Exploring Support for Post 16 Young People Outside Mainstream Education

Submitted by Douglas Clarkson to the University of Exeter
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Signed……

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Abstract

The aim of phase one was to explore what support there is for young people outside mainstream. The aim of phase two was to explore how this experience influences their identity. The dilemma of difference (Minnow, 1990) is particularly relevant as it highlights the complexities of achieving inclusivity over opportunity with potential stigmatising effects. The research design was influenced by ethnography and adopts an Interpretivist ontology and social constructivist epistemology. In phase 1, 21 participants were recruited to take part in semi-structured interviews. These participants were selected through a snowballing technique and included 10 young people, 5 educational psychologists and 6 professionals that worked or were involved with young people including staff. The interviews were followed by observation of each of the three settings. Phase two was achieved by eliciting thoughts and perceptions of the young people through an activity based on a personal construct psychology technique known as 'Drawing the ideal self' (Moran, 2006). This was followed by a semi-structured interview with staff mirroring the questions used in the activity. All data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The prominent findings were identified and discussed in relation to relevant literature. The research was then situated in a wider context in an overall discussion reflecting on possible implications for educational psychologists and their practice. The study highlighted complexities in the decision making process. In contrast to the literature I found that young people aspire to share the responsibility of choosing post 16 provision. Decision making is complex with difference in opinion about which professionals should have knowledge of the post 16 arena. Typically these young people had a traumatic experience transitioning to appropriate post 16 provision. However, provision outside mainstream was found to be person centred and flexible, tailoring the provision to the needs of the individual. A nurturing approach was found to be at the centre of the underpinning principles with mentoring support offering the greatest influence on young people's identity, fostering a sense of meaning and purpose.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter begins with my personal interest in the topic of post 16 education outside mainstream. I then go on to discuss the rationale for researching in this area, the context of the research and its potential to contribute to knowledge and educational psychology practice. The overall aim of the research is given and the chapter then ends with an outline of the structure of the research.

1.1 My Personal Perspective

Reflecting on my education in many ways I was lucky, my schools were supportive as were my parents. But I always felt that difficulties with reading and processing would hold me back. If there was a requirement to read large volumes of text I would struggle, but in other lessons where the focus was on thinking I would excel. Despite this I attained credible exam results, but always felt a fraud. In fact the imposter phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978) is something that has challenged me throughout my academic journey. I now consider this background a strength in the way I practice as a trainee educational psychologist. As I approached the post 16 environment I felt that if I were to continue my studies into post 16 and beyond I would be stigmatised. Thus I sympathise with the dilemma of difference concept (Minow, 1990) which is discussed in more detail in the literature review.

Consequently, I left school at 16 and pursued a career as a musician. Some years later, having completed an undergraduate degree and an MA qualification I taught music at a provision in HM Forces. Throughout this time I was shocked how many young people I came across with barriers to their learning, from literacy difficulties to anxiety. Beyond this I also recognised a lack in agency to achieve potential from many students. Some had a mastery oriented approach and some had a

more helpless approach (Dweck, 2000). It was as though some students felt they did not have permission to excel in comparison to their peers thus supressing their motivation. This provoked an interest in self-efficacy and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), considering both internal and external effects on an individual's belief in his or her innate ability to achieve goals.

Throughout this post 16 teaching experience I considered my role to be a mentor, supporting these young people. It was at that time that I realised how difficult it can be to negotiate your way from young person to adulthood. This is an important period and I felt privileged to be supporting these young people to construct their values, personal standards and ambitions that would likely shape their future.

> *'In late adolescence and young adulthood, people living in modern societies begin putting their lives together into integrative narratives of the self, reconstructing the past and imaginatively anticipating the future in such a way as to provide their lives with some sense of unity and purpose.' (McAdams, 2001 p. 117)*

This period of life from 15 to 25 is known as the reminiscence bump (Rubin, Wetzler & Nebes, 1986) or a window of opportunity (He & Crews, 2007) and highlighted as a period when adults remember a disproportionately large number of autobiographical events (Rubin, Wetzler & Nebes, 1986). Conway and Pleydell Pearce (2000) highlight lifetime periods, general events and event-specific knowledge as three different levels of the self-memory system (SMS) that can greatly influence identity. This is emotionally rich and can be motivational or de-motivational depending on the experience. Thus in accordance with Conway and

Pleydell Pearce's (2000) claim it is during adolescence and young adulthood that people are most preoccupied with forming their identity.

This is something that resonates with me and I believe that adopting an understanding of this experience is important. I argue that transition from young person to adulthood is a significant period and it is important to understand the experience of those young people that are living through this period to gain an accurate interpretation. Through working closely with young people I recognise the value of learning about the environmental effects such as busy or noisy provisions through the eyes of the person living that experience.

1.2 Rationale

In November 2011 the National Audit Office report *'Oversight of special education for young people aged 16-25'* identified an area of need that had been overlooked. As part of this report the importance of facilitating young people with special educational needs and disability into post 16 education or training was highlighted. A recent OFSTED inspection of a local authority in the SW of England (Ofsted, 2016) highlighted limited options for post 16 young people outside mainstream settings. (Reference to mainstream refers to all post 16 institutions that are approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014. For example, further education (FE) colleges or 16-19 academies).The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) identified the importance of supporting children and young people into adulthood. Moreover, it is clear that local authorities should ensure children and young people have access to the right support and opportunities.

The Ofsted inspection drew attention to the lack of clarity about the range of options available post 16, demonstrating a need to explore what support is available (Ofsted, 2016). Moreover this extends to understanding how to access appropriate provision. A culture of encouraging post 16 young people towards a traditional learning setting that might not be appropriate for them has emerged (Ofsted, 2016). This could be due to a lack of available appropriate provision for young people with SEND as reflected in a recent Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2016). Thus a gap in provision has emerged for young people who struggle to manage mainstream settings.

Following searches discussed in detail in the literature review little known literature about the identity of young people transitioning to adulthood or employment has been found. For many young people their journey is still not complete following the changes in legislation supporting young people with SEND until 25 (DfE, 2014) and the rise in the legal school leaving age to 18 (Education and Skills Act 2008). This identifies a gap in understanding which this research will address offering a contribution to psychology. In particular this research has a focus on support outside mainstream for young people who struggle to access traditional provisions, the experiences of the young people and how this influences their identity.

1.3 Context of the Research

In this research I attempt to uncover the issues that have developed due to a change in legislation. I suggest that the government agenda to address a problem identified as young people not being in education, employment or training (NEET) has also contributed to inducing a change to the post 16 environment. This term

relates to employment and the aspiration to achieve employment through training or education suggesting that those who are not engaged in education, employment or training will become dependent on the state (Knox, 2011). I do not aim to explore the NEET issue, but argue that this cannot be ignored as it directly effects the post 16 environment. The implication that a successful transition to adulthood is about employment rather than supporting personal development in life skills and independence is considered. Literature has revealed that some mainstream settings indicate that young people with complex SEND would have their needs catered for more appropriately in alternative provisions and this is reflected by Ofsted (Ofsted 2016).

This is important in terms of placing the research within context and I present the dilemma of difference (Minow, 1990) as central to understanding how inclusivity can be both appropriate and stigmatising according to the individual. I discuss this theory further in the literature review. Thus the importance of achieving an equal opportunity over inclusivity for the young person and facilitating appropriate provision however complex the need, is advocated. I draw upon guidance from the literature to support the importance of appropriate provision with the young person at the centre of the planning (DfE, 2014). I suggest that just knowing what the situation is and where young people with complex needs can go only goes so far. There is a need to understand the journey from their perspective.

In terms of choice the literature and legislation is clear that gaining the young person's voice is encouraged to find the correct provision (DfE, 2014), however, disappointingly reported as disproportionately absent in many cases (Ofsted, 2016). The young people's voice is more complex in many ways as it is possible that young people do not seem to know what they want, are unsure what is

available or struggle to articulate it. I suggest that there are occasions where people find the question difficult to answer, particularly if they have communication and interaction difficulties. It could also be that young people with SEND do not have a clear post 16 aspiration. My position is that young people can offer an understanding of their lived experience, contributing to a greater knowledge of how to support their journey to appropriate post 16 provision and in turn transition to adulthood.

1.4 Contribution to Educational Psychology Practice.

I take a position that those that are not comfortable in a traditional setting such as a college, or school or whose placement has broken down pose the greatest challenges in terms of securing an appropriate educational placement. Thus greater understanding of the difficulties experienced in choice of post 16 provision will address a gap in knowledge of this emerging area of education. In particular this informs a clear picture of areas that can be supported by educational psychologists. This addresses an understanding of what knowledge is required to support an informed decision. Moreover this considers who should have this knowledge. Complexities that surround the decision making process are addressed including thoughts around aspiration and matching through knowing both the young person and provision environment. This also raises a larger issue that needs to be considered in educational psychology practice and that is one of process. For example, a prerequisite to existing provision outside mainstream could include an education health and care plan (EHCP) to draw appropriate funding. This of course is not an easy process and has the added complexity of taking 20 weeks (DfE, 2014) and too much time to build evidence to make an application.

1.5 Overall Aim

This research is set in the post 16 arena. As the title suggests, the overall aim of it is to explore what support there is for young people outside mainstream. I also aim to explore what the experience is of young people as they negotiate their way to independence and adulthood and how this experience influences their identity.

1.6 Thesis Overview

This thesis is divided into two linked phases involving exploration of post 16 provision outside mainstream education. I am interested in what accessible provision there is and the underpinning philosophical principles within the provisions. In Phase One I am also concerned with the young people's experiences of support which acts as a bridge to phase two. Phase two is a psychological investigation using personal construct psychology (Kelly, 1955). This is designed to elicit understanding from young people about the influence on their identity whilst engaging with support outside mainstream. This is then followed by interviews with staff to gain further understanding of their perception of what influences the students.

Chapter 2 is a literature review including the historical context of inclusion, introducing the dilemma of difference (Minnow, 1990) as a central concept. Changes in legislation and the influence in the post 16 arena are evaluated through critique of OFSTED reports and surveys before considering identity through the period of Transition to adulthood. Chapter 3 presents the design of the thesis in two linked phases. The chapter also provides details of the research questions for each phase, data collection methods, the participants, ethical issues

and data analysis. The rationale for choosing Interpretivism as the ontology and social constructivism as the epistemology is provided highlighting ethnography as an influential approach. In chapter 4 I present the findings of the data analysis for Phase One and in chapter 5 I present the findings of the data analysis for Phase Two. Chapter 6 is an overall discussion, which draws together the literature, the methodology and the findings. I then present a conclusion in chapter 7 outlining the aim, findings, key points and potential implications for the practice of educational psychologists.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this literature review I aim to critically analyse literature relevant to what support is available outside of mainstream education for young people post 16. I present the traditional learning environment or mainstream as a sixth form at a school, college or further education. It is important to analyse the historical context of this issue in order to understand how educational opportunity at post 16 is conceptualised today. In particular, the dilemma of equality of opportunity and separate provision presented by Wedell (2008) is considered. Emergent theories offer an argument that implementation of policy can be too quick to achieve inclusivity without recognising potential wider issues. As a result some young people with complex needs find themselves in mainstream provisions where they struggle to cope before moving to more appropriate provision outside mainstream provisions.

Recognising individual differences and supporting development of appropriate life skills concurrently with academic progress for young people is highlighted for

successful transition to adulthood. This review appreciates that there are few research studies in this field, but it sets the limited review in its policy context and also draws on Ofsted surveys to present an accurate picture. Political issues such as unemployment and social disengagement are raised highlighting a political interest in reforming legislation. Following recent reform of the Child and Families Act 2014, change in legislation through the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014 is considered. In particular the 'local offer', extended the age range and importance of placing the young person and family at the centre of planning are highlighted as central to supporting young people (DfE, 2014). The implementation of this policy is explored pre and post the Special Educational Needs Reform (DfE, 2014). Any research after this reform is defined as current. Through Ofsted surveys and reports the national picture has emerged that points to a disappointing representation of provision for young people with SEND (Ofsted, 2016).

The assumption that all young people have the same vocational aspirations is challenged by drawing on conclusions about anxieties and worries in young people with a mild to moderate intellectual disability (Forte, Jahoda & Dagnan, 2011). The period of post 16 is identified as having a significant influence on the identity of young people. This is acknowledged as a 'window of opportunity' (He & Crews, 2007) and is placed within an educational context by Nyström (2009). The influence of transition points on social development are considered by Nuttall and Woods (2013). The review then draws on Maguire (2015) to explore gaps in knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of young people who are NEET. In particular she argues that misguided stereotyping of behaviour, attitudes and aspirations present a particular issue with developing interventions to support

young people who are ‘socially disengaged’ and at risk of becoming NEET. The review then concludes by considering what gaps there are in the literature that this research project will address.

2.2 Searches

To identify the relevant studies and themes discussed in the introduction a search for articles, reports and legislation was conducted. This included a combination of searches using EBSCO, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, Research Gate, www.gov.uk and www.ofsted.gov.uk. The following keywords and phrases were used: Post 16 provision/setting/alternative to mainstream, SEN Code of Practice, transition to adulthood, NEET, High needs learners, Young people missing out on education, Warnock report, Inclusivity and appropriate education, Ideal self, social disengagement, support for young people in their transition to adulthood, Special Educational Needs Reform, Post 16 The National Picture, identity/self-esteem/self-efficacy in young people/with SEND, aspiration of young people with SEND and dilemma of difference

The searches revealed a paucity in current literature contributing to understanding of support for 16-25 year-olds with communication, interaction, social and emotional needs outside mainstream. To understand the impact of inclusivity through the dilemma of difference there was a need to look historically at the development of theories and understanding of SEND. The structure of this review then places the impact of this within the changes of legislation, before gaining an understanding of the impact of this through Ofsted reports. This is important as it then offers opportunity to explore a potential effect or influence on young people and their transition to adulthood. As Morris and Atkinson (2018) identified, there is

little known literature in the post 16 arena however I have endeavoured to update the literature periodically throughout the research in project.

2.3 Historical Context

In terms of gaining an understanding of the context of young people with complex needs it is useful to consider the influence of the Warnock Report (DES, 1978). This is particularly important because of the breakthrough in challenging discrimination within education. With particular reference to post 16 the report advocated that all children with learning difficulties were entitled to an appropriate education arguing for inclusivity through integration. Elson (2011) offers a useful discussion of how prior to this children and young people with learning difficulties were often excluded, educated in segregated provision. Wedell, (2008) has highlighted that more recently Warnock feels that the concept of 'inclusion' has gone too far. This addressed an important misconception that inclusion was important for all children regardless of their difficulties recognising that opportunity might not mean inclusion in all cases. Wedell raises an important dilemma which I feel draws on Warnock's more recent argument.

This explores 'difference' in terms of equality of opportunity, or as Warnock advocates appropriate educational provision and 'special' or separate provision. Norwich (2013) highlighted this as a dilemma of difference incorporating ideas from legal studies (Minow, 1990). Minow (1990) first used the term 'dilemma of difference' by asking the question:

> When does treating people differently emphasise their difference and stigmatise or hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatise or hinder them on that basis?
>
> *(Minow, 1990: 20)*

Norwich (2013) highlights the dilemma of difference by considering when treating people differently has a negative effect by stigmatising or hampering them. On the other hand it could be that treating people the same has a negative effect by not recognising personal needs. Wedell (2008) argues for a flexible education system that is able to recognise diversity among learners while making provision for all. This could resolve the dilemma by adopting a needs led approach where the young person has the opportunity to engage in education inside or outside the mainstream setting.

In contrast to Minnow's position and Wedell's argument for a flexible education system, Florian (2007) argued for an inclusive educational environment. The focus of this argument is to develop provision to support the needs of all learners. This is a shift from having a focus on the difference between learners, and Florian (2007) suggested a new way of thinking about provision and practice to support this. In particular Florian (2007) argued for clearer thinking about the right to education and the need to challenge deterministic views about ability. I acknowledge this view, however my position is that for some young people despite positive steps in supporting teachers to support young people some provisions are not appropriate for all young people. This is not suggesting that mainstream provision isn't person centred, merely that a young person with significant needs might struggle to manage in a particular environment. For example, a provision might be busy or too noisy due to the amount of students for a particular student to cope. I therefore advocate the dilemma of difference as a useful tool to consider which provision is the most suitable to avoid stigmatising or hindering an individual student.

There have been some significant steps forward since the Warnock report (DES, 1978). For example The Disability Discrimination Code of Practice (providers of

Post-16 Education) (DfES, 2007) which make it illegal for students to be refused education simply because of their disability. I argue that it is important to ensure that whatever shape this education takes there is a focus on preparation or transition to adulthood as part of the curriculum. Elson (2011) offered a historical context and I suggest importantly discussed the development of the curriculum during the 1980's. This included a focus on the development of social and practical vocational skills and daily life skills. Elson (2011) went on to discuss these daily life skills as including using public transport, timekeeping, decision-making and home and recreation skills. From an academic perspective this might seem limiting for young people with special educational needs (SEN) as the focus is on individual needs such as daily life skills rather than academic achievement.

Elson (2011) highlights concern over diminished opportunities for those with SEN and/or disabilities which is important in understanding the importance of matching appropriate provision. This was identified by Tomlinson (1996) who in an effort to address the narrow opportunities for learners with SEN and/or disabilities advocated widening academic participation through reconceptualising provision for students. Whilst on the one hand this can be presented as a major breakthrough for inclusion, potentially transforming the culture of post 16 learning providers, the dilemma still remained as many students did not engage with an appropriate provision according to their need. Differentiating access to courses and introducing new content to accommodate SEN and/or disabilities can be useful. However this identifies a lack of building provision around the needs of the young person considering both curriculum and appropriate environment (Ofsted, 2011).

