Volume Two

Professional Practice Reports

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Introductory Chapter

Volume two of my thesis comprises of four professional practice reports (PPRs):-

1) An exploratory case study of a Local Authority Nurture Group: The factors which led mainstream schools to refer pupils to the nurture group and an outline of the perceived needs of those pupils at the time of the referral.
2) The employment of Social stories to support the delivery of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy – a reflective account.
3) The expansion of traded services: Exploring the key issues and implications for EPs.
4) How has the pupil voice been retrieved and incorporated within the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Single Plan? Exploring the approaches utilised by 3 special schools within a South London Borough.

PPRs 1, 2 and 4 outlines research I conducted on behalf of the Local Authority (LA) in which I am currently employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. This research was conducted in order to inform practice within the LA, due to emerging national and local changes regarding a) how the needs of children and young people are supported and b) the EPS' model of service delivery.

PPR2 documents my experience in delivering a therapeutic intervention, following substantial tuition during year 2 of my training at the University of Birmingham.

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Chapter 1 Professional Practice Report 1

An exploratory case study of a Local Authority Nurture Group: The factors which led mainstream schools to refer pupils to the nurture group and an outline of the perceived needs of those pupils at the time of the referral

1.1 Abstract

This research was carried out on behalf of the Local Authority's Behaviour Support Team due to a planned restructure of the current nurture provision. The researcher explored mainstream SENCo's and class teachers' perspectives regarding pupils who currently attend an off-site nurture provision within a South London Borough.

This research explored the needs of the pupils who attend the provision and also explored participants' rationale for referring the pupil and their expectations for the placement. It was anticipated that research findings would provide further information regarding the *type* of environment the pupils required. It was anticipated that this information could be utilised to help inform the restructuring of the new provision.

A case study design was adopted. This enabled the researcher to explore multiple perspectives regarding the nurture group (the case) in greater depth, predominantly due to the unique nature of the context.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, in which participants were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview and complete a brief questionnaire (self-administered). Semi-structured interviews explored participants' views regarding the pupils' needs at the time of referral, their rationale for referring the pupil and their expectations for the nurture placement. The questionnaire was administered to explicitly explore participants' views regarding a) the pupil's needs at the time of the referral and b) the severity of their need(s).

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. However the researcher utilised a concurrent triangulation strategy to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data regarding the pupils' needs, comparing and contrasting the two data sets.

Four overarching themes were identified and are discussed within the PPR. The converged data suggests that staff comprehensively believed pupils' behaviour was a motivating factor for referring pupils to the provision. However pupils also required additional support to develop age-appropriate social skills.

Participants' responses within the research interviews suggest that the restructured provision will support pupils more effectively if intensive adult support, routines and boundaries are provided. Staff at the provision will also need to consider the impact the pupils' behaviour has made upon their learning. Therefore pupils may be functioning well-below age-appropriate levels. This may have implications for staff training.

In addition, as a result of the research findings, the researcher makes recommendations for the Local Authority regarding procedural arrangements, due to their impact upon the effective functioning of the existing nurture group. This appeared to currently have financial implications for the LA and provide instability for pupils who attend the provision.

1.2 Introduction

The following professional practice report (PPR) outlines research carried out with mainstream teaching staff and special educational coordinators within a South London Borough. This research explored the staff members' views regarding pupils who were referred by their 'home-school' to an off-site nurture provision, run in collaboration between the Local Authority (LA) and one primary school. This research formed part of the author's role as a trainee educational psychologist within the LA.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Nurture Groups

Nurture groups can be described as a form of early intervention, usually provided for pupils experiencing emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD) (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005; DfEE, 1997). Conventionally nurture groups provide approximately 6-12 pupils with a small, safe and structured environment away from their mainstream classroom (Ofsted, 2011; Bennathan, 2002).

Nurture groups are traditionally described to support pupils experiencing a delay in the healthy development of their emotional and psychological development, which has impacted on their ability to understand their own behaviour, form relationships and communicate with others (Cooper and Lovey, 1999). However the needs of the pupils referred to nurture groups can vary significantly, which will be discussed later within this paper.

1.3.2 Psychological theory behind nurture groups

I will focus upon two key psychological theories to explore the philosophy behind nurture group support – *attachment theory*, and Bruner's theory of

scaffolding. However one must acknowledge that nurture staff may draw upon alternative theories and research, in order to effectively support a range of pupils' needs.

Nurture groups are theoretically underpinned by attachment theory (Boxall and Lucas, 2010; Doyle, 2001). Attachment theory was developed from the work of John Bowlby, who argued that infants have an innate requirement to seek proximity and emotional attachment with a primary caregiver. This proximity would eventually lead to the development of positive emotional, social and personal growth (Goldberg, 2000; Read, 2010). Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters et al. (1978) identified three forms of attachment that can occur between child and caregiver, *secure*, *avoidant* and *resistant-ambivalent*. A fourth category, *disorganised-disoriented* was later identified.

The primary caregiver provides a 'secure base' for the infant, recognising their needs and anxieties and providing appropriate reassurance to the infant when they are distressed, indicating to the infant they have *understood* how they feel (Geddes, 2006). Bion (1967) described the caregiver's reassuring behaviour as 'containment', therefore allowing the infant to transfer anxious feelings into functional thoughts if they experience anxiety in the future (Geddes, 2006). The infant's ability to cope with anxiety is a skill required for children playing and learning within the mainstream classroom.

One questions whether Bowlby and Ainsworth's descriptions regarding 'a secure attachment' remain relevant to 21st century family life. For example, an increase in mothers returning to full-time employment (Martinson, 2011) and a rise in parental divorce may lead to an increase in time away from the child's 'primary caregiver' and increased familiarity with the process of separation. Research suggests that children who attend child-care settings, develop similar child-parent attachments to children who remain at home with their primary caregiver (The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1997).

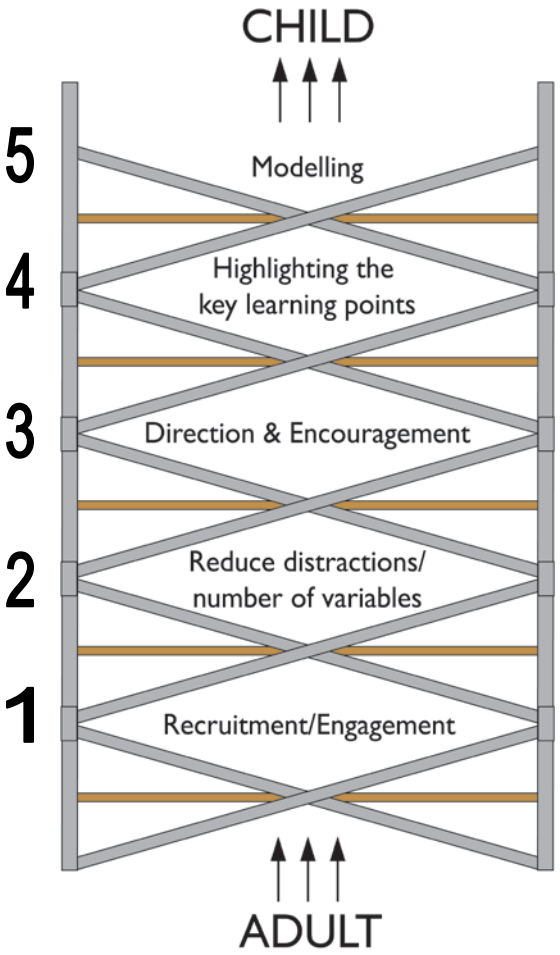
The interpersonal relationship between parent and child is emphasised significantly within attachment theory. Bowlby acknowledged that the quality of the interpersonal relationship must be interpreted within the wider social, cultural, economic and family context (Slater, 2007). In order to achieve this objective, individuals must work closely with the child's caregiver(s). Nevertheless school staff must be sensitive to a potentially negative interpretation by parents when the suggestion of a nurture group referral is raised. Parents may be aware of the theoretical basis underpinning nurture groups and could feel this referral is a direct criticism of the interpersonal relationship they have established with their child.

A key component of any nurture provision is to a) develop an understanding of the child's current emotional and social levels and b) utilise this information to plan tasks which build upon the level at which the pupil is currently functioning (Taylor and Gulliford, 2011; Bennathan, 1997). This process of structuring support around the child's current level of functioning can be compared to the process of *scaffolding*, a term largely associated with the work of Bruner.

The metaphor scaffolding describes the process of modelling - providing strategies and breaking tasks down into manageable chunks in order to augment the child's understanding (Smith, Cowie and Blades, 2003). It is anticipated that as a result of the adult-child interaction, a shared understanding will develop, known as inter-subjectivity (Bentham, 2002). Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) state that 5 key processes occur when effective scaffolding takes place (see figure 1).

Effective scaffolding within a nurture group would provide support and encouragement for pupils with low self-esteem. Consequently pupils attempting learning activities under close, supportive adult supervision have a greater capacity to learn due to reduced anxiety levels.

Figure 1. *An effective scaffolding model, developed from the ideas stated by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976).*



1.3.3 The impact of nurture groups - What does the evidence tell us?

Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997) conducted a large scale evaluation of 6 nurture groups within a London borough. However this research was retrospective and measured data gathered within the 1980s, therefore one must acknowledge that substantial changes to education policy and practice have since occurred. It was found that from the total of 308 pupils, 87% of the pupils returned to mainstream education within less than a year. In addition, 83% of the total group required no additional special educational need intervention. However 13% of the pupils required statements of special educational needs and 11% were allocated full-time places at special schools. The researchers also included a comparatively small control group within their

research (20 pupils). These pupils were originally identified as presenting with needs which would typically require nurture intervention, however they remained in mainstream education. 35% of the control group went on to require a place at special school, 10% requiring additional support within their mainstream school and in comparison only 55% required no additional support with their SEN. Despite this success one must highlight that these nurture placements took place *within schools*, therefore pupils did not have to experience the potential complexities of relocation and reintegration.

Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001) explored the nurture group's impact upon pupil's academic attainment, due to the significance learning plays within nurture groups (Boxall and Lucas, 2010). Cooper et al. (2001) measured academic progress, by exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the *rate of progress* made in English and Maths, using a simple scale[1]. 20% of mainstream staff believed pupils were making significant progress in English and maths, 60% believed pupils were making some progress and the remaining respondents indicated there was 'no change'. Cooper et al. (2001) did not have access to attainment data, to compare with staffs' perceptions. However due to the length of time pupils attended the nurture group[2], their rate of progress may not have been reflected within attainment data. A similar rate of 'significant' or 'accelerated progress' was identified within research carried out across 29 schools by Ofsted (2011). It was notable that prior to this intervention, pupils were making very little or no academic progress within their mainstream class. However it may be difficult to identify a true statistical measurement of the impact of nurture placements upon academic achievement due to the short-term nature of pupils' placements.

[1] Teachers were asked to indicate whether pupils' academic progress was 'worse', 'no change', 'some progress' or 'a lot of progress' (Cooper et al., 2001).
[2] A maximum of 3 academic terms.

1.3.4 The needs of pupils referred to nurture groups within the UK

Ofsted (2011) and Boxall (2002) identify that aggressive, disruptive and socially withdrawn behaviour may lead a pupil to be placed within a nurture provision. Despite the contrast between these behaviours, they both can result in the development of negative social relationships (Boxall, 2002) and attainment below age-expected levels (Ofsted, 2011).

However pupil behaviour and delayed social skills may indicate needs, which may be better supported with alternative strategies. Therefore one must distinguish further between the needs of children deemed appropriate for nurture support and for those children where alternative action is required.

Boxall and Lucas (2010) produced an extensive list which documented the children who would be suitable for a place within a nurture provision in greater detail:-

- Younger children whose social, emotional and cognitive needs are functioning between the 0-3 year developmental level
- Older children who are at least 2 to 3 years behind in social, emotional and cognitive development
- Children who appear depressed and/or distressed during daily functioning
- Children with restricted social skills with peers – will not share, take turns, aggressive towards other children
- Children who appear to lack trust, appear indifferent towards adults, make limited eye contact with adults.

In addition, Boxall and Lucas (2010) also highlighted the following groups of children that require support from an *alternative* intervention, where a nurture intervention was deemed *unsuitable*:-

- Those identified with a long term need.
- Children who require a long term placement at a specialist educational provision.

- Children who require more intensive and specialist support.

It is important to reiterate here that nurture groups are a form of early intervention.

1.3.5 Mainstream staff views around nurture groups

Previous research within the UK has explored mainstream school staffs' justification for referring pupils to within school nurture groups (their *rationale*). In addition researchers have explored staffs' *expectations* regarding the nurture placement, focusing specifically around the anticipated outcome(s) as a result of the referral.

Cooper and Tiknaz (2007) explored mainstream staffs' expectations and rationale for referring pupils to within-school nurture provision. Staff members were interviewed after pupils had reintegrated back into mainstream classes or were currently placed within their nurture group. The authors concluded that pupils were referred to the provision for two predominant reasons. Firstly pupil's difficulties in concentrating on their work, therefore it was believed that the greater adult to pupil ratio, would lead to enhanced academic support. Secondly, it was felt by removing pupils who were disrupting the class, the class were able to function better and this allowed the teacher to support the 'second tier' of pupils who required support. Several class teachers believed the nurture group was exclusively a provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties and a non-academic provision.

Ofsted (2011) also explored why mainstream staff referred pupils to within school nurture provisions, interviewing staff within 29 schools (including infant, first and junior). The reasons provided are outlined below:-

- Reduce the frequency of undesirable behaviour in class
- Support the pupil to recognise when their anger is escalating and learn to defuse these feelings more rapidly
- Learn age-appropriate behaviour
- Understand the consequences of their behaviour

- Remain in mainstream education in the long term
- Provide respite for peers and the class teacher

The reasons outlined above appear to focus more heavily around enhancing pupil behaviour. However they fail to highlight the positive impact this intervention could make on pupil's learning outcomes, despite the prevalence that learning should take within the nurture group intervention (Boxall and Lucas, 2010). However Doyle (2005) found within her case study, that relationships between pupils and their class peers and teaching staff had broken down, at the point of intervention. This may help to explain why behaviour dominates the participants' responses.

This research lacks direct relevance to current research as it was conducted on nurture groups within schools, rather than an external nurture provision run in collaboration between the LA and a primary school.

1.3.6 Supporting the needs of primary pupils off-site – an alternative provision?

Minimal research exists around off-site nurture provisions. Bennathan (2002) highlighted a nurture group run in collaboration between an infant and junior school in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1985. Pupils from additional schools attended the short-term provision, however there were notable tensions between the host school and the LA, regarding start dates, admissions criteria, funding, and group organisation.

The boundaries appear distorted as to whether the current context in focus is an off-site, early intervention or in fact an *alternative provision*. The LA has questioned whether there has been a shift in schools' reasons for utilising the provision. This question has resulted from a rise in the significance of the behavioural needs of pupils in attendance. The Department for Education states education provided for pupils within an off-site provision, focused on improving behaviour is to be considered an alternative provision (DfE, 2012). Consequently one could argue that the nurture group successfully meets the

criteria for both an early intervention and alternative provision within this specific context, particularly if the pupils return to their original mainstream school. However due to the significance of the pupils' behavioural needs, placements appear to be extending beyond the initial 2 to 3 terms originally agreed (see appendix A).

Traditionally pupil referral units (PRUs) are provisions which support pupils with significant behavioural needs (Taylor, 2012). Brown (2011) carried out an audit of the needs of pupils with significant behavioural needs who attended PRUs across England, on behalf of the DfE. This research looked at 2 specific areas:-

1) The needs experienced by children and young people (including underlying needs)
2) The severity of these needs

As a result of this research, it was deemed out of the 268 children explored, 41% had unmet needs at the PRU. The areas of need identified as most unlikely to be met within the PRU were linked to adult-child relationships, loss, trauma and care at home. This research suggests that PRUs may not be appropriate provisions to meet the needs of pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties, if underlying needs are identified. Within a nurture group setting, previous research suggests that time will be allocated for staff to focus on developing adult-child relationships (Cooper and Lovey, 1999).

1.3.7 The current research

The purpose of the current study is to retrospectively explore why mainstream schools referred pupils to the off-site nurture provision, explore the schools' expectations for pupils placed at the nurture group and explore mainstream schools evaluation of the pupil's needs at the time of making their referral.

This research takes place in the midst of proposed plans to restructure the existing nurture provision. Therefore this research will provide an indication of

the type of provision required by schools within the LA, in order to provide effective, additional support for pupils with special educational needs. Existing research almost exclusively focuses on the needs of pupils placed *within school* nurture groups. Therefore the LA cannot rely upon existing research to support the development of the new provision due to its restricted relevance.

As a result of these research objectives, there are 3 key research questions:-

a) Why do mainstream schools refer pupils to the nurture group?
b) What did staff at the mainstream school feel were the needs of the pupil at the time of making the referral?
c) What were the mainstream school's expectations for the pupil as a result of their referral to the nurture group?

1.4 Research Design

A case study is an in-depth analysis of a subject, within its real life context. Multiple perspectives are retrieved to explore the subject in depth (Thomas, 2011; Simons, 2009). Case study research consists of a subject and an analytical frame (Thomas, 2011). Therefore, the subject is the off-site nurture group (see appendix A).
The analytical frame is the type of off-site provision required by schools within the Borough, to support pupils in Key Stage One.

This research will employ a single, embedded, intrinsic case study design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) to provide a framework in order to explore the research questions.
An intrinsic case study focuses on a particular case, not around how the current case can inform our wider understanding of similar phenomenon (Stake, 1995). An embedded case study enables researchers to explore the sub-units of the research as opposed to the data as a whole (holistic case study) (Yin, 2009). This will enable me to explore the research questions in greater detail. For example, when exploring why participants came to the decision to refer pupils to the nurture provision in greater detail, it will be

beneficial to explore how participants came to this decision. This may lead to a greater understanding of stakeholders involved and/or procedures currently in place. Yin (2009) identified that researchers may utilise single case studies to explore a *revelatory* case. This is particularly relevant to the current research, as there appears to be minimal research previously conducted around off-site nurture provisions.

The research will be conducted retrospectively with mainstream school staff. Therefore the impact of my presence will be minimised – as the decision to refer each pupil has been made prior to my involvement. The retrospective nature of this research will ensure I am not a variable within the research itself, a potential pit-fall of case study design (Walker, 1983).

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Method selection

A mixed-methods approach will be employed, in which quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered and analysed simultaneously. Case study design encourages the use of mixed methods, in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of the topic area being investigated (Denscombe, 2007).

I will attempt to converge the 2 data sets. This will hopefully reinforce the research findings due to the relatively minimal research carried out previously within this particular area (Greene, Caracelli and Graham,1989). I will utilise a concurrent triangulation strategy, both data sets (quantitative and qualitative) will receive equal priority (Creswell, 2009). This research is a single-phase study, as no analysis was initiated prior to the completion of both sets of data collection (Creswell and Clark, 2007).

1.5.2 Epistemological orientation

Research employing mixed methods has traditionally received criticism on the basis that this approach uses methods from the quantitative and qualitative paradigms and these two worlds are epistemologically incompatible (Symonds and Gorard, 2010).

However Gorard (2006) argues that this argument depends on the type of data and how it is collected. In the current research, the questionnaire (a traditionally quantitative tool) will predominantly focus around the retrieval of subjective data, however this additional data can be utilised:-

a) to *rate* the significance of the pupil's needs
b) during the processes of triangulation to assess my interpretation of the qualitative data

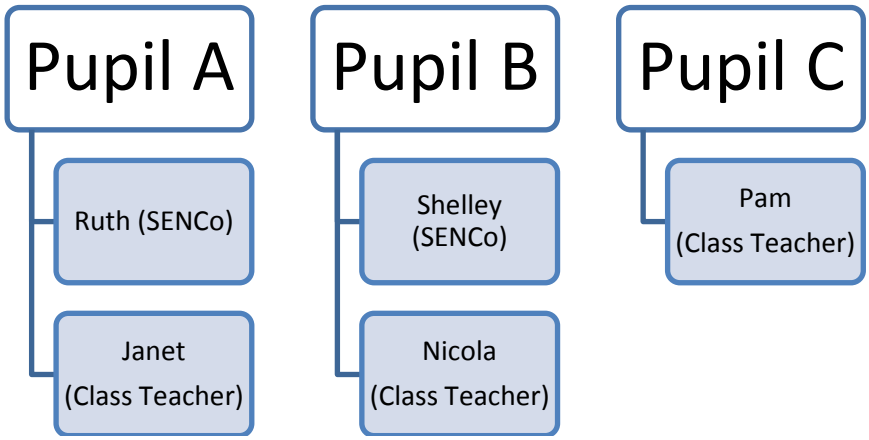
Therefore I have chosen to adopt a pragmatic epistemological orientation for the current research project. Pragmatists do not view the quantitative and qualitative paradigms in opposition, but instead view them as the two pillars of a continuum (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

1.5.3 Participants

The current research took place within three primary schools out of a possible four. Two parents did not provide consent to discuss their child. Each member of staff was interviewed within their current school, in a one to one setting.

In total there were 5 participants – 3 mainstream teachers and 2 special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCo's). Participants discussed the needs of 3 pupils who were attending the nurture group (see figure 2). All 5 participants were female.

Figure 2. *A figure documenting the relationships between participants and the pupils discussed within the research.*



I elected to interview mainstream class teachers and SENCos, due to the fact that primary and infant teachers traditionally spend the vast majority of time with pupils and SENCO's hold responsibility in schools regarding pupils SEN (DfES, 2001).King and Horrocks (2010) state qualitative research often involves the inclusion of participants with potentially diverse perspectives around a subject area.

A purposive sample was employed, as the participants were required to have an awareness of the pupils' SEN who currently attended the off-site nurture provision.

1.5.4 Instrument design

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to retrieve qualitative data (see appendix B) and a questionnaire was developed to retrieve quantitative data (see appendix C).

Due to the uniqueness of the current research area, I developed the semi-structured interview schedule using findings from my literature review and key research questions, as opposed to tools utilised within previous research. In doing so, it was hoped that this would enhance the construct validity of the interview schedule (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

In order to enhance the reliability of the interview schedule I developed a checklist (see appendix D) adapted from the recommendations of Arksey and Knight (1999), reducing the potential effects of interviewer bias. I utilised this checklist to review their questions prior to the onset of data gathering. This was particularly useful in the absence of a pilot study, due to the minimal (relevant) research population available.

Similarly to Brown's (2011) questionnaire, the research questionnaire explored both the pupil's needs and the severity of these needs, as previous research indicates pupils referred to nurture groups rarely experience specific needs in isolation. Therefore I may develop a greater understanding of the pupils' most significant needs. The categories of need were based around a combination of key previous research (Brown, 2011; Ofsted, 2011; Boxall and Lucas, 2010) and the LA's categories of special educational needs. Providing categories of need relevant to the current research in terms of locality and topic area.

Participants were asked to indicate *yes, no* or *uncertain* regarding which needs the pupil they referred experienced, at the time of the referral. I included the uncertain category, as its exclusion would assume the participant holds a definitive opinion (Converse and Presser, 2006).

1.5.5 Ethical considerations

I utilised the ethical guidelines published by the University of Birmingham (n.d), the British Psychological Society (2010; 2009) and the LA in which they are currently employed as a trainee educational psychologist.

Prior to the onset of conducting any research, a parental consent form (see appendix E) and accompanying cover letter (see appendix F) were sent home to the five parents of the pupils currently attending the nurture group. After

consent forms were retrieved from three of the parents, informed consent was then retrieved from relevant teachers and SENCos (see appendix G).

All consent forms and information sheets followed guidelines provided by Gillham (2005), who states that the consent form should be clear, explain the purpose of the research and outline participant's rights and obligations.

1.5.6 Data collection – administration

Arksey and Knight (1999) highlight 3 key skills required for developing effective interviews:-

- Active listening
- Developing a 'climate of trust'
- Skilled questioning (skills highlighted in appendix D)

An active listener focuses upon the way in which words are spoken and not simply what is said (Hough, 2006). Therefore the interviewer must focus on the *non-verbal behaviours* of the participant and *how* they express their point of view, for example emphasis and emotional tone (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Hough, 2006). Arksey and Knight (1999) state a 'climate of trust' is developed by operating ethically, sensitively and by providing opportunities for the participant to ask questions.

The current research utilised self-administered questionnaires, reducing the potential for socially desirable responses (Bryman, 2008).

1.6 Data Collation and Analysis

1.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

Data produced from the five completed questionnaires enabled me to explore participants' views regarding the needs of pupils and the significance of their

needs at the time of making the referral – when presented with a comprehensive list. Quantitative data is presented in table 1.

Due to fact that SENCos and class teachers both discussed the needs of pupil A and pupil B, it was important to highlight participants' individual responses within table 1. This is indicated by using the participants' initial next to their response.

Table 1.*A table to indicate the frequency of the needs of pupils referred to the nurture group and their significance at the time of their referral, as identified by school staff when presented with a comprehensive list.*

	Perceived Significance of Impact (frequency)				
Area of Need	**Uncertain**	**No Impact**	**Likely to Impact in the Future**	**Current, Moderate Impact**	**Current, Significant Impact**
Health Related Difficulty	0	0	0	0	0
Medical Related Difficulty	0	0	0	0	0
Literacy Difficulties	0	0	0	0	3(J,R,S)
Numeracy Difficulties	0	0	0	0	3(J,R,S)
Additional Learning Difficulties	0	0	0	0	2(J,R)
Social, Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties	0	0	0	0	5(J,R,P, S,N)
Sensory and/or Physical Difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Communication and/or Interaction Difficulties	0	0	0	2(S,N)	3(J,R,P)
Concerns regarding the Welfare of the Pupil	0	0	1(R)	0	1(P)
Experiences of Trauma and/or Loss	0	0	0	0	0
Concerns regarding the Boundaries Provided at Home	0	0	1(S)	1(N)	2(J,R)

Family Breakdown / Relationship Difficulties at Home	0	0	1(N)	1 (R)	1(J)
Concerns regarding the Mental Health of the Pupil	0	0	0	1 (R)	0

Due to the restricted number of participants it was not appropriate to quantitatively explore whether an overall discrepancy existed between the responses of class teachers (3) and SENCos (2).

1.6.2 Qualitative data analysis

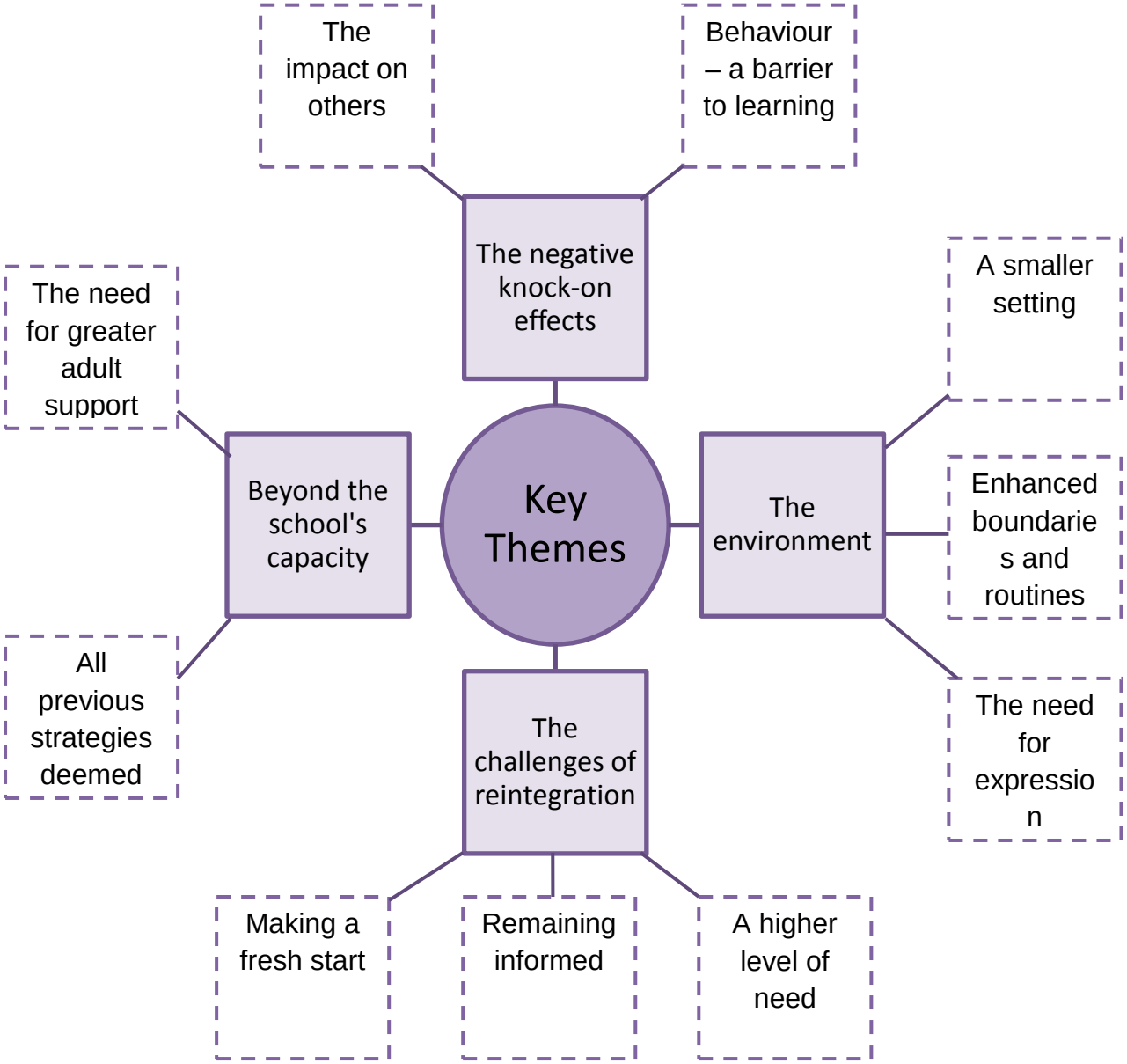
Interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, however pseudonyms were used to replace the real names of all individuals to ensure anonymity. Transcripts were produced for Janet, Pam, Ruth, Shelley and Nicola.

Transcribed data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the process of systematically encoding qualitative data, therefore enabling the researcher to provide meaning to the research data (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis explores the implicit and explicit ideas within data (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

Initial codes (see appendix H), were utilised to identify patterns within data, leading to the generation of four overarching themes and ten sub-themes, which are presented in the thematic map, presented below (see figure 3).

However in order to provide greater clarity for the reader, the themes and sub-themes are described bellowed, reinforced with interview extracts.

Figure 3. *A thematic map presenting the overarching themes and sub-themes I identified, as a result of their thematic analysis*.



1.6.3 Why do mainstream schools refer pupils to the nurture group?

<u>Theme 1</u>: The negative knock-on effects

When asked to outline their reasons for referring the pupil to the nurture group, participants frequently discussed the pupil's disruptive behaviour and

outlined the negative impact this had upon others and the pupil's own learning outcomes.

'..it was just the behaviour that disrupted his own learning and the learning of others at that time.'(Pam)

Sub-theme: The impact on others

Participants discussed how the pupil's behaviour had impacted upon peers and school staff. Shelley and Janet described behaviour which was physically aggressive towards others.

'..he didn't seem to show any empathy towards other children, it didn't seem to matter to him that he hurt other children and he would hurt anybody indiscriminately, it wasn't just a few children, anybody for example when children were lining up for lunch if he didn't like the look of somebody, he just went up and thumped them. So he was very, very difficult to contain, he also hit and kicked adults and there is only a certain amount that any adult will put up with being hit and kicked. The other problem was lots of children were going home unhappy, they were beginning to not want to come into school, they were terrified of this child..'(Shelley)

'..he was hurting children and adults actually, adults trying to stop him from going anywhere he would bite and kick them.' (Janet)

Shelley (explicitly) and Nicola (implicitly) believed the pupil's referral to the nurture group provided school staff with respite, due to the demanding nature of the pupil's needs.

'I think it's valuable, I think having the nurture group is very valuable, because as soon as the child left it's respite really for the class, the parent, the teachers and everybody else.' (Shelley)

'Yes, I think also it provided the adults time out because it was a stressful time, everyday something would happen and I think some of the adults

needed that time away from him, so it was a little bit of a relief for someone else to come in and help with the issue.'(Nicola)

Sub-theme: Behaviour – a barrier to learning

Participants believed the pupils' behaviour provided a barrier to learning taking place within the classroom, both for the pupil and for their peers.
'Well a behaviour strategy, he needed support there because without that nothing else could take place. That needed to be conquered first.'(Janet)

'..it was just a way of helping us teach the rest of the class as well. It was becoming quite a distraction for the rest of the class..' (Nicola)

<u>Theme 2</u>: Beyond the school's capacity

An additional explanation provided by participants for referring the pupil to the nurture group, was the pupil's needs outweighing the school's existing resources.

Sub-theme: The need for greater adult support
Participants noted that due to the needs of the pupil, intensive adult support was often required within the classroom. Without this support the pupil's behaviour would escalate.

'..but we didn't have enough adults in our setting..she was obviously involved in other groups at other times and couldn't then be with him all the time, so at those times when he was free to move around, to choose, select activities, play with other children, it was during those times that he and other children were at risk. We didn't have sufficient adults, like I said at the beginning, to contain, to look after him well enough for his educational needs and his behavioural needs, so we deemed it best really that he was in a setting where he had better adult supervision. That was it, there were the two of us and lots of children.' (Pam)

'..we then called for the family support worker to come down and he was able to work with the child, for say ten minutes or something like that but his behaviour within the classroom was becoming unmanageable and with sixty other children as well and not enough adults, for one adult to be with him the whole time.'(Nicola)

Sub-theme: All previous strategies deemed unsuccessful

A strong shared belief emerged that the strategies utilised by school staff had failed to achieve their desired impact. These strategies consisted of traditional whole-school approaches and strategies recommended by outside agencies.

'We had calm down times, we had picture, child friendly picture instruction cards, reward system, sticker charts, daily contact with mum, if he got more than 5 stickers he was rewarded with time in the rainbow room for a special activity. Those were the strategies we tried..None of those were successful.' (Janet)

'We have our sticker charts within the classroom, with him we did an individual chart..every carpet session he could earn a sticker..I can't remember if it was every independent learning session after that but he could earn quite a few within the day, that sticker chart would go home at the end of the week, it didn't have a huge impact, when I've done it in the past it's had a big impact on that specific child, but it didn't have a huge impact on him.' (Nicola)

1.6.4 What were the mainstream school's expectations for the pupil as a result of their referral to the nurture group?

<u>Theme 3</u>: The environment

Participants frequently discussed the *type* of environment the pupils required at the point of referral, outlining why this environment was more suitable and how this environment would support the pupil's needs more effectively.

Sub-theme: A smaller setting

Participants frequently and explicitly referred to the requirement of a smaller setting. Participants referred to the impact this would have upon adult supervision, supporting the pupil's specific needs and capacity to feel safe.

'Within a smaller class that could afford the flexibility really and not overwhelm him really with a class of thirty.' (Janet)

'..he just needed a very small group in which he could feel..maybe he was feeling unsafe, where he could feel safe, he couldn't cope with the large amounts of children because I have a big, busy reception. There are two reception classes, that's 60 children.' (Shelley)

Sub-theme: The need for expression

Participants also anticipated that referred pupils would find an alternative avenue to express their feelings, which was compatible with whole-school expectations. Prior to the referral, pupils expressed negative thoughts through their behaviour.

'I would hope that they would provide the nurture and the care and the support, that they do need, in order for them to express their own feelings and to do so in a more positive way.'(Nicola)

'The expectations were that he would be able to play cooperatively with other children, that if he was unhappy about something that he would be able to express what he was unhappy about, so that the teachers or the teaching assistants could remedy the situation, we wanted him not to just lash out and hurt and hit.' (Shelley)

<u>Theme 4</u>: The challenges of reintegration

Sub-theme: 'Making a fresh start'

A number of the participants referred to the nurture group providing the pupils with an opportunity to make a 'fresh start'.

'..that it would be a new start, he would be with other children, new children in an environment which suited him better..'(Pam)

'.. or the parents choose to have a complete fresh start, which I think is right for some children.' (Shelley)

Sub-theme: Remaining informed

Staff outlined that communication was minimal between the school staff and staff at the nurture group. This appeared particularly notable for class teachers.

'Nobody's asked me anything, this is the first time anybody has asked me to refer back.'(Janet)

'..I think he is going to remain in the setting but I haven't received any details myself..it would be interesting to know how he has made progress.'(Pam)

Nicola highlights that in addition to staff making direct contact with nurture staff prior to the referral, it would also be beneficial to have regular updates regarding their progress, in preparation for reintegration.

'..It would be nice for the nurture group to feed back to school and to teachers and for the teacher who is going to have him when he comes back, to go there and almost build a relationship with him before he comes back to our school, to almost observe how he is, because he might not have necessarily learnt the things, learnt the strategies that we were hoping for. If a teacher went there to observe, they'd know what to expect if they did come

back.'(Nicola)

Sub-theme: A higher level of need

Shelley and Ruth both reported that after the pupil initiated their place at the nurture group, they underwent a statutory assessment of their SEN, which led to both pupils receiving a statement of SEN. Both Shelley and Ruth also felt the pupils required specialist provision, therefore preventing reintegration back into the mainstream environment.

'We would have expected him to come back into mainstream school and we would have expected him to be able to cope but actually with this particular case it's going to be difficult because mum feels because his brother is here and anyway because he has a statement of special educational needs he probably wouldn't be able to go into mainstream, he would need to go into our specialist provision and that's what the nurture teacher feels as well.' (Shelley)

'..subsequently that we would apply for a statutory assessment and see that he would need a statement and he clearly does need a statement for his needs. Sometimes they do come back to mainstream, that did happen once a long time ago and it really didn't work.'(Ruth)

1.6.5 Converging the data

In addition to exploring the qualitative data for themes, I explored the data to identify whether the participants discussed the needs of the pupils referred to the nurture provision. Needs discussed within the interviews were then compared with the needs deemed *most significant* by participants within the research questionnaires. This comparison is discussed below.

1.6.6 What did staff at the mainstream school feel were the needs of the pupil at the time of making the referral?

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)

The most common need identified by participants within the questionnaire, was SEBD. All five of the participants indicated that the pupil in question had *current* and *significant* needs within this area.

Within the semi-structured interviews participants frequently referred to behaviour which was both aggressive and disruptive.

'..he just went up and thumped them. So he was very, very difficult to contain, he also hit and kicked adults and there is only a certain amount that any adult will put up with being hit and kicked.'(Shelley)

'Disruptive, he swore, he was rude, he was physical, defiant, aggressive.'(Ruth)

'..it was a safety issue within school, he would run off and out and just not be able to follow any instructions.' (Janet)

School staff also reported delays within the pupils' social skills, a need which also falls under the wider-term of SEBD.

'..focus in on individual needs and help him to learn the social skills that he needed..'(Nicola)

'Unable to share, unable to take turns..'(Pam)

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) provides a definition of SEBD which includes terminology such as 'disruptive and disturbing behaviour' and

‘immature social skills’. This suggests that the participants’ responses within the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews shared similarities.

Communication and Interaction

Participants also indicated that pupils required support within the area of communication and interaction. Three participants believed this was a current and significant need, whereas two participants believed this need was current and moderate.

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) states that communication and interaction needs encompasses pupils who experience needs in the areas of speech, language and communication.

Within the research interviews, participants did not widely refer to communication and interaction needs. Only two participants referred to needs which could be interpreted as a communication and/or interaction need.

‘..what was difficult for us to ascertain was, was he on the autistic spectrum..’(Ruth)

‘..he did have delayed speech and language skills, although that was a feature the main problem was his behaviour, he was very impulsive..’ (Shelley)

Boundaries at home

The majority of participants also indicated within the questionnaire, that they held concerns regarding the boundaries provided at home for the pupil. Although participants referred to an open dialogue with parents during the process of referral, only one participant shared concerns regarding the boundaries provided within the family home during the interviews.

'..in terms of her management of XXXX I think he probably ran rings around her because physically she found it very difficult to keep up with him.' (Ruth)

1.7 Discussion

The following discussion will answer the three key research questions by referring to both the research data and relating this back to my review of existing research literature. I will also reflect upon the design and methods used during this research.

1.7.1 Why do mainstream schools refer pupils to the nurture group?

Behaviour appeared to be the primary motivating factor for referring pupils to the nurture group, due to its negative impact upon other pupils, staff and the process of learning. The behaviour described by participants, can be interpreted as aggressive and disruptive. This behaviour has previously led staff to refer pupils to within school nurture provisions (Ofsted, 2011; Boxall, 2002).

School staff must consider the needs of the class, in addition to the pupil in question. Therefore an additional reason for referring pupils to the nurture group was due to the negative impact this appeared to have on the learning outcomes of the pupil and their peers. This supports previous research as referring schools believed that pupils referred to nurture groups were making minimal or no academic progress at the time of referral (Ofsted, 2011; Cooper et al., 2001). Whereas Cooper and Tiknaz (2007) found that nurture placements provided staff with an opportunity to support additional pupils further. School staff also believed the referral provided staff with 'respite'. This sense of reprieve was previously found within Ofsted's (2011) research.

Participants also referred to factors which suggested that the school did not have the capacity to meet the needs of the pupil referred, despite receiving advice and support from outside agencies. Participants often referred to the imbalanced adult to pupil ratio which inhibited the effectiveness of such advice. With a greater adult to pupil ratio, nurture staff may be able to plan more individualised tasks which are academically more appropriate for the pupil's current level of functioning (Taylor and Gulliford, 2011; Bennathan, 1997) and provide more effective scaffolding e.g. modelling (Wood et al., 1976).

1.7.2 What did staff at the mainstream school feel were the needs of the pupil at the time of making the referral?

All of the participants indicated that the pupil they referred had a current and significant need of SEBD within the questionnaire. This was supported more specifically by responses within the research interviews. Participants referred to pupil behaviour which was aggressive and disruptive, as previously found by researchers (Ofsted, 2011; Boxall, 2002).

Participants also referred to delays within the pupils' social skills, however it was unclear if the pupils' behaviour impacted directly upon their social relationships, as previously found by Boxall (2002). It should be noted that all pupils were required to be on the SEN register for SEBD as part of the referral criteria (see appendix A). However the objective of the research was to explore staffs' individual interpretations, as opposed to information that could be retrieved from the pupils' SEN files.

Although participants frequently identified that pupils experienced communication and interaction needs, they scarcely referred to this area within the research interview. My interpretations for the exclusion of this need within the discussion, are speculative, however participants may have chosen to focus upon the pupil's disruptive behaviour due to its significant impact upon relationships (pupil-adult; pupil-peer), as found by Doyle (2005).

There was also an absence of interview data relating to the pupils' boundaries within their family home, this may again be due to the participants' willingness to focus on the pupils' behaviour. Conversely boundaries at home, can arguably be interpreted as a need *external* to the pupil (not within-child), despite the prominent role of the parent-child relationship within attachment theory, a dominant theory within nurture group research (Boxall and Lucas, 2010, Slater, 2007).

1.7.3 What were the mainstream school's expectations for the pupil as a result of their referral to the nurture group?

The *environment* was a common theme of the research interviews. Participants' expectations for the nurture group included a smaller provision, this can be related back to participants' beliefs that pupils required greater adult support. A smaller setting may support nurture staff to provide pupils with effective scaffolding (Woods et al., 1976), as this should *directly* reduce the number of distractions, enabling adults to provide greater boundaries and routines. Scaffolding provided should take account of the pupil's stages of emotional and social development, believed to be a key component of all nurture provisions (Taylor and Gulliford, 2011; Bennathan, 1997). However if one considers Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, one questions whether pupils will receive adequate opportunities to observe and imitate positive peer behaviour, if they are taught within an off-site provision alongside other pupils with SEBD? Their exposure to *age-appropriate* behaviour and social skills may be reduced as a result.

