



"One of ours" - An exploration of inclusion and the use of alternative provision

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Abstract

The research presented here is an exploratory investigation of the attitudes of key decision-makers towards the placement of young people with social, emotional, mental health difficulties (SEMH) in alternative provisions. These attitudes were explored in the context of the participants' definitions of and attitudes towards inclusion alongside further exploration of factors which both help and hinder the inclusion of young people who attend these settings. Literature surrounding inclusion, exclusion, alternative provisions and teacher attitudes towards young people with SEMH informed the development of the study, alongside literature concerning the theory of attitudes.

The researcher sets the research within a social constructionist and pragmatic epistemological paradigm, utilising a qualitative methodology. Four school leadership team members, four alternative provision leads and four educational psychologists took part in semi-structured interviews based around a vignette developed in a focus group formed of participants from each of these groups. This vignette describes a fictional young person called Bert intended to be representative of young people placed in alternative provisions and discussion throughout the interviews referred back to Bert.

An inductive thematic analysis using Braun & Clarke's (2006) method was used to analyse the interview transcripts, with the research questions kept in mind throughout. This analysis presents codes, themes and subthemes in five thematic maps from which six key findings are drawn regarding the attitudes of the participants towards inclusion, alternative provision placement and the factors helping and hindering the successful inclusion of Bert. These key findings are: 1. There is a tension between the theory and practice of inclusion when considering the use of alternative provision. 2. Mainstream schools experience a variety of systemic and individual challenges and feel deskilled in supporting young people with SEMH. 3. The challenges in schools have led to the sense that Alternative Provision can do things which the mainstream cannot despite concerns around funding and quality assurance. 4. Taking ownership of young

people and placing them at the centre of decisions around their provision is essential, although at times these decisions are made to meet school needs rather than young peoples'. 5. Educational Psychologists have a role in supporting the inclusion of young people like Bert and their educators. 6. Children and young people are perceived to have an impact on their own inclusion

The implications of these findings for professional practice for school staff and educational psychologists as well as government policy are discussed and suggestions for further research are presented. Finally, the research provides some reflections following the research process.

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1. Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Personal Interest

The topic of the research presented here lies firmly within the researcher's interests. The concept of inclusion has been a fascination of the researcher for many years, stemming from the experiences of the researcher's younger sister's journey through mainstream school following a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition. Passionate about education and as a young person who found it difficult to understand why anybody might not enjoy learning, the researcher chose to pursue a career in educational psychology to support those who did not find the joy in school which she did.

The researcher encountered frustrations working as a teaching assistant in a mainstream secondary school with young people with behavioural difficulties. These young people appeared so disengaged from learning and the school community that often it felt positive for them to begin accessing alternatives outside of the school itself. After beginning training on the Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology, the researcher attended a powerful session about the inclusion debate and prompted the researcher to reflect on what is meant by the word inclusion and particularly what this might mean for young people with behavioural difficulties such as those at the mainstream secondary school that she had previously worked at. As the researcher continued learning about, reading about and discussing inclusion with fellow trainees, colleagues and friends, interest in the subject area grew and working on placement in an educational psychology service which explicitly promotes inclusive education consolidated the idea that this would be a fascinating area to conduct a piece of research in.

1.2 Background/Context

The author became particularly interested in Alternative Education Provision following a work placement in an East Midlands Local Authority which, at the time of writing, has no Pupil Referral Units. This gave rise to the question of what happens to young people if they are excluded from school or schools feel an alternative is needed for a young person. During the placement, the researcher noticed that many children and young people were placed within private organisations referred to within the service as Alternative Provisions and there seemed to be some unease within the Educational Psychology Service around these placements, with questions surrounding quality assurance, outcomes and the inclusivity of this practice. After some initial research, it became clear that there had been a dramatic rise in the use of Alternative Providers in recent years, particularly in areas such as the local authority in question where there are limited options for young people experiencing school exclusion.

Like many others, this local authority holds the concept of 'inclusion' in the highest regard and, combined with the researcher's own personal interest in the topic, the service was interested in understanding how Alternative Provisions fit within inclusive practice and what professionals making decisions around these placements thought about this.

1.3 Aim and Unique Contribution

The research presented here aims to uniquely contribute to the existing literature surrounding inclusion in the current UK context and to prompt an expansion in the limited research available exploring the use of private alternative provisions. Although there is a notable wealth of investigations concerning Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), the use of private alternative provisions remains relatively under-researched (Davies, 2012; Thompson & Russell, 2007). Given a changing educational climate in which the use of

alternative providers has experienced a “sharp rise” (Davies, 2012), it is proposed here that further research into the use and effectiveness of them is paramount to considering how they are approached in the future.

This research aims to present a platform for further study in this area by providing an exploration of the underlying definitions and attitudes guiding school leadership team members, alternative provision leads and educational psychologists supporting the process of making decisions around the placement of young people within these alternative provisions. This is pertinent in the context of promoting inclusive practice and ensuring the best outcomes for the children and young people who may be placed within these contexts (DfE 2014).

1.4 Professional Relevance

This research is presented as part of the completion of doctoral training in Applied Educational Psychology and given this context, it is also important for the researcher to note here the significant contribution this work aims to make to this role in particular. Although there is some variation across local authorities and private providers, the role of an educational psychologist is considered here to include the support of vulnerable young people and their settings in ensuring that their education meets their needs and encourages progress in all areas of their lives (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010).

In terms of alternative provision placements, the role of an educational psychologist may include supporting or advising schools around their thinking when considering the use of such a placement and encouraging them to consider how best to provide an inclusive education to any young person. In addition to providing a platform for further investigation in this area, another aim of this research is to encourage educational psychologists as part of their role to once again discuss the nature of ‘inclusion’ with consideration of the use of

private alternative providers. These discussions could usefully take place between educational psychologists in the profession, with their colleagues in schools and with the provisions themselves with the goal of ensuring the best for the young people in their care. An understanding of the potential perspectives of school leadership team members is hoped to support educational psychologist to consider the most effective ways of working with them to achieve an inclusive school environment on a systemic level as well as with individual young people on their caseloads.

1.5 Structure

This research is presented in six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction – Positioning the researcher and the research presented here in terms of its context, aims and professional relevance.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review – Presenting the literature concerning theory and practice in inclusion, exclusion, alternative provisions and the study of attitudes.

Chapter 3 – Methodology & Procedure – Outlining the epistemological standpoint of the researcher, the design of the study and the procedure undertaken in its completion.

Chapter 4 – Results – Presenting the results of the study, the thematic maps describing these results and the key findings.

Chapter 5 – Discussion – Interpreting the results and considering the limitations of the study, the potential implications for a variety of professionals and suggestions of further areas of study.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion – Presenting a final conclusion of the research presented.

2. Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The literature review below is presented in two parts: a narrative review and a systematic review. The narrative review describes the context of an inclusive education system guided by government policy and the difficulties in defining this term. Exclusion is defined and the potential impact of this is described, going on to consider the role of alternative provision. The theory within the literature looking at attitudes is explored, particularly in reference to children/young people with an identified social, emotional, mental health difficulty (SEMH). A systematic review of the literature investigating the attitudes of teachers towards children with SEMH is conducted, culminating in three key research questions.

2.2 Narrative Literature Review

2.2.1 Introduction

Alternative Provision is used across the UK and, although it is difficult to establish exact figures, it is estimated that approximately 135,000 children and young people receive some form of alternative provision every year (Department for Children Schools and Families (2008). Alongside the concerning statistic that 62.5% of children with special needs who were subject to a permanent exclusion had identified “Social, Emotional & Mental Health” needs (Office for National Statistics, 2016), these figures give rise to questions around what this alternative provision looks like and how key professionals choose appropriate provision for children and young people with behavioural difficulties in the context of inclusive education.

The researcher aims for this literature review to explore the definitions of and basic concepts surrounding inclusion and exclusion, as well as the increasing use of alternative provision. Psychological theory underpinning the development of attitudes and the influence these attitudes can have on an individual’s behaviour will be explored generally and with specific reference to children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Finally, the researcher will present a systematic review of the literature surrounding the attitudes of educational professionals towards the inclusion of children and young people with behavioural needs.

The aim here is to explore the literature surrounding inclusion and exclusion with particular reference to the views and attitudes of key professionals. It is also aimed that knowledge and understanding of the field will be demonstrated through critical evaluation of the literature. Finally, this review aims to give context for the research question developed and to demonstrate clearly how the literature presented contributed towards the development of that question.

2.2.2 Educational Inclusion

In this section definitions of inclusion will be discussed followed by a brief history of the topic with reference to government policy. This will be followed by a discussion of the theoretical foundations of inclusion and what this may look like in practice, concluding in a brief description of the evidence base for the approach and factors which help and hinder its implementation.

Defining Inclusion

Inclusion has been a staple of UK government policy surrounding education since the country's leaders signed up to the Salamanca Statement in 1997 (UNESCO, 1994) and continues to shape policy to this day (Department for Education & Department of Health [DfE/DoH], 2015). Given this positioning, it is important to have a consistent and well established definition of the term 'inclusion'. However, the literature does not give a consistent and clear view of this definition (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1993) and Local Authorities in the UK cannot agree on one either (Ainscow 2005). Often researchers do not present a definition of inclusion at the outset of their research (Bunch & Valeo, 2004) or present a discussion of the various definitions of inclusion without presenting a clear choice of definition (Boyle, Topping & Jindal-Snape, 2015) which can lead to difficulties in reviewing the literature.

Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu (1999) suggest that the literature could be accused of over-complicating the definition of inclusion and lowering the standards by which effective inclusion is judged. They firmly state their choice of the definition:

“...an educational program wherein students with disabilities learn alongside their age-appropriate peers in general education classrooms with appropriate aids and services” (Gilhool 1989).

The BPS Inclusive Education Position Paper (2002) goes further, identifying four key factors:

“Rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason – ability, gender, language, care status, family income, disability, sexuality, colour, religion or ethnic origin;

Maximising the participation of all learners in the community schools of their choice;

Making learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressures;

Rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs.” (BPS, 2002)

Hodkinson (2005) also highlights the difficulties within the literature in defining inclusion or inclusive education, identifying difficulties within a number of the definitions already present. Instead, Hodkinson (2005) suggests that the definition needs to focus upon valuing individuals and, following the suggestion of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994), focus on “the development of self”. He proposes the following definition:

“...a catalyst that requires schools and society to identify and overcome the barriers that inhibit children’s choices and ability to achieve their full potential” (Hodkinson, 2005, p. 19)

Given the range of definitions, some of which differ greatly, it is acknowledged here that it is difficult to define inclusion or inclusive education with any sense of certainty. Despite these difficulties, it is important to settle on a definition for the purposes of this literature review and the one provided by the BPS Inclusive Education Position Paper (2002) feels most appropriate given the psychological approach taken by the researcher here. The BPS provides evidence-based guidance for psychologists practising in Britain and the researcher feels that the definition provided by the BPS is comprehensive and accounts for a great deal of the variables which may impact upon a young person’s inclusion. The research presented here focuses on a group which has been defined as vulnerable and the definition provided by the BPS makes specific reference to the necessity of considering those most vulnerable.

History & the development of government policy

The journey towards inclusion for children with additional needs in mainstream education gained momentum with the 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act. This act declared that children who are identified as 'handicapped' should not be deemed as "unsuitable for education at school", leading to children with medically identified 'handicaps' only receiving schooling in specialist settings when they could be funded to be there if their parents desired it. This development led to the commissioning and publication of the Warnock Report (1978).

The Warnock Report laid the foundations for the next step towards inclusion: integration. Integration meant that students with special educational needs had the right to an education within their local mainstream school as long as this placement complied with the parent's wishes. The Warnock Report also elicited changes in the way children with additional needs are assessed, monitored and labelled and the categories of handicap which were previously in place were removed. The report recommended early intervention, annual reviews and more rigorous assessment of the child's individual needs with a view to identifying how best to meet these needs. The recommendations made were translated into legislation in the 1981 Education Act. This required local authorities to ensure that children with special needs were afforded the opportunity to be educated in mainstream school provided four key conditions could be met:

1. That this educational placement was in line with parental wishes
2. That the provision is suitable for the child's needs
3. That the child's peers' learning would not be impeded
4. That this can provided compatibly with an efficient use of resources

Legislation continued to focus on inclusion throughout the 1980s. Following the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994), the SEN Green Paper "Excellence for All Children" (Department for Education and Employment DfEE, 1997) clearly positioned the government within an inclusive model of education, stating that SEN children and young people should be educated within a

mainstream context unless there are “compelling reasons for doing otherwise”. However, following this the coalition government, which came into power in May 2010, released the “Support and Aspiration” Green Paper in 2011. This new policy document introduced the intention to move away from ‘inclusion’ in favour of promoting a greater choice of school for parents of children with SEN (Department for Education [DfE], 2011). Further confusion was introduced when the SEND Code of Practice was published in 2015, stating the government’s commitment to “a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education” (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015, pg. 25). It could be that the disagreement surrounding the definition of inclusion is reflected in this confusion in government policy, making it difficult for practitioners to identify how to go about implementing it in line with these policies.

Alongside the inclusion agenda, there has been a focus on the 'attainment' agenda (also referred to as the 'standards' agenda). Behind this is a desire to improve education in the UK in terms of the achievement of young people and their readiness for work or further education following their school years (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006). Rouse & Florian (1997) argue that the introduction of educational policy focussing on the attainment agenda has compounded the challenges in providing inclusive education; they propose a number of tensions (Figure 2.1 is a replica of 'Table 2' in Rouse & Florian 1997).

Figure 2.1 - Tensions between the inclusion and attainment agendas proposed by Rouse &

<u>The 'tensions' proposed by Rouse & Florian (1997)</u>
Inclusion - Exclusion
Equity - Excellence
Producers - Consumers
Choice - Planning
Entitlement - Differentiation
Altruism - Self-interest
Individuals - Groups

If it is accepted that inclusion's foundations are in the pursuit of equity, the tension between 'equity' and 'excellence' demonstrates their argument that the attainment and inclusion agendas are not compatible within UK education policy, giving rise to reduced inclusion where a focus on this attainment agenda

is chosen. Further to this, Bines (2000) proposes the need for collaboration between SEN policy makers and those working on educational standards and attainment in order for the two agendas to achieve success. Although Rouse & Florian (1997) present a bleak picture of the contradictions between these two agendas, Ainscow, Booth & Dyson (2006) provide a more hopeful scenario, indicating that the key is in the implementation of these policies despite the current rhetoric that this would be challenging if not impossible. Rather than pitting the two agendas against one another, they suggest that the two can be achieved in unison without either being compromised. Their proposal is that this will not be achieved by any radical reform in educational policy but by expanding upon the inclusive elements of current policy and supporting teachers to develop and implement them.

These arguments surrounding fluctuating and complex policies may reflect a number of things; the difficulties in defining “inclusion” itself or perhaps the ambiguous evidence base around its effectiveness as a model. Beyond the implementation of these policies, the debate surrounding whether inclusion is an effective model for the education of children and young people with SEN is fierce. This debate has sparked a great deal of research into the impact of inclusion , how a fully inclusive school environment can be created (if at all) and what this might look like.

What does inclusion look like? – Theory & practice

In the context of all that is presented above; the historical development of the inclusion agenda, the conflicting government policy guiding practice and the ongoing challenges faced by researchers and practitioners in defining the term itself, it is beneficial to consider how theory surrounding inclusion meets with the practice. Theoretical positions will be presented alongside consideration of how this theory translates into the everyday educational practice.

Inclusion is often grounded in social justice and human rights by strong proponents of the approach. Thomas & Vaughan (2004) begin their examination of the theory and practice of inclusive education by presenting arguments in line with this, discussing the links between the abolishment of racial segregation in education and inclusive practices applied to special educational needs. Further to this, Frederickson & Cline (2009) describe a considerable conflict presented by the limitations of the evidence-base in favour of inclusive education: do the fundamental human rights of young people stand firm regardless of research findings which do not support the effectiveness of current practices? If the argument is that segregation based upon disability is no different in terms of human rights to segregation based upon race is accepted, then it follows that the teaching of young people with additional needs in separate settings to their peers is in direct contravention of their human rights.

In contrast, some (including those who have advocated for inclusive practices) would state that social justice arguments do not represent a realistic stance which takes a holistic view of practice (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Providing further support to this view, Lindsay (2003) presents a critical perspective on inclusion and states that the social justice argument suffers from being reductionist in its approach, not accounting for the intricacies of day-to-day practice.

There has been some attempt in the literature to investigate and describe what the theory behind inclusion may look like in practice. Norwich (2008) provides a 'continuum' of inclusion (Figure 2.2), indicating that those in 'ordinary' classrooms on a full-time basis are most included and those in residential special settings are least included.

If most included is the more desirable pole of this continuum, it follows that we should strive for all young people to be in full-time mainstream education. However, as suggested by Lindsay (2003), this approach may not bear out in reality and concerns are shared by many professionals in the field as to the possible negative impact of this potentially narrow goal.

An example of one of these concern, shared by Mary Warnock (The

Warnock Report, 1978) is that young people with additional needs may be at risk of bullying in mainstream schools and ensuring their safety and wellbeing should be paramount, considered before their right to access their community school. However, some evidence has been found to the contrary when a 'fully' inclusive system is employed (Bunch & Valeo, 2004) and it is argued here that these concerns could more helpfully be conceptualised as questions around the acceptance of diversity and difference by young people as a population. The response to this should be to challenge and support the system rather than remove those who have become victims of it.

In addition to the difficult relationship between the inclusion and attainment agendas, these concerns paint of a picture of a theoretical stance which is

MOST SEPARATE

Full time residential special school
 Full time day special school
 Part time special – part time ordinary school
 Full time special unit or class in ordinary school
 Part time special unit/class – part time ordinary class
 Full time in ordinary class with some withdrawal and some in-class support
 Full time in ordinary class with in-class support
 Full time in ordinary class

Figure 2.2 - Norwich's () continuum of inclusion

challenging to define, measure or put into practice in a meaningful way. Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn & Christensen (2006) argue that the exploration of theory behind inclusion now overreaches the evidence-base on how to create an 'inclusive' school, something which researchers must remedy.

The evidence base

Research into inclusive education has been growing throughout its history and as a result it encompasses a vast array of sub-topics and methodologies. Within the scope of this review, it is important to give a sense of the overarching themes in the literature and a small number of more specific examples.

Typically a systematic literature review is considered to be a positive starting point when looking at the evidence-based for any topic. However the difficulties in defining and therefore measuring inclusion present a significant barrier to the completion of a rigorous systematic review of the literature. Reviews by Ruijs & Peetsma (2009) & Lindsay (2007) both attempt to analyse the impact of inclusion, finding that small sample sizes, poor research quality (such as limited use of control groups and poor accounting for extraneous variables) and a lack of consistent definitions resulted in inconclusive outcomes. In both reviews, there is evidence demonstrating positive, negative and neutral effects being found in each area. Although it could be argued that this is in favour of inclusion in that it meets the requirements of human rights without doing harm to those directly or indirectly effected, this does not sit well with many evidence-based practitioners.

Despite struggles to systematically review evidence, there is some literature which argues in favour of an inclusive approach and counters the concerns of some professionals within the field. For example, the concern regarding young people with special educational needs in mainstream schools experiencing higher levels of bullying is investigated by Bunch & Valeo (2004). They

explored the inclusion of young people with additional needs in two different types of school settings in Canada: 'fully' inclusive schools where young people are educated in fully mixed groups alongside their diverse peer group and schools which utilise an on-site unit for young people with additional needs which they attend for varying proportions of their timetable. Their findings demonstrated that the 'fully' inclusive schools recorded less incidents of bullying and an increase in typically developing young people engaging in advocating for their peers with additional needs. However, this piece of research (like many others) suffers from a small sample size and questionable generalisability to a UK context.

Looking specifically at a UK context, Ofsted (2006) completed inspections at 74 schools across 17 local authorities and concluded that mainstream schools with additionally resourced provisions (as compared to mainstream schools without this provision, special schools, PRUs etc) were the most successful in terms of academic and social outcomes. They attribute the success of schools in which young people achieved good progress despite complex additional needs to high quality teaching and a committed leadership team, a notion which is supported by further research (Zoller, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999). This indicates that Ofsted has found support for an model of education which utilises additional resources, expertise and a commitment from leadership to achieve the inclusion of young people with a variety of needs in mainstream education. However, the nature of this provision is unclear and, considering the continuum of inclusion (Figure 2.2), it may not be considered as 'fully' inclusive.

Whilst the debate around the merits of a fully inclusive model of education continues, research has also focussed on what factors may help or hinder inclusive practice. Monsen and Frederickson (2004) found that teachers with positive attitudes towards an inclusive classroom were rated to have greater levels of 'classroom satisfaction' by their pupils than those staff who were less inclined towards an inclusive model. However, Rose (2001) found that some

teachers feel that they do not possess the training, time and classroom support which they identified as necessary for effective inclusion, thus hindering this as a goal. They also found that teachers held concerns around the attitudes of typical students' parents towards increasing numbers of SEN pupils being educated in their children's classrooms.

This would indicate that teachers feel that physical placement within a mainstream setting is not enough to elicit a truly inclusive educational environment for a young person with SEN. Full social inclusion does not automatically occur following mainstream school placement for young people with special educational needs, (Ring and Travers 2005; Siperstein, Parker, Bardon and Widaman 2007; Humphrey and Lewis 2008) and increasing peer knowledge and understanding of SEN is necessary in the pursuit of this goal (Ring and Travers 2005). Gordon (2010) and Norwich & Kelly (2004) emphasise the importance of the pupil's voice when it comes to assessing successful inclusion.

Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu (1999) highlight the importance of an inclusive school culture in achieving inclusive education. They suggest that there are three main factors which contribute towards this successful school culture: an inclusive school leader, a vision of school and community holistically and a shared understanding of the values and language used throughout the school. Bunch & Valeo's (2004) findings described earlier in this chapter could be considered to provide further support for the positive influence of an inclusive school culture. Although the findings from both pieces of research should be approached tentatively due to small sample sizes and low generalisability, they promote the idea that an inclusive school culture could be a key factor in providing more inclusive educational experiences for children and young people. Osler, Watling & Busher (2001) accessed a much larger sample and investigated school exclusion but drew similar conclusions from their findings to Zoller, Ramanathan & Yu (1999); an inclusive school ethos encompasses an 'inclusive' leadership, a shared understanding and strong community relationships, leading to low exclusion rates and a more inclusive school.

2.2.3 Exclusion

Is school exclusion a significant problem?

Although there are multiple definitions of the term, the word ‘exclusion’ in this context refers to a period of time (whether for a fixed-term or permanently) during which a child/young person is removed from a school by the head teacher of that school (DfE 2012)

The rates of permanent exclusion from school remain a concern to this day, seeing 0.06% of the school population permanently excluded in 2014-15 (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Exclusion of pupils with special educational needs is a particular area of interest given the breakdown of these figures published by the Department for Education (shown in Table 2.1 below).

	Freq.	%	% of total school population
SEN + statement/Education Health & Care Plan	350	6.0	0.005
SEN no statement/EHCP	2,870	49.5	0.037
No SEN	2,580	44.5	0.033
All	5,800	100	0.074

Table 2.1: The exclusion figures for 2014-15 with specific reference to special educational needs. (Office for National Statistics, 2016)

These figures show that, in total 55.5% of those pupils excluded had an identified special educational need (when considering young people both with and without a statement/ Education Health Care Plan). This amounts to 0.04% of the total school population compared to those with no identified special educational need at 0.03%. These figures are perhaps more surprising given that, according the school census data, children with SEN (with or without a statement of education, health & care plan) account for approximately 16.69% of the school population; meaning that these children/young people are dramatically over-represented in the population of pupils who have been excluded from school (DfE 2015).

These figures represent only the formal school exclusions and the Lamb Inquiry reports that there is an unknown number of children and young people who experience informal exclusion from school which is more difficult to gain empirical data for (DCSF, 2009). Osler, Watling & Busher (2001) discuss in their DfEE research report the reasons for unofficial exclusion and they found that this method may be used by schools to hide true exclusion levels or sometimes to ensure that the child/young person is not subject to any 'stigma' as a result of having an exclusion on their record. However, they also conclude that these 'unofficial exclusions', regardless of length, can be detrimental to the child/young person.

Why do children/young people get excluded?

The reasons children/young people get excluded from school could be broadly categorised as behavioural misconduct, although this term is so broad it falls short of providing significant insight into the area. The Office for National Statistics (2016) cite a number of categories within this, as shown in Table 2.2 below.

Reason for exclusion	Freq.	%
Physical assault of staff or student	1,390	24
Verbal abuse towards staff or student	820	14
Bullying	30	0.5
Racist abuse	10	0.2
Sexual misconduct	100	1.7
Drug & alcohol related	490	8.4
Damage	60	1.0
Theft	30	0.5
Persistent disruptive behaviour	1,900	32.8
Other	980	16.9
Totals	5,800	100

Table 2.2: The reasons for permanent exclusions for 2014-15 (Office for National Statistics, 2016)

The most common reason cited for permanent exclusion is “persistent disruptive behaviour”; this implies a cumulative effect of relatively less severe behaviour incidents over time. As cited earlier, when it comes to children/young people with Special Educational Needs, the Office for National Statistics (2016) report that the highest percentage of young people with an identified SEN who received a fixed-term exclusion had been identified as having a Behavioural, Social, Emotional Difficulty (BESD), and most of these exclusions were for ‘persistent disruptive behaviour’. Once again, children/young people with identified SENs are significantly over-represented within the data which further confirm the need for further investigation in the area.

Beyond the reasons given by schools for a permanent exclusion at the point of the exclusion itself, there is a body of research surrounding risk and protective factors when it comes to permanent exclusion. Theriot, Craun & Dupper (2009) discuss the wealth of evidence that black and minority ethnic males are at highest risk of exclusion from school, although they argue that there is also evidence to suggest that black and minority ethnic pupils are significantly more likely to come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds which may be the key risk factor rather than race itself. They also present the argument that researching risk factors linked to the school rather than the individual pupil is essential moving forward. Miller & Leyden (1999) also assert the importance of school culture in reducing challenging behaviour, thus reducing exclusions.

Morrison et al (2001) report that, within the American school system, children/young people identified as having special educational needs and those performing below expectations academically were most at risk of a permanent exclusion. Although not necessarily generalisable to a UK context, the idea that SEN could be a risk factor for exclusion is certainly reflected in the data presented earlier in this chapter. Morrison et al (2001) also presents protective factors, notably including the protective nature of the child/young person having an effective advocate either within their school or their community. This could represent a valuable support in terms of a trusted adult ensuring that the child/young person is perceived in a more balanced manner,

however it raises concerns over equitability as children/young people who are not fortunate enough to have access to such an advocate may receive an exclusion where another would not.

The impact of exclusion.

Given that many of the risk factors for permanent exclusion could be considered to identify a vulnerable young person, it is important to also consider what the impact of a permanent exclusion might be on a child/young person's future. Children/young people who have experienced school exclusion have a significant increased risk of drug use, continued social disadvantage, poor communication with parents/carers, antisocial behaviour and involvement in the criminal justice system (McCrystal, Higgins & Percy, 2007; Morrison et al 2001; Gazeley, 2010). Sutherland & Eisner (2014) add that an indirect long-term consequence of school exclusion in the late stages of a young person's school career is being unemployed at age 18-19. These long-term effects of school exclusion, as highlighted by Gazeley (2010), may indicate an entrenched cycle whereby socially disadvantaged children/young people become educationally disadvantaged which places them at further risk of social disadvantage in the future.

2.2.4 The Role of Alternative Provision

What is 'alternative provision'?

A key question for the research presented here is what happens to children/young people who are excluded from school. When it comes to pupils in 'Education Other Than At School' (EOTAS), approximately one third are in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and the remaining two thirds go to private/voluntary alternative provisions or further education colleges (Davies, 2012). In the five years leading to the publication, Davies (2012) reports a "sharp rise" in referral to alternative provisions rather than exclusion. Alternative provision placements may account for an increasing number of children and young people who have been permanently excluded from school but these placements may also account for an increasing proportion of those subject for 'informal exclusion' (DCSF, 2008; Osler, Watling & Busher, 2001). Researchers provide definitions of Alternative Provision (AP) which vary slightly, although Taylor (2012) provides a useful definition for the purposes of the research presented here as it distinguishes between Alternative Provision and Pupil Referral Units:

"AP is defined as an organisation where pupils engage in timetabled, educational activities away from school and school staff. PRUs are also a form of AP, but for the purposes of this report they will be treated separately." (Taylor 2012, p. 4)

Like Taylor (2012), the researcher intends to use the term Alternative Provision to refer to educational activities undertaken outside of school which do not include PRUs as research into PRUs is extensive whereas Alternative Provision outside of PRU settings is less comprehensively covered within the literature. These APs can include organisations within the voluntary or private sector, as well as those set up by schools themselves; resulting in a range of styles, approaches and environmental settings for these organisations.

Who attends Alternative Provision?

The majority of young people placed in alternative provision are white males age 14 to 16 and most of them attend a part-time basis, although researchers point out the accuracy of any data in this area is difficult to confirm due to gaps

in record keeping and difficulties categorising these placements (Thomson and Russell, 2007). Unsurprisingly, Davies (2012) indicates the large number of children and young people placing provision are placed there due to behavioural, emotional, social difficulties (BESD /SEBD), although this data suffers from the same limitations presented by Thompson and Russell (2007).

Outcomes & effectiveness of APs?

DfE Statutory Guidance for the use of Alternative Provision (DfE 2013) states that:

“Good alternative provision is that which appropriately meets the needs of pupils which required its use and enables them to achieve good educational attainment on par with their mainstream peers. All pupils must receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves.” (DfE 2013, p.10)

In the context of this guidance and their increasing use in practice, it is important to consider the effectiveness of APs. The School Behaviour and Attendance paper published by the DfE (2014) reports that 1.3% of pupils in AP achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C in 2011-12 and Taylor (2012) reports significant concerns around a lack of focus on academic attainment in many APs.

OFSTED (2011) was critical of alternative provision, prompting a government paper focusing on improving alternative provision (Taylor 2012). One particular concern, lies in the qualifications gained by children and young people attending alternative provisions. Thomson & Russell (2007) explored this concern and found that the young people within alternative provision, despite their vulnerability, were often engaged in gaining qualifications which could have very limited positive impact on their future prospects in light of their aspirations. They highlight one particular example of a young person engaged in qualifications which would not allow them to access the college of their choice as these qualifications are not recognised by this college.