Elson (2011) highlighted that following the launch of the Disability Discrimination Code of Practice (2007) the Chairman of the Disability Rights Commission (Sir Bert Massie) endorsed a growth in providing opportunities for all. Moreover, he suggested a causal connection between greater educational opportunities and improved outcomes for post 16 students with learning and physical disabilities, including a better chance of obtaining employment. In terms of planning for successful transition to adulthood, a programme designed to support good practice emerged following the SEND reforms (DfE, 2014). This programme known as Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) identified five key elements for improving life chances through an Ofsted publication (Preparing for Adulthood, 2013). This publication has now been withdrawn as it is older than 3 years, however it did identify the importance of personalising approaches, developing a shared vision, improving options and support, raising aspirations and planning services together. Thus supporting the importance of separate or 'special' provision according to the need of the young person.

Sankardas and Rajanahally (2015) highlighted that the transition from school to work is a critical period for young adults when there is a need to make important decisions about transition to employment. The Preparing for Adult programme (Preparing for Adulthood, 2018) identifies employment as one of four areas that is important for successful transition to adulthood along with independent living, community inclusion and good health. Knox (2011) suggested a political interest in addressing unemployment with particular reference to young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Maguire, 2015), due to the cost of supporting them.

This seems to promote a view that supporting young people into employment should be the main focus for transition to adulthood. However it is important to understand young people with SEND and the difficult challenges they might have faced. Skrzypec, et al. (2016) present the importance of students' wellbeing as an essential component of ability to function well. Moreover that young people need to feel safe with good mental health, thus the focus of preparation for adulthood and appropriate provisions may differ. Wedell's conclusion endorsing the acknowledgment of difference without prejudice seems appropriate. Thus calling for suitable provision according to the need through an end to the 'artificial separation of special educational needs policy and mainstream thinking' (Wedell, 2008, p.127). Wedell's statement implies there is a preference towards placing young people in mainstream rather than considering if this appropriate for the young person. In accordance with Wedell's thinking I advocate using the dilemma of difference as a tool to consider what provision is appropriate for young people according to their needs.

2.4 Policy and Legislation

Perhaps one of the greatest systemic changes initiated through The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) was the requirement of a local offer. The aim of the local offer was to set out what services are available in each local authority to support children and young people who are disabled or who have SEN (DfE, 2014). Statements were required to be converted to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and perhaps most relevant the Code extended its age range to 25 years with an EHCP. The SEN Code of Practice makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure children and young

people have access to the right support and opportunities to negotiate their journey to adulthood (DfE, 2014). This is particularly important because in accordance with the Education and Skills Act (2008) the minimum age that young people can leave full time education rose to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015 (Education and Skills Act, 2008). Although this is described as full-time education, this could include undertaking work-based learning such as an apprenticeship, or part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours per week.

In section 8.3 of the SEN Code of Practice 2014 (DfE, 2014) it is clear that local authorities have a responsibility to place the young person and their family at the centre of planning. This support in preparing for adulthood should also be included in the local offer as stated in paragraphs 4.52-4.56. Under the Child and Families Act (2014) from the age of 16, young people have the right to make requests and decisions about their journey to adulthood, (subject to their cognitive ability, as stated in the Mental Capacity Act, 2005). In terms of supporting young people into adulthood, the SEN Code of Practice (2014) states that for young people aged 16-19, and those with an EHCP until the age of 25 that provision should offer 'a coherent study programme which provides stretch and progression and enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes in adult life.'

2.5 Ofsted – The Emerging National Picture.

Lee and Woods (2017) identify supporting the learning of 16-25 year-olds with social and emotional needs as a challenge that needs consideration by EP's. Ofsted (2013) identified that many of these young people struggle with the mainstream environment referring to them as having 'complex needs with no

suitable school place available' (Ofsted, 2013, p. 6). These young people were also identified as having low aspirations and limited achievement (Ofsted, 2013). The report highlighted that approximately 1,400 pupils across 15 local authorities were not participating in full-time education. The inspectors elicited this information through visiting the 15 local authorities and 37 schools, undertaking 97 case studies and interviewing leaders in a further 41 secondary schools.

Another concern was that some of the local authorities did not know how much provision their children and young people were receiving. Moreover some local authorities were unable to comment on the quality and appropriateness of the provision because they did not know for whom the provision was intended. In November 2011 the National Audit Office report *'Oversight of special education for young people aged 16-25'* (Ofsted, 2011) identified this as an area of need that had been overlooked. This report highlighted the importance of facilitating young people with special educational needs and disability into post 16 education or training. Thus stressing the importance of developing provision to match the complex needs of these young people.

There is little literature exploring how well further education and skills provision meets the needs of young people with high needs. However, there have been two Ofsted reports that explore how well the further education and skills sector is preparing young people with high needs for adult life. In August 2012 Ofsted produced a survey that explored the arrangements for transition from school and the provision in post-16 settings for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 (Ofsted, 2012). This survey consisted of inspectors visiting 32 providers to evaluate the quality of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25. These settings included colleges,

independent providers of work-based learning and local authority providers of adult and community learning.

Through case studies it demonstrated how the needs of various pupils were assessed before each pupil was guided towards a course. This was found to be a success when learners were enrolled on programmes appropriate to their needs. For example, one of the case studies identified a young person with autism who had previously been home tutored. Following an assessment of need the young person had one-to-one support in the classroom until his level of anxiety reduced. In time the young person was able to become an independent learner in a level 1 programme in ICT (Ofsted, 2012), thus fostering self-confidence and a change in attitude that resulted in greater engagement in lessons with improved attendance.

Whilst this sounds encouraging when learners had the highest levels of needs, insufficient provision was available. For example the group identified in ‘Pupils missing out on education’ (Ofsted, 2013) had no suitable place available which could be due to sensory impairment or behavioural difficulties. Overall the survey found that transition arrangements for these learners to post-16 education were ‘not fully effective’ (Ofsted, 2012). Another report called ‘Moving forwards?’ (Ofsted, 2016) was designed to evaluate what progress had been made three years later. This also assessed the extent to which the early implementation of the Children and Families Act (2014) had succeeded in preparing young people aged between 16 and 25 with high levels of needs for adult life.

This survey explored data collected from 17 providers visited by Her Majesty’s Inspectors between January and March 2015. The focus was firstly to obtain an accurate understanding of the quality and accessibility of the local offer. And

secondly, to analyse how well the needs were being met for learners with high needs. For this report these learners were defined as a learner who requires support costing over £6,000. The report highlighted three areas that are noteworthy of concern. Firstly, only three providers stood out for their high quality of provision, with eight providers unable to provide the appropriate support for their learners with profound or multiple learning difficulties or disabilities. Secondly, impartial careers advice and guidance for these learners with high needs was considered weak, failing to provide sufficiently detailed information. Finally, provision was not focussed sufficiently well on preparing learners with high needs for adult life. This report offered an accurate representation of the national picture, collecting data through analysing inspection reports from September 2014, collecting the views of over 1,600 young people and discussion with over 60 young people in focus groups meetings (Ofsted, 2016).

Of concern is the conclusion that the early implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 was not fully effective. Moreover, despite the developments in the SEN Code of Practice 2014 the most common weaknesses identified by inspectors was insufficient focus on preparing learners for adult life, a lack of specialist careers guidance and poor collaboration with learners and their parents. Inspectors also found a national lack of oversight for the monitoring and evaluation of FE and skills provision for high needs learners. Thus it was not possible to review and evaluate the impact of FE and skills provision on the achievements of learners with high-needs and how well they were prepared to progress to adult life.

As Kennedy (2015) and Morris and Atkinson (2018) highlighted, there is limited known literature following the post 16 reforms. However, before legislation changes in 2014, Attwood (2013) offered an analysis discussing how the

governments Green paper (DfE, 2011a, p. 16), *Support and Aspiration: A new Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability* had acknowledged the need for change. Attwood discussed how the implications of the report would challenge practice. Attwood conceptualised views of disability and how a change in language could shift understanding of a child's need from a within child perspective to an understanding from the child or young person's perspective. Attwood (2013) highlighted the importance of the Warnock Report (1978) in changing the emphasis from a personal 'deficit' to one that focussed on need.

Unfortunately as Attwood (2013) concluded, children and young people are often objectified by professionals and are sometimes mortified to hear others discuss their weakness. Moreover, it highlighted one of the greatest issues as the potential lack of choice and control. Kennedy (2015) reviewed the Revised SEND Code of Practice 0-25 with a particular focus on the pupil voice and found that children who are most often not listened to are those with SEND. Young people and their carers still seem to be in a position where they are required to find the provision that is the closest to supporting their need rather than provision being tailored around them (Ofsted, 2016). This is however acknowledged as a significant challenge for local authorities in some cases requiring the development of new provision.

2.6 Transition to Adulthood

At post 16 there is little known literature about what happens to young people who cannot find an appropriate provision to meet their need. Sankardas and Rajanahally (2015) highlight that for most young people there is a clear aspiration towards employment. Thus the importance of education and training towards achieving employment is a key focus within transition to adulthood. Forte, Jahoda

and Dagnan (2011) challenge this assumption by exploring the difference in worries between young people. They found that the most salient worries came from young people with a mild to moderate intellectual disability (ID) and that these was largely different from their non-disabled peers.

In particular the ID group's worries centred on being bullied, losing someone they are dependent upon, making and keeping friends and falling in love. Whereas their non-disabled peers worries centred on financial security, including getting a job, failing and having to make decisions about their future. It is therefore important to note that worries presented by young people with complex needs are often more distressing than that of their non-disabled peers. Forte, Jahoda and Dagnan (2011) make the salient point that assumptions about aspirations of young people can be inaccurate. Whilst some young people have clear aspirations to achieve successful employment some just want to establish and maintain secure relationships. As Forte, Jahoda and Dagnan (2011) discussed, transition to adulthood can be a worrying time as young people develop their own identity in relation to others.

This illustrates the importance of knowing the young person and placing this person at the centre of planning, in accordance with the SEN Code of practice (2014). Lawrence (2011) amplifies this through an understanding of reintegration from a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to mainstream. The findings are particularly relevant as many students in a PRU may become young people who are not comfortable in a traditional post 16 setting. Lawrence (2011) highlights the following as central to a successful transition.

> *'The child's self perceptions, views of education and motivation/desire to engage and succeed…, level of special educational needs, including mental health difficulties… and a timely, child-centred, individualised and holistic re-integration package.' (Lawrence, 2011, p. 224)*

This emphasises the importance of understanding a young person's self-perception, sense of identity and aspiration.

Blatchford and Webster (2018) discussed the challenges involved with supporting pupils with SEND within an educational context. In particular they discussed the presence of additional adults such as key workers or teaching assistants who work closest with children with complex needs. They advise caution against an over reliance on teaching assistants working one to one with a child or young person. Blatchford et al. (2011) used a naturalistic longitudinal design in a study to investigate the relationship between the amount of support and pupils' 'Positive Approaches to Learning' (PAL) and academic progress. They found a consistent trend for those with most support to make less academic progress than similar pupils with less support. In terms of supporting young people this might suggest caution against having a one to one key worker assigned to a student and this position is acknowledged.

However, when working with young people who struggle to access mainstream education due to their complex needs I present the role of the key worker as more than just supporting academic progress. Drake, Fergusson and Briggs (2014) draw on concepts of dyadic relationships between practitioners and young people with complex needs. They argue that centralizing the practitioner-young person relationship is key to successful outcomes for young people. In this way the one to

one worker acts more as a mentor than a teaching assistant or teacher. This acknowledges that the development of young people is as much about building personal constructs such as identity as it is about developing academic outcomes. Moreover, to support young people to develop independence Martin, Forde, Horgan and Mages (2018) highlight the importance of nurturing relationships developed through active listening where young people develop trust, with designated spaces for discussion. I present this as the role of the mentor, providing a secure base (Bombèr, 2007) for young people with complex needs to develop confidence and self-esteem.

2.7 Identity

Hodkinson, Biesta and James (2008) theorised that education is focussed on the skills required by an individual to prepare for employment. This is still recognised as one of the four areas in preparing for adulthood (Preparing for Adulthood, 2018). Nyström (2009) placed this within an educational context arguing for the importance of not only work but other aspects of life. I propose that this contextual viewpoint is valuable despite the age of the research as it presents the influence on identity as multifaceted where experience and environment are intrinsically linked. The post 16 period of development is an important time of transition to adulthood when young people can feel vulnerable which is reflected in their identity.

Ecclestone and Rawdin (2016) acknowledge a growing focus on declining wellbeing and mental health in children and young people with particular concerns about those considered to be at risk of social and educational disengagement. In considering this they draw together identity and transitions suggesting that those

who struggle independently with everyday life will also struggle within an educational environment. Ecclestone and Rawdin (2016) highlight political interest in educational settings as playing a significant role in supporting wellbeing and mental health. However this is challenged in terms of its effectiveness in supporting the existential sense of everyday vulnerability. They therefore argue for the importance of understanding the existential self as a self-concept that is separate from others. Thus Ecclestone and Rawdin (2016) argue for support that moves away from universal programmes to focus on richer, more meaningful person centred alternatives. Arnold and Baker (2013) highlight the transition period during post 16 as having a particular effect on young people emphasising a difference in context to transitions in schools. Linking identity to transitions they stress the importance of a successful transition for the individual recognising the added complexity of post 16 settings making different demands on learners. For example the expectation that young people will be much more independent.

He and Crews (2007), discussed that among the changes human bodies undergo, structural and functional changes of the human brain also occur. This is known as ‘the window of opportunity’ (He & Crews, 2007) or the ‘reminiscence bump’ (Rubin, Wetzler & Nebes, 1986). Blakemore (2014) also identified this as a time when functional and structural changes happen in the brain and young people adapt to their social environment. Moreover she presented adolescence as a period of life when one develops from puberty to adult independence (Blakemore, 2018). This is an important point as it highlights this time as a period when young people develop a more complete sense of self-identity (Blakemore, 2018).

For many young people there is a key goal to develop into an independent adult adopting and adapting values to support this transition (Romer, Reyna &

Satterthwaite, 2017). It should be acknowledged that although this study concentrates on the period of life from puberty to adult independence, identity is a lifelong process or story from infancy to maturity taking influence from the environment (McAdams, 2001). Nyström, Abrandt, et al. (2008) proposed that personal experience of education and other aspects of lives are important features of supporting transition and thus influencing identity. Nuttall and Woods (2013) present points of transition as having a significant influence on personal social development. The work of these authors is important as it supports the claim that at this stage of development and moreover transition to adulthood, the provision and in turn educational experience can have a significant influence in the young person's identity. For example, peer influence and opinions of peers at this time can have positive or negative effects on the behaviours and in turn identity of young people depending on their experience (Blakemore, 2018).

2.8 Understanding Young People

Knox, (2011) made the point that financial strain induced through unemployment and social disengagement are political issues. Young people who are NEET were highlighted as a particular category of unemployment. Maguire (2015) identified that there seems to be a lack of understanding about these young people. It could be argued that the assumption seems to adopt a 'within' young person attitude suggesting that an education to facilitate transition to employment and thus adulthood is the solution. In February 2012 the Deputy Prime Minster Nick Clegg announced a new initiative to help young people he described as 'NEET' into training or work (DfE, 2012). Discussing the young people he stated that 'many of them will have complex problems: truancy, teenage pregnancy, a lack of GCSEs and health problems. So helping them onto their feet will not be without

challenges…' There seems to be an assumption that many young people expect the welfare state to support them (Knox, 2011; Maguire 2015).

Furlong (2006) presented the perception of young people who are NEET as young people who have chosen to disengage with employment and society. Lyon, (2016) challenges this assumption by exploring extended school nonattendance. A limitation of this study is a small sample size of three young people. However it is important to understand that all three students were reported as having limited social interaction. The research highlighted that the lack of engagement and avoidance was due to negative school-based stimuli, negative social situations with peers or teachers, anxiety and extreme distress and positive outside school experience.

It could be that the key reasons for a lack of engagement find their foundation in anxiety (Furlong, 2006), particularly if a young person has complex needs which could be misunderstood through avoidant behaviour. Yates and Payne (2006) discuss how negative attitudes about young people who are NEET have developed over time. Moreover that these young people are at risk of becoming socially excluded through a lack of understanding of their needs. This illustrates the importance of understanding young people and the challenges they face. Darling (2007) suggested that patterns of determinants such as social exclusion can have a direct, negative impact on the aspiration and self-vision of a developing young person. Conversely positive patterns of determinants can also foster positive aspiration in the developing person (Darling, 2007).

2.9 Gaps in the Literature

I have identified the following gaps in the literature which I intend to address in this study. There seems to be a gap in knowledge about what provision is available for young people who have complex special educational needs outside mainstream following a rise in compulsory education to 18. I would like to explore what knowledge there is about provision from young people with complex needs, educational psychologists and professionals who work with these post 16 young people. There is a gap in understanding the young people's journey to an appropriate post 16 provision and support from their perspective. This extends to an understanding of what barriers there are to accessing an inclusive education in mainstream, and why did it stigmatise or hinder them if they experienced a breakdown in an education setting as part of their journey. There is a gap in understanding about the decision making process considering if placing the young person at the centre is what the young people want. The literature suggests that in some cases this is tokenistic, however I would like to explore this further considering the extent young people want ownership and the responsibility of decision making. There is a gap in the knowledge of the identity of young people who struggle to access mainstream post 16 education. There is a gap in the knowledge of what works to support these young people to prepare for adulthood. In contrast to aspiration for employment and independence I suggest there could be a need to support young people through a nurturing relationship with a key worker or mentor before considering vocational aspirations which I aim to explore.