Participants believed pupils would also develop a greater understanding of their own feelings, after attending the nurture provision. Ofsted (2011) similarly found that mainstream teacher's referrals to within school nurture provisions, were made with the expectation that pupils would find strategies to recognise their angry feelings at an earlier stage and defuse this anger prior to the point of escalation. Perhaps within the current context, pupils may have found it difficult to recognise their feelings, in addition to understanding how to

express these feelings appropriately, leading to aggressive or disruptive behaviour. Relating this back to attachment theory, staff at the nurture group can provide the pupil with support in developing greater understanding of their own feelings, by providing a 'secure base' (Geddes, 2006). Over time, it is anticipated that the pupil will develop functional responses when they encounter anxiety. This is arguably essential for positive reintegration into the mainstream setting (Geddes, 2006).

Several participants also believed the nurture group would provide the pupils with a *fresh start*. However traditionally nurture groups are considered a form of early intervention (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005; DfEE, 1997). More specifically, guidance provided by the LA states that pupils referred to the provision will attend for an average of two to three academic terms and then return to their 'home schools' (see appendix A). This highlights two concerns, firstly the nurture group is only a short-term provision, therefore it cannot be a *fresh start*, if a new provision is deemed appropriate, the nurture group could arguably be a stepping stone. Secondly, if staff feel the pupil requires a fresh start at the time of making their referral, one would assume their receptiveness to reintegrating the pupil within the mainstream classroom would be reduced.

An additional and unanticipated finding from the research interviews emerged around the levels of contact between the referring staff (participants) and staff at the nurture staff. This was frequently reported to be inadequate by participants, particularly by class teachers. There does not appear to be any direct research which refers to the reintegration of pupils from *off-site nurture provisions*, which one would anticipate due to the unique nature of these settings. However literature does exist around the factors which support positive reintegration back mainstream schools after placements off-site (see table 2)(Lawrence, 2011; Tootill and Spalding, 2000). Staff at the nurture group had previously provided practical support at schools, during the initial period of reintegration. However this appeared to no longer be available due to a reduction in resources. In addition school staff appeared to lack an

understanding of when pupils would return. This may have inhibited schools to prepare an individualised programme of support.

Table 2. *Supportive factors for positive pupil reintegration into mainstream school. (Factors adapted from Lawrence, 2011; Tootill and Spalding, 2000).*

Factor	Explanation
Continued Support	Staff from the off-site provision accompany pupils into mainstream, providing support for both pupils and school staff
Readiness to return	Pupils are reintegrated back into mainstream school when they are ready. Reintegration is not dictated by rigid time frames.
Effective communication	Pupils, Parents and Staff understand a) that reintegration will occur as soon as the pupil is ready b) the process of reintegration Off-site provision, parents and mainstream school communicate frequently regarding the pupil's progress.
Individualised support upon return	Mainstream school provides individualised support for pupil upon return. This is dependent upon their needs and information shared by staff from the off-site provision.
Positive outlook	Both pupils and parents believe reintegration will be successful. Understand the benefits of returning.
Home-school liaison	Parents/Carers are supportive and engaged within the process of reintegration.

The two participating SENCos also reported that a statutory assessment of the pupils' SEN was completed whilst pupils were attending the nurture group. Through further follow-up discussions with the nurture staff, it was identified that all of the current nurture pupils had received a statement of SEN.This contradicts the objective of the current provision which is to *prevent* the requirement for additional statutory support from the LA (see appendix A), due

to the fact the nurture provision is a form of early intervention. Within Iszatt and Wasilewska's (1997) research a much lower percentage of pupils required a statement of SEN after attending the nurture provision. However one must take into account that these figures were reflective of pupils based within-school nurture groups. One could argue the fact the current pupils have been identified as requiring off-site, full-time intervention, is suggestive of a higher level of need. Boxall and Lucas (2010) state that nurture provision is unsuitable for pupils who are considered to require long term support at a specialist educational setting. This may be due to the fact that the pupil will then make multiple transitions in a relatively short space of time. However the question to ask is whether the provision is appropriately designed to provide an early intervention?

If we accept that nurture groups were originally developed from the theory of attachment (Boxall and Lucas, 2010; Doyle, 2001), then it would appear appropriate to work with parents or carers, to develop a greater understanding of their maternal and paternal relationships (Slater, 2007; O'Connor and Colwell, 2002). It would also appear logical to suggest that the inclusion of parents would be more accessible if a within school nurture group was established. This assumption is based upon the fact that parents a) do not live nearby to the off-site nurture provision, reducing the likelihood of face-to-face contact with school staff and b) parents have pre-existing relationships with home-school staff.

When exploring the points raised above, one must take into consideration that thematic analysis involves my interpretations and are therefore subject to researcher bias. However the degree of researcher bias was somewhat off-set by the use of a questionnaire, when interpreting participants' views regarding pupils' needs.

The decision to explore participants' views retrospectively reduced potential researcher effects. For example influencing participants' actions and thoughts during the decision making process, a potential shortcoming of case study

research (Walker, 1983). However the retrospective nature of the research appeared to impact on the clarity of participants' memories regarding strategies utilised prior to referring pupils. This raises two concerns. Firstly the information regarding strategies used would potentially provide an indication of the support which *was* provided and additional support which could be provided in the future. Secondly, the lack of clarity regarding aspects of the participants' recollections, suggests that research findings may have been more robust and potentially richer if conducted within a shorter time frame after referrals were completed.

The employment of a case study design enabled me to explore the provision in greater depth, moving beyond the interview and questionnaire data. This was particularly beneficial due to the unique nature of off-site nurture groups and supported my interpretations and recommendations. For example, when participants referred to the provision as an opportunity for pupils to make a fresh start, I had the flexibility to explore through the semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and through literature regarding the provision whether participants' were justified to suggest this. I also held follow-up discussions regarding the number of pupils who had been referred for a statutory assessment of their SEN.

1.8 Conclusions and implications for EP practice

Although the off-site nurture provision is in the midst of a restructure, initial changes suggest the new provision will remain both *short-term* and *off-site*. Therefore the research findings remain relevant. The research findings suggest that the off-site provision, should provide intensive adult support, routines and boundaries. Intensive adult support is required in order to develop pupils' social skills and identify strategies to enhance behaviour. In addition due to the impact pupils' needs have made upon learning outcomes, pupils in most cases will require a highly differentiated curriculum. These characteristics, outlined by SENCos and class teachers, are compliant with

traditional nurture groups. However the LA's restructured provision, which appears to be moving away from the appellation 'nurture group', could incorporate these key features.

These findings also have implications for staff employed at the provision. Most notably staff will require a broad knowledge of child development and differentiation. This will enable staff to effectively provide an individualised curriculum for pupils, catering for their emotional, social and academic needs. Additionally the research suggests that staff at the off-site provision must have the capacity to regularly communicate with both parents/carers and staff at the pupil's home-school.

Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) were frequently identified by participants as motivating factors for referring pupils to the off-site provision. More specifically pupils displayed behaviour which was aggressive and disruptive. In addition the research uncovered some of the complexities tied to off-site nurture provisions, which previously appeared unpublished. For example, restricted contact between the pupil's home-school and the off-site nurture staff.

One way to potentially overcome these difficulties, is to provide greater support for mainstream school staff regarding SEBD at an earlier stage. However when one considers the needs of the pupils more holistically, it would also be beneficial to provide support regarding SEBD for parents or carers. This support may be provided in a more accessible format than is currently available for families within the Borough, for example, an advice line or drop-in sessions at schools, for example facilitating a Solution Circles group. This support could be provided by the Educational Psychology Service and may prevent SEBD difficulties escalating through early intervention. Within the current financial economic climate, there are reduced opportunities for EPs to complete non-statutory work. However one way to overcome this is for the EP to lead the support groups initially, but empower and train school

staff or parents to develop the skills to facilitate their own groups moving forward.

The LA must produce guidelines for all stakeholders to ensure effective communication takes place between all parties prior to, during and at the conclusion of a pupil's placement. This will ensure all parties receive up-to-date information regarding the pupil's needs, plan support appropriately and prepare for effective reintegration.

In addition, the LA must decide before allocating pupils to the off-site provision whether reintegration is a realistic proposition. If this is deemed unlikely, an alternative strategy will be required, due to the implications for both pupil (recurring disruptions) and LA (financial implications).

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1.10 Appendices

Appendix A

A description of the off-site nurture provision, located within the South London Borough.

The off-site nurture provision is based within one primary school within a South London Borough primary school. The provision accepts up to 7 key stage one pupils from primary / infant schools within the Borough. Currently there are five year 2 pupils in attendance. Although the pupils attend the provision full-time, they remain on roll at their 'home school' – therefore regular communication is encouraged/anticipated between staff at the provision and the referring mainstream primary school.

The nurture provision is viewed by the Local Authority as an early intervention, in which pupils will be placed at the provision between an average of 2 to 3 academic terms and then return to their 'home schools'. It is also anticipated that as a result of this placement/intervention, the pupil will not require a statutory assessment of their special educational needs (SEN).

The nurture provision is led by a full-time class teacher and supported by two teaching assistants. The group complete small-group and one-to-one activities, developing their social skills, self-esteem and eat together during breakfast club and snack time. In addition, pupils are also integrated into mainstream classes – literacy, numeracy, PE, music and golden time. It is believed this will support the pupils' eventual reintegration back into full-time mainstream education.

Although the children who are referred to the nurture provision have a range of needs at the time of referral, the Local Authority requests that schools refer pupils to the nurture provision that meet the following criteria:-

- Pupil is on the SEN register at school action plus for SEBD
- Pupil is known to the Local Authority's Behaviour Support Team and/or Educational Psychology Service
- Pupil is subject to a Common Assessment Framework

Appendix B

The semi-structured interview schedule utilised to retrieve qualitative data.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Introduction

- This research is hoping to explore why mainstream schools refer children to the nurture group
- This research is also hoping to explore the needs of the children who are referred to the nurture group

Questions

1. Why did the school decide to refer the pupil to the nurture group?
   - Did the school hold any additional concerns regarding the child which led to the referral?

2. Who was involved in the decision to refer the pupil?
   - Were the parents' views explored?
   - Had the school received advice from outside agencies?

3. What strategies had been attempted prior to this referral?

4. What were the school's expectations for the pupil as a result of their placement at the nurture group?
   -What do you feel will be the next steps for the pupil?
   - What support would be provided for the pupil whilst placed within the provision?

5. What was your understanding of the provision in terms of its purpose prior to referring the pupil?

Appendix C

A copy of the questionnaire survey used to retrieve quantitative data.

Assessment of Need Questionnaire

Information regarding the pupil

Pupil's name _____ Gender Male ☐ Female ☐

Pupil's date of birth ____/____/____

Is the pupil entitled to Free School Meals Yes ☐ No ☐ not sure ☐

For each category of need listed below please indicate the following:-

Firstly indicate whether the pupil experienced needs which impacted upon their education. There are three options to select from within this scale:-

1) Yes
2) No
3) Uncertain

If you select option 1) yes, for any of the categories of need, please indicate how serious you feel this particular need impacts upon the pupil's education. There are five options to select from within this scale:-

1) Uncertain

2) No impact

3) Likely to impact in the future

4) Current, moderate impact

5) Current, significant impact

Area of need	Do you feel the pupil experiences these needs?	If you selected option 1 - How serious do you feel this need impacts upon the

		pupil's education?
Health related difficulty		
Medical related difficulty		
Literacy difficulties		
Numeracy difficulties		
Additional learning difficulties		
Emotional, Behavioural & Social difficulties		
Sensory and/or Physical difficulties		
Communication and/or Interaction difficulties		
Concerns regarding the welfare of the pupil		
Experiences of trauma and/or loss		
Concerns regarding the boundaries provided at home		
Family breakdown / relationship difficulties at home		
Concerns regarding the mental health of the pupil		

Appendix D

A checklist to review potential researcher bias, during the development of a semi-structured interview schedule

Potential area of bias	**Description**	
Use of vocabulary	Clear vocabulary? Is this appropriate for the particular social/cultural group? Are concepts used? Is technical terminology used?	
Prejudicial language	Is language used which may reinforce a particular point of view?	
Ambiguous terms	Are words with double/multiple meanings used? Are they explicit? Are there terms which do not explicitly state measurements/values e.g. average	
Leading questions	Particularly the case when using emotive language – one could argue that this is why it is particularly useful to add prompts to the interview schedule, to avoid spontaneous, leading follow-up questions	
Assumptive questions	Avoid questions which assume, if you are unsure what the participant has said, ask the question again or ask an open question. E.g. can you tell me a bit more about this?	

Appendix E

A copy of the parental consent form, sent home to the parents of pupils who currently attend the off-site nurture provision.

Research Consent Form - Parents

About this research

- This research is hoping to explore why mainstream schools refer children to the nurture group
- This research is also hoping to explore the needs of the children who are referred to the nurture group
- This research will ask staff at mainstream schools:-
  - why the staff chose to refer children to the nurture group?
  - what their expectations were for the unit placement after a referral had been accepted
  - what did the mainstream staff feel were the needs of the children which they had referred to the nurture group
- This research will provide questionnaires to mainstream school staff and attempt to explore what mainstream staff felt were the needs of the child at the time of completing the referral
- This research will carry out semi-structured interviews with staff at the mainstream school to explore why they decided to refer the child to the nurture group and explore the staff's expectations about the potential outcomes of the nurture group placement
- The data produced from the questionnaires and interviews will be analysed by the researcher
- The results and data analysis will be included within the researcher's research paper, which forms part of their research at the University of Birmingham
- The names of any children or individuals within the study will remain anonymous
- All electronic data will be stored securely using a secure password.
- All printed data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet
- Confidentiality – The researcher will ensure that only the following individuals will have access to the raw interview and questionnaire data – the researcher's tutor [redacted] (from the University of Birmingham) and the research team consisting of [redacted],

[redacted] and [redacted] (All from the Behaviour Support Team) and [redacted] (from the Educational Psychology Service).

- Right to withdraw – If you would like to withdraw your child's data from the research you can do so up until the20th December 2012 – After this date all data will be unidentifiable and anonymous. Please contact the researcher if you wish to withdraw your child's data (the researcher's contact details are outlined below).

What I am asking you to do

- Allow the researcher access to information about your child's basic details – Date of Birth, Gender and whether your child is entitled to free school meals. This information will be used to see if there are patterns relating between age, gender and/or socio-economic status and referrals made to the provision.
- Allow the researcher to interview members of staff at your child's previous mainstream school and discuss the topics highlighted above
- Allow the researcher to keep all of the data retrieved from this research and analyse it for research purposes
- Allow the researcher to quote staff from the research interviews within my research report

Researcher's contact details

Steve Dexter

Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted] Educational Psychology Service

Email address: Steven.Dexter@XXXXXXX Telephone number: XXXX

If you agree with the research information documented above and are happy for your child to be discussed by staff at their previous mainstream school, please sign below and return this complete slip to the Local Authority nurture group.

_____ Name_____

Date: _____

Appendix F

A copy of the 'accompanying cover letter' which was sent home to parents alongside the parental consent form.

6th December 2012

Dear Parent(s) / Carer(s)

I am writing to you to retrieve your consent regarding a piece of research I am preparing to carry out regarding the needs of students who currently attend the nurture group at [redacted] Primary School.

Please note this research will take place outside of the nurture group and **will not** involve any direct work with your child. However if you provide your consent **I will** be interviewing the mainstream class teacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) at the mainstream school that your child was attending prior to their placement at the nurture group. As a result I will be discussing your child's special educational needs. However any notes or recordings from these interviews will remain confidential and any reports produced from this research will remain anonymous. Therefore your child will not be identifiable by third parties.

The reason / rationale behind this piece of research are as follows:-

- To explore the needs of the pupils who attend the nurture group
- To explore why mainstream schools are referring pupils within [redacted] to the nurture group

The consent form attached provides further details about the research plan.

If after carefully reading the research consent form, you are happy for me to carry out interviews with the mainstream staff members (class teacher and SENCo) regarding the issues documented above, please complete the slip at the bottom of the consent form and please return to the [redacted] Primary School Nurture Group at your earliest convenience.

If you have any further questions regarding this research please do not hesitate to contact me on [redacted].

Yours faithfully

Steve Dexter

Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted] Educational Psychology Service

Appendix G

A copy of the staff consent form, provided for mainstream teaching staff and special educational needs co-ordinators, prior to participating within the research.

Research Consent Form - Staff

About this research

- This research is hoping to explore why mainstream schools refer children to the nurture group
- This research is also hoping to explore the needs of the children who are referred to the nurture group
- This research will ask staff at mainstream schools:-
  - why the staff chose to refer children to the nurture group?
  - what their expectations were for the unit placement after a referral had been accepted
  - what did the mainstream staff feel were the needs of the children which they had referred to the nurture group
- This research will provide questionnaires to mainstream school staff and attempt to explore what mainstream staff felt were the needs of the child at the time of completing the referral
- This research will carry out semi-structured interviews with staff at the mainstream school to explore why they decided to refer the child to the nurture group and explore the staff's expectations about the potential outcomes of the nurture group placement
- The data produced from the questionnaires and interviews will be analysed by the researcher
- The results and data analysis will be included within the researcher's research paper, which forms part of their research at the University of Birmingham
- The names of any children or individuals within the study will remain anonymous
- All electronic data will be stored securely using a secure password.
- All printed data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet
- Right to withdraw –You have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. However if you decide to participate and decide that you would like to withdraw your data from the research, you have the right to do so up until the 1st December 2012 - After this date all

data will be unidentifiable and anonymous. Please contact the researcher if you would like to withdraw (the researcher's contact details are outlined below).

- Confidentiality – The researcher will ensure that only the following individuals will have access to the raw interview and questionnaire data – the researcher's tutor [redacted] (from the University of Birmingham) and the research team consisting of [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] (All from the Behaviour Support Team) and [redacted] (from the Educational Psychology Service).

What I am asking you to do

- Allow the researcher to interview you, discussing the topics highlighted above
- Allow the researcher to keep all of the data retrieved from this research and analyse it for research purposes
- Allow the researcher to quote you (anonymously) from the research interviews within my research report

Researcher's contact details

Steve Dexter

Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted] Educational Psychology Service

Email address: Steven.Dexter@XXXXX Telephone number: XXXXXX

If you agree with the research information documented above and are happy to participate within the research, please sign below

_____ Name_____

Date: _____

Appendix H

The initial codes generated from the five data sets.

Code	Frequency
Early signs	2
Consistent needs	1
Seeking advice	2
Beyond the school's capacity	4
The impact on other children	8
Behaviour prevented learning	2
A smaller environment required	6
Notifying school leaders	2
Involving the parents	4
Uncertainty regarding what happened next	2
Emotional time for parents	1
Making a fresh start	3
The role of the TA	2
The need for greater adult support	5
Other pupils at risk	1
Difficult to contain	2
An environment which supports the pupil's needs	3
Developing appropriate social skills	2
Enabling integration	1
Developing areas of need	1
Initial concerns	1
Required a different environment	2
Multiple needs	3
Required clear boundaries	1
A quiet setting	1
A complex child	1
Inconsistent parenting	1
The pupil couldn't cope	1
Exploring the possibilities	1
Excluding young pupils	1
Parents' anxieties regarding the nurture group	1
Provision dictating need?	1
Enhancing expectations	2
Accessing additional support	1
The challenge of reintegration	4
The influence of previous experiences	1
Persisting difficulties	1
Reduced communication between school and nurture group	1
Providing boundaries	1
Early intervention	2
Greater need for the nurture group	1
Multiple reasons why pupils may require nurture provision	1
An issue of safety	1

Following their own agenda	1
Class teacher not always involved	1
Child-friendly strategies	1
Positive reinforcement	3
Home-school liaison	3
Providing clarity	1
Time away from the class	1
Strategies were unsuccessful	2
Opportunities to discuss feelings	1
Reducing pupil's timetables	1
Expecting reintegration	2
Specialised & individualised support	2
Continuity required during reintegration	2
No communication between class teacher and nurture group	2
A learning opportunity for teachers	1
Sharing expertise	1
Required containment	1
Required enhanced routine	1
Explicit about expectations	1
Liaison between class teacher & SENCo	1
Impact on parents	1
Able to express their views / feelings (reason for referral)	2
Information was shared	1
Filling the gaps in development	1
Resolving needs – a long-term process	1
Collaborative process with parents	1
Attachment with school staff	2
The use of exclusion	1
Temporary gains	1
Holistic needs	1
Respite for staff & parents	2
The value of the nurture group	1
An alternative to exclusion	1
Anger outbursts	1
A father figure at school	1
Progressively worse	1
Additional time for pupils	1
Other pupils imitating his behaviour	1
Whole class strategies – a consistent approach	1
An individualised approach	1
The need for consistency	1
Small provision = Individualised approach	1
Learn to cope with their emotions	1
The benefit of interaction between school and nurture group	2
Build relationship with pupils before reintegration	1

Chapter 2 Professional Practice Report 2

The employment of Social Stories to support the delivery of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy – a reflective account.

2.1 Abstract

The following professional practice report (PPR) provided me with a formal platform to reflect upon and document the knowledge I have gained from university tuition, wider reading and the practical delivery of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This six-week intervention was delivered with a year 6 boy who experiences a range of special educational needs.

Within this paper I have described my practical approach to therapeutic delivery. Paying particular attention to how I have incorporated Social Stories within each session. Social Stories were employed in response to the pupil's special educational needs. However this element of the intervention also added a unique quality relating to the knowledge base of the EP. Within the paper I have explored the unique contribution of EPs within the delivery of therapeutic interventions. However this discussion is extended further, where I have explored whether the delivery of CBT is a resourceful use of EP time.

The impact of this one to one intervention was measured using a range of assessments. Additionally classroom observations and regular communication with the pupil's mother occurred. However additional feedback from the pupil's class teacher was not possible due to time constraints at school. Pre-existing methods to record or evaluate pupil behaviour were also not established. Consequently my ability to measure impact was restricted and relied upon the feedback elicited from the pupil. This led to a broader discussion within the paper regarding *capacity*, which emerged as a prominent theme within my reflections.

I concluded by reflecting on the practical elements I believe to be beneficial for maximising the impact of CBT. I also discusses whether a generic therapeutic role for the EP is plausible when one considers the variance which

occurs between LAs in terms of need and resources. A possible solution to this challenge is recommended.

2.2 Introduction

The following professional practice report (PPR) explores the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) intervention I delivered within a South-East London Borough. This six week intervention was delivered with a year 6 boy, who experiences a range of special educational needs (SEN). The purpose of this PPR is two-fold. Firstly, providing me with the platform to demonstrate the knowledge I have gained through tuition and wider reading. But secondly to demonstrate how I have applied this knowledge, paying particular attention to the unique adaptation I have made and how this relates to the skill set of the educational psychologist (EP). This is particularly notable when one considers the broad range of professionals who have the aptitude to deliver CBT with children and young people. The unique adaptation I provided within the current intervention was the inclusion of Social Stories. I will discuss why and how I incorporated Social Stories within my approach later within the paper.

Whilst reflecting upon how EPs can provide a unique contribution to the delivery of therapeutic interventions, a recurring question emerged – *is the delivery of therapeutic intervention a resourceful use of EP time?* This question was particularly relevant within my current service, in which I am employed as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP), due to the reduced size of the team. However this question has wider implications regarding the role EPs can provide in supporting the development of positive mental health for children and young people. Consequently, although I will focus greatly

upon my practical experiences, I will consistently reflect upon how my experiences relate to wider EP practice.

In order to ensure a shared understanding with the reader, I will begin by briefly documenting my understanding of CBT and Social Stories. I will then explore the supporting and inhibiting factors for the delivery of CBT by EPs. I will then focus my attention upon the current case; this will include an exploration of the case and my formulation – a critical component of the therapeutic process. Within my reflections I will focus on three main areas:-

1) The employment of Social Stories within the delivery of CBT.

2) The key learning points that emerged from the case in focus.

3) A reflection of how my experiences relate to the literature highlighted earlier within the paper. I will again focus particularly on the role of the EP within therapeutic intervention.

2.3 Background

2.3.1 What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?

CBT is a therapeutic intervention which explores the client's thoughts and beliefs (Greig, 2007). It is widely believed that there are three levels of cognition (Greig, 2007):- core beliefs, dysfunctional assumptions and negative automatic thoughts. Negative automatic thoughts are most crucial within CBT. These beliefs, as the name suggests, occur without conscious thought. They are often unquestioned by the individual as a result and are assumed to be

factual. However they are addressed by the therapist through CBT (Westbrook, Kennerley and Kirk, 2007). Negative automatic thoughts are accessible, specific and as a result are more receptive to change.

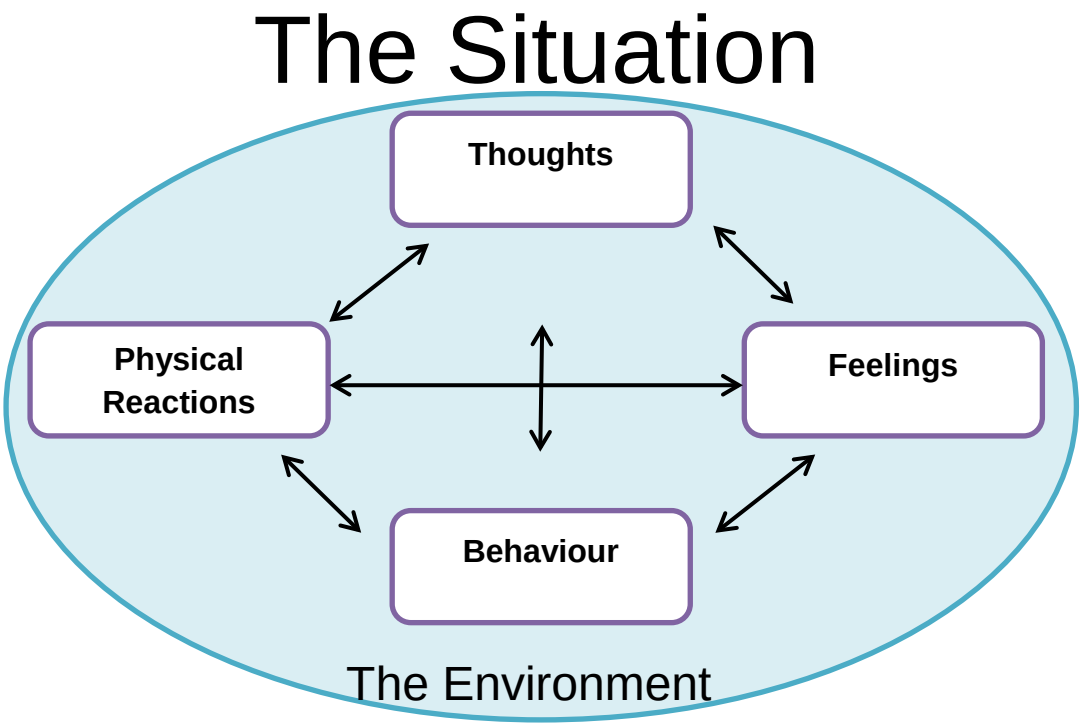
Graham (2005) highlights that our thoughts, behaviours, feelings and physical reactions can form an interdependent cycle, within a problematic situation (see figure 1). As indicated within the diagram, CBT also considers the *context* in which difficulties occur (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2012). As a result, CBT often requires the client to practise the ideas or actions discussed, within particular contexts. CBT builds upon the following fundamental principles:-

- Difficulties lie within our perception and responses to the difficulty, not the difficulty itself (Greig, 2007).
- The human response to particular events or situations, is moderated by our cognition (Westbrook et al., 2007).
- Mental health issues are exaggerated versions of socially desirable behaviour (Westbrook et al., 2007). Therefore thoughts and behaviours are adaptable and not pathological.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) (2008) advocate the employment of CBT with a broad range of prevalent mental health difficulties. CBT provides the therapist with a range of techniques which can be adapted to support the individual's needs (Rait, Monsen and Squires,

2010). Consequently I believe CBT is an appropriate therapeutic approach to utilise with children and young people and particularly pupils with SEN.

Figure 1. *A diagram which demonstrates the interdependent cycle which influences our perceptions and reactions to situations (Adapted from Greenberger and Padesky, 1995).*



2.3.2 The application of CBT with children and young people

Approximately two decades ago many considered CBT an inappropriate intervention for children. This belief was held due to the requirement for clients to interpret the perception of others and think abstractly. Pupils may be required to recognise when and why their thoughts and behaviours are inaccurate or inappropriate (Greig, 2007). However the evidence supporting the use of CBT with children and young people has risen considerably since the early 1990's (Greig, 2007). Previous apprehension also related to the

reduced number of studies which incorporated randomised control trials (RCT)[3] (Greig, 2007). However Hammersley (2004) provides caution when dismissing the relevance of research which does not include RCTs. Stating that research should not simply demonstrate the impact of *what* is employed, but additionally explore *how* it was employed. This is a key strength of case study design for example (Yin, 2009). Case study research can also help to determine why specific interventions have succeeded, therefore enhancing the EP's ability to ascertain whether CBT is suitable for specific clients.

Restructuring cognitive processes will potentially be complex for younger children or pupils with SEN. However CBT emphasises collaboration, enabling the therapist to provide structure and guide cognitive restructure (Westbrook et al., 2007). Additionally Stallard (2005) outlines the following factors which they believe are important when delivering CBT with pupils:-

- Empower the pupil, building and developing their skills and ideas
- Create a motivating and engaging approach
- Interaction between the pupil, parent and therapist is required
- Employ a flexible and creative approach to sharing concepts – an example of which could be the employment of Social Stories.

2.3.3 What are Social Stories?

Social Stories are designed to enhance pupils' understanding and expectations of social situations, which can occur within real-life settings

[3]Relative to research within the adult population.

(Smith, 2001). Social Stories contain sentences of various forms, which are employed to achieve specific objectives (see appendix A). Toplis and Hadwin (2006) provide a simplistic and efficient guide in how to write Social Stories, which I referred to prior to initiating the intervention.

Smith (2001) believes the following qualities, enhance the use of Social Stories to address delays in social skills:-

- Visual – sentences are accompanied by pictures
- Permanent – pupil can revisit the story
- Accessible – language used takes account of the pupil's age and SEN
- Individualised – informed by understanding of the pupil's needs and situation
- Focused support – explores the specifics
- Enables greater understanding of the pupil's current difficulties
- Focuses upon what people think, feel and how they behave.

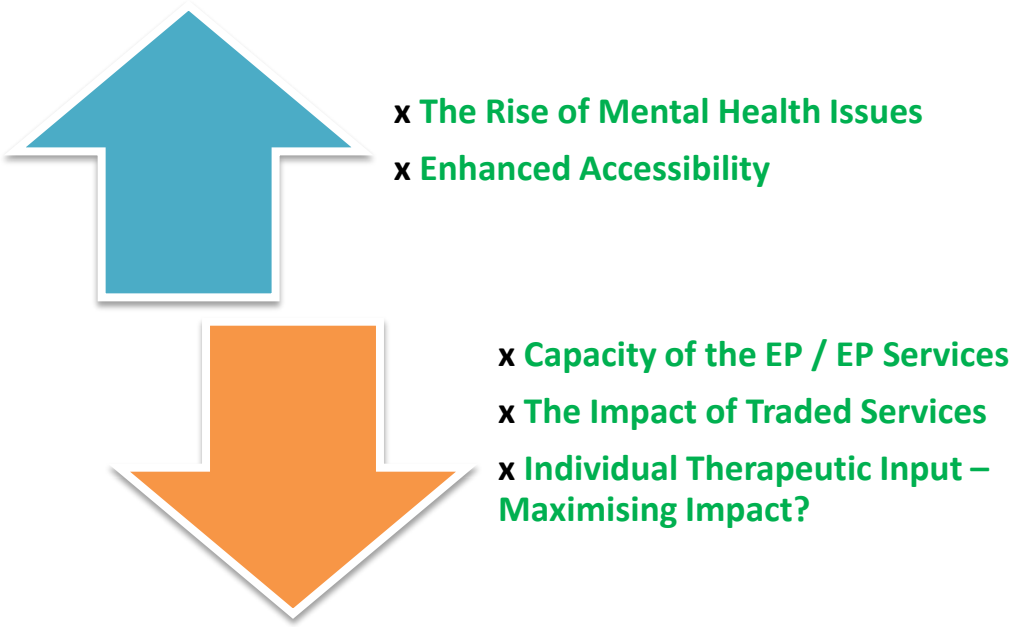
This final point highlights why Social Stories are commonly utilised with pupils who experience social communication difficulties (SCD). Social Stories may help pupils to infer what others think and feel (Ali and Frederickson, 2006). A skill often referred to as *theory of mind*. It is believed that pupils with SCD experience significant challenges when attempting to infer (Baron-Cohen, Leslie and Frith, 1985).

Within the current PPR, I will document how I have employed Social Stories to enhance the delivery of CBT within a school setting. I feel this adaptation draws upon the skills of EPs and occurs within a context which EPs are highly knowledgeable. This adds further justification for the delivery of the intervention. However there are a number of additional factors which both support or inhibit the delivery of CBT by EPs.

2.3.4 CBT and the role of the EP: Reasons for and against

CBT can be delivered by professionals from a wide range of backgrounds (Pugh, 2010). As a result one may question whether the delivery of CBT is an efficient use of EP time. There appears to be a number of reasons which both support and inhibit the delivery of CBT by EPs (see figure 2).

Figure 2. *A diagram which outlines the reasons for and against EPs conducting CBT with pupils within school settings.*



Supporting Factors

The rise of mental health issues for children and young people

A significant rise in the prevalence of anxiety and depression for children and young people was identified between1986 and 2006 (Collishaw, Maughan, Natarajan et al., 2010). This has been attributed to the demands of the National Curriculum (Nuffield Foundation, 2012; MacKay, 2007). However I believe the intervals between statistical measurements are too broad to attribute the rise to a single factor. I propose the rise relates to a combination of changes throughout this period, for example greater recognition of mental health issues (MacKay, 2007). Nevertheless alternative research suggests this rise in prevalence appeared to stabilise at the turn of the millennium (Maughan, Collishaw, Meltzer et al., 2008; Green, McGinnity, Meltzer et al., 2005). Estimations of the prevalence of mental illness in 5 to 16 year olds, ranged from approximately 10 to 20% (Green et al., 2005; Meltzer, Garrward, Goodman et al., 2000). However the Nuffield Foundation (2012) warns that economic cuts by the Coalition government have enhanced risk factors associated with mental illness. For example, an increase in poverty and youth unemployment. Furthermore the prevalence rate of children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties in addition to learning difficulties increases significantly– with a prevalence rate of 36% (Emerson and Hatton, 2007)[4].

[4] Compared to a prevalence rate of 8% for pupils who do not experience learning difficulties.

Meltzer, Gatward, Corbin et al. (2003) estimated that 60 to 70% of children and adolescents experiencing mental health issues failed to access evidence-based interventions. However Kim-Cohen, Caspi, Moffitt et al. (2003) estimate that *if* effective treatment is provided for pupils who develop mental health issues before the age of 18, this could prevent issues from continuing into adulthood for approximately 25-50% of pupils. Unfortunately the majority of pupils will not meet the threshold for specialist support within Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (Atkinson and Hornby, 2002)[5]. Therefore there appears a requirement for greater access.

Enhanced accessibility for pupils

UK schools have reported that they rely heavily on EP services, to provide support with mental health issues (DfE, 2011). EPs can provide guidance and therapeutic interventions at an earlier stage due to their regular presence within the school context - enhancing accessibility. Pupils who receive therapeutic interventions during school hours will miss curriculum input. However unsupported mental health issues may have a negative impact upon a pupil's capacity to learn (Weare, 2000).

[5] 90% of pupils experiencing mental health problems, do not access CAMHS' support (Atkinson and Hornby, 2002).

Kazdin, Holland, Crowley et al. (1997) completed research regarding potential barriers for pupils accessing outpatient therapeutic support.

Difficulties experienced by families were:-

- the length of the journey to the centre or clinic
- Inconvenient appointment times
- Arranging child care for siblings, in order to take their child to therapy
- The financial costs of attending, such as transport to the facility

This research was completed within the USA, however these obstacles appear equally relevant within the UK. In addition pupils and their parents may experience or perceive negative stigma associated with outpatient clinics (Atkinson, Squires, Bragg et al., 2013). If sensitively managed, pupils may therefore access therapeutic support within a more familiar environment, whilst maintaining a higher level of confidentiality (Rait et al., 2010).

In addition, providing CBT within the school may enable pupils to generalise ideas learnt within each session (Lochman, Powell, Whidby et al., 2006). This process has been found to be particularly useful for pupils with SEBD, due to the additional support they may require from staff to implement ideas learnt within CBT (Lawson, Quinn, Hardiman et al., 2006). This also enables the therapist to develop a greater understanding of the environment. This is important for assessment, formulation, intervention and providing feedback to staff (Fuggle, Dunsmuir and Curry, 2013).

Inhibiting Factors

The capacity of the EP / EP services

Researchers suggest that the adaptation to the training of EPs, to a three year doctorate training programme, enables greater capacity for the inclusion of therapeutic training (Greig, 2007). However although the opportunity to receive CBT training has increased, applying these skills can be challenging for TEPs. Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) found that TEPs found time restrictions particularly challenging – both in terms of their ability to accommodate CBT alongside additional obligations and the time available within schools to complete CBT. Factors which varied depending upon the service's model of practice.However the length of CBT suggests that this intervention must be wholeheartedly embraced by service *and* school. The requirement for therapeutic supervision can also place substantial pressure upon the capacity of EP services when delivering therapeutic interventions (Squires and Dusmuir, 2011) (see appendix B).

These concerns also appear to relate to EPs upon qualification (Atkinson, Bragg, Squires et al., 2011). Consequently there is no guarantee that the therapeutic skills developed during Doctorate training will relate explicitly to TEPs' future roles (Squires and Dunsmuir, 2011). EP services will not be *obligated* to provide qualified EPs with a broad range of experiences as is

required for TEPs. Instead, EP services must prioritise statutory requirements and the overriding needs of their service users. A difficulty exacerbated further by Central Government cuts, which have impacted upon LA expenditure significantly (Taylor, Burn-Murdoch and Butler, 2013). Therefore EP services may reduce in size as a result or adopt a traded model of delivery.

The impact of traded services

One may question whether therapeutic interventions are compatible with EP services, which are no longer funded directly by the LA. Services operating within a semi or fully traded model may indeed charge schools or organisations to provide therapeutic intervention. This may cause tension between generating income and meeting the needs of schools, families and pupils (Atkinson et al., 2013).

The implications of traded input may reduce the delivery of therapeutic support by EPs for a number of reasons:-

- Length of input – CBT will often take place for a minimum of 6 sessions (Fuggle et al., 2013). This has implications relating to capacity and finance.
- Unique selling point – EP services may wish to identify roles which distinguish them from potential competitors. This may ensure the long term

stability of service income (Farrell, Woods, Lewis et al., 2006). As CBT can be delivered by a number of professionals, this may not be considered distinctive.

- Reduced negotiation – Disparities have previously been identified between what schools would like from EP services and what EPs want to provide (Kelly and Gray, 2000). The school or organisation funding EP input may now be perceived as *the customer*. Therefore one could argue that the EP's power to negotiate their role is somewhat reduced. Particularly if there is pressure to meet financial targets within the LA. This is not to question the integrity of EPs, however the consequences of failing to meet targets may result in significant cuts to the EP service, including redundancies. Schools have indicated that advice and individual assessment was the most valued service EPs' provided (Ashton and Roberts, 2006).

By commissioning therapeutic work, decision making is further placed within schools' hands. Should schools brunt the cost of a societal issue? Of course one can counter this argument by outlining schools' obligations to support the emotional and social well-being of pupils (DfES, 2003). However the current economic climate may invariably mean that a best-fit approach must be adopted by schools. Additionally, if the commissioning organisation hopes to ensure *value for money*, they may in fact identify that *systemic work* has the most significant impact within their organisation.

Individual therapeutic input – maximising impact?

Therapeutic interventions are often delivered in one to one settings. As a result one could question whether this approach is maximising the impact of EP services. For over three decades there has been substantial debate about adapting the work of the EP in order to work more systemically (Fox, 2009; MacKay, 2007) and therefore enabling EPs to meet the needs of the wider school population.

Research appears to predominantly focus upon individualised support for mental health concerns. However there are suggestions regarding how mental health issues can be supported more holistically. Atkinson and Hornby's (2002) framework for promoting mental health within schools (see appendix C), highlights a number of levels at which support can be provided. This promotes potential opportunities for EPs to support a greater number of pupils who have unsupported mental health issues (Meltzer et al., 2003). EPs may promote positive mental health by providing INSET for school staff or collaborating with school staff to develop a school culture which facilitates positive well-being.

2.4 Description of the Presenting Problem

2.4.1 Context

The context for the current research is a two-form entry primary school, with 397 pupils on roll. The primary school is located within a South East London Borough. The school contains a specialist unit which predominantly supports pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties, however pupils also experience a broad range of additional needs. The pupil in question currently attends the specialist unit. A positive, transparent routine was established with the pupil. Each session was delivered for one hour, at the same time and day of the week and taking place within a quiet withdrawal room within the pupil's school. This enhanced the client's confidentiality.

2.4.2 Participants

The primary focus of the current research paper is a therapeutic intervention with an individual pupil. The 10 year old boy was in year 6 at the time CBT was delivered. The pupil's ethnic origin can be described as White British. The pupil lives at home with his biological parents and older brother.

The pupil has a Statement of SEN and has been identified as having the following SEN[6]:-

- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- Social Communication Difficulties
- Cognition and Learning (Dyslexia)

[6] Definitions of the SEN stated can be found within the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001).

The interactive nature and persistence of the pupil's SEN, leads to an interpretation that their needs are complex (Marchant, 2001). The pupil's most prominent presenting need currently appeared to be **SEBD** and was consequently the focus of the referral. Information was also retrieved from the pupil's mother and the pupil's class teacher during the assessment and intervention process.

2.4.3 The Case

I initially assessed the pupil in March 2013, in preparation for his transfer to secondary school in September 2014. During this assessment, I jointly consulted with the pupil's mother and head teacher, where the request for a therapeutic intervention was made. Previously the pupil had received counselling at school. However it was felt minimal improvement was made through this intervention. After consulting with the pupil it was evident that the pupil could reflect and wanted to change his behaviour, but was unsure how to achieve this.

2.5 The Process and Purpose of Assessment and Formulation

Assessment is a collaborative process, which requires the therapist to elicit information from both the client and additional key individuals (Fuggle et al., 2013; Kuyken, Padesky and Dudley, 2009). Greig (2007) highlights the importance of triangulating information, during assessments. Triangulation enhances the therapist's interpretations and accounts for the fact that misunderstandings can occur when consulting with pupils. For example,

pupils may feel obligated to provide particular responses, due to the traditional adult-pupil dynamic (McQuillan, 2005). During the assessment process it is also important to explore the context(s) in which difficulties occur (Fuggle et al., 2013).

Formulation requires the therapist to interpret the information gathered from their assessment and *make sense of this information*, utilising their knowledge of typical, adaptive child development and psychological theory (Fuggle et al., 2013; Westbrook et al., 2007).The therapist will elicit new information during CBT. Therefore assessment and formulation is an evolving and continual process. The therapist's interpretations should be viewed as a number of hypotheses which must be explored (Butler, 1998). Johnstone and Dallos (2006) highlight that good formulation incorporates the following information:-

- A summary of the key issues
- Identifies relationships between issues
- Applies psychological theory to interpret how issues developed and how they are maintained
- Identifies an intervention plan

I referred to guidelines by Fuggle et al. (2013)[7] to ensure constructive information was elicited during the assessment process. I referred to Johnstone and Dallos' (2006) guidance and utilised a checklist (BPS, 2011,

[7] Available from http://www.uk.sagepub.com/upmdata/51765_Extended_CBT_Assessment.pdf

see appendix D) to enhance the accuracy and quality of my formulation (see appendix E).