Concerns have also been raised by OFSTED (2011) about the commissioning of alternative provision placements for children and young people and the accountability of those responsible for providing suitable education to all children and young people. Taylor (2012) highlights the significant range of different kinds of alternative provisions available as well as a range of different sources for these provisions. This makes evaluating alternative provision empirically particularly difficult. Indeed, many researchers (Taylor, 2012; Gutherson, Davies and Daszkiewicz , 2011; Davies, 2012; Thomson and Russell, 2007) have found that it is difficult to even establish the number of children accessing alternative provision either following a permanent exclusion or whilst on role at a mainstream school, further adding to the difficulties in conducting rigorous evaluation of the overall effectiveness of alternative provision.

In spite of these difficulties, Gutherson, Davies and Daszkiewicz (2011) conducted a literature review in an attempt to summarise aspects of effective alternative provision and identify transferable aspects of good practice. They suggest some characteristics which are essential to providing effective alternative provision these characteristics are:

- "1. Based on trusting, caring relationships.
2. Based on effective assessment of need.
3. Person-centred.
4. Purposeful (outcomes focused).
5. Personalised appropriate (curriculum/addressing needs).
6. Flexible and accessible.
7. Delivered by highly skilled and trained staff.
8. Monitored and assessed (to ensure needs are met and to inform delivery).
9. Supported by the wider family and community."

(Gutherson, Davies & Daszkiewicz 2011, p. 3)

Of particular concern are the difficulties surrounding the qualifications gained by children and young people attending alternative provisions. Thomson & Russell (2007) explored this concern and found that the young people within alternative provision, despite their vulnerability, were often on training routes which could be hoped to have very limited positive impact on their future prospects. They highlight one particular example of a young person engaged in qualifications which would not allow them to access the college of their choice as these qualifications are not recognised by this college.

In one East Midlands local authority there are currently at least thirty nine Alternative Provisions (NCSEP, 2015). Davies (2012) reviewed the use of alternative provision within this East Midlands local authority, highlighting their variation in quality of these alternative provisions, particularly those which are classed as independent, due to them being unmonitored and unregulated for the most part.

2.2.5 Attitudes towards the inclusion of Children/Young People with SEMH.

Children & young people with SEMH difficulties are a group who are difficult to identify (Mowat 2010), often perceived negatively by school staff (Goodman & Burton 2010) and at a disproportionately high risk of being excluded from school with 62.5% of permanently excluded children with SEN had An SEMH need (Office for National Statistics, 2016; Burton & Goodman 2011),. This may lead one to the conclusion that these individuals are also at greatest risk of not experiencing an “inclusive” educational experience. Given the suggested importance of school factors in both the inclusion and exclusion of children and young people (Zoller, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999; Bunch & Valeo, 2004; Osler, Watling & Busher, 2001), it is important to consider the attitudes of some of those individuals who may play a key part in inclusive practices for children/young people who may be at risk of exclusion.

However, before the attitudes the key staff hold about children/young people with SEMH can be explored, it is important to define attitude and investigate what impact attitudes can have on the actions an individual chooses to take.

What is an attitude?

Maio & Haddock (2015) define an attitude as “an overall evaluation of an object that is based on cognitive, affective and behavioural information”. Bohner & Wanke (2002) also make reference to cognitive, affective and behavioural components within their definition of attitudes, however not all authors agree that these three components are always aligned. Cooper, Blackman & Keller (2016) argue that these three aspects may be present in any combination in the development and maintenance of an individual’s attitude and propose that it is not necessary for all three to contribute. At the core of both definitions lies the evaluation of the attitude object, either positively or negatively, which is consistent with more classic literature in the field such as Fishbein & Ajzen (1977).

What influences an attitude?

When considering the formation of an individual's attitudes, the Multi-Component Model of Attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Cooper, Blackman & Keller 2016; Maio & Haddock, 2015) reflects the definitions described above, framing attitude formation in the context of three key components;

1. Affective: The affective component refers to the impact an emotion can have on an attitude, for example Isen & Simonds (1978) found that participants reported more positive attitudes towards products they owned at home if they were given a free gift earlier during their visit, despite the two events appearing to be unrelated.
2. Cognitive: Maio & Haddock (2015) discuss the impact an individual's beliefs can have on their attitudes and suggest that beliefs and attitudes are linked. For example, if a teacher holds the belief that children with SEMH are disruptive to those without SEMH then this may affect their attitude towards SEMH children being educated in a mainstream classroom.
3. Behavioural: This component describes the impact of behavioural experiences on an individual's attitudes; individuals can form positive and negative attitudes through experiences and, for example, will be more effectively impacted upon by negative experiences than positive ones (Fazio, Eiser & Shook, 2004).

Breckler (1984) highlighted a dearth of evidence in support of the Multi-Component Model and conducted two studies to evaluate its validity, finding significant support for the model and arguing that it is important for researchers to take care to distinguish between the three components in light of the evidence they present.

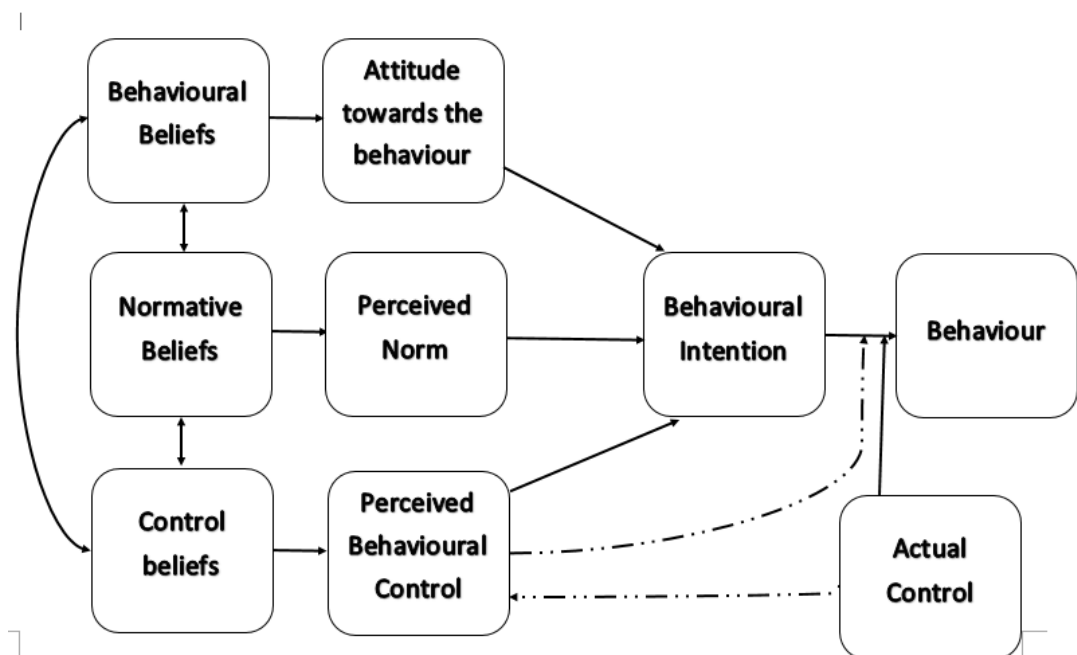
How do attitudes influence behaviour?

Cognitive, affective and behavioural factors have been shown to influence an individual's attitudes, however it is also important to understand how those attitudes do or do not go on to influence behaviour. The complexities of the

influence an individual's attitudes can have on their behaviour continues to be a highly debated topic (Cooper, Blackman & Keller, 2016) and there are a number of theories which aim to explain this interaction.

Fishbein & Ajzen (2011) proposed the Reasoned Action Approach; an amalgamation and extension of previous theories the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1985) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Figure 1 below is a path model showing the Reasoned Action Approach.

Figure 2.1: A path model of the Reasoned Action Approach based on the schematic presented by Cooper, Blackman & Keller (2016).



Fishbein & Ajzen's (2010) theory proposes that an individual's attitude, formed based upon individual factors, social factors and the information the individual has, influences behaviour indirectly via behavioural intention and the evidence appears to support this assertion (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). The perceived norm (i.e. what the individual perceives or knows that others think/do) and perceived behavioural control (i.e. whether or not the individual feels that they are able to complete the behaviour in question) act to influence behavioural intention alongside attitudes, implying that attitudes in themselves may not directly predict behaviour. For example, MacFarlane & Woolfson (2013) found that the inclusive behaviours of teachers who worked in schools where the subjective

norm was found to be an inclusive approach was more significantly predicted by this subjective norm than their behavioural intentions or reported attitudes.

The perspective of key individuals on the inclusion of pupils with SEMH

McFarlane & Woolfson (2013) used the Theory of Planned Behaviour to study the attitudes of teachers towards including children/young people with emotional behavioural difficulties (EBD). They found that teachers who perceived that the subjective norm was to include these young people had increased intention to behave inclusively, leading to the conclusion that school culture as set by the senior leader of the organisation has a significant impact on inclusive behaviours. Although teachers may have the intention to practise inclusively for this group of children/young people, research suggests that they feel ill prepared by their training and poorly supported by underfunded agencies such as educational psychologists and counsellors to carry out their intentions (Goodman & Burton 2010).

Polou & Norwich (2002) also utilised the Theory of Planned Behaviour and looked at teachers' cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses to young people with SEMH. They found that staff who felt that challenging behaviour was caused by internal factors to the child (e.g. personality traits) were more likely to also feel that they could not manage these behaviours and to experience stress. They also found that negative feelings towards to this group of young people were associated with a reduced intention to support them. When considered in parallel, the research presented above could indicate that when school staff are poorly prepared and supported in managing children with SEMH in mainstream settings which are not led with an inclusive ethos they may experience negative feelings towards both themselves as professionals and the children they are working with which could lead to less inclusive practices.

Whilst teacher attitudes and attributions have received more attention in the research, there has been relatively limited research focussing on mainstream pupil perceptions of inclusive practice. Bunch and Valeo (2004) looked at

Canadian mainstream pupils' perceptions of their peers with SEN in fully inclusive schools and schools with a Special Education Unit. The findings support fully inclusive practice; with inclusive school pupils citing less abusive behaviour towards SEN peers, increased advocacy and fuller friendship development for those peers. In addition to this, the findings suggest that children and young people will generally accept the system they are in as the correct one; students within inclusive schools firmly defending the SEN peers' right to remain with that environment whilst the majority of pupils in the less fully inclusive school environment agreed that SEN pupils may sometimes be better off separated from their mainstream peers.

Lewis, Chard & Scott (1994) identified that parents of children/young people with these behaviour difficulties have reported feeling less positively towards mainstream schooling, holding concerns that previous failures to support their children in these mainstream settings have failed. However, the author also reports that parents are more inclined to look upon mainstream settings favourably if they are given a voice in the process of deciding where their child should be educated. The support of parents plays a vital role in the success of their children (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Wentzel 1998) and, in light of this, it is important to take account of their views and invite them into the process wherever possible.

Outcomes for those with SEMH

When looking at the long term outcomes for children/young people who are identified as having SEMH, Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout, & Epstein (2004) used a meta-analysis and found that pupils with behavioural needs performed below their same age peers across the curriculum throughout their time in education. It is clear that these young people are at a disadvantage, although it is not always clear why and the directionality of cause and effect in this phenomenon has yet to be established (Wehby, Lane and Falk, 2003).

Bradley, Doolittle & Bartolotta (2008) look at a large range of outcomes for these young people, from academic to adjustment to adult life. The authors characterise these outcomes as “dismal”, highlighting a significant evidence base suggesting that this group of young people find it difficult to succeed at school, have challenges in gaining “meaningful employment”, are at higher risk of involvement with the criminal justice system and are more likely to have troubled interpersonal relationships.

National exclusion statistics for the England 2014-15 show that 62.5% of children with special needs who were subject to a permanent exclusion had identified “Social, Emotional & Mental Health” needs (Office for National Statistics, 2016). This is a new category and although it is specifically not designed to replace SEMH, it is the only category available which reflects a similar set of needs. This figure is significant cause for concern; given the higher risk of children and young people with an identified special educational need compared to the typical population, the fact that this group of young people are at the highest risk within that population may be good cause to prioritise finding effective ways of meeting their needs.

2.2.6 Summary

This narrative review of the literature aimed to explore the concept of inclusion, the reasons behind and impact of exclusion, how alternative provision is used and what psychological theory surrounding attitudes can tell us about how teachers perceive children and young people with SEMH. Despite inclusive education being prevalent throughout government policy, the literature demonstrates the increasing exclusion of children and young people with SEMH. The differing definitions of “inclusion” lead the author to conclude that the use of alternative provision could be categorised as both inclusive and exclusive and that the attitudes of key decision makers towards children/young people most likely to be placed in these provisions (i.e. children with an identified SEMH) could be having a significant impact on these choices.

Given the figures around the outcomes for children and young people in these educational contexts, understanding why key decision makers place them there and their attitudes towards this may be key to understanding how local authorities can ensure these children/young people are included and subsequently ensure positive outcomes for them. However, further understanding of what the research tells us about the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children/young people with BESD/EBD/SEMH needs through a systematic review of the literature will provide further context for the attitudes of key decision makers in more senior positions within schools.

2.3 Systematic Review

2.3.1 Background & Review Question

Given the importance highlighted above of teacher attitudes in the inclusion of children/young people with identified SEMH, a systematic review of the literature surrounding this area was conducted. The following review question was developed:

What does research tell us about the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children/young people with BESD/EBD/SEMH needs?

2.3.2 Search

Initially, search criteria were developed based on the review question. It was deemed necessary to include the terms “inclusion”, “teacher”, “attitudes” and “SEMH” within this search to fully encompass the review question. These terms were then developed to include suitable synonyms as these initial search terms produced limited results.

A PRISMA flow chart based on the PRISMA statement (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff & Altman 2009) is presented in Appendix 1. This shows how the search progressed schematically.

The databases searched, how the search was posed, the conditions placed on that search and the number of results obtained from each are presented in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: The searches completed in each of the three databases accessed.

Database	Search	Results
ProQuest	inclusion AND teacher AND (views OR attitudes) AND (BESD OR EBD OR SEMH)	31
Web of Science	inclusion AND teacher AND (views OR attitudes) AND (BESD OR EBD OR SEMH)	56
ERIC	inclusion AND teacher AND (views OR attitudes) AND (BESD OR EBD OR SEMH)	15
Google Scholar	Inclusion, teacher, attitudes, BESD OR EBD OR SEMH.	4,070

In addition to these searches, the citations within papers which were selected for the review were also searched for any additional papers which met the inclusion/exclusion criteria detailed below. This yielded 3 additional papers for consideration, bringing the total number of papers considered to 4,160.

2.3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion

Once the search was complete, the 4,157 articles produced by the three databases were screened. The articles removed at this stage were excluded if the search results list indicated that the topic was irrelevant (e.g. articles referring to dentistry), the research was not UK based, full papers were unavailable or articles were not in English.

The remaining 49 articles were assessed and placed under the following inclusion/exclusion criteria:

Included studies must:

- Be empirical research based, not in the form of a review.
- Be published in a peer reviewed journal.
- Be published since 2000.
- Focus on teacher's views, including student teachers.
- Must related to inclusion and either focus on BESD/EBD/SEMH or have aspects looking specifically at this area.

Studies were excluded if:

- There was a broad focus on the inclusion debate rather than any specific focus on the inclusion of pupils with BESD/EBD/SEMH
- They focused on the views of parents & carers/young people/other professionals
- The research was conducted outside of UK/Ireland
- The research was intended as an evaluation of an intervention

All 49 articles which were assessed are presented in Appendix 2 with reference to whether or not they were included and why. Seven papers were included in the review in total, these are displayed in Table 2.4 below:

Table 2.4: Included papers

	Author (year)	Title
1	Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000)	Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Inclusion Of Children With Special Educational Needs In The Ordinary School
2	Goodman & Burton (2010)	The Inclusion Of Students With BESD In Mainstream Schools: Teachers' Experiences Of And Recommendations For Creating A Successful Inclusive Environment
3	Grieve (2009)	Teachers' Beliefs About Inappropriate Behaviour: Challenging Attitudes?
4	Hastings & Oakford (2003)	Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs
5	McFarlane & Woolfson (2013)	Teacher Attitudes And Behavior Toward The Inclusion Of Children With Social, Emotional And Behavioral Difficulties In Mainstream Schools: An Application Of The Theory Of Planned Behavior
6	Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka (2014)	Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion, Perceived Adequacy Of Support And Classroom Learning Environment
7	O'Toole & Burke (2013)	Ready, Willing And Able? Attitudes And Concerns In Relation To Inclusion Amongst A Cohort Of Irish Preservice Teachers

2.3.4 Description of Studies

Table 2.5 below shows a limited summary of the participants, method and results relevant to the review question of each of the papers included in the review.

Table 2.5 – Description of studies included in the review here

Author (year)	Title	Participants	Method	Summary & Results
Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000)	Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Inclusion Of Children With Special Educational Needs In The Ordinary School	111 Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students and 24 fourth year undergraduate s studying a BA in Education.	• Survey including Likert style questions, semantic differential scaling and open questions. • Exploring student teachers' attitudes towards inclusion depending on the gender of the teacher, the severity of need and the type of need. • Measuring attitudes by looking at cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to different needs.	• Participants were generally positive about inclusion. • Participants reported students with emotional/behavioural difficulties were significantly more concerning and stressful than students with other special educational needs. They reported they would benefit from more training in meeting this category of needs. • Participants who perceived themselves as having greater skill in working with children with special educational needs generally had more positive attitudes towards inclusion. • Participants training to be science teachers were least positive about inclusion and female participants were significantly more positive about inclusion than males.

Goodman & Burton (2010)	The Inclusion Of Students With BESD In Mainstream Schools: Teachers' Experiences Of And Recommend ations For Creating A Successful Inclusive Environment	8 mainstream teachers, 7 female & 1 male, from schools in different local authorities and teaching different subjects.	• Semi-structured interviews • Focusing on ○ Participants' experiences of children & young people with behavioural, emotional, social difficulties in their schools. ○ The strategies they use ○ The training they have received ○ Their perceptions of policy in the this area ○ The support they receive from within school and outside agencies.	• Participants reported that limited resources result in reduced mainstream inclusion for children/ young people with behavioural, emotional, social difficulties with many of these pupils spending time in Learning Support Units or similar in school provisions. • Participants felt that "enjoyable" alternative provisions can be a barrier to improvements in behaviour in mainstream school. • Participants felt that the policies in place are not supported by funding or resources. • Participants reported that school behaviour policies are sanction focused which does not meet behavioural needs well. • Participants reported feeling that parental engagement with school is essential for successful inclusion of children/ young people with behavioural needs.
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Grieve (2009)	Teachers' Beliefs About Inappropriate Behaviour: Challenging Attitudes?	21 teachers in one local authority in Scotland who were enrolled on a course on challenging behaviour.	• A phenomenological approach using Grounded Theory • Exploring attitudes to gain a "thick description" of how inclusion is revealed in school practice.	• Participants often held different definitions of challenging behaviour. • Attitudes towards the inclusion of children/young people with BESD fell into one of three categories; inclusion is a good idea in theory which needs adequate support, inclusion is detrimental to typically developing peers or the needs of these children would be better met in a specialist setting. • Three of the teachers agreed that including children/young people with BESD could "transform" schools. • Participants identified 44 characteristics of effective teachers of children with BESD • Some participants felt they did not need more training in this area and the researchers conclude that some felt the child was expected to fit within the school systems rather than the school systems fitting around the needs of the child.
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Hastings & Oakford (2003)	Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs	93 student teachers; 60 primary, 33 secondary; 79 female, 14 male; average age of 26.47 years, 31 had professional experience of special educational needs, 26 had personal experience with special educational needs.	• The Impact of Inclusion Questionnaire (IIQ) - A Likert scale was used for all questions. • Two versions of the questionnaire randomly allocated to participants; one regarding intellectual disabilities and one regarding emotional and behavioural difficulties.	• Participants were generally less positive about the inclusion of children/young people with behavioural, emotional, social difficulties than they were about including those with intellectual disabilities. • There was an effect of participant gender, previous professional experience or previous personal experience. • Secondary teachers were more positive about the inclusion of children with special educational needs overall.
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McFarlane & Woolfson (2013)	Teacher Attitudes And Behavior Toward The Inclusion Of Children With Social, Emotional And Behavioral Difficulties In Mainstream Schools: An Application Of The Theory Of Planned Behavior	111 mainstream teachers across 12 districts in Scotland. 105 female, 6 male.	• Theory of Planned Behaviour was applied to the data collection looking at the attitudes of teachers. • 5 questionnaires the Multidimensional Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education Scale (MATIES), Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), Teachers Subjective Norm Scale, Teachers' Willingness to Work with the Severely Disabled Scale (TWSD) and the Adaptation Evaluation Instrument (AEI).	• Positive beliefs and high perceived behavioural control resulted in an increase in positive behavioural intention. • 49% of variation in behavioural intention was predicted by beliefs, feelings, the subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. • The subjective norm (i.e. the views of the head teacher) predicted teacher behaviour but not behavioural intention; the researchers concluded that the head teacher has a key role in inclusion. • More experienced teachers had a less positive view of children/young people with social, emotional, behavioural difficulties. • INSET training in the field increased positive feelings towards children/young people with behavioural, emotional, social difficulties but did not predict beliefs or willingness to work with these children.
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Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka (2014)	Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion, Perceived Adequacy Of Support And Classroom Learning Environment	95 teachers from different primary schools in the South East of England. 21 males, 73 females, 1 undisclosed.	• Exploring if the needs of a child/young person impacts upon a teacher's attitude towards inclusion. • Questionnaires; demographic information, the Teacher Attitude to Inclusion Scale (TAIS), Willingness to Include questionnaire, Adequacy of Support Questionnaire, the Health/Stress Questionnaire (based on Galloway's Scale of Teacher Stress) and My Class Inventory (MCI).	• All participants were least willing to include children/young people with behavioural or multiple difficulties. • Participants had an increased positive attitude towards inclusion when there was an increase in perceived adequacy of support. • Participants' attitudes towards inclusion were concluded to impact significantly on teachers' approaches to classroom management. More positive attitudes to inclusion were associated with classes rated as more cohesive, less competitive and less difficult. • Older teachers had less positive attitudes towards inclusion; this was no explained by those teachers having more experience.
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O'Toole & Burke (2013)	Ready, Willing And Able? Attitudes And Concerns In Relation To Inclusion Amongst A Cohort Of Irish Preservice Teachers	110 pre-service secondary school teachers in Ireland. 69 female, 38 male and 3 undisclosed. 9% reported having no children/young people with special educational needs in their class.	• The relationship between self-efficacy of teachers and their attitudes towards inclusive education as well as their concerns. • 5 measures were used; a demographics questionnaire, a measure of school climate, an adapted version of the Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES), the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) and a scale measuring teacher efficacy.	• Characteristics associated with children/young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (i.e. physical aggression, low behavioural control, high disruption and verbal aggression) were associated with less positive attitudes towards inclusion. • A perceived lack of resources and support is the greatest concern for inclusive practice. • Participants with professional and personal experience of special educational needs had more positive attitudes towards inclusion. • Participants with higher levels of belief in the influence a teacher can have had more positive attitudes towards inclusion. • Less positive attitudes towards inclusion correlated with an increase in concerns.
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2.3.5 Quality Assessment

Quality assessment of these papers was completed using Gough's (2007) Weight of Evidence model, also utilising Pawson, Boaz, Grayson, Long & Barnes (2003) TAPUPAS model within the Weight of Evidence model as suggested by Gough (2007). The Weight of Evidence model is split into three categories, A, B and C. A refers to an analysis of the quality to which the study has been completed and includes Transparency, Accuracy, Accessibility and Specificity from the TAPUPAS model. B refers to analysis of how appropriate the method used was in answering the question posed by the research, including Purposivity from the TAPUPAS model. C refers to how relevant and helpful the study is to the review being conducted, including Utility and Propriety from the TAPUPAS model. Each of the elements of the TAPUPAS model is explained in more detail in Appendix 3. Each paper was assessed in each of these areas and given a rating of low (L), medium (M) or (H). The detailed breakdown of this is tabulated and presented in Appendix 4.

In summary, all papers were rated as being of high or medium quality overall. Grieve (2009), Goodman & Burton (2010) and Hastings & Oakford (2003) had medium ratings overall. Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000), McFarlane & Woolfson (2013), Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka (2014) and O'Toole & Burke (2013) had high ratings overall. All papers were rated high in 'purposivity' and 'propriety', only three areas were rated as low. 'Accuracy' was rated as low for Grieve (2009) due to limitations in the breadth of literature grounding the research, 'utility' was rated as low for Hastings & Oakford (2003) due to limitations in applying the results to practice. Despite some criticisms, the judgements of the studies involved in this review in terms of quality are broadly positive (75.5%) and all studies were judged to be ethical and fit for purpose; no papers were removed from the review at this stage.

2.3.6 Synthesis

A qualitative method was chosen to synthesise the papers chosen for review due to the wide variation in methodologies and measures used across the papers. Four broad themes were identified:

1. Teachers have generally less positive attitudes towards including children with behavioural difficulties

The research overwhelmingly concludes that teachers have the least positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children/ young people with emotional, behavioural difficulties (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2014; O'Toole & Burke 2013). Teachers reported that including this group of children/young people is stressful (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden 2000, Hastings & Oakford 2003) and is perceived to have a significant negative impact on the peers of the child/ren in question (Grieve 2009, Hastings & Oakford 2003). Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka (2014) found that teachers felt least positively toward the inclusion of children/young people with multiple difficulties and those with emotional, behavioural needs equally, perhaps indicating that the complexity of the needs presented by these individuals may be a contributing factor towards these less positive attitudes.

2. Further support, resources and training are needed by teachers to meet the needs of children/young people with behavioural difficulties.

Despite indicating that these children/young people are the most difficult to include, teachers also reported that resources and support available for this group are limited (Goodman & Burton 2010, O'Toole & Burke 2013). Teachers report that although policy advocates for inclusion and, in particular, multi-agency working to support the inclusion of children/young people with these needs, funding and the availability of support from agencies outside of school such as the Educational Psychology Service are not sufficient to meet the demand in schools (Goodman & Burton 2010, O'Toole & Burke 2013). In light of this, it is not surprising that teachers report that they would value more support, resources and training for working with children presenting with these needs (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Goodman & Burton, 2010; Monsen,

Ewing & Kwoka, 2014; O'Toole & Burke, 2013). However, this conclusion is not supported by all the research within this review and could be considered to be unstable; Grieve (2009) found that the teachers in their sample did not feel they required further training to meet these needs, reporting that staff feel that pupils should fit within the system which is in place rather than the school system changing to suit their needs.

3. Teachers have low confidence that behavioural needs can be met in mainstream schools by mainstream teachers.

There are some contradictory findings in this area, both within and between the papers reviewed. Some staff feel that children/young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties would have more positive educational experiences in specialist settings or provisions which are designed to meet their needs (Grieve 2009, Goodman & Burton 2010). Some teachers feel that the whole school policies in place in their schools are focused on sanction rather than reward which they feel does not suit children/young people with these needs (Goodman & Burton 2010) and, as previously stated, teachers have been reported to hold concerns about the impact of including these children/young people on their more typical peers (Grieve 2009, Hastings & Oakford 2003). In contrast, some teachers have highlighted concerns that alternative provisions which are perceived to be “fun” have a negative impact on these pupils’ behaviour in mainstream and reduces the success of reintegration (Goodman & Burton 2010). This represents a contradiction as staff report a perception of the need for specialist provision to meet these children’s needs but they report significant concerns around the use of this provision to support mainstream inclusion. It could be concluded that staff may feel that these children’s needs are best met outside of the mainstream without reintegration as a goal. This conclusion is supported by Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000) who found that teachers are not confident in meeting the Individual Education Plan (IEP) requirements for children with these needs, this may explain teachers’ perception that these pupils would be better placed in specialist provisions where they may perceive these IEP requirements could be met more easily.

4. Teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of children/young people with behavioural needs are significantly affected by self-efficacy and the subjective norm.

The final theme surrounds the finding that teacher self-efficacy can be linked with positive attitudes towards inclusion (McFarlane & Woolfson 2013, O'Toole & Burke 2013); it could be extrapolated that increasing staff confidence in managing the needs of pupils they feel least able to meet could increase inclusive approaches. Other papers within this review further support the conclusion that teachers do not feel confident in meeting the needs of children with emotional/behavioural difficulties (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden 2000, Goodman & Burton 2010), providing further support for low self-efficacy as a key factor. In addition, the subjective norm (typically characterised as the theory espoused by the head teacher) strongly predicts teacher behaviour, even more than attitudes or beliefs towards inclusion (McFarlane & Woolfson 2013). This may mean that school culture as set by the senior leadership of a school, if supportive of including children with emotional/behavioural difficulties, could improve inclusive practices. Head teachers could be seen as key figures in the success of "inclusion" in schools

2.3.7 Limitations

This review has some limitations which must be considered. This is a very small review regarding a very select group of research papers; this is due to the constraints set by the inclusion/exclusion criteria chosen. These criteria were set to ensure that the review honed in on themes directly associated with the context most relevant to the researcher, however there were limited papers which met these criteria fully. Future reviews may wish to consider papers from a more global context as there were a number of papers which met all criteria aside from this.

Further to these limitations on the extent of the review, the quality assessment was completed in a basic manner, a more detailed, perhaps numbered, rating system may be more appropriate. The inclusion of this was considered but it

was felt by the reviewer that it would difficult to fully explore this option with the constraints in place on this particular review in terms of time in particular. The papers were also rated only by the reviewer and it would have been ideal to have multiple quality assurance evaluations carried out by multiple researchers in order to gain a fuller picture of the research at hand.

2.3.8 Conclusions & Implications

The question asked by this review from the outset was:

What does research tell us about the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children/young people with BESD/EBD/SEMH needs?