2.10 Conclusion

The structure of this literature review has incorporated both a chronological understanding exploring the historical context, development of the Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Code of Practice 2014 and the national picture following the changes in legislation. The Children and Families Act 2014 is still relatively new which could explain why according to Ofsted (2016) it is not fully effective. The most common weakness in preparing young people with SEN for adulthood was not placing the individual in the centre of planning (Ofsted, 2016).

This is an area that needs exploring further which I identify as a gap in the literature. In considering the support outside mainstream for young people who struggle within a traditional setting this research will address this gap. In particular the decision making process to further understand the practise of placing the young person at the centre of the decision making within the post 16 context.

Through drawing similarities in perception with young people with mild to moderate ID, a difference in educational and employment aspirations emerged (Forte, Jahoda & Dagnan, 2011). This demonstrated that for many young people anxieties were more distressing with aspiration focussed on maintaining relationships, particularly with people they are dependent upon. Thus challenging the simplistic view of a good education leads to a good job and therefore successful transition to adulthood. The work of Lawrence (2011) illustrated the importance of supporting mental health, fostering positive self perceptions through a person-centred package. This was placed within an educational context (Nyström, 2009) recognising post 16 as a crucial period to support a positive influence on identity (He & Crews, 2007). Influence on identity was presented as

multifaceted where experience and environment are intrinsically linked and crucial to supporting a balanced development.

Perhaps the greatest assumption that requires exploration is a lack of understanding of disengaged young people. It is argued that a category of young people can develop from a group identified by Ofsted (2013) as 'young people who have complex needs and no suitable school place available'. Unemployment and social disengagement are highlighted as political issues (Knox, 2011) that incorporate a lack of understanding of the complexity of need presented by these young people. Thus the reason behind disengagement from education is poorly understood. Drawing relevance from extended school nonattendance, negative stimuli such as being bullied and anxiety are highlighted as determinants. Thus the disengagement is a communication of needs that have resulted as a reaction to negative experience.

Inaccurate assumptions are identified about young people with complex needs, in particular those who disengage with mainstream education. Anxiety developed from negative previous experience can be communicated by students through behaviour such as extended school nonattendance. Students with complex needs require appropriate support which is a wider issue than just finding an appropriate course. Thus the dilemma of inclusive verses appropriate opportunity needs exploring. In terms of support for young people there is a gap in the literature that this research intends to address placing the dilemma of difference (Minnow, 1990) at the centre. It is intended that exploring the underpinning principles of the support for young people will reveal the extent to which provision is person centred and needs led. It is also intended that through exploring the identity of young people engaged in provision outside mainstream a greater understanding

of what influences their development will emerge. Supporting complex needs is not without challenges, however the significance of understanding what is important to the young person and how to best support their development is underpinned by this research.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The following starts with the research aim followed by the research questions according to each phase. The philosophical assumptions are then discussed before I outline the two phase design of this study. I then discuss the recruitment of participants, including building rapport, before a section on data analysis, finishing the methodology with a section on ethics.

3.1 Research Aim

The aims of this research are as follows:

Phase 1

- To explore the support for young people who struggle to access mainstream provisions at post 16.
- To understand the experience of young people as they negotiate their way to adulthood.

Phase 2

- To explore how these provisions influence the identity of young people.
- To inform educational psychology practice within the wider post 16 SEND arena.

3.2 Research Questions

Research questions were developed during the research process in line with interpretivist research (Thomas, 2013). The original research questions were very broad and covered the following areas:

- What can we learn from the Young Person's interpretation of their experiences transitioning to further education to employment?
- What works within this transition?
- What are the obstacles within this transition?
- What does not work within this transition?
- What (if any) interventions could be put in place to support this transition?

However as the research progressed it became clear that the research required further focussing. In addition a third research question was developed during data analysis. Thus the final research questions are as follows:

Phase 1

1. What alternative provision is made for young people post 16 who are not comfortable in a traditional learning environment?

2. What are the principles that underlie the design of the provision?

3. What are the young people's experiences of support from post 16 provisions outside the traditional post 16 settings?

Phase 2

4. What is the identity of post 16 young people in these alternative settings as perceived by themselves?

5. What do they and others working with them perceive as influencing these identities, including their participation in these alternative settings?

3.3 Overall Philosophical Assumptions

The following offers an understanding of my chosen philosophical position. Interpretivism (ontology) and Social Constructivism (epistemology) are presented and explored further considering the eclectic nature of interpretivism and the ethnographic influence on this study.

3.3.1 Ontological Approach

In this study I adopt Interpretivism as my ontological approach. My position is that part of the environment in an educational provision is the interaction between staff, peers and the physical environment. This includes environmental factors such as the size of a building, sensory issues with noise or how people relate to each other. If a young person is not comfortable with any of these this could present as a barrier to their education, employment or training experience. I suggest this can only be realised through understanding social life as it unfolds within the environment, recognising how people feel and are affected within the context of their community. Unlike positivist and post positivist research this project does not aim to prove or disprove a hypothesis, instead it embraces understanding of unique meaning about what people think (Crotty, 1998).

A positivist approach would typically aim to relate or compare variables with a focus on identifying cause and effect (McKerchar, 2008). Thus I suggest that the research can be richer in its exploration of diversity in the demographics of the participants. I do not come from a critical approach and do not aim to reveal hidden political or ideological agendas (Hudson, 2000). I aim to understand the life world experience in detail from a narrow sample population. In this way I reject postmodernism as I aim to represent what is learnt about post 16 provision outside

mainstream and how it influences young people rather than avoiding explanation or representation (Jupp, 2013).

McKerchar, (2008) suggests that positivist and post positivist methodologies presume that all the questions and possible answers are known prior to the questions being asked. In contrast I aim to develop a new and rich understanding of external influence on individual psychology that affect human thought and behaviour. Thus quantitative methodologies and mixed methods methodologies are inappropriate (McKerchar, 2008; Jupp, 2013). I therefore reject positivism and pragmatism (as a form of methodological pluralism) respectively and embrace interpretivism as an appropriate ontology.

3.3.2 Epistemological Approach

Kelly (1955) advocated that the construction of knowledge as something that develops through interaction with objects or features of the external world (Jupp, 2013). I acknowledge this and particularly in phase 2 I adopt principles that encourage a mental image of themselves. However, as a development of the constructivist perspective I maintain that it is important that the epistemology supports an understanding of the social life world experience. Thus the images are used to construct meaning which is further understood in social context. This is developed through discussion, prompting in order to develop understanding that is social in its nature. This social construction is something that is embedded in this research implemented through semi-structured interviews that are flexible in nature (Tomlinson, 1989).

The epistemology for this study is therefore social constructivist and is underpinned by the social relationship between myself as the researcher and the

participants. This is not to be confused with social constructionism which focusses an importance on the language used giving a central role to discourse (Gergen, 1994). In this research it is the meaning that is important through empowering the voice of the participant. It is the values of the researched that are crucial, taken in context of the situation. Howell (2013) describes this as an emic position where the meaning is constructed by the participant discussing their life world experience. This is then reflected upon to contextualise the meaning behind the themes that emerge according to the participants constructs (Howell, 2013).

To achieve this, drawing on the work of Denzin (1989) and Lincoln (1994) I aimed as much as possible to:

- Reduce power imbalance through dressing down and building rapport through regular visits to each provision.
- Talk to potential participants using open questions and give them power over the conversation to empower the young people.
- Immerse myself in the provision life of the participants involved in the research.
- Achieve a deep understanding of the participants involved in the research through an informal interview.
- Reflect on the interview and any interaction I had with the participants.
- Observe each provision acknowledging my own bias to consider any environmental influence.
- Transcribe the interviews and produce a contextualised interpretation using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.3 Ethnography as an Approach

The following explores interpretivism as an ontology, embracing the principles of ethnography whilst recognising that becoming part of the researched community is not possible.

Thomas advocates ethnography as '*interpretive as it gets'* (Thomas, 2013, p. 155). If I was to adopt a typical ethnographical methodology to be as interpretivist as possible this would involve 'going native' (Howell, 2013). In this way I would aim to get as close to the research ideas, beliefs and moral perspective of the individuals involved in the research as much as possible. In some cases this would extend to researchers living within the community they are investigating. However, as a professional and an adult it is not possible to have the same relationship with young people as other young people with SEND in similar provisions.

Ethnography developed from anthropology, and what is particularly relevant to this research that separates ethnography from anthropology is that I aim to come from a non-judgemental position. In the early 1920's an anthropological approach would view cultures and communities from a western point of view making judgements and forming opinions (Thomas, 2013). The researcher would assume an elevated status which would perceive these communities as '*objects of study*' (Thomas, 2013, p.156). This is considered inappropriate and a main distinction that this research makes by drawing on ethnographic principles is an opportunity to learn from the participant as an equal rather that studying them. This facilitates the opportunity to learn from the young person, celebrating their individual differences. As O'Reilly (2012) suggests philosophies are consistently being developed. Thus there is opportunity for compromise, achieving an ethnographic

approach whilst accepting that it might not be ethnographic in the purest sense (O'Reilly, 2012; Fetterman, 2010).

3.3.4 The Rejection of Other Interpretivist Approaches.

To consider my approach in more detail I considered other approaches such as phenomenology, idealism and hermeneutics but rejected them due to the following reasons.

I have rejected a phenomenological approach due to the idea of typification and categorising the actor as a particular variety of human. This suggests that by splitting up stimuli if an actor hears, sees, smells and tastes it is possible to categorise and sub-categorise the world around us. In this case one would identify life world experience through distinct characteristics. Through this process it is possible to identity types of behaviour with types of people (O'Reilly, 2012). I am keen to acknowledge that humans by their nature are all different and react in different ways in different context. Thus in contrast I come from a position that celebrates individual differences according to individual values as they emerge.
I have rejected idealism as an approach due to its move away from social in its construction in favour of a more philosophical perspective (O'Reilly, 2012). In contrast to phenomenology everything is an individual perception within context. The issue with this is that it is impossible to make value judgements as a researcher (Benton & Craib, 2001). Whilst this approach offers a useful contribution through an emphasis on studying the world in context it is informed through understanding language, culture and rules through individual concept (O'Reilly, 2012). In this study however I aim to construct understanding and

interpret meaning through social interaction considering what is discussed rather than how.

I have disregarded hermeneutics as an approach due to its tendency to make common assumptions about groups within cultures and across cultures. Learning about a culture or group and recognising the role within a social process is a positive aspect of this approach (O'Reilly, 2012). However, understanding the individual is important in this research, recognising that each young person has their own journey and a unique view of the world, even if similarities can occur.

3.4 Research Design

This thesis is made up of two parts. Phase 1 is an exploration of what provision or support there is for young people and the principles that underpin that provision. Phase 2 is a psychological investigation of the influence on the identity of post 16 young people engaging in two different types of provision. This is elicited from the perspective of the young people and those that work with them. Initially the research was made up of two questions in each phase, however through analysis of the interviews it seemed clear than an understanding of the young people's experiences is a key characteristic of the research. Moreover, I see the third research question as a springboard that links the two phases. As a psychologist I argue that an understanding of what support there is and the principles are important but do not answer the 'So what?' question.

The two phases are separated by two different approaches, firstly a semi-structured interview to elicit the understanding of post 16 young people outside mainstream. This is achieved by interviewing young people from two provision led settings and a young person led setting. This young person led setting is

structured as a forum designed to inform decision making and support young people with SEND within a Local Authority in the South West of England. The semi-structured interviews also extended to professionals that work with young people post 16 with SEND and educational psychologists. The second phase incorporates a personal construct psychology technique to elicit young people's constructs and perspectives (Kelly, 1955). The focus of this is mirrored in a semi-structured interview with staff who work with the young people to gain a wider understanding of the influence on their identities.

It is the experience of the young person not the professionals that is important and a psychological understanding of this, triangulated with the view of those that work with them. The aim is to gain a perspective of the young person's identity and what this experience means to them. This is an opportunity to get below the surface and facilitate a reflection of themselves, and potentially an understanding of their post 16 journey. Exploring the intrinsic and extrinsic self constructs of the young people offers a clear pathway from the support available, to the underpinning principles that maintain this and then the provision experience. I am interested in where the psychology is in the research which is particularly evident in phase 2.

3.4.1 Table 1 Research Design

Phase 1	
Design	Interpretivist Research
Research Questions 1. What alternative provision is made for young people post 16 who are not comfortable in a traditional learning environment? 2. What are the principles that underlie the design of the provision? 3. What are the young people's experiences of support from post 16 provisions outside the traditional post 16 settings?	Observations and Semi-Structured Interviews Semi-Structured Interviews Semi-Structured Interviews
Data Analysis Method	Thematic Analysis
Number of Participants	10 young people, (including 5 from a young person led forum and 5 from a provision led setting) 5 Educational Psychologists 6 professionals supporting young people
Phase 2	
Design	Interpretivist Research

Research Questions 4. What is the identity of post 16 young people in these alternative settings as perceived by themselves? 5. What do they and others working with them perceive as influencing these identities, including their participation in these alternative settings?	Personal Construct Psychology Elicitation Activity (Draw Your Ideal Self) Personal Construct Psychology Elicitation Activity (Students) / Semi-Structured Interviews (Staff)
Analysis	Thematic analysis
Number of Participants	10 young people, (including 5 from a young person led forum and 5 from a provision led setting) 5 staff across the post 16 settings.

3.5 Participants

3.5.1 Original Choice of Participants

As reflected in my ethics application my original plan was to include a sample of:

- 10 young people, (including 5 from a young person led forum and 5 from a provision led setting)
- 5 parents
- 5 educational psychologists.

- 3 staff across the post 16 settings.

However, the final sample differs because as I carried out two pilot interviews I realised that the data from the young person was the most relevant in gaining a comprehensive insight into post 16 experience. The interview was successful and the flexible semi-structured design adopted from Tomlinson, (1989) worked well in eliciting information. I felt that a minimum of 3 participants and a maximum of 5 from each group would be appropriate to achieve rich data. I did however decide to reflect on the data throughout the research remaining mindful that I might need to recruit more participants if I did not feel that I had achieved rich enough data.

3.5.2 Sample Categorisation

Young people who are not comfortable in a traditional post 16 education are a difficult category to define. However, through visiting provisions outside mainstream I identified a community. There are commonalities within the sample, however I viewed each participant as an individual and I was keen not to subjectively categorise the young people. This was to avoid a within child perspective and allow any commonalities to emerge through the research. I concede that the majority of participants have communication and interaction difficulties which seems to come hand in hand with social, emotional and mental health difficulties as a result of their experience. I leave identification of needs to the data analysis section 4.9.2 where the young people self-identify their own needs, in keeping with ethnographic principles. I would however argue that what joins the participants is their journey through post 16 as young people with special educational needs and/or disability who have experienced a challenging journey.

A primary concern in terms of selection of participants was that I recruited key participants, sometimes known as key informants (Burgess, 1984). Another aspect of sample selection was the importance of respecting the most key participants as 'encultured informants' (Spradley, 1979), understanding their position within the research. These were the young people, who the research centred around. Prior to data collection through building rapport with the young people I became aware of a dilemma. This was between the aspiration for independence and the need for support. My interpretation was that the young people wanted the support of their key worker, but not their parent or carer. My general impression was that staff that worked closest with the young people were seen as mentors, who they could rely on. This seemed to be support that did not challenge their independence unlike the dependence of a parental role. Reflecting on this I chose to omit parents or carers from the research.

My final choice which was the final number of participants was:

Phase 1

- 10 young people, (including 5 from a young person led forum and 5 from two similar provision led settings)
- 5 educational psychologists.
- 6 staff and professionals that work within the post 16 arena.

Phase 2

- 10 young people, (including 5 from a young person led forum and 5 from two similar provision led settings)

- 5 staff who worked with the young people (including the member of staff who facilitated the young person led provision and two members of staff from each of the provision led provisions)

To protect anonymity it was important that the young people were not individually identified. Therefore it was not important to have the same participants in phase 1 and phase 2. However, nine young people and one member of staff who facilitated the young person led provision were involved in both phases of the research.

3.5.3 Snowballing

In an effort to ensure that I gained a range of responses I chose to remain open to different influence on the design. To achieve this I adopted snowballing as a strategy (Small, 2009). An example of this happened during phase 1 when an interview with an educational psychologist revealed that the role of another professional who worked for the advisory service would be relevant. I added this professional to my data collection, re-categorising the staff sample to professionals who work with young people. During this interview, I was signposted to another professional who worked for a careers advisory service and I added this person to the sample. This added a wider understanding and greater depth to the data.

3.5.4 Recruiting Young People

The initial aim was to recruit from two different provisions, this included firstly; a provision outside mainstream which was designed for young people who could not manage to access mainstream. Many of these young people had previous experience of mainstream being too challenging and they chose not to engage with mainstream education. In this provision students typically worked one to one

with staff with a curriculum that was adapted to meet the needs of the young person. This need could be at an academic educational level or providing a nurturing environment free from crowds or noise. Staff were encouraged to be flexible with their approach, according to the young person.