2.5.1 Why CBT?

I identified my therapeutic approach after carefully considering the pupil's complex SEN. As a result I required an approach which was structured, active and collaborative. Taking into account the pupil's SEBD and social communication difficulties and thus ensuring the pupil was clear about their role, my role and appropriate scaffolding could be provided. These are all key attributes of the CBT approach (Westbrook et al., 2007). I wanted to deconstruct *what* was happening within the classroom and to facilitate greater understanding regarding *why* this behaviour occurred. These two objectives appeared highly compatible with CBT (Greig, 2007).

Research suggests that CBT is an appropriate intervention to utilise with a 10 year old pupil who experiences a primary presenting need of SEBD. Durlak, Fuhrman and Lampman (1991) completed a meta-analysis of 64 studies exploring the application of CBT with pupils experiencing SEBD. Results indicated that CBT had a significantly greater impact upon pupils operating within Piaget's formal operation stage of cognitive development. Piaget believed at this stage young people have the capacity to think abstractly

(Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems, 2013). However a meta-analysis conducted more recently, indicated that CBT is most effective with younger pupils (Gonzalez, Nelson, Gutkin et al., 2004). The authors hypothesised that the impact of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy[8] was therefore dependent upon the pupil's willingness to cooperate with the therapist and their eagerness to acquire pro-social behavioural skills. Therefore older adolescents may have undermined the therapist's support, due to a reluctance to engage. The meta-analyses indicate that younger pupils can access CBT and CBT can impact positively upon their behavioural needs. Although abstract thinking skills are often required in CBT, one should not be discouraged from using CBT with pupils under 11 years of age. In conclusion age may not be the most significant moderating factor, in determining the impact of CBT. Instead this may be a) the quality of the scaffolding the therapist provides and b) the activities included within CBT which enhances the pupil's willingness to engage. However when CBT has been applied with pupils who experience SCD, researchers have found pupils find it difficult to generalise key learning points into the relevant contexts or situations (Wood and Schwartzman, 2013).

2.5.2 Incorporating Social Stories within CBT

Sunderland (2000) states children may find it difficult to interpret other peoples' feelings through literal discussion. Whereas Dodge (1985) states

[8] A specific form of CBT

children who demonstrate aggression, attend to fewer cues within their environment. As a result their assumption regarding the intent of others is inaccurate. After considering the research evidence, I was concerned that these challenges may have been further exacerbated due to the fact the pupil experienced SCD. NICE (2013) produced guidelines when delivering CBT with pupils with SCD and coexisting difficulties. They recommend that therapists employ:-

- Enhanced structure
- Simplified cognitive activities
- Incorporate the client's specific interests
- Greater use of written and visual aids

Sze and Wood (2008) found visual aids enhanced the client's understanding of concepts during CBT. After reflecting upon existing research I decided to incorporate Social Stories as a tool within my therapeutic approach. Research indicates that Social Stories are most commonly used to support pupils with SCD (Ali and Frederickson, 2006). The factors which support the employment of Social Stories appear highly compatible with CBT. Social Stories are employed to enhance the pupil's understanding of:-

a) a situation and their existing behaviour, thoughts and feelings
b) desired behaviour within this situation
c) other people's feelings and perspectives within a specific situation

These key points would suggest the employment of Social Stories may support the pupil to generalise key learning points within relevant contexts. I believed this was particularly important, as school staff were not available to

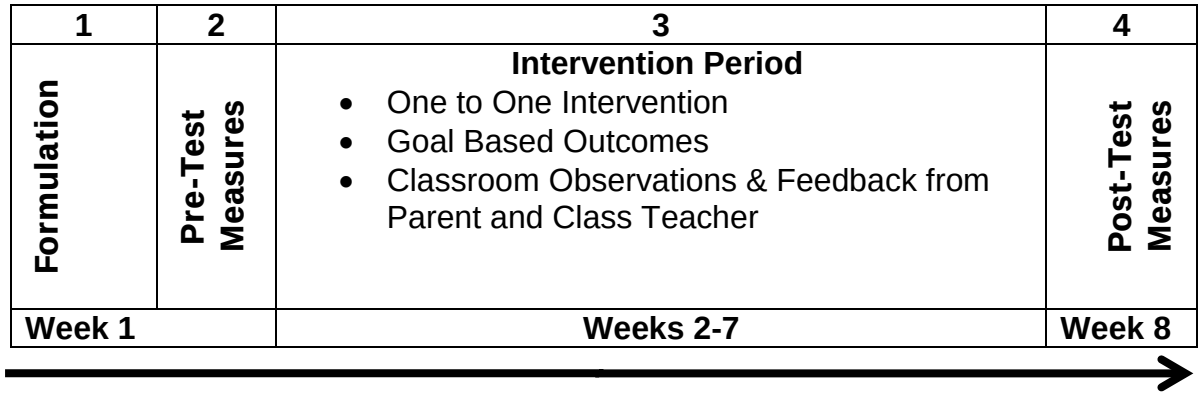
attend the conclusion of each session. The capacity of staff to liaise with me regarding the key learning points was also restricted. Consequently greater responsibility fell upon the shoulders of the pupil to recall and apply ideas developed within the session. I anticipated that Social Stories would support the pupil to foresee how they could apply the strategies learnt within the session.

Social Stories do not appear to have been widely used as part of the delivery of CBT. Sofronoff, Attwood and Hinton (2005) utilised Social Stories with pupils with a recognised SCD and experiencing anxiety. However Social Stories were not a key focus of the research. Instead the authors were predominantly focused upon a) the effectiveness of CBT in supporting childhood anxiety and b) the impact of parental involvement within the intervention. Social Stories were employed once during the intervention, in which they were the primary focus of session five. Unfortunately Sofronoff et al. (2005) did not discuss the perceived impact or specific use of Social Stories within the intervention. Therefore it appears that there remains uncertainty regarding the use of Social Stories as part of a CBT intervention. I will explore how Social Stories can be utilised and how effective I perceive them to be. I will utilise Social Stories throughout my delivery of CBT, as opposed to one session.

2.6 The Intervention

This CBT intervention was conducted over an 8 week period and consisted of four stages (see figure 3).

Figure 3. *An overview of the therapeutic input.*



Graham (2005) emphasises that successful CBT incorporates the input of school staff and parents within the therapeutic process. I frequently liaised with the pupil's mother and occasionally interacted with the school staff. Both parties were included in the process of assessment and formulation. I will discuss this further within the 'reflections and implications' section of the paper.

When planning and delivering my CBT intervention, I referred to guidance from the following sources:-

- Stallard's (2002) 'Think good, feel good', a practical resource which documents activities to use when delivering CBT with children and young people.
- Smith's (2001) and Gray's (2000) guidance regarding the production of Social Stories.

I utilised and adapted practical worksheets within Stallard's (2002) text. However I also included my own resources, including Social Stories (see appendix F) accounting for the pupil's SEN. I produced an initial overall plan for the 6 week intervention however this was reviewed and adapted on a weekly basis. I initially found that the pupil found it difficult to reflect upon how his thoughts impacted upon his own behaviour and the individuals around him. Therefore I adapted the way I utilised Social Stories, referring to these throughout sessions, including the introduction of new concepts or topics. Initially I had used the Stories as a way to recap the topics discussed within the session. I made this adaptation after session 1. The content of the 6 individual sessions are broken down and discussed within appendix G.

2.6.1 Ethical Considerations

I referred to guidelines provided by the University of Birmingham (n.d) and the British Psychological Society (2010; 2009). This helped to ensure my data collection methods and therapeutic intervention was conducted ethically.

Informed consent was retrieved from the pupil's parents (see appendix H), the pupil (see appendix I) and the pupil's teacher (see appendix J).

Daniels and Jenkins (2010) discuss the significance of *fidelity* or maintaining a trusting relationship during the therapeutic process. They highlight that trust may be compromised if the therapist discloses information with third parties.

However the issue of fidelity is potentially complicated further when delivering CBT, due to the emphasis upon collaboration. The key to achieving this collaborative, yet ethical approach is to ensure the therapist negotiates with the pupil regarding *what* and *how* information is shared with key adults. This approach continues to place the pupil's well-being at the heart of the approach and will not marginalise their choice or point of view.

2.6.2 Measurements

Three existing instruments were utilised to measure the *perceived* changes which occurred during and upon completion of the CBT-based intervention:-

- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (completed by the pupil's mother and class teacher - Pre-and Post-measurement).
- Emotional Literacy Checklist (completed by the pupil and the pupil's mother and class teacher - Pre-and Post-measurement).
- Goal Based Outcomes (completed by the pupil at the end of each session).

An overview of each instrument is included within appendix K.

By including each party within the pre-and post-measurements, I have explored perceived changes from multiple perspectives. This may help to overcome potential biases, which can occur when one explores a subjective perspective. For example the pupil's response could reflect how they want to be viewed by others. Additionally I supported the pupil to read statements within the Checklist. Therefore my presence may have influenced the pupil's response, despite emphasising that the pupil should respond honestly.

When one considers the reliability of the three measurements one must consider how the focus of each instrument related to the purpose of the intervention. The combination of the SDQ and Emotional Literacy Checklist helped me to explore the impact of the intervention on presenting behaviour at the surface level and the pupil's underlying difficulties (see formulation in appendix E). This justified the inclusion of two questionnaires and consequently the increased demands upon respondents' time. The Goal Based Outcomes relied upon the pupil's perspective. I reduced this shortcoming by completing classroom observations, focusing on the pupil's behaviour within relevant scenarios. I also consulted with the pupil's mother on a weekly basis. The teacher's restricted capacity inhibited me from retrieving explicitly related behavioural records. Additionally pre-existing and more generic behavioural records did not appear to be formally kept within class. Consequently I was unable to utilise this data to supplement my own measurements. Accessing qualitative feedback from the class teacher, in addition to the parent would have enabled the respondents to provide

feedback in their own words, not constrained by the items included within the instruments.

2.7 Results

2.7.1 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: Pre-and Post-Measures[9]

Parents	Overall	Emotional Symptoms	Conduct Problems	Hyperactivity	Peer Problems	Pro-social Behaviour
Pre	29	6	8	9	6	5
Post	15	3	3	5	4	7
Variation	-14	-3	-5	-4	-2	+2

Class Teacher	Overall	Emotional Symptoms	Conduct Problems	Hyperactivity	Peer Problems	Pro-social Behaviour
Pre	22	4	7	4	7	4
Post	20	4	7	4	5	2
Variation	-2	0	0	0	-2	-2

2.7.2 Emotional Literacy Checklist: Pre-and Post-Measures

A higher score is suggestive of superior emotional literacy, however for a more detailed interpretation of scores please refer to appendix L.

[9] Green = low need; Yellow = some need; Blue = high need

Parents	Overall Emotional Literacy	Self-Awareness Sub-scale	Self-Regulation Sub-scale	Motivation Sub-scale	Empathy Sub-scale	Social Skills Sub-scale
Pre	52	13	8	9	11	11
Post	52	12	6	10	12	12
Variation	0	-1	-2	+1	+1	+1

Class Teacher	Overall Emotional Literacy	Self-Awareness Sub-scale	Self-Regulation Sub-scale	Motivation Sub-scale	Empathy Sub-scale	Social Skills Sub-scale
Pre	40	10	6	10	4	10
Post	40	10	7	9	5	9
Variation	0	0	+1	-1	+1	-1

Pupil	Overall Emotional Literacy
Pre	74
Post	73
Variation	-1

2.7.3 Goal Progress Chart

Goal 1 = *Not to get angry during maths lessons*

Goal 2 = *To stop shouting during my lessons*

Goal 3 =*Not to get frustrated when I lose at games*

	Session Number					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Goal 1	4	7	9	10	10	10
Goal 2	4	7	8	9	10	10
Goal 3	6	9	10	9	10	10

2.7.4 Interpreting the Results

Contrasting results were found between the Parental and Teacher SDQs. The mother's responses indicated a significant reduction in emotional, hyperactive and challenging behaviours. However these improvements were not indicated by the teacher. However the class teacher did share the mother's perspective that the pupil's peer relationships had marginally improved.

Minor changes (both positive and negative) were indicated by the pupil, parent and class teacher within the Emotional Literacy Checklists. This suggests that the intervention had minimal impact upon the pupil's emotional literacy. However qualitative feedback from the pupil's mother, suggests that the pupil now provides greater feedback regarding their school experiences. A gradual improvement was also noticeable when the pupil was asked to reflect about their week within the sessions. This may suggest a development in the pupil's level of self-awareness. However this was not demonstrated within the quantitative results. When utilising Social Stories, the pupil also demonstrated an increased understanding of how other people may feel within a number of

scenarios presented. This would suggest enhanced empathic understanding. However, again, this was not evident within the quantitative results.

Scores provided by the pupil within the Goal Progress Chart would suggest that the pupil had achieved all three of his goals. However through my observations and through feedback from the pupil's mother it was evident that further improvement remained possible. This is not to dispute that progress has been made. Most notably, the pupil demonstrated greater empathy when playing games and appeared to enjoy the process of game playing as time progressed. Consequently the pupil became less preoccupied with the requirement to win.

2.8 Reflections

Within my reflections I will focus upon:-

1) The employment of Social Stories within the CBT sessions.
2) Discuss the key learning points regarding the specific case.
3) My experiences as a trainee delivering CBT, relating my own experiences to the supporting and opposing factors outlined within the literature review.

2.8.1 Using Social Stories to Support the Delivery of CBT – A Positive Approach?

As previously discussed, I adjusted how I used Social Stories within the sessions, after reflecting back after week 1. My objective was to enhance the

pupil's understanding during the sessions, as opposed to using Social Stories as a way of reinforcing the key learning points. This adjustment appeared to result in three key outcomes:-

1) Enhancing the pupil's understanding of key concepts introduced
2) Enhancing the pupil's empathy towards others within specific situations
3) Providing the pupil with a guide, *mapping out* a potential solution he could adopt in class

These interpretations were based upon my observations and through informal qualitative feedback by the pupil.

The inclusion of Social Stories *throughout* each session appears logical in hindsight, particularly for a pupil experiencing SCD. Social Stories are believed to assist a pupil's understanding and comprehend how others may think, feel and behave (Smith, 2001). I feel I may have overestimated the pupil's comprehension skills during the initial assessment. During the assessment process, the pupil appeared to comprehend my language and responded coherently, skills which were not as evident within the sessions. Nevertheless one should note the content of the sessions was more adult-led than during the process of assessment. During the CBT sessions I wanted to address areas of particular challenge for the pupil, as opposed to simply exploring *his* views regarding his strengths and needs. Previously the pupil determined the thresholds of our discussion.

2.8.2 The Key Learning Points from the Current Case

The following key learning points draw upon reflections regarding my experiences during the 6 week intervention.

Assessment Process

After completing the CBT intervention, I further comprehend Fuggle et al.'s (2013) perspective regarding the continual assessment process. Each session provided a platform to address areas of challenge for the pupil, but additionally provided me with an increasingly detailed insight of the pupil's needs. This learning process enabled me to adapt the focus of my input, the resources and approach I adopted and develop a greater perception of the pupil's needs outside of the CBT sessions. I initially felt frustration at the fact I had conceivably overlooked the sheer significance of the pupil's needs. However through discussion with my supervisor, I developed a more positive perspective. This understanding simply ensured my intervention became increasingly accessible for the young person and additionally, my enhanced insight could enable further support within the classroom. Consequently I provided additional recommendations to the school as a result. Expanding on my previous report (see appendix M).

Differentiation

As previously discussed the pupil experienced a range of SEN. Consequently I made significant adaptations and additions to the materials outlined within Stallard's (2002) guidance. For example, significant reinforcement was required during each session. This helped to ensure each session was accessible. Throughout this process, I valued the flexibility which CBT provides and identified creative ways to differentiate my input (Rait et al., 2010; Stallard, 2005). Perhaps the most significant adaptation was in response to the pupil's unwillingness to attempt writing or drawing at first. This consequently placed greater emphasis upon talking about his thoughts, feelings and behaviour. In addition, the completion of homework tasks was also challenging. Although the pupil was aware that he could ask his mother for support to complete the task, I soon realised that my requests for the pupil to complete written tasks were ill-advised. Instead providing him with practical tasks he could carry out later on within the school day. As a consequence of these changes I often felt it was important to reflect upon whether the content of the input remained closely aligned with the principles of CBT. Therefore ensuring the integrity of the intervention was maintained. I feel I achieved this objective by frequently referring learning back to the interdependent cycle of thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Transferring Skills into the Classroom

The pupil appeared to find it difficult to implement the skills we discussed within each session. This appeared to be exacerbated further by the pupil's tendency to compartmentalise. An interpretation consequently supported by the pupil's mother. If I was to complete this intervention again, I feel it would be beneficial to ask a member of staff to attend the final 10 minutes of each session. This would enable the member of staff to comprehend the key learning points of the session and support the pupil to transfer skills they have learnt into the classroom. However one must anticipate two potential challenges when utilising this strategy:-

1) The capacity of the school to deploy a consistent member of staff for 10 minutes each week.

2) Ensuring the pupil is clear that only information they wish to share is divulged.

Eliciting Feedback

The pupil often appeared to provide what he perceived to be the most desirable response - habitually the *most positive response*. This could be explained by the traditional adult-pupil dynamic (McQuillan, 2005). I felt this

reduced the value of the feedback elicited regarding the pupil's progress and feedback regarding the quality of the session.

2.8.3 Reflecting on the Therapeutic Intervention: The Trainee Educational Psychologist's Perspective

I will now refer back to existing literature regarding the supporting and inhibiting factors for EPs delivering therapeutic interventions, incorporating my own experiences to extend understanding.

Accessibility

From a practical standpoint CBT was highly accessible for the pupil. Overcoming barriers associated with outpatient support (Kazdin et al., 1997). Although other pupils were aware of my presence, I frequently attended the school in my role as link EP. Therefore it was not uncharacteristic of me to be within the school or classroom. Additionally I was familiar with the whole-school issues, policies and school staff. This was particularly useful when feeding back to staff about potential adaptations to the curriculum and provision.

Capacity to Deliver

A theme of *capacity* emerged when reflecting upon my CBT intervention. Firstly, adopting a pragmatic perspective I found the process of CBT prolonged, particularly the preparation of resources. Although this was my initial attempt at individual therapeutic input, as a TEP I experience increased flexibility within my working week in comparison to colleagues. I would question whether the delivery of therapeutic interventions is plausible for peers, without adaptations to my current service's model of delivery (Atkinson et al., 2011; Squires and Dunsmuir, 2011). Additionally if one considers the delivery of therapeutic intervention within a traded or semi-traded model of service delivery, one questions whether *planning time* should be included within the service cost.

Secondly the capacity of both the parents and school staff was at times restricted. This is not to criticise either party, but only to highlight the commitment required to ensure effective communication occurs. Of course when initiating the CBT intervention, it is impossible to forecast one's commitments on a weekly or daily basis. Communication was particularly constrained with the class teacher. One should again recall that the pupil was taught within a specialist unit. Therefore a number of the pupils experienced significant SEN. Consequently the class teacher was often attending to the needs of other pupils. Despite this understandable barrier, I did feel this

reduced the pupil's ability to transfer skills into the classroom (Lawson et al., 2006). A challenge anticipated due to the pupil's SCD (Wood and Schwartzman, 2013).

Capacity to Supervise

Reflecting as a TEP, I often found that the requirement for therapeutic supervision in addition to ongoing supervision placed great demand upon my supervisor's time. Consequently the time-restrictions resulted in a dominant focus regarding the practical delivery of CBT. However in hindsight, I may have benefited from additional exploration of my on-going assessment and re-conceptualising the case (Squires and Dunsmuir, 2011).

EP Support at the Individual Level

Expanding on the issue of capacity one must consider whether individual therapeutic support maximises the impact of EP intervention. During classroom observations I identified that four additional pupils appeared to experience challenges comparable to the client. This would suggest that a systemic approach may be advisable moving forward. This could be achieved by:-

1) Working with the class teacher to ensure the curriculum is carefully differentiated. Enabling pupils to access and experience success within the classroom and consequently enhance their self-esteem.

2) Working with the school leadership team to ensure provision or support is in place for pupils during periods of significant emotional distress. Adopting a humanistic paradigm one must question whether pupils have the capacity to learn if their emotional and social needs are not fully supported.

Although I have considered alternatives to the delivery of individual therapeutic support within the current setting, I have yet to address more generally how *EPs* can support the development of mental health for children and young people. I believe this to be a question of *how*, as opposed to *if* we should be providing support. Particularly when one considers the significance of mental health concerns within the UK (Collishaw et al., 2010; MacKay, 2007). Magnified further when pupils' experience SEN (Emerson and Hatton, 2007). One could also argue the EP's knowledge of educational settings is of great value, when one considers the perceived impact of education upon the well-being of pupils and students (Nuffield Foundation, 2012). One could argue that EP services can fulfil **three** roles in relation to children and young people's mental health:-

1) Provide support in the *identification* of Mental Health issues.

2) *Raising awareness* and providing *guidance* regarding Mental Health issues.

3) Provide individual or group-based *therapeutic support.*

These three roles all correspond with what the Mental Health Foundation (1999) identified as effective early intervention for pupils.

However defining an explicit role for EPs to support the development of mental health for children and young people may prove ill-advised due to the variation between CAMHS services across the UK (Atkinson and Hornby, 2002). Therefore instead of defining a nationally recognised role, it may be more realistic to specify the EPS' role within mental health as part of the LA's **Local Offer** (DfE, 2013). This will enable each LA to account for the capacity of their local CAMHS service and the needs of pupils within their specific area. I would foresee that Atkinson and Hornby's (2002) Framework would be a valuable tool to support such discussions.

2.9 Conclusions and Implications for EP Practice

I will now conclude this PPR by outlining the following key learning points and implications for EP Practice.

- The inclusion of Social Stories with CBT can assist pupils to a) recognise positive and negative thoughts and b) map out potential responses to challenging situations. Without this tool, I feel it can be more challenging for pupils with SCD to envisage how learning outcomes can be applied within relevant settings.
- To further enhance the transfer of skills from each session into the classroom, it would be beneficial for a member of staff to attend the

concluding moments of each session. I would argue that this becomes an essential requirement when CBT is delivered with pupils experiencing SEN and particularly SEBD and SCD.

- Assessment was an on-going process throughout the intervention. Developing a greater understanding of the pupil's needs and responses enabled me to prepare for each session more effectively. This also helped me to provide further guidance to school staff regarding how to support the pupil within the classroom.
- A service's decision to deliver therapeutic interventions has implications for EPs in terms of delivery *and* therapeutic supervision. Additionally the preparation of resources for each session is also time-consuming. Moving forwards I question whether my current EP service has the capacity to deliver therapeutic interventions such as CBT. Particularly when individualised adaptations are required (for example the employment of Social Stories).
- If I delivered CBT in the future, I would develop or adapt a tool to support the elicitation of the pupil's views regarding the content and quality of each session. This tool would need to be individualised, accounting for the pupil's needs. Enabling the pupil to complete feedback independent of adult support. Information elicited would then enhance my reflections and adaptations to consequent input.
- In order to maximise the impact of the therapeutic interventions with pupils experiencing SEN, I believe the involvement of school staff and parents/carers is imperative. Before initiating the intervention one must explore all potential barriers to achieving frequent communication. The EP

should also be explicit that positive change does not simply result from one to one intervention.

- The requirement for LAs to support children and adolescent mental health appears evident when one considers existing research. However due to the variance between services within each LA, it is perhaps ill-advised to allocate specific roles to specific services. I propose that EP services must work with LA leaders to establish how best they can facilitate the enhancement of mental health for children and adolescents. Consequently a strategic plan across the LA can be developed.

Within my literature review and reflections, I have considered whether CBT should be provided by EP services. I have attempted to reflect on the supporting and inhibiting factors for both TEPs and EPs. I have moved beyond my experience as a TEP, as I feel it is important that training is reflective of the real life practice. As previously discussed the EP service's model of delivery will have implications as to whether there is capacity for EPs to conduct therapeutic work. However one could argue that the relatively high levels of autonomy EPs experience within their profession would enable the EP to deliver therapeutic support, if they believed this to be appropriate. Nevertheless one cannot dismiss the constraints that appear to be emerging across the profession. Particularly when one considers EP input may now be predominantly commissioned by individuals and groups outside of the LA. This may marginalise the EP's level of autonomy. Therefore I argue that it is the responsibility of central government to ensure the mental health of

children and young people is not marginalised by financial constraints and consequential decisions.

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2.11 Appendices

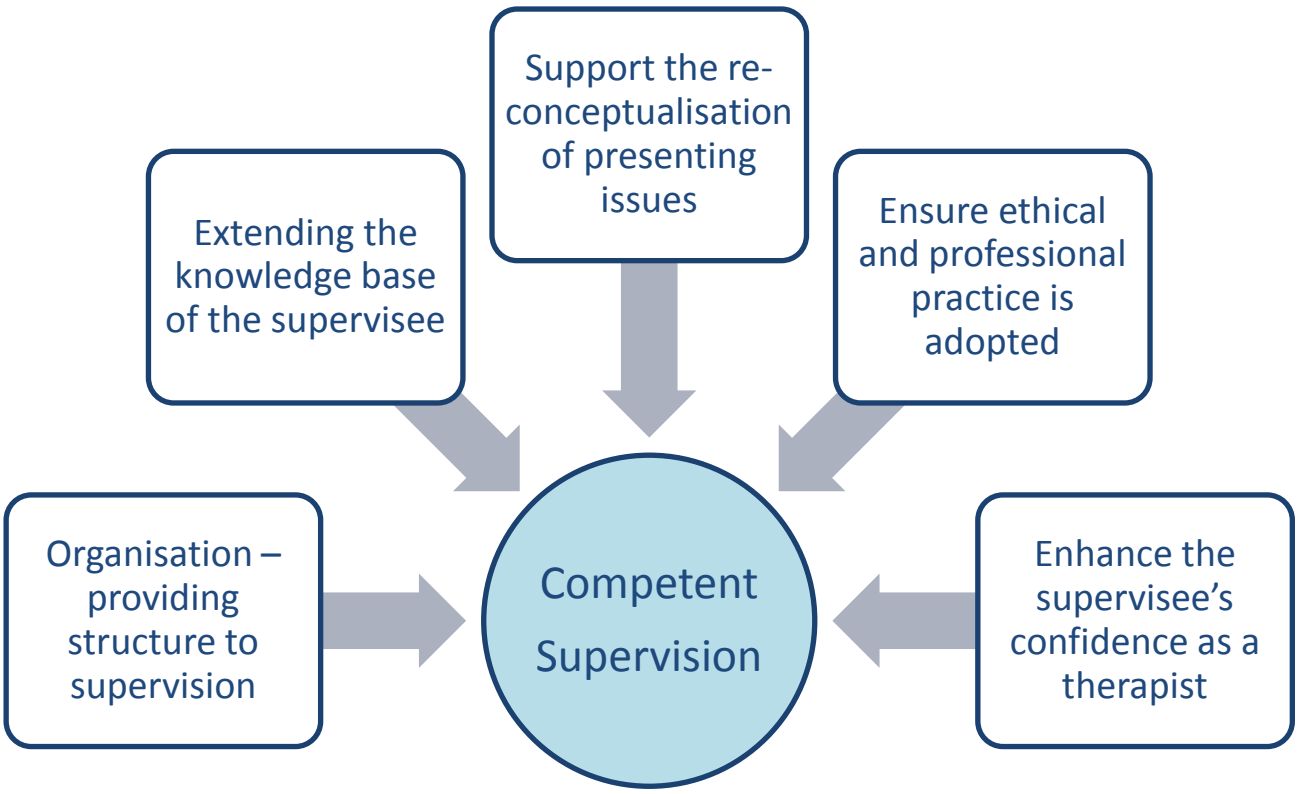
Appendix A

A table which documents the types of sentences incorporated within a Social Story. Adapted from Gray (2000; 1994).

Type of Sentence	Purpose
Descriptive	Provides information about the situation – what, where, who, why. Emphasis on *usually* or *sometimes* what happens, in order to enable change.
Perspective	Outlines the reactions and feelings of others.
Directive	Identify the desired response – what the pupil *should* do in this situation.
Control	Identify how pupil will recall the story. Pupil composes this section.
Co-operative	Outline how adults or peers will help pupil within this situation.
Partial	Pupil attempts to identify what will be the next steps in this situation. Including their feelings and the feelings of others.
Affirmative	The key learning points are emphasised.

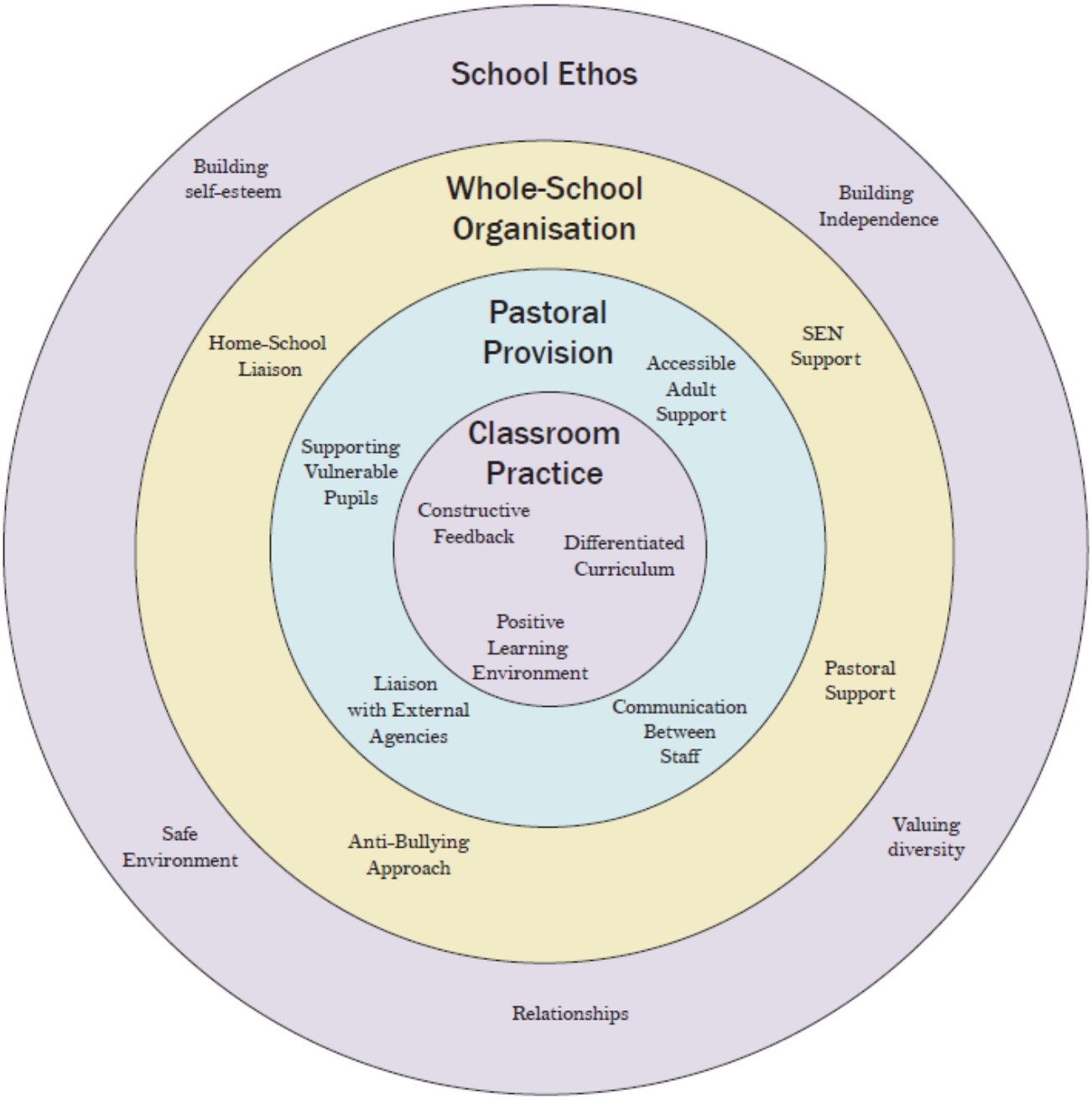
Appendix B

A diagram which outlines the skills which underpin competent therapeutic supervision (Squires and Dusmuir, 2011; Roth and Pilling, n.d.).



Appendix C

The framework for promoting mental health within schools (adapted from Atkinson and Hornby, 2002).



Appendix D

A checklist ofgood practice for therapists when completing formulation.Adapted from the BPS (2011).

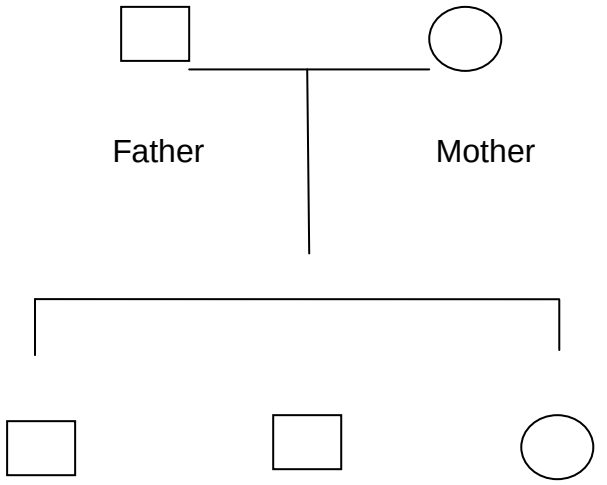
Characteristics of Good Formulation	Included Within Formulation?
Assessment includes depth and breadth	
Psychological theory guides EP's interpretations of information retrieved	
Theoretically sound or logical	
Incorporates the strengths of the pupil	
Relevant history of the pupil and presenting problems are included	
Indicates how presenting difficulties relate to one another	
Suggests how difficulties have developed currently, within the specific context	
States how interventions been prioritised	
Can be used to predict potential setbacks for interventions	
Outlines goals and desired outcomes	
Person specific not problem specific	
Culturally sensitive and accessible to all	
Does not attribute blame to pupil or key individuals	
Identifies whether trauma or abuse is relevant to the case	
Evaluates the impact of any medical or health care interventions	
Identifies whether alternative interventions have impacted positively or negatively on pupil	
Incorporates any school based factors	
Incorporates any additional issues within wider society which may be relevant in terms of impact	
Can be clearly linked to both the assessment and the intervention	
Identifies the key problem holder	
Identifies the key stakeholders and their objectives	
Respects the interpretations of service user and relevant others	
Formulation is constructed collaboratively	
Development and sharing of formulation is constructed at an appropriate pace	

Can justify decisions or conclusions made within formulation	
EP reflects upon and acknowledges their values and assumptions	

Appendix E

Initial formulation completed prior to initiating the CBT intervention.

Genogram[10]



Pupil's Strengths

From my assessments, I have identified that the pupil has the following strengths to build upon and utilise within CBT:-

- When *interested*, he is very focused and will retaininformation
- Enjoys science, maths and art, this appears to be the pupil's favourite subject
- Is happy and motivated to attend school
- Responds well to routine
- Verbal comprehension skills
- Processing speed

[10] Genograms are detailed family trees which may help the EP to explore the interrelationships between family members (Beaver, 2003).

The following 4 sub-headings are taken from guidance by Johnstone and Dallos (2006).

1) Summary of core problems

In total I identified two key problems. Within the two tables below I have attempted to outline the *five P's:-* the problem and the predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors (Dudley and Kuyken, 2006). In addition I have also attempted to outline where the problem occurs and the frequency of the problem. This information will help me to ensure the focus of my intervention takes account of the significance of each problem and any potential barriers which must be overcome.

Verbally and Physically Abusive and Aggressive to Other People	
Where	• Within the classroom – usually towards females
Frequency	• Physically abusive at least once a week • Verbally abusive to staff or pupils on a daily basis
Predisposing Factors	• Learning difficulties • Feeling different from peers • Low self-esteem • Reduced perseverance
Precipitating Factors	• When pupil finds work difficult • Points of transition during the day • Feeling isolated
Perpetuating Factors	• Will not take responsibility for his actions • Underlying learning needs not fully identified until this year • Socially isolated • Reduced exposure to peers modelling pro-social behaviour • Abuse or aggression leads to time away from the activity (negative reinforcement)
Protective Factors	• Ignoring the initial outburst • Preparing him for change • Providing differentiated tasks

Damaging Work and Property	
Where	• Within the classroom, playground and at home
Frequency	• When participating in games (at home or school) (dependent upon activity) • Prior to inclusion (3 times per week) • When he feels he cannot complete a task (at home)

	(dependent upon activity, however pupil feels this occurs within half of his lessons)
Predisposing Factors	• Learning difficulties • Low self-esteem • Reduced levels of perseverance • Speech and language difficulties (as a young child) • Social communication and interaction difficulties
Precipitating Factors	• Points of transition during the day • When he loses during games • When he feels he cannot do something
Perpetuating Factors	• Described as a 'perfectionist' – *either I can do things well, or I can't do them at all* • Challenging to take perspective of others • Easily frustrated
Protective Factors	• Demanding his attention in a clear, firm manner • Providing tasks outside of the classroom environment • Providing differentiated tasks

2) How do the problems relate to one another

In order to explore how the pupil's current difficulties relate to one another, I have utilised the Interactive Factors Framework (IFF) (Frederickson and Clyne, 2002). The IFFencourages the EP to explore the presenting problems at multiple levels:- environmental, biological, cognitive and behavioural, prior to exploring how these levels interact.The IFF supportedme to identify the predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors for the pupil. (IFF presented at the end of Appendix C).

3) The psychological theory which helps to explain the current problems

In order to explore how the presenting problems interact and why they have developed, I have referred to psychological theory and research regarding the following areas:-

Psychological Theory	Relevance to Presenting Problem
Self-concept	• The pupil appears to have an inaccurate (negative) perception of his own ability. This is generalised across all subjects and appears to undermine all learning tasks. As the pupil is required to use

	literacy skills within most subjects, his learning experiences may be more challenging due to his literacy difficulties.
Theory of mind	• The pupil's social communication and interaction difficulties may explain his ego-centric behaviour. For example, the fact he *must* win. Other pupils find the work challenging within his class, however they are less vocal about their difficulties.
Parenting styles	• There appears to be discrepancy between the parenting styles of the pupil's mother and father. Each parent's style does not appear to fall clearly within Baumrind's (1991) parenting styles. However I conclude that the pupil's father demonstrates greater control than his mother, whilst mum demonstrates greater warmth. Of course each *style* has its strengths, however one questions whether this inconsistency, has led to a) increased uncertainty regarding expectations – particularly when one considers the pupil's positive response to routine and b) an inaccurate perception that women are more tolerant of undesirable behaviour or perhaps that females can be overpowered.
Emotional intelligence	• The pupil's response to specific situations suggests that his perceptions of certain situations may be inaccurate. Therefore this will lead to an inaccurate response.
Social Learning Theory	• The pupil's best friend also experiences SEBD. Therefore I feel the pupil has observed undesirable behaviour by other pupils within the specialist unit.
Ego Defence mechanisms (Psychodynamic theory)	• To avoid challenging academic tasks it appears the pupil employs a number of ego defence mechanisms. These include regression, denial, splitting, projection, idealisation & rationalisation. For example, the pupil attempts to rationalise his aggressive behaviour by stating that he is upset by other pupils' comments and actions.
Humanistic perspective	• Maslow's *hierarchy of needs* suggests that the pupil will only achieve positive self-esteem, whenhis social needs have been met. • Social acceptance requires a sense of belonging. I feel currently the pupil is socially isolated due to a) his behaviour and social communication difficulties b) the fact that he spends time within two settings and c) a variety of changes to his environment (moving house, separated from peers)

4) The plan for intervention

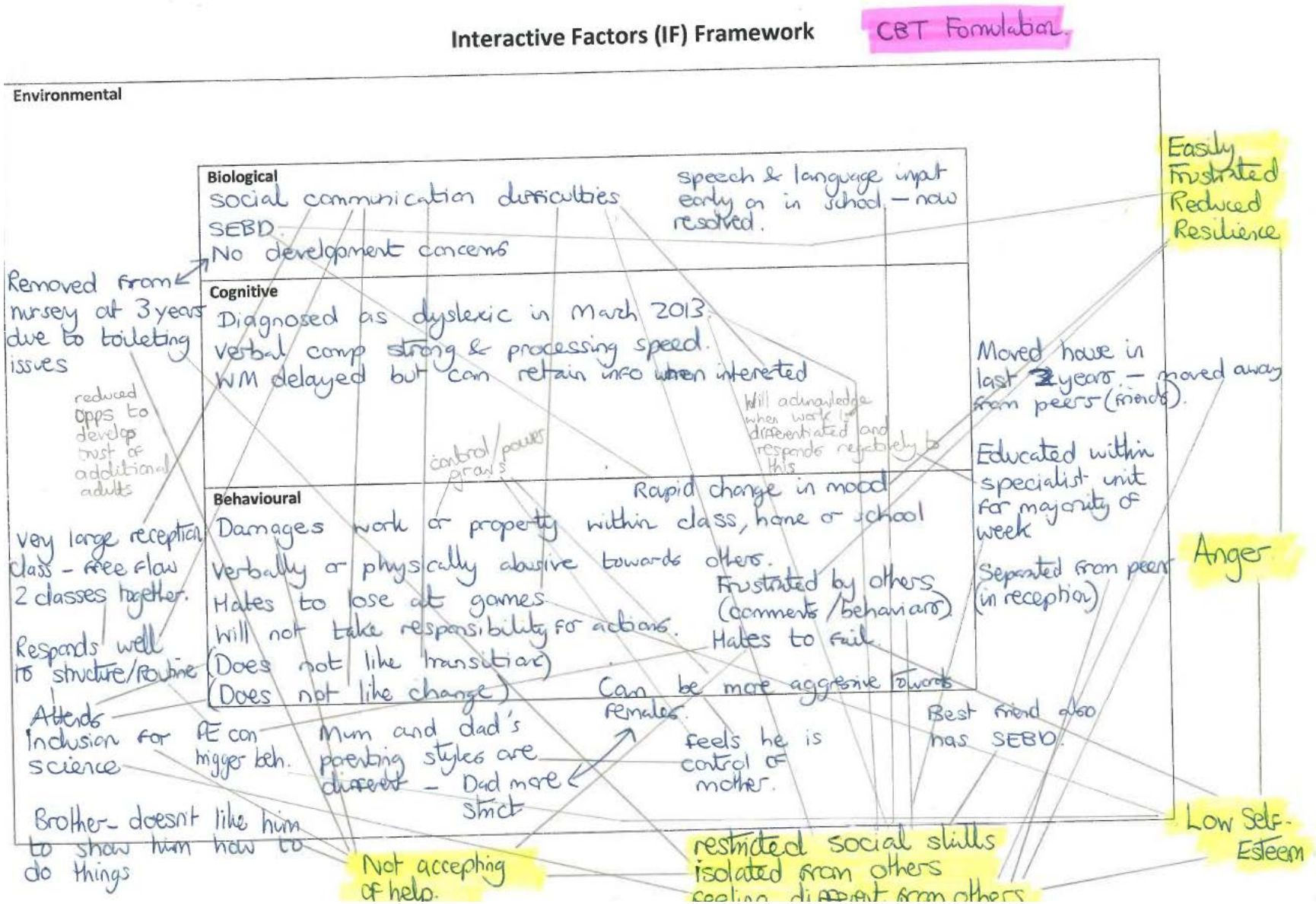
The intervention will focus around challenging three *core beliefs* which I feel the pupil currently holds:-

- Everything I do must be perfect
- I always fail at school
- I am different to other pupils

The three core beliefs highlighted above often result in angry and aggressive behaviour by the pupil. Therefore the focus of my input will be to support the pupil to:-

- Understand their feelings
- Recognise angry feelings at an earlier stage and
- Identifying coping strategies to calm angry thoughts.