This review first and foremost shows that the research in this area is limited and the concerns presented earlier in the review around differing definitions of inclusion and the difficulties in measuring attitudes are significant limitations. However, the research presented indicates that teachers hold significant concerns about the inclusion of children with emotional/behavioural needs in mainstream settings. The source of these concerns is subject to discussion; low self-efficacy, a lack of resources or training, the impact on others or an attitude that children should fit within a school system rather than the system fitting the child are all have all been found to contribute one or more of these papers. There are implications around ensuring an inclusive school culture as set by the senior leadership of school and ensuring that policy is supported by resources, training, support and funding for teachers managing these complex and challenging children/young people. In terms of the research presented here, this review indicates that school leadership team members participating here may highlight these concerns when discussing the placement of a young person in an alternative provision.

2.4 Summary

Inclusion is notoriously difficult to define (Fuchs & Fuchs 1993), with researchers and policy makers characterising it in a variety of different ways. At its core, it appears that inclusive education promotes all children learning together regardless of individual differences and being afforded the same opportunities whilst being supported to access these opportunities (BPS 2002). However, the literature presented here highlights that this goal is not achieved for some children/young people. One group which research has demonstrated are often not successfully included are children with behavioural, emotional, social difficulties (Goodman & Burton 2010; Burton & Goodman 2011). This group have been found to be at risk of negative short and long term outcomes as well as exclusive (rather than inclusive) practices (Bradley, Doolittle & Bartolotta 2008).

One common outcome for these children/young people is exclusion from school (DfE 2015). The literature presented here highlights the worrying risks of this outcome; not least of which is long term social disadvantage (Gazeley 2010). Another outcome for many children/young people with these needs is placement in an Alternative Provision or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) (Davies 2012). Although the evidence surrounding PRUs is extensive, other Alternative Provisions are less well researched. The evidence base which is available suggests that these placements can have concerning consequences as these providers are often unregulated and unmonitored (Thomson & Russell 2007).

Throughout the research, the attitudes of key figures in the lives of these children/young people are considered. The underlying theory behind these attitudes tells us that they can have a significant impact upon the actions of an individual and that they are affected by emotions, beliefs and experiences (Ajzen & Fishbein 2010; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Cooper, Blackman & Keller 2016; Maio & Haddock, 2015). The author has reviewed a small selection of papers looking specifically at the attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of

this vulnerable group of children/young people. This research broadly concludes that teachers are least positive about including children with social, emotional, behavioural difficulties (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden 2000, Hastings & Oakford 2003, Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka 2014, O'Toole & Burke 2013) and often feel that they would be better placed outside of mainstream schools (Grieve 2009, Goodman & Burton 2010). However, this research also suggests that senior leaders in schools can have a significant impact on the inclusive behaviour of school staff (McFarlane & Woolfson 2013), identifying these senior leaders as key figures for researchers to consider when exploring the inclusion of children/young people in mainstream schools.

2.5 Rationale & Research Questions

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the use of alternative provisions other than PRUs, however due to the recent nature of this change there is limited research evaluating their use and impact. In a UK context, “inclusive education” is presented as preferable although researchers, policymakers and local authorities do not appear to agree on a definition of the term and the place of alternative provision within this context is unclear. At the time of writing, the author has found no research investigating the attitudes of key decision makers towards the use of alternative provision. Such research could be useful in guiding local authorities and professionals such as educational psychologists working within them to a better understanding of the underlying attitudes behind the decisions and therefore to a stronger position from which to promote the best outcomes for children/young people, whether or not this includes the use of alternative provision.

Primary research questions:

1. What are key decision makers’ definitions of and attitudes towards “inclusion”?
2. What are key decision makers’ attitudes towards the placement of children and young people in alternative provisions in the context of their definitions of and attitudes towards inclusion?
3. What do key decision makers believe are key factors helping and hindering the inclusion of young people with SEMH who are placed in alternative provisions?

3. Chapter 3 – Methodology & Procedure

Chapter 3 is separated into two sections; Methodology and Procedure. The 'Methodology' section aims to describe the epistemological standpoint of the researcher and the design of the research undertaken. The 'Procedure' section aims to clearly present and clarify the sampling, data collection and data analysis processes. Finally, a summary is included which aims to draw together the chapter as a whole and prepare the reader for the results presented in Chapter 4.

3.1 Methodology

This section presents the ontological and epistemological standpoint of the researcher alongside her positionality within the research context, a description of the methodological choices made by the researcher and the reasons for these choices, some critique of the methodological choices chosen by the researcher and considerations around the trustworthiness of the research presented here.

3.1.2 Epistemology

Prior to presenting how the research here was conducted, the researcher aims to present an account of the epistemological and ontological stand-point from which it has arisen. Epistemology describes the researcher's beliefs about the nature of knowledge; both what and how she can know whilst ontology describes the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality; what reality exists or is constructed by her experiences (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Guba & Lincoln (1994) describe four major ontological & epistemological paradigms within the social sciences; positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. Table 3.1 aims to present these four paradigms and is based upon the work of Guba & Lincoln (1994) and Allison & Pomeroy (2000). Although all of the paradigms presented have a place in research within the social sciences (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000) the researcher intends to explore constructivism, social constructionism in particular, given its relevance to the research presented here.

Table 3.1 – A table describing the four major paradigms and their aligned ontological and epistemological standpoints. Based upon the tables presented by Guba & Lincoln (Table 6.1, Page 109, Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and the adaptation of Guba & Lincoln's (1994) work produced by Allison & Pomeroy (Table 1, Page 94, Allison & Pomeroy, 2000)

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology
Positivism	Naïve Realism – A reality exists which we are able to identify and understand accurately	Dualist/Objectivist – Knowledge gained through research findings can be objectively 'true' and therefore form verified facts.
Post-Positivism	Critical Realism – A reality exists but it cannot be accurately measured and can only be predicted via probabilities	Modified dualist/ Objectivist – Findings from research are likely to be true and could form 'facts' but this is not absolute.
Critical Theory	Historical Realism – Individual factors such as gender, sociopolitical climate, cultural factors etc. form a reality which exists in a more virtual sense.	Subjectivist – Knowledge gained through research findings is inextricably linked to the perspective of and relationship between the observer and the observed.
Constructivism	Relativism – Realities are constructed by individuals in their own ways which differ from one another depending on how they understand their own realities.	Subjectivism – Findings from research are created by the research itself and can be considered to be significant when the realities described by multiple individuals share common themes or ideas.

3.1.2.1 Social Constructionism

Before proceeding with explanations and explorations of social constructionism, it is important to clarify the distinction between social constructionism and constructivism. Lee (2012) highlights that although some authors may suggest the two terms are interchangeable, there is a subtle difference which guides the researcher's choice in terms here. The definition provided by Lee (2012) is:

“...social constructionism differs from radical constructivism in that the former focuses on collective generation of meaning while the latter suggests that the individual mind is active exclusively in the meaning-making activity.”

(Lee, 2012, p. 405)

Social constructionism states that meaning and knowledge are generated through socially shared constructions of the world around us (Schwandt, 1994) and the research presented here is highly focused on socially constructed definitions and how these guide the practice of individuals within the community constructing these definitions, the researcher has chosen to focus on a social constructionist epistemology here as the focus of this research lies in the shared understanding certain professional groups have of terms and the practice dictated by these terms.

3.1.2.2 Pragmatism & Real World Research

Given the real world nature of the research presented here, although a social constructionist epistemology has guided many of the methodological choices made by the researcher both at the data gathering and data analysing stages, a pragmatic approach must also be acknowledged.

Robson (2016) describes a pragmatic approach as the choice to make methodological decisions based on the research question at hand, selecting the most appropriate methodology for that research question. The research questions at the heart of this research are intended to be approached in an exploratory manner and methodological choices were made based on what

would allow for this exploration in the real world context the research took place in.

Valuing the individual experiences of the participants and acknowledging the subjective nature of the data leads the researcher to conclude that a qualitative methodology is not only pragmatically appropriate in answering the research questions at hand but also allows the researcher to explore these socially constructed realities as openly as possible. It is also important for the researcher to acknowledge here that her own socially constructed reality is likely to influence the interpretation of the data collected (Clarke & Braun, 2013) and therefore positioning this research in a social constructionist paradigm guided by pragmatism best accounts for the researcher's beliefs at the time of writing.

3.1.2.3 Positionality of the Researcher

Clarke & Braun (2013) recommend presenting biographical details about oneself as a researcher in the interests of reflexivity. In this case, the researcher identifies as a white female undertaking a Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology. During this Doctorate, the researcher has undertaken placement within a local authority which has a large number of alternative provisions and has engaged with a large volume of casework which has involved the use of one or more of these alternative provisions. Prior to beginning the Doctorate, the researcher worked in a mainstream secondary school within the same local authority which used both internal and external alternative provisions. The extent to which alternative provisions featured within the researcher's casework and longer term experience, alongside an interest in 'inclusion' as a concept developed whilst on the doctorate, prompted the research presented here.

3.1.2 Design

This is an exploratory investigation into the underlying attitudes towards inclusion and the placement of a young person in an alternative provision of key decision makers in that process. Individual semi-structured interviews using vignettes were conducted with three groups; school senior leadership team members, alternative provision leads, and educational psychologists.

This section includes exploration of the use of vignettes; a description of the process of developing the vignette used in the research presented here; an exploration of the use of semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to analyse these interviews alongside presenting ethical considerations and acknowledging the researcher's steps to address issues around the trustworthiness of this research.

3.2.2.1 *Vignette methodology*

Renold (2002) defines vignettes as "short scenarios or stories in written or pictorial form which participants can comment upon". A vignette affords a researcher the opportunity to explore participants' values and beliefs around sensitive topics in a 'safe' manner; i.e. allowing them to express these beliefs and values in an honest way without directly relating those responses back to themselves personally or feeling that their responses are being judged in some way (Bryman, 2015).

Vignettes have been used for qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches to research. Quantitative methods allow for large samples, greater reliability and more generalisable results (Poulou 2001, Renold 2002). However, quantitative approaches to vignette use have been criticised. Renold (2002) warns that researchers using vignettes have found that the value of the methodology comes into its own when looking at complex ideals and value sets

which a quantitative survey may not have the sensitivity to truly demonstrate. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, directly mirror these issues; whilst they may allow for deeper exploration of participants' beliefs and values (Barter & Renold 2000), the samples are often smaller by necessity and give a less generalisable set of results.

Poulou (2001) discusses the advantages and limitations of vignette methodology. The evocative nature of a vignette as a story is proposed as a significant advantage, allowing for participants to involve themselves in the issue at hand and reflect upon their responses in relation to something more tangible than a simple definition. However, Renold (2002) points out that although vignettes can explore beliefs and value sets, the relationship between these ideals and actual behaviour can be limited. This brings into question how applicable vignettes are to behavioural predictions.

Barter & Renold (1999) suggest that a vignette methodology can be used in conjunction with another method (such as semi-structured interviews as in Ford & Nikapota, 2000) to explore the attitudes and beliefs of participants in a qualitative manner. Given the researcher's desire to take an exploratory approach which acknowledges the individual views and constructions of the participants, a qualitative approach to a vignette based methodology has been chosen.

3.2.2.2 The development of the vignette –a focus group

The researcher felt it was important to develop a vignette based on real casework undertaken within the authority around children and young people placed in alternative provisions. However, it was also important to the researcher that this vignette did not demonstrate a bias towards any of the involved participant groups. Given the researcher's position within the local authority as a trainee educational psychologist, the researcher felt that it would not be possible for her to develop a vignette which fulfilled this requirement.

Contributions from each of the participant groups were required and the researcher considered using a focus group method to achieve this. Krueger & Casey (2000) suggest that focus groups encourage participants to have a focussed discussion with the goal of producing something useful at the end. Further to this, Howitt (2016) proposes that, unlike an interview situation, the participants in a focus group have the most control over its outcome, giving the researcher an opportunity to act as a moderator and to minimise her contribution. This led the researcher to conclude that a focus group would be the most effective way of producing a vignette which was not biased towards the position of an educational psychologist but did account for the views and experiences of each participating group.

The proposed contributors to this process included two members of a secondary school senior leadership team, two alternative provision leads and an educational psychologist. All those who participated in the focus group were exempt from participating in the semi-structured interviews. This group was chosen as the researcher felt that the vignette developed must feel relatable to all three participant groups taking part in the semi-structured interviews and should not demonstrate a bias towards or in opposition to the use of alternative provisions.

Unfortunately, on the day the focus group was scheduled to take place, the representatives from the alternative provision were unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Rescheduling the focus group was not possible at that time and the focus group included the educational psychologist and the two school senior leadership team members. The alternative provision leads were sent a draft copy of the vignette completed in the focus group and were asked to feedback and agreement or disagreement to ensure that their views were appropriately accounted for, however this does represent a threat to the validity of the vignette developed.

Prior to conducting the focus group, the researcher identified a small list of key areas in the constructed young person's life which the vignette should describe. These key requirements were:

- The young person's age & gender
- Information about the young person at home
- Information about the young person at school
- Information about the young person in the community

The researcher considered identifying further key requirements of the vignette but it was decided that it was important for the researcher to have a minimal contribution to ensure that the researcher's views did not significantly influence the vignette's development.

The researcher drew up a script to guide the focus group based on Krueger & Casey (2000) and this script can be seen at Appendix 5. This script split the hour long session into three main activities;

- Introductions and ground rules
- Phase 1 – Mind-mapping ideas
- Phase 2 – Writing the vignette

The ground rules chosen by the group can be seen at Appendix 6.

The role of the researcher in this focus group is to facilitate rather than participate; Robson (2016) suggests that this role entails generating interest in the topic area without leading or guiding the group in a particular direction. Robson (2016) also highlights that this in itself can be quite a challenging task when the researcher is likely to hold some opinions on the topic due to their interest in it. Krueger & Casey (2000) and Krueger (1998) provide useful guidance surrounding the role of group facilitator/moderator and the researcher utilised the active listening skills and questioning techniques recommended by these authors. The script at Appendix 5 includes some prompts for questioning taken from these sources.

Krueger & Casey (2000) suggest that using a graphical approach to facilitate focus groups can stimulate discussion. In light of this, the researcher included a graphic element into the focus group process. Each group member was asked

to draw a picture of a young person who attends an alternative provision and label the image with key information (such as gender, age, personality, strengths, likes & dislikes). The group were then asked to individually draw a picture of a house and write key words describing the young person's life at home, a picture of the young person's school and their life at school and finally a picture of a row of houses representing the community and words to describe their life in the community. The drawings produced by the first of the school leaders are shown in Appendix 7. The drawings produced by educational psychologist are shown in Appendix 8.

Once the individual mind-maps had been completed, the researcher asked each participant to share their drawings and annotations with the group. The researcher then facilitated a group discussion around common themes and differences between each group member's drawings. Finally, the researcher facilitated a group discussion to produce a collectively annotated drawing which accounted for all of their views and which all group members agreed was representative of a child attending an alternative provision.

The researcher acknowledged openly with the group that this activity could not hope to represent all young people who may attend alternative provisions but rather aimed to identify some common factors which many young people in this group may share. The drawings and annotations produced by the researcher as a product of facilitating this group discussion are shown in Appendix 9.

In the script developed for the focus group, the researcher included a phase during which the group would collectively write the vignette which was to be used. However, once the collective mind-map had been created, the group feedback that they felt the summary provided by the researcher as part of the facilitative process captured the data well and that they felt it would be better for the researcher to write up that summary and then email it to the group members for them to check and provide feedback on. Krueger (1998) recommends that focus group moderators are open-minded to alternative methods or approaches suggested by participants and the researcher felt that this suggestion by the group was a suitable change to allow the activity to achieve its goal whilst maintaining responsiveness to the group.

The researcher produced a draft vignette and sent it via email to the alternative provision leaders who could not attend the focus group itself..

All participants provided positive feedback and confirmed that the vignette was reflective of the discussion and mirrored a young person attending an alternative provision effectively. One change was made following the feedback from the alternative provision leaders which was to include the following addition:

“...routine and his family often allow him to engage in inappropriate behaviours because they find it difficult to manage him”

The final vignette used is presented below;

“Bert is a 15 year old boy attending a mainstream school. He is described by the adults in his life as a streetwise young person who is kind and sociable when working 1:1. Bert finds school difficult and encounters many barriers to his learning; he doesn't like school. He enjoys P.E and design technology as he is a practical and hands on learner but he struggles academically. He places a low value on school and education more broadly, he does not value the rules at his school or the school uniform. He has low self-esteem and finds it difficult to find positive things to say about himself. He can be verbally aggressive as a defence mechanism and adults feel he likes to present a certain image to his peers. Bert spends time with a large group of peers in school although staff would not describe these individuals as friends of Bert's, he does have a group of friends in the community. He is described as vulnerable and easily led.

Bert comes from a family with a history of difficulties in school who place a low value on education. He lacks a strong support network and his family have low aspirations for him and appear disinterested in his life at school. There appears to be a contradiction between what Bert wants for his life and what his family want. Some describe Bert's family as dysfunctional and chaotic with no structure or routine and his family often allow him to engage in inappropriate behaviours because they find it difficult to manage him. He has to be independent and has been expected to grow up quickly with caring responsibilities for his young siblings. The area he lives in is deprived and, in this community, Bert spends time with a large group of older young men who

are a big influence on him. He is vulnerable within this group and has been involved in some antisocial behaviour. Those close to him are protective of him and his position within the community is important to him. He is viewed by some as a trouble maker, these people feel apprehensive about him.

Bert's school attendance is low and he avoids lessons when he is present. He does not appear to participate in lessons and has been noticed to create distractions when he is there. Staff feel that the curriculum is not suited to Bert and that he needs a personalised approach. School have been following the graduated response, however Bert is felt to be in a vicious cycle within the behaviour system which he cannot seem to break and is at risk of permanent exclusion. Bert feels a sense of failure both in school and at home."

3.2.2.3 An exploration of the use of semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviewing is a commonly-used technique in gathering qualitative data and can be applied with varying levels of flexibility and rigor (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Howitt, 2016). A semi-structured approach utilises open questions which are explored through minimal prompting from the interviewer, eliciting "thick descriptions" of a participant's story and/or perspective (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Unlike a structured interview, the researcher is advised to prepare a short list of flexible questions as a starting framework for the conversation between interviewer and interviewee and further questions are asked to clarify and elaborate on the points raised (Howitt, 2016; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

There are a number of methodological advantages as well as challenges to using semi-structured interviews in qualitative research and a selection of these are presented here. Howitt (2016) provides a compelling argument in favour of a semi-structured approach, highlighting that the researcher is afforded the opportunity to respond to the interviewees on an individual basis and draw out detailed descriptions to provide a rich data set for analysis, an advantage highlighted throughout the literature in this area (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree,

2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Seidman, 1991; Whiting, 2008). Furthermore, the potential for flexibility and researcher control afforded by the use of this method in approaching an exploratory piece of research has been heralded as a key advantage which a more structured approach is less likely to provide (Howitt, 2016). Finally, Barribell & While (1994) claim that the methodology is useful in exploring “attitudes, values, beliefs and motives”, an advantage of particular relevance to the research presented here.

In contrast to these advantages, a variety of authors have provided useful critique of the use of semi-structured interviewing. Diefenbach (2008) presents concerns surrounding the generalisability of semi-structured interview data as it is considered to be highly individual and this also give rise to difficulties in replicating the research effectively. Further to this, he highlights the unconscious bias which may impact upon what the interviewee shares with the interviewer purely by virtue of the interview situation alongside the concern that interviewees are likely to present their espoused theory which often does not translate directly to behaviour. Potter & Hepburn (2005) also provide a detailed critical view of qualitative interviewing, particularly focussing on the issue of the researcher/s’ internal biases which may lead to threats at both the data gathering (for example, leading questions) and data analysis (for example, interpretations in favour of the researcher’s views) phases.

When considering the critique presented above, the researcher acknowledges that many of these cannot be fully resolved here. Chapter 1 provides an account of the author’s personal interest in the topic at hand which is intended to alert the reader to the biases which the implementation and interpretation may have been affected by to ensure transparency. Further to this, the researcher has attempted to take steps to respond to the critique raised by Deifenbach (2008) surrounding the unconscious bias in reporting which may impact on the interviewee by introducing the use of a vignette into the methodology. Bryman (2015) suggests that the use of a vignette can support participants to feel safe to report underlying views rather than espoused theory.

3.2.2.4 An exploration of the use of thematic analysis

One common method for analysing qualitative data within psychology is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It aims to identify patterns or ‘themes’ within large qualitative data sets to enable the researcher to provide a detailed description of the data gathered (Howitt, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2006). As is highlighted by a number of authors discussing qualitative methods, it is a technique which could be considered an umbrella under which other qualitative approaches sit (such as grounded theory or discourse analysis) and its use has taken a number of forms without there being an agreed format under which it should be conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Howitt, 2016; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013).

Braun & Clarke (2006) describe two approaches to a thematic analysis; one which is driven by the data itself, an inductive approach, or one which is driven by theoretical elements brought to the data by the researcher, a theoretical approach. The process of conducting the analysis varies depending on which of these approaches is chosen and the researcher considered an inductive approach (thematic analysis describe by Braun & Clarke, 2006) or a theoretical approach (Template Analysis described by King, 1998). Each of these approaches is briefly described below followed by justification of the final decision made by the researcher.

In response to the criticism that thematic analysis does not have an agreed format or procedure, Braun & Clarke (2006) provide a detailed description of the process of conducting a thematic analysis and this paper is often cited when describing the approach (Howitt, 2016; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Their approach allows for inductive analysis which is driven by the data itself and is most usefully applied to exploratory research. However, although Braun & Clarke (2006) do highlight the utility of a more theoretical approach within their

paper, they do not provide a detailed methodological procedure for this approach.

Described by King (1998), template analysis provides a method of thematic analysis which accounts for themes the researcher may identify as important early in the analysis process or perhaps even before the analysis process has started; allowing the researcher to use a theoretical approach. A template is developed for identifying these a priori themes in the data and is modified throughout the analysis process to best reflect the data in question (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley & King, 2015; Brooks & King, 2012). Brooks, McCluskey, Turley & King (2015) argue that Template Analysis has commonalities with approaches such as Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis in terms of flexibility and the coding structures which are developed but differs in that it allows the identification of themes prior to detailed data analysis, the researcher defines their template themes early on and Template Analysis typically produces more levels of themes and subthemes.

Following consideration of the analytical approaches described above, the researcher felt that the exploratory motivations behind the research presented here called for a flexible, inductive approach such as the one described by Braun & Clarke (2006). This will allow for the findings to be guided by the data gathered rather than a theoretical framework, thus fulfilling the exploratory tone of the research presented here without restriction.

3.2.2.5 Ethical considerations

The University of Nottingham Ethics Committee provided ethical approval for the research presented here on the basis of the steps taken by the researcher to mitigate the minimal ethical risks posed by the research. The researcher consulted the British Psychological Society guidelines (BPS, 2010) when addressing these issues. Each of these issues and the steps taken to address them are presented in the table below.

Table 3.2: The ethical issues presented by the current research and the actions taken to address them.

Ethical Consideration	Steps taken to address the ethical consideration
Informed Consent	• A detailed information sheet and consent form (See Appendix 10 & 11) was given to all participants who took part in both the focus group and the semi-structured interviews in order to elicit fully informed consent • Opportunities were explicitly provided for all participants to ask questions before, during and after the data collection period.
Right to Withdraw	• All participants who took part in both the focus group and the semi-structured interviews were informed of their right to withdraw at any time up to six weeks following the data collection period both on their information sheets (See Appendix 10) and verbally at the beginning and end of the data gathering process. The debrief sheet provided to participants (See Appendix 13) also give participants further information about withdrawing their data after the interview process.
Confidentiality	• All data is presented anonymously using codes to identify participants. • Transcripts of the interviews were completely anonymised including the redaction of all names of individuals, schools and alternative provisions. • The voice recordings of the interviews were deleted following transcription.

3.2.2.6 Acknowledging & Addressing Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has long been the subject of criticism and concern with regard to its trustworthiness and application (Shenton, 2004; Golafshani, 2003; Brink, 1993, Howitt, 2016). Typically, quantitative research is evaluated in terms of its validity and reliability and some researchers utilise these terms in evaluating qualitative research with equal rigor (Brink, 1993) but perhaps with re-imagined interpretations (Golafshani, 2003). In contrast, Guba (1981) proposed alternative criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research which account for the epistemological differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Shenton (2003) provides a useful breakdown of these criteria alongside suggestions of measures a qualitative researcher can take to address some of the threats to trustworthiness they may encounter and Table 3.3 below presents each of the four criteria, the threats to trustworthiness the researcher acknowledges and the action taken to attempt to address these threats.

Table 3.3 – Trustworthiness criteria, threats and actions to address these threats

Criteria	Acknowledged Threats	Addressing Threats
Credibility – Do the findings reflect reality?	• A social constructionist epistemology presents a threat in that the researcher's stance denotes the subjective nature of every individual's reality; thus making it difficult to measure or describe. • Participants may not be honest with the researcher, perhaps due to a social desirability bias or demand characteristics.	• Using well established methods of data gathering and data analysis i.e. semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis) • Taking steps to ensure the honesty of the participants (i.e. the use of a vignette) • Examining previous research acknowledging similarities and differences in findings
Transferability – Can the findings be applied to alternative situations?	• The findings are likely to be specific to the context in which they are gathered, thus making generalisations about the findings difficult.	• Being explicit with regard to the context of the research to allow the reader to judge how applicable the findings may be to their own context.
Dependability – Can the research and its findings be replicated?	• The findings may be specific to the research at hand and even if they were repeated, they may not elicit the same results (Florio-Ruane, 1991)	• Providing a detailed description of the design and procedure of both data gathering and data analysis alongside a reflective appraisal of both.

	• Semi-structured interviews are challenging to replicate given the nuances of human interaction which are not recorded in transcripts or even noted by the researcher.	
Confirmability – Do the findings reflect the participants rather than the researcher?	• The researcher may bring biases and assumptions to the data gathering and data analysis process.	• Identifying the positionality of the researcher to allow the reader to understand any biases present in the data gathering and, particularly, data analysis.

3.2 Procedure

This section aims to provide a detailed description of the sampling methods & participants alongside a critique of this group and a detailed description of the processes used for both data collection and data analysis.

3.2.1 Sampling

3.2.1.1 Stakeholder engagement

Negotiations around stakeholder engagement were set up from within the Educational Psychology Service in the local authority in question. All mainstream secondary school head teachers within one area of the local authority in question (eighteen in total) were invited to participate. Ten alternative providers within the local authority chosen from a list published online were also invited. In addition to this, the researcher visited team meetings held within the educational psychology service in question to invite all educational psychologists within the service to take part.

Invitations to participate were sent out in the form of a letter (Shown at Appendix 12) by post or in person in the case of the educational psychology service in September 2016. An information sheet and consent form were also sent and these can be seen at Appendix 10 & 11. The researcher received one response for each participant group agreeing to take part and the decision was taken to make follow up phone calls to schools and alternative provisions. At this time, the researcher had hoped head teachers would participate, however the follow-up phone calls gave the researcher the sense that head teachers may not have time available to do so and, following discussions with the research supervisor, the decision was made to allow members of a school leadership team with some experience of alternative provision placements to

take part. Following this change, the researcher was able to elicit participation from two school senior leadership team member of different schools, four alternative provision leads and four educational psychologists.

Two further school senior leadership team members were needed to fulfil the desired sample size and the researcher requested that educational psychologist colleagues took the information sheet to termly planning meetings in schools and reported back of any interest. It was via this route which the final two school senior leadership team members agreed to participate.

3.2.1.2 The participants involved

Four members of school senior leadership teams, four alternative provision leads and four Educational Psychologists participated in the research. This sample size was chosen based on two key factors; firstly, it was important for the researcher to consider pragmatic factors such as the time-consuming nature of transcription and qualitative analysis of those transcripts and secondly the researcher also wanted to ensure that the sample produced sufficient data to draw trustworthy conclusions from. Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006) found that there was a significant decrease in the number of new themes found when analysing more than six interviews. Although the researcher would have preferred to conduct six interviews per participant group, it was decided that this would be challenging given the time constraints of this research process and four interviews per participant group represented a more manageable commitment.

This sample was selected on an opportunity basis; the criteria for inclusion in this sample is that they must all have had some experience of participating in the decision making process around a child or young person who, at the end of that process, was placed in an alternative provision. The participants involved did not fall within the researcher's professional working relationships where possible in order to ensure that the researcher could maintain her role as a researcher without interference of the professional practice role as a

Trainee Educational Psychologist. It is important to note that despite choosing participants from different teams within the service, the researcher holds professional relationships to some degree with all educational psychologists within the available sample.

Participant information is shown in Table 3.4 below:

Table 3.4: Participant information including each participant's assigned code, role and gender.

Participant Code	Role	Gender
AP1	Alternative Provision Lead	Female
AP2	Alternative Provision Lead	Female
AP3	Alternative Provision Lead	Female
AP4	Alternative Provision Lead	Female
Sch1	School Senior Leadership Team Member	Male
Sch2	School Senior Leadership Team Member	Male
Sch3	School Senior Leadership Team Member	Male
Sch4	School Senior Leadership Team Member	Male
EP1	Senior Educational Psychologist	Female
EP2	Educational Psychologist	Female
EP3	Educational Psychologist	Female
EP4	Educational Psychologist	Female

The participants involved represented a range of experiences and professional backgrounds, although the majority identified having worked as a teacher at some point in their career. More detailed, individual demographic details are not provided here as the small number of possible participants means that further details may cause individuals to be identifiable and this may compromise the anonymity of the participants. The researcher acknowledges here that this represents a methodological challenge, however DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) highlight the importance of protecting interviewees' anonymity given potentially sensitive topics raised during the interview process.

It is important to note that this sample has a number of limitations:

1. A gender confound: All of the educational psychologists and alternative provision leads who took part were female whilst all of the school leadership team members who participated were male. It could be argued that this may account for some of the differences between the groups in the findings.
2. Small sample size: Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006) would suggest six participants per group and the sample here included four per group. This may reduce the credibility of the findings.
3. Demographic data is not presented: Individual demographics may account for some differences between participants but the researcher has chosen not to present this data and the impact of these differences are not accounted for because of this.