The second provision was designed as a participant led meeting place for young people in the SW of England. This was established to work actively with commissioners of services to influence planning and adapt the development of services. This provision is a forum led by a steering group that has regular monthly meetings made up of young people with SEND. These young people had various difficulties ranging from having autism to sight impairment. Many of these young people had experienced their own difficulties in mainstream education and were engaged in provisions outside mainstream. Their aim was to make improvements to education and post 16 experience for young people with SEND by young people with SEND.

I became aware of these provisions by attending a post 16 meeting held by the local authority. During this meeting these provisions were highlighted as new emerging provisions that support young people with complex needs. Having identified the two provisions I contacted them and visited the provisions. Both were keen to be involved in the research, with the ethical caveat that the young people could choose if they wanted to be involved without any pressure. For the purpose of this research the two contrasting provision types are known as the; young person led provision (YPL) and the provision led provision (PL).

3.5.5 Building Rapport with the Young People

I adopted the same strategy in each provision to build rapport. In the case of the young person led provision this was facilitated by one adult but otherwise completely led by the young people in the steering group. Before I could attend they required a one page profile and asked that I could introduce myself and be clear about what I wanted from them. On the first meeting I produced a 'one page profile' (see appendix 1) including a photograph, making it clear who I was, what I was interested in and what I would like them to do to support my research if any of them were willing to volunteer to participate. I was also clear that I was not a member of staff in an effort to minimise any power imbalance.

This was an approach that I mirrored in the provision led setting, however I did not address all the students as a group. I took time to meet students individually, using the one page profile as a framework for each introduction. I was clear from the start that I was interested in finding out about their educational experience as part of my research into post 16 education. I concede that I could not become part of their community however, in terms of status I was clear that we were equal by giving them ownership of our interaction. For example asking them if I could join them and then asking them if I could sit down with them. In both provisions there was a relaxed environment and I dressed casually to avoid looking corporate. I took an interest in what the young people were doing, spending time in each provision when I could on my study days (two days per week). After approximately 3 to 4 visits in each provision I approached young people and asked them if they would be willing to participate in my research.

3.5.6 Widening the Choice of Provision to Recruit Enough Participants

The original aim was to recruit participants from these two contrasting provisions and in the case of the young person led provision that was the case. However, after spending some time visiting the provision led setting, some of the young people revealed that they did not want to be part of the research. I respected this and contacted another similar provision led setting that mirrored the support offered by this organisation. Both of these provisions were organisation led, providing post 16 support for very similar students. They described these learners as young people who have fallen between the gaps or 'bespoke learners'. I therefore used these two provision led settings to recruit 5 participants from provision led settings, so 5 participants from the young person led provision and 5 participants from provision led contexts.

3.6 Data Collection

Having built appropriate relationships I started collecting data for both phases after half term in May and June. One of the benefits to collecting data from these provision was that the term lasted longer than that of a traditional FE college which gave me more time. Both provision led settings also kept contact with their students informally once per week during the summer holidays to ensure regular interaction. As a result I managed to complete my data collection before the beginning of the next educational year when the environments could have changed. This change could be due to having had a summer break before the beginning of a new educational year.

3.61 Table 2 Project Time Line

Date	What Happened
	Phase 1
12.12.2016	Meeting with provision led setting (PL) (provision 1) about potential involvement in the study.
6.01.2017	Meeting with facilitator of young person led setting (YPL) about potential involvement in study.
6.01.2017	Attend YPL meeting and present one page profile about myself (See appendix 1 for one page profile).
17.01.2017	Research proposal accepted
27.01.2017	Attend young person led setting meeting / build rapport and get to know young people.
24.02.2017	Attend young person led setting meeting / build rapport and get to know young people.
23.02.2017	Attend post 16 event to meet with other post 16 provisions (this included an informal discussion with provision led setting 2 about potential involvement in the study).
20.03.2017	Ethics approval
24.03.2017	Attend young person led setting meeting / build rapport and learn about young people, introducing the project.
07.04.2017	Pilot Interviews
20.04.2017	Attend provision led setting 1 to build rapport and learn about young people, introducing the project.
20.04.2017	EP Interview 1 (John)
20.04.2017	ST Interview 1 (Mike)
20.04.2017	ST Interview 2 (Wendy)
21.04.2017	ST Interview 3 (Debbie)
26.04.2017	EP Interview 2 (Sharon)
27.04.2017	OP Interview 1 (Emma; Information and advice service)
27.04.2017	Attend provision led setting 1 to build rapport and learn about young people.
28.04.2017	Attend young person led setting meeting / build rapport and learn about young people.
05.05.2017	EP Interview 3 (David)
05.05.2017	2 participants from the provision led setting 1 choose to opt out
05.05.2017	YPL Interview 1 (Aaron)
05.05.2017	YPL Interview 2 (Fred)
06.05.2017	Telephone conversation with provision led setting 2 about potential involvement in the study.
11.05.2017	Attend provision led setting 1 to build rapport and learn about young people.
12.05.2017	Attend provision led setting 2 to build rapport and learn about young people, introducing the project.

12.05.2017	EP Interview 4 (Lucy)
25.05.2017	EP Interview 5 (Caroline)
26.05.2017	Attend provision led setting 2 to build rapport and learn about young people.
26.05.2017	OP Interview 2 (Jane; careers service)
06.06.2017	PL Interview 1 (Helen) (Provision 1)
06.06.2017	PL Interview 2 (Dannielle) (Provision 1)
06.06.2017	PL Interview 3 (Darren) (Provision 2)
15.06.2017	PL Interview 4 (Sarah) (Provision 1)
15.06.2017	ST Interview 4 (Ruth)
16.06.2017	YPL Interview 3 (Daisy)
16.06.2017	YPL Interview 4 (Hanna)
23.06.2017	PL Interview 5 (Brian) (Provision 2)
14.07.2017	YPL Interview 5 (Clare)
	Phase 2
29.06.2017	PL Interview 1 (Darren) (Provision 2)
29.06.2017	PL Interview 2 (Brian) (Provision 2)
30.06.2017	ST Interview 1 (Gaynor) (Provision 2)
30.06.2017	ST Interview 2 (Sally) (Provision 2)
05.07.2017	PL Interview 3 (Sarah) (Provision 1)
06.07.2017	ST Interview 3 (Jess) (Provision 1)
06.07.2017	ST Interview 4 (Stewart) (Provision 1)
10.07.2017	PL Interview 4 (Andrew) (Provision 1)
14.07.2017	YPL Interview (Daisy)
14.07.2017	ST Interview 5 (Ruth)
17.07.2017	YPL Interview 2 (Fred)
01.08.2017	YPL Interview 3 (Hanna)
01.08.2017	YPL Interview 4 (Aaron)
02.08.2017	PL Interview 5 (Helen) (Provision 1)
09.08.2017	YPL Interview 5 (Clare)
	Completing Thesis
31.07.2017 until 01.09.2017	Data transcription (typically 1 or 2 interviews per day)
04.09.2017 until 18.12.2017	Data analysis
19.12.2017 until 26.03.2018	Complete thesis (first draft)
27.03.2018	Hand in thesis (first draft)
16.04.2018 until 25.05.2018	Complete suggested amendments
29.05.2018	Hand in thesis (final version)

*It should be noted that pseudonyms are used for all participants to protect the anonymity of participants.

Key

YPL – Young Person Led Provision

PL – Provision Led Provision

ST – Staff

OP – Other professionals involved with post 16 education

EP – Educational Psychologist

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

3.7.1 Choice of Thematic Analysis

Before choosing my type of qualitative analysis I considered what I wanted to know about my data. Structural approaches such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis and narrative analysis focus on the structure of talk, text and interaction (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton & Ormston, 2014). Thus a structural approach aims to understand how situated or narrated accounts are constructed. Rather than focussing on the language used in the data, this research is interested in the meaning of what is said rather than how it is said.

Substantive approaches such as grounded theory and thematic analysis are very similar in the respect that they aim to capture, interpret and report clusters of meaning within the data (Ritchie et al., 2014). In fact some researchers suggest that thematic analysis is a form of grounded theory (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) because they can be approached in the same way. Both refer to the events and feelings that emerge in the data to learn about the perception of participants and how the world effects them. However, with grounded theory the aim is to introduce emergent abstract concepts early in the analysis, continually refining them

according to the underpinning theoretical or philosophical position of the researcher (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

A drawback to this method is the possibility of resistance to subsequent revision. Both structures seem quite logical, however I found in practice that analysis needs constant refining. Analysis should be a consistent process, moulded and shaped by the codes, categories and themes that arise. Robson (2002) makes the point that first impressions can make a large impression on the researcher which can make later revision a struggle to embrace. Grounded theory seems to be based around developing an overriding theory to explain the data and can be greatly influenced by first impressions. In thematic analysis the importance of ensuring that initial codes and categories have low-interference is stressed, emphasising the importance of staying close to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this way an understanding of the data can emerge with less first impression influence, consistently being negotiated in terms of understanding and interpretation.

3.7.2 Adopting an Interpretivist Bottom up Approach to Analysis

Other interpretivist methodology such as phenomenology (Langdridge, 2007) highlight the importance of understanding potential influence of previous experience, opinions or values and place then to one side. Some authors present thematic analysis as a phenomenological method (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012) implying that these principles are adopted. This research draws upon ethnographic principles which acknowledges the importance of diminishing researcher bias, but does not seek objectivity. Moreover as an interpretivist researcher I acknowledge my own position and how this has influenced my interpretation of the data. Through staying close to the data as it emerges without

following a framework for language or meaning my understanding and interpretation develops. I therefore concede that my interpretation of the data will be different to another researcher which means other researchers could draw different conclusions.

3.7.3 Developing Skills of Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) highlighted vague codes, incoherent themes and thin sketchy theme definitions as pitfalls within thematic analysis. To refine my analysis skills I completed analysis of two interviews and shared them with two research supervisors. This highlighted that initially my codes and descriptions were too vague and moved away from what was said in the data. This also highlighted that in some cases I was making the data fit some of the themes that had arisen in the literature review rather than just allowing the data to emerge. I then completed a more refined example of analysis of an interview, at the same time the two supervisors autonomously completed an analysis of the same interview. Through this work it was possible to share our different thoughts about the codes and themes. Although they were not exactly the same they were all very similar which identified that my analysis skills were now appropriate to continue analysing the data.

3.8 Ethics

This section will outline the ethical approach I adopted in my practice as a researcher in accordance with the University of Exeter Ethics committee, the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics (2018) and the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (SCPE) according to the health and care professions

council (HCPC, 2016). I followed the principles outlined in the ethics proposal that were required to achieve ethics approval from university ethics committee which I achieved on 30th March 2017 (see appendix 5).

3.8.1 Consent and Power Relationship

Each participant was given an outline of the research project in the form of an information sheet and a consent form (see appendix 2 and appendix 3 respectively). The information sheets and consent forms were constructed for adults, young people and parents, breaking down the consent form into each stage of the research. They clearly stated what the research is about, their right to withdraw at any time and that all data would be anonymised. Any participants under the age of 18 were also given a consent form for parental permission to take part, this was accompanied by a letter for parents (see appendix 4). I also offered to read the information and consent sheets for any participants who had literacy needs.

I then explained that the interview would be recorded but the recording will be kept in a secure place for analysis. I then made it clear that I would be the only person who listens to this recording to transcribe the interview and it would only be used as part of this research project. This was completed in accordance with ethics guidance and approval from the University of Exeter Ethics committee (See appendix 5, certificate of ethics approval). Through being open, honest and spending time getting to know the participants I ensured that the participants had a clear understanding of what the research was about, and what they would be asked to do right from the start in accordance with professional integrity (BPS,

2018) and section 9 of the SCPE (HCPC, 2016). I confirmed this by asking them and then summarising the research and data collection process.

3.8.2 Environmental Influence

In accordance with the BPS Code of ethics (BPS, 2018) to reduce any potential power relationship I used appropriate language. For example, I used open questions to allow participants to answer any way they chose (Thomas, 2013) such as; 'How would you feel about taking part…' rather than; 'Is it okay if you take part…'. To consider any impact of the broader environment, each participant was approached in turn to book in an agreeable time and venue of their choice. The venues were chosen by the participants and varied from interview rooms, to rest areas to comfortable chairs in a café supported by one of the provisions. I also dressed in casual clothes so that the participants would feel relaxed and comfortable reducing any potential issues of power (BPS, 2018).

3.8.3 Opportunity to Opt Out

Each participant was given an information sheet and a consent form in advance of the interview to give them time to fully understand what they might be asked to do. This also gave any young people under 18 the opportunity to take an information sheet, letter and consent form to their parents/guardians to sign. I then reminded each participant of everything written on the sheets with a focus on their right to opt out, confidentiality and that their participation would be anonymous. I also offered to read the information sheet to any participants. As I built rapport with the students, as a result of the difficulties some students had experienced in their past they then chose to opt out of the research. This was absolutely fine, but it did

mean that I had to approach another provision with the same ethos to recruit enough participants.

3.8.4 Ethical Challenges

Many of the young people involved in the research felt vulnerable and were nervous about taking part. They had often had to overcome a difficult pathway to their post 16 education with significant needs. To address this ethically from a compassionate and empathetic position (BPS, 2018) this was acknowledged. In an effort to remain mindful of this questions were constructed to avoid details about traumatic previous experience. In accordance with section 6 of the SCPE (HCPC, 2016) this is not about exploring a young person's mental health, care investigation or traumatic personal circumstances as this would be an inappropriate risk to participants mental well-being.

Thus I made it clear that if any young people wanted someone to accompany them in an interview that was absolutely fine. In some cases the young people did have their mentor accompany them until they felt comfortable enough to talk. I was also ready to signpost any participants that seemed distressed in any way. I was also mindful that if there was any sign that the young person looked vulnerable, or at all uncomfortable I would terminate the interview exercising appropriate judgement.

I recognised that if I made individual links with the participants in phase 1 and phase two that this could identify them. I therefore generalised by drawing commonalities with what I found between phase 1 and phase 2 rather than considering the individual. Anonymity was a challenge to ensure that the young people had their privacy preserved and that this was extended to the provisions

involved and indeed the local authority. To preserve anonymity in accordance with the BPS Code of Ethics (BPS, 2018; HCPC, 2016) and approval from the University of Exeter university ethics committee I used pseudonyms. When considering provision knowledge my interest was what the provision offered and the support young people received rather than the name of the provision as this could compromise the anonymity of participants. The local authority employed in the research project was also protected by identifying it as a local authority in the south west rather than the particular local authority.

Chapter 4 Phase 1 Findings

This chapter provides details of the specific research questions for Phase 1 and details of the participants. Data collection are then summarised before the analysis method is outlined in more detail. This includes a reflection of negotiating through the steps of thematic analysis in practice. The data are presented according to observation and interview groups, presenting the observation and categories and interview themes that emerged. This is then discussed according to the research questions for phase 1.

4.1: Research Questions

1. What alternative provision is made for young people post 16 who are not comfortable in a traditional learning environment?

2. What are the principles that underlie the design of the provision?

3. What are the young people's experiences of support from post 16 provisions outside the traditional post 16 settings?

4.2: Participants

4.2.1 Table 3 Participant Demographic Data (Phase 1)

Participant name	Age 18 and above	Age below 18	Male/Female	Type
Aaron	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**YPL**
Fred	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**YPL**
Daisy	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**YPL**
Hanna	**N**	**Y**	**F**	**YPL**
Clare	**N**	**Y**	**F**	**YPL**
Helen	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**PL**
Darren	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**PL**
Sarah	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**PL**
Dannielle*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**PL**
Brian	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**PL**
John*	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**EP**
Sharon*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**EP**
David*	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**EP**
Lucy*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**EP**

Caroline*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**EP**
Mike*	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**ST**
Wendy*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**
Debbie*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**
Ruth	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**
Emma*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**OP**
Jane*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**OP**

* Signifies participants that were only involved in phase 1.

**It should be noted that pseudonyms are used for all participants to protect the anonymity of participants.

*** Ethnicity is not included as it is not relevant to this research and could compromise the anonymity of the participants

Key

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4.3 Data Collection Methods – Phase 1

The following section outlines the methods used to collect data in phase 1, these include provision observation and semi-structured interviews.

4.3.1 Observation

In my original proposal my aim was to carry out two structured observations at each provision. Each observation will last for 20 minutes watching a group of students interact and relate to each other. However, as not all young people had given consent to be part of the research project the observation was restricted to a quantifiable, physical environmental interpretation of each provision. This was rather than observing any young people and staff interacting that might not have given consent to being observed in their physical environment. When constructing the observation template I felt that it was important to gain an impression of what the space was like from both the young person's perspective and a visitors. I therefore considered how it might be for a young person or visitor arriving at the setting, if the environment was noisy or quiet, if one could use the toilet discreetly and if one would be required to be in a space with lots of other people. I also reflected on any other thoughts I had while I was observing each setting which I wrote down immediately after the observation. For example, why a provision might choose a discrete location. I conducted one observation of each setting lasting approximately 45 minutes. (See appendix 6, observation template).

4.3 Semi-structured Interview

In an effort to facilitate the participants as much agency to share their feelings and thoughts I adopted semi-structured interviews (Tomlinson, 1989). These interviews were designed to contribute answers to research questions 1, 2 and 3. This was achieved by administering a semi-structured interview with students, staff, educational psychologists and professionals involved with the post 16 process. The structure was adopted from Tomlinson (1989) starting with open

questions allowing the opportunity to probe with more specific questions depending on the answer.