By reducing the anger outbursts, I anticipate that the pupil will break the dysfunctional cycle. This cycle appears to currently reinforce the pupil's negative core beliefs, as when he becomes aggressive in the classroom, he avoids tasks he finds difficult, he misses out on learning opportunities and his behaviour alienates him from peers.

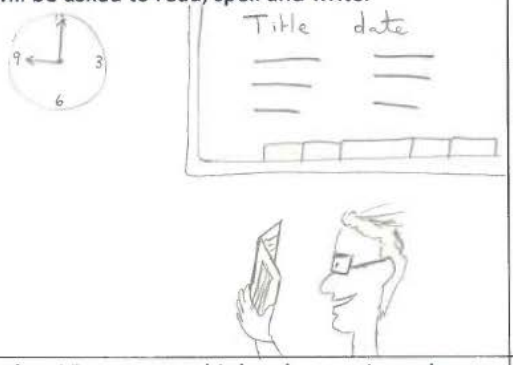

Interactive Factors (IF) Framework
CBT Formulation
Environmental
Biological
social communication difficulties
SEBD
No development concerns
speech & language input early on in school — now resolved.
Cognitive
Diagnosed as dyslexic in March 2013.
Verbal comp strong & processing speed.
WM delayed but can retain info when interested
Will acknowledge when work is differentiated and responds negatively to this
control issues grows
Behavioural
Damages work or property within class, home or school
Verbally or physically abusive towards others.
Hates to lose at games
Will not take responsibility for actions.
(Does not like transition)
(Does not like change)
Rapid change in mood
Frustrated by others (comments / behaviour)
Hates to fail.
Can be more aggressive towards females.
Removed from nursery at 3 years due to toileting issues
reduced opps to develop trust of additional adults
Very large reception class - free flow 2 classes together.
Responds well to structure/routine
Attends Inclusion for science
Brother - doesn't like him to show him how to do things
PE can trigger beh.
Mum and dad's parenting styles are different - Dad more strict
feels he is control of mother.
Best friend also has SEBD.
Moved house in last 2 years. - moved away from peers (friends).
Educated within specialist unit for majority of week
Separated from peers (in reception)
Easily Frustrated
Reduced Resilience
Anger
Low Self-Esteem
Not accepting of help.
restricted social skills
isolated from others
feeling different from others

Appendix F

An example of the Social Stories utilised within the CBT intervention.

Balanced Thinking

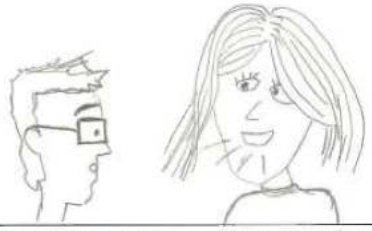
Vince has literacy every day at 9:00 am. This lesson always takes place within Vince's main classroom. Usually during a literacy lesson Vince will be asked to read, spell and write.



Sometimes Vince needs help from an adult during his literacy lesson. In order to seek support from an adult Vince puts up his hand.



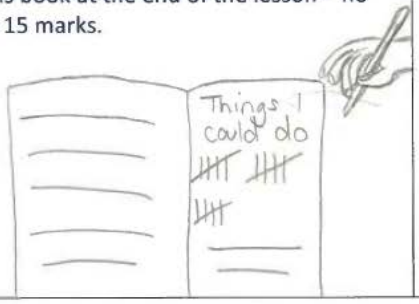
When Vince puts up his hand, sometimes the class teacher is working with other pupils. However Vince waits quietly and the class teacher always comes over to help him as soon as she has finished helping the other pupil.



During literacy lessons Vince used to think 'I cannot do this, it's too difficult' but he focused on the things he couldn't do, not the things he could do.



Vince's class teacher wanted Vince to focus on the things he could do. To help him remember she asked Vince to keep a tally chart at the back of his book. Every time he could complete a task, he placed a mark at the back of his book. Vince checked his book at the end of the lesson – he had made 15 marks.



Vince has literacy every day. He can find some of the tasks difficult. When Vince finds a task difficult he asks for help. The class teacher always helps Vince. But Vince also finds that he can complete some of the tasks by himself. He now has a balanced view about his literacy skills.



Appendix G

A brief overview of the 6 weekly sessions

CBT – Overview of the 6 sessions

Session 1: Introduction

- Introduced the CBT cycle
- If/then quiz – explored the pupil's responses to a range of scenarios (helping me to consider his thoughts, feelings and actions)
- What I think, what I do or how I feel – explored the difference between thoughts, feelings and actions (what I do)
- Explored the pupil's current solutions to difficulties
- Introduced Social Stories
- Goal setting – identified 3 priority targets to focus upon
- Goal Progress Chart

Session 2: Identifying my Thoughts

- Recapof session 1
- Explored the recognition of other people's feelings, using cards of various facial expressions
- What are they thinking – explored what pupil would anticipate others to feel within a range of scenarios
- Explored the pupil's positive, worrying and unpleasant thoughts about himself
- Set homework – *identifying the things I am good at*
- Goal Progress Chart

After week 2, I introduced board games into each session. This enabled me to explore how the pupil responded to winning and losing and the overall process of playing games with others. This also provided the pupil with an opportunity to interact without explicit focus or discussion upon their thoughts, feelings and actions. I found that the 60 minute sessions were tiring for the pupil.

Session 3: Recognising Negative Thoughts

- Recap of session 2

- Identifying thinking errors – negative thoughts, overreacting, negative expectations, (unhelpful) generalisations
- All or nothing thinking – recognising our success
- Looking for evidence – when thinking negatively (thinking errors)
- Further exploration of the feelings of others – e.g. finishing last and turn taking
- Goal Progress Chart

Session 4: Controlling my Thoughts

- Recap of session 3
- Looking for the positive – nice thoughts about myself, activities that make me feel good, positive thoughts about achievement
- Balanced thinking – recognising the positives during moments of adversity
- Friendly behaviour – socialising with peers outside of his friendship group
- Anger volcano – initial exploration of the various levels of anger
- Goal Progress Chart

Session 5: Changing my Behaviour

- Recap of session 4
- Anger volcano revisited and explored further
- Breaking down challenging situations into small steps
- Identifying possible solutions – coping self-talk, thinking puzzles and thought stopping
- Exploring the consequences of solutions
- Goal Progress Chart

Session 6: Problem Solving

- Recap of week 5
- Exploring possible solutions which can be adopted after week of practice
- Stop, Plan and Go:-
  - Stop: Identify the problem
  - Plan: What is your solution?
  - Go: When will you try out the solution*
- Goal Progress Chart

* The pupil often identified a solution which could be adopted at that moment in time. This helped him to prevent his frustrations escalating.

Appendix H

A copy of the parental consent form, sent home to the parents of pupil.

Therapeutic intervention

Parental Consent form

About the Intervention

- The therapeutic intervention I am hoping to deliver is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- CBT explores the thoughts, behaviours, feelings and physical reactions of the client, within specific situations. It is also important to explore the environment, in which problematic situations can occur within.
- CBT builds upon the following fundamental principles:-
  - The child's difficulties lie within their perception and responses to the difficulty, not the difficulty itself
  - The child's response to particular events or situations, is moderated by cognition
  - Behaviour is adaptable
- CBT uses a range of techniques and approaches to support the child to break down situations into the 4 key areas:-thoughts, behaviours, feelings and physical reactions. This should help the therapist and the child to identify where further support is required and where adjustments may lead to positive change.
- As a result, I will work with XXXX to identify strategies which may help him to overcome challenges he currently experiences. XXXX may be asked to practice these strategies within the classroom, however I will provide support and so will his class teachers.
- I will use stories to enhance the XXXX's understanding of situations. This approach may also help XXXX to understand how others may feel in specific situations.

If I provide consent, what happens next?

Assessment

If you are happy for your child to participate within the intervention, I would like to carry out an assessment of XXXX's current strengths and challenges. This will include discussions with XXXX, XXXX's class teachers and yourself.

Formulation

I will then attempt to identify the potential key issues which are leading to the difficulties experienced by XXXX. However I will check to ensure that you, XXXX and XXXX's class teachers agree with my interpretations. This process is highly important, as it will help to guide the focus of CBT.

Pre-Assessment
I will ask you and XXXX's class teachers to complete 2 short questionnaires. I will also ask XXXX to complete one questionnaire. This will help me to identify whether the CBT has been successful.

Intervention
I will then develop a 6 week programme of CBT. Each session will last for up to 1 hour. This will take place during school hours and will take place within the school, in a quiet room. During this time XXXX may be asked to practice some of the strategies we develop together. He may be asked to try these strategies out within the classroom.

Post-Assessment
I will then ask you, XXXX class teachers and XXXX to complete the same questionnaires. This information will then be analysed to see if a) CBT has been effective and b) where XXXX may require further support.

Professional Development

I am also hoping to write-up this case as part of a wider research paper. This research paper will form part of my Doctoral research at the University of Birmingham.

However it is important to know that all information and data will remain **anonymous.**

All electronic data will be stored securely using a secure password.

All printed data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet.

Confidentiality – I will ensure that only the following individuals will have access to the questionnaire data – my personal tutor [redacted] (from the University of Birmingham) and my supervisor [redacted] (from the Educational Psychology Service).

Right to withdraw – If you would like to withdraw your child from the intervention, you can do so at any point. However if you would like to withdraw your questionnaire responses from the research you can do so up until the30th November 2013 – After this date all data will be anonymous. Please contact

me if you no longer wish XXXX to participate (my contact details are outlined below).

To clarify I am asking you to:-

- Allow me to deliver 6 weeks of CBT with your son, within school hours.
- For you and your son, to complete a pre-and post-intervention questionnaire.
- For me to hold a consultation with you regarding your son, as part of the assessment process.
- For me to discuss with you my formulation, which will guide my delivery of CBT.
- Allow me to explore the perspectives of your child's class teachers.
- Allow me to keep all of the data retrieved from this intervention and analyse it to measure its effectiveness and include this information within my write-up.
- Allow me to quote any verbal feedback made by class teachers within my write-up.

Researcher's contact details

Steve Dexter

Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted] Educational Psychology Service

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Telephone number: [redacted]

If you have read and understood the research information documented above and are happy for your child to a) participate in the therapeutic intervention and b) participate in the research, please provide your name, today's date and signature and return the completed form to [redacted] Primary School.

Signature: _____ Name: _____

Date _____

Appendix I

A copy of the script I referred to when explaining the purpose of the CBT intervention and my Professional Practice Report, regarding our work together.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Pupil Consent script

What is CBT?

- The therapeutic intervention I am hoping to deliver is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- CBT explores how we think, behave, feel and physically react within specific situations.
- However I will also look at the environment, for example the classroom, in which difficult situations can take place.
- Sometimes we may feel things are negative, but actually they are not, which have just misunderstood what is going on around us.
- CBT believes we can change our behaviour – with support from an adult.
- I will work with you, using different tasks to help find out when you find it difficult within school and what we can do to change this.
- We will try to find solutions and then practice these ideas.
- Sometimes I will use stories to help you to understand what is going on in situations better AND help you to understand how other people feel.
- I have asked your parents if I can work with you and they have said yes, but you do not have to take part – you can decide.

If I provide consent, what happens next?

Assessment
If you are happy to take part I would like to ask you some questions about things you do well at and the things you find difficult at school. I will also ask your parents and the class teacher what they think.

Formulation

I will then try and identify how I can help you BUT I will check to see if you think I am right.

Pre-Assessment
I will ask you to complete a short questionnaire about how you currently feel, this will help me to see if the CBT has been helpful.

Intervention
We will then meet for 1 hour each week for 6 weeks. This will take place during school hours and will take place at school, in a quiet room. I may ask you to practice some of the ideas we think of and try these out in the classroom.

Post-Assessment
I will then ask you to again complete a short questionnaire. This information will then be analysed to see if a) CBT has been helpful and b) where you may require further support.

Professional Development

I would also like to write-up this work as part of a research paper. This research paper is part of my University course. I am asked to write up my work to show my teachers what I have learnt.

However nobody will know who you are, as I will not use your name in my work.

All the information I keep will be kept securely at my office.

Confidentiality – Only two people will see the work we have done – my personal tutor AnitaSoni (from the University of Birmingham) and my supervisor Sallie Maltby (from the Educational Psychology Service).

Right to withdraw – If you would like to stop taking part, you can do so at any time.

To clarify I am asking you to:-

- Work with me for 6 weeks – this work is called CBT
- To complete a questionnaire before and after CBT.
- To ask you questions about things that are going well and things you find difficult.
- Allow me to keep all of the information I collect from our work and see if it has helped and include this information within my write-up.

Appendix J

A copy of the teacher consent form.

Therapeutic intervention

Teacher Consent form

About the Intervention

- The therapeutic intervention I am hoping to deliver is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- CBT explores the thoughts, behaviours, feelings and physical reactions of the client, within specific situations. It is also important to explore the environment, in which problematic situations can occur within.
- CBT builds upon the following fundamental principles:-
  - The child's difficulties lie within their perception and responses to the difficulty, not the difficulty itself
  - The child's response to particular events or situations, is moderated by cognition
  - Behaviour is adaptable
- CBT uses a range of techniques and approaches to support the child to break down situations into the 4 key areas:-thoughts, behaviours, feelings and physical reactions. This should help the therapist and the child to identify where further support is required and where adjustments may lead to positive change.
- As a result, I will work with XXXX to identify strategies which may help him to overcome challenges he currently experiences. XXXX may be asked to practice these strategies within the classroom, however I will provide support.
- I will use stories to enhance the XXXX's understanding of situations. This approach may also help XXXX to understand how others may feel in specific situations.

If I provide consent, what happens next?

Assessment

If you are happy to participate within the intervention, I would like to carry out an assessment of XXXX's current strengths and challenges. This will include discussions with you, XXXX's parents and XXXX.

Formulation
I will then attempt to identify the potential key issues which are leading to the difficulties experienced by XXXX. However I will check to ensure that you, XXXX and XXXX's parents agree with my interpretations. This process is highly important, as it will help to guide the focus of CBT.

Pre-Assessment
I will ask you, XXXX's parents and XXXX to complete 2 short questionnaires, this will help me to identify whether the CBT has been successful.

Intervention
I will then develop a 6 week programme of CBT. Each session will last for up to 1 hour. This will take place during school hours and will take place within the school, in a quiet room. During this time XXXX may be asked to practice some of the strategies we develop together. He may be asked to try these strategies out within the classroom. It would be really helpful if you could support XXXX to practice these strategies and monitor how he gets on. I will also provide support and will be contactable throughout the 6 weeks.

Post-Assessment
I will then ask you, XXXX's parents and XXXX to again complete 2 short questionnaires. This information will then be analysed to see if a) CBT has been effective and b) where XXXX may require further support.

Professional Development

I am also hoping to write-up this case as part of a wider research paper. This research paper will form part of my Doctoral research at the University of Birmingham.

However it is important to know that all information and data will remain **anonymous.**

All electronic data will be stored securely using a secure password.

All printed data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet.

Confidentiality – I will ensure that only the following individuals will have access to the questionnaire data – my personal tutor [redacted] (from the University of Birmingham) and my supervisor [redacted] (from the Educational Psychology Service).

Right to withdraw – If you would like to withdraw your data from the research you can do so up until the30th November 2013 – After this date all data will be anonymous. Please contact me if you wish to withdraw your data (my contact details are outlined below).

To clarify I am asking you to:-

- Complete a pre-and post-intervention questionnaire.
- For me to hold a consultation with you regarding XXXX, as part of the assessment process.
- For me to meet with you to discuss my formulation, which will guide my delivery of CBT.
- Explore your perspectives regarding how XXXX has behaved within the classroom each week. This will include feedback regarding XXXX's application of the strategies he has learnt.
- Allow me to keep all of the data retrieved from this intervention and analyse it to measure its effectiveness and include this information within my write-up.
- Allow me to quote any verbal feedback you provide within my write-up. Again this information will remain **anonymous**.

Researcher's contact details

Steve Dexter

Trainee Educational Psychologist

[redacted] Educational Psychology Service

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Telephone number: [redacted]

If you have read and understood the research information documented above and are happy to participate in a) the therapeutic intervention and b) the research, please provide your name, today's date and signature. Please return to the Head Teacher.

Signature: _____ Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix K

An overview of the three instruments used to measure the perceived impact of the six week intervention.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The SDQ explores individual's perspectives regarding a child's emotional and behavioural development. The questionnaire consists of 25 statements. The respondent is required to indicate whether they believe the statement is *not*, *somewhat* or *certainly true*. The recorded responses provided an indication of whether the pupil experiences *low need*, *some need* or *high need* within the following areas:-

- Conduct problems
- Hyperactivity
- Emotional symptoms
- Peer problems
- Pro-social behaviour

Emotional Literacy Checklist

The Emotional Literacy Checklist (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003) provides an indication of a pupil's strengths and needs across five areas relating to emotional literacy:- self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The authors describe emotional literacy as *'..the ability of people to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their own emotions and to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to the expressed emotions of others'*. (p3, Southampton Psychology Service, 2003).The results of each Checklist will potentially highlight areas in which the pupil may require additional support or intervention.

There are 3 Checklists in total:-

- A Pupil Checklist[11] consisting of 25 items. The pupil must read each statement and indicate whether they feel it is *very like me*, *quite like me*, *only a bit like me* or *not like me at all*.

[11]Standardised in 2003 across England. Sample consisted of 732 pupils across 28 schools.

- A Parent Checklist[12] consisting of 25 items. The parent(s) must read each statement relating to their child and indicate whether they feel it is *very true, somewhat true, not really true* or *not at all true*.
- A Teacher Checklist[13]consisting of 20 items. Again the teacher must read each statement relating to the pupil and indicate whether they feel it is *very true, somewhat true, not really true* or *not at all true*.

The overall reliability for emotional literacy was deemed sufficient within the pupil, parent and teacher Checklists. This was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (0.70 or above). However inadequate reliability was found within all individual scales for pupils and within the individual scales of *empathy* and *self-awareness* within the Parent Checklist (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003).

Goal Progress Chart

The Goal Progress Chart is a measurement tool which enables the therapist to:-

- Retrieve objective evidence regarding the value and effectiveness of an intervention.
- Enhance the delivery of the intervention.
- Help to evaluate the progress a client has made towards a specified goal.

(Law, 2013).

The Goal Progress Chart consists of a simple scale from zero (no progress) to ten (goal is fully achieved). At the end of each session the client provides a score, which reflects the progress they perceive they have made towards an identified goal. Comparisons can then be made between the scores provided each week, enabling the therapist to identify and explore positive *and* negative change. When completing the process of goal setting, it is important to ensure goals are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timed) (O'Neill and Conzemius, 2006). However within the current intervention, I attempted to carefully balance my guidance whilst ensuring the goals set were pupil-led.

[12]Standardised in 2003across England. Sample consisted of responses regarding 449 pupils from 34 schools.

[13]Standardised in 2003across England. Sample consisted of responses regarding 569 pupils from 35 schools.

Appendix L

A series of tables documenting score bands and corresponding descriptions for the pupil, parent and teacher Emotional Literacy Checklists. Adapted from Southampton Psychology Service (2003).

Pupil

Score Band	Description	Score Range
1	Well Below Average	62 or below
2	Below Average	63-68
3	Average	69-81
4	Above Average	82-87
5	Well Above Average	88 or above

Parent

Score Band	Description	Overall	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
1	Well Below Average	60 or below	10 or below	8 or below	9 or below	11 or below	14 or below
2	Below Average	61-67	11-12	9-11	10-11	12-13	15-16
3	Average	68-80	13-14	12-15	12-16	14-17	17-19
4	Above Average	81-86	15	16-17	17	18	20
5	Well Above Average	87 or above	16-20	18-20	18-20	19-20	20

Teacher

Score Band	Description	Overall	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
1	Well Below Average	42 or below	8 or below	6 or below	6 or below	8 or below	9 or below
2	Below	43-50	9-10	7-8	7-8	9-10	10-11

	Average						
3	Average	51-69	11-13	9-14	9-13	11-14	12-14
4	Above Average	70-75	14	15	14-15	15	15
5	Well Above Average	76 or above	15-16	16	16	16	16

Appendix M

Recommendations and concluding observations provided to school staff at the conclusion of the six week intervention.

Presenting needs

The following reflections were made following my six-week intervention with XXXXXX:-

- Self-preservation – At times XXXXXX appears to avoid topics or challenges he experiences in order to protect his self-esteem. XXXXXX may also indicate he has understood a topic or instruction rather than request further input. This can make it challenging to identify how XXXXXX currently feels. In this sense his expectations appear to impact upon his temperament and willingness to engage.
- At times XXXXXX compartmentalises. He appeared to view school, home and the CBT sessions as distinct entities. This may inhibit the transference of positive experiences or skills, which he or others can build upon.
- XXXXXX appears to distinctly connect correct responses with positive feelings and incorrect responses with negative feelings. Therefore reinforcing his resistance to initiate activities he finds difficult. For example written or drawing tasks.
- XXXXXX may continue to find it difficult to accept losing when playing games. This may be due to a number of reasons. However XXXXXX appears to *expect* to win when initiating a game. He may also perceive game playing as an area of strength, therefore enhancing his frustration when he loses.
- Over-learning – XXXXXX remembered information we frequently revisited.
- XXXXXX responded positively to the Social Stories presented. The visual nature of these Stories may have increased XXXXXX's comprehension.
- XXXXXX levels of frustration appear to escalate rapidly. This reduces the window of opportunity he has to recognise early irritations. He may also find it difficult to let go of initial frustration, therefore perceivably small triggers may lead to feelings of anger. This may be as a result of underlying anxiety, again linked to XXXXXX's expectations within the classroom.

Recommendations

- Avoid challenging XXXXXX – instead 'XXXXXX I want you to...'

- Over-learning – repeating key learning points within a topic area should helpXXXXXX to remember these points moving forward.
- Increase the range of success XXXXXX experiences within other settings, may reduce his desire to *have* to win at games.
- When addressing recurring challenges, it may be useful to explore desirable behaviour through Social Stories.
- XXXXXX will benefit from regular opportunities to complete individual written activities using ICT. This accounts for his SEN and reluctance to complete activities he thinks he will find difficult.
- XXXXXX will require support to recognise when he is anxious or frustrated. Recognition of these feelings may help XXXXXX to implement coping strategies learnt within the intervention and prevent his frustration escalating. This could be achieved by adopting a self-rating scale with XXXXXX which is referred to upon arrival.
- XXXXXX will benefit from opportunities to complete tasks which he experiences high levels of success. Therefore XXXXXX will feel he is the expert. This may include tasks in which XXXXXX talks to others about an area of interest.
- XXXXXX may wish to attend extra-curricular activity clubs in which he completes activities which interest him

Chapter 3 Professional Practice Report 3

The expansion of traded services: Exploring the key issues and implications for EPs

3.1 Abstract

The following Professional Practice Report (PPR) explores the emergence of traded models of service delivery, adopted by Educational Psychology Services (EPS) located within Local Authorities (LA). More specifically this paper attempts to accomplish two key objectives:-

1) To identify the practical implications for Educational Psychologists (EP) operating within a traded or semi-traded model of service delivery.
2) To identify factors which may lead schools to commission additional EP support.

This research was conducted predominantly within a South East London Borough. It was my objective to produce a research paper with outcomes which are both informative and functional for the LA in which I am currently employed as a Trainee EP.

Due to the relatively recent emergence of traded services, existing research which explicitly relates to this topic area is restricted. Consequently within my literature review I have drawn upon research from outside the field of educational psychology. This enabled me to consider the research findings alongside an existing evidence-base. In addition I anticipate that this wider exploration of existing research, may shed new light upon current understanding within the EP profession.

In order to achieve the two key objectives, I have elicited the views of Principal EPs, EPs and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo's), with a particular focus on the views of participants located within my current LA. The perspectives of participants were elicited through self-completion questionnaires. Questionnaires contained both open and closed questions. Open responses were analysed using content analysis. Closed responses were converted into statistical data.

A range of perspectives were identified both between and within participating groups. However a number of themes emerged. Consequently I have identified a number of potential implications for EP practice. These implications will need to be addressed or explored further. For example, how EP services can ensure inclusive practice, within a traded model of service delivery. In addition, as I had anticipated, functional data was elicited which may support the EPS to secure additional commissioning and greater engagement with service users.

3.2 Introduction

The following Professional Practice Report (PPR) explores traded and semi-traded models of Educational Psychology service delivery. This topic is particularly relevant within the Local Authority (LA) in which I am currently employed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). The EP service has adopted a semi-traded model of service delivery within the past 18 months. This topic area also holds particular interest for me as a third year trainee EP. Through discussions with peers at the University of Birmingham, it appears that the introduction of traded services has impacted upon the skills required to fulfil the role, the type of work conducted and employment opportunities. Consequently further exploration of the implications and issues relating to this approach is warranted.

The topic of ethical trading has previously been explored by a range of authors (DECP, 2013; Fisher, 2009; Bracher and Hingley, 2002). The DECP (2013) states that the introduction of a traded model of service delivery does not change the fact EP support should be delivered in '..the most efficient, effective and fair way possible.' (p5). The DECP (2013) highlighted ethical considerations EP services must account for when operating within a traded model. These considerations relate to the four ethical principles outlined within the BPS' (2009) Code of Ethics and Conduct (see table 1). Although one must be mindful of the significance of ensuring ethical EP service delivery, current published research fails to explore the additional practical implications of traded service delivery, such as:-

- The type of work commissioned by service users
- The skills required by EPs when operating within a traded model of service delivery and more specifically the skills required to negotiate the commissioning of EP input.

The focus of this paper has largely been influenced by discussions with colleagues within the LA in which I am currently employed and peers at the University of Birmingham. However this reliance upon the verbal discourse is a consequence of restricted published research regarding this topic area.

Nevertheless I believe the focus of this research will hold relevance to other EP services. Due to the number of unanswered questions I have identified, this PPR may appear highly discursive at times, however I will narrow the focus of my enquiry as the paper evolves and aim to explore specific research questions through active exploration.

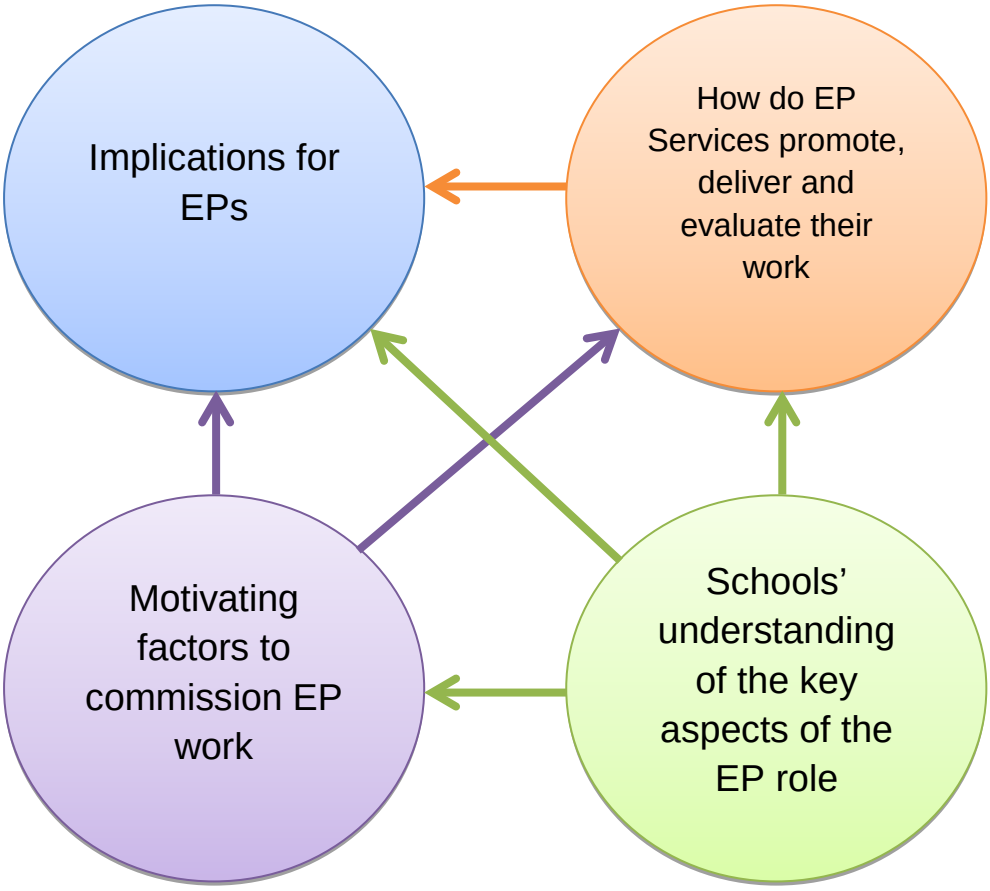
Table 1. *A table which outlines the DECP's (2013) ethical considerations, when adopting a traded model of service delivery.*

Ethical Principle	Ethical Considerations
Respect	• Commissioners must be aware of the requirement to communicate with children and young people, in order to elicit their views and the subsequent cost implications. • EPs must operate in an honest, accurate and transparent way. This has particular implications for EPs when making decisions with financial implications. • Consent must be retrieved from the child, young person or parent, without persuasion from the commissioner.
Competence	• The level of the EP's competence and qualifications must be clearly communicated. • EPs may identify areas of input in which their colleague holds far greater knowledge or skills. In this circumstance, the client will be notified that their colleague can provide support within this area.
Responsibility	• Clear expectations should develop between the manager of the EPS and EPs, regarding EPs' responsibilities within their role. • EPs must be prepared to ask the commissioner questions regarding the ethics of the input requested.
Integrity	• Written and oral communication should be objective, evidence-based and free from bias. • EPs should be honest and accurate regarding the cost of services prior to initiating input. • EPs must communicate the statutory services the EPS can provide which are provided outside of the trading context.

This PPR will focus on four interacting areas (see figure 1) with a central focus regarding the implications of traded services for EPs. The perspectives

of Principal Educational Psychologists (PEPs), EPs and school SENCo's will be explored and included within the paper. The perspective of school SENCo's have been included, as it widely accepted that schools are the primary external commissioner for EP support (DfE, 2011*a*). I anticipate that the way in which EP Services market, deliver and evaluate their work may influence schools' willingness to commission EP support. However to begin, I will highlight the factors which have led to adjustments in EP service delivery.

Figure 1. *A diagram which outlines the four key areas of focus within the current PPR.*



3.3 Literature Review

3.3.1 Adjustments to Public Service Delivery

Adjustments to the delivery of EP services have arguably been influenced by three key factors:-

1) Extensive cuts to public expenditure due to the economic recession

2) An increase in autonomy for schools and educational settings

3) The delegation of SEN funding into schools.

The reduction in public sector expenditure has and will continue to impact upon the delivery of public sector services across the UK (Elliott, 2014). Although the government has ring-fenced the budgets for schools and the National Health Service (NHS), additional services within the public sector fall at the discretion of Local Authorities. Consequently the degree of change to EP services depends on how LA leaders have managed reductions to their expenditure (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2014).

The current Coalition government has attempted to raise standards within the public sector by placing greater accountability in the hands of independent services. Consequently this has reduced the responsibility and control of Local Authorities. Therefore institutions hold greater autonomy when deciding how to improve their service (Leach et al., 2011). This alteration was intended to provide greater choice for institutions which subsequently would lead to a competitive market. It is believed that the development of choice and competition within public services will:-

- Enhance the quality of services provided
- Ensure services are more aligned with what the consumer desires
- Leads to greater innovation, as organisations may consider alternative ways to utilise and trade their skills (Office of Fair Trading, 2010).

Within the field of education, these adjustments were manifested through the introduction of free schools and an increase in the number of academies (Glatter, 2012).

An equally significant factor in the transition to a more competitive market is the delegation of SEN funding. LAs were actively encouraged to delegate SEN funding to mainstream schools nearly a decade ago (DfES, 2004)[14]. This again provides schools with greater flexibility and responsibility. However the funding schools receive from the central government[15] is not ring-fenced and subsequently does not have to be spent exclusively on SEN resources or

[14] This excluded SEN funding for pupils with more severe and complex SEN.
[15] Within the Dedicated Schools Grant

support (House of Commons, 2012). The LA in which I am currently employed, have only elected to delegate SEN resources within the past 18 months. The LA's protocol for funding SEN within mainstream educational settings is documented within appendix A.

Gillham (1978) highlighted over three decades ago that the EP profession must develop alongside the evolving systems which envelop them. This clear message now appears most evident. With increasing cuts to public services, the need to evolve appears in many cases a necessity. From a pragmatic perspective, the three factors discussed have led to the following changes:-

1) Reduced central funding exists within LAs
2) Greater funding for SEN has been allocated to schools
3) Greater choice has been promoted for schools to enhance teaching and support for pupils. Consequently many LAs and more specifically EP services are adopting a traded or semi-traded model of service delivery in order to ensure long term durability. Currently the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) (2011) report that EP services adopt one of three models of service delivery:-

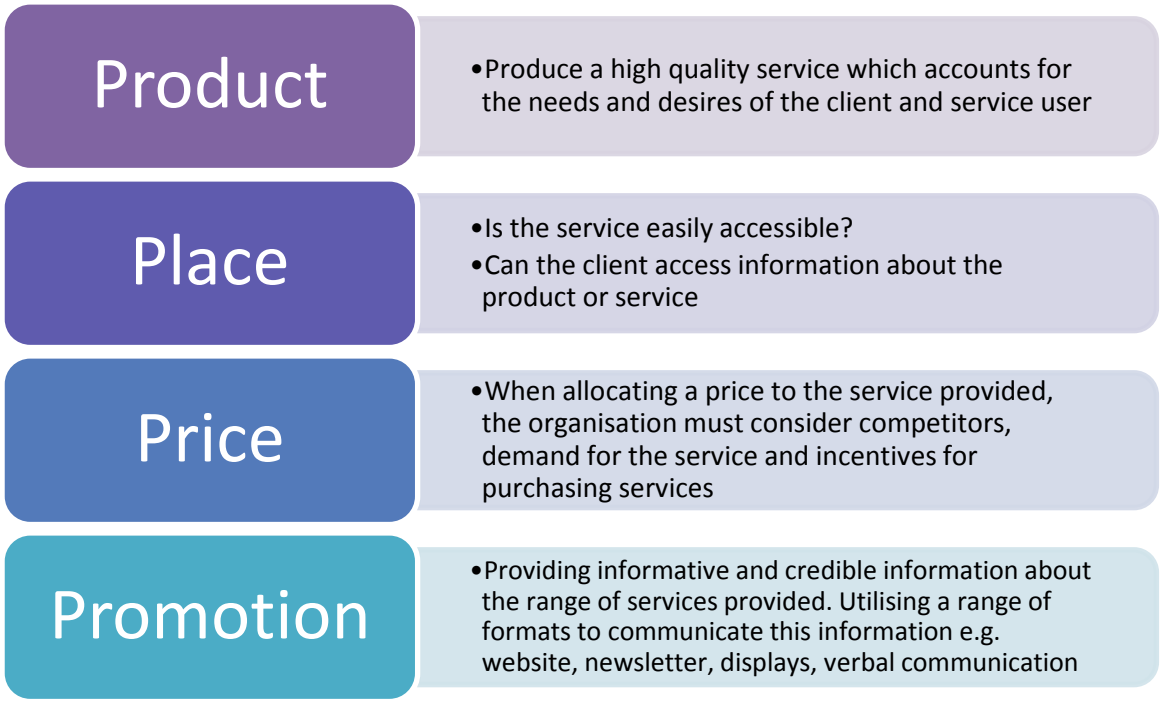
1) Funded exclusively and directly by the LA
2) A semi-traded model in which statutory or core requirements are funded by the LA, however additional input is commissioned by schools or other organisations.
3) A fully traded or commissioned model, where the EPS operates independently from the LA and their service is traded to LAs, schools and organisations.

The 2012 Educational Psychology Workforce Survey identified that the second highest funding mechanism for EPS' was through the commissioning of services. LA maintained schools, academies, trusts and free schools were all identified as substantial commissioners of EP involvement. Existing research does not appear to have discussed how EP services can develop a successful traded model of service delivery. I have explored research within the field of marketing in an attempt to extend current understanding.

3.3.2 The world of marketing – what information can we draw upon?

The Marketing Mix Framework (MMF), developed in the mid 1960's continues to be utilised within the world of marketing (Dubicki, 2007). This Framework is also known as the *four P's* approach (see figure 2). Organisations must account for each element in a harmonious, high quality and cost effective manner (Bean and Hussey, 2011). The requirement to promote EP services may have practical implications for the role of the EP. Within a service funded exclusively by the LA, one would anticipate that an EP is required to negotiate potential support, recognise one's strengths and identify how these strengths can support their client.

Figure 2. *A diagram which documents the Marketing Mix Framework, a framework for marketing services. Descriptions adapted from Bean and Hussey (2011).*



The MMF was previously believed to lack relevance to the marketing of public services. Instead the key marketing objective was to build trust and enduring relationships with the service user, as opposed to selling a product (Osborne, 2010). However I would argue that the relevance of the MMF has now increased, as the intention is to trade. I would also argue that trust and enduring relationships can still be achieved through the MMF, by providing a

desirable service, which is transparent and of high quality. Identifying whether the service provided is desirable, can be achieved by evaluating the impact of service delivery.

Stobie (2002) previously concluded that the process of evaluation was not widely and rigorously conducted within the EP profession. However in order to measure the true impact of EP work, I would argue this process is essential. Webster (2001) identified that internal appraisals were commonly employed by EP services. However self-evaluation is vulnerable to bias and thus can be unreliable (Hensel et al., 2010). Consequently feedback from the service-user should be elicited, stating whether the current service provided is effective and of high quality (Fox, 1992). This is particularly notable when one considers the research findings of Farrell et al. (2006), who proposed that the unique contribution of the EP is down to the impact of their support, not the type of support they provide.

3.3.3 Defining the EP role

Over the past two decades a number of research reports have attempted to define the activities carried out by EPs (see appendix B) (Farrell, 2010; Boyle and Lauchlan, 2009; Frederickson and Miller, 2008; Ashton and Roberts, 2006). These specific functions can be delivered by EPs within their day to day role. Referring back to the MMF, identifying the functions we deliver, will support EP services to explicitly identify what they wish to trade. At times reviews have focused on identifying the unique contribution of the EP; an exploration which also has significant relevance to the commissioning of EP Services. If the service provided is unique, one foresees that this reduces the competitive market and thus may enhance commissioning opportunities.

Defining specific tasks which the EP can fulfil may over-simplify the EP role and subsequently exclude the abstract skills or processes which are challenging to explain, understand and measure. These skills are often overlooked by clients, senior managers *and* EPs. This input is described by Stringer et al. (2006) as *invisible psychology*, for example:-

- Resolving conflict within multi-agency meetings
- Active listening
- Facilitating thought
- Identifying strengths in existing practice, which can then empower the client moving forwards

Stringer et al.'s (2006) article provokes further thought during this period of financial change. I agree with the authors' argument that we must identify a way in which these *invisible* skills and qualities can be more broadly understood. However it may be challenging to evaluate the impact of these abstract skills. Subsequently EP services have often focused upon evaluating the aspects of our work which are easier to measure (Leadbetter, 2000). One potential solution which may support EP services to reduce the ambiguity of their work, is to provide service users with case study examples of EP input. These examples may enable the EPS to discuss their role in greater depth and discuss the aspects of their work which is more supplementary.

3.3.4 Schools as the customer: Should the customer always be right?

As noted by the DfE (2011*a*), schools are the primary commissioners of EP Services. Therefore it is important to explore the services schools would like EPs to provide. Annan (2005) conducted research regarding a change in service delivery within an inner-city EPS. The motivation for change was not prompted by transition to a traded model. However there is strong relevance to the existing research due to a prioritisation of service users' requests, when determining the support provided. These adaptations impacted on how EPs delivered input and consequently upon the EP role. Annan (2005) reported that a narrative emerged within schools' feedback regarding the restricted availability of EPs. Consequently EPs were located within schools for the vast majority of their working week and conducted direct work with school staff and pupils. One would assume that this impacted on the time EPs were allocated to complete administrative tasks, such as report writing. In addition, schools were allocated a menu of potential services which could be provided. This

menu therefore provided a platform to promote the variety of support which could be delivered.

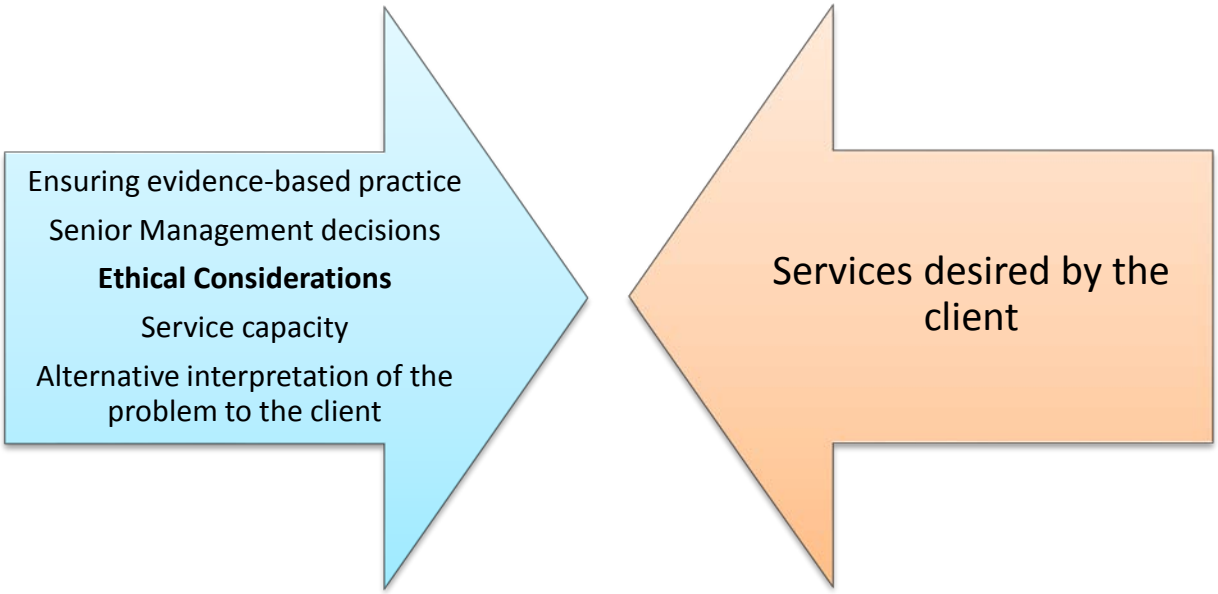
EPs fulfil statutory core functions which are provided in addition to the optional input commissioned by schools. The statutory duties fulfilled within the current LA consists of:-

- Statutory assessments
- Early years assessments
- Attendance at Pupil Resource Agreement (PRA) meetings. A PRA is a form of top-up funding which is provided to pupils who are adjudged to require funding in order to support their SEN; however their needs are not to the extent at which they require a Statement of SEN or EHC plan
- Transition reviews for pupils in year 5, in preparation for their transition to secondary school
- Support to schools following a critical incident
- Attendance and contribution within SEN Tribunals
- Joint-Planning Meetings

Traditionally EP services appear to have negotiated their optional input, dependent upon the needs of the school. However following the emergence of traded services EPs may feel a greater burden to fulfil the services requested by service users in order to meet financial targets. However I anticipate a number of factors preventing EPs from simply fulfilling the requests of the client (see figure 3). Conflicting factors may arise, creating great tension moving forward; an example of which is the EP's opportunity to work in collaboration with other agencies. Consequently schools may be expected to commission numerous services. Previously multi-agency collaboration was projected as an essential process for meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people (DfES, 2003). Nevertheless in order for an EPS to succeed within a traded model, they must provide a service that service users will commission.