3.2.2 Data Collection

3.2.2.1 *Development of the interview script*

The researcher had three main considerations in mind when attempting to develop a script including a set of questions for the semi-structured interviews:

1. The research questions at hand
2. The use of the vignette
3. The aim to conduct an exploratory, semi-structured interview

This led the researcher to develop a semi-structured interview schedule which ensured that each research question was answered, participants kept the vignette in mind and that the dialogue remained open and exploratory in nature in line with the methodological choices made in designing the research (Howitt, 2016; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

3.2.2.2 Conducting the semi-structured interviews

As arranged during stakeholder negotiations, the researcher conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each participant. The vignette was presented to the participant, immediately following which the semi-structured interview around the scenario presented within the vignette was conducted. This process occurred within a private and quiet room at a venue of the participants' choosing, either their place of employment or a local authority venue booked by the researcher at the participants' request. Each interview was voice recorded with the participants' consent using a laptop computer and external microphone and lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour 15 minutes.

The interview questions shown within the script at Appendix 14 were interspersed with further probing and clarification questions from the researcher when necessary within the process of each individual interview. The researcher considered the guidance provided by DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) surrounding building rapport in interviews; the interviewer-interviewee relationship is highlighted as essential in ensuring positive participation in the interview process. Seidman (2006) warns researchers to develop rapport whilst maintaining professional distance to ensure unbiased data gathering and analysis, acknowledging that this can be a challenging balance to strike. The researcher hoped to achieve this balanced relationship with the interviewee through the use of the script and formality of the research process whilst also putting in practice active listening skills described by Egan (2013).

3.2.3 Data Analysis

The transcripts from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using an inductive thematic analysis and this process was guided by Braun & Clarke (2006). The stages of this process are briefly outlined in Figure 2 below followed by further detail regarding each stage.

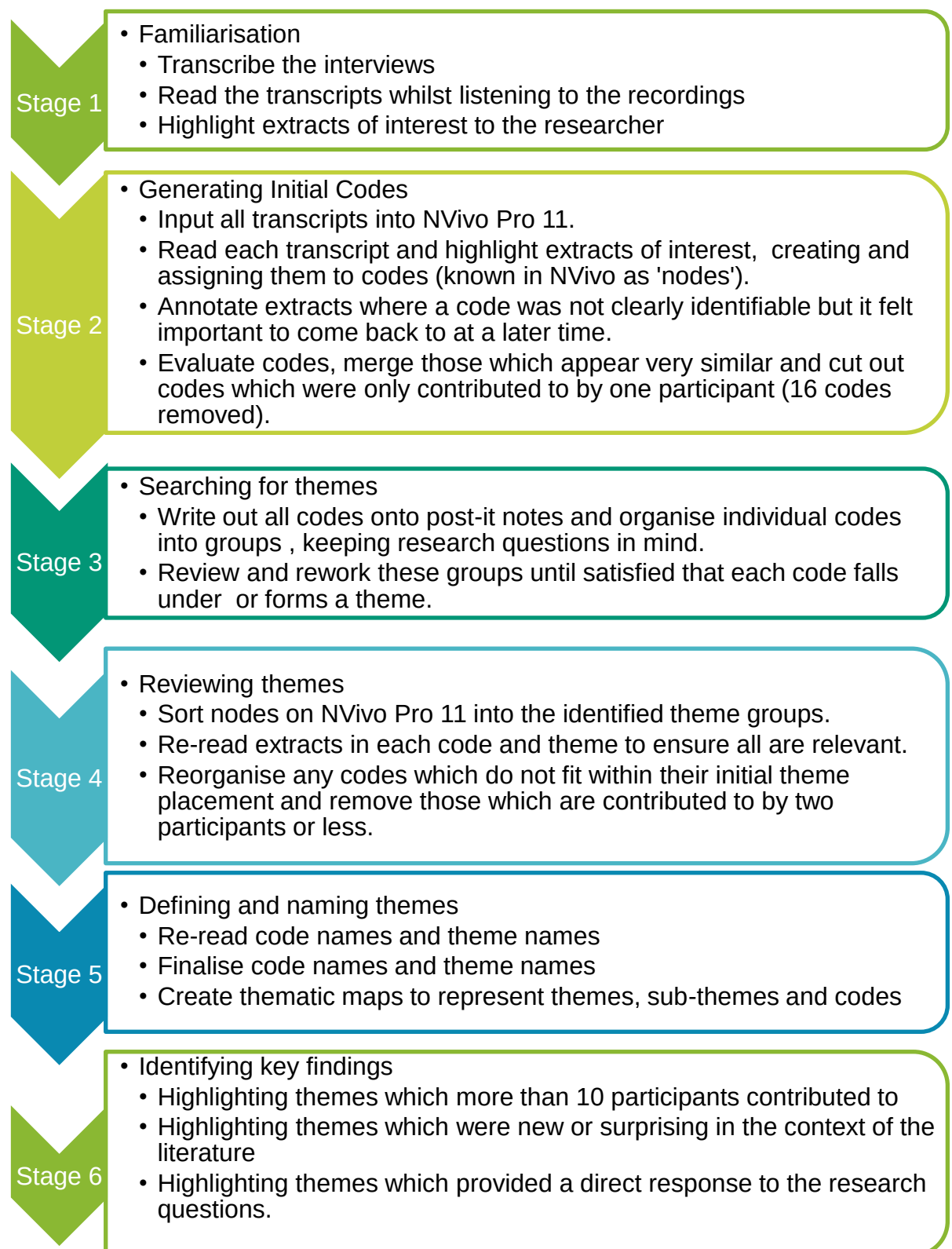


Figure 3.1 – An overview of the analysis process used.

3.2.3.1 Familiarisation

First, the audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed. Bong (2002) suggests that a researcher benefits from personally transcribing audio recordings as it contributes to the process of familiarising oneself with the data and the researcher found this to be the case here. Howitt (2016) describes two main approaches to transcription of audio data:

- Orthographic transcription – transcription solely of the words said by those recorded.
- Jefferson transcription – more detailed transcription accounting for intonation, interruptions etc.

More detailed transcription methods such as Jefferson transcription are typically used for other approaches to data analysis such as Conversation Analysis (Davidson, 2009). The researcher's choice to use thematic analysis led her to choose a manual orthographic transcription method. This involved listening to the audio recordings and typing the words used by the participants and the researcher, the transcriptions do not include details of intonation or any interpretation of intention conveyed by tonality or non-verbal data. An example extract of a transcript is shown at Appendix 15.

The researcher then re-read the transcripts whilst listening to the audio recordings, a process which served two purposes. Firstly, to check for errors including typographical errors and secondly to continue the familiarisation process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, the researcher printed the completed transcripts and spent some time highlighting extracts of interest. These highlighted extracts did not necessarily feature in the final analysis but served to support the researcher's immersion in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.2.3.2 Generating Initial Codes

All twelve transcripts were added into NVivo Pro 11, a piece of software designed for the analysis of qualitative data. This software allows for the creation of codes, referred to as 'nodes', and for extracts to be assigned to each code. The researcher highlighted passages of interest and created codes as she read through all twelve transcripts, also adding in annotations for extracts which did not appear initially to fit into a particular code but were considered important enough to look back on later. This resulted in 85 initial codes which were then reviewed. Three codes were merged into other codes due to similarities and sixteen codes were removed as they included only one extract from one participant. This resulted in 53 codes.

3.2.3.3 Searching for Themes

Each set of coded extracts was then reviewed and codes which appeared to fit together to form a potential theme or subtheme were grouped, in line with the process outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). The researcher used post-it notes representing each code to organise and order them into groups. These themes and subthemes were given a draft name. In order to ensure that all important data and relevant themes were identified, some codes which did not fit into identified themes were identified as themes or subthemes in themselves. During the process, the researcher referred back to the research questions regularly to ensure that they were in the forefront of her mind throughout the analysis process.

3.2.3.4 Reviewing Themes

First, the researcher transferred the identified themes and subthemes onto the NVivo Pro 11 software, grouping the 'nodes' and reviewing the associated extracts as she did this. This resulted in some changes to the themes and subthemes each code was assigned to, in light of reviewing the extracts carefully

in the context of these themes. All themes and subthemes were then given draft names.

3.2.3.5 Defining and Naming Themes

The researcher redrafted the names given to themes and subthemes at the review stage. NVivo Pro 11 was then used to create five thematic maps as visual representations of the themes, subthemes and codes. This process provided a final opportunity to review the theme names before they were finalised.

3.2.3.6 Identifying key findings

Once the theme, subthemes and codes were identified and the thematic maps were created, the researcher considered all of the thematic maps as a whole and identified key findings of the research. The researcher aimed to ensure that these key findings would provide a concise summary of the overall outcomes of this research in the context of the research questions. This was done by identifying any themes or patterns which met one or more of the following criteria:

- Themes and patterns which provided a direct response to the research questions.
- A new finding which has not been previously identified in the literature.
- Themes which all or the majority of participants contributed to.

3.3 Summary

This chapter has outlined both the methodology and the procedural details of the research presented here. The social constructionist epistemological standpoint of the researcher has been presented and the research design is described in this context including critical analysis of the use of the use of the

vignette, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. Finally, the chapter provides a detailed description of the data collection and analysis methods chosen by the researcher; inductive thematic analysis using Braun & Clarke's (2006) recommendations and the NVivo Pro 11 software to create codes, subthemes, themes and thematic maps leading to the identification of key findings. Chapter 4 presents the data gathered through the methods described.

4. Chapter 4 – Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings and analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews conducted using the vignette. It is divided into three sections, one for each of the three research questions. For each question a thematic map is presented followed by a narrative description of the themes, subthemes and codes and an analysis of these findings.

The three research questions were:

1. What are key decision makers' definitions of and attitudes towards "inclusion"?
2. What are key decision makers' attitudes towards the placement of children and young people in alternative provisions in the context of their definitions of and attitudes towards inclusion?
3. What do key decision makers believe are key factors helping and hindering the inclusion of young people with SEMH who are placed in alternative provisions?

Finally, six key findings are described and a summary of the chapter is presented.

4.2 Research Question 1

What are key decision makers' definitions of and attitudes towards "inclusion"?

4.2.1 Thematic Map - Research Question 1

A thematic map representing the key themes, subthemes and codes for Research Question 1 is presented in Figure 4.1 below.

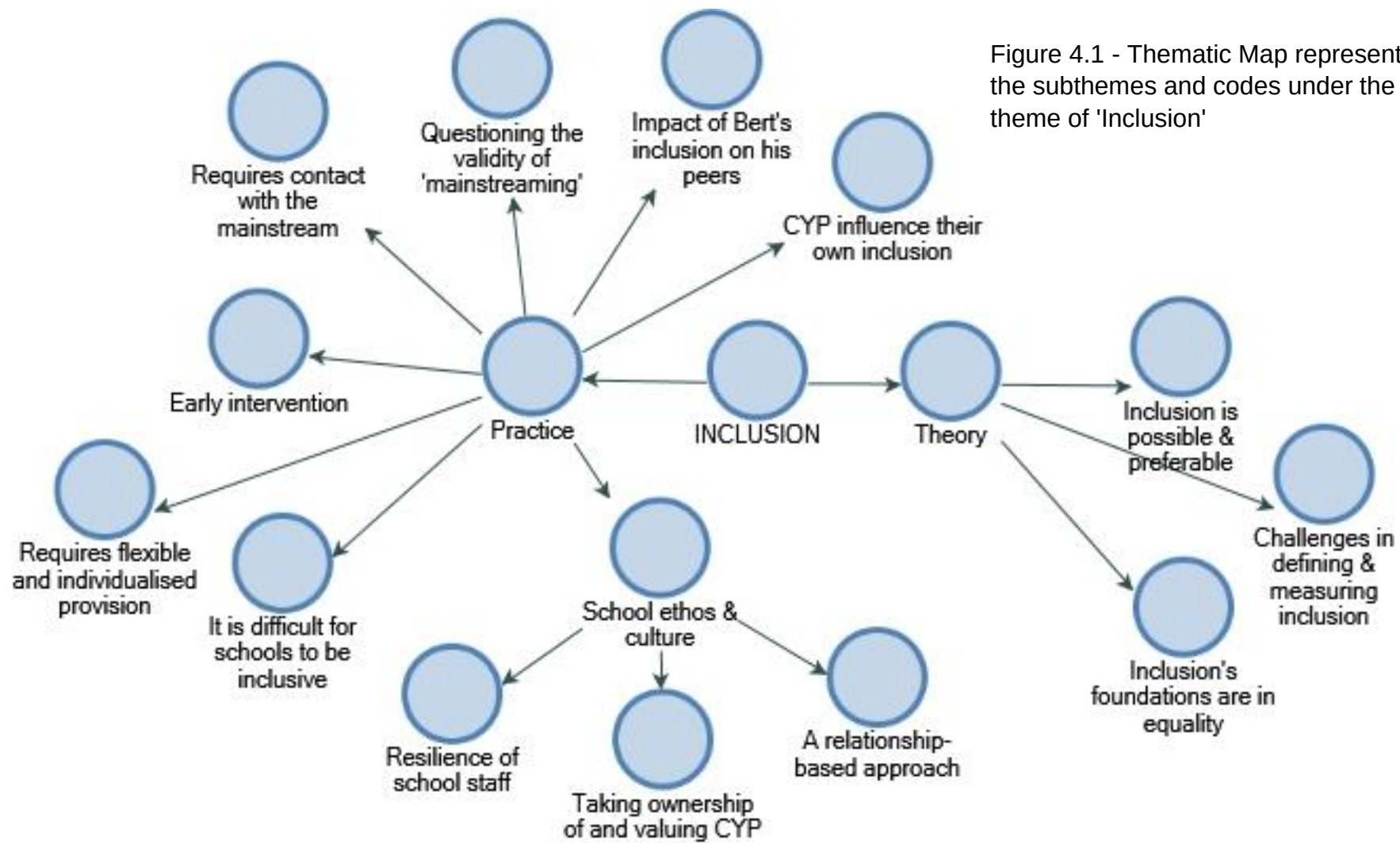


Figure 4.1 - Thematic Map representing the subthemes and codes under the theme of 'Inclusion'

4.2.2 Narrative description of themes, subthemes and codes

All of the codes under the overarching theme of 'Inclusion' fell into two main themes; theory and practice. When speaking theoretically about inclusion, participants identified challenges in defining and measuring inclusion ("It's a really tricky concept isn't it? Inclusion. You think you know what it means but the more you think about it the more you unpick it, it's quite tricky" EP2) and many expressed this difficulty explicitly as an initial response when asked to define it. Despite these challenges, six participants talked about the foundations of inclusion being rooted in equality for all young people and eight felt that it is possible ("I think anyone can be included I don't think anyone is beyond inclusion" EP1) and preferable ("I think we should definitely aim for it [inclusion], definitely aim for it, absolutely." AP4).

In terms of the practice of inclusion, participants advocate for contact with the mainstream school, particularly for those accessing off-site provision, ("...it makes me feel really quite strongly is when alternative provisions are explored the link with the school must always remain." Sch2). A subtheme surrounding school ethos/culture was identified mentioning taking ownership of young people ("...it's about the thinking of staff, and feeling, thinking and feeling, does this child belong to them?" EP2), valuing their place within the school and utilising a relationship-based approach ("a year 9 boy sits with his baseball hat and it's his birthday so the tutor gave him a card, and actually that made a bit of a difference that did and you know, it showed somebody actually cared" AP2). Despite this, some participants questioned the validity of 'mainstreaming' for some young people; EP4 said "...how long do you plug for 'Bert's to stay at school where staff are unhappy; Bert's unhappy, parents are unhappy, how long do you do that for if everyone is unhappy?...Yes, they're included, but are they happy?".

Half of all participants (two from each group) proposed that it is difficult for mainstream schools to be inclusive, going on to highlight concerns about the

impact of young people like Bert on their peers (...“if you allow the standards to slip for one then it’s going to go for everybody” Sch1). Participants also often discussed the requirement of flexible and individualised provision for young people (“the systems that would help would be systems that respond flexibly” EP1) and regularly linked this to the challenges in providing inclusive education in mainstream schools (...“there isn’t that flexibility [in schools] anymore.” Sch4). Early intervention was also felt by participants to be key to the success of inclusive practice. Finally, a number of participants referred to the influence a young person can have on their own inclusion and placed importance on the concept of a young person contributing to education and their provision in particular; Sch3 said “...within all that process, we’d ask him, what is his contribution to it, what’s his responsibility?”.

4.2.3 Analysis

The codes and subthemes under the overarching theme of 'Inclusion' clearly highlighted the tensions between its theory and its practice. Encouragingly, a majority of the participants here felt inclusion was possible and preferable, particularly with reference to Bert and this provides an insight into the hopeful nature of some members of the participant group in their perspective of inclusion. This preference could be linked to the moral aspect of inclusion which participants also highlighted in discussing an awareness of inclusion's foundations being in equality. However, these theoretical perspectives are complicated by the view that there are considerable challenges in defining and measuring inclusion; this indicates concerns within the theory of inclusion which hint at the challenges in its practice. The themes arising from the data indicate a clear disparity between the two and it is suggested here that this may represent some cognitive dissonance, due in part to these challenges in defining inclusion and the experiences shared by participants around the difficulty of achieving inclusion within schools today.

In practice, eleven of the twelve participants shared a clear assertion that inclusive education requires contact with a mainstream school. However, half of all participants also questioned the validity of 'mainstreaming' all young people, further demonstrating the dichotomy between the theory and the practice of inclusion.

Eleven of the twelve participants contributed to codes surrounding the importance of school ethos and culture to inclusive practice. A relationship-based approach delivered by staff in an organisation which values and takes ownership of young people is proposed by this group of participants, indicating that the practice of inclusion is best achieved when it is heavily rooted at a systems level. Furthermore, eleven of the twelve participants reported that inclusion requires flexible and individualised provision, which is likely to stem from the approach taken by the leadership of the school. It is proposed here that the participants face the dilemma of achieving the lofty goal of inclusion in challenging practical circumstances which they desire to find solutions for, recognising the need for these solutions to stem from an organisational level.

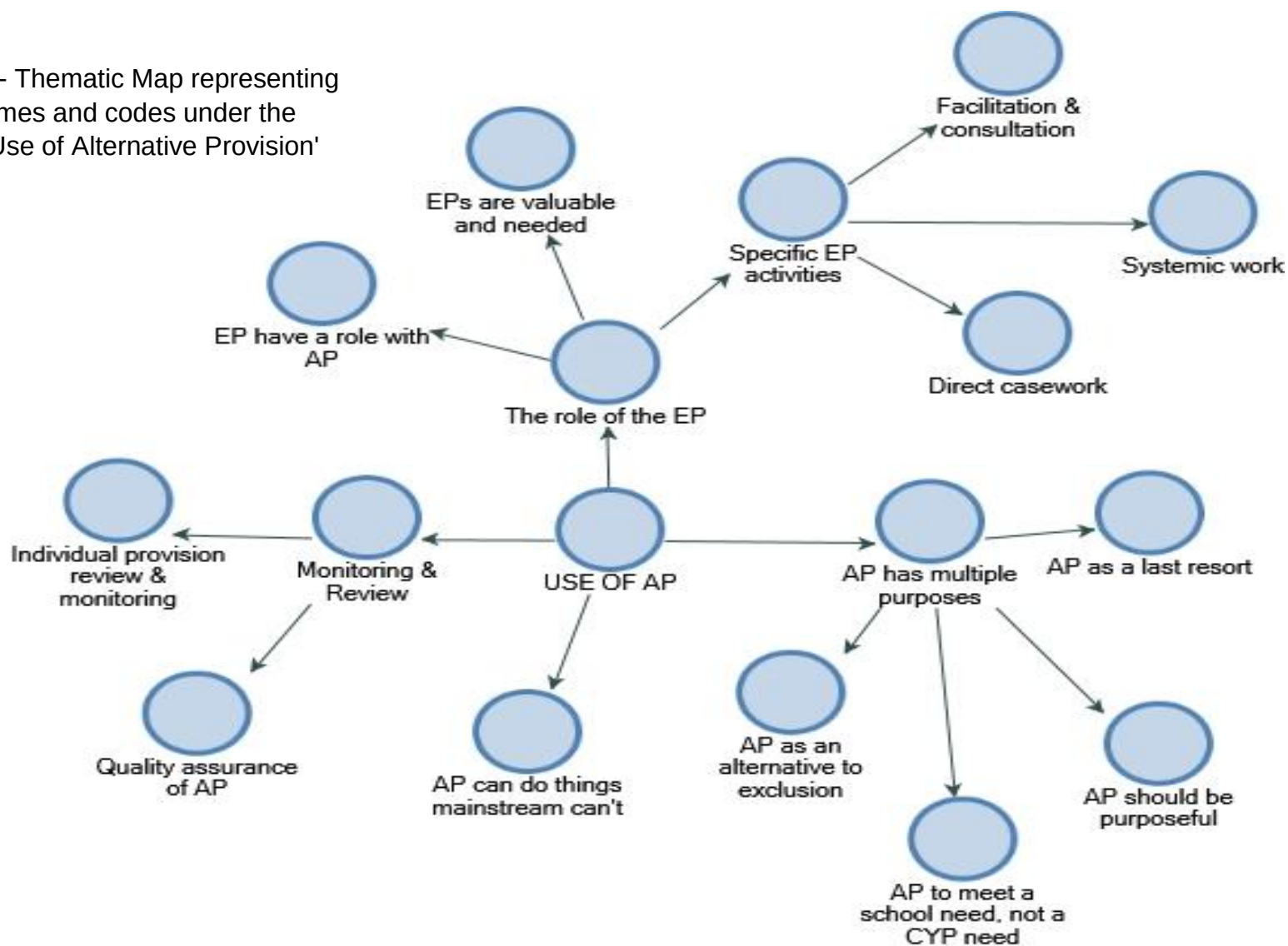
4.3 Research Question 2

What are key decision makers' attitudes towards the placement of children and young people in alternative provisions in the context of their definitions of and attitudes towards inclusion?

4.3.1 Thematic map - Research Question 2

A thematic map representing the key themes, subthemes and codes for Research Question 2 is presented in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2 - Thematic Map representing the subthemes and codes under the theme of 'Use of Alternative Provision'



4.3.2 Narrative description of themes & subthemes

When talking about the use of alternative provision, a key theme surrounded the concept that alternative provisions can provide resources and use approaches that mainstream schools cannot; nine out of the twelve participants expressed this view and Sch2 stated that "...normal provision perhaps isn't enough, there's nothing wrong with that". In the context of this perception, participants identified that alternative provision should be purposeful ("The ones who are linked to a particular trade or skill, to me seem more valid, it seems a more justified placement of education" EP1).

Many participants felt that alternative provision is a last resort ("I feel like they're quite risky in that, "Oh God we're putting them in an alternative provision" and then what? You feel like there's almost an abyss afterwards if this fails, then what next?" EP1) or an alternative to exclusions ("Morally, you know I suppose you kind of think we are doing the right thing by him because we could have permanently excluded him" Sch4). Some expressed a feeling that often these placements are chosen to meet the needs of the school rather than the needs of the young person, AP1 said "if Bert is being on some provision that is just to help the school out from getting him off site then that isn't being inclusive is it?".

Regardless of purpose, participants regularly discussed the need for monitoring and review of alternative provision, with two specific requirements: the quality assurance of alternative providers themselves and individual monitoring of the provision for each young person on an alternative package. Sch2 expressed a concern that staff in AP are not best placed to support challenging young people "I know some of the people doing those jobs [in AP] and they are doing that job because they can't do the teaching job, and you think hold on, can't do the normal teaching job and you're now delivering to the most needy and who need the best teachers" and AP1 acknowledged concerns that not all provision is of good quality "I'm not saying all alternative provision is good, because it isn't, there is some really awful stuff out there."

There was some disagreement about who holds responsibility for this review, with a general acknowledgement of the need for school to track individuals but also questioning the role of the educational psychology service and/or the wider local authority for quality assurance of the provider. AP1 suggested that EPs could have a role in quality assuring provisions: "There is something around the EP monitoring, you know is that provision effective, is it meeting a need, am I getting the information I require"

Finally, most participants felt that the educational psychology service has a general role in the use of alternative provisions and identified that they are valuable and needed. AP2 suggests that the knowledge of an EP can help support staff to explore different approaches "I think that the expertise of an EP would be, it's great because sometimes teachers have not explored avenues in their PGCE training that might be opened up for them to have more strategies and EPs will have a bank of knowledge" In particular, participants highlighted facilitation & consultation, direct casework and systemic work in settings as the specific activities they might expect or desire from the local service.

4.3.3 Analysis

The second research question requires that the data is analysed in the context of the findings of the first question, as a result the researcher has made reference to these throughout this section of the analysis.

When considering the perception of some participants that inclusion is difficult to achieve in practice, alongside the assertion that inclusion requires a flexible and individualised approach, it is not surprising that participants held the view that alternative provision can provide some things which schools cannot. It

could be perceived to allow for a flexible approach and contact with the mainstream without the necessity for young people to attend their local community school full-time. In addition, this may also be perceived to resolve the concern shared by some participants that Bert's inclusion could have a negative impact on his mainstream peers. However, the concern shared by some participants that AP is sometimes used to meet the needs of a school rather than the young person indicates a discomfort with its use for these purposes. Equally, the use of AP for the purpose of avoiding exclusion or as a last resort is also indicative of a further discomfort and the idea that the choice to use these provisions may come at the end of a great deal of steps to avoid this type of placement. This further consolidates the view that AP placements are not desirable.

In exploring inclusion in practice, participants identified the importance of a school ethos which promotes taking ownership of young people. When considering the use of alternative provision, they also highlighted the importance of individual review and monitoring of alternative provision placements. These two themes run parallel to one another as the monitoring of young people's experiences and progress at alternative provisions indicates this sense of ownership and the importance of young people remaining a part of school even when attending a separate provider. When discussing the importance of quality assurance, participants highlighted the range in quality of provision that they have experienced, however who should hold responsibility for this quality assurance remains unclear in the eyes of the participants.

The discussion around the role of the EP in cases where a young person attends an alternative provision indicated that participants place a certain level of importance on EP involvement. This may be due in part to the range of work that participants suggested an EP could undertake in supporting both schools and alternative providers in meeting the needs of the complex young people who most often access these provisions. The EP's role in promoting inclusion may also be the reason that they are considered to have a part in these cases,

as these placements appear to be viewed as a challenge to inclusion both in theory and in practice.

4.4 Research Question 3

What do key decision makers believe are key factors helping and hindering the inclusion of young people with SEMH who are placed in alternative provisions?

4.4.1 Thematic maps

Three thematic maps representing the key themes, subthemes and codes for Research Question 3 are presented in Figure 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 below.