Thomas (2013) criticised semi-structured as ‘too rigid a tool’ if a researcher wanted to gain an understanding of the meanings participants construct within their environment. This research however embraces the flexibility of a respondent interview (Robson, 2002) where answers are followed up with probes. The interviews were designed to avoid any sensitive topics such as sexual activity or drug use. Throughout each interview I used my training as an educational psychologist to monitor the progress of the interview to ensure that should participants become distressed the interview could be suspended. The study was not designed to involve any prolonged or repetitive testing. Each interview was designed to last between 30 to 45 minutes but varied depending on how much each participant had to say. The shortest interview was approximately 10 minutes and the longest interview was approximately an hour. After each question I listened to the response and if the interviewee answered a different point while answering the first point I would omit that question. Each interview was recorded on to an HD card using a Zoom H4 hand held recorder. Following each interview the recording was transferred on to a password protected computer and deleted from the HD card in an effort to protect the data. This data was then stored on a password protected computer.

The list of possible questions was constructed and then discussed in supervision before a trial in a pilot interview with a relative the same age as the participants (see appendix 7, Interview questions for phase 1). The interview questions seemed appropriate, however following this pilot I learnt that I might need to consider different ways of presenting the questions including less corporate

(complicated, or obscure) language in the open questions for young people. I was also mindful of alternative synonyms that I might need to use throughout each interview to ensure participant understanding. In the case of the young people I wanted to make the interview as accessible as possible and felt that a list of questions could be intimidating. So I presented the questions using visual images, asking questions relating to each image. For example, an academic mortarboard hat to represent questions about qualifications and curriculum (see appendix 8)

4.4 Analysis

4.4.1 Negotiating Through the 6 Steps of Thematic Analysis

In practice thematic analysis involves a numbers of consistent choices (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In part some of these choices start to evolve through understanding the data prior to analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified six phases which are applied flexibly. This was my experience and throughout the analysis it became clear that this is not a linear process moving from one phase to the next. It is a consistent negotiation and refinement of the codes, categories and themes (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). This refinement continued throughout the analysis.

The six phases identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) were:

1. Familiarising yourself with the data.
2. Generating initial codes.
3. Searching for themes.
4. Reviewing themes.
5. Defining and naming themes.
6. Producing the report.

Firstly, to immerse myself in the data I completed all transcriptions. While completing the transcriptions I was mindful of the literature and the research questions and considered potential codes, and themes making notes throughout the process. Transcribing the data served two purposes, firstly acting as a reminder of any reflections during the interviews, and secondly, continuously improving my knowledge of the data. I analysed transcriptions of participants in groups, moving through each group, completing phase 1 before moving to phase 2.

In both phases, after transcribing the data I read the transcriptions again, amending any initial thoughts about codes, categories or themes I had during the transcription. As I started to identify the initial codes I found myself going back over the data. In some cases the codes were too broad, and is some cases my initial codes did not accurately reflect what the participant had said. This is a time consuming process, which as Braun and Clarke (2006) discussed became more refined the more data I coded. Thus I revisited coded interviews, ensuring that I had captured a consistent contextual understanding of the meaning. In some cases when I interpreted the meaning of a code, category or theme I made a note that I reflected upon during the process. These notes were included in a smaller font under the code, category or theme (see appendix 14 for examples).

Thomas (2013) highlighted the possibility of moving away from intelligent reading and knowledge of the data as a potential danger. In particular he was referring to the use of software such as NVivo to support data analysis. I was aware of this and found that this had previously been the case when experimenting with NVivo so I opted not to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. I concede the point that this can suit many researchers, however my experience

that matches with Thomas (2013) is that it can conflict with doing the analysis. Consequently an expectation that the software will do the analysis rather than the researcher can develop. In contrast to using the software, having identified codes, categories and themes I printed what I had coded, categorised and themed and compared the data between each group of participants. Thus the analysis was consistently evolving through comparison, and decisions within each interview. This sometimes resulted in many themes or codes being revised after having coded an interview. This was relevant to both phases.

The stages of analysis were difficult to differentiate, particularly phases three, four and five which at times seemed to merge into one, consistently reviewing, refining and questioning themes to ensure that they represented a meaningful pattern of the data. Flick (2014) highlighted the lack of detail of the process in steps three and four and criticises the steps described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Although I did find them ambiguous at times, this reflects the flexibility described by Braun and Clarke (2006) who are clear that these are guidelines and not rules. Through ensuring that each step was completed my analysis became refined. Throughout the analysis it was the content that was important and not the frequency it was said. This did add a further complexity to being consistent if a point was only made once, thus I concede that another researcher could interpret the importance of each point made differently. I interpreted the strength of what was said according to the importance I perceived the participant placed on the point they made. I argue that having a contextualised understanding through my subjection enabled me to understand what was important to the participant.

4.4.2 Thematic Analysis procedure (Phase 1)

Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight an advantage of thematic analysis as having the flexibility to analyse different types of data. This has been particularly apparent in this project and an approach that I have been able to generalise across different data collection methods. When transcribing the semi-structured interviews it was important to transcribe what was said and note any other aspects such as laughter or long silences that emphasised the meaning, anonymising any names or reference to specific post 16 provisions, or provisions that might have been mentioned in the interview. Whilst this took time, it did allow me to immerse myself in the data. However, before being able to analyse the observation in the same way I needed to achieve a comparable transcription of the data.

The observation data were categorised according to codes that would contribute to answering the research questions in phase one. This gave the data slightly more structure, including some reflections at the time. Although this was a provision observation rather than an observation of young people there was occasionally reference to some participants. Only participants who had given consent were observed. Each observation was written up in the template, (see appendix 11 for an example of the Young Person Led provision observation). Once all three observations were transcribed a quantifiable interpretation was written. This incorporated comparisons between the three observed settings to generalise the data before coding into sub categories and categories. This was completed in the same way as the codes, categories and themes in the semi-structured interviews (See appendix 12).

4.5 Findings (Phase 1)

This research is structured around gaining an understanding from different population groups. Thus to comprehensively understand the 'story' (Ritchie et al, 2014), or themes that emerge from each group I have chosen to present the research findings according to each population. Within each separate group I consider the thematic framework that emerges. After presenting the findings of each group I then discuss them in terms of the extent to which each significant theme is comparable between each group. In accordance with an ethnographic approach I present an interpretation of what was shared by the different populations. This offers an understanding of the participant's experience, exploring and explaining rather than offering a measurement of commonalities (Ritchie et al, 2014).

The language is therefore tailored to embrace the richness of the data rather than frequency. In this research my interpretation of meaning is important, acknowledging that this interpretation could vary from that of another researcher. Thus as Ritchie et al (2014) discuss, rather than using specific numbers of participants I opt for 'recurrent or dominant' as appropriate language. (See appendix 12 for an example of observation analysis and appendix 15 for an excerpt of an interview analysis). Following a transcribed interpretation of the observations I analysed this in more detail using codes before further refining these codes into themes. See appendix 16 for a table which offers a list of categories accompanied by the codes the categories were developed from. Appendix 17 offers a complete table listing all themes developed from the interviews in phase 1 including the categories and codes the themes were developed from.

4.6 Provision Observation

To gain an understanding of the environment I observed the space in the three provisions involved in the research. I then interpreted what I had observed considering all three provisions together. I was interested in any potential influence the space might have on the young people. Thus apart from just considering the physical space I also reflected and interpreted how this might affect any young people in the environment. I also considered how this might be for a visitor arriving at the setting and how this might work practically (see appendix 6, observation template and appendix 16 for a breakdown of the categories and codes). The observation was divided into six categories. These are presented and discussed below:

Figure 1. Categories from provision observations

4.6.1 Location

The provision led facilities were difficult to find, each provision was located in an industrial estate. There seemed to be few directions to find each provision. Both of these provisions had a main space which was the nucleus of the provision. The young person led provision however had a space which was provided by the local council in a room where the Information Advice and Support for Send is located (IASS). One provision took advantage co-locating in the same industrial estate. A consistent theme in each provision was the issue of parking. However the young person led provision held its meetings in the evening so this would not be such an issue as spaces would become clear. Commonly the young people in all three provisions used taxis or were dropped off.

4.6.2 Building External

In terms of accessibility one provision had stairs which would act as a barrier to anyone requiring wheelchair access. An industrial appearance seemed to be a recurrent theme and my impression was that this was not inviting. In environments where young people were engaged in plastering, decorating or construction the appearance was less smart.

4.6.3 Building Internal

Parity in the arrival space was less common. The difference between provision led provisions included a very calming quiet and sedate space with sofas in the middle of a room with a window that offered a view of the countryside. Around the outside there were small animals that were kept as pets and used as part of an animal care course. My interpretation was that this was an area that young people could congregate with opportunity to mix without pressure to interact. Conversely in

another arrival space the environment was busy with a small refreshment area immediately when you walked in.

Toilets seemed to be a common contributing barrier for young people. Whilst I did not observe any participants entering the toilets, I was aware that there seemed to be a widespread avoidance of the toilets in one of the provisions. One toilet was situated in an exposed position where entering the toilet could be noticed by other staff and students. Conversely in the other two provisions the toilets were situated in discrete locations.

4.6.4 Provision for Individual Learners

Independent space where young people could work on their own away from other students was consistently available with outbreak group training areas. This included individual booths for those studying IT with space for a tutor. However, one provision was acoustically limited by the space in terms having a concrete floor and ceiling. Thus it was noisy with greater reverberation than the other provisions.

4.6.5 Meeting Spaces

Having a rest area where young people could arrive discretely was a recurrent strength. Although conversely in one provision this was very open and exposed. What seemed to work well was having a rest area away from the main rooms with comfortable chairs where young people could relax.

4.6.6 Internal Environment

In two settings there was carpet and soft furnishing such as dividers between work spaces. This helped reduce volume, reverberation and add clarity to the sound. Motivational and educational posters were widespread in the provisions. These included posters of grammar such as a full stop and semicolon or basic mathematics strategies and messages including ‘Stop hating yourself for everything you aren’t and start loving yourself for everything you already are’. There were also posters of ‘Blob Pictures’ asking the question, ‘which blob do you feel like today’.

4.7 Educational Psychologist Interviews

Educational psychologists are well placed to have a holistic understanding of the barriers and challenges young people need to overcome. This is in the respect that they work closely with children and young people with a variety of needs and can apply psychology to understand how young people develop within context. Their role is necessarily fluid according to the needs of children and young people (Norwich, 2000). In this study I aimed to gain a rich understanding of educational psychology perspective of the developing child throughout their life from early years to transition to adulthood. Thus 5 educational psychologists who work in primary, secondary and post 16 contexts were interviewed. Six themes emerged through the interviews. These are presented and discussed below:

Figure 2. Themes from interviews with educational psychologists

4.7.1 Practice

It was less common that educational psychologists identified their role as supporting a child through to adulthood.

> 'This year I am just primary…we don't really link up with the secondary side'
>
> David

Sharon recognised that part of her work with year six transitioning to secondary school would:

> 'Incorporate hopes for the future and perhaps thinking about where children might be going…'
>
> Sharon

Post 16 was identified as a new area that does not require educational psychology involvement a huge amount, implying that support from educational psychologists is only commissioned as a result of statutory obligation. There was a commonly held view that the role of an educational psychologist is to support children and young people through their educational experience. Moreover this is to employ psychological principles to support and maximise life outcomes.

> 'I see it about helping children to survive and thrive in the education system and to help those around them in schools…building those aspirations and hopes in terms of a positive out view.'
>
> Lucy

In terms of the role it is commonly noted that the role of an educational psychologist is not to offer a gateway to specific provisions. It is to support young people in making informed decisions about their future.

4.7.2 Support Outside Mainstream

It is important to note that this research is about provision for young people who struggle to access the traditional learning environment. Sharon and Lucy highlighted how person centred they had found traditional settings, acknowledging the support for SEND from mainstream providers. There was a strong opinion about having the right kind of person to support vulnerable young people. This seems to be a dilemma between having the right experience, training or skills and being the right kind of person in terms of individual characteristics.

> 'Some people just don't get it and can't put themselves in the shoes of a young person who might be struggling for whatever reason.'
>
> Sharon

The suggestion was getting the right person comes first. Thus having staff that are willing to learn a young person's life story and understand them seems appropriate. Educational psychologists highlighted the importance of developing appropriate relationships and fostering a relationship in terms of mentoring.

> 'To paraphrase Rogers, becoming an adult person includes other skills than what you're directly teaching.'
>
> Sharon

Appropriate support was suggested to have an ethos that embraces inclusion and community participation.

4.7.3 Knowledge of Post 16 Provision

Identifying a careers service that has knowledge and understanding of all provisions was a dominant suggestion.

> I can't imagine being in a meeting where I would need to know that information. I would just signpost them to career south-west…'
>
> John

Commonly the approach from educational psychologists is more around process than knowledge. However a concern about the quality of potential provisions was a recurrent question following the speed at which different provisions seem to emerge. There seems to be a challenge in staying current with so many new provisions cropping up, and a difficulty in understanding what they offer. Having said that there was recurrent belief that knowledge of the young person and what

provision is available is important. There was some awareness of what provision was available to young people although this was not widespread.

4.7.4 Journey to Post 16

Caroline discussed barriers to accessing post 16 provisions and suggested that there may be:

> 'Disengagement with education, some of these young people may not be attending school'
>
> Caroline

A strong feeling about transition to post 16 highlighted a lack of information sharing as a barrier to identifying an appropriate provision. Moreover, there was a tendency for adults around young people making the decisions, sending the young people to the local college. Success was attributed to person centred planning with a more nurturing type of provision. Knowing the young person and sharing the information to allow the young person's voice to be heard was to a recurring theme.

> '…we like to try and put these young people into categories and I don't think that they neatly fit into a category…The reality is that at a strategic level students are categorised by the very nature of the code of practice.'
>
> Caroline

Educational psychologists suggested that patterns of disengagement often emerge around year 8 or 9 and this is communicated through a decrease attendance. It was suggested that as they see disengagement in their learning this can become a challenge which will affect issues around aspirations and beliefs

about education. Transition particularly during adolescence was highlighted as a vulnerable time.

4.7.5 Policy

To achieve a successful transition to adulthood an appropriate environment was highlighted as a contributing factor. With a focus on process there seemed to be a difference in opinion about how much an educational psychologist should be armed with the appropriate knowledge about post 16 provision.

> ‘I can’t imagine being in a meeting where I would need to know that information, I would just signpost them.’
>
> John
>
> ‘I think parents are entitled to an informed choice…we need to be involved, to come in to them with some kind of informed view.’
>
> David

Of course there is another dilemma considering the extent to which a young person should work to fit into the provision, against the extent to which the provision should work to understand and support the needs of the young person.

> ‘It could be a question of what can we do to make this more successful rather than they don’t fit so they can’t stay on the course.’
>
> Lucy

The role of the educational psychologist was highlighted as helping young people engage in thinking about transition and weighing up the pros and cons of what the challenges might be, what courses they might choose and where they might

choose to study. The educational psychologist role beyond working collaboratively was highlighted as supporting young people to start thinking about the process.

4.7.6 Transition to Adulthood

My interpretation was that debate about NEET was a recurring theme. Whilst access to employment was highlighted as important there was a conflicting argument. This highlighted a greater importance to support young people to be healthy psychologically and socially able.

> ‘Employment isn’t necessarily going to be for everyone, obviously that is a goal, but it wasn’t there in my thinking. I was thinking more about someone who can function in society than someone who can function in an employed capacity.’
>
> David

4.8 Professionals Who Work With Young People

Professionals who work with young people should have an empirical understanding of challenges faced by young people. Six professionals were interviewed including careers advisors, information and advice service for SEND advisors, and staff who work directly with young people within post 16 provisions outside mainstream. Six themes emerged and these are presented and discussed in the following:

Figure 3. Themes from interviews with professionals working with post 16

4.8.1 Practice

The Children and Families Act 2014 was highlighted as having a significant influence on the practice of professionals who work with young people with SEND. In particular those professionals who work in an advisory and supportive role. One professional highlighted her role as being a new way of working as a result of the Children and Families Act 2014 that parents and young people are not particularly used to.

> '…often it's very difficult for young people to pick up the phone and contact somebody. You know they have special needs and they don't know what to say, what to ask for…'
>
> Jane (IASS)

It was generally felt that professionals need to work closely with vulnerable young people as they need additional help to move forward. There seemed to be a widespread view that young people can be in a time of unknowing where there is a 'blind spot' (Luft & Ingham, 1955) as a result of what is not known to themselves

but known to others. Thus the role was considered to be about matching in a person centred way (DfE, 2014). Staff had a consistent view that there was a need to be flexible and bespoke according to the needs of the young person. The dominant reason for this seemed to be an understanding that many of the young people had failed in mainstream.

> '…I see myself as looking at the problem and working out how they can cross the boundaries to be able to learn for the future… I work in a non-mainstream way, in a way that they can engage and learn without realising they are learning…'
>
> Wendy (Staff - Provision Led setting)

4.8.2 Underpinning Principles

It was highlighted that if a young person had failed in mainstream then a provision cannot expect to teach without finding a different way:

> 'I think a lot of it is around the trainers and their approachability and the provision being able to accept that sometimes young people have bad days… how the provision engages with that and how they break down the barriers that young person might have.'
>
> Emma (Careers Service)

Thus the principles seem to extend to the approach of the staff. It was consistently felt that those that work with these young people need to be accessible, building a relationship that allows them to give a bit of time to talk through problems. Whilst giving time it was suggested that staff would need the ability to recognise that young people don't always tell you exactly how they are feeling if they struggle. Moreover, some young people might struggle to understand their feelings and make sense of why they struggle. Professionals consistently highlighted the importance of knowing the young person. Recognising that no two young people are the same and:

> '…understanding where that young person's coming from, what are their barriers.'
>
> Emma (Careers Service)

It was suggested that they [the young people] need a positive outlook as they often don't get this at home. Underpinning principles were also described as supporting young people to learn about themselves and help them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. Thus enabling the young person to see their own worth and self-efficacy. Helping them to unpick the chaos and then move on with their education. Commonly, education was seen as flexible with a role to help young people integrate into the wider world.