The introduction of traded services within the field of educational psychology has enforced EPs to reflect upon how they can fulfil their professional role in an ethical way (DECP, 2013). These ethical considerations prevent EP services from simply fulfilling the requests of the commissioner. The delegation of SEN funding into schools, is a key factor in the development of a competitive market and consequently EP services must also consider how they can secure commissioning, in order to ensure their service is sustainable. Existing research from the field of marketing suggests that service-users must be aware of the input services can provide. This task is made more complex for EP services, due to the 'invisible psychology' which underpins EP practice. As a result one could argue that service-users may not hold a comprehensive understanding of the EP role, which may impact upon the variety and extent of commissioning.

Figure 3. *A diagram which depicts the potentially resistant factors, one must consider before delivering support requested by service-users.*



3.3.5 The current research

Within the LA which I am currently employed as a Trainee EP, the EPS moved across to a semi-traded model at the beginning of the 2012/13 academic year. 50 per cent of their non-statutory work is traded. Currently the EPS has experienced a mixed-response to the trading of services. At the time of writing, approximately 85% of schools have commissioned EP input. However there is a large variance between the numbers of EP visits each school commissions. Remaining schools rely upon 'free visits' or access support from alternative services. Current feedback from LA Directors suggests this approach will now continue for the foreseeable future. Through informal discussion it appears that this transition has occurred in a number of LAs in recent months or years. The transition to a fully or semi-traded model, may enable LAs to navigate around increasing cuts to expenditure, whilst providing a service which:-

a) Supports the needs of all service-users
b) Is of high quality and evidence-based
c) Enables the EP to fulfil their statutory duties

Despite the emergence of the traded model of service delivery, existing research regarding the practical implications of this model of service is restricted. Additionally minimal research also exists regarding the factors which contribute to a successful traded service. Consequently within the following research I have two key objectives:-

a) To identify the practical implications for EPs operating within a traded or semi-traded model of service delivery.
b) To identify factors which may lead schools to commission EP support, in addition to the statutory and non-commissioned school visits currently provided.

In order to achieve these objectives I will attempt to answer 4 key research questions.

3.3.6 Key research questions

1) What are the implications of traded or semi-traded models of service for EPs?

2) How do EP Services who adopt a fully traded and semi-traded model of service promote, deliver and evaluate their work?

3) Does a shared perspective regarding the most important aspects of the EP role exist between schools and EPs?

4) What factors would or do motivate schools to commission support from the EPS?

3.4 Research Design

In order to answer the key research questions I have employed an exploratory design. It is my objective to explore a topic area, in which currently minimal existing research is available (Creswell and Clark, 2011). This prevents me from simply extending current understanding or exploring specific uncertainties within the topic area. An exploratory design provides me with the flexibility to elicit data regarding a number of areas. Therefore my focus is upon the breadth, as opposed to the depth. This is particularly notable due to the relatively recent emergence of traded services. The objective of this research is to provide functional data, specifically for one LA. I acknowledge that this design will inhibit wider generalisation of the research findings, however the findings can be shared to good effect.

3.5 Methodology

3.5.1 Methods

I utilised self-completion questionnaires in order to elicit participants' views. Self-completion questionnaires have a number of strengths and shortcomings (see figure 4). I wanted to explore the perspectives of PEPs from EP Services across London and I did not want the range of potential respondents to be restricted by time or logistical challenges. This approach enabled me to

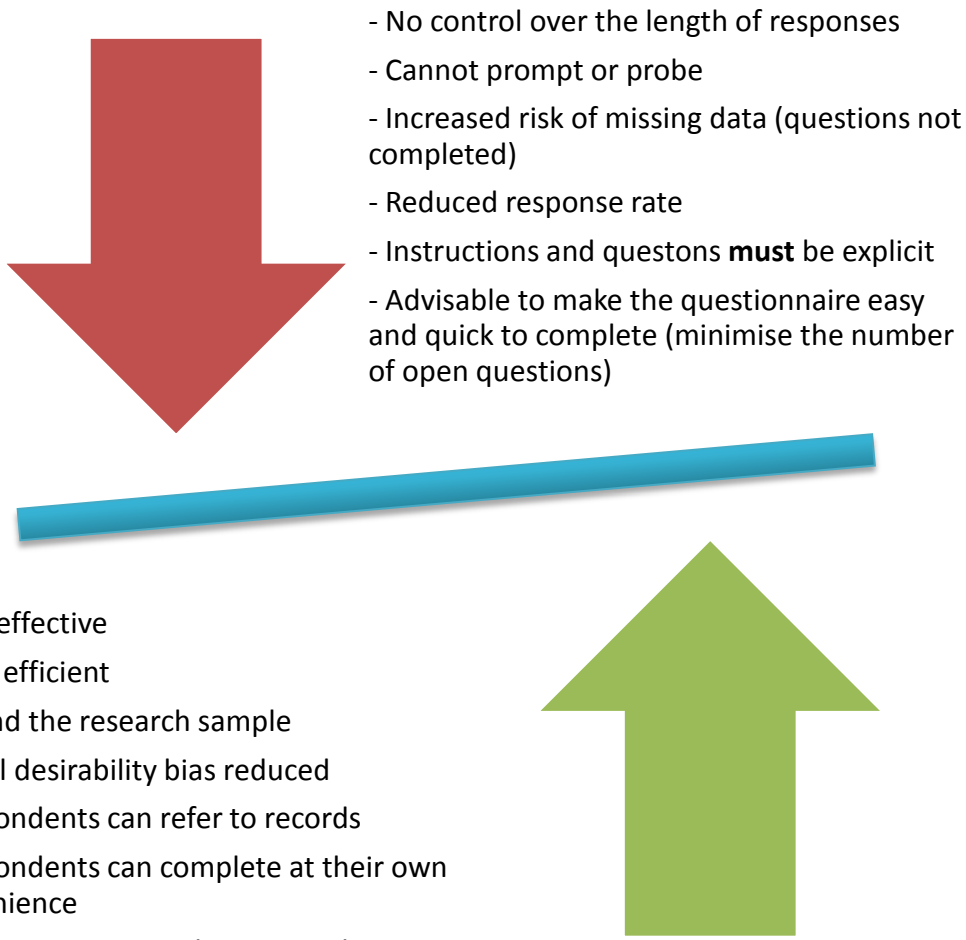
explore a wide range of perspectives, which was significant due to the ambiguity surrounding the topic area. Respondents could also complete the questionnaire at their convenience, which I anticipated would have a positive impact on participants' willingness to participate. I acknowledge that a qualitative approach, such as semi-structured interviews, would have provided me with an opportunity to explore participants' responses in greater depth. However the time and logistical implications of conducting research in-person, would have led to a significant reduction in the number of views elicited.

Each questionnaire comprised of open and closed questions. Consequently I was able to explore participants' perspectives in their own words, in addition to identifying their responses to pre-coded questions. Arguably the key advantage of using closed as opposed to open questions is that it is easier to explore relationships between the data sets (Bryman, 2012). However open questions also hold a number of advantages (Peterson, 2000):-

- Participant responses are not swayed by predetermined answers.
- They provide participants with a platform to elaborate on a previous answer or to explain their point of view.
- They are beneficial when exploring a topic area which is unpredictable or where minimal information is currently available.

This final point is particularly relevant to the current research due to restricted research regarding traded EP services within the UK.

Figure 4. *A diagram which demonstrates the strengths and shortcomings of self-completion questionnaires (Bryman, 2012; Czaja and Blair, 2005).*



A key challenge of utilising open questions is producing a set of data which can be analysed to identify relationships or patterns between participants' responses. However I overcame this potential challenge by conducting content analysis. Content analysis enabled me to transfer extensive, individualised responses into collective *categories*. I will discuss this approach further, later within the paper (see Data Analysis).

3.5.2 Epistemological Orientation

There are a number of objectives within the current research. However the primary objective of my data collection is to elicit functional information regarding how to enhance the number of schools commissioning EP services within my current LA. Therefore as the researcher I am predominantly concerned with participants' anticipated actions, as opposed to their

underlying beliefs. As a result I have adopted a pragmatic epistemological orientation within the current research. Creswell (2009) states that pragmatism primarily focuses on the resolution of identified challenges, whereas Hjørland (1997) implies that our knowledge and actions are interrelated entities. Our knowledge is shaped by our lived-experiences. Therefore subsequent actions may be predicted by a) our understanding and b) our previous behaviour.

3.5.3 Participants

In total there were three participant groups:–

Participant Group	Number of Individuals Invited to Respond	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Principal Educational Psychologists	37	6	16.2%
Educational Psychologists	12	9	75%
Special Educational Needs Coordinators	71	47	66.2%

PEPs located within Inner- and Outer- London Boroughs were invited to participate. I made this decision due to two key reasons:-

1) The PEP of the LA in which I am currently employed regularly liaises with PEPs within London, ensuring the process of data collection was convenient and practicable. The PEP emailed all London PEPs to inform them about my research project and to contact me if they wished to participate.

2) London PEPs had indicated their interest in the topic of traded services within a recent PEP meeting.

This research was designed to inform practice within my current LA, therefore it appeared logical to focus upon the experiences of EPs located within this LA. I elicited responses from SENCo's in order to gather the perspectives of schools within the Borough. I made this decision due to the responsibility SENCo's hold within schools for the special educational needs of pupils. Additionally within my LA, SENCo's are the key point of contact for EPs.

3.5.4 Context

Due to the nature of survey research, participants were situated within a range of settings. Participating PEPs were located within a number of Boroughs within inner- and outer- London. However EPs and SENCo's were located within a single South East London Borough – within which I am currently employed as a Trainee EP.

3.5.5 Instrument Design

When designing self-completion questionnaires, a number of factors may influence if and how prospective participants respond:-

- Questions included must be unambiguous and comprehensible, enabling independent completion (Sapsford, 2007).
- The space provided underneath a question may influence the length of participants' responses (Peterson, 2000).
- The length and complexity of the questionnaire (Czaja and Blair, 2005).

Each questionnaire (3 in total) was specifically designed with a specific participating group in mind:- Principal EPs (see appendix C), EPs (see appendix D) and school SENCo's (see appendix E). When developing the research questionnaires I referred to Czaja and Blair's (2005) extensive guidelines. The originality of the existing research prevented me from utilising specific questions previously adopted within existing research. However I drew upon existing research (Farrell, 2010; Boyle and Lauchlan, 2009; Frederickson and Miller, 2008; Ashton and Roberts, 2006) to develop my *checklists* regarding the role of the EP. My review of existing literature, the research objectives and key research questions supported my development of each questionnaire.

3.5.6 Ethical Considerations

When planning this research I carefully referred to guidelines by the University of Birmingham (n.d.), the British Psychological Society (2010; 2009). Czaja and Blair (2005) state that when conducting survey-based research, the two primary ethical objectives are 1) ensuring informed consent is provided and 2) explicitly stating and ensuring that participants' responses remain confidential.

I produced a research information sheet which was presented to all participants (see appendix F).

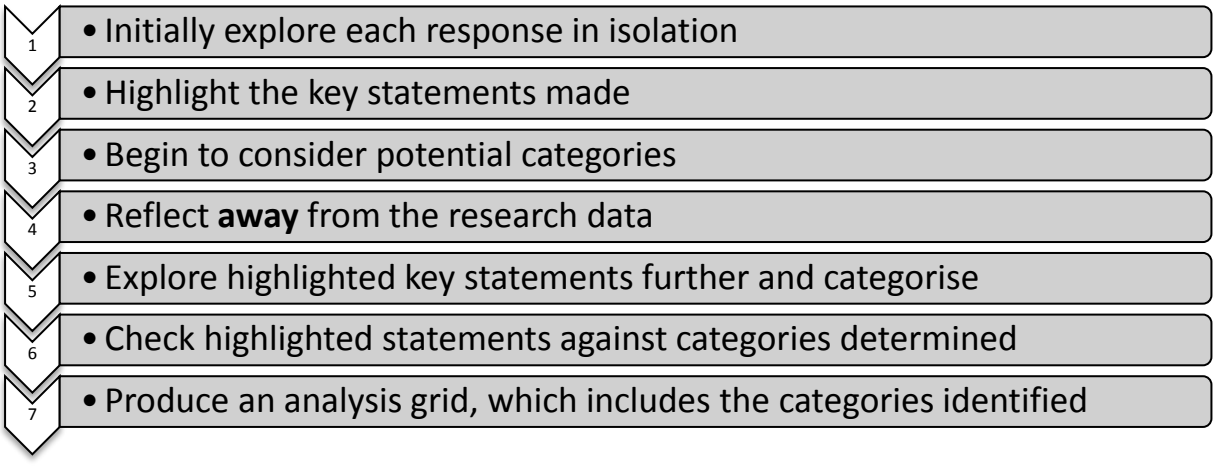
3.5.7 Data Collection

The PEP at my current LA contacted London PEPs on my behalf via email (see appendix G). The PEP attached copies of the Research Information sheet and the Research Questionnaire. EPs were asked to participate during a whole service meeting. EPs were informed that they could complete questionnaires by hand or electronically. SENCo's were also informed in person about the research and asked to participate. This request was delivered at the LA's SENCo Network meeting.

3.5.8 Data Analysis

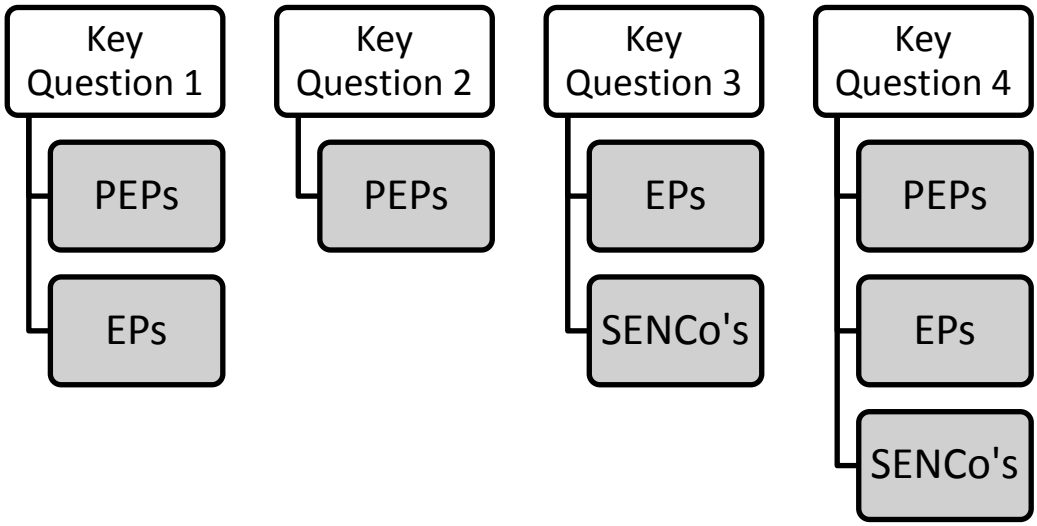
Participants' responses to closed questions were transformed into quantitative data. This enabled me to complete a simple analysis of the data through Microsoft Excel, including statistical comparisons between SENCos' and EPs' responses. Participants' responses to open questions were analysed using content analysis (example provided in appendix H). I followed a 7-staged process, outlined by Gillham (2000) when conducting content analysis (see figure 5).

Figure 5. *Gillham's (2000) 7-staged process for conducting content analysis.*



Data from the following participatory groups was utilised to answer each of the 4 key questions (see figure 6).

Figure 6. *A diagram which indicates the source of data utilised to answer each of the 4 key questions.*

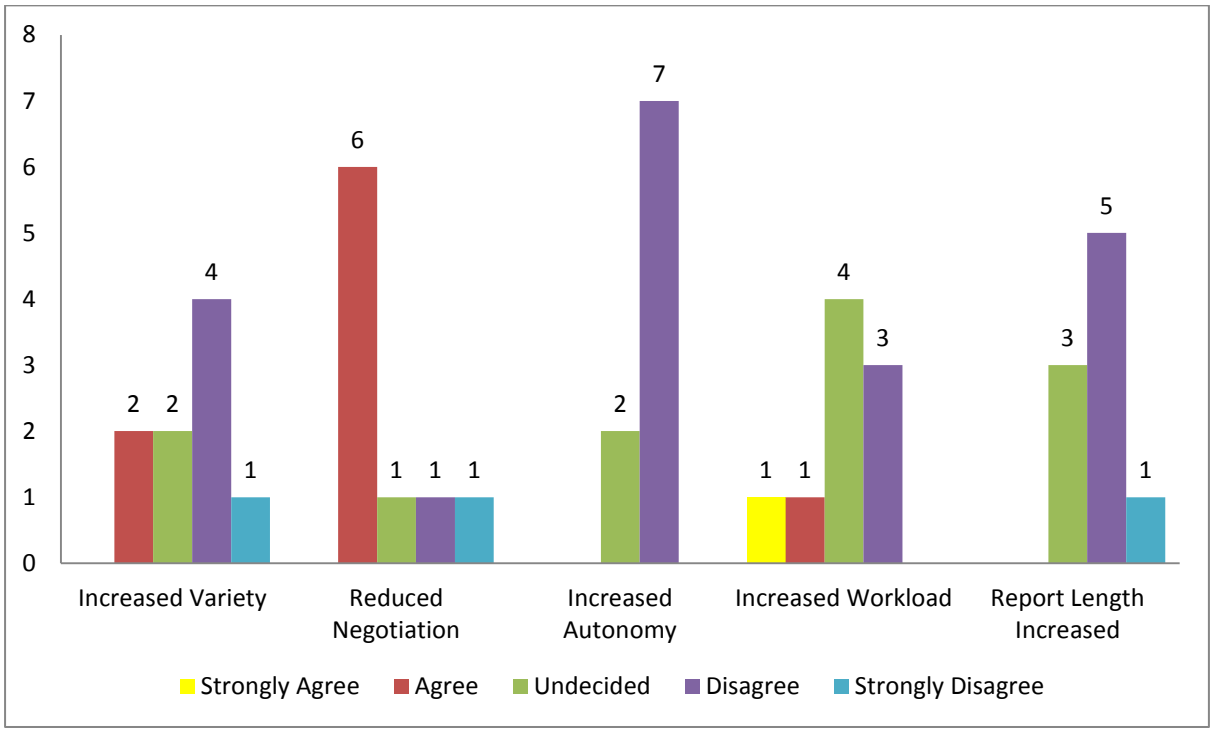


3.6 Findings

1) What are the implications of traded or semi-traded models of service for EPs?

EPs were asked to complete a series of Likert-scale questions. The results of which are indicated in table 2. Results indicate that the majority of EPs believe the introduction of semi-traded services has reduced their capacity to negotiate with commissioning partners. Respondents also indicated that their autonomy has *not* increased as a consequence of the semi-traded model. A number of discrepancies appeared across the remaining scales. I will discuss potential explanations for these discrepancies within the discussion.

Table 2. *A table which indicates the frequency of responses from EPs to a series of Likert-scale questions.*



In addition to the Likert-scales, EPs and PEPs provided responses to open-questions regarding their experiences of traded-services and the implications this has had or may have upon EPs (see table 3). EPs suggested at times that they were no longer working with pupils who historically would have received EP input.

Table 3. *A table which outlines the outcomes of the content analysis I conducted regarding the implications of traded-services upon EPs.*

Category	Example	Indicated by Whom?
Inhibits Long-Term Planning	• Difficult to predict commissioning figures when budgeting for the next financial year • Staffing – Short term contracts	PEPs
Increased Variety of Work	• Increased number of commissioners equates to increased variety of work	PEPs and EPs
Equality and Inclusion	• Varying levels of commissioning schools – the school which you attend could impact upon whether you will receive EP support • Vulnerable groups may not be identified by SENCo – reduced 'free' visits and opportunity for negotiation • SENCo's *prioritising* needs as opposed to	EPs

	commissioning further support	
Inhibits Transparency	• Parents encouraged to seek statutory support • Pupils not discussed by school in case EP recommends further support is needed • Reports that parents have paid schools to commission EP input	PEPs and EPs
Additional Support	• Schools willing to commission further EP input can now do so	PEPs and EPs
Reduced Negotiation	• School identifies specific roles/services – individualised response reduced • Schools can now specify exactly what they would like • Reduces opportunity to professionally critique school's current practice	PEPs and EPs
Challenge of Selling Services	• Morally and practically can feel uncomfortable	EPs

2) How do EP Services who adopt a fully traded and semi-traded model of service promote, deliver and evaluate their work?

Due to the restricted number of responses from PEPs, the functionality of this data is somewhat restricted. This prevented me from completing content analysis in the manner identified by Gillham (2000). However I must acknowledge that the depth of the responses provided may have also been inhibited by the research methods employed. I will explore this further within the discussion.

The following commonalities and notable individual responses were identified between the data sets:-

<u>Promotion</u>

The majority of respondents promoted their traded services through a service brochure. One LA also utilises a website to promote their service and viewed the annual evaluation process as a way to generate further commissioning. However not all of the respondents actively promote their traded services.

<u>Services Delivered</u>

Individual case work and training (including INSET) were the dominant services commissioned. However alternative commissioners were also

identified, often leading to commissioned multi-agency work; for example, joint assessments alongside Speech and Language Therapists. Work with parents was also referred to, such as training and consultation, although the commissioning partner was not identified. One PEP also identified an increased advisory role within schools due to the demise of SEN and Behaviour Services within the LA, due to financial cuts.

Evaluation

Evaluation was not completed by all responding Services. A number of respondents utilised an annual evaluation form in order to monitor the effectiveness of their service. However on-going evaluations relating to individual case work, group work and training were discussed.

3) Does a shared perspective regarding the most important aspects of the EP role exist between schools and EPs?

Earlier within this PPR, I proposed that a disparate understanding regarding the key aspects of the EP's role would inhibit the commissioning of EP services. EPs and SENCo's were required to complete a rating exercise, in which they were asked to rate a series of functions conducted by EPs. Participants were asked to rate each task from 1 (irrelevant) to 10 (most important) (see table 4). A Pearson correlation of $r = 0.64$ (to 2 d.p.) was identified between the perspectives of EPs and SENCo's, indicating a positive but moderate correlation (Dancey and Reidy, 2007).

There were clear similarities between several tasks rated 'most important' by EPs and SENCo's; for example, consultations (with parents and staff), statutory assessments and advice regarding interventions. However SENCo's placed greater importance upon the completion of standardised assessments, whereas EPs valued their contribution within multi-agency output. Notable discrepancies emerged regarding exam concessions (rated higher by SENCo's), individual therapeutic input and small group work (both rated higher by EPs). In addition to the tasks donated to participants to rate, participants were also invited to identify any additional tasks which they believed were significant (see table 5).

Table 4. *The perspectives of EPs and SENCo's regarding the most significant aspects of the EP role. Average scores are presented.*

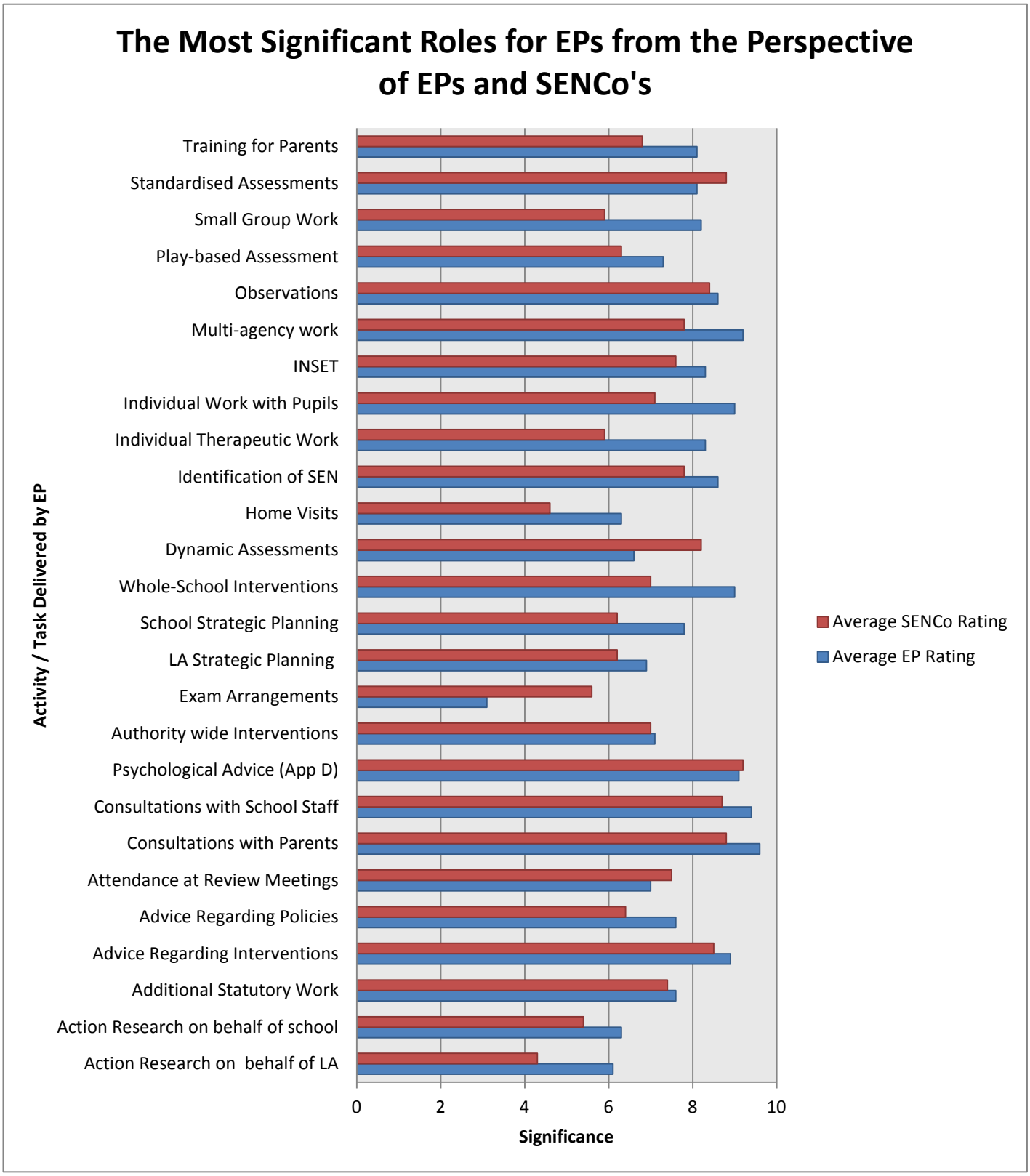


Table 5. *A table which outlines the outcomes of the content analysis conducted regarding the EPs' and SENCos' views regarding the key tasks of the EP.*

Category	Example	Indicated by Whom?
Reassurance to School Staff and Parents	• Listening ear to staff • Critical incident intervention • Containment / emotional support for staff	EPs / SENCo
Mediation	• Mediate between school and parents	EPs
Psychological Perspective	• Viewing challenges from a psychological perspective and exploring how factors interact	EPs
Supervision	• Supervision of peers and other professionals	EPs
Providing a Positive, Problem Solving Approach	• Adopting a solution focused approach to challenges	EPs / SENCo's
Realistic Perspective	• Realistic strategies • Managing expectations of clients	EPs / SENCo's
Identifying & Facilitating Additional Support	• Identifying additional agencies which can support further • Referring to additional agencies	EPs / SENCo's
Supporting School to Access Further Resources	• Support schools to access further funding for pupils	SENCo's
Facilitating Change	• Guidance motivates staff to adjust practice	SENCo's
Identifying Pupils' Strengths	• Identifying the strengths of pupils to build upon	SENCo's
Information Share	• Provide insight into latest research, resources which can aid support and pedagogy	SENCo's

4) What factors would or do motivate schools to commission support from outside agencies?

In order to answer key question 4, I have utilised closed and open questions. School SENCo's were required to provide a score of 1 (not important) to 6 (highly important) regarding a number of factors which motivate schools to commission EP support (see table 6). Additionally PEPs and EPs were asked to identify factors which they believed motivated schools to commission EP input. SENCo's were asked to identify factors which were not included within table 4. I have again analysed these responses using content analysis (see table 7).

Table 6. *A table which documents the average rating provided by SENCo's regarding the motivating factors which lead to the commissioning of support from the EPS.*

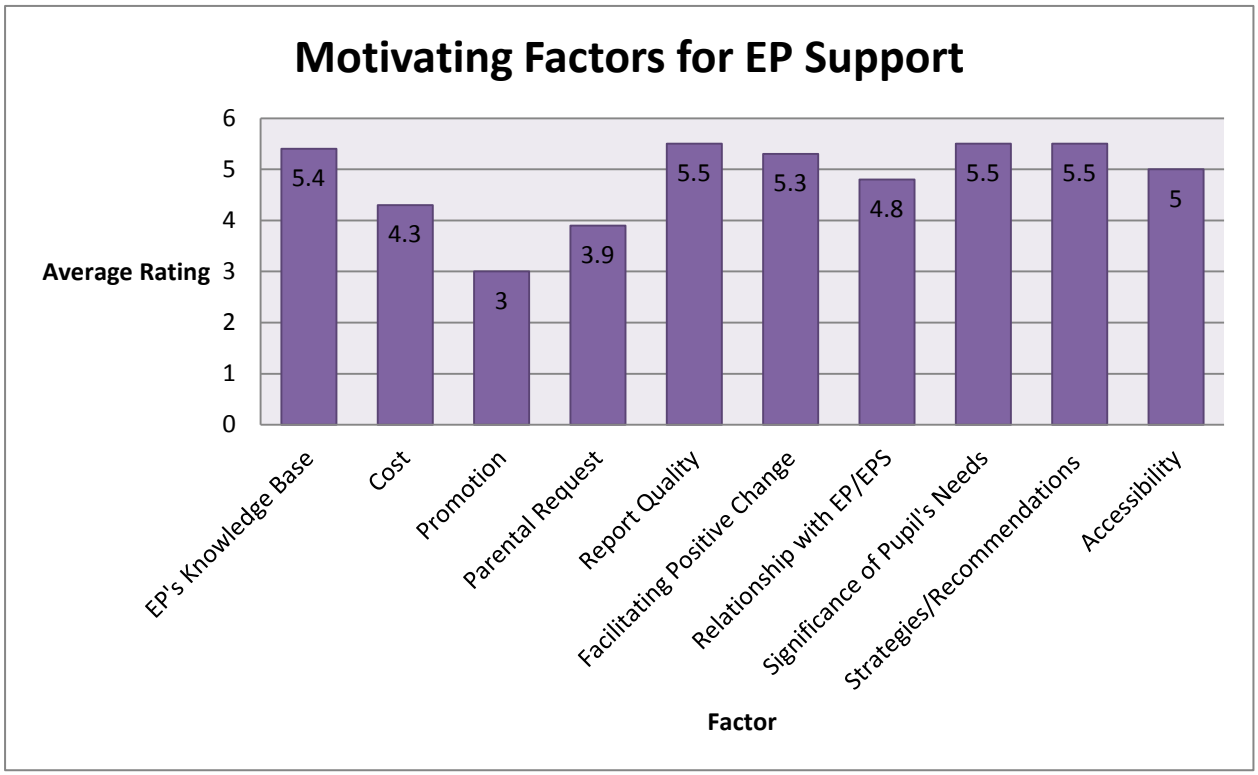


Table 7. *A table to which outlines the outcome of the content analysis I conducted regarding PEPs', EPs' and SENCos' views regarding factors which motivate schools to commission EP services.*

Category	Example	Indicated by Whom?
Accessing Additional Support	• EP assessment leads to access to greater funding for a pupil • A desire to make a case for statutory assessment / EHC	PEPs, EPs and SENCo's
Fresh Perspective	• Provide a solution focused approach • Reports contain strategies, previously not attempted by school	PEPs, EPs and SENCo's
Specific Knowledge	• Providing a psychological perspective to a difficulty • Contributing evidence-based recommendations	PEPs, EPs and SENCo's
Broader Perspective	• EP moves beyond within-child factors – holistic view • Supports the school with systemic issues	EPs
Parental Requests	• Parent applies pressure to Head Teacher for EP input	PEPs and EPs

Local Knowledge	• EP's understanding of local procedures, other services and *history* of the school	PEPs and EPs
Relationships	• EP's relationship with a school	PEPs and EPs

Additionally SENCo's were asked to specify any factors which could enhance commissioning *further*. The following categories were identified (see appendix I).

3.7 Discussion

3.7.1 What are the implications of traded or semi-traded models of service for EPs?

A wide range of responses were provided by EPs regarding their experiences of working within a semi-traded model of service delivery. This variety may reflect the differences relating to each EP's beliefs, professional obligations and in addition their individual experiences; for example, there has been notable variance in the degree to which schools have commissioned EP support within the LA.

Despite the variety of perspectives, commonalities were identified between the responses of EPs and PEPs. The most notable implication appeared to be the fact that a traded model of service delivery can inhibit the EPs ability to negotiate their role with schools. It appeared that the functions EPs deliver were in response to specific requests from schools. This challenge, at times, fell within a broader discussion regarding inclusive practice. Here EPs highlighted that on occasions it has become apparent that pupils experiencing needs that were traditionally supported by the EPS were no longer referred to the service. This often occurred within schools who have not commissioned additional EP support. Moving forwards, EP services must address how they will address the needs of pupils whom EPs' believe require additional support, when schools are not prepared to commission EP input.

Transparency was also inhibited by a semi-traded model of service delivery, according to PEPs and EPs; for example, reports suggest that schools have allowed parents to indirectly commission support from the EP service, which would contradict guidance from the AEP (2011). Reports suggest that parents

have made payments to their child's school, in order for the school to commission EP assessments.

The process of 'selling' EP support was also highlighted by EPs as a moral and practical challenge. Firstly, it appeared that the process conflicted with their personal beliefs regarding the very nature of a public sector service. One could argue that this adjustment could compromise their ideological position. Secondly, it emerged that several EPs felt unprepared in the technique of trading. This has clear implications for both CPD and more broadly the content of doctoral training programmes.

In terms of the positives implications, PEPs and EPs indicated that this model of service delivery could or has enhanced the variety of work delivered. This implication indicates the potential for further opportunities. The Office of Fair Trading (2010) highlighted that traded services should adopt an innovative approach to service delivery. EP services could adopt an innovative approach relating new research findings to meet the identified needs of their service users, utilising a broader range of psychological concepts (Annan, 2005). Schools may elect to commission EPs to conduct group consultations for example, ensuring greater value for money due to the wider impact this intervention may have.

3.7.2 How do EP Services who adopt a fully traded and semi-traded model of service promote, deliver and evaluate their work?

During this stage of the discussion I will refer back to the MMF. However firstly I must acknowledge the reduced quantity and depth of responses provided by PEPs. It was my objective to explore specifically how EP services have promoted and evaluated their service. In hindsight this could have been achieved more productively through semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2007); an argument enhanced further by the restricted research already available within this area. However due to time restrictions, the employment of surveys enabled me to elicit the perspectives of a broader range of individuals. This was important as I wanted to secure data which was reliable and therefore functional.

Product

The vast majority of respondents indicated that the key areas of their traded input were individual case work and training. This finding appears to correspond with the key functions delivered by my current EPS.

Place

PEPs also indicated that additional services commissioned EP input, such as Speech and Language Therapy Services. This often resulted in multi-agency collaboration. In addition, wider cuts to LA services have resulted in opportunities to provide alternative input, for example behaviour services have been cut within the LA, leading to a requirement for additional support for pupils experiencing SEBD. This may lead EP services to reflect upon how they can apply psychology to account for current gaps in support.

Promotion

The process of promotion was not unanimously employed by PEPs. However brochures and websites were utilised to advertise prospective input in a cost effective and time efficient manner (Bean and Hussey, 2011).

Evaluation

Respondents indicated that evaluation was not frequently conducted. This reflects findings by Stobie (2002). However when evaluation was conducted this occurred on an annual basis, due to time constraints. Time constraints have also inhibited the process of evaluation within my current EPS. Eliciting objective feedback from service-users can also help EPS' to identify areas which could be improved (Hensel et al., 2010). One responding PEP stated that they use evaluation to stimulate additional commissioning opportunities.

Within the current LA, the impact of service delivery is predominantly measured through data. However I would question whether this measures the full impact of our work and instead may result in a focus upon the measurable functions delivered (Leadbetter, 2000). If we are unclear about the true impact of our own support, one could argue that this marginalises our claim that our

practice is evidence-based. However in order to measure the true impact of our support, we need to ensure service-users understand what we provide. Stringer et al. (2006) highlighted that service-users may not hold a comprehensive understanding of the EP role, referring to the 'invisible psychology' which underpins EP input. Consequently in order to extend service-users' understanding of the EP role, one could argue that EP services must promote the wider aspects of the EP role. One approach would be the employment of case studies, to document successful input conducted by the EP Service. This would enable the EPS to explain the services provided, using practical examples to facilitate understanding, including the more supplementary aspects of EP input.

3.7.3 Does a shared perspective regarding the most important aspects of the EP role exist between schools and EPs?

Similarities existed between the perspectives of EPs and SENCo's regarding the key aspects of the EP role, such as:-

- Consultations with parents and staff
- Statutory assessments
- Guidance regarding interventions.

However there were several discrepancies with EPs assigning greater value to small group work and individual therapeutic work. Interestingly several EPs and SENCo's referred to elements of EP support which could relate to Stringer et al.'s (2006) invisible psychology, for example providing reassurance to staff and parents, adopting a problem solving, positive approach and facilitating change.

When SENCo's were asked to indicate their own interpretations of the EP role, the overwhelming response related to the EP supporting schools to access further support or resources. This reflects the role of 'gatekeeper', frequently referred to within existing literature (Howes et al., 2009). Consequently the gatekeeper role does not appear to have diminished as a result of the delegation of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Schools can still

apply for additional ‘top-up’ funding (see appendix A). In order to facilitate this process, one would anticipate an EP report is required. Consequently this takes time to produce and reduces the potential time an EP can spend within school.

A number of SENCo’s appeared to indicate a secure understanding of the EP role. However their responses regarding the services we provide, appeared to focus heavily upon a within-child perspective, suggesting further clarity is required, as this may further inhibit the variety of work commissioned by schools.

3.7.4 What factors would or do motivate schools to commission support from the EPS?

All responding groups indicated that the EPS provides a fresh perspective to an on-going difficulty. EPs’ knowledge of evidence-based strategies and interventions were also highlighted as motivating factors. It appeared the most significant factor, recognised by all participating groups, was the requirement to access further support or resources. The Coalition Government have suggested that they would like EPs to move away from the ‘gatekeeper’ role (Madden, 2010). However due to the current economic challenges, it may be difficult for EP services to be selective about the work they conduct.

PEPs and EPs believed parental requests stimulated SENCo’s to commission EP support. However SENCos’ responses within the closed, rating task suggested this is not a significant factor. One could argue it is important for schools to consult with parents about how their child can be supported further, as opposed to simply carrying-out the requests of the parent. However this finding leads me to again question how accessible EP support is for additional clients, within a traded model.

A range of additional factors which could enhance further commissioning were identified by SENCo’s. Primarily these factors revolved around finance. SENCo’s requested a lower cost in order to access EP support. However SENCo’s also highlighted that they were not in charge of the school budget. Consequently SENCo’s must negotiate potential commissioning with their

Head Teacher. This appeared to be challenging for several SENCo's. As previously highlighted within Annan's (2005) research, SENCos' indicated the availability of EPs as a barrier to engaging with the EPS; this may impact on further commissioning. The participating EPS within Annan's research enhanced EPs' availability to schools by assigning EPs within schools for a greater proportion of their working week. However increasing EP time within schools may reduce EPs capacity to :-

- Write reports – an aspect of our work valued by SENCo's
- Explore current research – also highlighted as a key strength of the EPS
- Collaborate with peers
- Formulate

Within the current LA the EPS predominantly conducts individual case work. As a result EPs require time to complete assessments, consultations and observations prior to writing a report. Adjusting the type of support the EPS provides may enable the service to provide further support within schools, without reducing the quality of EP input. One example of how this can be achieved is through consultation, as this reduces the time required to complete administrative tasks such as report writing. SENCo's have indicated that they would like further information about how EPs can support staff and pupils, again reinforcing the requirement for further promotion regarding the skills and functions we can serve.

3.8 Conclusions and Implications for EP Practice

Within the current research a variety of responses were provided by participants. Contrasting views were evident both between and within participating groups. This may reflect participants' varying experiences, beliefs and professional obligations. Nevertheless a number of commonalities and areas for further exploration were identified.

- EPs' responses suggest further support is required in order to develop the skills EPs require to negotiate traded services. I feel this has implications for applied doctoral training programmes. The emergence of traded services is apparent and additionally may impact upon our day to day role.

- Research from the marketing sector suggests that EP Services must promote and evaluate their work to ensure optimal levels of commissioning. Evaluation currently appears to be marginalised within the EPS due to the LA's decision to measure impact exclusively through quantitative data. However research suggests that the process of evaluation can facilitate additional commissioning and therefore indirectly enhance sold service statistics.
- The introduction of traded services may provide opportunities for EPs to conduct alternative functions within schools and be commissioned by clients outside of schools. However additional opportunities may develop if the EPS promote their work further. This should include the variety of services we can provide and the specific details of our input, including the 'invisible psychology'. This transition may also encourage EP services to extend the range of functions we deliver. Objective evaluations, completed by service-users, may provide feedback to the EPS to enhance existing practice. However the process of evaluation may also ensure greater understanding regarding the EP role.
- In contrast the role of 'gatekeeper' appears important within my current LA. This *role* has continued despite the delegation of the Dedicated Schools Grant 18 months ago. This may restrict the variety of work conducted by EPs.
- Despite the emphasis upon innovation, schools still value our core skills of applying research evidence to identify strategies and interventions and report writing. Therefore the management of EP's time is paramount; ensuring we provide a current evidence-based service and document our involvement accurately and efficiently.
- SENCo's are often the key point of contact for EPs within the Borough. However they are not the budget holders. Therefore it would be beneficial to conduct further research with Head Teachers, to explore their perspectives regarding the factors which will motivate future commissioning.
- Traded and semi-traded models of service delivery appear to have restricted EPs' capacity to negotiate their role. In addition levels of

commissioning vary across schools within the Borough. Consequently, EPs feel that vulnerable pupils who previously would have accessed EP support, no longer do.

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3.10 Appendices

Appendix A

A table which documents how SEN resources are allocated to mainstream educational provisions, within the LA in which I am currently employed.

Level	Funding	Description
Universal	Up to approx. £4000pa	All pupils entitled to funding through the AWPU. Delivered through *quality first teaching*.
Band 1	Up to £6000pa	The notional SEN budget, delegated to all mainstream schools. Schools then have the responsibility to use this funding to meet the needs of pupils with low cost, high incidence SEN.
Band 2	Additional £2000	Top-up funding from the LA to support pupils with more complex, high cost needs. Schools must apply for this resource, demonstrating how they have utilised existing funds.
Band 3	Additional £4000	Top-up funding for pupils with significant complex, high cost needs. Schools must apply for this resource, demonstrating how they have utilised existing funds.
Band 4	Additional £6000	Top-up funding for pupils with severe complex, high cost, needs. Pupils who qualify for this level of additional funding should be considered for an EHC Single Plan.