Figure 4.3 - Thematic Map representing the subthemes and codes under the theme of 'Influential Individual Variables'

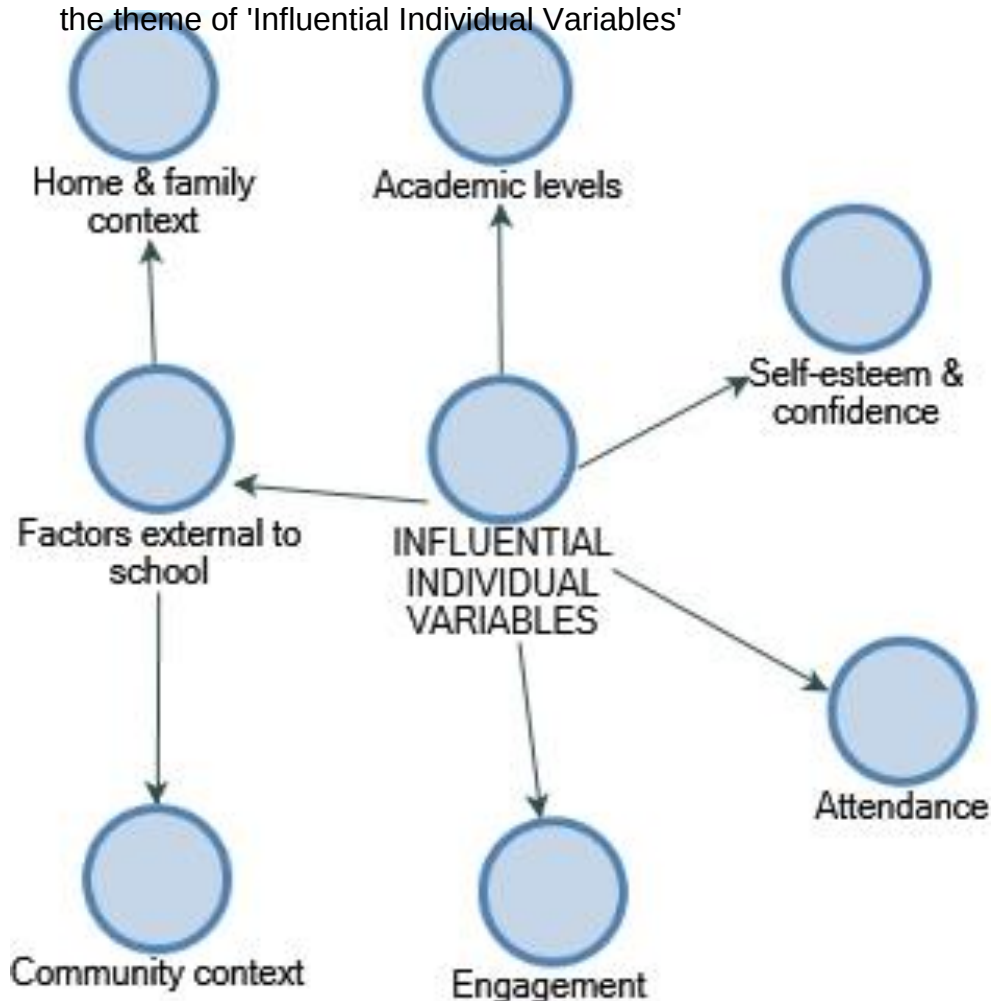


Figure 4.4 - Thematic Map representing the subthemes and codes under the theme of 'Helping Factors'

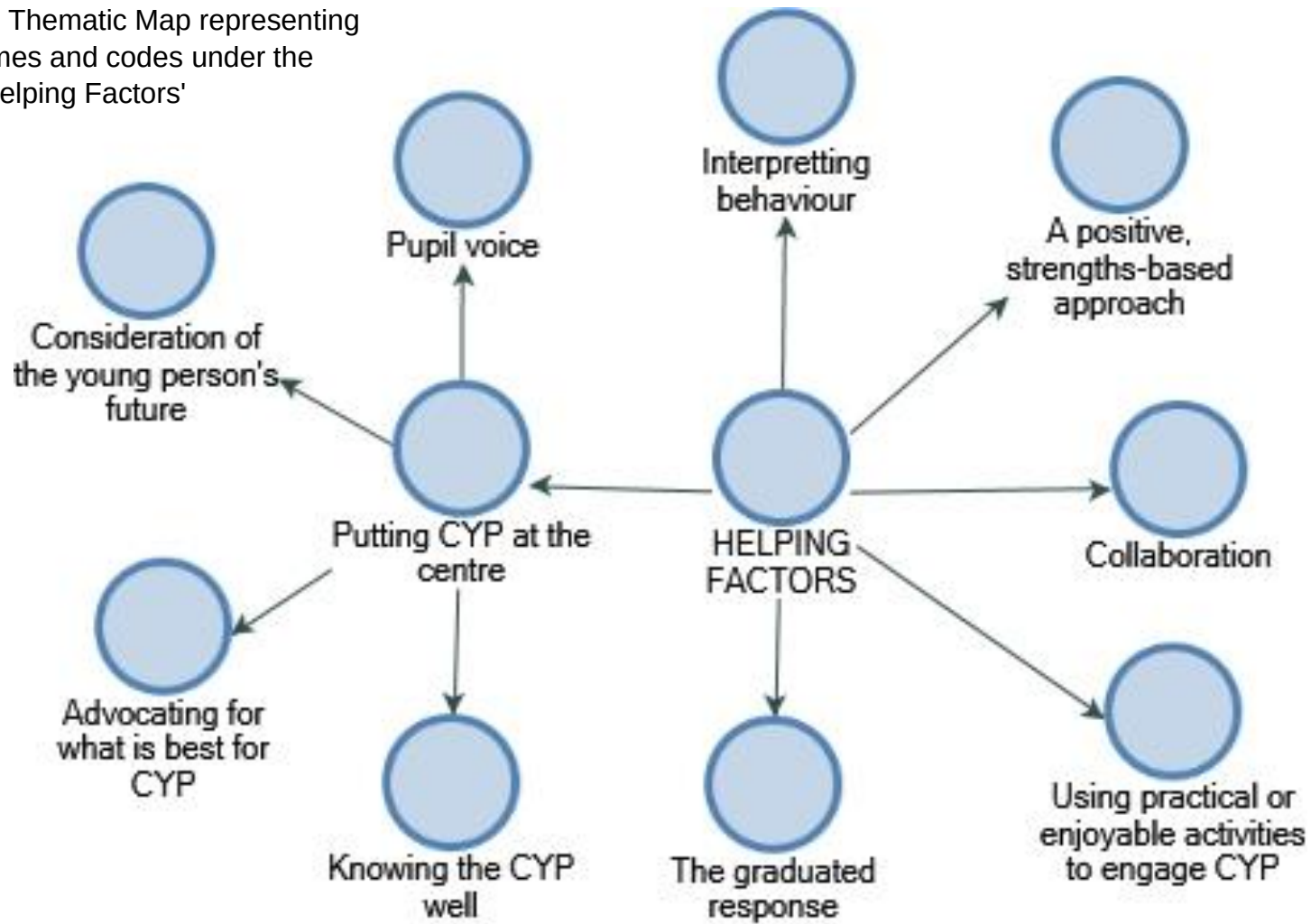
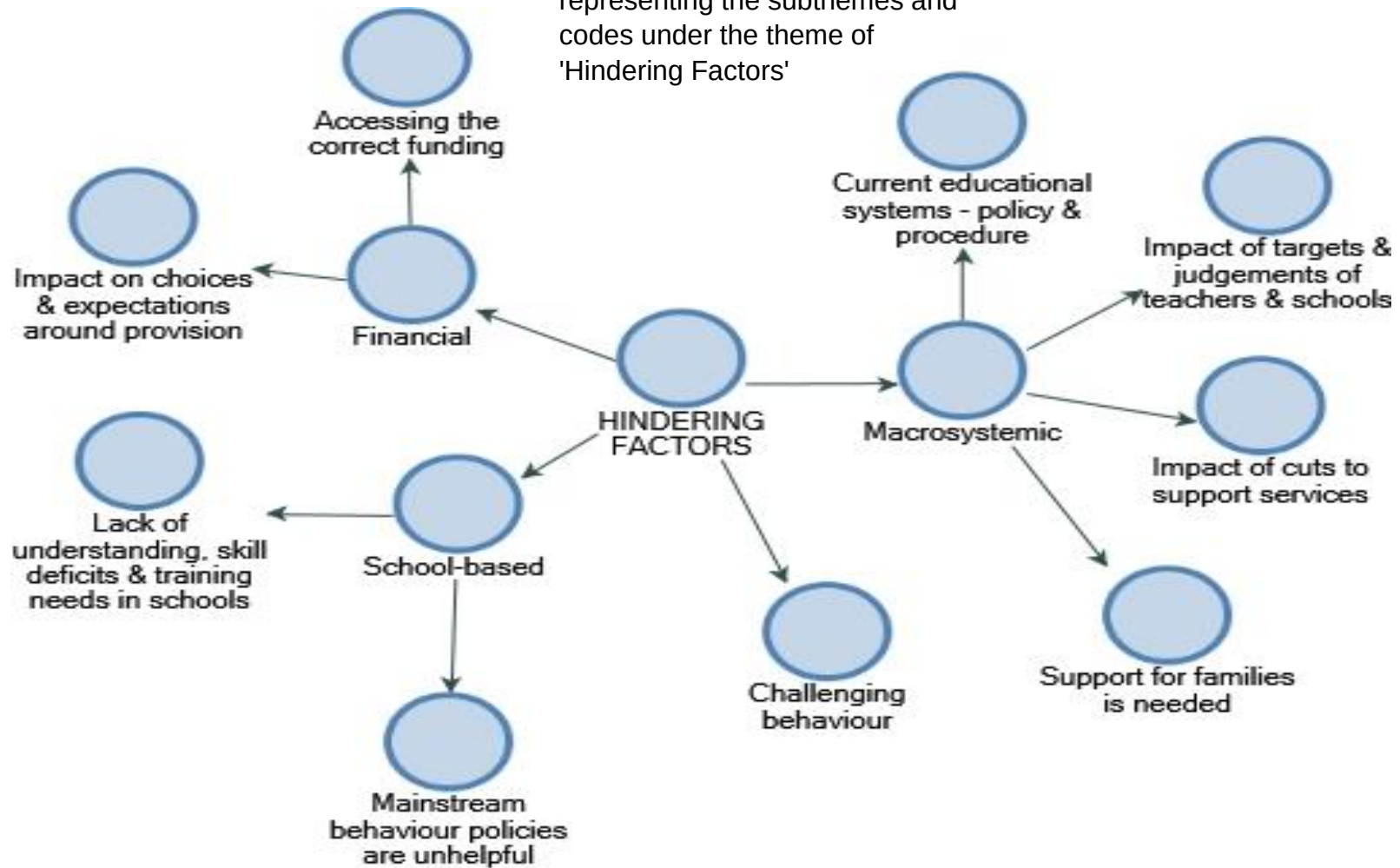


Figure 4.5 - Thematic Map representing the subthemes and codes under the theme of 'Hindering Factors'



4.4.2 Narrative description of themes & subthemes

The three thematic maps presented in this section link directly to the 'Practice' theme under the overarching theme of 'Inclusion'. The researcher had anticipated the themes around helping and hindering factors in light of the questions asked of participants, however some of the codes which identified factors of importance to the practice of inclusion for individuals were not framed as helping or hindering factors by the participants. Instead, these have been categorised as 'influential individual variables'. This is further explored in the analysis at 4.4.3.

Influential individual variables:

The influential individual variables were not identified specifically as helping or hindering factors but were highlighted as important in the context of including individual young people who attend alternative providers. Participants talked extensively about the young person's engagement ("[Engagement is] crucial isn't it, otherwise he's just not going to bother coming out for education." AP1) and attendance ("...he doesn't really attend school when he should be attending and he avoids lessons when he is actually in the building he's not in the class, so I couldn't really say that he's being included" EP1).

Ten out of the twelve participants also raised factors external to school, more specifically the home, family and community context in which the young person lives. Sch2 highlights his perspective as a parent and a teacher, saying "As a parent myself and a teacher, I do think it starts in the home. The home is miles and miles away the most significant influence on a person's life". EP1 focussed more on the impact of the community context, questioning "would he respond to a different mainstream school that had a socio-economic context, if you moved him 10 miles into a different community that wasn't as deprived, with different pupils and different aspirations attending, would we see a very different Bert?". In addition, the impact of family background on predictions for a particular young person's future was highlighted; Sch4 states "...family history

told us that he's not going to make it to the end of year 11", indicating that staff had a preconception of this young person's future and chances of success prior to his arrival at school.

A young person's self-esteem and academic levels were also highlighted by participants as key variables when considering their successful inclusion. AP4 talked about self-esteem on multiple occasions, for example suggesting that "...if he can experience success and feel a sense of self worth, he can do better...". EP4 explains the importance of responding to individual academic levels and remarked that "...if he was on P-levels and he was 15, it would paint a different picture to a kid who was one or two sublevels below, or markedly weaker in literature than in numeracy".

Helpful approaches to using AP:

All participants were able to identify some helpful approaches to take when using alternative provisions. Participants discussed using practical and enjoyable activities to engage young people and Sch2 suggests that this is common with young people in Bert's situation; "he's very typical, enjoying PE and DT and so if through the sort of bespoke timetables and opportunities you'd look to see if there could be more provision for that and used in a sort of incentive way as well". A positive, strengths-based approach is also advocated for by over half of the participants here and has been contrasted directly with a deficit model by AP1 here "...inclusion comes from strengths-based model which is actually what are the strengths and let's build on those because that then fills any deficit".

Four participants mentioned the graduated response, either explicitly or implicitly. Sch2 describes the approach as follows: "...we can do this for you Bert but this won't be forever, this is for an amount of time to help you develop and I would have expected, it would be a sort of zig-zag approach, we've got

times where we will take you to one side and support you, develop some skills for you then come back in the mainstream environment see if you cope, see if you are applying some of the stuff that we've working on you with and when it all falls apart again you come to one side". In this context, some participants also talked about interpreting a young person's behaviour and EP2 highlights differences in this practice between settings: "...ultimately, it comes down to interpretation. Different settings would interpret him in different ways, but also different settings must have different responses to different groups of children in the way they interpret it."

One particularly large theme is "Collaboration". All but one of the participants mention it and most describe the importance of all key figures in a young person's life working together in that young person's best interests. In the context of alternative provision, participants focussed particularly on the collaborative relationship between school, the family and the provider. EP2 says "I suppose it's about alternative provision to work collaboratively with school, and being confident in doing that, so rather than feeling like they're "getting" a student, it's more about recognising that they are part of a collaborative team that are supporting that student." and Sch2 brings in the importance of working with the family too: "...the effective working relationship at school is school, the student and the family or whoever is looking after the young person. And so it's that honesty, that recognition, that support, consistent communication, saying the issues that this young person faces aren't your issues, aren't my issues at school, we have this joint responsibility to work together".

The idea of putting young people at the centre of provision was a strong theme, contributed to by four codes. The first contributing code is "advocating for young people", for example, AP2 talks about advocating for the best for young people forcefully "it is about weighing up very much what is best for the child and trying to, forcefully sometimes, put forward those points of views". The second is "knowing young people well" which Sch4 describes as being "...key

to it all". The third is the importance of gathering "pupil views" and EP4 suggests that this is a vital step in inclusive practice, stating that "...if school were reviewing and finding that he was doing much better in the alternative provision then being inclusive would be discussing that with him". Finally and most often mentioned by all twelve participants, "considering young people's future". Sch3 talks about this as the purpose of school: "...that's what school is about. we are the sausage machine, they join and they go through this sausage machine but what we are trying to do as a school is, on different levels, is get kids ready for being good citizens being able to engage with adult life and future opportunities, contribute to the economy and be prepared for the big changes that's going to happen in their lives...". EP3 highlights the importance of alternative provision considering life after school: "I think alternative providers need to have quite a rigorous sense of them preparing the young people for re-integration for a life after school, rather than being a haven for them while they're not in school".

Hindering factors:

Most participants mentioned financial hindrances such as accessing the correct funding streams and, most often, the impact of financial considerations on expectations and choices of provision. Participants identified feeling that it was often the case that school was obliged to seek provision based on their constrained budgets rather than the ideal provision for the young person. Sch1 explained "...a lot of it comes down to money. And it's kind of who's the cheapest and who can provide it and she [AP lead] was talking about this full day provision being £100 or something and we sat where we are now, in the back of my head was thinking 'well you say that but I could get [NAME OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION] for 2 days out of that, I could get a GCSE qualification done at [NAME OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION] for £80 a day".

Participants also identified school-based hindrances including unhelpful mainstream behaviour policies. EP1 described one such policy and a sense

that it is indicative of a non-inclusive school "...schools that accumulate demerit points and expel and exclude after a certain threshold, you often find that they're the schools that, you don't think of them in your head as inclusive schools". Furthermore, AP1 highlighted an example of a young person on their provision as a result of refusing to take her make-up off "...school behaviour policy can sometimes dictate some of the decisions which might be an unintended outcome of that policy. This provision should be about kids additional needs, not kids who flout uniform rules".

In addition to concerns around mainstream behaviour policies, School and AP lead participants also discussed a lack of understanding and skills & training deficits in school staff. One training need mentioned surrounded interpreting behaviour, Sch2 said "...how do you differentiate it between a cheeky kid just pushing the boundaries and then vulnerable children who doesn't know any better and has got no other mechanisms to express themselves. That's a huge training need.". Another surrounded staff's skills in empathising with young people, AP3 said "I used to go into mainstream schools and teach teachers basically how to care. They have no empathy with these children".

Beyond school, participants identified four macro-systemic hindrances (i.e. policies and structures at a local authority/government level); the impact of current educational policy and procedure (perceived to be unhelpful and restrictive), cuts to support services, the necessity for further support for struggling families and the negative impact of targets & judgements of teachers & schools. Current educational systems were highlighted as a hindrance by all three groups:

AP4 "...as a teacher I got very angry about all the changes the Government were putting in the curriculum and the levels and then taking the levels out and then saying this, that and the other. Messing about with what teachers were doing. I know they want to improve standards but putting more and more stress on the system doesn't work."

EP1 "...we have a one size fits all version of school, it doesn't matter which version, if you're the inner city kid from a poor estate or you're a traveller, if you're a boy coming from an ex-mining village that hasn't seen a job since 1984, we still expect you fit that model, we don't necessarily recognise your needs, your hopes or your aspirations, we want kids to achieve the same thing, and do the same exams and, ultimately our view of success is quite a narrow prescriptive view of success, and hands down to us we're told what success looks like, OFSTED tells us what success looks like."

Sch4 "...you've always got a one size fits all curriculum led by the government, its tighter than it's ever been before in terms of courses you can offer that add value in terms of school results so you know it's far more academic than it's been in recent years. So yeah, there is something wrong with the curriculum."

Linked to these concerns around educational policy, participants spoke about the impact of the targets imposed upon teachers and schools. Sch1 mentions the 'Progress 8' policy "...from a selfish school point of view we are looking at our Progress 8 figures and a child that's not attending or only doing one subject for three hours a week is having a huge effect on school data".

Cuts to support services were also highlighted as a hindrance, AP2 gave CAMHS as an example, saying " we know that local authority services are being paired back somewhat and CAMHS for example you know there are services that are available and it would be great if you could and that there was consistency when people saw those children and that CAMHS for example,, I'm not on a downer at CAMHS, but those appointments are few and far between".

Finally, a young person's challenging behaviour was proposed as a hindering factor by three participants, Sch1, Sch2 & Sch4. Sch4 explained the impact of the challenging behaviour of one young person; "...his behaviour had led us to a situation where he was often removed from lessons, therefore not included.,

he would be sat in our isolation, therefore not included, he would be referred to our [CENTRE] therefore not included, actually off-site, and potentially fixed-term excluded for x number of days. So how included did he feel before we made the suggestion of 'you need to be somewhere else'".

4.4.3 Analysis

The findings relating to the third and final research question are analysed and interpreted here in the context of the findings from the previous two question and these findings are referred to throughout.

A selection of codes were identified to represent individual variables which are influential in the manner and extent to which young people experience inclusion in education. When discussing these ideas, participants highlighted them in terms of both helping and hindering factors, such as supportive families and high attendance as helping factors and unsupportive families and low attendance as hindrances. It is suggested here that these are demonstrative of the complexity of individual young people's lives and this aligns with the participants' assertion that inclusion requires flexible and individualised provision.

It is argued here that the use of alternative providers could be understood as a response to providing the flexibility which schools find challenging in the context of the macro-systemic hindering factors also highlighted by the participants. These macro-systemic factors call into question the impact of current educational policy and procedure, particularly around the targets and judgements set for school staff (such as Progress 8). Participants suggest that these policies have a detrimental impact on schools' capacity to support young people who do not achieve the expected academic and behaviour standards set for them, thus reducing their inclusion.

These macro-systemic factors may also be a contributing factor to the financial concerns raised by participants, which are clearly identified by them as having an impact on decisions around a young person's provision. This may also lead to decisions around these placements being reflective of the school's needs, rather than the young person's (as recognised by participants when talking about the reasoning behind alternative provision placement).

Challenging behaviour was also identified by participants as a hindrance to a young person's inclusion. This was recognised both as an individual hindrance but the management of this behaviour was also identified by participants as being unhelpful, citing mainstream behaviour policies as part of the challenge facing young people with SEMH. This, in combination with the skills and training deficits which the participants spoke about, gives rise to a picture of schools struggling to manage young people like Bert and feeling uncertain as to the best way to support them. This further strengthens the idea that alternative provision are used in situations where schools feel deskilled and unable to provide what the young person needs.

In contrast to these hindering factors, participants also identified some helpful approaches in including young people who attend alternative provisions. Participants propose an approach that places the young people at the centre. This links to the importance participants place on school ethos & culture and the idea that, in practicing inclusion, it is necessary to have a culture which values and takes ownership of young people. Participants also suggest a positive, strengths-based approach and it is argued here that these participants place importance on the school's approach, making links between this and the practice of inclusion.

Finally, participants also discussed the graduated response as a helping factor. This may be reflective of the view that alternative provision is an undesirable option to be considered only following attempts to support the young person in school, thus positioning it as a last resort to avoid exclusion.

4.5 Key findings

Given the complexity of the themes and subthemes arising from the data, the researcher has selected six key findings which were chosen in the context of the research questions and professional relevance (further detail regarding this process is provided at section 3.2.3.6). These key findings aim to draw together the analysis of each of the thematic maps above to give a sense of the results as a whole. The thematic maps are referenced throughout and should be considered alongside these key findings.

Key finding 1. There is a tension between the theory and practice of inclusion when considering the use of alternative provision.

The tensions between the theory and practice of inclusion in the context of using AP are highlighted throughout these findings and appear clear in the thematic map at Figure 4.1. Despite feeling that defining and measuring inclusion is challenging, participants identified equality as representing the foundations of inclusion and a clear basic definition is identified by participants, made clear by the succinct subthemes demonstrated in the first thematic map. The idea of contact with mainstream school as being essential to achieving inclusion in practice was also shared by participants. However, they sometimes questioned the validity of mainstream schooling for all young people and highlighted many barriers to achieving inclusion as a goal. Participants appear to view the moral theoretical groundings as insufficient in attaining inclusive practice in light of these challenges and the comparative complexity of the subthemes and codes identified when considering inclusion in practice is indicative of this complexity. This may indicate some cognitive dissonance in participants who feel that inclusion is possible and preferable but directly experience these barriers preventing its realisation.

The indecision around the necessity of mainstream contact may arise directly from the topic of this research (discussing alternative provision placements in the context of an inclusive approach to education) which could highlights disparities in its use when considered in light of widespread understanding of the term.

Key finding 2. Mainstream schools experience a variety of systemic and individual challenges and feel deskilled in supporting young people with SEMH

When considering the themes represented in the thematic map of hindering factors (shown at Figure 4.5), challenging behaviour was identified by participants as a key difficulty when approaching including a young person like Bert. Participants identified this individual challenge as being further compounded by systemic hindering factors including unhelpful mainstream behaviour policies and skills & training deficits in school staff. This indicates that school staff feel de-skilled and that they are working within systems which do not account for SEMH needs. Macro-systemic challenges are also highlighted in this thematic map; the impact on teachers of targets and judgements may influence not only school staff's capacity to support young people like Bert but also put a strain on the ethos and culture considered by the participant as vital to maintaining inclusion (See the thematic map shown at Figure 4.1). When looking at the thematic maps for Inclusion (Figure 4.1) and Hindering Factors (Figure 4.5) alongside one another, the researcher noted that inflexible educational policy in the context of the necessity for flexible and individualised provision appears to represent a further hindrance.

Key finding 3. The challenges in schools have led to the sense that Alternative Provision can do things which the mainstream cannot despite concerns around funding and quality assurance.

Given that the participants shared a sense of a de-skilled workforce (See Figure 4.5), it is perhaps unsurprising that a theme in the thematic map for Research Question 2 (shown at Figure 4.2) shows that participants feel that alternative providers can do things which mainstream schools cannot. Taking a flexible approach to behaviour and providing individualised provision delivered by staff skilled in meeting the needs of complex young people represents a considerable demand on mainstream school staff. The macro-systemic hindering factors identified by participants at Figure 4.5 indicate that this demand feels unmanageable.

This may also be a contributing factor in the tension between the theory and practice of inclusion which is shown in Figure 4.1. The challenges in mainstream schools which leave staff feeling that young people's needs are unmet has been identified as one of the driving forces behind the commissioning of alternative provision (see Figure 4.2), however Figure 4.1 shows that participants are also aware of the tenets behind inclusion surrounding equality, implying that mainstream is best. Participants also shared concerns around the quality assurance and funding of alternative provision placements, implying that participants are unsure of whether these placements are best for young people either. This may go some way to explain why alternative provision can present as a 'last resort' (see Figure 4.2). When considering the thematic maps shown at Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.5, it appears that school staff are making reactive rather than proactive decisions when placing young people in alternative provisions as they feel unable to meet a young person's needs in their setting.

Key finding 4. Taking ownership of young people and placing them at the centre of decisions around their provision is essential, although at times these decisions are made to meet school needs rather than young peoples'.

Placing young people at the centre of decision around their provision was identified as key by participants, shown in the thematic map at 4.4. Furthermore,

they suggest that schools must maintain ownership of young people (see Figure 4.1), describing them as 'one of ours'. The extent to which school culture was discussed both explicitly and implicitly by the majority of the participants (shown in Figure 4.1) demonstrates that an inclusive ethos can have a powerful impact on inclusion in practice and the suggestions around taking ownership of young people attending off-site provision may helpfully form part of that ethos.

An ethos that puts young people at the centre of decisions made around their provision (see Figure 4.4) also indicates the importance of provision being put in place in order to respond to their needs and gives a sense that inclusion in practice should provide young people with a sense of belonging to their community school (see Figure 4.1). However, participants also identified that the decisions to place a young person on AP is sometimes made in response to a school need rather than the needs of the young person. This may be a consequence of the macro-systemic pressures reported by participants and shown in Figure 4.5, further indicating that alternative provision use represents a response to the challenges experienced by mainstream schools rather than a direct response to young people's needs.

Key finding 5. Educational Psychologists have a role in supporting the inclusion of young people like Bert and their educators.

Participants identified that EPs have a role and represent a valuable support in including young people who are placed part-time on alternative provision. Participants identified that EPs can offer consultation, direct work and systemic work as part of this support (shown in Figure 4.2).. It is possible that the role of the EP stems from the unique contribution of the profession in applying psychological knowledge to understand and meet young people's needs as well as the reputation of the profession for advocating for inclusion. It is also important to note that participants reported a sense reduced capacity of outside agencies (including the EPS) represents a hindering factor in including young

people like Bert, further contributing to the macro-systemic hindrances which lead schools to feeling they are unable to meet young peoples' needs in their settings (see Figure 4.5).

Key finding 6. Children and young people are perceived to have an impact on their own inclusion

Participants discussed the impact children and young people can have on their own inclusion, at times suggesting that some young people do not want to be included (see Figure 4.1). In particular, engagement was highlighted as an influential individual variable which impacts on the success of a young person's inclusion (shown at Figure 4.3) and participants discussed helpful strategies such as using practical or enjoyable activities in terms of their positive effect on young people's engagement (see Figure 4.4). However, it could be suggested that this concept places some responsibility on young people for their own inclusion and could be interpreted as placing the blame for a school's choice to formally or informally exclude at the young person's door. It is suggested here that although young people can have a direct impact upon their own inclusion, participants have also acknowledged the role that educators and other professionals can have upon promoting this self-determined inclusion by utilising strategies such as the relationship-based they also suggest.

This perspective directly contrasts with the view also shared by participants that sometimes decisions are made around young people's placements on AP in order to meet a school need rather than a young person's, as shown at Figure 4.2. This, alongside the assertion made by participants that young people must be placed at the centre of decisions made around their educational placements (see Figure 4.4), indicates that young people's voices must be heard throughout the process.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has presented five thematic maps representing the data across the three research questions. The first map (Figure 4.1) centres on the overarching theme of inclusion, exploring sub-themes and codes relating to theory and practice. The second map (Figure 4.2) centres on the use of alternative provision; considering its purposes and important considerations in its use. The final three maps represent the findings associated with factors which help (Figure 4.4), hinder (Figure 4.5) or may have an influence over (Figure 4.3) the inclusion of young people who are placed in alternative provisions. Each thematic map is followed by a narrative description including quotes from the raw data and an analysis of the data.

Six key findings were identified by the researcher as being representative of these findings as a whole, with a particular focus on responding to the research questions and identifying findings which reflect the literature explored in Chapter 2 and findings which the researchers considered to be new.

The six key findings were:

1. There is a tension between the theory and practice of inclusion when considering the use of alternative provision.
2. Mainstream schools experience a variety of systemic and individual challenges and feel deskilled in supporting young people with SEMH
3. The challenges in schools have led to the sense that Alternative Provision can do things which the mainstream cannot despite concerns around funding and quality assurance.
4. Taking ownership of young people and placing them at the centre of decisions around their provision is essential, although at times these decisions are made to meet school needs rather than young peoples’.
5. Educational Psychologists have a role in supporting the inclusion of young people like Bert and their educators.

6. Children and young people are perceived to have an impact on their own inclusion

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will aim to interpret the findings presented above in the context of the literature presented at Chapter 2 and evaluate the research and its limitations before considering the implications of these findings for educational psychologists, education professionals and government policy. Suggestions for further research are given before a brief set of reflections from the researcher.

5.2 Interpretation of key findings

This section will present the key findings from the research undertaken here in the context of the literature explored in Chapter 2. The research explored the following research questions:

1. What are key decision makers' definitions of and attitudes towards "inclusion"?
2. What are key decision makers' attitudes towards the placement of children and young people in alternative provisions in the context of their definitions of and attitudes towards inclusion?
3. What do key decision makers believe are key factors helping and hindering the inclusion of young people with SEMH who are placed in alternative provisions?

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, the researcher aims to respond to these research questions in the context of the key findings arising from the data, responding to the three questions in parallel in order to fully explore to the links made between them. These findings are presented not as 'fact' but as the experienced reality and social constructions of the participants who took

part and should be considered in the context of the thematic maps presented in Chapter 4.

The six key findings were:

1. There is a tension between the theory and practice of inclusion when considering the use of alternative provision.
2. Mainstream schools experience a variety of systemic and individual challenges and feel deskilled in supporting young people with SEMH
3. The challenges in schools have led to the sense that Alternative Provision can do things which the mainstream cannot despite concerns around funding and quality assurance.
4. Taking ownership of young people and placing them at the centre of decisions around their provision is essential, although at times these decisions are made to meet school needs rather than young peoples’.
5. Educational Psychologists have a role in supporting the inclusion of young people like Bert and their educators.
6. Children and young people are perceived to have an impact on their own inclusion

5.2.1 Key Finding 1

There is a tension between the theory and practice of inclusion when considering the use of alternative provision.

The views of the participants surrounding inclusion, both in theory and in practice, have some commonalities with the definitions explored at the outset of this research. Considerations around inclusion's foundations in equality and adapting to the individual echoes the BPS (2002) definition and the view that school ethos and culture is a defining feature of inclusive practice is also highlighted within this definition and can be seen clearly in the thematic map at Figure 4.1. Both Gilhool (1989) and the BPS (2002) make specific reference to educating young people within their community schools alongside their

peers regardless of any individual differences and this is both supported and questioned by the participants here (see Figure 4.1), possibly due to the context of the discussion about alternative provision.

The challenges in defining and measuring inclusion are noted by the participants and this may go some way to explaining some of the confusion demonstrated by advocating for contact with the mainstream school whilst questioning the validity of mainstreaming, a conflict represented in the thematic map at Figure 4.1. This reflects the conclusions drawn by Ainscow (2005), who argues that different local authorities do not agree on a definition of inclusion and the confusion at government policy level on what constitutes an inclusive education for young people (DfE, 2011; DfE/DoH, 2015). It is suggested here that the lack of clarity around expectations of the professionals involved leads to an unwillingness to present a view that inclusion can only mean mainstream education.

Figure 5.1 - Norwich's (2008) continuum of inclusion

In terms of Norwich's (2008) continuum of inclusion (See Figure 5.1) it is proposed here that part-time alternative provision placements are best positioned alongside "part-time special, part-time ordinary school" as this appears to best represent young people's experiences. However, this continuum indicates that this means young people on these part-time placements could not be considered to be well included. The thematic maps shown at Figure 4.1 and 4.5 show that despite participants' assertions that inclusion is possible and preferable, there a great number of

MOST SEPARATE

- Full time residential special school
- Full time day special school
- Part time special – part time ordinary school
- Full time special unit or class in ordinary school
- Part time special unit/class – part time ordinary class
- Full time in ordinary class with some withdrawal and some in-class support
- Full time in ordinary class with in-class support
- Full time in ordinary class

challenges to its achievement in practice arguing that staff are not skilled to meet young people's needs. The creation of a school which is inclusive in its practice and aligns itself fully with the theoretical and moral principles of inclusion has been identified by Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn & Christensen (2006) as a significant challenge which has yet to have been met by the evidence base. This further supports the idea that in spite of their desire to hold true to the theory of inclusion, schools continue to struggle to implement it successfully.