> '…you can't have a blanket policy on how you talk to young people because they are all different and some might not want to engage in a certain way and some will but in their own way…'
>
> Ruth (Staff/facilitator - Young Person Led Provision)

In the case of the young person led provision the underpinning principles are very similar in many ways however there are differences as the role of the student is different. Part of this is about how the group is enabled to form, allowing them the agency to learn about developing the group as they develop their identity. Thus in many ways the underpinning principles were constructed through allowing the young people to develop according to their experience. There was a consistent view that by giving young people ownership, when the group was established, a voice from the young people evolved. Consequently the key underpinning principles for this provision were highlighted as having a voice, both individually and as a group and being respected equally.

> '…it is a very big cultural change, but I think it's also a big change for professionals to not give direct questions to me in a meeting and direct them to the young people. Equally I need to not jump in and answer.'

Ruth (Staff/facilitator - Young Person Led Provision)

There was a commonly held view that the provision needed to adopt a nurturing approach. This included keeping the young people safe, healthy, achieving what they aim to do and offering a positive contribution. It was mutually felt that there was a need to have a safe place for the young people. This was both a physical space in the shape of a chill out room and a model of working:

'We use PACE here (Golding & Hughes, 2012), so everything is very playful, with acceptance, encouraging curiosity with empathy. And it works for the students so there are no restraints and PACE is my model of success.'

Debbie (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

One of the principles that was discussed along with the PACE model was the belief that if a student can make one attachment in life then they can make others. The students were commonly described as a mix of young people with different needs including mental health, autism, attachment difficulties, looked after children and youth offenders. A less common view was the importance of supporting the parents and recognising the difficult journey they have been through:

'Their parents will be exhausted by the time they reach me. By the time these young people reach me I have very battered parents, they are exhausted, battered and it breaks your heart…'

Debbie (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

The educational structure in terms of day to day and weekly routine was in essence not a linear process and understanding barriers and personal complexities over time seemed to be a recurrent consideration. There was a

commonly held view that the size of the group had an impact on the development of the students:

> 'We look to create a small group working area for work around personal experience and work development away from education.'
>
> Mike (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

4.8.3 Journey to Post 16

It was less common that staff and professionals commented on individual difficulties that young people had been through before attending each provision. However staff were aware of the journey that their learners might have travelled:

> '…some of them have been in special education, some of them have been in pupil referral units, some of them have worked their way into college and it's not worked out and they came back to us and some of them have not managed to make mainstream at all yet…'
>
> Mike (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

It was generally acknowledged that the students were difficult to categorise however they were repeatedly discussed as having anxiety and mental health issues.

> 'I would say 60% of our young people are autistic, OCD or ADHD and they have an awful lot of triggers and worries around anxiety, around environments so the environment we have has got to be safe.'
>
> Mike (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

4.8.4 Support Outside Mainstream

It was common that professionals working with vulnerable young people outside mainstream had a working knowledge of different provisions. Moreover they had a reasonable understanding of the approach and what these provisions offered. My interpretation was that with often having experienced a challenging journey to post 16 young people struggled to articulate what they want. Gaining the voice of the child or young person seems to be more complicated than just asking where a young person might want to go and what they might want to study. Thus the importance of getting to know the principles and ethos of potential provisions seems to be significant.

There was a general knowledge of what is available. Provisions were broken down into the following:

- Youth work, charities or trusts, (this offers a 12 week course with a community project)
- A small provision linked to the local FE college, (this supports young people with life skills)
- A small provision linked to a college in another neighbouring local authority, (this is designed to help young people move forward)
- Work based learning or training at the FE college,
- Provisions that are small, new and bespoke projects,
- Alternative learning provisions for Young People with difficulties (these seem to primarily support young people with mental health or communication and interaction difficulties, however this is not a prerequisite to be on these courses)
- Flexible provisions offering just a few hours per week,
- Farm based provision that supports autism (offering construction, animal care, building fences or brickwork. (which also included transport)),
- Get a life project (a 12 week course using a barn in a rural setting)
- A new IT provider who specialises with young people who have communication and interaction difficulties
- Gardening in a local park (this could be linked in to doing gardening)
- Provisions funded by social care
- Providers of apprenticeships
- School sixth forms
- FE Colleges (with courses including catering or hospitality)

I was commonly signposted to the local offer, however professionals acknowledged that with so many provisions cropping up and consistently changing they were unsure how up to date that would be. Currently the careers advisory service in this location seem to be respected as having the most up to date knowledge. It was highlighted that if a placement or provision breaks down, communicating with this service is the most cohesive way to find an alternative provision. Travel and transport was identified as a particular issue and barrier to young people accessing an appropriate provision.

4.8.5 Policy

There was a widespread belief that provision for post 16 special educational needs had developed and emerged as a result of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE, 2014). Ownership seemed to be key to this with young people accomplishing control of their decisions:

> '…to get young people engaging in special educational needs and difficulties without adults making the decisions for them.'
>
> Ruth (Staff/facilitator - Young Person Led Provision)

More exceptional was the feeling that funding and the way this is drawn is a barrier to consistency in the provision across the local authority.

> '… so I would have to teach 50 students free for a year to pay all my bills and then at the end of the year just gone the government would pay me the year that has just gone…but what happens is the local authority also pay into the FE College so that is where they predominantly want the majority of the students to go…'

Debbie (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

There was a commonly held view that the current focus in post 16 education is tackling the NEET problem. There was also a widespread view that this extended to provisions specifically for young people who struggled with their independence and accessing mainstream provision:

'…post 16 is the new government playground. Because in time when young people are struggling to get jobs the government are going to look at it and they are going to say 'why aren't these young people getting jobs,' and they'll say it's because the post 16 provision isn't right for them…'

Emma (Careers Service)

It was frequently felt amongst staff who worked closely with the young people that curriculum expectations for vulnerable young people was unreasonable:

'It's like the fact that they have to have GCSE English and Maths grade C, what happens if they really don't get it and are not capable?'

Wendy (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

Young people seem to be aware of the raise in participation age (RPA), however less common seems to be the understanding about how this is monitored.

> '…we don't have an education welfare system, we don't have people monitoring it in quite the same way as it is pre-16, so you find young people can drop in and out of things…'
>
> Emma (Careers Service)

4.8.6 Transition to Adulthood

There was a commonly held view that the main role of the post 16 provisions was to aid transition to adulthood. The general feeling was that making the young people feel secure and giving them the skills to live independently was most important. It was generally felt that qualifications and aspirations for employment came after life skills, independence and feeling secure:

> '…I would say it's about transition to independence and adulthood, understanding that these young people have really struggled and that they are going to need extra support. I'm a firm believer that you can do your Maths and English when you are 65, but if you can't get the bus or go to the shops and feel confident…'
>
> Ruth (Staff/facilitator - Young Person Led Provision)

There was a strong feeling that most young people have parents or guardians making decisions for them. Support with making decisions seems to be a key concept as there was a dominant view that there are two things that young people don't like, assumptions and authoritative figures:

> '…they don't like people who assume things, people who presume they know what you think or they presume they know them because they have worked with other students. Also people that go about things in an authoritative way trying to tell them what to do.'
>
> Ruth (Staff/facilitator - Young Person Led Provision)

4.9 Findings from Interviews with Young People Who Attend Provision Led Provisions

These findings are based on interviews with five young people who attend a provision outside mainstream. Their needs are self-identified in section 4.9.2. These young people were recruited across two settings and offer an empirical understanding of their experience. Each interview was semi-structured in nature and analysed thematically. Six themes emerged and these are presented below:

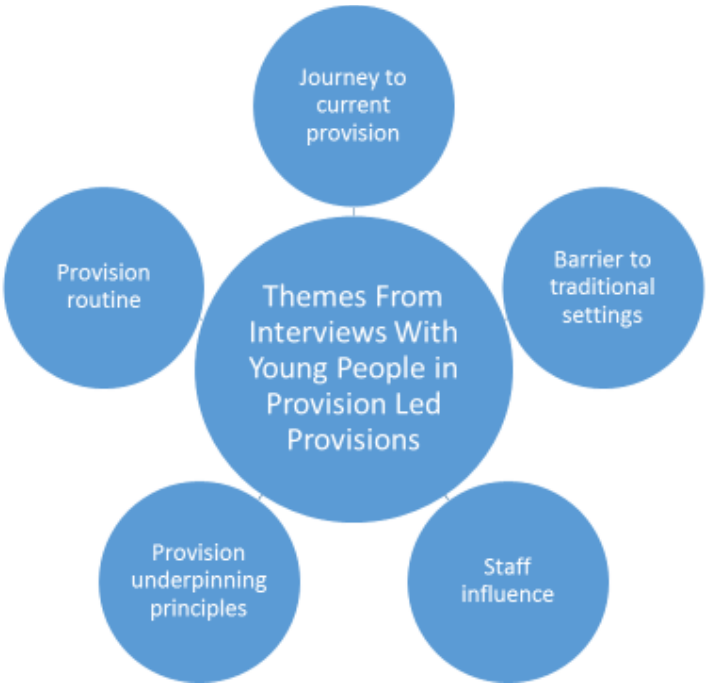

Figure 4. Themes from interviews with young people from provision led provisions.

4.9.1 Journey to Current Provision

It was commonly felt that the journey to the current post 16 provision had been challenging. The young people consistently reflected that the problem was within themselves rather than a reaction to things that happened.

> '…when I was at high school my behaviour wasn't too good and I got bullied really badly. My worst lesson was science because the person sat next to me was always bullying me,

so I kept walking out of that lesson… I just couldn't deal with it. It was horrible, so then I started to come here…'

Helen

There was a recurrent feeling that young people didn't know or understand how they transitioned to their current provision. Commonly the young people had tried other provisions before arriving at this provision:

'…then Darren hand a mental health episode…and it was decided that Daren's needs would be best met here…'

Mentor speaking for Darren (Staff – Provision Led Setting)

It was consistently articulated that the move to their current provision was sorted out by someone else. Interestingly the young people didn't make any reference to feeling upset about not being involved in the process.

'…I got told about it from someone in a charity for young people called…and he got me into this college…and I seem to like it…'

Danielle

'...I never knew it existed…I think I came here because people asked me if I wanted to come not because I knew about it, but I'm glad it was bought up to me…there was a lady from [a local charity]… she told me about it and just sorted it out…'

Helen

4.9.2 Barrier to Traditional Settings

The size of the provision was commonly discussed as a barrier to traditional settings. This included the size of the groups, the physical size and the noise. Moreover when young people discussed what works, with particular reference to

work experience, having a small setting was recurrent. Young people identified their own difficulties as an explanation for this including:

- ADHD
- Autism
- OCD with extreme attention to detail
- Anxiety
- Inability to cope independently
- Lack of confidence
- Mental Health Episodes
- Need of a clam atmosphere
- Having to rush

4.9.3 Staff Influence

The positive effect staff had on the young people was a dominant topic. In particular having 1-to-1 where young people could develop a relationship of reliable trust. It was consistently felt that the staff come from a person centred perspective where they make an effort to understand and know the young person.

> '…They will help you understand and they will help themselves understand why you did that and then they will put you on the correct path…they will just take you out of the situation and then they will help you…'
>
> Darren

It was commonly felt that staff were calm and collected, rarely raised their voice and treated the young people like adults.

> '…it's fine here because I'm with my mentor …when I am cooking she stands next to me to make sure everything is alright…It is a very calm atmosphere with no noise…there is no shouting, they try to keep it not stressed and relaxed.'
>
> Helen

It was highlighted that staff try to work out how to help the young people without seeing personal difficulties as a barrier to their development.

> ‘They accept that you have autism but don’t actually pay much attention to it or what it entails. They really help with that and focus on finding ways to make things easier for you.’
>
> Brian

4.9.4 Provision Underpinning Principles

There was a consistent view that the environment was key to having a successful provision. A recurrent point was how calm and ‘chilled out’ the atmosphere was. It was commonly felt that in these two provisions the space was appropriate for learning with private areas where young people could have their own time for learning or gathering their thoughts.

> ‘It is the environment and the way that like I stated, it’s not a school it is like a family and the environment is just so calm and relaxing and it’s a nice place to work in…if you want a quiet place to just sit and work they will give it to you so you can concentrate and work so you don’t have to involve yourself in the other people…’
>
> Brian

There was also a widespread view that staff and the provision will not give up on the young people, understanding their difficulties.

> ‘I think it [the provision] is here to help people get back into education and get people back on the right track…I mean you know education. To get them started on life. People come here and need to get back on the right track and enjoy life again and not worry. To overcome some difficulties.’
>
> Helen

4.9.5 Provision Routine

It was generally felt that the routine for each young person was bespoke and designed to support each individual young person.

> ‘I do my workbook in the afternoon, so these units are things like the college induction, customer service, one on basic cooking, one on preparing for work experience, we did one on time and we did one on money...I do Maths and English, sometimes they do it on a Tuesday or Wednesday…’
>
> Helen

There was a commonly held view that the level of education would be tailored to suit the young person and help them prepare for transition to adulthood. For some young people this was about independence and life skills and although less common this was also about transition to a university as an undergraduate:

> ‘I have got my level 1 diploma, my level 2 diploma, I’ve got my level 2 diploma in media, my level 2 in art and I have level 3 and my A-levels as well. And I have my functional skills level 2 in English as I completed my GCSE in maths.’
>
> Darren

A routine that allows young people to develop at their own pace, recognising that some might stay longer to develop their independence was raised.

> ‘I’m 19, I think I’m staying here next year as well.’
>
> Sarah

There was a widespread view that there were a number of different courses to suit the young people across the two settings including:

- Art
- Catering
- Animal Care
- Painting and decorating (including wallpapering)
- IT (Computers)
- Media
- Construction/building

- Science
- Work Skills – to prepare young people for work experience

4.10 Findings from Interviews with Young People (YP) Who Attend a Young Person Led Provision.

These findings are based on interviews with five young people who attend a young person led provision. It should be noted that this provision is not their educational or training provision but a forum, run by young people to support young people. The following includes an insight into their awareness of what was available as they moved towards post 16 education. The role of this provision emerged as having particular importance to these young people and this is discussed in the emergent themes. Each young person was interviewed using semi-structured interviews which were then analysed using thematic analysis. Five themes emerged and these are presented below:

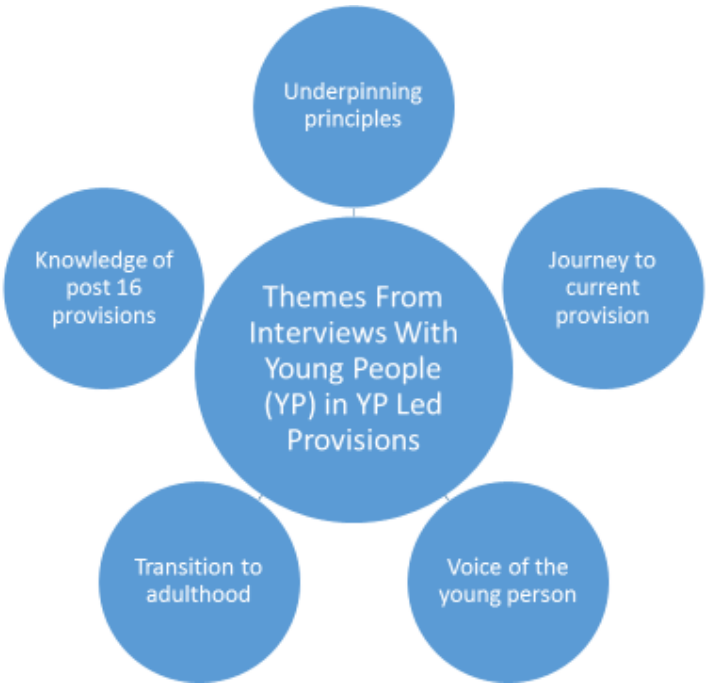

Figure 5. Themes from interviews with young people (YP) from YP led provisions.

4.10.1 Underpinning Principles

It was commonly identified that this provision began as a result of the local authority acknowledging a lack of suitable provisions which was highlighted in an Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2016). There was a widespread feeling that they had a purpose. It was commonly felt that only those who are disabled or have a special educational need can completely understand what it is like to have a disability.

> 'Well, we want to help everyone get equal opportunities in education, no matter what their disability if they have sensory, mental health, physical… so anything really.'
>
> Hanna

The young people commonly felt that it was important that they all had an opportunity to speak when engaged in the forum.

> 'Well we have main points of what people have trouble with like transport, so buses…'
>
> Hanna

The young people also generally acknowledged a wider purpose and identified feeding data about young people to the right places. Moreover they commonly aimed to hold people accountable for what they do with the information they pass on. In particular the young people identified 6 main principles that they had negotiated in their meetings.

> 'So we want equality between people who have SEND and those that don't, we also have 6 main points: Equality, unity so a united voice for people with SEND, diversity so the acceptance of diverse disabilities and conditions, community so really we want people to respect each other, values and changes, we want to see changes around us and make life easier for us. And they are not big changes most of the time they are just small things

that can help us to integrate more…I feel that with the power it has behind it with the collective voice of all young people with SEND people have to listen.'