Appendix B

An extensive list of the various functions EPs believe are delivered by EP Services. As documented within existing research (Farrell, 2010; Boyle and Lauchlan, 2009; Frederickson and Miller, 2008; Ashton and Roberts, 2006).

Functions delivered by the EP
Action research on behalf of the LA
Action research on behalf of the school
Additional statutory work
Advice regarding programmes of intervention
Advice to schools regarding policies
Consultations with parents
Consultations with school staff
Contribute Psychological Advice within process of Statutory Assessment
Contribution to Authority-wide Interventions
Contribution to exam arrangements
Contribution to LA's strategic planning
Contribution to review meetings
Contribution to school's strategic planning
Contribution to whole-school interventions
Dynamic assessment
Home visits
Identification of SEN
Individual therapeutic work
Individual work with pupils (including eliciting the pupil's views)
INSET
Multi-agency work (including attendance at CAF meetings)
Observations
Play-based assessment
Small group work (interventions)
Standardised assessments (Cognitive and Attainment)
Training for parents

Appendix C

A copy of the research questionnaire provided to Principal Educational Psychologists.

Educational Psychology - Service Delivery Research

1. Please tick one of the following three options, which best describes your current model of service delivery[16]:-

a) Funded exclusively and directly by the Local Authority ☐
b) A semi-traded model ☐
c) A fully traded or commissioned model ☐

What is the EPS' rationale for this model of delivery?

If option a) is selected please turn to question **8**.

2. How long has the service operated within this model of service delivery?

0-6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ 1-2 years ☐

2-3 years ☐ > 3 years ☐

3. How is the EPS currently commissioned? Please tick all relevant boxes.

Local Authority Children's Services ☐ Academies, Trusts and/or Free Schools ☐

Local Authority Maintained Schools ☐ Parents ☐

Other – Please state below ☐

4. Which services do you provide on a traded basis?

[16] Models of delivery based upon current guidance by the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP)

5. In your experience, which EP services have you found to be the most frequently
commissioned by service users?

6. What factors do you feel prompt service-users to commission EP input?

7. Does your Service publicise traded work? If so how is this achieved?

8. Do you monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of your service? If so how is this
achieved?

9. Are there any skills or qualities which you feel distinguish EPs from alternative organisations that provide a similar service to the EPS? If so please describe these skills or qualities below.

10. What do you feel are the strengths and/or weaknesses of a traded or semi-
traded model of service delivery?

Thank you for participating.

Appendix D

A copy of the research questionnaire provided to Educational Psychologists.

Educational Psychology - Service Delivery Research

Within the next 5 questions you will be presented with a statement. You are being asked to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by indicating whether you:- strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree or strongly disagree. (please place a tick in the appropriate box).

1. Working within a traded or semi-traded model has increased the variety of work I do.

Strongly Agree	☐
Agree	☐
Undecided	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly Disagree	☐

2. Working within a traded or semi-traded model has reduced my capacity to negotiate my role with service users.

Strongly Agree	☐
Agree	☐
Undecided	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly Disagree	☐

3. Working within a traded or semi-traded model has increased my autonomy.

Strongly Agree	☐
Agree	☐
Undecided	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly Disagree	☐

4. Generally speaking, since moving across to a traded or semi-traded model my workload has increased.

Strongly Agree	☐
Agree	☐
Undecided	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly Disagree	☐

5. Generally speaking, since moving across to a traded or semi-traded model the length of my reports has increased.

Strongly Agree	☐
Agree	☐
Undecided	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly Disagree	☐

6. Have you experienced any challenges whilst operating within a traded or semi-
traded model? If so what are/were they?

7. What factors do you feel prompt service-users to commission EP input?

8. What do you feel are the key strengths and/or weaknesses of a traded or semi-
traded model of service delivery?

9. Are there any skills or qualities which you feel distinguish EPs from alternative

organisations that provide a similar service to the EPS? If so please describe
these skills or qualities below.

10. Please complete the following table, regarding what you perceive are the most important aspects of the EP role.

	Significance Irrelevant → Most Important										
Activity / task delivered by the EP	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**Not Sure**
Action research on behalf of the LA											
Action research on behalf of school											
Additional statutory work											
Advice regarding interventions											
Advice to schools regarding policies											
Attendance at review meetings											
Consultations with parents											
Consultations with school staff											
Contribute Psychological Advice[17]											
Contribution to Authority-wide Interventions											
Contribution to exam arrangements											
Contribution to LA's strategic planning											
Contribution to school's strategic planning											
Whole-school interventions											
Dynamic assessment											
Home visits											
Identification of SEN											
Individual therapeutic work											

[17] Within process of Statutory Assessment

Individual work with pupils[18]											
INSET											
Multi-agency work											
Observations											
Play-based assessment											
Small group work (interventions)											
Standardised assessments[19]											
Training for parents											

11. In the space below please add any additional tasks you feel are carried out by the EP. In addition you may wish to discuss any processes or outcomes which develop through EP involvement. This may either be within your current service or through your wider experiences.

Thank you for participating

[18] Including eliciting the pupil's views
[19] Cognitive, Attainment etc.

Appendix E

A copy of the research questionnaire provided to School SENCo's.

Educational Psychology-
Service Delivery Research

1. Have you previously commissioned EP input at your school? If yes, what was the focus of this input?

2. Which factors would motivate your school to commission involvement from the Educational Psychology Service? (please tick)

	Significance Not important ⟶ Highly Important					
Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
EP's knowledge base						
Cost						
Promotion of EPS/service provided						
Parental request						
Quality of report						
EPS input facilitates positive change						
Relationship with EP or EPS						
Significance of pupil's needs						
Strategies and recommendations						
Accessibility						

3. Are there any additional factors which you feel do or could enhance the school's motivation to commission support from EP Services?

4. What do you perceive is the role of the EP? You may wish to discuss specific tasks delivered by the EP, however you may also wish to discuss any processes or outcomes which develop through EP involvement.

5. Please complete the following table, regarding what you perceive are the most important aspects of the EP role.

	Significance Irrelevant ⟶ Most Important										
Activity / task delivered by the EP	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**Not Sure**
Action research on behalf of the LA											
Action research on behalf of school											
Additional statutory work											
Advice regarding interventions											
Advice to schools regarding policies											
Attendance at review meetings											
Consultations with parents											
Consultations with school staff											
Contribute Psychological Advice[20]											
Contribution to Authority-wide Interventions											
Contribution to exam arrangements											
Contribution to LA's strategic planning											
Contribution to school's strategic planning											
Whole-school interventions											
Dynamic assessment											
Home visits											
Identification of SEN											
Individual therapeutic work											
Individual work with pupils[21]											
INSET											
Multi-agency work											
Observations											
Play-based assessment											
Small group work (interventions)											
Standardised assessments[22]											
Training for parents											

[20] within process of Statutory Assessment
[21] including eliciting the pupil's views
[22] Cognitive, Attainment etc.

Appendix F

A copy of the research information sheet provided to each participant prior to the completion of each questionnaire. This information sheet outlined the research objectives and the ethical rights of the participant.

Research Information

The Research Objectives

The following research will attempt to explore the perspectives of school SENCo's, EPs and Principal EPs regarding the commissioning of EP Services. As part of this research I will attempt to answer 4 key research questions:-

1) What are the implications of traded or semi-traded models of service for EPs?
2) How do EP Services who adopt a fully traded and semi-traded model of service promote, deliver and evaluate their work?
3) Does a shared perspective regarding the role of the EP exist between schools and EPs?
4) What factors would or do motivate schools to commission support from outside agencies?

What will happen to the data (my responses)?

- Written responses will be stored securely within a locked filing cabinet. Emailed responses will be stored, using a secure password.
- All respondents' data will remain confidential.
- I will anonymously use the data retrieved as part of my research paper at the University of Birmingham. This research paper will be shared with my colleagues at the Bromley Educational Psychology Service.

Can I withdraw from the research?

You have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. However if you participate and later decide that you would like to withdraw *your data* from the research, you have the right to do so up until the 19th February 2014 - After this date all data will be unidentifiable and anonymous. Please contact the researcher if you would like to withdraw (the researcher's contact details are outlined below).

Consent

By agreeing to complete this questionnaire, you are providing me with consent to anonymously use your responses as part of my research at the University of Birmingham. This research paper will also be shared with my colleagues within the Bromley Educational Psychology Service.

Questionnaires can be returned in person, via email or through the post.

Thank you for your time



Appendix G

A copy of the e-mail sent to prospective Principal Educational Psychologists located within Inner-and Outer-London Boroughs. The Research Information Sheet and Research Questionnaire were attached.

Dear All,

Further to XXXXXX's email below, you may remember that we also discussed some research on traded services that is being undertaken by one of our trainees, Steve Dexter.

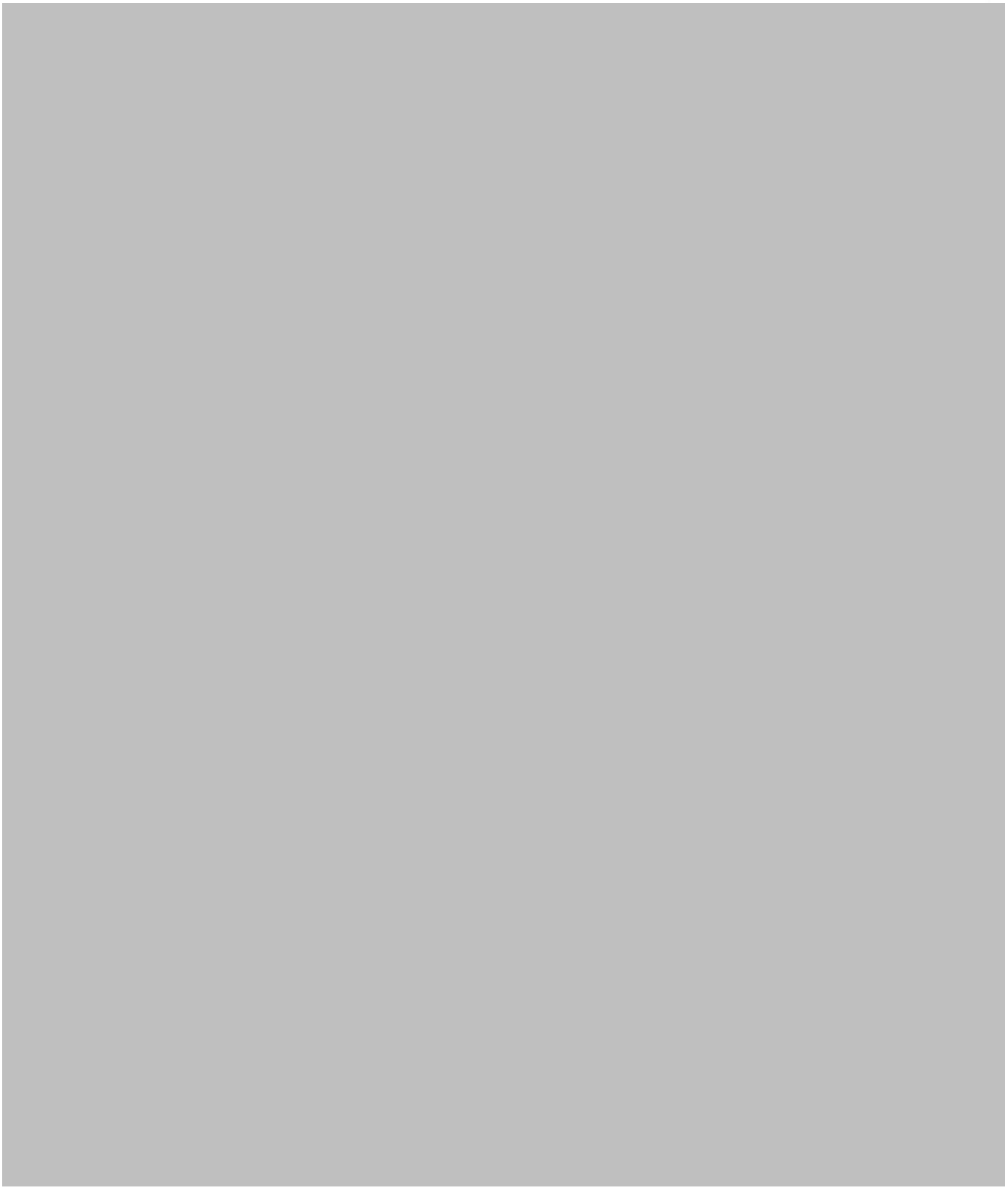
I attach his questionnaire and accompanying notes. We would be very grateful if you could find the time to complete and return- it is quite brief. Email responses to: s

Steve will circulate the final report to everyone so it should be a useful investment of time.

Many thanks

Appendix H

An example of a returned questionnaire, analysed using content analysis.



Appendix I

*The categories identified following content analysis of SENCos' perspectives regarding factors which could **further** enhance the commissioning of EP services.*

Category	Example
Enhanced Availability	• Flexibility for the EP to attend after-school hours • EP available to answer emergency queries
Enhanced Understanding	• Provide a document which outlines how schools can use their EP most effectively
Finance	• Reduced cost • Discounted rates for additional commissioning • Greater access to funding from SLT (internal factor)
Clarity Regarding Recommendations	• EP to hold follow-up discussions with teachers • Modelling recommended strategies to staff
Response Rate	• Quicker response to initial queries • Prompt reports

Chapter 4 Professional Practice Report 4

How has the pupil voice been retrieved and incorporated within the Education, Health and Care (EHC) Single Plan? Exploring the approaches utilised by 3 special schools within a South London Borough.

4.1 Abstract

The following research paper outlines firstly how school staff retrieved the views of pupils with complex special educational needs (SEN) in preparation for their Education, Health and Care (EHC) Single Plan Meeting and secondly how the pupil voice was incorporated within the EHC Single Plan itself.

This research was carried out on behalf of a Local Authority (LA) located in South London. The LA was commissioned to pilot the EHC Single Plan within the Borough as part of a national SEN pathfinder to evaluate proposed changes to the way in which support is provided for children and young people with SEN. These proposed changes were outlined in the SEN green paper entitled 'Support and Aspirations' (DfE, 2011).

Over the last 25 years the inclusion of the pupil voice within the process of assessment and review has been supported by UK legislation, government guidelines and research.

Semi-structured interviews were used to retrieve data from five participants responsible for implementing the pilot, across three special schools. Data was then analysed using thematic analysis.

Eight overarching themes were identified and are discussed within the paper. Participants discuss the holistic approach adopted in order to retrieve the pupil's views accurately. However participants also highlighted that the individual needs of the pupil were accounted for – including their preferred

form of communication, in order to make the process of assessment and review accessible.

Although the EHC Single Plan was not fully adopted within all participating schools during the pilot, data retrieved during the interviews should provide stakeholders within the LA with functional information, in order to evaluate the current version of the EHC Single Plan. Most notably the requirement for enhanced communication between the LA and service users, increased flexibility within the Single Plan and a discussion of the *key worker*'s potential responsibilities.

4.2 Introduction

The following professional practice report contributes to the SEND pathfinder research currently taking place within a South East London Borough. This research aims to explore proposed changes to the process of statutory assessment and review for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

The current research explored the views of staff from special schools for pupils with complex SEN, who have participated in:-

a) The revised statutory assessment and review process (piloted Education, Health and Care Single Plan)
b) The process of retrieving the views of pupils, in preparation for and during the pupil's EHC Single Plan meeting.

I will now review literature which explores the rationale behind the introduction of the EHC Single Plan, the retrieval and inclusion of the pupil voice and research which explores the current challenges and considerations when incorporating pupils with complex needs in the process of assessment and review.

4.3 Literature Review

4.3.1 The Education, Health and Care (EHC) Single Plan

In March 2011, the current coalition government produced the SEN green paper, entitled 'Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability' in which a number of changes were proposed to the way in which children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities would be supported (DfE, 2011). Within the paper it was proposed that the UK government would replace the existing statutory SEN assessment and statement process with the EHC single plan. As a result of these proposals the UK government has selected 20 pathfinders to test a number of proposed reforms (Mott MacDonald, 2012).

The government's rationale for introducing the EHC single plan is to:-

- Provide parents with greater control

- Provide a strategic, collaborative and cost effective approach to addressing the SEN of children and young people for Local Authorities (LAs).
- Enable all children to fulfil their potential – by enhancing the aspirations and expectations of children and adults involved in their lives.
  Lead to better life outcomes for children – by improving earlier access for education, health and care. The EHC Single Plan will focus explicitly on pupil outcomes, considering the short and long term goals for the pupil - a significant change to the existing statutory paperwork.
- Support young people with their transition into adulthood, across all three areas of provision (education, health and care).
- Provide a statutory document and process of review which is flexible and can be reviewed frequently – in line with the evolving needs of the child. (DfE, 2011).

The proposed EHC Single Plan would replace the long-term pre-existing statutory document, the statement of special educational needs, first introduced within the 1981 Education Act (DoES, 1981). Therefore the introduction of the Single Plan sees arguably the most significant change to SEN policy within the last 30 years. Each child's statement of SEN is reviewed each year under a multi-agency meeting called an *annual review* (DfES, 2001*a*). The proposed changes are due to current criticisms of the existing statutory process by parents, who feel the bureaucracy and complexity of the process of assessment and review makes this current method difficult to access and their child's needs are not adequately reflected (DfE, 2011). The government consulted with adults regarding statutory support during the consultation phase – notably the views of children and young people were not retrieved.

Although 'Support and Aspiration' emphasises the role of the parent and the increase in parental control, it is currently unclear how the proposed changes will impact upon the role of the pupil within the process of assessing and reviewing their special educational needs. Increased clarity about the role of children and young people may become clearer upon the introduction of the Children and Families Bill (Gillie, 2012) and revised SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2012*a*).

However there are three significant arguments which bind UK policy and practice to the inclusion of the pupil voice, during the process of assessment and review – the legal argument, the political argument and theoretical argument. These three factors will be discussed further shortly, however firstly this paper will attempt to outline the complex definition of the pupil voice.

4.3.2 The Pupil Voice – a complex definition

For the purposes of this research, the author will refer to Cheminais' (2008) definition of the pupil voice, who states that the pupil voice can be described as a process in which the pupil is provided with a platform to express their views, take part in decisions which affect them and actively participate in their education.

However after reviewing literature regarding legislation, policy and theory, it appears that a wide range of terminology is used to describe the process of retrieving and incorporating the views of pupils during assessments and reviews of SEN. This includes terminology such as *participation, consultation, involvement, engagement* and *partnership* (Cheminais, 2008; Bragg, 2007; May, 2004).

May (2004) argues that the interchangeable terminology used to describe the process of retrieving the views of the pupil, adds to the ambiguity for professionals when planning how to carry out this activity. However one could argue that the terminology may appear ambiguous at times, due to the contrasting needs of children with SEN. May (2004) herself states that participation is a term that must be interpreted in relation to the context in question. However one would counter this argument and state that the levels of a child's participation should not be bound by the context in which they exist, but more by the individual's needs and willingness to share their perspective.

4.3.3 Pupil Participation – why include the views of the pupil?

As identified earlier within the paper, there are three motivating factors to include the views of the pupil during the process of assessment and review of their SEN – current legislation, UK policies (past and present) and the various theories positively relating to its inclusion.

The legal argument

The rights of the child were formally recognised and agreed at an international level within the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNICEF UK, 2012). This agreement is often recognised as the significant first step in the development of legislation within the UK which outlined the requirement for professionals to consult with children and young people and consider their views when making decisions which impacted upon their lives (Woolfson, Bryce, Mooney et al., 2008; Roller, 1998). However this places greater obligation on adults to ensure legal practice, as the pupil may not be aware of their legal rights.

The political argument

The previous Labour government produced a number of policies during their three terms in office (1997–2010), which emphasised the significance and obligation for professionals to make every attempt to consult with pupils and incorporate their views within reports, meetings and during the process of assessment (See table 1). The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) provided guidance regarding the existing statutory assessment and statement process.

Although the SEN Code of Practice is currently being reviewed and updated by the government (DfE, 2012*a*), the emphasis on pupil aspirations within the SEN green paper (DfE, 2011) suggests that pupils will still be consulted about their ambitions and objectives. One could argue that young people with special educational needs will receive additional support to actualise their ambitions and objectives due to the proposal of the coalition government for the EHC Single Plan to support individuals from birth into early adulthood 19-25 (DfE, 2011). The young person's statutory support will now extend from 19-25, although the terminology used to refer to this *new* cohort remains unclear. The Department for Education have documented that the new SEN Code of Practice will reflect the new 0-25 system of support (DfE, 2012*b*).

Table 1. *A table which documents contemporary UK political policy which provides guidance to professionals regarding the inclusion of the pupil voice.*

Year	Policy	Key outcomes
2001	SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001*a*)	• Child should feel their views are listened to and valued • C/YP who attend special schools should be offered the same opportunities as pupils in mainstream schools to express their views. However allocated more support, opportunities to practice and time to complete tasks. • Pupils' views explored and incorporated within the annual review process • Pupils should have access to a nominated key adult, who the pupil is able to discuss any difficulties/concerns with regarding their education • Highlights that pupils may require support to convey their views
2001	SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001*b*)	• Children should be encouraged to participate in all decision-making activities in education, including target setting, developing IEPs, selecting schools, contributing to assessments & meetings. • Child should have access to pictures/materials to express views if required • When making decisions, child should be presented with clear options in an accessible format

2004	Working together: giving children and young people a say (DfES, 2004)	• Provide training & support for C&YP so they are able to participate effectively • Managing expectations – identifying what can be achieved/is not available (legal, financial boundaries) • Child understands the decision-making process, the impact of their views • Feedback will be provided regarding decision(s) made • Language used is clear for C/YP to understand

The theoretical argument

Cheminais (2008) states that the evolving argument for pupil's views and participation to be welcomed within the process of assessment and review, may be tied to our increasing understanding of how children learn. In the 19th Century it was believed that children were passive, silent individuals. However due to Jean Piaget's influence on developmental psychology, it is widely believed optimal learning takes place when children are actively involved within their surrounding environment (Smith et al., 2003).

Cheminais (2008) states that by providing pupils with a platform to share their views within school, the following outcomes will hopefully occur which will raise pupil engagement, reflectivity and providing staff with the information required to make learning personalised:-

- Pupils will feel respected and valued – increasing their self-esteem and self-confidence
- Develops the pupil's skills in reflective thinking
- Increasing the pupil's sense of belonging within the school community
- Provides the pupil with a greater sense of ownership over their learning
- Promotes the concept of democracy and skills required for debate
- Allows teachers to develop a greater understanding of the key issues which are important to pupils – allowing the teacher to make adaptations to their teaching style and the curriculum as a result

4.3.4 Pupils with Complex Needs

There is no absolute definition or diagnosis pathway for pupils with complex needs (Marchant, 2001). However a pupil believed to have complex needs will often:-

- Experience a number of discrete needs which interact, intensifying their impact.
- Experience needs which persist throughout their life
- Require support from a range of professionals
- Be recognised within the United Kingdom as disabled. However it should be noted that not all disabled pupils are considered to experience complex needs.
  (DfE, n.d., Marchant, 2001).

Marchant (2001) identifies that the process of assessment can at times exclude and alienate the pupil with complex needs. Assessment can at times become preoccupied with the process of diagnoses, focusing on where additional support is required. One way to overcome this feeling of exclusion is to focus on what the pupil *can do*, as opposed to their limitations. This change in philosophy adopts the principles of the social theory of disability. The social theory of disability states that people with physical impairments have restricted opportunities to participate in society, as a result of social barriers, as opposed to their medical or physical needs (Hughes and Paterson, 1997).

An additional way to enable pupils to experience greater success is to adapt how pupil's progress is assessed. Assessment information forms a key component of SEN statutory review paperwork. One adaptation may be to monitor pupil progress and current functioning in relation to pupils with similar complex needs, as opposed to age-appropriate levels. This is recommended within the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Department of Health, 2000). This could be described as a *needs related progress indicator,* which could develop from gathering data from pupils with complex needs across the UK. However this approach fails to account for the individualised nature of the pupil's needs and adults would need to ensure that high expectations are maintained for all pupils.

An alternative way to foster positive reflections within EHC Single Plan meetings, may be achieved by adopting the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL). AfL moves the focus away from a set grade, towards a description of what the pupil currently understands, what the next steps in the learning process are and how they can achieve this (DCSF, 2008). This approach is also arguably more transparent for adults working with the pupil, enabling more effective planning and support. AfL will also provide relevant information for the EHC Single Plan review meeting, due to focus on outcomes. Learning outcomes or targets can be built upon the pupil's next steps within the learning process.

4.3.5 Retrieving the views of pupils with complex needs and the contribution of the pupil

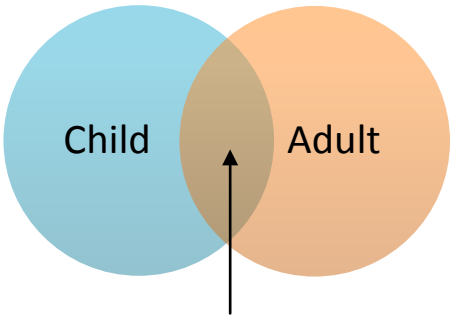
During the statutory process of assessment and review of a child or young person's special educational needs, there are arguably two key points at which the pupil may have an opportunity to contribute their views:–

1) during the assessment of their needs and preparation for the statutory review meeting
2) During the statutory review meeting

Although there has been long term emphasis about including the child within SEN assessment and review, the process of how to do this has been left to the individual or organisation (Armstrong, Galloway and Tomlinson, 1993). This may be viewed by experienced school staff as enabling greater autonomy. However less experienced staff may feel uncertain by the reduced guidance available, which could lead to misunderstandings.

Gersch (1990) identifies that adults can at times assume that the child holds the same view of the world as their own. This inaccurate assumption, influences their interpretation when consulting with children and young people and leads to what Gersch (1990) described as a 'mismatch of perception'. One could argue that a key skill for the professional to develop when eliciting the views of pupils is the ability to secure a shared perception, or understanding. By doing so, the professional accurately reflects the views of the pupil and the pupil is confident that they have been understood (see figure 1).

Figure 1. *The 'spheres of perception model' I developed, demonstrating the key role of the process of consultation – to develop a shared perception.*



Woolfson et al. (2008) developed a comprehensive 8-staged model with the intention to enhance pupil involvement and contribution both prior to and during multi-agency meetings which addressed their special educational needs (see appendix A). The model incorporates the key recommendations stated within the SEN Tool Kit for schools to refer to when attempting to incorporate children and young people during annual review meetings (DfES, 2001*b*). The authors recommended that in order for the model to be implemented in school, a key adult, or 'mediating teacher' was required in order to ensure that all 8 stages were successfully fulfilled.

As part of Woolfson et al.'s (2008) evaluation of the model, semi-structured interviews were carried out with pupils, parents and outside agencies. The following points were identified:-

- Pupils stated that they were more likely to speak up in front of adults they felt comfortable with
- 'Mediating teachers' felt this model provided inexperienced staff with an effective guidance
- Pupils felt better informed prior to the meeting
- Higher proportion of pupils felt views were listened to during the meeting
- The pupils' understanding of the content of the meeting increased

This model was piloted with mainstream pupils and did not involve pupils with complex SEN, therefore if utilised within special schools one must also

consider the methods the adult or key person must utilise in order to successfully achieve each stage.

The 1989 Children Act (Department of Health, 1989), states that all pupils with complex needs have the capacity to express their views, as long as their views are explored appropriately, by an individual who understands their needs. The role of the professional is to therefore find strategies to provide the pupil with a vehicle to share their views (Gersch, 1996).

May (2004) highlights that the SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001*a*), predominantly focuses upon retrieving the views of pupils through vocal participation. However for pupils with complex SEN this may be difficult and alternative methods may need to be considered, for example manipulating objects to indicate preferences, completing questionnaires, signing and using body language to communicate. The SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001*b*) acknowledged that alternative strategies may be required, however the detail provided regarding these strategies appears insufficient for replication. This appears to be a common theme within the research literature over recent years. However the DfE (2012*c*) have published comprehensive training materials for teachers of pupils with learning difficulties which are severe, profound and complex. This web-based resource provides school staff with guidance regarding the retrieval of the pupil's views. This is reinforced through videos and case studies, identifying specific examples of how effective non-verbal communication can be achieved. Despite the excellent depth and quality of this resource, one questions whether the resource has been publicised thoroughly. This resource is not referred to within additional government documents and was difficult to locate within the DfE's website.

4.3.6 Person-Centred Planning

The Department of Health (DoH) (2010) produced guidance for professionals working with young people with disabilities, in order to develop pupil-centred review and transition meetings. Pupil-centred planning places the pupil at the heart of the review or transition process and with the support of adults, attempts to identify what the individual pupil's aspirations and needs are (Taylor, 2007). By developing a greater understanding of the young person, it was anticipated that this would lead to more effective action points and thus

more successful long term outcomes, for example paid employment. Taylor (2007) states that person-centred planning has been utilised within schools progressively more within the last decade, particularly during transition review meetings, in which the pupil focuses on their future.

Person-centred planning forms a key component of the Getting A Life (2011) initiative, which was initially a cross-government project set up in 2008 to demonstrate how young people with complex SEN could achieve positive outcomes and paid employment. The project focused on individuals aged 14 to 25 and involved schools, parents and a number of local agencies working together to provide support and practical advice to the young person. Person-centred reviews were utilised to formulate an action plan for the young person, however in addition the key outcomes were fed back into local strategic plans, for example employment, transition, ensuring the correct support was in place for service users.

A key role for the local agencies was to highlight to families and the young person, what was possible in terms of the long term outcomes and outline the advantages of working, which could be influential when the young person was identifying their aspirations and an action plan was formulated. The Getting A Life (2011) has now disbanded at central government level, but has continued within the original 12 LAs in which it was piloted.

4.3.7 The challenges of retrieving the views of pupils with complex needs

The ethical challenge

One must consider the ethical implications when retrieving the views of children and young people. Bragg (2007) identifies that during the process of assessment and review, the child and young person should provide their informed consent, in addition to the parental consent that is provided. Bragg (2007) states that in doing so the pupil will understand the purpose of the interaction or meeting, their responsibilities within this process and the consequences of the process. However for pupils with complex needs, ensuring informed consent has been accurately retrieved can be a complex

process due to communication barriers. For example, non-verbal communication is open to misinterpretation by the adult (DfES, 2001*b*).

May (2004) states an additional ethical challenge is the retrieval of the pupil's views. The adult identifies the questions and interprets the pupil's response, potentially determining how the pupil voice is represented within review meetings. The risk of misinterpretation is enhanced, when adults attempt to fulfil the pupil advocacy role. If adults attempt to speak on the pupil's behalf, there is a danger that 'informal advocacy' can occur, in which the adult states what they perceive the pupil's views to be, when in fact this perception contradicts the pupil's view and the perceptions of other key adults (Marchant, 2001).

Are pupils entitled to an equal say?

A long term concern has existed concerning the relevance of the pupil voice during the decision making process (Armstrong et al., 1993). If the pupil's opinions are not included at this stage the retrieval of the pupil voice may be tokenistic (Todd, 2003).

It appears that the large emphasis within government policy (see table 1), has attempted to reinforce the requirement to take the views of the pupil into account, alongside other key stakeholders (the parents, school, LA). However as May (2004) highlights these policies highlight good practice and are not law-binding.

McQuillan (2005) believes that the process of pupil participation navigates away from the typical teacher-pupil dynamic within schools, providing pupils with a greater share of the power. As a result, this creates a state of disequilibrium. Therefore the key question appears to be, how can the pupil be included comprehensively within the process of assessment and review, without compromising the views of professionals and parents?

Hart (1992) (see appendix B) and Shier (2001) (see appendix C) have provided tools with which schools can use to measure their level of

engagement with pupils during the process of assessment and review. Both tools document engagement on a continuum ranging from tokenistic involvement to full engagement in the decision-making process. However Treseder (1997) (see appendix D) provides a self-assessment tool which presents levels of engagement in a less hierarchical manner. Therefore one could argue that the model is less indicative of the *idealistic* response. Conversely this model does not provide staff with an opportunity to indicate forms of non-engagement with pupils – therefore arguably limiting their potential responses. These tools can be used by schools to evaluate their practice.

A cultural barrier

Building on from the point raised by McQuillan (2005), it may be that in order for pupils to feel empowered and for adults to empower pupils to contribute their views more, we may need to create a *culture* of pupil participation.

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001*a*) highlights that pupil participation should be encouraged during the development of learning targets and the review of individual education plans. However May (2004) criticises the 2001 Code of Practice, for its lack of guidance or acknowledgment surrounding the engagement of pupils within the wider school context. The SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001*b*), however discusses the benefits of developing a whole-school culture of pupil-participation and provides strategies regarding how this can be accomplished, for example PSHE & citizenship lessons, formulating a school council. As current government policy is open to interpretation, perhaps it is the school's culture that plays the most significant role upon the inclusion of the pupil voice. One would anticipate that a school which actively encourages the contribution of pupil's views throughout the school year, would be more receptive to pupil participation within the SEN review process.

A drain on school resources?

Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) highlight the challenge for practitioners to accommodate time to elicit the views of the pupil. If one considers Woolfson et al.'s (2008) comprehensive 8-staged model as the blueprint for good

practice, replicating these 8 stages places great demands on the resources of practitioners and particularly school staff. Firstly, from a practical standpoint, carrying out the tasks recommended. However in addition to this, staff may require training regarding how to carry out certain aspects of the 'mediator' role – as eliciting the views of pupils in the context of assessment and review, may not have been a key component of their initial teacher training.

Norwich, Kelly and Educational Psychologists in Training (2006) completed an evaluation of the successes and challenges mainstream schools experienced whilst retrieving the pupil voice and including pupils in the decision-making process. School staff reported that the SEN review process was a time consuming process and that it was difficult to identify the pupil's capacity to share their views.

The role of the educational psychologist (EP)

It appears widely accepted that retrieving the views of pupils through the process of consultation, is a key role of the EP (Farrell, Woods, Lewis et al. 2006; Beaver, 2011). In addition it has been stated that the EP is placed within a uniquely neutral position when eliciting the views of the pupil (DfEE, 2000).

Therefore one solution to the challenges documented above may be for the EP to increase their role during the process of assessment and review, in order to elicit the pupil voice. Initially the EP's involvement may be to determine the pupil's capacity to participate within the assessment and review process – in relation to their profile of need(s). Roller (1998) described this as an assessment of the child's 'sufficient understanding'. This evaluation could be incorporated within all comprehensive EP reports moving forward.

Additionally the EP's training and skills may become relevant when retrieving the views of pupils with more complex SEN, particularly in light of proposed changes to the threshold of statutory support (DfE, 2011). This is due to the fact that EPs use a variety of methods to retrieve the views of pupils during consultations, including:-

- Direct discussion

- Questionnaires and Self-report scales
- Personal construct psychology
- Solution focused approach

(Harding and Atkinson, 2009)

4.3.8 The current research

Within the current context, a key objective for the LA, as part of their role within the SEND pathfinder research is to develop the design of the EHC Single Plan, with a specific focus on children and young people with complex SEN (Norris, 2012). As a pathfinder, the LA is eager to explore how schools have accommodated the pupil voice and whether participants have experienced any challenges when attempting to accommodate the pupil voice. It is anticipated that data produced from this research may enable staff to make further developments to the EHC Single Plan, to accommodate the pupil voice further.

The current coalition government, stated within the White Paper the 'Importance of Teaching' that special schools should share their expertise in supporting the SEN of children and young people with other special and mainstream schools (DfE, 2010). Therefore an additional objective for the current research is to identify the strategies utilised by staff at special schools to retrieve the views of pupils with complex needs, in order to share these strategies with other schools, both locally and nationally. The requirement to share effective strategies is particularly relevant due to the restricted number of replicable resources currently available. It is anticipated that the contexts researched within the current study will become increasingly relevant to other schools, due to the government's emphasis upon providing additional support for pupils with more complex needs (DfE, 2011).

After clarifying the research objectives with the key stakeholders and reflecting upon the relevant literature, the following key questions were developed by the researcher:-

1) *To what extent do special schools engage with pupils regarding their education and incorporate their views in preparation for the EHC Single Plan meeting?*
2) *What strategies were most effective at retrieving the views of pupils in preparation for the EHC Single Plan review meeting?*
3) *To what extent does the EHC Single Plan provide schools with an opportunity to accommodate the views of the pupil?*
4) *Have school staff experienced any challenges whilst trying to accommodate the pupil voice within the EHC Single Plan?*

4.4 Research Design

I will explore the EHC Single Plan (the single subject or case) from multiple perspectives, in depth and from the perspective of individuals who have piloted the EHC Single Plan in real life settings (Thomas, 2011; Simons, 2009).

This research can also be identified as an embedded case study. I will explore sub-units of data, moving beyond the abstract level (Yin, 2009). I will retrieve examples of tools used by school staff to elicit the pupil voice, in addition to eliciting the perspectives of staff.

The current research can be described as an instrumental case study, as the data gathered will be utilised to contribute to the development of real life practice and policy (Stake, 1995). More specifically, it is anticipated that this research will contribute to a) on-going research regarding the development of the EHC Single Plan and b) relevant contexts regarding how best to retrieve and incorporate the views of pupils with complex SEN.

This case study is *discovery led* and aims to describe the processes and relationships involved in each context. However in addition, the researcher will explore challenges experienced by participants (Denscombe, 2007).

4.5 Methodology

4.5.1 Epistemological orientation

Epistemology is the philosophy of how we know, what we know (King and Horrocks, 2010). The researcher has adopted a constructionist epistemological orientation for the current research project.

Constructionism is based upon the principle that reality is co-constructed by researcher and participant after effective communication has taken place (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Sarantakos, 2005). This principle underpins case study research (Stark and Torrance, 2005). The use of language and the development of a shared understanding are crucial, in order for the researcher to retrieve functional knowledge (King and Horrocks, 2010; Sarantakos, 2005).

The EHC Single Plans are operating within the pilot stage and pupils with complex SEN have individualised needs, therefore it would be unrealistic to understand participants' views regarding their input, without engaging directly within an open discussion. Additionally I will discuss the documents or tools used to retrieve the pupil voice, to support my interpretations. Developing a shared understanding is crucial at this stage to ensure that functional information, regarding real-life practice is accurately reflected back to policy developers.

4.5.2 Method selection

Kvale (2007) states when conducting qualitative research the objective of the researcher is to unravel knowledge from the socially constructed, interwoven webs. Semi-structured interviews will be employed to 'unravel' these interwoven webs.

Arksey and Knight (1999) identify that interviews are advantageous when gathering data for the following reasons:-

- They are reactive

- They allow the researcher to find out the specific, in-depth information about a case
- They find out key issues from the perspective of the participant

The advantages outlined by Arksey and Knight (1999) are particularly relevant to the current research. The EHC Single Plan is a new, working document, therefore one should anticipate, the unanticipated response. The reactive nature of semi-structured interviews, allows the researcher to explore these responses further. In addition, the key objectives of the research are to develop a greater understanding of how a) school staff retrieved the pupil voice and b) whether adjustments are required to the current version of the EHC Single Plan, therefore providing stakeholders with richer and more useful data.

Additionally I will analyse the tools retrieved from participants, which are used to retrieve the pupil voice, paying particular attention to their relevance to the content of the EHC Single Plan. I will also discuss these tools with participants as part of my analysis.

4.5.3 Context

This research took place within 3 special schools within a South London Borough. The needs of the pupils who attend each school varied and in addition each school identified a target group as part of the pathfinder research. Each setting/special school is outlined below:-

Setting A

A specialist school for pupils aged 4-19. This school also supports the needs of students with a wide range of special educational needs, however the main criterion for admission is that the pupil has a physical disability and/or medical condition. However there are pupils who attend with additional needs such as communication or sensory difficulties. The target groups will be pupils currently in years 7 and 10.

Setting B

A specialist secondary school for 11-19 year olds, with a wide range of special educational needs; however Setting B specialises in supporting students with Cognitive and Learning Needs. The target group will be pupils who are currently attending the post 16 provision.

Setting C

A specialist unit for 7-11 year olds (the target group), with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The specialist unit is attached to a mainstream junior school.

4.5.4 Participants

5 participants took part in the research overall. This included 1 participant from setting A, 3 from setting B and 1 from setting C. 4 participants were female and 1 male.

A purposive sample was employed to select participants (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). This was due to the fact that participants were required to meet the following entry criteria:-

a) Work with pupils with complex SEN

b) Participate in the process of statutory assessment and review for pupils with SEN

c) Work in a context currently piloting the EHC Single Plan, as part of the LA's wider SEND pathfinder research

4.5.5 Instrument design

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to retrieve qualitative data (see appendix E). The interview schedule was designed after exploring

key literature and identifying issues raised within the key questions. This schedule was then carefully reviewed after completing a pilot study (see below). By utilising this 3-staged approach (key literature, key questions, pilot) it was anticipated this enhanced the construct validity of the schedule (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

Pilot

A pilot interview was conducted with one individual. The researcher used the pilot interview to evaluate whether the semi-structured interview schedule contained ambiguous language, leading questions and to measure the timing of the interviews (Gorard, 2002). In addition the researcher wanted to ensure that the interview schedule followed a 'logical sequence' and was therefore accessible for participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

By ensuring questions are not leading or ambiguous, the reliability of the research is enhanced, as the findings are not simply a product of the researcher's interview schedule but instead reflect the thoughts of the participant (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

No amendments were made to interview schedule after completing the pilot. The participant's responses were included within the data analysis.

4.5.6 Ethical considerations

Informed consent was retrieved from all participants before the onset of data collection. The research consent form (see appendix F) provided for participants was produced in reference to Gillham's (2005) ethical guidelines. Therefore I ensured the consent form provided a clear indication of the purpose of the research, what was expected from participants and used simple and clear language throughout those explanations.

To ensure that this research was ethically sound, I referred to guidelines provided by the University of Birmingham (n.d), the British Psychological Society (2010; 2009) and the LA in which I am currently employed.

Participants were assigned a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity during the analysis and reporting stage (Kvale, 2007).

4.5.7 Data collection administration

To reduce the likelihood of interviewer bias during the interview process, I clarified my understanding during moments of uncertainty by paraphrasing what the interviewee had said (Kvale, 2007; Gillham, 2005). In doing so, it was anticipated that I would retrieve a data set built upon a *shared understanding* between myself and the participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

In order to support the retrieval of participant's views regarding their level of engagement with pupils, I developed the Pupil Engagement Self-Assessment Tool (PESAT) (see appendix G). I attempted to capture the key strengths from existing models of engagement and participation –such as Hart's (1992), Shier's (2001) and Treseder's (1997). However I wanted to provide participants with a model that was less hierarchical, provided participants with the opportunity to identify minimal or non-engaging behaviour and this model also incorporated aspects of Woolfson et al.'s (2008) strategies for effective multi-agency meetings.

To further enhance the shared understanding between myself and the participants, I sent copies of each completed transcript to each specific participant via email. This allowed the participant to read through the transcript and challenge any information that they disagreed with - taking into account that transcription is an interpretative process (Gibbs, 2007). This information was then removed.

4.6 Data Collation and Analysis

Phonetic transcripts were produced for Lauren (see appendix H), Christine, Claire, Katherine and Lesley.

Attride-Stirling (2001) states that in order to produce meaningful results from qualitative data, the researcher must utilise a systematic approach during their analysis. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) state that when identifying which analytic strategy to use within one's research one must consider the analytic purpose of the research. The purpose of the current research was to produce reliable and meaningful evidence which could be used by the research stakeholders.