This dilemma further indicates that participants may be experiencing cognitive dissonance surrounding the topic of alternative provision placements due to their sense that it does not meet the requirements of inclusive practice alongside their experience of the challenges with achieving this goal. Ross-Hill (2009) and Grieve (2009) argue that cognitive dissonance is an indicator of attitudes which are changing or about to undergo change. Given that alternative provision in the form explored here is a relatively new concept, it is perhaps unsurprising that attitudes towards its use are fluid and changeable however it is important that ongoing research considers this.

5.2.2 Key Finding 2

Mainstream schools experience a variety of systemic and individual challenges and feel deskilled in supporting young people with SEMH

The challenges to inclusion in practice are considered particularly pronounced when supporting young people with SEMH. As shown in the thematic map at Figure 4.1, participants in this research discussed the importance of flexibility and individualisation in including young people like Bert when considering inclusion in practice. When thinking around hindering factors, they highlighted difficulties around behaviour policies, a lack of flexibility, resources and staff capacity & understanding alongside macro-systemic hindrances such as the curriculum and targets set for schools (see Figure 4.5). These findings support that of Rose (2001) who reported that school staff do not feel they have the time or resources to be effective in including all young people. O'Toole & Burke (2013) drew similar conclusions regarding the perceived lack of support and

resources reported by pre-service teacher and also reporting that the participants felt less positively about their ability to include a young person with behavioural difficulties. Given that the participants in the research presented here were asked about inclusion in the context of the vignette describing Bert, a young person reported with behavioural difficulties, it may be that the self-efficacy of the teaching staff involved was lower for Bert than it might be for a young person with a different profile, leading them to highlight these barriers to his inclusion.

In contrast, there is mixed support in the current evidence base surrounding the view shared here by alternative provision and school leads that school staff do not have sufficient skills and training to include young people effectively (see Figure 4.5). Whilst evidence provided by Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000), Goodman & Burton (2010), Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka (2014) and O'Toole & Burke (2013) supports this finding, Grieve (2009) reported that teaching staff in their sample did not feel that further training would be helpful as young people should be expected to fit into the school systems as they stand rather than the school's systems changing to suit them. Grieve (2009) suggests that this could be linked a view espoused by school staff that it is not their role to include young people who display challenging behaviour and Poulou & Norwich (2002) found that teachers had a reduced intention to support young people with SEMH difficulties, supporting the theme found here that the participants felt challenging behaviour represented a hindering factor in young people's inclusion (see Figure 4.5). However, this is contrasted with the view shared by participants that including Bert is possible and preferable which indicates a more open view when thinking theoretically about inclusion (see Figure 4.1). It is possible that in speaking to senior leaders at school as well as professionals working outside of the mainstream setting, the researcher has gathered a perspective more representative of the school ethos and culture (McFarlane & Woolfson 2013) rather than that of main grade teachers working in those mainstream settings. Given that a teacher's inclusive attitude is thought to have direct links to their effectiveness

(Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000), there is strong motivation for school leadership to consider inclusion to be an important part of their role.

Figure 4.5 presents hindering factors identified by the participants and their view that academic progress targets such as the 'Progress 8' system are viewed as restrictive to the inclusion of young people such as Bert also has mixed support in the literature. Grieve (2009) presents findings that indicated teachers view the inclusion agenda as being incompatible with agendas around attainment, implying that the success of one leads to the failure of the other. Bennett (2006) further supports this finding, in addition to findings which indicate that limited support from outside agencies further hinders the inclusion of young people with SEMH, a finding reflected in the views of the participants presented here. However it is important to note, as explored in Chapter 2, some researchers feel that the two agendas are compatible if they are interpreted alongside one another, rather than separately and it may be that the participants are lacking in direction and guidance as to how to achieve this following the introduction of new attainment targets such as 'Progress 8'.

5.2.3 Key Finding 3

The challenges in schools have led to the sense that Alternative Provision can do things which the mainstream cannot.

Given the high number of young people with SEMH experiencing formal or informal exclusions (DCSF, 2008; Osler, Watling & Busher, 2001) and finding themselves in alternative provisions (Davies, 2012), Polou & Norwich's (2002) findings that teachers had a reduced intention to support young people with SEMH when compared to young people with different needs may go some way to explaining this concern. One interpretation of this is that school staff's reduced intention to support this particular group leads them to seek out alternatives such as alternative provisions. The participants here appear to have some sense of this, with the findings presented in Figure 4.2 indicating that they believe placements in these provisions can be led by a school

need rather than by the needs of the young person and that there is a deficit of skills and training for school staff which may support these young people.

In contrast, a theme also emerged from the data suggesting that the reason for alternative provision placements for young people such as Bert is an attempt to provide them with something which the mainstream cannot (see Figure 4.2). To some extent this is supported by Hart (2013); when investigating what works in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) they found that staff and young people reported relationships as being one of the most powerful benefits of their settings. Furthermore, flexibility in teaching and learning was also identified alongside individualised programmes of learning. Although this data comes from PRUs and may not apply completely to alternative provisions, these findings support placements in alternative settings being perceived as having similar advantages to those identified in the findings here (see Figure 4.1 and 4.2).

However, the extent to which these perceptions reflect the progress and outcomes for young people in alternative provisions remains unclear. Given participants' assertion that it is important to consider a young person's future when making choices around the use of alternative provision (see Figure 4.4), the limited literature in terms of the outcomes expected for young people placed in alternative provisions is not encouraging. The DfE (2014) reported that 1.3% of pupils in AP achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C in 2011-12 and Osler, Watling & Busher (2001) report that 'unofficial exclusions' can be detrimental to young people. Once again, participants appear to demonstrate some awareness of this, reporting that there is a need for quality assurance of these placements (shown at Figure 4.2). Thomson & Russell (2007) highlight concerns surrounding the monitoring and quality assurance of alternative provisions, a concern which also arose from the data here, both around assuring the quality of the provision itself and the individual packages delivered for young people (see Figure 4.2).

5.2.4 Key Finding 4

Taking ownership of young people and placing them at the centre of decisions around their provision is essential, although at times these decisions are made to meet school needs rather than young people's.

The themes arising from the data and shown at Figures 4.1 and 4.4 which identify the importance of collaborative working, the need for contact with the mainstream and the maintenance of a sense of ownership of young people regardless of the provision they attend may indicate that participants perceive alternative provision as an addition to school rather than separate from it. This is reflective of a distinction between alternative provisions and Pupil Referral Units which are more traditionally used for young people who have been excluded from school (Davies, 2012), whilst the use of the alternative provision presented in the case study is one in which Bert remains on school roll and still attends on a part-time basis.

Although presented in the context of a different group of young people, Whitaker (2007) makes a case for the vital importance of this concept in including young people with autism from the perspective of their parents. Although this finding may not fully apply to young people with SEMH, there is a sense of 'face' validity to this in that schools who feel they have a responsibility to support a young person regardless of their needs may indeed be more inclusive.

Maintaining ownership over young people may be indicative of an inclusive school ethos and/or culture and this is also discussed at length by the participants and is represented in the thematic map at Figure 4.1. This is heavily supported in the literature (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999; Osler, Watling & Busher, 2001; Bunch & Valeo, 2004). Osler, Watling & Busher (2001) and Zoller, Ramanathan & Yu (1999) suggest that an inclusive school ethos which encompasses an 'inclusive' leadership, a shared understanding and strong

community relationships leads to a more inclusive school which does not exclude as many young people. Once again, the concept represented in the thematic map at Figure 4.2 that alternative provision is sometimes put in place as a 'last resort' or to avoid permanent exclusion reflects this literature, however it also further raises the concern shared by participants that these placements are sometimes implemented to meet the needs of the school rather than that of the young person.

The belief shared by participants that placing young people at the centre of decisions around their provision and gathering pupil voice represents a helping factor in achieving inclusion for that young person (see Figure 4.4) is supported by Gordon (2010) and Norwich & Kelly (2004) who propose that the success of inclusion can be assessed through gathering the views of young people. Considerations around young people's future outcomes was a key consideration for the participants here and this may be as a result of their awareness of less than desirable outcomes from alternative providers (see Figures 4.2 and 4.4) (Osler, Watling & Busher, 2001; Thomson & Russell, 2007).

Catalano et al (2004) describe school connectedness as being characterised by two key factors:

"1) attachment, characterized by close affective relationships with those at school; and 2) commitment, characterized by an investment in school and doing well in school." (Catalano et al, 20004, p.252)

These are reflected in the findings here, particularly the themes referencing a relationship-based approach and engagement (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4. Catalano et al (2004) also discuss the importance of school ethos and culture in promoting school connectedness, in particular they talk about staff holding children in positive regard which the findings here also support.

5.2.5 Key Finding 5

Educational Psychologists have a role in supporting the inclusion of young people like Bert and their educators.

The role of educational psychologists (EPs) has been identified by the participants in this research as being valuable and needed (see Figure 4.2). It is proposed here that a part of that role stems from the helping factor which participants also identified; 'interpreting behaviour' (see Figure 4.4). The EP role encompasses many activities but, pertinent to the case of Bert, they often participate in casework around complex young people by engaging in a holistic approach which encourages the interpretation of young people's needs and behaviours (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010).

At a systemic level, EPs have a role in advocating for inclusion and eliminating discrimination in all its forms (Farrell, 2004). In the context of this research, this makes it unsurprising that participants identified a role for the EP in a case such as Bert's. Fallon, Woods & Rooney (2004) identified consultation, systemic work and direct work as forming a part of the EP role, all of which were also identified by the participants here (see Figure 4.2). However, Lindsay (2007) argues that the role of the EP must go further and strive to provide research and evidence-based practice for inclusion.

Participants here also identified early intervention as key to inclusive practice (see Figure 4.1). EPs can support young people and the adults working with them to create positive environments which are responsive to SEMH needs (Roffey, 2015). Roffey (2015) also argues that EPs have a role in supporting young people and schools to foster resilience and self-esteem - also highlighted by participants as an influential individual factor in the success of including young people like Bert (see Figure 4.3). However, as highlighted by Goodman & Burton (2010), reductions in the capacity of the workforce due to increasing demand and cuts to many of the services in the UK is likely to have impacted on the reality of EPs engaging in early intervention (supported by the participants here who report that cuts to support services represent a hindering factor to inclusion).

5.2.6 Key Finding 6

Children and young people are perceived to have an impact on their own inclusion

The influence young people can have on their own inclusion was raised by participants both explicitly and implicitly (see Figures 4.1 and 4.3). Explicitly when discussing the practice of inclusion and implicitly in their discussions surrounding young people's engagement as a variable which is influential in the success of the inclusion of young people in circumstances similar to Bert's.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by Deci & Ryan (1989), suggests that motivation and engagement stem from the human needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. The theory asserts that intrinsic motivation towards these three needs is more powerful than external controls such as rewards and punishments. Autonomous regulation is correlated with young people enjoying school whilst more externally controlled motivation results in greater anxieties and difficulties in coping with setbacks (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Participants here raised concerns around school behaviour policies being unhelpful which reflects this theory.

SDT supports the finding that young people can have an impact on their own inclusion, however research applying SDT to educational contexts goes further. Niemiec & Ryan (2009) summarised this evidence and discussed the impact of external pressures on teachers which prevent them from using strategies supporting autonomy. SDT suggests this autonomy is vital to successful engagement and the external pressures mentioned by Niemiec & Ryan (2009) bear remarkable similarities to the macro-systemic hindrances discussed by participants in this research (see Figure 4.5).

Furthermore, there appears to be a direct link between motivation and school connectedness or belonging (Martin & Dowson, 2009), a concept also raised implicitly by participants when speaking of the importance of maintaining

ownership of young people and placing them at the centre of decisions made about their education (see Figures 4.1 and 4.4). When the SDT research is considered alongside the findings of the research presented here, it is argued that young people may influence their own inclusion but those working with young people such as Bert can have an impact upon their ability to do this. Young people's autonomy is best facilitated by the relationship-based approach advocated by the participants (shown at Figure 4.4), in a school setting which encourages this self-determined motivation by providing young people with opportunities for independence and a reduced focus on external motivations such as reward and punishment systems identified by participants as a hindering factor (see Figure 4.5).

5.4 Limitations of the research

Whilst some limitations of methodological choices made in this research are presented under section '3.1.2. Design' in Chapter 3, this section aims to acknowledge the limitations of the study in a more comprehensive manner. The limitations of the sample and methodology used are discussed followed by a critique of the topic and research questions chosen. Where relevant, the researcher will refer the reader to Chapter 3 in order to prevent repetition.

5.4.1 Limitations of sample and methodology

5.4.1.1 Limitations of a qualitative approach

As highlighted in Chapter 3 (under 3.1.2. 'Acknowledging and Addressing Trustworthiness'), qualitative research has been the subject of some criticism in terms of its trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004; Golafshani, 2003; Brink, 1993, Howitt, 2016). Whilst Chapter 3 details the efforts made by the researcher to respond to these methodological concerns, it is noted here that they continue to present some limitations of this research in the four areas proposed by Guba (1981) and described further by Shenton (2003); credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In terms of credibility, the researcher acknowledges the threat posed by social desirability bias and demand characteristics. It is possible that the participants were affected by the researcher's dual role as a trainee educational psychologist which may have altered the responses they gave during the semi-structured interview. The researcher hoped to counter this threat to some extent via the use of vignette methodology which has been suggested to allow participants to explore challenging scenarios without experiencing a sense of personal judgement (Bryman, 2015).

There are also significant limitations in terms of transferability. The findings presented here could be considered to be highly specific to the local authority

in which the data was gathered and even to the schools and alternative provisions from which the participants were gained. Furthermore, the use of semi-structured interviews in which the responses of the participant partially dictated the directionality of the interview represents a threat to the dependability of the research as replicating the exact line of questioning would not be possible.

Finally, the confirmability of the researcher here is subject to risks surrounding the reflexivity of the researcher. Howitt (2016) defines reflexivity:

“The stance in research in which the researcher considers the implications of the knowledge they create in terms of the procedures of data collection, the biases of the researcher, and their presence in the situations they investigate.” (Howitt, 2016, pg. 535).

Although the researcher’s epistemological stand point acknowledges that her actions in research are influenced by her own positionality and thus makes no claims on the findings here beyond their personally constructed nature, the criticism that the researcher’s own biases are likely to have influenced the findings stands as an essential one to note.

5.4.1.2 Limitations of the sample

The sample here is also subject to limitations which are discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.1; including a potential gender bias, small sample and a lack of demographic data due to ethical considerations. Further to these, the researcher acknowledges the challenge that the groups chosen here may not reflect those making key decisions around young people’s placements in every local authority. Other groups may include other local authority professionals, parents/carers and the young people themselves.

Limitations of the data gathering methods & the data gathered

General critique of vignette methodology and the use of semi-structured interviews are presented in Chapter 3 at section 3.1.2. This section aims to position some further critique specific to the procedure here and the data it elicited.

First and foremost, the vignette which was used was not developed in the manner originally designed by the researcher which accounted for the views of all three participant groups. Although the researcher attempted to mitigate this risk by checking the validity of the vignette with the alternative provision leads after its development, their absence from the focus group may have affected the content of the vignette as they were unable to contribute to the discussion as it took place.

In terms of the interviews themselves, the researcher acknowledges being new to qualitative methodologies and, more specifically, semi-structured interviews. The literature indicates that semi-structured interviews are an activity which requires some practice and skill (Barribell & While, 1994) and, although the researcher took steps to ensure rigor in the implementation of this procedure, this relative inexperience may have affected the researcher's ability to guide the interviews in a neutral manner accounting for reflexivity.

Finally it is important to note a gap in the data gathered. The exploratory nature of this research which aimed to look more closely at the underlying attitudes of participants meant that the researcher chose to use broad questions. The risk introduced by this methodological decision was that there would be gaps in the framework chosen for analysis. In this case, an absence of data was gathered surrounding affective factors in alternative provision leads' attitudes towards alternative provision placements. This represents a threat to the credibility of the data as the theoretical literature indicates attitudes are formed of beliefs, experiences *and* affective factors (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Cooper, Blackman & Keller 2016; Maio & Haddock, 2015).

5.4.1.3 Limitations of data analysis method

The use of thematic analysis in research is subject to similar critique that qualitative methods in general are subject to, as described earlier in this chapter. Some further critique specific to the approach is presented in Chapter 3 at section 3.1.2.

5.4.2 Limitations of the topic and chosen research questions

Finally, the researcher aims to address limitations of the choice of topic and research questions. Although unique contribution of the research presented here is clearly outlined, there are limitations which further research would need to address in the interests of developing understanding in this area. A significant limitation is that the research topic and questions chosen do not address the significant concerns presented in the existing literature surrounding the quality of alternative provisions, thus resulting in limited implications about whether these provisions should or should not be used in their current position. Furthermore, the research questions asked here do not account for the differences in procedure around these placements which may exist in different local authorities

In addition to these limitations, it is pertinent to consider the difficulties in exploring attitudes in a research context. The research questions chosen here focus specifically on the attitudes of the participants, an area which is notoriously difficult to research (Maio & Haddock, 2014). Although the researcher took steps to account for theoretical knowledge in the area and aimed to utilise a rigorous data analysis process, it remains important for this difficulty in exploring attitudes to be explicitly acknowledged despite attempts made to address it.

5.5 Implications

Despite the limitations described above, the findings presented here may provide a useful contribution to future practice for educational psychologists, education professionals in a variety of settings and, finally, for government policy.

5.5.1 Implications for educational psychologists

In part, the original motivation for undertaking this research centred on the researcher's experiences of discussing with educational psychologists in her placement setting their concerns around the use of alternative provisions in the local authority. Consequently, the findings here have implications for professional practice in response to those concerns. First and foremost this research further highlights the importance of checking a shared definition of inclusion with their colleagues in other settings; an open dialogue surrounding the goals of inclusive practice may help educational psychologists to support schools to best meet the needs of their vulnerable young people such as Bert. In addition to this, educational psychologists could helpfully maintain unconditional positive regard for school staff; the findings here indicate a cognitive dissonance for school leads in which they want to support inclusion but are disempowered by the numerous barriers to achieving it. In terms of the practice of educational psychologists, this means that our role may be to support staff to overcome or breakdown these barriers and this could be achieved in part through open dialogue.

Whilst acknowledging that there are worrying difficulties with these placements, the professionals participating appeared to accept these placements as important in meeting young people's needs and at times acknowledged changing their definition of inclusion to accommodate this. Whilst the research here does not attempt to answer the question of whether or not these placements are inclusive, an implication of the findings is that

educational psychology services in local authorities where alternative providers are used may wish to revisit their collective definition of inclusion with these provisions in mind. It may be useful to develop a shared approach to schools wishing to use these provisions, whether that approach is supportive of those placements or not, and could also include the development of locally contextualised guidance for EPs who are asked to become involved in casework where AP is either in place or being considered.

5.5.2 Implications for educational settings

These findings also have implications for staff in educational settings; both in mainstream schools and alternative provisions. The concerns shared by participants around the quality of alternative provisions implies the need for schools staff to be rigorous in their assessment of the quality of the provision before choosing to proceed with one of these placements. Whilst a young person remains on a school roll, it is their responsibility to ensure that their educational provision is suitable.

Further to this, the concern shared by both alternative provision leads and school leads that the choice to use an alternative provision can at times be motivated by the needs of the school rather than the needs of the young person has significant implications for this decision-making process. The use of colleagues both within and outside of these settings, such as educational psychologists, to behave as 'critical friends' may support schools to ensure that these potentially life changing placement decisions are made on the basis of what is best for the young person.

Finally, the view shared by the participants that the link between mainstream schools and alternative providers in the case of these placements is vital has implications for all settings. Maintaining ownership of young people whether they attend the physical school site or not has been highlighted as important in the past (Whittaker, 2007) and this suggests that school leads could support

the inclusion of their young people placed in these settings to be more included by having this sense of ownership and taking a communicative and collaborative approach to the placement.

5.5.3 Implications for government policy

Whilst this has been suggested in the literature previously (Davies, 2012; Thompson & Russell, 2007), it bears highlighting here that rigorous quality assurance measures set by central and local government in regard to alternative provisions would be helpful in supporting school settings to be confident that the placement may be in the best interests of the young person. However, it is also essential that government policy is clear about what inclusion means and how inclusive practice is best achieved within the current education system. Government policy provides a confused message in this regard at present (DfE, 2011; DfE/DoH, 2015) which further contributes to the difficulties that education professionals have in making informed choices for these vulnerable young people. Within this context, there is an implication for the progress and attainment targets currently placed on school. Whilst schools must be held accountable for the achievement of their students, the findings here support those of Grieve (2009) in their suggestion that these targets can have a direct and negative impact on the inclusion of certain groups of vulnerable young people, leading the researcher to suggest here that the two could be usefully revised and considered in parallel by those responsible for developing these policies.

Finally, the findings of the literature review also further highlight a concern raised by Davies (2012) and Thompson & Russell (2007). Exclusion statistics do not currently include young people placed in alternative provision on a full or part-time basis. Whilst it may be true that these young people have not experienced a formal permanent exclusion, it is important that the statistics produced by the government are useful in establishing patterns in this regard

and they may not be considered to achieve a representative view of this at present.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

As laid out in Chapter 1 of the research presented here, one of the researcher's aims was to present an exploratory platform for further study into the area of alternative provision. By virtue of this goal, the findings here have elicited a great deal of further questions to be asked of future research in order to further our understanding in this area.

Whilst the participants here represented some significant voices in the process of making the decision to place a young person in alternative provision, the findings highlight further important voices which future researchers may wish to consider. In particular, pupil and parent voice has been mentioned by some of the participants here. Establishing the views of young people placed in alternative provision and their parents will make a valuable contribution, particularly for those professionals whose role includes advocating for young people such as educational psychologists. In particular, the researcher notes the concept of schools maintaining 'ownership' of young people and the research surrounding schools belonging, recently described by Allen & Kern (2017), could usefully be applied to consider the impact of alternative provision placements on this sense of belonging and what protective factors support it.

The researcher notes that it may also be useful to explore the process which leads to the decision to place a young person in an alternative provision. The findings here indicate that some professionals hold concerns around how the decision is made, implying that it can be made as a response to challenging behaviour rather than a proactive decision to meet a young person's needs. Whilst this process may differ across settings, the use of Activity Theory as proposed by Engeström, Miettinen & Punamäki (1999) may support those wishing to understand this decision-making process further. It may also inform

those involved in that process in their aim to ensure that these decisions are compatible with government agendas surrounding inclusion in particular.

Finally, a clear direction for future research is the impact of alternative provisions upon those who attend them. Whilst there has been some research indicating concerning outcomes in terms of qualifications (DfE, 2014), this is an area which requires further investigation. In addition this does not encompass every area in which a young person's life may be affected by these placements. The findings here indicate that alternative provision leads feel that their provisions offer young people the opportunity to build relationships with their staff which, in their view, contributes to their inclusion. The impact of these placements on young people's social, emotional, mental health and wellbeing (an area which, Davies (2012) suggests, is an area of need for this particular group of young people) has yet to be explored and it is essential that the literature can provide a contribution to evidence-based practice in this regard.

5.7 Reflections from the researcher

The research presented here comprises a number of the researcher's passions and goals; both personal and professional. The concept of inclusion has held a fascination for the researcher which has led her to reconsider a number of aspects of her personal, academic and professional views. Perhaps most significantly, the researcher's difficulties in understanding and approaching young people experiencing difficulties which manifest as troubled and challenging behaviour have been challenged in and of themselves by the professional training and by this research. Recognising this group of young people as vulnerable and, at times, marginalised, has been a transformative process for the researcher which may not have led to the attitudinal change she has experienced without the contribution of this process.

Further to this, the researcher has been able to explore and recognise the power of qualitative approaches. Prior to undertaking this research, the researcher held a firmly positivist epistemological stance which restricted her access to the valuable learning and development to be gained from alternative approaches. The methodological choices made here have been invaluable in developing the researcher in this aspect of the role of being a scientist practitioner.

Pertinently, the findings here have allowed the researcher to challenge and defend the principles of inclusion in the context of young people's alternative placements. This has developed the researcher as an applied psychologist and will contribute to her future practice in advocating for the inclusion of vulnerable groups throughout her career.

6. Chapter 6 – Conclusion

In the context of the inclusion agenda (Department for Education & Department of Health [DfE/DoH], 2015), the existing literature highlights the particular challenges to the inclusion of children and young people with SEMH (Goodman & Burton, 2010; Goodman & Burton, 2011). Under some circumstances these young people are placed in alternative provisions which are not always monitored or regulated (Thompson & Russell, 2007) and this research aimed to explore the attitudes of those key to making those placement decisions.

A qualitative methodology was used here to explore the attitudes of school senior leadership team members, alternative provision leads and educational psychologists. A vignette provided context for semi-structured interviews focussing on inclusion and the use of alternative provisions. An inductive thematic analysis was undertaken, guided by the principles outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006), and thematic maps were presented to summarise the data.

Six key findings were identified:

1. There is a tension between the theory and practice of inclusion when considering the use of alternative provision.
2. Mainstream schools experience a variety of systemic and individual challenges and feel deskilled in supporting young people with SEMH
3. The challenges in schools have led to the sense that Alternative Provision can do things which the mainstream cannot despite concerns around funding and quality assurance.
4. Taking ownership of young people and placing them at the centre of decisions around their provision is essential, although at times these decisions are made to meet school needs rather than young peoples’.
5. Educational Psychologists have a role in supporting the inclusion of young people like Bert and their educators.

6. Children and young people are perceived to have an impact on their own inclusion

These findings align with much of the literature presented in Chapter 2 whilst also providing new insight into the attitudes of the participants towards these placements in the context of the inclusion agenda. The participants' concern that young people's needs are not at the heart of these placement decisions reflect the concerns they also raise regarding macro-systemic hindering factors which have led them to feel that mainstream schools are unable to provide all that they need. Self-Determination Theory is highlighted as a useful framework for understanding young people's influence on their own inclusion and provides some useful proposals for how educators can promote this in schools.

Overall, these findings contribute a platform for further research to investigate what impact alternative provisions have on young people in both the short and long term. Alongside this platform, this research may also stimulate educational psychologists to consider their collective definition of inclusion and how this can and should be applied when responding to casework where alternative providers are involved or such a placement is being considered. The macro-systemic hindering factors highlighted by participants could provide useful guidance for the future development of educational policy at a government level given the rise in the use of alternative provision.

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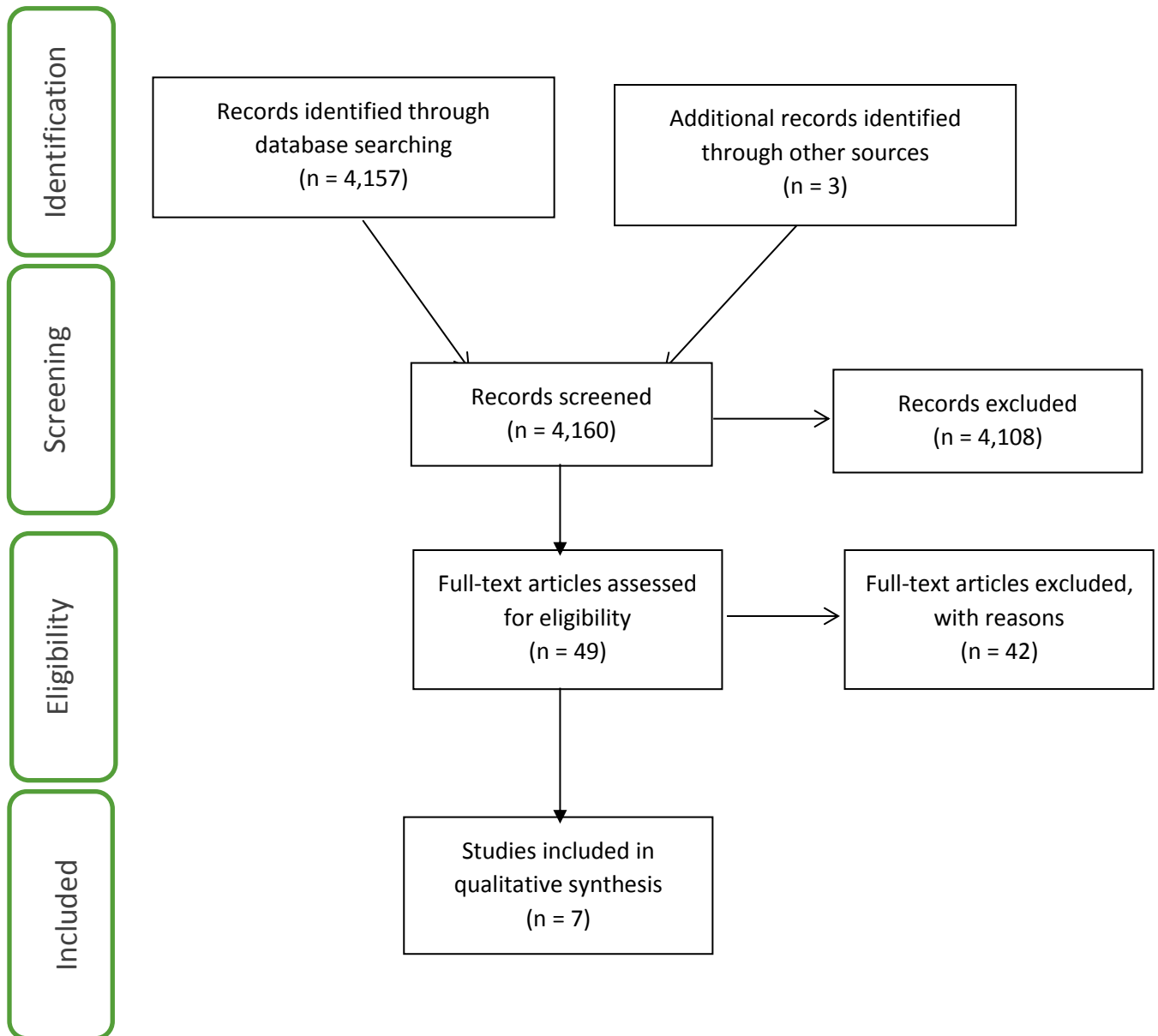
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Appendix 1

PRISMA flow chart.