Fred

4.10.2 Journey to Current Provision

It was commonly felt that the journey to post 16 had been difficult with a recurrent lack of provision knowledge.

'I heard about it [the current provision] at school because we have a hearing support centre for the deaf and the teacher of the deaf told me and one other student about it.'

Hanna

Some young people found negotiating themselves to post 16 particularly difficult and in extreme cases became NEET as a result of their experience.

'I went to secondary school and it was absolutely terrible…10 going on to 11 caused me a lot of issues…just didn't really want to be in school…when you get to year 11 it just hits you in the metaphorical sense, you just feel alone…I felt so alone…I kept getting this horrible feeling of being like there will always be people who will succeed but no matter what happens someone will always fail…I failed again. Then I ended up leaving school…at the time you are in a state of chaos in your head…'

Aaron

4.10.3 Voice of the Young Person

In terms of the voice of the young people there was a widespread view that everyone in the group was given their chance to speak while everyone else listened. In order to represent all young people with SEND the young people commonly discussed gaining a greater understanding of the voice of young people

through visiting schools and other provisions. Also a view that they are listened to in the strategic meetings and they felt there was a power to their voice. The young people with physical disabilities generally seemed to trust other people to inform them and support them to make a judgement about the next step. In the case of the young people with more developmental disabilities such as autistic spectrum condition they seemed to find the whole process much more complex.

> '…The IASS [information and advice service for SEND] mainly support my parents but I have always had a good relationship with them…They are an impartial advocate for anyone who wants their services…so they are not necessarily on the parents side or the schools side but they are an intermediary that helps you say what you want to say.'
>
> Fred

4.10.4 Transition to Adulthood

As a result of previous experience there was a widespread feeling that these young people wanted to take the role of improving opportunities for other young people. Thus for them it was not about getting anything out of the experience in terms of self-development. It was consistently felt that it was the educational provisions that were responsible for their personal development. The young people commonly saw their role in this provision as supporting other young people with SEND. Although less common some skills that could be argued as useful in terms of transition to adulthood were identified:

> '… [talking about the other educational post 16 provision] it is focussed on academics but not the same way as a degree…it is about you learning the skills to get you into a position…they go another step forward to where you want to be…what makes this provision so different for me as someone with autism is that they pick up on people's strengths and weaknesses, capitalising on the strengths and supplementing their weaknesses…'
>
> Fred

> 'I have developed leadership and the ability to work with other people and learning about how the system works.'

Clare

4.10.5 Knowledge of Post 16 Provisions

A lack of post 16 provision knowledge was consistently identified by the young people. Hanna and Clare identified provisions that could support hearing and sight impairment respectively. This narrowed the decision of staying at school or moving to a provision specifically for young people with sight impairment for Clare and moving to a provision with a hearing support centre that offered the course Hanna wanted to do. Daisy was clear to start with that she wanted to study a business course. She therefore only looked at provisions that did business courses.

> 'Um, the college, another provision that is linked to the college, a provision that was originally set up as a Christian charity, they do a business course, that's about the only three I know really.'
>
> Daisy

There was an understanding of what courses were available however this was not detailed, particularly if the courses were not of interest to the participant. Rather than choice of course the young people were interested in exploring appropriate support. Fred described his journey as one of a collaborative one, investigating provisions through the support of the information and advice support service and his parents.

4.11 Phase 1 Discussion

I have structured the following discussion around the research questions for phase 1.

4.11.1 Research Question 1, Provision for Young People Post 16 Who Are Not Comfortable in a Traditional Learning Environment

In addressing the first research question I have found more complexity than just a list of different provision. This has raised questions about what should be known about provision in terms of matching provision to young people successfully beyond appropriate courses. Moreover, what is known by those involved in the process to support an informed decision according to their role. The findings have illustrated different perspectives and approaches to what provision is and can be for young people. Gifford (2007) highlighted the definition of environment as one that has emerged with a focus on the interrelationship between environments and human affect, cognition, and behaviour. This is useful in understanding the influence a provision might have on the educational experience of a young person.

De Young (2013) drew on this to present an information processing model, suggesting that all environments are patterns of information. Whilst I posit that our interrelationship can be explained in a more social approach this goes some way to introducing the diverse influence that can be experienced within a provision. Tomlinson (1996) was highlighted in the literature as making a breakthrough for inclusion by reconceptualising provision for students. However availability of this provision and knowledge of how to match a young person with this provision still seems to be an area of need (Ofsted, 2016). The requirement for local authorities to set out the local offer (DfE, 2014) to give information on provisions seems to be something which is largely unknown at post 16. There were contrasting opinions about what different people should or should not know according to their role. There does seem to be a wide understanding of what courses are available in

terms of academic provision, however opinion seems divided about what provision knowledge there should be.

Whilst educational psychologists resisted adopting a role of gatekeeper it was acknowledged that they should know more to support an informed choice. Other professionals felt that whilst they could not know all provisions they were aware of many provisions with flexible and vocational packages. What was useful about this knowledge was that they also had an impression of provision outside the local authority which could be accessed and what need many of these provisions supported. The literature highlights the difficulty with categorising students (Ofsted, 2013). This is significant as knowing the students is one step to matching the provision. My position is that making an informed decision is a collaborative process which should be an informed decision. Moreover there is a clear role for educational psychologists to be at the centre of this embracing a Plan Do Review cycle (DfE, 2014).

An informed decision is complex and draws on more information than simply the voice of the young person. It requires understanding of the need of the young person, courses available, support available and the appropriateness of the environment to make an informed decision. In term of what provision there is, my interpretation is that there is an over reliance on the careers service to hold all the information on provisions. Generally the young people had tried other provisions which did not work for them before arriving at their current provisions. There was a recurrent feeling that young people didn't know or understand how they transitioned to their current provision. Moreover a limited knowledge of post 16 provision was common. However, they seemed grateful that the transition had happened and they had found an appropriate provision where they felt safe. This

highlights a difficulty in matching provision successfully even after the changes in legislation (DfE, 2014).

In some cases having a limited knowledge seemed less important as there was a comprehensive knowledge of provision that could support a particular area of need. This was largely the case for young people who have sensory impairments, such as vision or hearing. With reference to having an understanding of what is available the choice for young people can be exceedingly complex. The *'Oversight of special education for young people aged 16-25'* (Ofsted, 2011) is now an old report. However with limited literature in this area (Morris & Atkinson, 2018), and a lack of provision knowledge it is difficult to know if this has been addressed appropriately. What seems to be a concern however is that even if there is appropriate provision to match the need of young people outside mainstream there seems to be little knowledge outside the careers services.

4.11.2 Research Question 2 Principles that Underlie the Design of the Provision

The literature highlights a change in post 16 provision following the extension of full time education age range (Education and Skills Act, 2008). The change in legislation (DfE, 2014) is acknowledged as having influenced huge change with local authorities now held accountable for support alongside this growth from 0-25. There is little known literature about young person led provision, or forums of this kind that support decision making at a strategic level. Those involved in the forum felt strongly that due to their own disabilities they were more qualified to understand disability and special educational needs. In terms of the young person led provision what seemed unique was that the young people very much took ownership of the philosophical principles that underpinned the provision.

A change in legislation requires a change in mindset, which is reflected in Ofsted reports as slow to develop (Ofsted, 2016) and it was generally felt that educating change were the principles of the group. What is interesting about these principles is that they were constructed as part of the formation process. The facilitator understood that the richness of the group comes from allowing and encouraging the young people to have control of the process. This can be a challenge as this includes developing group forming skills which can take time trusting that the quality in the future will be better for it. This was a hidden principle that supported personal development through working as a group. This is something that grew and developed in accordance with Tuckman's group formation theory (1965). I argue that the personal development that happens as a result of being part of this group of young people is less obvious which explains why it was identified less. The young people commonly felt the principles were about what they had to offer, the meaning and making a difference to other young people with SEND. However, concurrently, the principles were also about developing skills as a group which would further enrich these young people's transition to adulthood.

Morgan and Risen (2016) introduce three areas of transition to adulthood that seem to sit within post 16 education. These are education, employment and independent living. I noticed that to some degree the principles of each provision are to support these, however the focus seemed to shift depending on the perspective of the staff. Although less common it was highlighted that we should accept that not all young people will have the skills to move into employment accepting difference in accordance with Wedell (2008). Knowing the young person was a key thread which was reflected in the literature (DfE, 2014). But this extended to understanding their past journey and what kind of learner they might

be as a result of their past. This could include difficulties accessing mainstream education or a breakdown in their post 16 placement.

Forte, Jahoda and Dagnan (2011) highlighted the difference in worries of young people according to the level of their need. This was reflected in the findings that highlighted feeling safe and secure above financial and employment success for some young people. For these young people with social, emotional and mental health challenges PACE was presented as an appropriate model (Golding & Hughes, 2012). As a principle this placed a nurturing approach above educational achievement, qualifications to teach and in some cases even teaching experience. This is very much part of the provision ethos which supports the personal barriers identified in the literature as anxiety from being bullied or losing friends (Forte, Jahoda and Dagnan, 2011). This implies that provisions support these barriers rather than getting a job or finance however the key principle is that this can only come when psychological wellbeing is secure.

4.11.3 Research Question 3: Young People's Experiences of Support from Post 16 Provisions Outside the Traditional Post 16 Settings

It is important to recognise the potential feelings of insecurity vulnerable young people feel following the journey to their current post 16 settings. My interpretation is that many young people with SEND have very low self-esteem and self-efficacy when they arrive at their provision outside mainstream. Anxiety and mental health issues were recurrently recognised in the data. This was supported by the literature that highlighted difficulties experienced by young people attempting to integrate into settings with particular reference to anxiety and mental health (Lawrence, 2011). Typically young people had struggled to engage with various provisions before finding themselves in an appropriate provision outside

mainstream. In this study a number of young people were unaware how they transitioned to their current provisions even if they were part of the process which highlights the complexity of transition and decision making for these young people.

This transition is clearly a difficult time as identified by Nuttall and Woods (2013). This raises concern about the progress in firstly establishing appropriate provision, a deficit raised through Ofsted (2016) and secondly transition. The voice of the child or young person (DfE, 2014) is consistently encouraged, however this decision making process still seems to be placing many young people in provision that breaks down. Personal and social development have been identified as key to progression to adulthood (Nuttall and Woods, 2013). This was identified by staff for example Mike from a Provision Led Setting) who recognised a number of barriers for young people during this key point of transition. However a common experience of young people is still one of overwhelming challenge.

Their experience outside mainstream however was one where the need for an induction period was understood. There is little known literature about the relationships young people have with staff in post 16 settings outside mainstream settings. However, young people commonly identified that the staff were interested in them. For them this seemed to be at the heart of the provision experience. Moreover that staff adopted a nurturing approach, tailoring their support to the young people. For Example, Brian described his provision as a family that helps young people overcome their difficulties (autism in his case) working out how to help ‘you’.

It should be noted that forming a relationship with one key member of staff seemed to have the greatest effect from the young person’s perspective. This

seems to draw on the PACE principles primarily focusing on acceptance. There seems to be a clear importance that young people understand they are accepted for who they are regardless of their difficulties or barriers. The literature seems to acknowledge a focus on academic achievement (Forte, Jahoda & Dagnan, 2011), within provisions. Previous Ofsted reports identified a lack of suitable places available for young people with complex needs. This could be the case with a greater need for provisions outside mainstream and a cohesive transition to them. However, these provisions outside the traditional settings seem to offer a framework to support young people according to their need with the mentoring role at the heart of it.

Chapter 5 Phase 2 Findings

This chapter follows a similar structure to chapter 4. After a reminder of the research questions I present a demographic table of participants for phase 2, including which participants were only involved in phase 2. The data collection methods are then summarised before the data are presented according to the interview groups, introducing the interview themes that emerged. This is then discussed according to the interview questions for phase 2. The analysis method was discussed for both phases in chapter 4.

5.1: Research Questions

4. What is the identity of post 16 young people in these alternative settings as perceived by themselves?

5. What do they and others working with them perceive as influencing these identities, including their participation in these alternative settings?

5.2: Participants

5.2.1 Table 4 Participant Demographic Data (Phase 2)

Participant number	Age 18 and above	Age below 18	Male/Female	Type
Daisy	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**YPL**
Fred	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**YPL**
Hanna	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**YPL**
Aaron	**N**	**Y**	**M**	**YPL**

Clare	**N**	**Y**	**F**	**YPL**
Darren	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**PL**
Brian	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**PL**
Sarah	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**PL**
Andrew*	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**PL**
Helen	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**PL**
Gaynor*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**
Sally*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**
Jess*	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**
Stewart*	**Y**	**N**	**M**	**ST**
Ruth	**Y**	**N**	**F**	**ST**

* Signifies participants that were only involved in phase 2.

**It should be noted that pseudonyms are used for all participants to protect their anonymity.

*** Ethnicity is not included as it is not relevant to this research and could compromise the anonymity of the participants.

Key

YPL – Young Person Led Provision

PL – Provision Led Provision

ST – Staff

5.3 Data Collection Methods

5.3.1 Drawing Your Ideal Self

To address question 4 and question 5 from the perspective of the young people and those working with them I aimed to explore the personal constructs of the young people and what they perceived as influencing these constructs. Beaver (2011) highlighted that highly linguistic-based methods do not always generate rich conversation from young people and children in terms of understanding their model of the world. This is also my experience in practice, I therefore aimed to employ a method that involved semi-structured drawing and talking exercises to elicit each participant's model of themselves and what had influenced them. This was achieved by eliciting thoughts and perceptions of the young people through an activity based on a personal construct psychology technique known as 'Drawing the ideal self' (Moran, 2006).

I chose this technique because it has a structure that I could generalise with all the young people participants. Pervin and Cervone (2010), describe the ideal self as a concept recognised by Carl Rogers, which people conceptualise in the present but also in the future. In terms of understanding the identity of a young person this includes meanings that are valued and relevant to the individual. Understanding of self constructs offers a psychological structure of how people understand themselves within their environment (Rogers, 1961). Thus there is the opportunity to get below the surface of the individual. Through getting immersed in the hypothetical imagined world of each participant I gained a greater understanding of the 'self' (identity). Moreover, this activity facilitated a reflection of themselves and an understanding of the movement in their core constructs. This enabled the

young people to recognise the progress and what has supported that progress in their post 16 experience.

All 10 young people were asked to draw their non-ideal self and then their ideal self, a small drawing in the centre of a blank A4 sheet of paper. The drawing itself was not important so if anyone could not draw or did not want to I had some clip art pictures they could have used. However, all participants were happy to draw, even if it was only a ‘stick’ drawing. Once they had completed each drawing I asked them to state 3 things about the person. At this point I acted as the scribe while they talked. I wrote the 3 things about the person next to drawing of the person, followed by the potential influences which I wrote under the following sub-headings: Bag, Birthday Present, Family, Friendships, Greatest Fear, History and Future. (See appendix 9 for interview questions and appendix 13 and 14 for a completed interview example).

As discussed by Beaver (2011) in considering drawing opposites (in this case the ideal and non-ideal self), and exploring the core constructs about particular influences in their life it was possible to gain an interpretative understanding of their world beyond a superficial level. The technique then explores influences through a version of the Salmon Line (Salmon, 1988). This includes a horizontal line drawn between two polar opposites. In this case the two polar opposites are the non-ideal self, which I placed to the left of the line and the ideal self which I placed to the right of the line. I then split the line into a scale from 0-10. 0 being the person one would not like to be and 10 being the person one would like to be. In practice I found that the young people identified constructs and influences about their identity from before they started at their current provision to where they felt they were at that time.

I then asked each participant where they thought they were on the scale when they started at their post 16 provision and where they thought they are now. Following this I asked them how they thought the staff that worked with them and their family would answer this question, thus mapping their development over time. I then continued to probe asking them the following questions:

- Why this number and not less?
- If there had been movement I asked them ‘what do you think the change was down to?
- If there was no movement I asked ‘why you think that was?’
- I then asked them what they thought they might need to do to move to a 10.

Throughout this scaling exercise, I scribed for them underneath the scale. My reflection of this activity was that beyond gaining an understanding of the identity of each young person as perceived by themselves, the young people also found the activity uplifting, as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the progress they had made and what had influenced it. Following each ‘drawing the ideal self’ activity I transcribed my interpretation of the raw data and analysed using thematic analysis as discussed in chapter 4.

5.3.2 Semi-structured interview

To answer the second part of research question 5, I employed a semi-structured interview approach. Where possible the participants recruited were staff who worked directly with the young people who were participants in phase 2. In the provision led settings each member of staff worked 1:1 with a young person and were able to comment on their feelings about what influenced these identities, including participation in their provision. In the case of the young person led

provision this was facilitated by only one member of staff who was able to give a general view in accordance with the other participants.

This was carried out in the same way as the semi-structured interview procedure in phase 1. The data were also recorded in the same way using a Zoom H4 hand held recorder before transferring the recordings to a password protected computer and deleting the file from the HD card once the recordings were recorded. The data were then transcribed and analysed using a thematic analysis as discussed in chapter 4.

After selecting the 'Draw your ideal self' personal construct psychology activity I felt that it was important that the interview questions induced comparable answers, including the same scaling questions (See appendix 10).