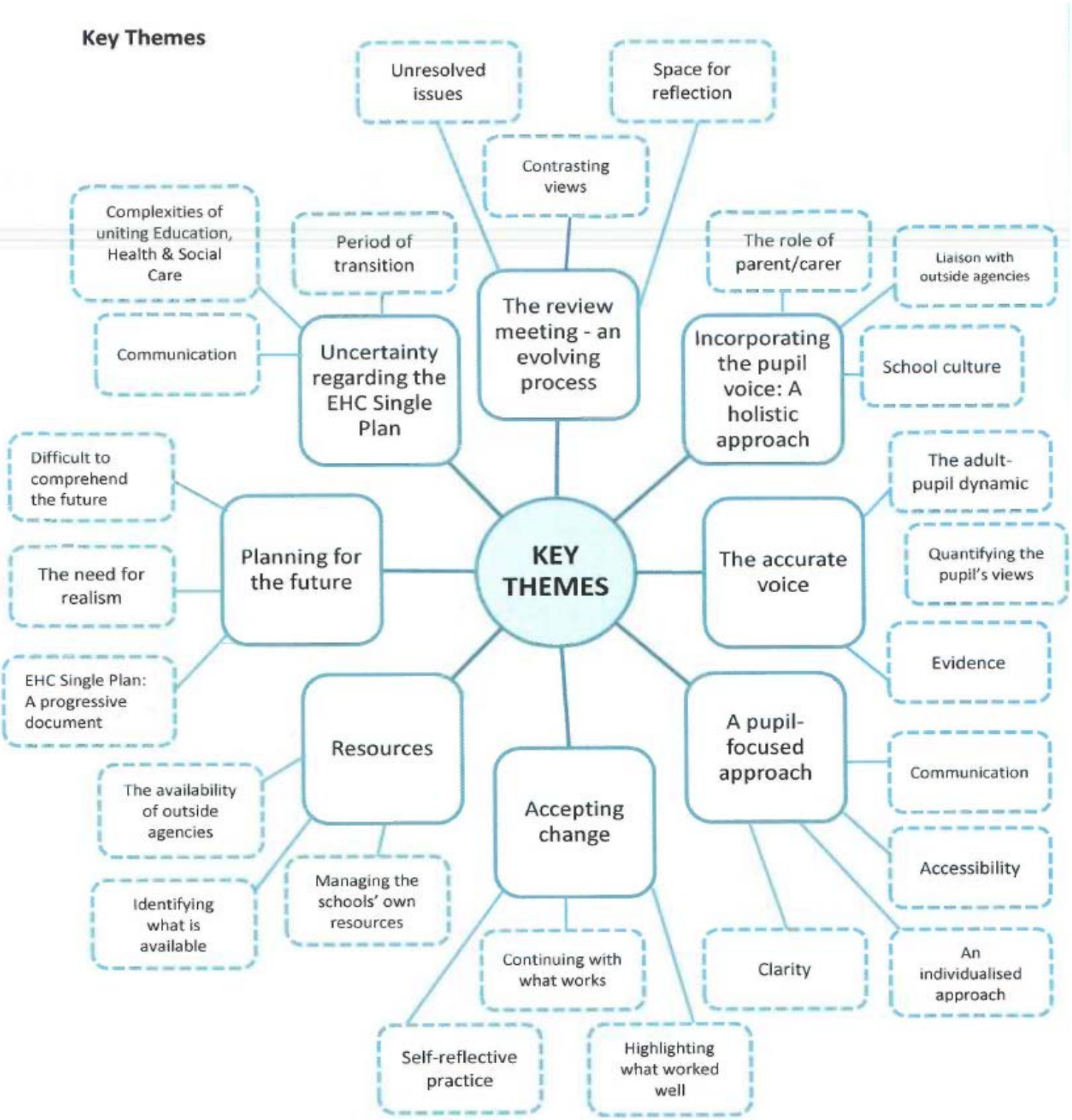
The five data sets were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the process in which the researcher uncovers prominent themes within the data they have retrieved (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These *themes* can be described as patterns within the research data, which must symbolise meaning and relate to the topic under investigation (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

I conducted a theoretical analysis at the latent level (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I focused on the transcribed data and what I felt was implied by the participants during the interviews. I also referred back to the research questions and previous theory/research as part of the analysis. I will state when interpretations are not explicitly related to the data, thus enhancing the validity of the research findings (Guest et al., 2012).

I referred to Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidance notes before carrying out the thematic analysis. Initial codes were generated (see appendix I), identifying patterns within the research data. I utilised these initial codes to produce 8 overarching themes and 25 sub-themes, which are presented in the thematic map below (see figure 2).

This research paper will now discuss the results of thematic analysis. My interpretations will be supported with the inclusion of extracts from the interview data.

Figure 2. *A thematic map presenting the overarching themes and sub-themes I identified, as a result of my thematic analysis*.



THEME 1: The review meeting – An evolving process

Participants frequently described a process of engagement with pupils regarding the retrieval of their views, which began long before the EHC Single Plan meeting and continued in an arena outside of the meeting.

> *'..I see the voice as something that is on-going all the year round, not just when they are doing that..'* (Lauren).

- Sub-theme: Unresolved issues

Participants highlighted that at times issues cannot be resolved within the one-off multi-agency meeting, where the pupil's special educational needs were reviewed.

> *'Well it doesn't get resolved in a short meeting. It doesn't..normally it might be aired within the meeting and then we would have to do some follow-up work with that parent or that child or both and we use people in school to do that..'* (Lesley)
>
> *'..it's an open ended conversation. .in a sense it's a formative process having that conversation, it's not a summative process. I think very often when you get lots of different people together sometimes you can reach a consensus and that's great but sometimes you reach an impasse that needs to be explored further..'*(Christine)

Therefore pupils, parents, staff and outside-agencies required space to reflect on the key discussion points and potentially retrieve additional information.

- Sub-theme: Space for reflection

As Christine identifies in the following extract, time away from the meeting can allow adults time to identify whether *resources are available* (a later theme).

> *'..if the student or the parents or carers need time to reflect on what has happened in the rest of the meeting, the next step forward in a particular way, you might need to have a little bit of time to reflect and think about it. Also you can suggest ways forward for a child but you need to make sure that what's being discussed is actually possible, particularly with the sixth formers who are going to be leaving and will be going on to further education of some sort. Will we need to find out if something arises, that they are interested in, a particular type of course, that might sound fantastic and there is a really clear pathway forward but there is a checking process there and you have to be careful that you don't make promises that you can't keep. So I think there is a period for reflection and fact finding sometimes after the meeting that has to take place.'* (Christine)

- Sub-theme: Contrasting views

At times a definitive action plan or outcome could not be outlined at the end of the review meeting due to contrasting views between individuals attending the multi-agency meeting.

> *'..sometimes parents might have aspirations for their young person and actually the young person themselves, they don't quite tally, so it's important for the young person to be there to express the way that they feel about things as well, rather than just have the parents speak for them..'* (Claire)

Participants discussed the benefit of finding a compromise or common ground between both parties, to ensure that parents were supportive of their children.

> *'Obviously I really want to help this student reach their goal but I need the parent to be onside, otherwise it's all going to fall apart, you have to think what building blocks can we put in place, what strategies can we put in place, so that actually yes the student can get this and the parent is still on board and sometimes it's the vice versa so it's the parent really pushing and it's the student who is putting the brakes on, so you have to think about it in another way.'* (Claire)

Lauren highlighted that the key to developing the agreement or common ground within the meeting, was by developing a close working relationship with the parents or carers throughout the academic year. As a result, the school and parents will develop a shared understanding of the pupil's views prior to the meeting, which is underpinned by trust.

> *'..I think working with a very close working relationship with the parents, you kind of set it out in steps and you're working all the time to see where they want to go, so at an annual review or something like bringing it all together at the Education, Health and Care plan, you're looking at what shall we do next, so you'll building up a working document really to move the children forward, the compromise can normally be met because the trust is being built and because they can see it's all for the good of the child..'* (Lauren)

THEME 2: Incorporating the pupil voice: A holistic approach.

- Sub-theme: The role of the parent or carer

The school's communication with parents and carers appears to enable the school and family to develop a shared and greater understanding of the pupil.

Lauren notes that many pupils arrive via school transport, however home-school liaison can still be maintained through contact books, which still leads to a close partnership with the parents.

> *'..we have contact books we have for parents where anything that the child has shared goes into the contact book, because they don't come to collect them on the playground necessarily, they might go home on transport, so it's really key way for us sharing what the pupils might have said or expressed because they're not as verbal as others. We'd put those in the contact book and also anything they might have shared at home and that's really valuable to help with their next steps in learning or to deal with any concerns that have come through on a daily basis but also with planning their learning needs as the years go on as well..*'(Lauren)

- Sub-theme: School culture

The concept of a school culture appeared to emerge across the data, in which pupils were encouraged to share their views and were provided with

alternative ways to do so throughout the school year. By doing so, it was believed that by the time the pupil came to share their views within the forum of the EHC Single Plan meeting or Annual Review, they were familiar with the process of speaking honestly and about themselves.

Participants referred to activities which took place throughout the school year, which encouraged pupils to share their views, for example the school council, 'Our Say' club, 'the listening ear', a worry box and circle time.

> *'..we do lots of work through the school council and speaking up, people speaking up, having elections, we've got people on the XXXXXXX Youth Council, we do a lot of work around self-advocacy, we've got a speaking up club.'* (Lesley)
>
> *'They've got opportunities throughout the year to have a say, so they have the worry box, the school council, the listening ear, those sorts of things, there's a child who we often quote who says 'we don't need the worry box because we speak to you every day'. There is a lot of air time in our class..'* (Lauren)

However Lauren highlighted that at times, she holds more concerns about how the pupils' express their views, as opposed to having the opportunities to do so.

> *'..they are free with what they want to say, the only difficulty with what they want to say is how they express that..'* (Lauren)

Claire states that staff at her school are also conscious of this issue and have incorporated this into the school curriculum.

> *'..we do work quite a lot with our students speaking and listening and in literacy about being able to ask questions and being able to express themselves..'* (Claire)

Katherine stated that the pupil voice should form a central part of a school's ethos.

> *'Well I think pupil voice is paramount really to, well alongside the curriculum, it should be part and parcel of the school ethos.'* (Katherine)

- Sub-theme: Liaison with outside agencies

Schools have utilised the support of outside agencies to promote the pupil voice within school, providing training and support to establish groups referred to by the participants, for example 'Our Say' club.

> *'..if they are interested and want to do it then there is a training course that the kids go on first that we run here. We've had guidance from a number of people, from XXXXXXX Wide and a national mentoring network..'* (Christine)

However in addition to the initiation of groups, participants also referred to the advice and expertise outside agencies provided which was specialised and at times moved beyond the knowledge pupils, parents and school staff held in relation to subjects such as the pupil's health.

> *'..there are situations where the parent might not be familiar with what's available, they might not agree with some things either medically or health wise, professionals might have a clearer understanding of what is available for the child, so I think that's where the multi-agency approach shows nothing, well hopefully nothing is missed..there will be times where the medical professional might override the views of the parent and the child at that time, but obviously everyone will be considered and consulted..they're getting the umbrella of experiences coming together..'*(Lauren)

THEME 3: A pupil-focused approach

It appears that the pupil is central to the process of assessment and review. Lesley outlined that within her school, staff explicitly adopted a pupil-centred approach when completing annual reviews.

> *'We as a school moved our annual review agenda and structure to a pupil centred approach a few years ago..'* (Lesley)

- Sub-theme: An individualised process

Participants referred to the individualised nature of the assessment and review meeting, which primarily related to the individual *needs* of the pupil.

> *'..the nature of the meetings, the nature of the outcomes are highly individual, depending on who was there and depending on the needs of the child and what those needs were.'*(Christine)
>
> *'..a good majority of our students are verbal, it depends on the need of the student, some of the sixth form students are not so verbal, the autistic students for example, so they know what they want, they may say I want dance, I want cooking classes, but they need to know what the outcome is at the end of it.'* (Katherine)

- Sub-theme: Accessibility

Participants implicitly referred to the accessibility of the information they provided and tools utilised to retrieve the pupil voice.

> *'..children aren't always as articulate as some of the children in our mainstream school, so I think it's important that you give them the equipment to express themselves, in a way that they feel comfortable with..'*(Lauren)

Claire, Lauren and Lesley discussed a pro-forma their schools utilise to retrieve the pupil voice.

'.. within the pro forma it asks them about progress they think they have made, it asks them about future targets they would set for themselves, support they are getting, whether they need more support, less support or different kinds of support, it will ask them about subjects they enjoy and get a lot out of, it will ask if there are subjects that they don't enjoy for whatever reason and also talks about their home life, what things they do at home, hobbies, interests, do they go out with friends and there is also a section at the end to make any comments or topics that they want to bring up at the end..'(Claire)

Lauren feels that the school's pro-forma (see appendix J) reflects key aspects of the EHC Single Plan.

'.. so we do for our annual reviews a sheet called 'all about me' it's about how they feel about all sorts of things and that would filter into this sort of approach

because all of the parts in the plan show those sorts of questions, who is in your family, what do you want to do, what experiences have you had..'
(Lauren)

Lesley donated the pro-forma's used to retrieve the primary pupil voice (see appendix K) and the secondary pupil voice (see appendix L).

'.. we have a questionnaire that we give to pupils that is the same as the one that staff fill in and it's the same as the parents fill in and we have a slightly different one for primary pupils and secondary pupils, we also have a symbolised one. All pupils that's from four year olds right throughout the school are given a chance to meet with the teacher or TA well before the meeting to go through their sheet or their responses and they are given an opportunity to make a response. For some pupils this will be a supported choice-making response and for others they will just dictate what they want to say and a few might be able to record their own words, so it's a real chance for those young people to think about what they want to do and then they bring that with them, the older ones will bring that with them to the meeting so if they need a prompt they've actually got something to say at the meeting.'
(Lesley)

- Sub-theme: Communication

An independent sub-theme of communication emerged, alongside accessibility, due to its prominence within the research data. Due to the needs of the pupils who attend the three provisions, finding alternative ways to communicate with pupils appeared essential in order to retrieve the pupil voice.

'..communication is key, we're probably very good at trying to find alternative ways for kids to communicate, you know we will spend a huge amount of time to build into what they experience in the school a huge number of ways in which they can communicate, so the preferred style of communication might not be verbal it might be through actions and what they do, so we do a huge amount of drama here. We've spent a large amount of time building up the drama, from a process point of view, not the product, so we don't do drama where the kids work on a play and then put on a play, but we do a lot of work with the drama where the children get an opportunity to express their views and express their feelings, express their thoughts, by role playing.' (Christine)

'..we have young people that use communication books, communication aids, who also put forward their own view, we have young people who have more severe learning difficulties who will be able to say a few words or make a choice by whatever their communication..their normal communication method will be..' (Lesley)

'We would obviously be very mindful of the language used, so if they are using sign, we might use makaton when talking to the pupil, it might be that they would be better with pictures and pointing at things and using symbols.' (Lauren)

'..with students with communication difficulties, we would have to look at ways of, almost use things like widget and things like that, to measure liking and disliking of lessons we would use symbols, I'm just thinking of one particular student where just asking questions, you might not elicit the right response where if you had symbols for those lessons for example, you might get a clearer response for example.' (Claire)

- Sub-theme: Clarity

Participants identified the benefit of providing pupils with ample opportunity to clarify any concerns or questions they may have, prior to the EHC Single Plan or annual review meeting.

> *'Yes before, if it's an annual review, we will say this meeting will be an annual review and this is what we are going to talk about. So we might tell the whole class of students and say next week we are going to have this meeting and before that we will meet you all to individually talk about your feelings, and at the meeting anything you want to talk about is absolutely fine, so they know it's an open forum for them as well.'* (Claire)

Clarity appeared in the form of routine and expectations also, where pupils became familiar with the schools approach to retrieving their views. Therefore when they attended the EHC Single Plan meeting, they were familiar with the topics of conversation.

> *'Yes, everyone is answering the same questions in the same order, so I think that's really important so they at least they have some understanding of what we're talking about because it follows what they've already done.'*(Lesley)

THEME 4: The accurate voice

- Sub-theme: The adult-pupil dynamic

Christine states that a significant challenge when retrieving the pupil voice, is feeling secure that the pupil has provided their true feelings, as opposed to providing a response the adult wishes to hear.

> '*..there's always that thought in the back of your mind is that they are providing what they think you want to hear and not what they actually feel*.' (Christine)

Katherine identified that it's important that individuals who know the pupil are present within the meeting and therefore do not assume that the pupil's responses within the meeting are their categorical beliefs.

'..in the past we've had lots of agencies from outside coming in and if they don't know the child or the family, it's easy to make assumptions..' (Katherine)

Christine believes for some pupils, the process of sitting next to an adult and discussing their beliefs or views may be intimidating, which leads us back to the theme of a pupil-centred approach, ensuring the pupil is comfortable to convey their true opinions and adopting alternative approaches, for example peer groups.

'..an adult sitting with a child could potentially be intimidating, so we would try and elicit their views by talking to them directly, also by putting them into peer groups and giving them an opportunity to express their voice through peer group.'(Christine)

As Lesley discussed, one way to overcome this challenge is by quantifying these views and gathering the pupil voice prior to the review meeting.

'I think that's why it's really important to have the pupil fill in their views before the meeting because then everybody can see what they've said and what their wishes are, so it's then very difficult for an adult to hijack the meeting and go off on a different direction if the pupil has already put something down that is important to them.'(Lesley)

- Sub-theme: Quantifying the pupil's views

Christine identifies that it's important to quantify the views of the pupil due to the fact pupils may attempt to second guess what the adult would like the pupil to say. Christine feels this can be achieved by holding discussions with additional members of staff, to see if the pupil has shared similar views with them and to hold more informal conversations with the pupil, away from the more *formal* review meeting.

'..if you are talking to the child about their dreams, aspirations and what they want to do, there is a danger that there is role confusion and wonder why they are being asked and try and not disappoint you and try and second guess what you want them to say. So that can be a challenge and we try and triangulate that to a some extent, so if we feel that the child has a particular

aspiration for the future then you might say to another adult 'oh so and so says that they want to do this when they are older' why don't you have a chat with them and see if you get the same answer?..I think those conversations need to be ad-hoc and informal to some extent because as soon as you try and formalise them, you fall into the trap of communicating across roles which can be problematic.'(Christine)

'.. our job is build-up opportunities in circle time, social skills, so every week they share their weekend news, what's gone on in their family, things that bring a little bit more of the flavour of the child..when you come to sit down, you feel you know the child very, very well. So bringing it together, it almost just fine tunes it then.' (Lauren)

- Sub-theme: Evidence

From my analysis, I interpreted that Lauren believes the prompts she provides within the meeting – although adult led - are evidence-based, reflecting what the pupil has communicated within the school year, therefore school staff are actively attempting to promote the pupil's own views within the meeting.

'.. you can prompt them, it's whether you lose the actual voice because you're giving them a steer aren't you, but because we do know them so well, we know their parents, we know their situation, actually something has prompted us to say that because we know about it, it's just they might not have these skills to recall some of those things so working with the child may help that a lot I think, to home in on the relevant stuff without missing things..'(Lauren)

Similarly when speaking on behalf of the pupil, Lauren believes adults can increase the accuracy of their summarising, if they are able to refer back to evidence collated throughout the school year.

'.. sometimes you might get parents or teachers speaking for the child if that's what happens from these resources, it might not be exactly the child's view, it might be watered down slightly, just the way things are when it's from a second person, that's where using lots of places to draw information from, you build up a better picture.' (Lauren)

THEME 5: Accepting change

- Sub-theme: Self-reflective practice

There appeared to be high levels of self-reflective practice taking place across the settings. As a result if staff felt there were ways to improve on the retrieval of the pupil voice, they would actively seek to make changes to their approach.

'..as a school decided to use a person-centred approach with our annual reviews, but that isn't a national thing, that's just something we've done.' (Lesley)

'.. we will always be looking at ways to try and reflect upon what we do, or what the pupils..need. That's going to be a constant process..' (Christine)

'. . .sometimes. . .despite as many opportunities as we can think of they still don't communicate particularly effectively, so our response to that is we're constantly looking at new ways for them to communicate, it's very personalised in that sense.'(Christine)

- Sub-theme: Highlighting what worked well

As the participants generally appeared to share a common appreciation of the existing statutory process of assessment and reviewing SEN, participants frequently highlighted examples of current practice that *worked well*.

'We have a very simple agenda, a pupil-centred agenda that works really well, that everyone knows and understands and the other thing is, we always start with the positives..and then that sets the tone, it's about what that young person can do, it's not about what they can't do. So again I'm always wary of having a target driven agenda because lots of our young people don't always meet their targets, it can be quite negative, you know you haven't done this, you didn't do that, rather than starting with right what have you done really well this year, what's gone really well? okay right how do we improve that? and do we work on that? That seems to me to be a much more natural flow, than just going along with targets that perhaps haven't been met for whatever reason.'(Lesley)

'.. in ours they have a chance to be involved in all of it, rather than just a little part at the end, because that's the whole point we wanted it to be about them the whole way through and I don't think this reflects that.'(Lesley)

Katherine appeared confused by the need for change as she feels the current annual review process is working well.

> *'At the moment it seems like it does work, it's working as it is, in schools..There's no real reason why this EHC single plan can't work, but from what I can see the only real difference is they're starting it from an earlier age and it just follows the child from 0 to 25..I mean it's to stop the statements really isn't it?'* (Katherine)

- Sub-theme: Continuing with what works

Several participants also referred to continuing with their school's existing approach to assessment and review of pupil's SEN. Therefore they did not appear to fully participate in using the EHC Single Plan. There appeared to be a level of uncertainty surrounding the EHC Single Plan (a later theme) held by participants, which may have led participants to revert back to familiar approaches.

> *'..we haven't actually used the single plan as such in the school, we're still using our own review documentation..'*(Claire)
>
> *'..the single plan has not really been brought to the table with students as of yet. So we have had meetings, so all the students that are leaving, post 19, they've all their 139A done the moving on plan, that is going to be abolished, but a similar format I will assume has got to take place and that will form part of the EHC single plan and this will be reviewed at 16 or 19, so the same sort of information will have to be ploughed back into the single plan.*'(Katherine)

THEME 6: Resources

Resources appeared to impact on the inclusion of the pupil voice within the EHC Single Plan - both pragmatically and in terms of planning for the future.

- Sub-theme: Managing the school's own resources

Participants highlighted that time constraints made it challenging when trying to accommodate the views of the pupil.

'Not really I think if anything time would be the challenge..making sure you have set aside enough time for every student..in schools you are run by timetables..so it's fitting it in at a convenient time for students and other members of staff really.' (Claire)

'*Time is hard, we're only a class of ten children and four adults, even if they are teaching assistants they might not be here until 6 o'clock at night to write it all down, gathering everything. Time is probably the biggest constraint making sure everything always kept up to date, making sure everything is always recorded..not only finding the time to make sure you've documented it, but also finding the time to trawl through it all for each child, when you are still doing parent's evenings, annual reviews, school productions, sports days, all that goes with being part of a mainstream school, it's balancing it all.'* (Lauren)

- Sub-theme: The resources of outside agencies

The availability of outside agencies to attend review meetings appears to be currently restricted.

'..getting everybody in the room to be consulted that is the hardest thing, you know that yourself as an educational psychologist, but speech and language therapists may only be assigned to the school on certain days, there's lots of things that can be a stumbling block for getting everybody in the room, although there's ways round it, a report is not a full consultation it's obviously just an observation or recommendations..' (Lauren)

'..it's pot luck if anybody else turns up from social care or health.' (Lesley)

Lesley highlighted that working together with outside agencies would be beneficial, if they were able to attend.

'We look at multi-agency input where we can, they don't come at the moment but if they came that would be great and that's really important that we're all working on the same thing, we all understand the same thing, we all know what the priorities are.' (Lesley)

Christine believed the Connexions service (no longer in operation) could have potentially fulfilled the *key worker* role (addressed shortly), whereas Katherine highlighted that Connexions retrieved pupil's views regarding their future, however due to the loss of this service, schools may be have to use their own resources to retrieve this information.

'..I haven't seen or heard of any initiative that's going to try and create that role [the key worker role]. In fact in recent years, there's been more of an effort to get rid of that role, so things like the Connexions service which to some extent fulfilled part of that brief, well that's gone, so it seems in some ways the effort is to go in the opposite direction of that.'(Christine)

'*A lot of the reason why the school is in the dark at the moment, is because of the demise of Connexions, they did a lot of this work..'*(Katherine)

- Sub-theme: Identifying what is available

Participants identified that within the meeting it may be difficult to develop a plan forward, as there may be uncertainty regarding what resources are available within the local area.

'It's all very well saying what would you like but really what is on offer?' (Katherine)

As a result, occasionally a *period of reflection* is required, where further information is identified, as previously discussed.

'..suggest ways forward for a child but you need to make sure that what's being discussed is actually possible.. and there is a really clear pathway forward but there is a checking process there and you have to be careful that you don't make promises that you can't keep. So I think there is a period for reflection and fact finding sometimes after the meeting that has to take place.' (Christine)

THEME 7: Planning for the future

Participants frequently referred to the pupil's future and the next steps in their education. This may have been due to the fact that the majority of the participants (3) worked with the sixth form cohort.

- Sub-theme: The EHC Single Plan: A progressive document

Participants also referred to the fact that the EHC Single Plan focuses on the pupil's aspirations for the future and follows the pupil through into early adulthood. Therefore the Single Plan evolves with the pupil.

'..some of the focuses are on..their aspirations I think that does come through in this quite a lot..that makes you think about where that child is going, not just in the time they're with you but longer term as well.' (Lauren)

'..expressing their wishes, saying these are the areas I need help in, so then that voice is heard and it's kept there within the single plan and then every year they don't have to go through the same process..it should then be an on-going process, so I've already achieved those things, now what are the next steps, not going backwards but going ahead..' (Claire)

- Sub-theme: Difficult to comprehend the future

Despite the emphasis placed upon the future within meetings, pupils found it difficult to comprehend the future.

'The challenge is for those young people who have more severe cognitive difficulties, who don't have an understanding of abstract issues or perceptions, for example the last question we always ask the pupils is about the future, we always talk about this, the future 'what would you like in the future?' well if you've got no idea of here or now or next, the future is just a nonsense..' (Lesley)

'Well I think a challenge for some students, thinking about the future..they are unsure about what the next step might even be, certainly have no idea or no concept of 5 years' time, so that can be quite a challenge..' (Claire)

One way in which staff at Lesley's school overcome this difficulty, is to take pupils to colleges to visit and then hold discussions about their visits.

'*I suppose actually taking young people to a college, so 'this is what we're talking about, this is a college'..we get pupils who have left to come back and talk about their experiences and perhaps use photos so it actually gets across the idea of what it means to leave and to go, but I'm not saying we've cured it as such or solved it..'*(Lesley)

- Sub-theme: The need for realism

When planning for the future, staff felt at times that a sense of realism was required, in order to make an effective action plan with pupils. This could be related to a number of factors, for example the local context, academic attainment, as opposed to restricting the pupil's aspirations.

'We would have also tried to find out from the child any potential barriers that they could foresee about achieving their dreams..we would try and find out from the pupil how they're thinking in terms of general and specific, if they're thinking in very general terms and they frame their thoughts about the future in very general terms we would try to find out from the pupil how capable they are at breaking them down into small, achievable steps. If they're not capable of doing that and they can only hold onto the big dream or what's right in front of them they can't see the journey in between, that's a potential problem and something that would again feed into the review and how are we going to manage that really? But if they readily broke down that dream into small manageable steps, that would again be very interesting.' (Christine)

'..they asked what would you like to do? But there was nothing about you can do this, this or this? So when you have students with learning difficulties, they are going to want this, this and this, there was nothing about what would be offered, because cynically, these students said they wanted to be independent travellers, or for someone to take them out on a Saturday, well there's no money available for that.'(Katherine)

THEME 8: Uncertainty regarding the EHC Single Plan

- Sub-theme: Period of transition

One concern that emerged from the data, was that a number of initiatives were being introduced in unison, within a relatively small time frame. A number of these initiatives are interlinked, however *how* they combined, appeared unclear to the service user (the teacher). For example the Achievement for All (AfA) programme - a framework for school improvement, designed to support schools and pupils to achieve their full potential (Humphrey and Squires, 2011), was introduced in parallel with the EHC Single Plan pilot.

'..then there's this pilot, then there's people coming in from the AfA to tell teachers how to do these structured conversations and another organisation coming in to discuss how to talk to the students and I think there are so many people doing different strands of work and you have the Young Advisors, I don't think their views have been asked about yet.'(Katherine)

Participants also referred to additional changes that are currently occurring at the national level alongside the introduction of the EHC single plan, which has impacted upon the local Borough.

'A lot of people have different agendas, XXXXXXX College wants students to stay in the Borough, the whole of the Borough wants students to stay in the Borough, there's arguments for and against that, which we don't want to get into..I think there is so many pockets of people working on things that it's a bit confusing at the moment..' (Katherine)

Katherine suggested that the multiple changes currently occurring, may have impacted upon the significance placed upon the pupil voice.

'..there has been so many initiatives about how this plan is going to formulate and who is involved erm, that I think the pupil voice is still probably low down, well it's probably running in the middle of the agenda probably.. I think they're trying to sort out the admin and the paper work and the staffing and trying to sort out how it's going to look, maybe they've tackled it the wrong way round, I don't know.' (Katherine)

Lesley shared her apprehension about simply assuming that all school's currently adopt a holistic practice when retrieving the pupil voice and believes a prompt will ensure good practice is achieved by all within the EHC Single Plan meeting.

'..I actually think to some extent the paper work in secondary, it's about how you chair the meetings, it's about who is given what status within the meeting and who is given a chance to speak in the meeting..I think if there was a prompt in the paperwork, then for those people who are not including the pupils so much, it prompts them to include the pupil's view in all of it, rather than just stuck at the end..'(Lesley)

- Sub-theme: Complexities of uniting education, health and social care.

At times participants appeared to question how the process of uniting the three disciplines of education, health and social care would work in practice. Lesley questioned whether the change in approach, would lead to social workers attending meetings more frequently because of the current economic climate.

'*Social care very hit and miss, they don't often come, it would be good if they could be there, it's really important that they're there for older pupil's transition meetings..I can't see that changing because we're in a time of cuts, they tell me they don't have the capacity to come, so that's an issue.*' (Lesley)

Christine questioned the feasibility of uniting the three disciplines more explicitly.

'..it seems to me that there are three strands to this plan and they are formed of three very disparate bodies with their own cultures and their own ways of working, so to try and resolve all those tensions which are inevitable..to try and resolve those tensions by just getting on with it, by piloting it with pupils is probably not the best way forward, I think it would have been better if there was a far greater dialogue between those professionals before the plan was piloted because there are inevitable constraints on those different arenas, different ways of working, teachers, social workers, potentially doctors have very different codes of conduct, perceptions about what their role is and different boundaries about what they should and should not be doing, those have evolved over a long period of time and are all very important and to put them altogether into one plan with a child with special needs, when you haven't had an opportunity to thrash out all that and decide how you are going to move forward..' (Christine)

Christine highlighted the requirement for an impartial individual, a third-party to navigate these relationships and put together the best outcomes for the pupil. Although Christine was aware that this role should be fulfilled by the key worker, they were unclear about *who* would fulfil this role and what this role would entail.

'*I think previously education, health and social care although we have worked together, they have been three distinct disciplines ..putting those three things together isn't necessarily going to work. I think from that combination is going to emerge all sorts of potential tensions and conflicts which could potentially confuse a student's pathway forward. That's a tricky area, it seems to me the only way to resolve this would be to have, in some sense, an independent person who has an overview and who is aware of, not necessarily fully, but is aware of what goes on within those three disciplines and can put it all together for it – that would be the key worker role, but they would have to be impartial and not located within one of those three areas, I think that would be very important. But I haven't seen or heard of any initiative that's going to try and create that role.'*(Christine)

- Sub-theme: Communication

It appeared that participants held a number of unanswered questions which they shared within the interview.

'I think there is a whole load of stuff there that needs to be discussed and talked about so there is a coherent way for those three bodies to work together which is perfectly possible' (Christine)

'*Who is formulating this plan?*' (Katherine)

Additional comments

In addition some of the participants suggested that the EHC Single Plan may require increased flexibility to a) adopt an individualised approach, taking the specific needs of the pupil into account and b) to potentially broaden the space provided to include additional pupil comments, so the pupil voice runs throughout the document.

4.7 Discussion

This discussion will focus around the 4 key research questions. The researcher will utilise the research data to answer the research questions, relating the data back to previous research highlighted earlier within the research paper.

4.7.1 To what extent do special schools engage with pupils regarding their education and incorporate their views in preparation for the EHC Single Plan meeting?

Participants described a level of engagement with pupils that evolved throughout the school year. This moves away from the researcher's interpretation that engagement would predominantly take place prior to the meeting and within the meeting itself. In fact engagement continued after the meeting had taken place in some scenarios due to unresolved issues which arose or to enable those in attendance to reflect. One could argue that the progressive nature and continuity that the EHC Single Plan may provide may be more accommodating for this approach, than the previous annual review process, in which the annual review meeting took place once a year and

paper work was then dispersed. The DfE (2011) proposed that the new SEN review process will need to be more flexible, where reviews can take place more frequently in line with the needs of the pupil.

The concept of a school culture was explicitly and implicitly referred to within the research. Staff identified a number of activities which facilitated the development of this culture, for example the school council. Within the school councils, pupils set their own agenda, identifying issues relevant to them. By doing so, one would assume a culture has emerged, in which pupils anticipate their views to be valued and retrieved. This approach will then navigate away from the traditional adult-pupil power dynamic described by McQuillan (2005). Therefore enabling pupils to identify topics which are important to their education and future, as opposed to a meeting which revolves around adult-led discussions (May, 2004). The concept of developing school culture which promotes the pupil voice is discussed within the SEN Toolkit (2001*b*). It is unclear as to whether this document will be revised in association with the updated SEN Code of Practice.

As Cheminais (2008) highlights the inclusion of the pupil voice within the wider school environment will not only have possible positive implications for the review of the pupil's SEN. However there are additional positive outcomes anticipated, for example increasing the pupil's reflective thinking and sense of belonging.

By empowering pupils to share their views, the potential for conflicting views within the meeting may occur. Therefore decisions are frequently made outside of the meeting, emphasising the importance that information is fed back to the pupil regarding the key outcomes of the meeting. This is reflected in stage 8 of Woolfson et al.'s (2008) model, who state that feedback can be in the form of a letter, however for pupils with complex SEN, this should be presented in the most accessible format for the individual pupil.

Participants referred to attainment levels which were wide ranging (P Scales to National Curriculum levels). However there was also a shared belief that attainment was not the significant priority for pupils with complex needs. This belief appeared to be due to the small steps of progress some of the pupils made. As discussed previously, pupils with complex needs can become alienated by the process of assessment , as the focus can lead to a preoccupation with pupils' limitations (Marchant, 2001). Although participants discussed the need to elicit pupils' views regarding their strengths, attainment

could still form a key component of the EHC Single Plan if staff adapt current assessment techniques. This adaptation would include enhanced use of AfL, identifying what pupils already understand and the next steps in the learning process. This will ensure that pupils contribute to targets which relate to attainment, outlined within their Single Plan. This adaptation may overcome barriers which one could argue are socially constructed (Hughes and Paterson, 1997).

4.7.2 What strategies were most effective at retrieving the views of pupils in preparation for the EHC Single Plan review meeting?

It appears that participants believe the process of retrieving the pupil voice is individualised. One must take into account the pupil's needs and communication skills for example. Pupils need to be clear of the purpose of the meeting, what is expected of them both before and during the meeting, therefore *clarity* is important. The significance of preparation is reflected within Woolfson et al.'s (2008) model. This may explain why guidance concerning *how* to include the pupil voice within SEN assessment and review has frequently been left up to individuals or organisations (Armstrong et al., 1993). A one-size fits all approach may not encapsulate the vast array of complex individual needs which may be encountered by professionals.

Participants referred to an approach which was pupil-centred. A pupil-centred review places the pupil at the centre of the review process, in order to develop a greater understanding of the pupil and by doing so, will hopefully lead to more effective action points and long term outcomes (DoH, 2010; Taylor, 2007). Establishing effective outcomes for pupils was a primary objective for the DfE (2011) when the EHC Single Plan was proposed.

It appears that these factors have enabled participants to develop a more *accurate pupil voice*, in which the views of the pupil have been explored over time, *evidence* has been retrieved and the views shared by pupils within the meeting, have been *quantified* with this evidence. By rigorously attempting to retrieve and include the accurate views of the pupil throughout the academic year, participants may reduce the potential for 'informal advocacy' to occur and empower pupils to contribute their views in the presence of adults (McQuillan, 2005; Marchant, 2001).

Participants retrieved the views of parents, carers and outside agencies to ensure that their interpretations of the pupil voice were both quantified and accurate. Schools' links with parents or carers are significant due to the government's emphasis on collaboration and the parental role within the plan (DfE, 2011). The schools' efforts to liaise with parents and carers are particularly noteworthy as a large proportion of pupils travel to the schools via school transport. Therefore alternative communication avenues have been developed, such as home-school contact books. These strategies should enable school staff and parents to develop a *shared understanding* of the pupil's views prior to the review meeting.

School staff frequently referred to a pro-forma which they used to elicit the views of pupils. This reflected topics which would be discussed within the meeting. However the pro-forma at times adapted to incorporate pupils' preferred communication techniques. Adapting materials to meet the needs of pupils, is emphasised within existing research (DfES, 2004; Gersch, 1996), maintaining the rights of the pupil (Todd, 2003). Participants also referred to the pro-forma that they use to elicit parents' and carers' views prior to the meeting. This pro-forma again reflects topics which are discussed in the meeting and may enable the process of assessment and review, to become more simplistic for parents (DfE, 2011).

Participants identified a number of strategies or tools used to elicit the views of pupils with communication difficulties, these included:-

- Communication books
- Makaton
- The use of symbol cards, such as Widgit.
- Drama and role play

It is notable that these strategies accommodated non-verbal communication, as acknowledged within previous research and government policy (May, 2004; DfES, 2001*b*).

Although participants have identified a number of strategies independently, staff also acknowledged that the search for new techniques and ideas was a continual process. This suggests a potential requirement for greater advice for adults working with children and young people with complex SEN and how to communicate in alternative ways. Although the SEN Toolkit (2001*b*) has

previously documented alternative strategies which can be used to retrieve the pupil's views, the DfE's (2012*c*) new training materials provide greater depth, ensuring that strategies presented are replicable. However despite the richness of information provided within this training material, participants did not refer to this guide. This reinforces my perception that the training material has received insufficient publicity since it was published and will therefore require greater distribution to ensure that service users, make the most of its worth.

Participants demonstrated an awareness of the dangers of simply assuming the pupil holds a similar view as themselves (Gersch, 1990). By ensuring that the pupil's views were explicitly explored within the meeting, including the process of decision making, ensured that the retrieval of the pupil's views prior to the meeting were not simply *tokenistic* (Todd, 2003). However the 'Working together'(DfES, 2004) document also emphasised the requirement for pupils to be clear about the potential impact of their views on the decision making process. For pupils with complex needs, understanding the impact of their decisions may be difficult to comprehend. This complexity was not discussed by participants within the current research. One way to overcome this barrier may be to ensure that pupils are aware of the purpose of the SEN assessment and review process prior to participation (Woolfson et al., 2008).

Participants did not specifically refer to the role provided by the EP in the process of assessment and review. However outside agencies provided support with establishing groups within school which facilitated pupils to share their views.

4.7.3 To what extent does the EHC Single Plan provide schools with an opportunity to accommodate the views of the pupil?

Participants' practical experience of utilising the EHC Single Plan was generally limited despite having access to the Plan. Four out of the five participants, decided to continue with the pre-existing annual review of Statements of SEN. I therefore explored why participants had decided not to use the Single Plan. Although this exploration deviates away from key question outlined above, this enabled me to provide functional data for the LA, a key objective of the research.

Several participants also identified that the current EHC Single Plan restricted their ability to incorporate the individualised needs of the pupil. The majority of school staff stated that the Plan focused too heavily on specific areas such as achievement. This marginalised staffs' pre-existing individualised approach to documenting pupils' strengths and needs. As noted within the literature review, the pupil voice has frequently been excluded from the coalition government's legislation, including the SEN green paper, 'Support and Aspiration' (DfE, 2011). However, this may be due to the fact that the government has chosen to focus on proposed changes as opposed to reaffirming successful strategies. Certainly, one could argue without an opportunity to include the views of the pupil voice within the plan, the retrieval of the pupil's views becomes more of a tokenistic exercise (Todd, 2003).

Staff also believed that existing practice was working effectively. However it should be noted, that staff were innovative in their approach, adapting their methods and adopting new approaches to meet the needs of pupils more effectively, for example using pupil-centred reviews. This perspective was in stark contrast to the narrative presented within Support and Aspiration (DfE, 2011). However one must take into account that the criticisms of existing practice were largely attributed to parents, as opposed to school staff within special schools. This contrast may be due to the fact that there is less deliberation by the LA when attempting to access support for pupils within the three contexts, due to the complexity of their needs. However one must also consider that this contrast may simply reflect the views of 5 participants from 3 special schools. This may not reflect the overall views of school staff within the current or wider contexts.

The participants' decision to continue to operate their existing assessment and review procedures may be understood by exploring organisational psychology. For example, Cartwright and Baron (2002) state that a resistance to change can take place at two levels, firstly at the organisational level, where school leaders strongly believe in their current approach and wish to continue with this strategy. Secondly, at the individual level in which the individual member of staff is fearful of attempting new approaches or continue with existing methods due to complexities of adjusting this long-standing approach. Within the research settings the uncertainty surrounding the EHC Single Plan, may have enhanced individuals' fear of attempting the new approach. Although one takes into account that the introduction of the Plan

was a pilot, staff must ensure the pupil's needs take precedence over the format of the meeting.

4.7.4 Have school staff experienced any challenges whilst trying to accommodate the pupil voice within the EHC Single Plan?

As this EHC Single Plan pilot is still within the relatively early stages, it is perhaps difficult to request participants to identify challenges specific to the pupil voice and to ask participants to unravel these experiences from the plan overall. As this discussion has already alluded to, participants referred to a holistic approach to retrieving the pupil voice, therefore more general concerns regarding the EHC Single Plan also hold relevance and will therefore be included here.

Participants identified that time constraints made it challenging for staff to retrieve the pupil voice, as previously identified by researchers (Ruddock and McIntyre, 2007; Norwich et al., 2006). This was particularly challenging, as participants discussed the necessity to record the views of the pupils with complex needs throughout the school year. This ensured that evidence was collated in preparation for the SEN review meeting.

School staff also highlighted that outside agencies were not always available to attend the SEN review meeting. Staff noted that the health and care professionals had particular time restrictions. This is of particular concern when one considers a primary objective of the DfE (2011) was to introduce a process which was collaborative. As staff alluded to, the formative nature of meetings suggests that discussions are required between all parties in order to identify the appropriate outcomes for pupils. This is difficult to achieve through written correspondence.

A narrative emerged within the interview data regarding *the future*. One must acknowledge that the majority of participants were piloting the Single Plan with sixth form pupils (aged 16 and above). However the emphasis on the future may be due to the progressive nature of the EHC Single Plan, which follows the pupil through until 25 years of age (DfE, 2011). One must take into the account that the transition into adulthood can be a complex process for all

young people (Coleman and Hendry, 1999). However if a young person has complex SEN this may result in changes to their educational setting, health and care provision (Polat, Kalambouka, Boyle et al., 2001). Therefore pupils will have had a number of possible changes to comprehend.