Appendix 2

Papers screened and included/excluded

Author(s), year	Title	Included ?	Reasoning
Abbott, 2006	Northern Ireland Head Teachers' Perceptions Of Inclusion	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Armstrong, 2014	Educator Perceptions Of Children Who Present With Social, Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties: A Literature Review With Implications For Recent Educational Policy In England And Internationally	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point. The article is a review of the literature
Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000	A Survey Into Mainstream Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Inclusion Of Children With Special Educational Needs In The Ordinary School In One Local Education Authority	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000	Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Inclusion Of Children With Special Educational Needs In The Ordinary School	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.
Boyle, Topping & Jindal-Snape, 2013	Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion In High Schools	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Broomhead, 2013	Preferential Treatment Or Unwanted In Mainstream Schools? The Perceptions Of Parents And Teachers With	NO	The journal publishing the article is not peer reviewed.

	Regards To Pupils With Special Educational Needs And Challenging Behaviour		
Broomhead, 2014	'A Clash Of Two Worlds'; Disjuncture Between The Norms And Values Held By Educational Practitioners And Parents Of Children With Behavioural, Emotional And Social Difficulties	NO	The journal publishing the article is not peer reviewed.
Burnard & Yaxley, 2000	Children With Behavioural And Emotional Difficulties: Complex Children, Complex Training For Teachers	NO	The article is a review of the literature
Burton & Goodman, 2011	Perspectives Of SENCOs And Support Staff In England On Their Roles, Relationships And Capacity To Support Inclusive Practice For Students With Behavioural Emotional And Social Difficulties	NO	The article does not look at teacher attitudes/views
Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003	Changing Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards Disability And Inclusion	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Cassady, 2011	Teachers' Attitudes Toward The Inclusion Of Students With Autism And Emotional Behavioral Disorder	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Cheney, Blum & Walker, 2004	An Analysis Of Leadership Teams' Perceptions Of Positive Behavior Support And The Outcomes Of Typically Developing And At-Risk Students In Their Schools	NO	The research focuses on evaluating an intervention
Clough & Nutbrown, 2004	Special Educational Needs And Inclusion Multiple Perspectives Of Pre-school Educators In The UK	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.

Cohen, 2015	Principal Leadership Styles And Teacher And Principal Attitudes, Concerns And Competencies Regarding Inclusion	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Coleman, Webber & Algozzine, 2000	Inclusion And Students With Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	NO	The research was published before 2000
Dias & Cadima, 2016	Effects Of Personal And Professional Factors On Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion In Preschool	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Drysdale, Williams & Meaney, 2007	Teachers' Perceptions Of Integrating Students With Behaviour Disorders: Challenges And Strategies	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Gavish, 2017	Four Profiles Of Inclusive Supportive Teachers: Perceptions Of Their Status And Role In Implementing Inclusion Of Students With Special Needs In General Classrooms	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Glazzard, 2001	Perceptions Of The Barriers To Effective Inclusion In One Primary School: Voices Of Teachers And Teaching Assistants	NO	The journal publishing the article is not peer reviewed.
Goodman & Burton, 2010	The Inclusion Of Students With BESD In Mainstream Schools: Teachers' Experiences Of And Recommendations For Creating A Successful Inclusive Environment	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.
Grieve, 2009	Teachers' Beliefs About Inappropriate Behaviour: Challenging Attitudes?	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.
Hastings & Oakford, 2003	Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.
Hernandez, Hueck & Charley, 2016	General Education And Special Education Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing

			specifically at BESD at any point.
Jones, 2003	The Construction Of Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties	NO	The article is a review of the literature
Killoran, Woronko & Zaretsky, 2014	Exploring Preservice Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Lambe, 2007	Northern Ireland Student Teachers' Changing Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education During Initial Teacher Training.	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Lambe, 2011	Pre-Service Education And Attitudes Towards Inclusion: The Role Of The Teacher Educator Within A Permeated Teaching Model	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013	Teacher Attitudes And Behavior Toward The Inclusion Of Children With Social, Emotional And Behavioral Difficulties In Mainstream Schools: An Application Of The Theory Of Planned Behavior	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.
MacLeod, 2001	Towards Inclusion – Our Shared Responsibility For Disaffected Pupils.	NO	The research focuses on evaluating an intervention
Markova, Cate, Krolak-Schwerdt & Glock, 2016	Preservice Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion And Toward Students With Special Educational Needs From Different Ethnic Backgrounds	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2014	Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion, Perceived Adequacy Of Support And Classroom Learning Environment	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.

Moran, 2007	Embracing Inclusive Teacher Education	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Mowat, 2009	The Inclusion Of Pupils Perceived As Having Social And Emotional Behavioural Difficulties In Main-stream Schools: A Focus Upon Learning	NO	The journal publishing the article is not peer reviewed.
Mowat, 2010	Inclusion Of Pupils Perceived As Experiencing Social And Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD): Affordances And Constraints	NO	The research focuses on evaluating an intervention
Mowat, 2015	'Inclusion – That Word!' Examining Some Of The Tensions In Supporting Pupils Experiencing Social, Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties/Needs	NO	The research focuses on evaluating an intervention
O'Toole & Burke, 2013	Ready, Willing And Able? Attitudes And Concerns In Relation To Inclusion Amongst A Cohort Of Irish Pre-service Teachers	YES	All Inclusion/Exclusion criteria are met.
Paliokosta & Blandford, 2010	Inclusion In School: A Policy, Ideology Or Lived Experience? Similar Findings In Diverse School Cultures	NO	The journal publishing the article is not peer reviewed.
Poulou & Norwich, 2002	Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioural Responses to Students with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: a Model of Decision-Making	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland

Rose, 2001	Primary School Teacher Perceptions Of The Conditions Required To Include Pupils With Special Educational Needs	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Samanta, 2016	Attitude Of Secondary School Teachers Towards The Inclusion Of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Children In General Education Classroom	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Scanlon & Barnes-Holmes, 2013	Changing Attitudes: Supporting Teachers In Effectively Including Students With Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties In Mainstream Education	NO	The research focuses on evaluating an intervention
Sharma & Sokal, 2016	Can Teachers' Self-Reported Efficacy, Concerns, And Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scores Predict Their Actual Inclusive Classroom Practices?	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Shillingford & Karlin, 2014	Preservice Teachers' Self Efficacy And Knowledge Of Emotional And Behavioural Disorders	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Short & Bullock, 2013	Perspectives On Select Field-Based Experiences For Pre-Service Teachers Of Students With Emotional And Behavioural Disorders	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Soles, Bloom, Heath & Karagiannakis, 2008	An Exploration Of Teachers' Current Perceptions Of Children With Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland
Vaz, Wilson, Falkmer, Sim, Scott, Crodier & Falkmer, 2015	Factors Associated With Primary School Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Inclusion Of Students With Disabilities	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.

Visser, Cole & Daniels, 2002	Inclusion For The Difficult To Include.	NO	The article does not look at teacher attitudes/views
Whitty & Clarke, 2012	Irish Mathematics Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion	NO	Study looks broadly at inclusion rather than focussing specifically at BESD at any point.
Wood, Evans & Spandagou, 2014	Attitudes Of Principals Towards Students With Disruptive Behaviour: An Australian Perspective	NO	Research based outside of the UK/Ireland

Appendix 3

TAPUPAS model

The table below shows the definitions given by Gough (2007) for each of the aspects of the TAPUPAS model. This was used in the quality assessment.

Weight of Evidence A: Generic on quality of execution of study
Transparency - clarity of purpose Accuracy – accurate Accessibility – understandable Specificity – method specific quality
Weight of Evidence B: Review specific on appropriateness of method
Purposivity- fit for purpose method
Weight of Evidence C: Review specific on focus / approach of study to review question
Utility – provides relevant answers Propriety – legal and ethical research

Table from Gough, D. (2007). Weight of evidence: a framework for the appraisal of the quality and relevance of evidence. *Research papers in education*, 22(2), 213-228.

Appendix 4

Quality Assessment table

Author	A				B	C		Overall judgement
	T	Accu	Acce	S	Pu	U	Pr	
Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000)	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
Goodman & Burton (2010)	M	M	H	M	H	H	H	M
Grieve (2009)	H	L	H	M	H	M	H	M
Hastings & Oakford (2003)	M	M	H	H	H	L	H	M
MacFarlane & Woolfson (2013)	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka (2014)	H	H	H	H	H	M	H	H
O'Toole & Burke (2013)	H	H	M	M	H	H	H	H

H = High

M = Medium

L = Low

Appendix 5

Focus Group Script

Introduction - 5-10 mins

Good morning and welcome. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion today. My name is Zoe Brown, I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist from the University of Nottingham, currently working on placement with XXXXXXXX County Council. I am conducting a piece of research about Alternative Provisions and I am really interested in your views of what a child who attends an alternative provision might be like.

You were invited because you can all play a key part in the decision to place a child in an alternative provision and you may have similar or different ideas about what these children might be like. Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what others have said.

If you want to follow-up on something someone has said, you want to agree, disagree or give an example then feel free to do that. I am here to ask questions, listen and make sure that everyone gets the chance to share. I am interested in hearing from each of you so if you're talking a lot, I may ask you to give others a chance. And if you aren't saying much, I may call on you.

Feel free to get up and get refreshments if you would like. I'd like to start with some introductions and setting some ground rules for our group.

Introductions - tell us your name, your role and something interesting about you.

Ground Rules - I have some ideas but I wondered if anybody else had any thought on what important ground rules we should set for our session today?

- Confidentiality
- Unconditional Positive Regard
- Everyone gets a voice

Thank you. I've written our ground rules on the flip chart here to help us keep them in mind.

The aim of this focus group is to create a vignette which describes a child who might typically be placed in alternative provision. A vignette is "a brief evocative description, account or episode"; for us this means it is a short paragraph describing a young person. This vignette will then be used when I interview other EPs, Head teachers and Alternative Provision leads about their views. This is a really important part of my research because it will help me create a balanced, imaginary example of a young person who might attend an Alternative Provision.

At any point during our discussion, you might have a particular child in mind. It is helpful to use examples to think about these young people. Try to think broadly about what the young people you know who have been placed in alternative provision have in common rather than focussing on one particular child.

Any questions??

Phase 1 - Mind-mapping - 30 -40 mins

Individual - I'd like you to draw a young person who is in an Alternative Provision. You don't have to be an artist, a stick figure is just fine. Label the figure with any information you feel is important about the young person (i.e. gender, age, personality, strengths, needs, likes, dislikes). In one corner of the page, draw the child's home and write some key words inside the picture which describes the child's life at home. Now, in another corner of the page, draw the child's school and write some key words inside the picture which describe the child's life at school. Finally, draw a picture of a row of houses to represent the community and fill them with key words describing their relationship with the community.

Feedback - Please could you show us your drawing and tell us about the child you have drawn. When you have finished, we can discuss as a group

any similarities or differences between our drawings and come up with one drawing which reflects all of our views using the flipchart paper.

Phase 2 - Writing the vignette - 15-25 mins

Now that we have an annotated drawing representing our fictional young person, we need to translate that into a short passage describing him/her. It is important that we all agree on what this passage says and that it is an accurate translation of the young person we have created.

How should we start?

What should we add next?

And now?

And now?

And finally?

Have we captured the drawing or is there anything else we need to add?

Closing and thank you

Thank you for taking part in this group. We have created an in-depth view of this fictional young person and I'm looking forward to using the vignette we have written to talk to other professionals.

If you have any further questions please feel free to ask them now. If you think of anything later you wish to discuss with me, please feel free to email me on xxxxxxxxxxxx

Thank you once again for your time.

Prompts for questioning & probing

Would you explain further?

Tell us more?

Please describe what you mean?

I'm wondering if you could give some further details about that?

Could you give an example of what you mean?

I'm wondering if others in the group have had the same experiences?

(if someone nods agreement with another group member) I can see that you agree, could you tell us more?

REMEMBER: responses should NOT include value judgements such as "correct!" or "excellent!".

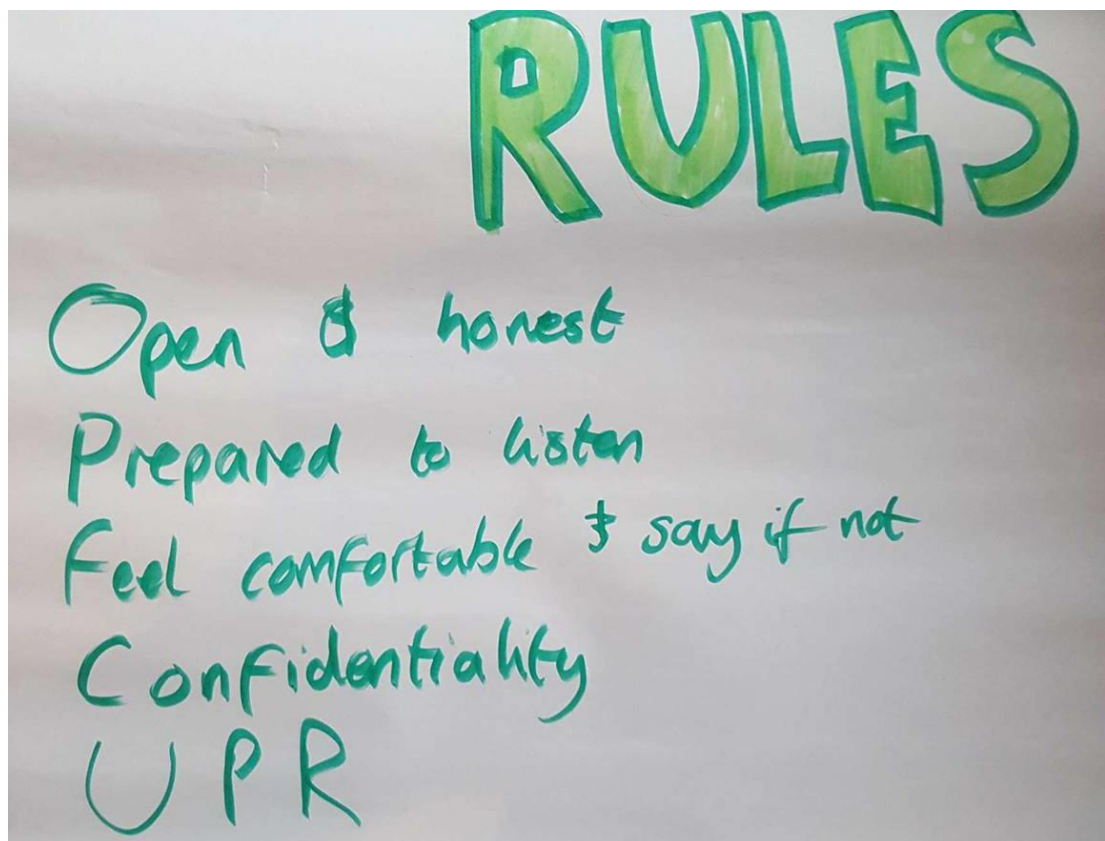
"Okay", "Yes", "Uh huh" or slow nodding are appropriate.

Appendix 6

Focus Group Ground Rules

1. Open & honest communication
2. All group members prepared to listen
3. All group members should be made to feel comfortable and feel confident to say if they are not comfortable.
4. All discussions will be kept confidential
5. Unconditional Positive Regard from between all group members

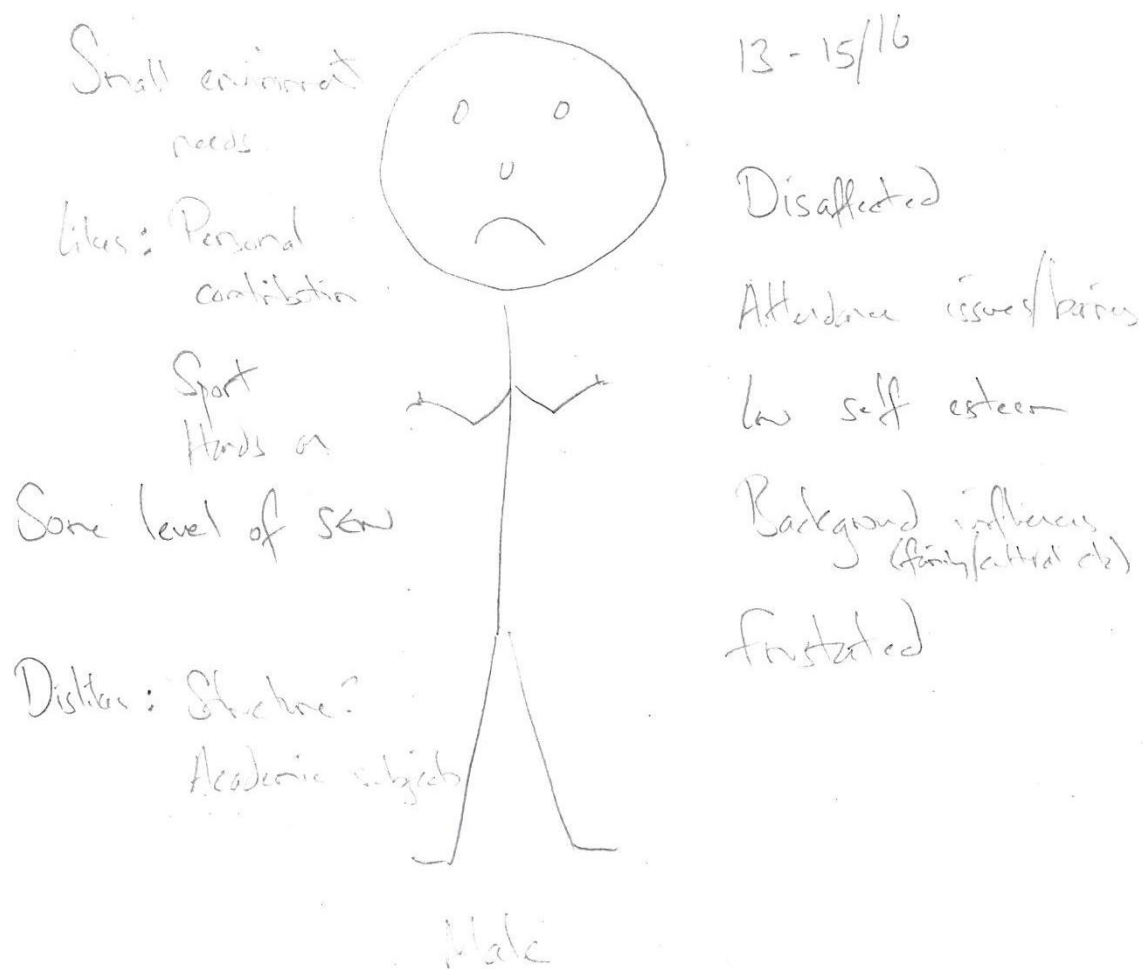
This image shows the notes made on the flip chart during the focus group itself:



Appendix 7

Drawings produced by school leadership team members during the Focus Group

The young person drawn and annotated by the first of the school leaders



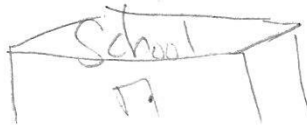
The aspects of the young person's life drawn and annotated by the first of the school leaders



Disfranchised
Sparse

unkept
load

low income



low self-esteem

Disaffected

low attendance

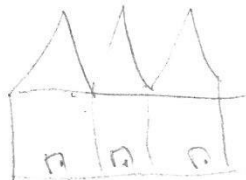
SEN? - Barrier to learning

Equality issues

work unkept - presentation

lack of resources

Aggression Risk of ~~exclusion~~



Deprived area

Risk of anti-

Concert terrace?

social

lack of input (parabola)

behaviour

left to own devices

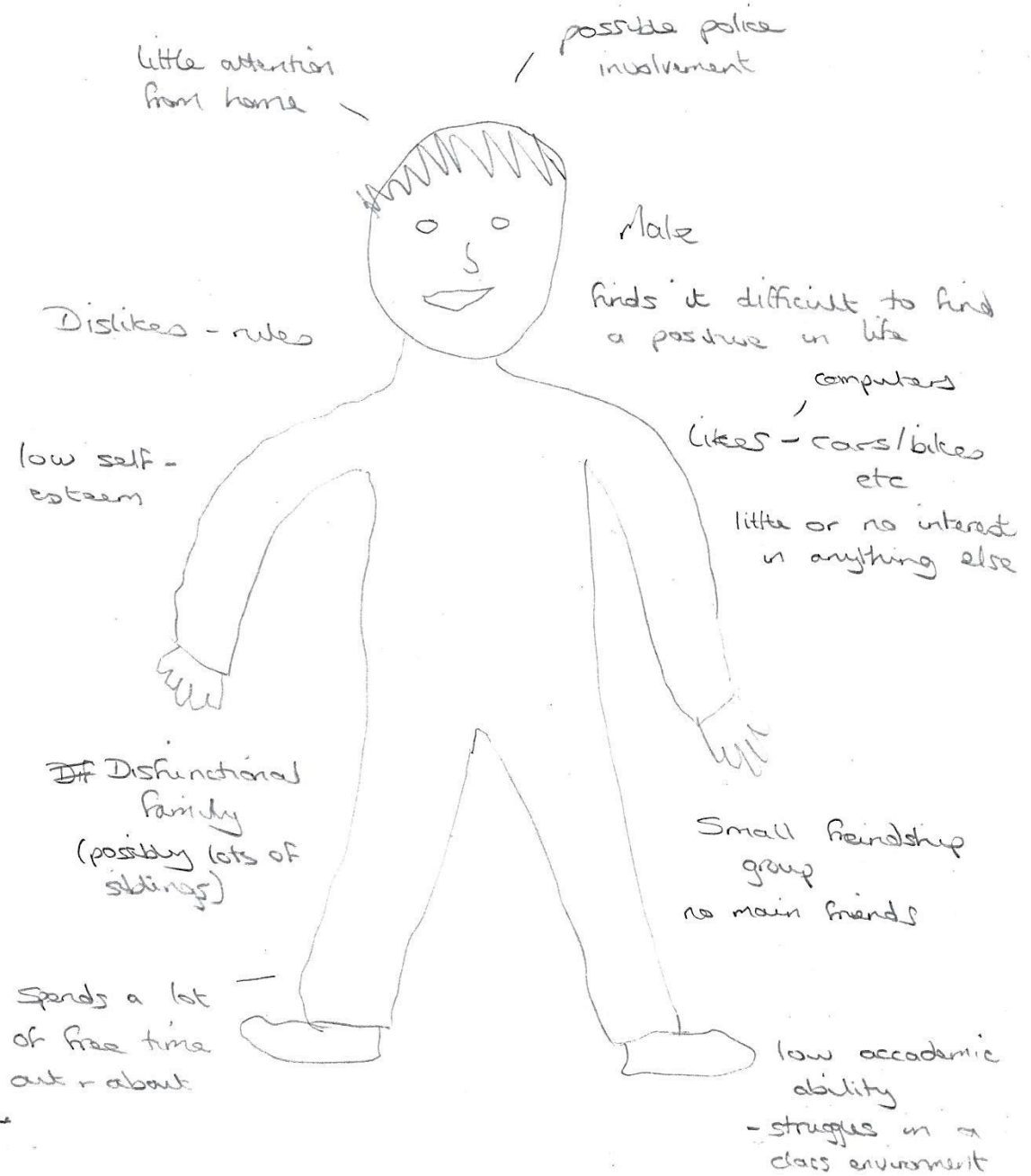
Potential incident

high unemployment

in area

high crime rate

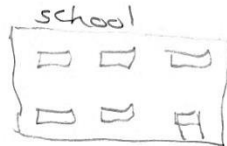
The young person drawn and annotated by the second of the school leaders



The aspects of the young person's life drawn and annotated by the first of the school leaders



cluttered
unkempt
lots of people in & around
no structure/routine
noisy
~~messy~~ gardens need attending
messy



school
frightening
unsure
feels like they have to show off
create a reason to leave a lesson
don't want to be shown up if they
can't do the work
defence mechanism to protect
lonely

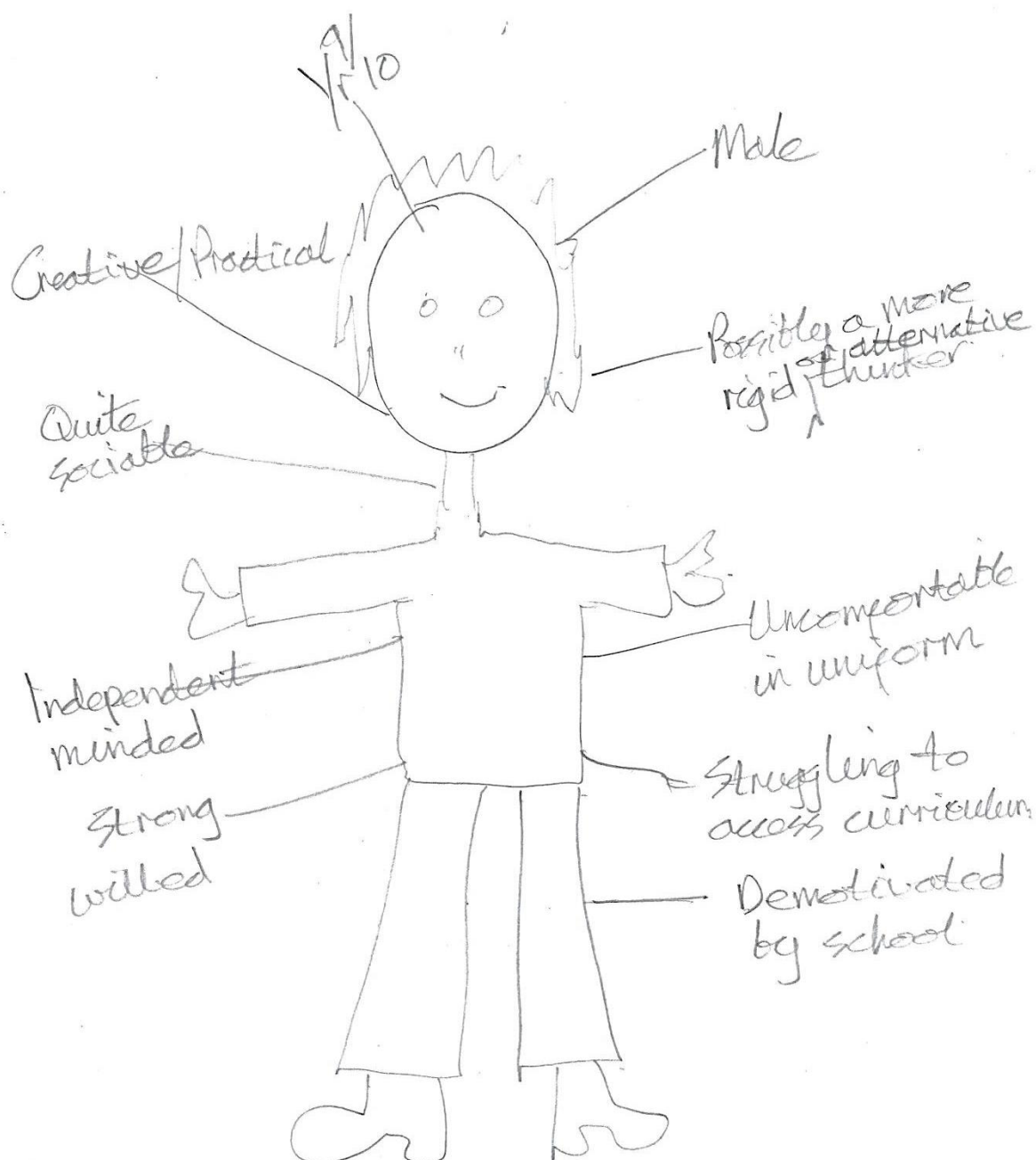


community
- apprehensive know of them
protective deprived area
annoyed like minded people around
unsure
friendly
messy gardens