The introduction of the EHC Single Plan was designed to enhance pupils' transitions into adulthood (DfE, 2011). However participants were uncertain about the potential prospects available for pupils, when exploring their future opportunities. Developing awareness of what is available is arguably essential in order to ensure pupils have appropriate opportunities to *realistically* express their preferences moving forward (DfES, 2004). As previously discussed, the Getting A Life (2011) project looked at developing pathways for young people with complex SEN to achieve positive outcomes and paid employment. One would anticipate the involvement of local agencies would enhance the knowledge of what is available for pupils moving forward. Although the Getting A Life (2011) project is no longer government led, it has been maintained by independent LAs within the UK and this approach could be adopted by additional LAs.

The pupil voice has been excluded from a number of the coalition government's policies and legislation. Participants identified that specific guidance was required to ensure that the pupil voice was incorporated. The government could not assume that this approach would be adopted by all schools. This supports research by Woolfson et al. (2008) who found that staff who utilised *their* model (see appendix A), felt the model would be particularly useful for inexperienced staff.

Confusion arose within the schools responsible for piloting the EHC Single Plan due to a number of additional pilots which are occurring within the LA. Additional changes are also occurring at the national level which has arguably led to a *period of transition*, for example changes related to funding and post-16 provision (DfE, 2012*d*). Participants found it difficult to comprehend how the Single Plan related to these additional changes, appearing uniformed regarding how the Plan related to the broader changes currently occurring. This period of transition may have contributed to participants' perseverance with the pre-existing SEN assessment and review process.

A key challenge which was identified within the research data was the reduced, direct communication between LA representatives regarding the EHC Single Plan and school staff responsible for implementing the Plan. Opportunities to ask questions either directly or indirectly may have taken place. Additionally a definitive answer may yet have been established – one must remember that the LA is *piloting* the EHC Single Plan. However it appears that increased dialogue (direct or indirect) is required to address a number of questions related to the EHC Single Plan, in order for the Plan to be piloted unequivocally moving forward.

Participants identified that key worker role is essential but may prove to be challenging to implement. Participants believed the key worker must hold a neutral position and have a thorough understanding of the roles and cultures of education, health and care professionals. Participants were unaware of the professional responsible to carry out this role, which highlighted the restricted levels of communication. However the DfE (2013) recently published documentation which stated that the LA have piloted the key worker role with parents, who were appointed through a local organisation which promotes the views of parents of children/young people with SEN. Parents received training and will fulfil this role within the Borough. In addition, a 'Preparing For Adulthood Co-ordinator' will be assigned to fulfil the key worker role with older pupils.

The individualised nature of a) school culture (Hargreaves, 1994) b) the needs of pupils with complex SEN and c) the views *shared* by pupils, parents or carers and professionals, suggests that the information incorporated into the EHC Single Plan will vary significantly within each meeting. Therefore to produce a standard pro-forma for pupils with complex needs is a challenging task. However what the LA have attempted to produce is a document which encapsulates the key information such as attainment levels, targets for the three key areas. This information relates to existing UK policy and legislation and additional information, more relevant to the individual can be incorporated around this.

4.7.5 Research Design and Methodology – reflections

In order to develop a greater understanding of how school staff utilised tools and strategies to retrieve the pupil voice within this case study, I could have completed observations of staff using the tools and strategies with pupils. However I was conscious that my presence may have made pupils feel

uncomfortable and therefore less likely to share their true perspectives (Woolfson et al., 2008). The researcher should attempt to ensure minimal disruption to the real-life setting when completing case study research (Walker, 1983).

I did not explore the perspectives of parents, carers or pupils, as I wanted to focus on the individuals who held responsibility for piloting the EHC Single Plan. Additionally the EHC Single Plan was in its early stages of the pilot, therefore it was unclear how familiar pupils and parents would be with the proposed SEN reforms. I do however acknowledge that by excluding the parental and pupil voice, I have elicited only one perspective regarding the degree of pupil engagement.

The advantages of using semi-structured interviews, outlined by Arksey and Knight (1999) were compatible with conducting research regarding the pilot of the EHC Single Plan. Semi-structured interviews enabled me to respond to the unanticipated responses from participants. For example, I anticipated that all schools had employed the EHC Single Plan, however the flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed me to explore why participants had continued to use existing methods.

The PESAT tool prompted in depth discussion about school staff's level of engagement with pupils both in preparation for their EHC Single Plan review meeting and during the meeting itself. However the PESAT tool fails to take account of the evolving nature of a school's engagement with pupils, for example within their school culture.

A limitation of the research was the reduced number of perspectives retrieved, however only 4 special schools were signed up to the SEND pathfinder research within the LA. The fourth school not included within the current research, was engaged in pre-existing research regarding the pathfinder, therefore it was not possible elicit their views. Although one could also question the number of participants involved, I only interviewed participants who were actively involved in the pilot of the EHC Single Plan. Therefore I interviewed all relevant members of school staff.

4.8 Conclusion

Participating special schools currently engage with pupils significantly in preparation for their SEN review meeting, moving beyond engagement levels indicated within the PESAT (Appendix G). Participating staff consider the views of pupils throughout the school year in order to provide an accurate pupil voice. However due to the changes in the focus of SEN review meetings which will be more focused upon outcomes, the following adaptations may be required:-

- Adapting the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) to identify the academic areas which pupils may wish to revisit or require additional support within.
- Adapting the pro-forma utilised by staff in order to become more outcome focused in line with the EHC Single Plan. This will provide pupils with an opportunity to consider potential outcomes prior to the meeting.
- Developing a similar holistic, evolving approach to retrieving pupils' views around their health and care. However one questions how this will occur, due to a lack of day to day contact with health and care professionals.

The author criticised the lack of specific advice made available by the government within the last two decades, regarding how to retrieve SEN pupil's views. The depth of the advice prevents additional schools from replicating these strategies – such as the SEN Toolkit (DfES, 2001*b*). However within the current research, participants indicated that the retrieval of pupil's views is highly dependent upon their specific needs. This leads to an individualised approach which is difficult for participants to describe generally.

The DfE must ensure that the new training materials for school staff who work with pupils with profound, severe and complex needs (DfE, 2012*c*) is publicised extensively. It would be advisable to reference this resource within the SEN Code of Practice and make this resource available to all adults involved in the EHC Single Plan review process.

It is difficult to ascertain how accommodating the EHC Single Plan is at incorporating the pupil voice due to several participants' decisions to utilise their existing model of practice. Staff were critical of the lack of flexibility the Plan provided to accommodate pupils' views, however there appeared to be a number of motivating factors for electing not to adopt the EHC Single Plan, including:-

- Uncertainty regarding specific aspects of the Plan and surrounding processes, which undermined participants' confidence to implement the plan. Heightened by a lack of direct communication between staff responsible for piloting the Plan and the LA. For example 'who will facilitate communication between the education, health and care professionals' (the key worker).
- Self-confidence and satisfaction with existing practice.
- Resistance to change – a natural yet unanticipated response from the LA.

- Additional changes or pilots running in parallel to the Plan, which undermined the clarity of the Plan.

Additional communication between the LA and the participating schools appears to be required in order to:-

a) Resolve any outstanding questions school staff participating within the pilot may have
b) Clarify school staffs' understanding of the EHC Single Plan within the LA's wider approach to supporting SEN, in light of additional changes currently occurring
c) Resolve any issues relating to resistance to change
d) Receive functional feedback regarding the EHC Single Plan, which may lead to alterations

Research findings suggest the key worker must have significant capacity in order to fulfil the following duties which will take place outside of the EHC Single Plan meeting:-

- Develop an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and guiding principles of education, health and care professionals.
- Liaise with key parties to resolve the unresolved issues or decisions which may occur within the meeting.
- Coordinate feedback following concluding decisions made outside of the meeting.
- Develop rapport with the pupil prior to the meeting, to ensure their presence does not inhibit the pupil from sharing their views.
- Additionally, the key worker may take on responsibility for ensuring the pupil's voice is heard throughout the review process – fulfilling an advocacy role.

A number of challenges were experienced when incorporating the pupil voice both specifically to the EHC Single Plan and within the overall process. They are outlined below:-

- Developing an accurate understanding of the pupil voice, particularly when communication is an area of need.
- Managing conflicting views between individuals within SEN review meetings.
- The time consuming nature of recording the pupil voice throughout the school year.
- Identifying what resources or provision is available within the local area for pupils, particularly when planning for the pupil's next steps.
- Pupils' difficulties in comprehending the future.
- The lack of flexibility within the EHC Single Plan to accommodate the pupil's individual needs, specifically moving more away from attainment and towards goals relating to personal or developmental objectives.

Although participants did not refer to the role of the EP within the research, EPs can support school staff to enhance the accurate retrieval of the pupil's views. EPs' experience and extensive training regarding pupils with complex SEN, places them in an appropriate position to assess a pupil's 'sufficient understanding' (Roller, 1998). This evaluation may be incorporated within existing assessments, but should be referred to explicitly within EP reports. EPs may provide corresponding strategies for professionals, in how best to elicit the views of pupils, taking the pupil's profile of needs into consideration.

An additional role for the EP may be to provide support when conflict arises within meetings. This can occur between pupils and parents but also between parents and outside agencies and was referred to within the research. Cameron (2006) identifies problem solving as a key component of the EP role, as EPs understand human problems to have different layers which are often interactive. In addition the EP has access to a number of problem solving frameworks (Kelly, 2008) and methods within their knowledge base, for example Solution Focused Approach, to use during the process of *mediation*.

If schools wish to adopt person-centred SEN review meetings, professionals, parents and carers will benefit from information detailing their purpose and structure prior to attending. This approach may be significantly different from professionals or parents' prior experiences. Prior information will also provide parents and carers with an opportunity to discuss the outcomes they feel their child would like to achieve, prior to attending the meeting. This will also provide both parents to contribute to this discussion, if only one parent attends the meeting. In the past the voice of the father has been marginalised within the statutory assessment process (Hart, 2011). This should further reduce misunderstandings or conflict within the actual meeting.

The SEN green paper 'Support and Aspiration' (DfE, 2011) identifies that the introduction of the EHC Single Plan will result in additional support for pupils with more complex needs, due to the reduction in statutory assessments. This may therefore result in outside agencies having greater capacity to attend EHC Single Plan review meetings – a current concern for participants.

Participants shared concerns regarding the restricted information available regarding post-16 opportunities and resources. However, locally these

concerns may be addressed through the development of the ‘Preparing For Adulthood Co-ordinator’ role, currently being piloted by the LA (DfE, 2013). However in addition to the creation of this role, it appears logical for the LA and Department for Education to draw upon the experiences of LAs who have implemented the Getting A Life (2011) initiative. LAs involved in this initiative could provide guidance to neighbouring authorities, particularly due to the relevance of outcomes within both the initiative and EHC Single Plan.

Taking participants’ feedback into consideration, the EHC Single Plan requires greater flexibility in order to take into account the vast array of complex individual needs within the Borough. This may be achieved, by utilising an electronic version of the Plan, which the LA is currently developing.

4.9 References

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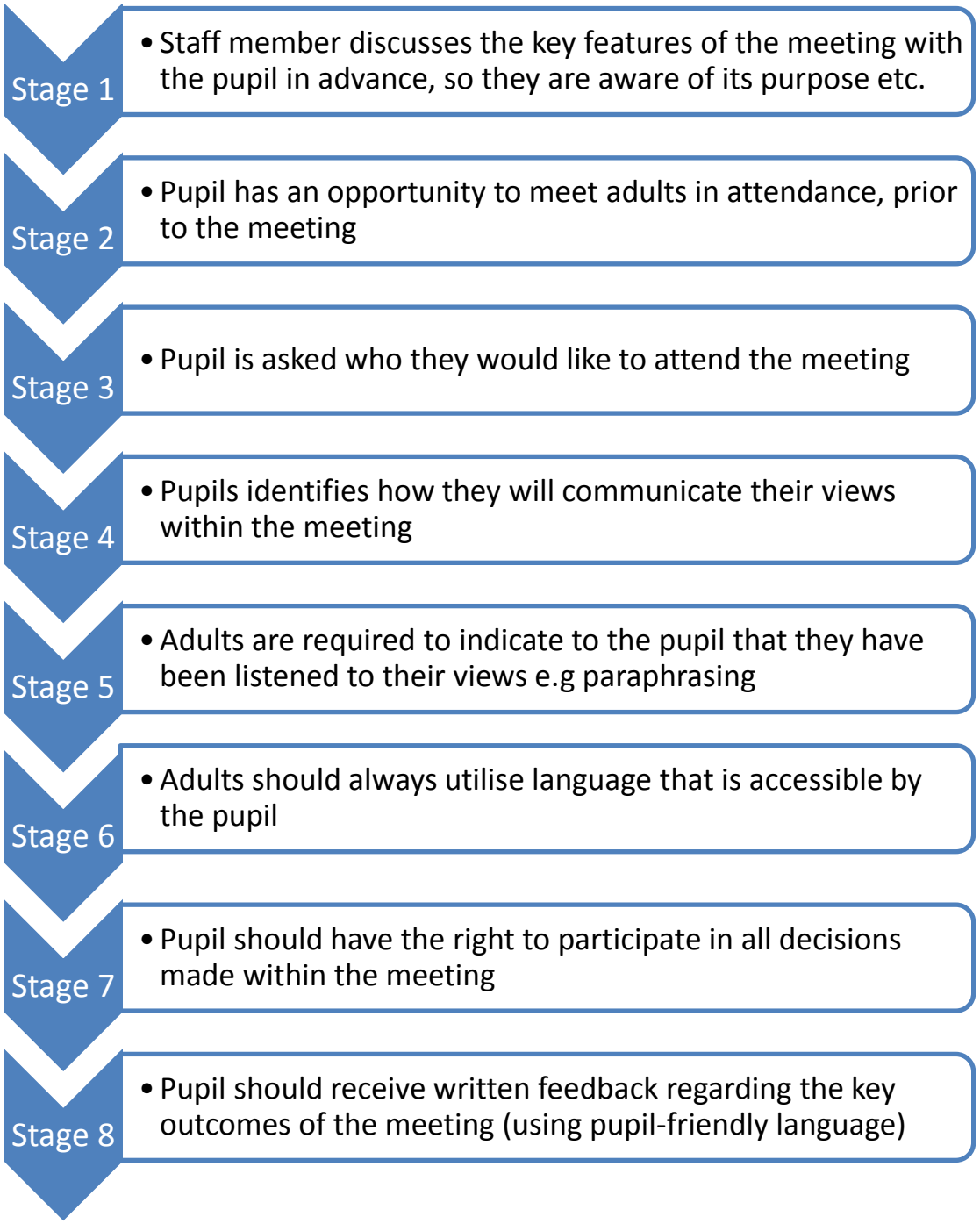
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4.10 Appendices

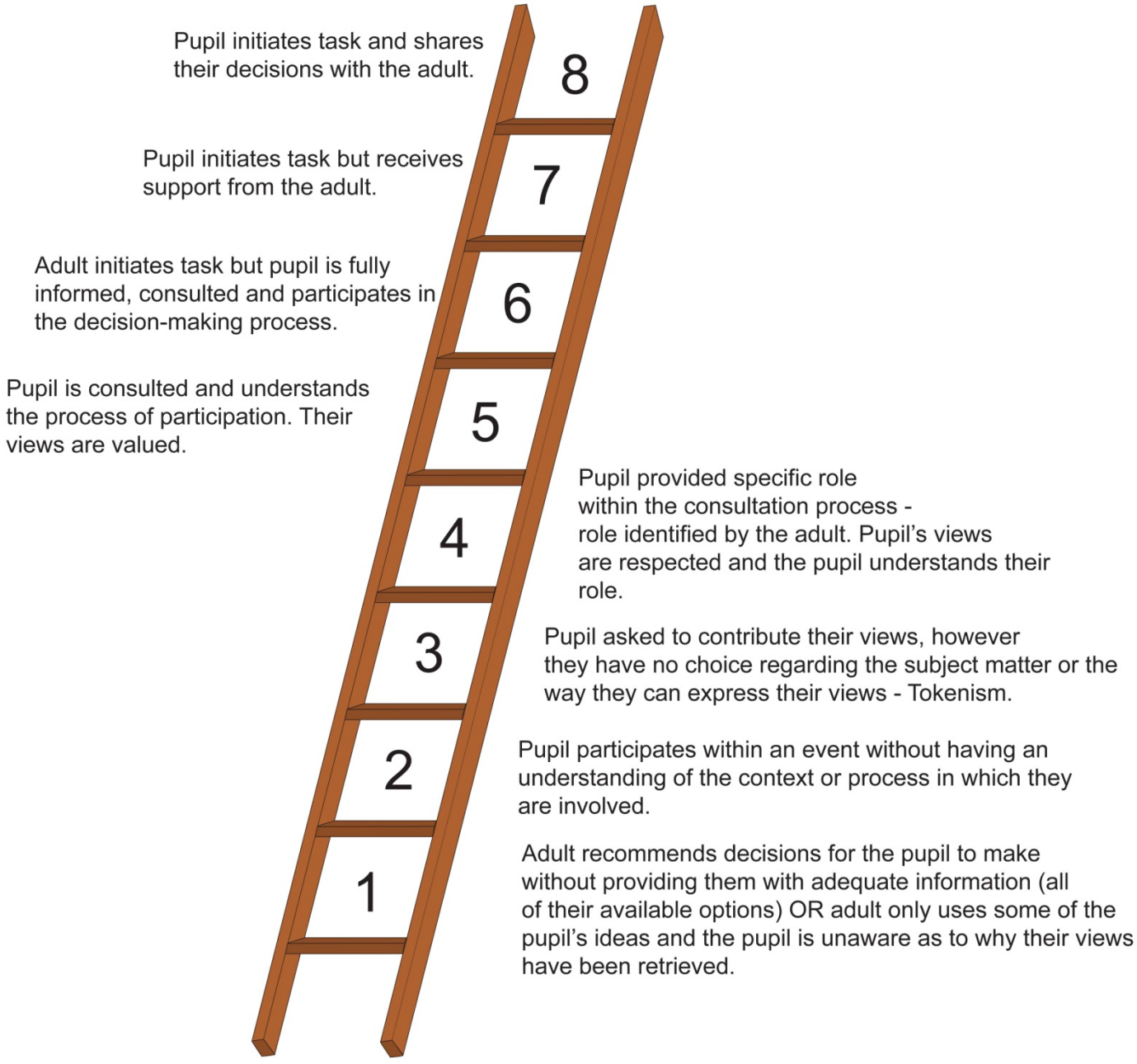
Appendix A

Woolfson et al.'s (2008) 8-staged model of consultation.



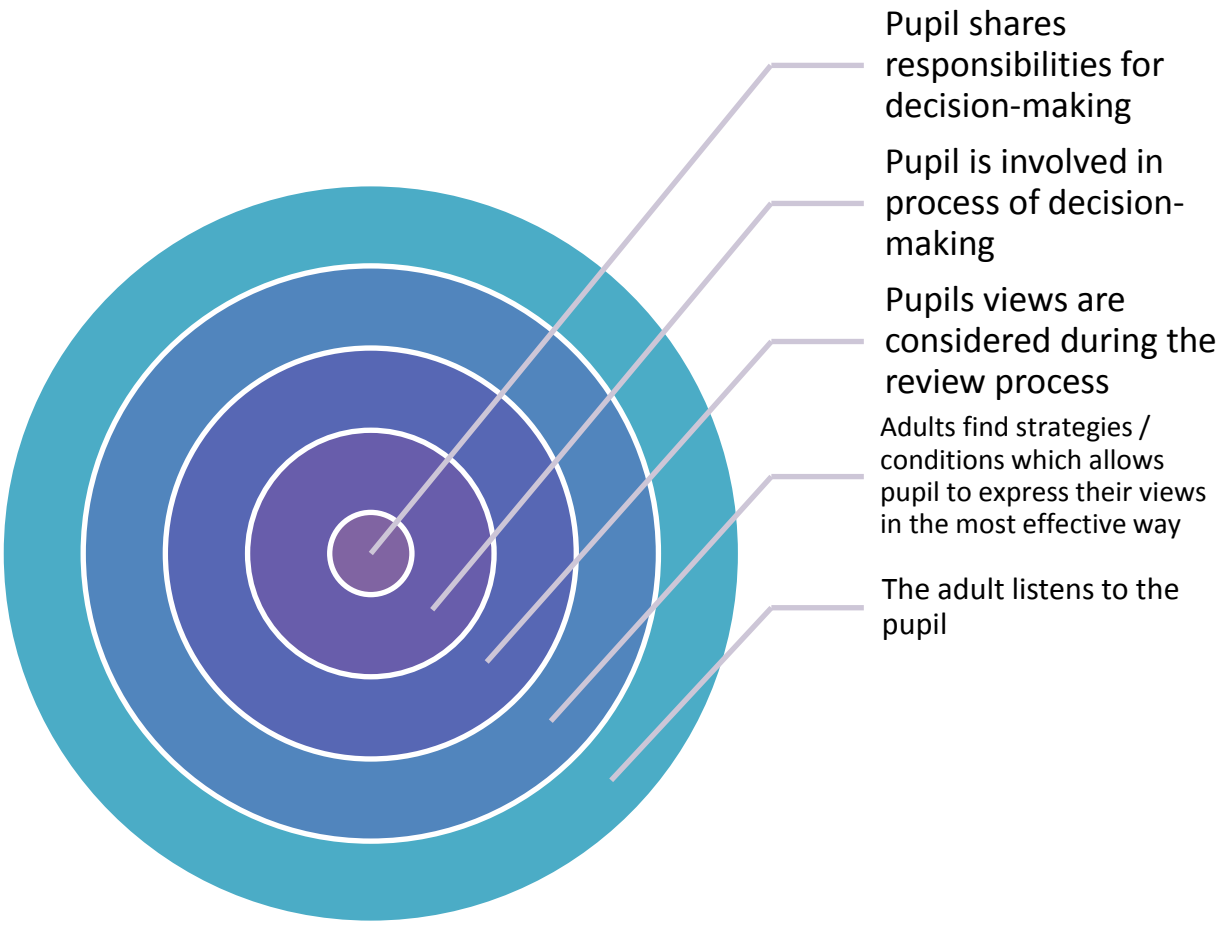
Appendix B

An adaptation of Hart's (1992) 'Ladder of Participation' model, which schools can use to measure their level of engagement with pupils during the process of assessment and review.



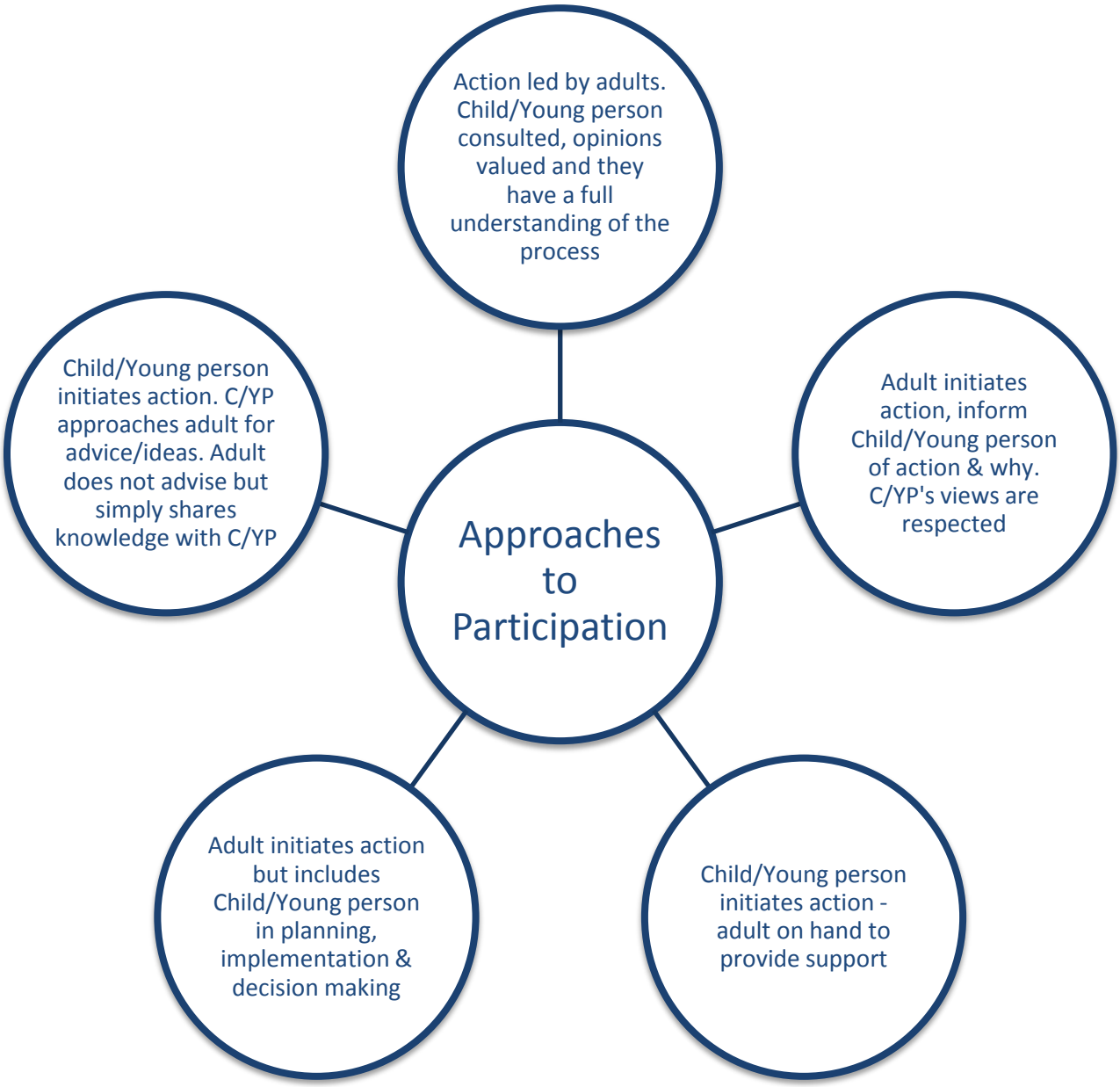
Appendix C

An adapted version of Shier's (2001) 'pathways to pupil participation framework'.



Appendix D

An adapted version of Treseder's (1997) 'Approaches to Participation' model, which outlines the various ways in which children and young people can participate in the process of decision making.



Appendix E

The semi-structured interview schedule utilised to retrieve participants' views.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Introduction

- This research is hoping to explore how special schools have retrieved the pupil voice prior to their Education, Health and Care Single Plan review meeting.
- This research is also hoping to explore how adaptable special schools have found the EHC Single Plan when attempting to incorporate the views of the pupil.

Questions

1. How would you define the term 'the pupil voice'?
2. How would you describe the level of engagement staff have made with the pupil regarding their special educational needs - firstly in preparation for the EHC Single Plan review meeting but also during the meeting itself?
   - Use the PESAT model to assist in the discussion.
3. What information was retrieved from the pupil in preparation for their EHC Single Plan review meeting?
4. Did the school utilise any specific tools/strategies in order to retrieve the pupil's views?
5. Did you experience any challenges whilst attempting to retrieve the pupil's views? If so what were they?
   - How were these challenges overcome?
   - If no challenges were experienced, why does the participant feel this was the case?
6. How were the pupil's views utilised within the review process overall?
   - Were the pupil's views shared within the review meeting?
7. From a practical standpoint, how were the pupil's views incorporated into the EHC Single Plan?
8. Did you experience any challenges whilst attempting to incorporate the pupil's views within the EHC Single Plan?

- How were these challenges overcome?
- If no challenges were experienced, why does the participant feel this was the case?

9. From your experience, what are the similarities and differences between the new EHC Single Plan process and previous statutory review of pupil's special educational needs? Please pay particular attention to the 'pupil voice' within your response.

Appendix F

A copy of the consent form provided to school staff, which staff were required to sign prior to participating within the research.

Research Consent Form

About this research

- This research is hoping to explore how special schools have retrieved the pupil voice prior to their Education, Health and Care Single Plan review meeting.

- This research is also hoping to explore how adaptable special schools have found the EHC Single Plan when attempting to incorporate the views of the pupil.

- This research will explore the views of staff at special schools regarding the following key areas:-

  - The strategies/tools to gather the views of the pupil

  - The degree to which the pupil voice was incorporated within the EHC Single Plan review meeting and how this was achieved.

  - Any challenges experienced whilst school staff were a) retrieving the views of the pupil or b) attempting to incorporate the views of the pupil within the EHC Single Plan

- The researcher will carry out semi-structured interviews with staff at the special school to explore the key points outlined above. It is anticipated that interviews will last for up to 45 minutes.

- The data produced from the interviews will be transcribed and analysed by the researcher.

- This research forms part of the Local Authority's SEND Pathfinder research, commissioned by the Department of Education.

- In addition the results and data analysis will be included within the researcher's research paper, which forms part of their research at the University of Birmingham.

- The names of any children or individuals used within the study will remain anonymous – pseudonyms will be assigned.

- All electronic data will be stored securely using a secure password.

- All printed data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet.

- Confidentiality – The researcher will ensure that only the following individuals will have access to the interview and questionnaire data – the researcher's supervisor at the Educational Psychology Service and the researcher's tutor at the University of Birmingham.

- Right to withdraw –You have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. However if you decide to participate and decide that you would like to withdraw your data from the research, you have the right to do so up until the 21st February 2012 - After this date all data will be unidentifiable and anonymous. Please contact the researcher if you would like to withdraw (the researcher's contact details are outlined below).

What I am asking you to do

- Allow the researcher to interview you, discussing the topics highlighted above
- Allow the researcher to keep all of the data retrieved from this research and analyse it for research purposes
- Allow the researcher to quote you (anonymously) from the research interviews within my research report
- Researcher's contact details
- Steve Dexter
- Trainee Educational Psychologist
- xxxxxx Educational Psychology Service
- Email address: Steven.Dexter@xxxx Telephone number: xxxx

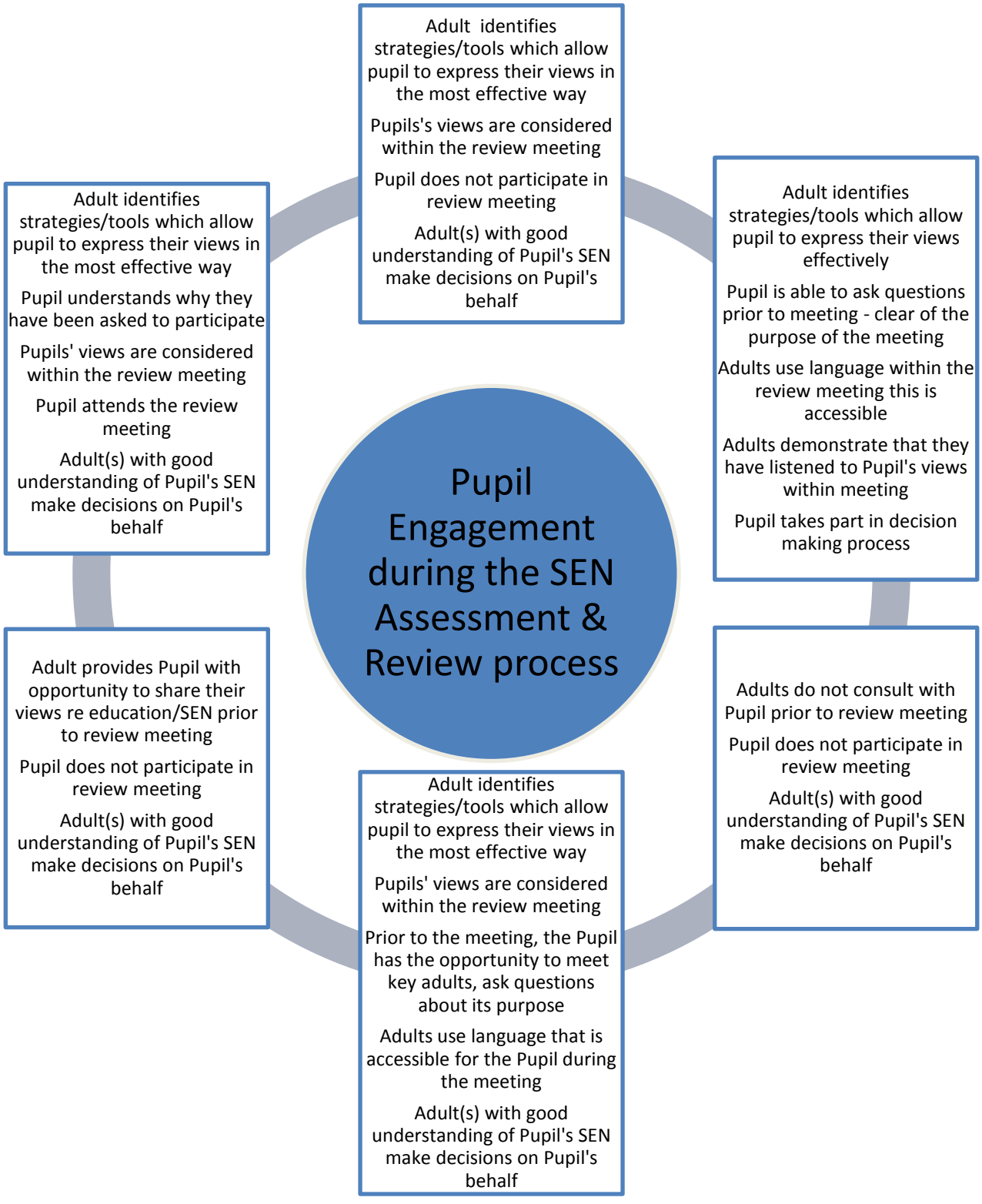
If you agree with the research information documented above and are happy to participate within the research project, please sign below

_____ Name _____

Date: _____

Appendix G

The PESAT (Pupil Engagement Self-Assessment Tool) used by the researcher to assist participants to indicate their level of engagement with pupils during the process of assessment and review of their SEN.



Appendix H

Lauren's interview transcript.

Appendix I

The initial codes generated from the five data sets.

Code	Frequency
The positives/Areas of strength	3
The pupil's feelings	4
The pupil's interests	4
Help and support	1
Being heard	1
The pupil's future	15
Avoiding repetition	3
An evolving process	12
The pupil voice is paramount	1
Structured questions / Aiding self-reflection	4
Child centred / Pupil-focused approach	6
Evaluating Support	1
Holding a discussion with the pupil	1
Creating opportunities to speak & ask questions	6
The importance of listening	3
Satisfying the pupil & the parent / Conflicting views	5
A part of school culture / Systemic approach	3
Effective preparation	4
Pupil targets	4
Evolving practice	4

Time restrictions	4
Boundaries of the school role	2
The challenge of thinking about the future	3
Routines & expectations	3
Setting targets & personal goals	2
The academic nature of the EHC plan	1
Small step progress	1
The relevance of the plan	1
Signposting to support	1
Utilising information gathered	1
Continuing with what works	3
Uncertainty regarding the EHC Single Plan	7
The need to focus on the individual	7
In capturing everything about the child	1
Moving forward	3
Pupil ownership	4
The plan follows the pupil	1
Highlighting achievements	1
Realistic / The need for honesty	7
Confusion within the Local Authority	1
Duel processes	1
Restricting decisions – what's available / managing expectations	2
Unanswered questions	2
Effective practice that was working / proud of what works	6
Structured interviews	1

Wider projects	2
Defining need	2
Replacing Connexions	1
The pupil voice tackles difficulties	1
Individualised outcomes dependent upon need	2
A reduced time frame for the EHC single plan	1
Communication breakdown regarding the EHC plan	1
Multiple pilots at once	2
Shared ownership around piloting the plan	2
Advocate for the pupil voice	1
Speaking on behalf of the pupil	1
Impact of the SEN on pupil's decision making skills	1
Avoiding assumptions within the meeting	1
Providing support within the meeting	1
Reinventing the wheel	1
Need for greater communication	1
Making the pupil feel comfortable to share their views	4
Evidence / A reference point for review meetings	8
Establishing links with family to understand the pupil better	1
Taking the individual's needs into consideration	2
Supporting the pupil to develop the skills to share their views	1
Home-school liaison	6
Multi-agency liaison	1
The role of the parent	2
Developing a shared understanding of the pupil's views	1

Acting on the pupil's best interests	3
Understanding what is available	1
The difficulty of capturing the pupil's views in a one-off situation	2
Navigating the compromise	1
Building trust	1
Recording information	1
Accessible materials	1
Accessible language / Communication needs of the pupil	10
Pupil friendly process	2
Sharing concerns	1
Peer support / Collaborative approach	4
Pupil voice helps you understand the pupil better	1
Referring back to the pupil voice gathered, as a way of monitoring progress	1
The EHC single plan is more central around the pupil	1
Importance of attendance at the meeting	2
Individual contributions dependent on need	1
Requirement for multi-agency attendance	2
Getting used to change	1
The benefit of continuity	1
Increasing attention around the pupil voice within the EHC Single Plan	1
The constraints of multi-agency working	4
A shared understanding of the process	1
Reports are second best	1
Reports that are applicable to the EHC single plan	1

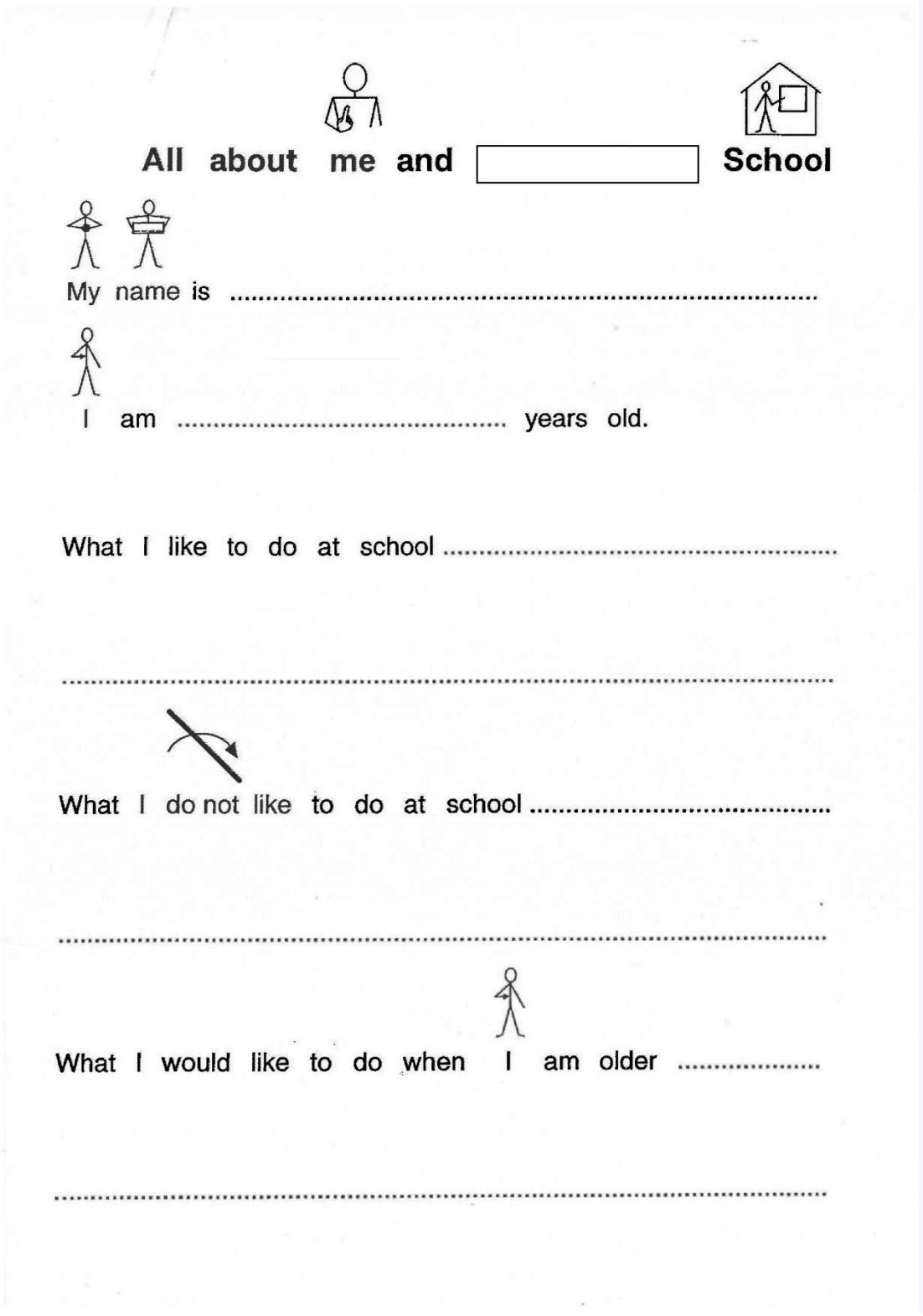
Avoid speaking on behalf of the pupil	1
Developing a shared understanding of the pupil / Uncovering the hidden picture of the pupil (Structured Conversations)	3
Working with pupils	1
Pupil voice leads to enhanced progress	1
Implicit retrieval of views	1
Sharing their opinions	1
Communication difficulties – identifying what the pupil feels	1
An holistic process	1
A number of initiatives in place	1
Collaborative approach	1
Making decisions after the meeting	2
Fact finding process	1
Meeting leads to further dialogue	1
Develop an holistic view of the pupil	2
Pupil-adult dynamic	3
Uncertainty regarding the role of the key worker	2
Conflicting professional roles	1
Communication breakdown regarding the Key worker role	3
3 distinct professions	1
The need for an independent key worker	1
The loss of Connexions and filling the void	1
A period for reflection	1
Academic progress	1
Checking for clarification	1
Anticipating potential barriers	1

Self-reflective	2
The positive knock-on effects of the pupil voice	2
Retrieving the pupil's true feelings	1
Quantifying the views of the pupil	1
The need for informal communication	1
Developing an understanding of the pupil over time	1
Single plan is an evolving process	1
Coping with change	1
Uncertainty moving forward	2
Discrete cultures and ways of working	1
Potential conflict between education, health & social care	1
Greater preparation required prior to the pilot	1
A shared understanding required by professionals	1
Making decisions	2
Accessible	1
Evidence prevents adults dominating the review meeting	1
The role of the chair person	1
A child focused framework / acts as a prompt	2
Making the young person feel important	1
Starting with the pupil's views	1
Building on the pupil's strengths	1
Valuing what the pupil says	1
Making the action points / targets clear	2
Providing responsibility to older pupils	1
Enhanced clarity around the EHC plan	1

Pupil views should be more prominent in the EHC single plan	1
The EHC Single Plan does not account for pupil views throughout	1
Addressing the family's priorities / Unplanned responses	2
EHC Single Plan not compatible with a child centred approach	1
The EHC should start with the positives.	1
Managing resources	1
Targets are maintained within the EHC single plan	1
An approach as opposed to paper work	1

Appendix J

Pro-forma used at Lauren's school to retrieve the pupil voice.



All about me and [ ] School

My name is .....

I am ..... years old.

What I like to do at school .....

.....

What I do not like to do at school .....

.....

What I would like to do when I am older .....

.....

Appendix K

Pro-forma used by Lesley's school to retrieve the primary pupil voice.

Pupil

Primary Pupil Review Contribution

To be completed by the pupil.

Name of Pupil

Date of Birth

1. Things people like about me:

2. Things I am good at:

3. Things I want to do better:

4. People who help me:

5. Things I like to do at home:

Pupil signature: **Date:**

Appendix L

Pro-forma used by Lesley's school to retrieve the secondary pupil voice.

Pupil

Secondary Pupil Review Contribution

To be completed by the pupil.

Name of Pupil

Date of Birth

1. Things people like about me:

2. Things I am good at:

3. What I am doing at school that is different this year:

4. Things that I want to improve:

5. I need help with:

6. Things I like to do at home:

7. Things I would like to do in the future:

Pupil signature: **Date:**

pss/keep/annualreview
pss/keep/annualreview