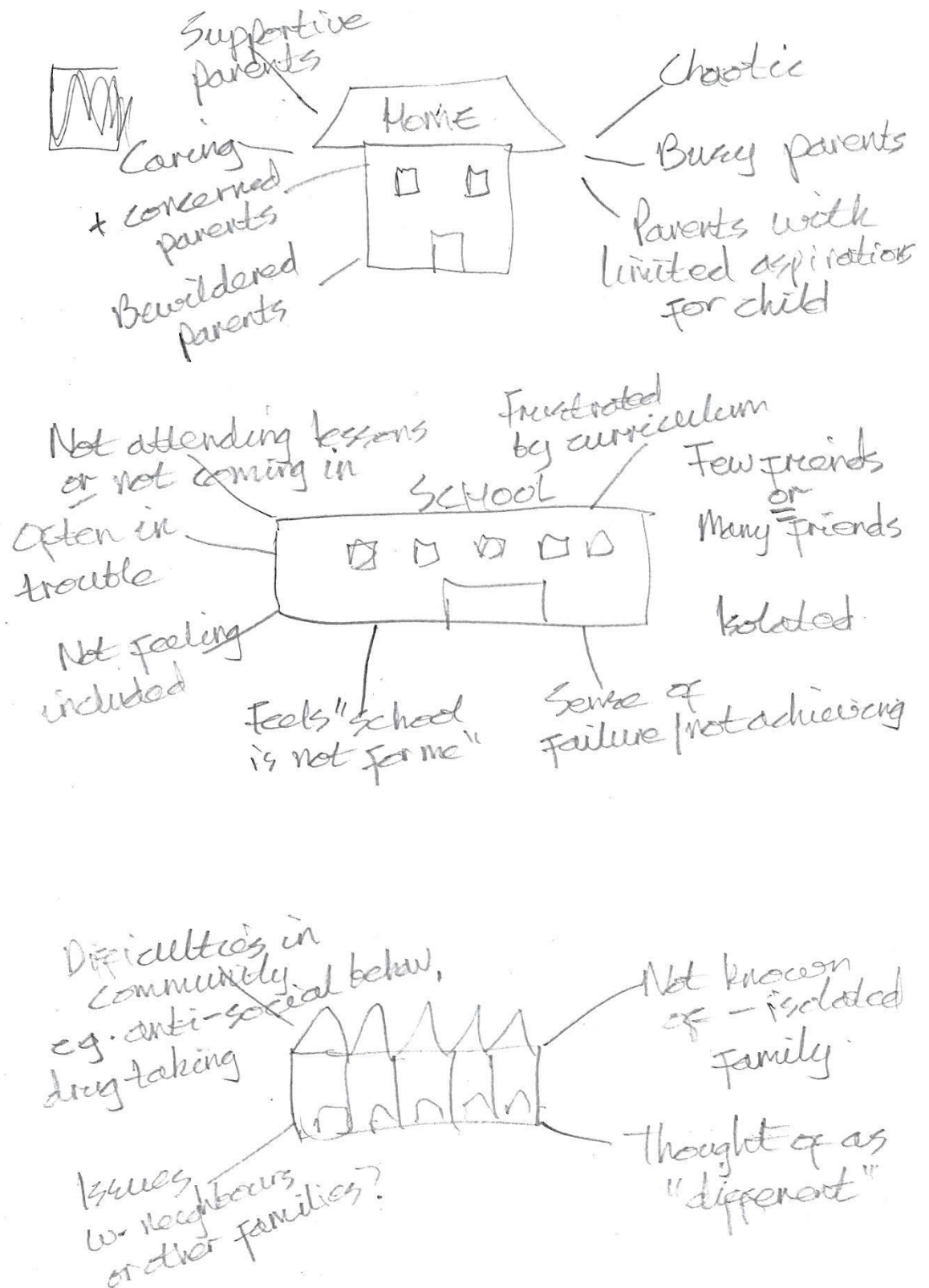
Appendix 8

Drawings produced by the educational psychologist during the Focus Group

The young person drawn and annotated by educational psychologist



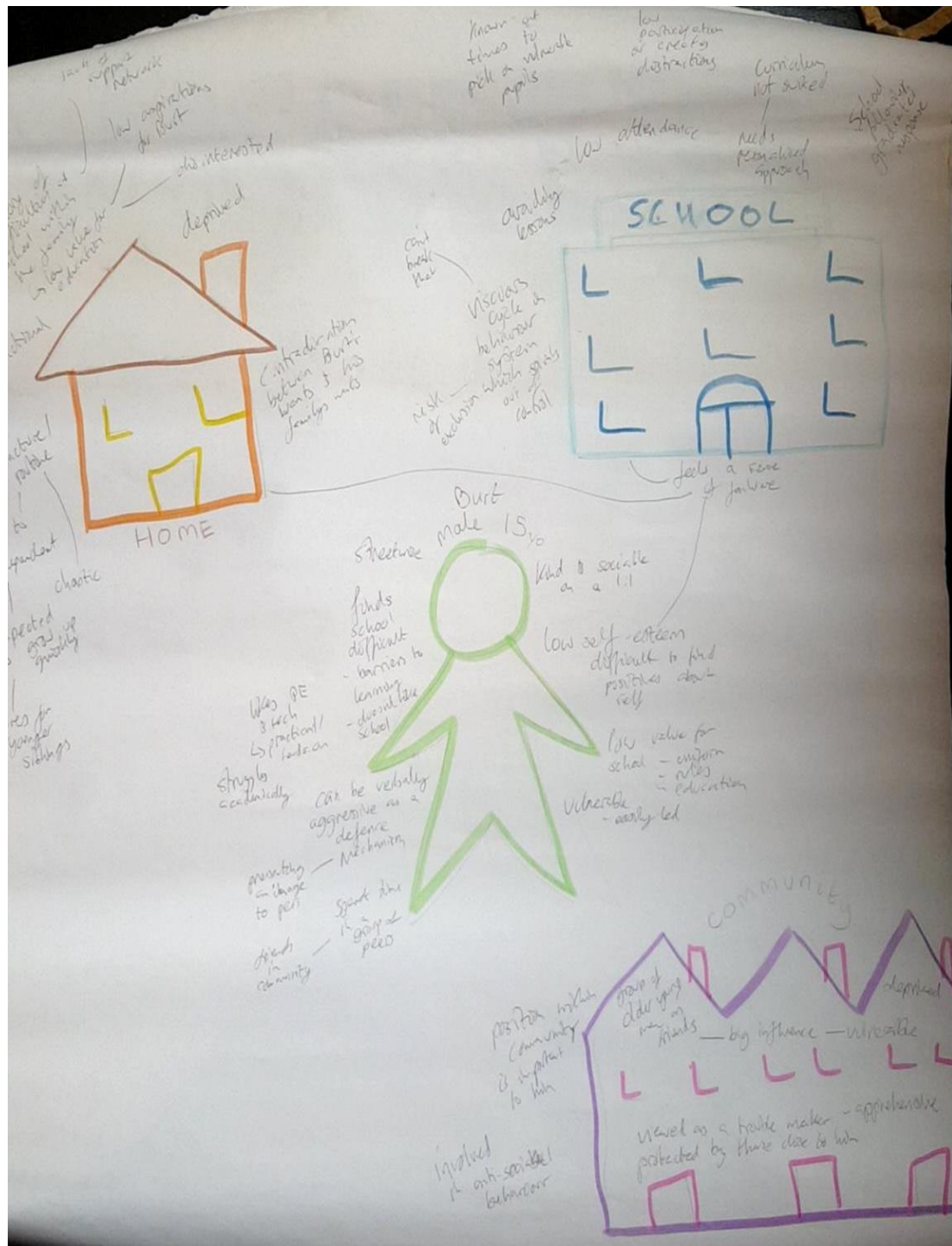
The aspects of the young person's life drawn and annotated by the educational psychologist



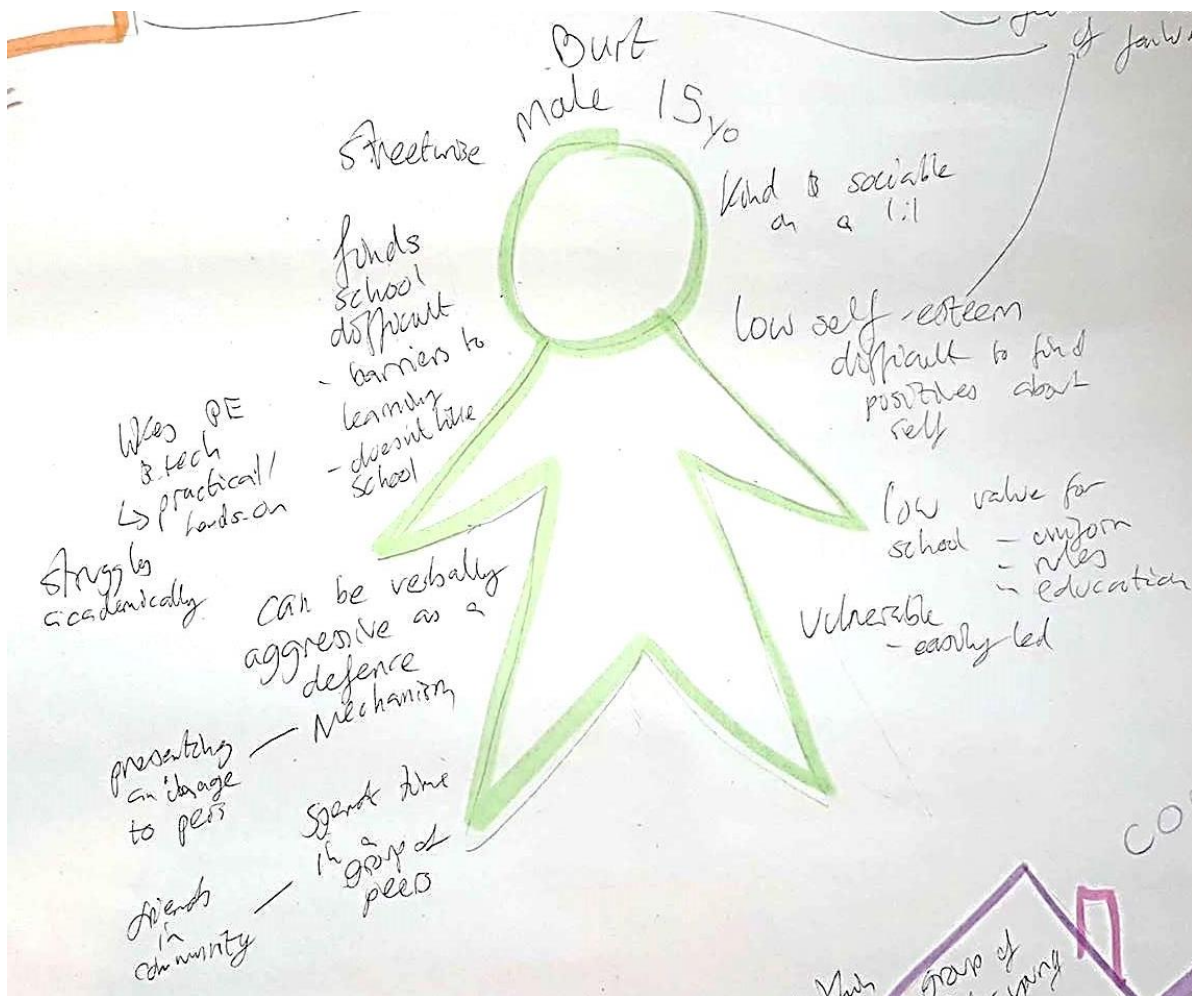
Appendix 9

The graphic with annotations produced by the researcher during the focus group.

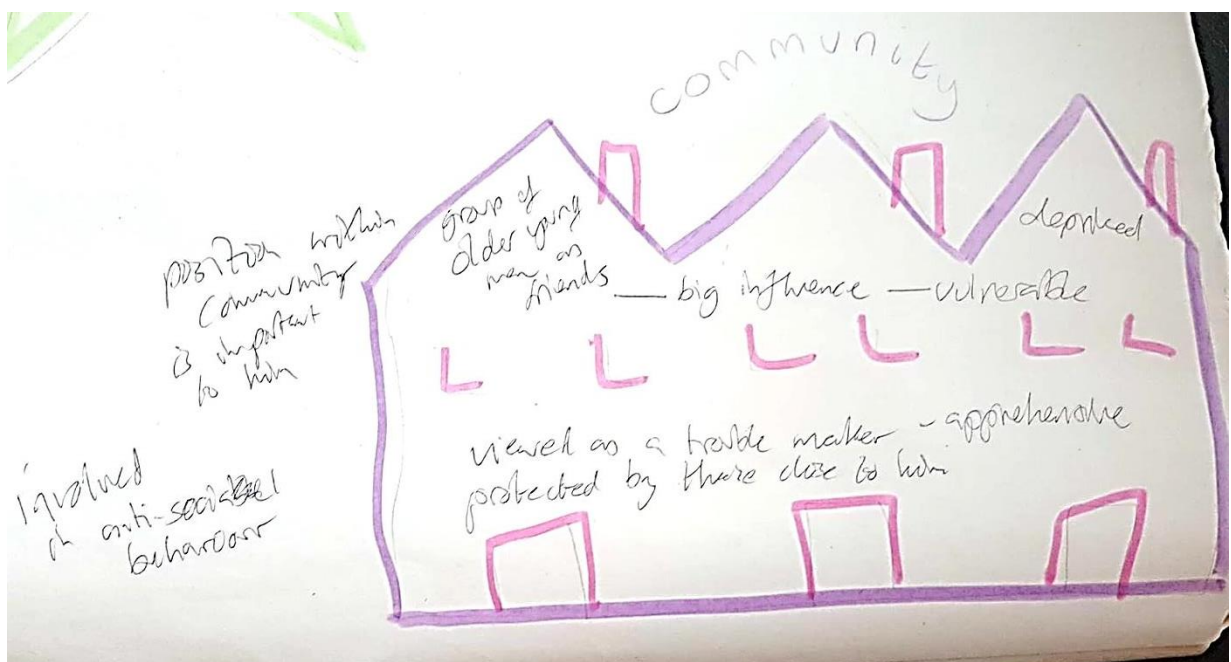
The overall flipchart graphic with annotations



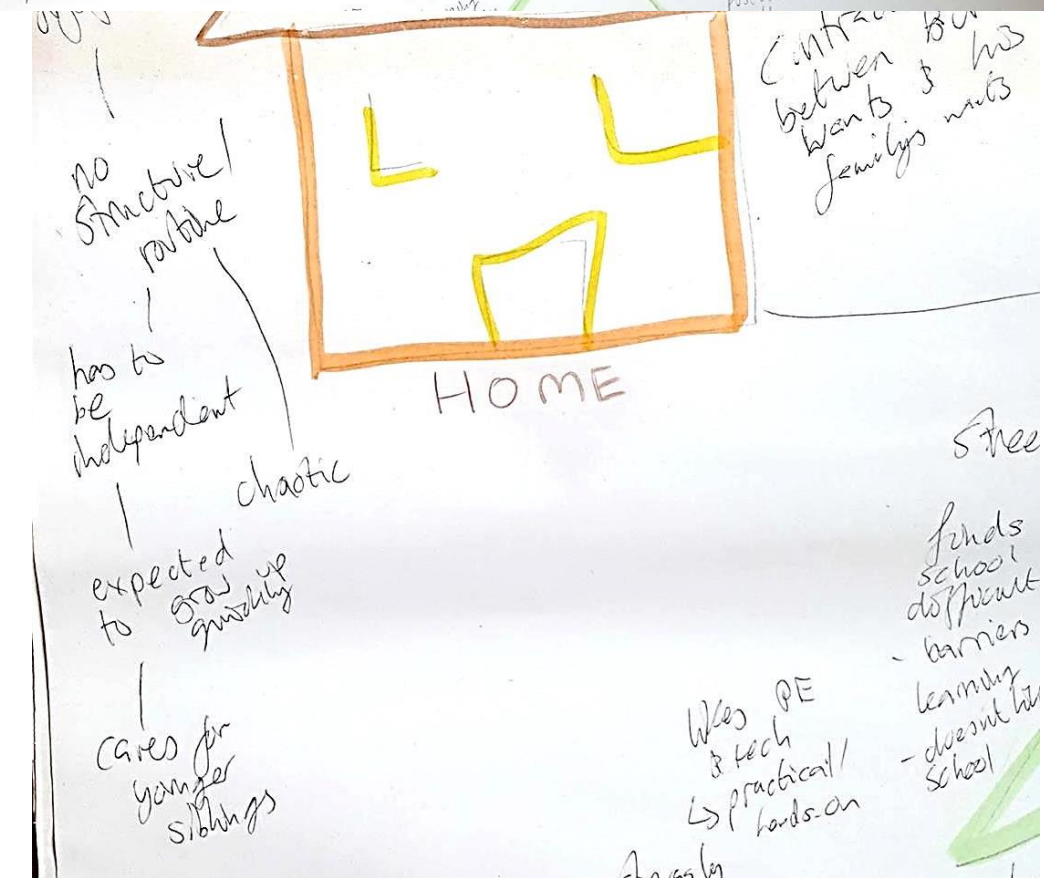
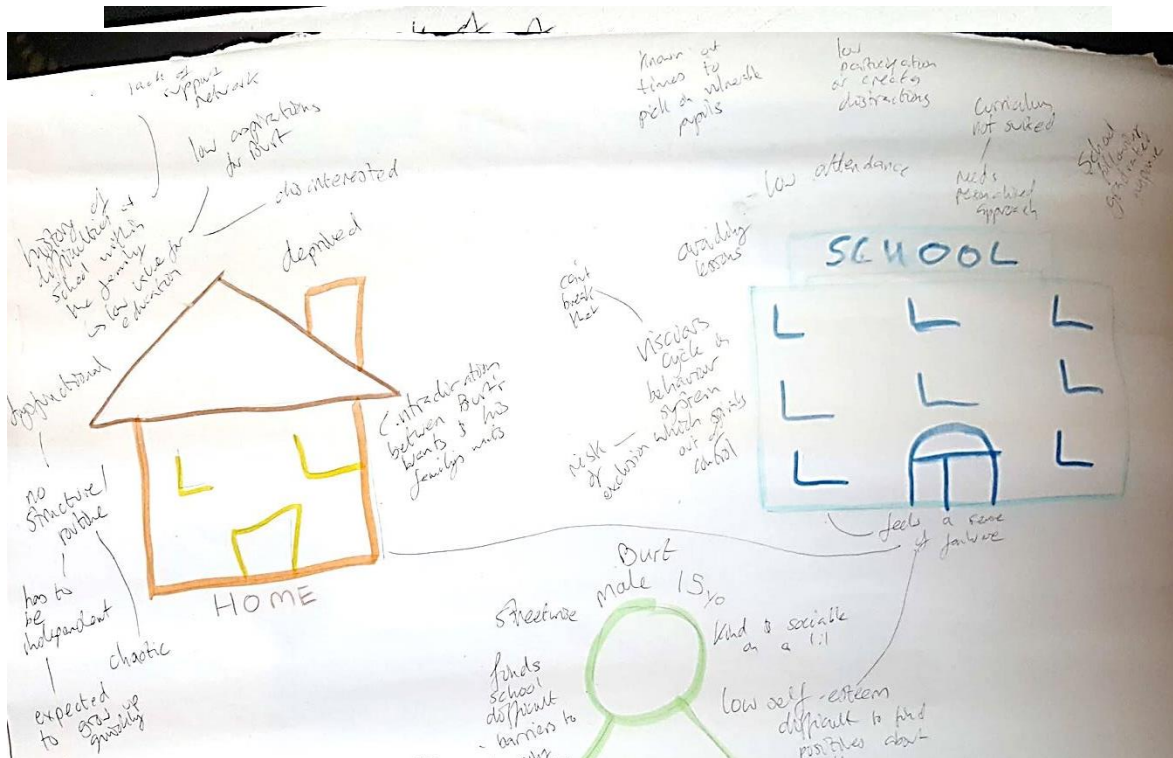
Close up of the young person & annotations



Close up of the community & annotations



Close up of the home & annotations



Close up of home and school & annotations

Close up of the school & annotations

Appendix 10

Information Sheet

Information Sheet for Participants

Title of Project: Using a vignette to understand the attitudes of those making key decisions around the inclusion and educational placement of children and young people in Alternative Provisions.

Insert Ethics Approval Number or Taught Project Archive Number

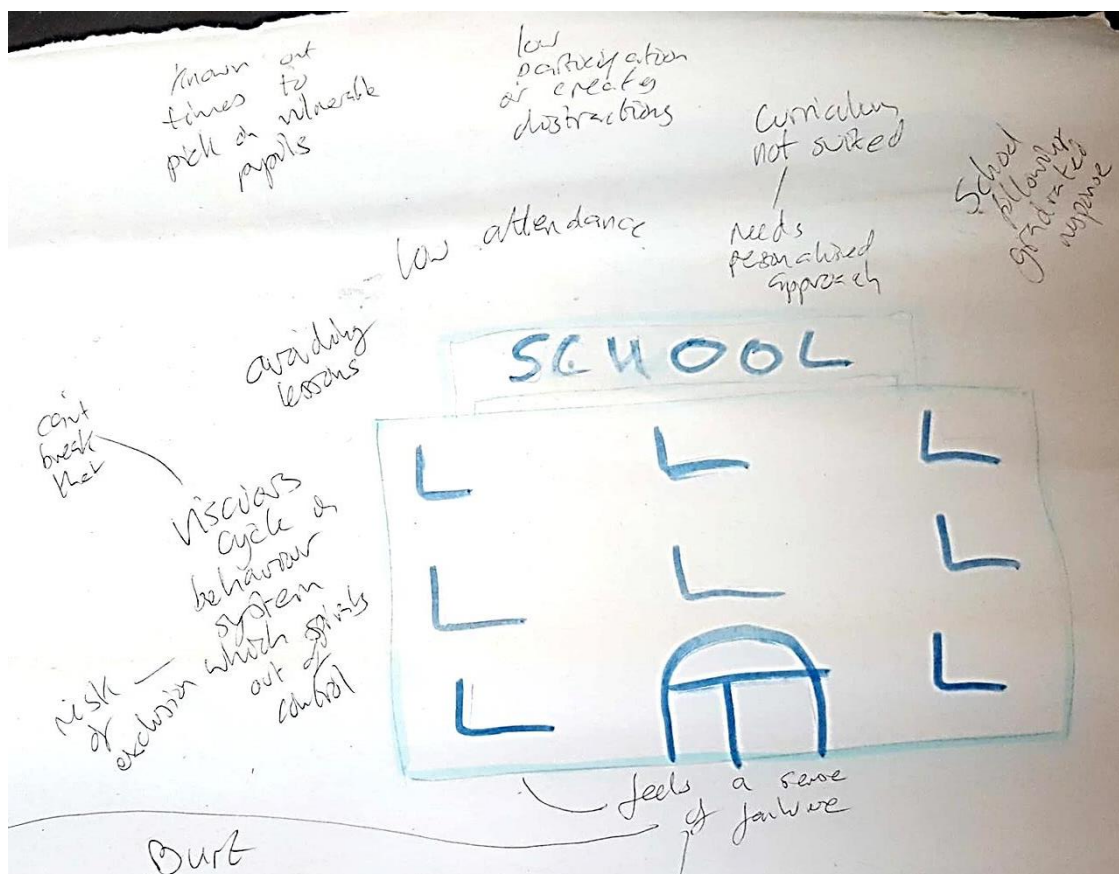
Researcher: Zoe Brown *Supervisors:* Dr Sarah Atkinson

Contact Details: Zoe Brown: lpzxlb@nottingham.ac.uk Dr Sarah Atkinson: lpasa3@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

This is an invitation to take part in a research study looking at the reasons children are placed in alternative provisions.

Before you decide if you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

I am investigating the perspectives of key decision makers when it comes to placing children and young people in alternative provisions. This is an exploratory study and it is hoped that



the findings will be useful in understanding the key concepts which contribute towards the decision to place a child or young person in an alternative provision.

If you participate, there will be a semi-structured interview whereby the researcher will visit you at your work place and speak with you for approximately 1 hour; we will need a private and quiet room for this time. There will be a short passage to read about a child attending an alternative provision which will then be the subject of some open questions to gather your views. The interview will be voice-recorded and these recordings will be stored securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act and the voice recordings will be deleted after the interviews have been transcribed.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part. You are free to withdraw at any point before, during or up to 6 weeks after the interview. The findings will be presented in a thesis and all participants will remain anonymous (all names will be removed from both the transcripts and the thesis). All data collected will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. It will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to ask now. We can also be contacted after your participation at the above address.

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

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 11

Consent Form

Consent Form for Participants

Title of Project: Using a vignette to understand the attitudes of those making key decisions around the inclusion and educational placement of children and young people in Alternative Provisions.

Insert Ethics Approval Number or Taught Project Archive Number

Researcher: Zoe Brown Supervisors: Dr Sarah Atkinson

Contact Details: Zoe Brown: lpzxlb@nottingham.ac.uk Dr Sarah Atkinson: lpasa3@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

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? YES/NO

- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study?
YES/NO
(at any time and without giving a reason)
- Do you give your permission for the interview conducted to be voice recorded? The recording will be stored securely in compliance with the Data Protection Act and the transcripts will have all names removed.
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

“This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time.”

Signature of the Participant:

Date:

Name (in block capitals)

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

Signature of researcher:

Date:

Appendix 12

Stakeholder Engagement Letter

This matter is being dealt with by:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

T

E

W



The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA

Dear Mr / Mrs X

My name is Zoe Brown, I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Nottingham and I am currently on placement with XXXXXXXXX County Council Educational Psychology Service. I am looking to recruit participants for my doctoral research project investigating the placement of children and young people within alternative provisions.

As part of this study I am hoping to meet with leaders of alternative provisions/ school leadership teams/ educational psychologists [DELETE AS APPROPRIATE], who are key in making decisions around placing children and young people in these alternative provisions.

This research has been given ethical approval and in line with ethical practice, I would ensure that all parties involved in the research are fully informed of the study aims and procedures. I would also seek fully-informed consent from all participants involved, I have attached an information sheet and a consent letter for your reference.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to speak with you, or relevant person(s), to discuss my research further and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Brown

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 13

Debrief Sheet

EXPERIMENTAL DEBRIEFING INFORMATION

School of Psychology

University of Nottingham

Name of Experimenter:

Zoe Brown

Email of Experimenter:

lpxzlb@nottingham.ac.uk

Name of Supervisor:

Dr Sarah Atkinson

Email of Supervisor:

lpasa3@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Title of Experiment:

Using a vignette to understand the attitudes of those making key decisions around the inclusion and educational placement of children and young people in Alternative Provisions.

Background/Hypothesis:

Given the context of increasing use of alternative provisions (APs) in England (Davies 2012), this research aims to elicit an understanding of the attitudes towards inclusion held by key decision makers in the process of placing children in these APs. The underlying theory guiding head teachers, alternative provision leads and county council staff supporting the process of making decisions around the placement of young people within these alternative provisions is pertinent in the context of promoting inclusive practice and ensuring the best outcomes for the children and young people who may be placed within them (DfE 2014). The purpose of the research proposed here is to gather the views on inclusion of these three key groups in the context of semi-structured interviews. It is hypothesised that the three key groups will differ in their definitions of inclusion and their thoughts on how inclusion can be achieved for a child with additional needs.

Design and Dependent Measures:

This is an exploratory investigation using a between-groups design to investigate underlying attitudes towards inclusion of key decision-makers in the process of deciding on the placement of a child or young person in an alternative provision. The research will include two phases; a focus group to develop the vignette followed by individual semi-structured interviews using the vignette with three groups; school leadership team members, alternative provision leads and Educational Psychologists as they are often asked to give a view on educational placements for children with additional needs. The focus group will include a school leadership team member, AP lead and educational psychologist. Those participating in the focus group will not participate in phase 2 of the experiment.

Intended Analysis:

The voice recordings of the interview will be transcribed. A thematic analysis approach will be taken to analysing the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews. This method of analysis has been chosen as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it fits well with the pragmatic approach to research which underpins the study proposed here. The data from the three groups of individuals will be collated and a separate analysis of the data from each group will be conducted. This will allow any similarities and differences in the themes uncovered for each group to be compared and contrasted.

Useful Reading:

- Davies, M. (2012) Local Authority approaches to Exclusion and Alternative Provision: A research report commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council to inform "A review of Nottinghamshire's arrangements for children with Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties". Nottinghamshire County Council. Retrieved from: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/easysiteweb/gatewaylink.aspx?allid=228552>.
- Department for Education (2014) School behaviour and attendance: Research priorities and questions.
- Monsen, J. J., & Frederickson, N. (2004). Teachers' attitudes towards mainstreaming and their pupils' perceptions of their classroom learning environment. *Learning Environments Research*, 7(2), 129-142.

Further Information:

Should you feel that you would like further information about this research or if you would like to discuss any aspect of the study in more detail, please contact Zoe Brown on the email address above. Zoe will be happy to explore any queries or concerns with the support of supervisor Dr Sarah Atkinson.

Appendix 14

Semi-Structured Interview Script

Good morning/afternoon, my name is Zoe Brown and I am a trainee educational psychologist from The University of Nottingham on placement at XXXXXXXX County Council. Our task today is to look at a short passage describing a child/young person placed within an alternative provision in the county and discuss the case together.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that you are free to withdraw from this research at any time, including up to six weeks from today. I am recording our discussion because I will later want to recall what was said accurately. The contents of our discussion today will be kept anonymous and when I write up my research I will not include the names of any person or school within the transcripts of our interview today. Please feel free to ask questions at any time, your information sheet includes my contact details in case you have questions after I leave.

When it comes to our discussion, there are no right or wrong answers. The questions I have to ask are designed to prompt this discussion rather than lead it. Please feel free to use examples during our discussion. If you are happy to continue, we can now look at the case we are here to discuss.

Here is a vignette describing a young person who has been placed in an alternative provision on a part-time basis, please read it carefully as it will inform our discussion.

Present the vignette to the participant and give them time to read it.

Questions:

1. With the case we have just looked at in mind, what does 'inclusion' mean to you?
2. To what extent do you feel that this young person can be/is being included under the terms of your definition?
3. What factors in this case help and/or hinder the inclusion of this child/young person?
4. Is there anything you feel that the head teacher/alternative provision lead/educational psychologist involved in this case could do differently/additionally to promote the inclusion of this child/young person?
5. Do you have any other thoughts stimulated by this case or the discussion we have had today that you would like to share?

Appendix 15

Example Transcript Extract

Extract from the transcript of the interview with AP1:

"B: So let's say the strengths, all the positives yeah we've got that he is kind and sociable that that's a positive i.e. he is able to engage, he's got constructive interests and he is able to access the social and obviously this is someone else's opinion around his group of peers but he then can clearly access, he is leaving house, he is not an anxious learner whose tied up in his bedroom for example so that needs to be seen as a strength. Erm. He's got caring responsibilities. Again, that is a strength

A: How do you think that particular strength would manifest for Bert?

B: Obviously it depends on the caring responsibilities, if they're younger siblings humans and you would imagine that he is having to take on the role of protector for example is going to be reliable if he is picking them up from school for example so you could assume that he can be punctual that he can follow instructions, that he can guide other people. You know, a leadership role that he might be making meals, he might be cleaning, so there is quite a lot of things three. Yes, so I think they're the positives

A: and how would they directly help him help anyone working around him to make sure he is included

B: because you need to play to those particular strengths and exploit them to a certain extent I don't mean that in a pejorative term. Yeah. So sometimes I find that the inclusion can come from what you call a deficit model, so let's have a look at this child and what's wrong with this child and then what do we need to pump into this child to make them better as it were. Yeah? Deficit model. Whereas what it's really about is inclusion come from strength-based model which is actually what are the strengths and let's build on those because that then fills any deficit, does that make sense?

A: So can you think of any examples of a learner that might be similar to Bert and what was helpful for that learner in terms of including him or her?

B: I'm thinking about particular female, I don't know how similar she is to Bert, it's just because I know she had been talking about her experiences this week, she is very forthright, you know, there is no sitting on the fence there, but I think for her what she would say in terms of her being included was that she had to learn that her behaviour was getting in the way of her being able to access so she wasn't allowing herself to access but the thing that helped her to feel included was just pure persistence, and not that okay, you've kicked off, so we are going to exclude you, or, no. Because the way that we tend to work is that we don't exclude, we never exclude, however bad it is. They might need a day, time out to figure out how to deal with it but we don't exclude. And for her it was about that perseverance of actually, we're not going to go away and it's that pushing of boundaries to check, am I safe, oh no, they've pissed off like everybody else, or the strategy has worked, I've got what I wanted, it is that realisation that, erm, you know this isn't going away oh and actually I'm a bit fed up of being like this so it is the perseverance, it's like the drip, drip, drip of the tap"