5.4 Data Analysis Procedure (Phase 2)

The different types of data collection across phase 2 included a 'draw your ideal self activity' and semi-structured interviews. The analysis in phase 2 followed the same procedure as in phase 1 (see section 4.4.2). However, before being able to analyse the 'draw your ideal self' activity I needed to achieve a comparable transcription of the data. An extra step was added from raw data to thematic analysis to capture my interpretation (See appendix 13 for an example of raw data). This included writing up my interpretation of the data including the influence on constructs of each participant's identity followed by what was learnt from the scaling.

This was written in accordance with my ontological and epistemological stance and therefore influenced by my subjection (See appendix 14 for an interpreted interview demonstrating the steps to analysis). This data was then analysed in the

same way as the semi-structured interviews. Whilst analysing the data I aimed to employ an inductive reasoning, thus thinking about the common themes and reasoning about them. In this way it is accepted that the knowledge is 'provisional' (Thomas, 2013) and the best that can achieved with the data elicited. Moreover, it is accepted that the findings are not fixed and may be superseded with different participants, in a different environment or context change.

5.5 Phase 2 Findings:

The Phase 2 data incorporated an extra step added from raw data to thematic analysis to capture my interpretation (illustrated in Appendix 14). The analysed data included codes before further refining these codes into categories, before further refining these categories into themes. Appendix 18 illustrates a complete table listing all themes developed from the interviews in phase 2 including the codes and categories the themes were developed from.

The following section is structured by interview group according to the themes that emerged.

5.6 Provision led Provision Interview with Young People

The young people from two provision led provisions outside the traditional settings were asked to engage in a 'draw your ideal self' (Moran, 2006) personal construct psychology activity. Polar opposites of their ideal and non-ideal self constructs were used to elicit their view of this experience. Due to the abstract nature of the activity the young people's constructs are not quoted directly but a researcher critique was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke,

2006), six key themes emerged from the data. These are presented in figure 6 and discussed below:

Figure 6. Themes from Interviews with Young People in Provision Led Provisions

5.6.1 Self-description

The young people commonly described themselves in terms of 3 dominant categories:

- Creativity, with a particular focus on imagination (Darren)
- Interests, for example Marvell superhero comics (Brian)
- Appearance, for example having hair in a pony-tail rather than being messy (Helen).

Although less common there was also reference to a more literal answer, describing Wasps as the greatest fear.

5.6.2 Pivotal Point in Life

There was a recurrent area of focus that seemed to have a significant influence on the young people. This was an event or experience of some kind that each of them had experienced. Andrew discussed his past as a time when he had no meaning. He described this person as ‘Larry the Loaner’, someone who nobody knows. Daren explained that he had experienced a ‘destructive relationship’ in the past and was very clear that his history was something that he ‘chose to forget’. This seemed to be a point in his life that he chose to leave behind and in his words ‘will never be open to it’ and will ‘keep it under lock and key’. Sarah stated that she had ‘been through some difficult things when she was little’ and identified bullying, being nasty and disrespectful as non-ideal constructs.

5.6.3 Relationships

There were differing concepts of what friends were and how important they were to the young people. Helen identified the staff and people who supported her in the provision as her friends whilst Darren suggested that he had 50 -100 friends and that he ‘finds a way to talk to everyone’. Although this was less common it seemed that having friendly acquaintances was important. For Brian having one or two close friends that he can be close to that he could trust is important. He was clear that he wanted to be his own person with the opportunity to make his own decisions without his family interfering. However, it was noteworthy that he felt if he was on the wrong path he appreciated that his family wanted the best for him and would try and help him by ‘pushing him in the right direction’. He seemed to value the security they offered whilst aspiring to transition to independence.

For other young people family was important, however the concept of what family was to them differed. Andrew had identified the fear of being alone and how when he was younger his parents forgot his 14th birthday. He identified his family as a 'military family', elevating them in terms of their values and standards with particular reference to having honour and meaning. Sarah highlighted how the support from her family had helped her and how important it was. Moreover she discussed how she was brought up by a loving and caring family.

5.6.4 Purpose in Life

Having meaning in life was a dominant area of focus. There was a common feeling that the young people wanted to be successful in life. The recurrent definition of this was to have a job and secure relationships with family and friends. Brian highlighted that his greatest fear would be if his family and friends abandoned him. These young people were aware of the influence of their past and discussed how this influenced their aspiration. For example Andrew wanted to join the military like his parents, despite feeling alone as a child.

5.6.5 Mentor Role

The help and support of a mentor was commonly highlighted as having an influence on the development of the young people. Sarah discussed that her mentor had 'helped with her self-belief' and in turn her journey to adulthood. Andrew described how most of all he trusts his mentor and that, 'he has been there when I needed someone to talk to'. Helen informed me that she valued her mentor's 'sense of humour' and how much she makes her laugh.

5.6.6 Personal Growth

The most common area of personal growth seemed to be confidence. Brian stated that he now feels that he can ‘deal with real life situations’ including budgeting, and cooking for himself. He also described how he feels that he now has the resilience to ‘manage good and bad experiences with other people’. As the provision for young people with EHCP’s has grown and acknowledges the importance of a 0-25 provision rather than a 0-19 provision (DfE, 2014) young people now have more time.

5.7 Young Person led Provision Interview with Young People

As above the young people in this provision engaged in a draw your ideal self activity and polar opposites were used to elicit their views. Thematic analysis led to five key themes which are shown in figure 9.

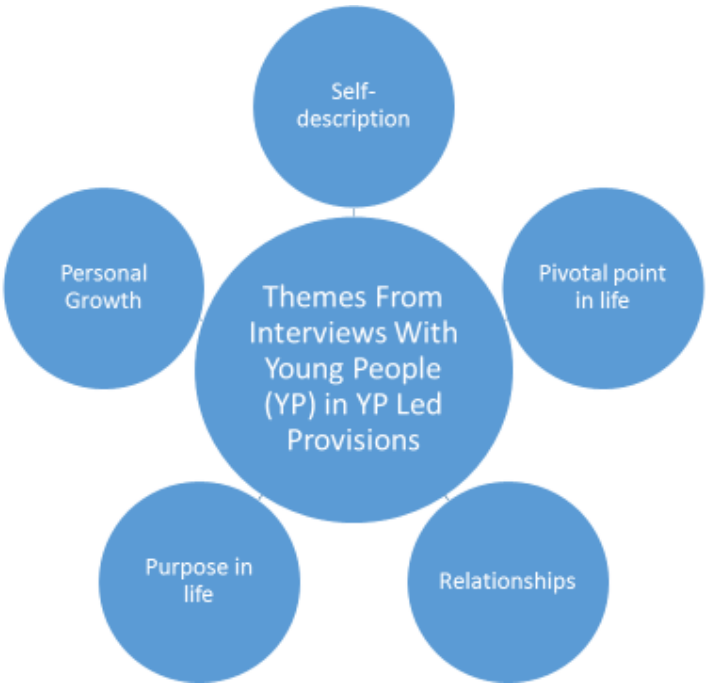

Figure 7. Themes from Interviews with Young People (YP) in a YP Led Provision

5.7.1 Self-description

In many ways the findings of the young person led provision drew parallels with the staff led provision. However, I suggest that commonly these young people had worked through many of their difficulties and in some cases did not present with the same level of vulnerability. There was a subtle difference in the self-description. What was consistent however was their understanding of disability. Although less common Daisy described herself as hardworking and valued her appearance, including ‘makeup and shoes’. It was clear that being resilient and not making any excuses epitomised her approach to life.

There was a recurrent focus on internal values. Aaron described how as a result of his past he could have ‘easily become violent and self-centred’ but now describes himself as a mentor for the group. Commonly the young people were not materialistic and valued genuine people. Clare described herself as someone who, ‘looks out for other people’s well-being’, whilst Hanna described herself as ‘loyal’.

Fred epitomised the identity of the group and described himself as someone who doesn’t ‘just tick boxes for self-gain, particularly if it is at the expense of others’. He judged people who only want ‘material things like mobile phones’. What was important to him was to have genuine friends who are, ‘genuine, loyal and care about each other’. There was a clear will to support each other and other people with SEND, be genuine and place doing the right thing over self-gain.

5.7.2 Pivotal Point in Life

There was a recurrent point in life that mirrored the young people in provision led settings. Fred informed me that he historically had many struggles to deal with, but with support from others he has ‘learnt from his mistakes’ and developed a ‘will to support others’. Hanna said that she had a supportive and nurturing family and she ‘wants to help people’. The young people identified that they could have also made different life choices which could have taken them in a different direction. This could easily have been in an opposite direction than supporting and helping others. Daisy discussed how it was up to her to make a decision about how her past had affected her. She decided that she wanted to influence people’s understanding of disability to achieve change. Clare informed me that she could have become selfish and lonely but she decided to become content and happy. Whereas Aaron identified that he could have become violent and self-centred and now finds a purpose in the group.

5.7.3 Relationships

Aaron informed me that he wanted to ‘continue to develop relationships and find true love’. It was commonly felt that if they had friends they would need to have the same values. However the recurrent focus was that of family support. Aaron described his family as ‘amazing’. Clare described how she feels so secure with her family that she ‘would be happy to live a long way from them’ whilst still knowing they would be there for her. Fred emphasised ‘meaning behind the support’ from his parents. Whilst Hanna informed me that her family want the best for her and her greatest fear would be that ‘she let them down’.

5.7.4 Purpose in Life

Each of these young people felt that they had a purpose in life which was personified in their participation in the young person led provision. Hanna informed me that she feared, ‘not having the confidence to get involved and make a difference’. Being a good person was important to her. Fred discussed that he would like to ‘support others…’ and ‘help others to help themselves’. The opportunity to help through this provision was a dominant focus they all shared. Aaron described how after being in provisions that have broken down leading to him now being NEET, belonging and having an input is important to him. He also felt that although he had an individual purpose the strength came from the group identity. Daisy epitomised this by stressing the importance of the group ‘working for change…to improve things for other people with SEND’.

5.7.5 Personal Growth

There was a dominant understanding that each young person had grown whilst they had been part of the provision even if they didn’t attribute this directly to the provision. The young people commonly talked about how much they had developed. They also unanimously felt that their family and the staff that worked with them would recognise their personal growth. Although less common this was attributed to the experience of engaging in discussions about different topics and working in smaller groups to come up with strategies. Developing in confidence, communicating and getting to know people was a common feeling in the group. It was interesting that by reflecting on what others might say the young people could commonly recognise their personal growth as a more concrete development.

It was more common that the young people identified their educational provision rather than participation in the group as having the greatest influence on their personal development. However, Fred felt that having the opportunity to grow through having the opportunity to be part of something where he felt respected and valued as a member of the team was important to his personal development. Hanna highlighted being with more people and getting out of her ‘bubble’ as helping her to become less shy and more confident. This was echoed by Aaron who felt that being part of the group and having a group identity supported his personal growth.

5.8 Interviews with Staff and Adults Who Work with Young People

Five staff who work with the young people involved in the research were asked to comment and discuss their experience of the young people’s identity. The questions had a particular reference to what they perceive as influencing these identities, including their participation in these alternative settings. From the analysis of data, six key themes emerged and these are presented in figure 8 and discussed in the following.

Figure 8. Themes from Interviews with Staff and Adults Who Work With Young People.

5.8.1 Category of Learner

Whilst staff commented on common traits and behaviours in the young people the fact that they are all individual and thus difficult to categorise was a dominant theme. Gaynor described the learners as having ‘additional needs’, she also discussed that most have autism, sometimes they have mental health issues and sometimes they have both. She felt that although less common some have pathological demand avoidance syndrome (PDA). Gaynor also felt that all the young people wanted to learn but struggled with the ‘classroom atmosphere’. It was commonly felt that the young people typically struggled with all 4 areas of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 (DfE, 2014). Ruth informed me that they [the young people] manage things in very different ways stating, that communication and interaction was their greatest barrier.

> ‘We have young people that have been in mainstream school that can’t cope, people on the autistic spectrum, we have young people with behavioural issues that have been to a pupil referral unit (PRU) before coming here. A lot of students are very angry or withdrawn, we tend to see lots of behaviour, acting up where they are used to being restrained…They can’t cope in mainstream education, that’s it really in a nutshell.’
>
> Ruth

It was commonly felt that learners ‘view the world from within a box’, looking at things in a different way. The learners were commonly described as having a detailed focus with a heightened sensory awareness. As a result they are often knowledgeable about one thing and struggle to see the importance of widening their learning to other subjects. Stewart said ‘they live for computer games’ and used an example of a student who enjoys ‘streaming…which is playing a computer game online with other people whilst this is being shown live in YouTube so that other people watch.’

5.8.2 Tailored Curriculum

This theme is relevant to the young people in staff led provisions. The induction phase as a settling in period was a recurring theme.

> ‘When they [the young people] come in they are very unsure, there is an initial settling in period of a good couple of months where they don’t know what they want to do. You don’t know them and they don’t know you.’
>
> Jess

This induction phase was commonly discussed as an important period often following a break down in a previous setting. In terms of the routine it was commonly discussed that it takes time for young people to feel secure in the provision. The experience of the staff was that commonly this extended to attendance following a holiday or a break.

> '…I think being out in the big bad world frightens them, I think if they had something like this post this provision they would be quite happy as it would offer them a security net…'
>
> Sally

Although less common the importance of joining the support up with home and school was discussed.

> 'Also I do support parents with completing the personal independence payment forms for their young people so that they get what they're entitled to, because they often struggle with filling out these forms. Basically pastoral care with students and supporting with parents…'
>
> Sally

Understanding the young people and their needs in terms of the classroom environment, self-efficacy and 'building confidence to have a go' were dominant themes.

> '…we build the confidence by getting them to do things, we never set them up to fail and this is a term you will hear all the time but we really don't.'
>
> Gaynor

The staff discussed their aspiration in terms of getting the young people ready for transition to adulthood and independence. This was tailored so that it progressed at the pace the young person could cope with. However staff commonly felt that

this would follow a structure of making them feel safe, then preparing them for employment followed by some work experience. This also included appropriate functional skills so their Mathematics and English are at a level required for employment.

> '…we put our arms around them and make them feel safe and that they are happy doing what they are doing…then the second year the job coach sort of role is to get them ready…preparing them for interviews, trying to find them work experience placement outside of our facility…'
>
> Jess

5.8.3 Knowing the Young Person

It was commonly felt that knowing the young people was key to providing the appropriate support for young people.

> 'So you have to build a relationship and get to know them, and they have to get to know you. Once they feel comfortable with you and they begin to trust you, and this is about mutual respect then they are so nice to work with and it is so rewarding.'
>
> Jess
>
> 'I'm gonna be like, 'tell me what you did last night?' And if they say nothing I'll start prying a bit, so 'what did you eat? What did you drink? Did you watch something on telly? Did you play a game? Did you read a book?' So an icebreaker every day.'
>
> Stewart

Staff highlighted the importance of having an awareness of the personal home situation.

> 'You know some people…might come from singe parents, or parents who are out of work so there is no home for the young people at the end of the day, or the young people have to fend for themselves, some of them have to look after younger siblings, some are

fostered, some of them are looked after children, so all of these factors have an impact on the youngsters start in life.'

Jess

Staff also highlighted a person centred (DfE, 2014) approach to teaching and supporting the young people as important.

'I have had many days where they don't want to do English, Maths or Vocational stuff, but you can have a conversation maybe take them to the shop to buy something and you can use maths to work out how much money you have to spend…'

Stewart

…we try to keep it really calm here, we try to give information in small bite-size chunks…

Sally

5.8.4 Young Person Aspiration

There was a subtle difference in the perceived aspiration of each group of young people. The professional involved with the young person led provision felt that the young people had a group aspiration. Part of this included forming a group and she identified the Tuckman (1965) group formation sequence as a process that they shared.

'I think although they know each other and they trust each other they are still very much in the early stages, they know who they are and they know what they are about…'

Ruth

Through forming a group identity it was felt that the young people commonly had an aspiration to have a purpose in life. In particular this was to support young people with SEND.

> '…I think they see themselves as an advocate voice of young people…become almost figures that young people go to and become a communication link…actively trying to make a change, a force to be reckoned with…'
>
> Ruth

The staff who worked with the young people in the provision led setting started by generally aspiring to feel secure. This included feeling safe which mostly seems to be achieved during the induction phase. Whilst the young people led provision seem to have a clear aspiration to have a purpose in life the staff in the other provisions identified that this was something that they needed work on with the young people to achieve.

5.8.5 Mentor Role

There seemed to be a difference in what staff felt was their role in each of the provisions. In the case of the young person led provision the adult involved saw herself as very much a facilitator.

> 'I would say that I work to enable the young people to run the forum as a group.'
>
> Ruth

However my interpretation is that by supporting the young people, giving them ownership and meeting their needs in a safe place within a group there is parity in

the support she offers. The young people seem to respond to being given the agency to grow and develop a group identity.

> 'When I have worked with youth groups before the goal and outcome is very much adult led, so much so that young people are not always aware what they are working towards... whereas I think these guys are very much in control of where they go, what their outcomes are, how they are going to get that…'
>
> Ruth

It was commonly felt that the mentor role was very much about creating the correct environment to support the young people. This was achieved by getting to know the young people, working out what they need and being consistent with their support.

> '…the staff here do actually get to know them do support them, and if we say we're going to do something then we will do it. Just the fact they feel special here.'
>
> Sally

It was commonly felt that by adopting a nurturing approach that is supportive and encouraging to achieve a secure base (Bombèr, 2007) the young people can develop a relationship that fosters feelings of security.

> '…you have to take the time, you have to build a relationship and you have to earn their respect and their trust. They need to be able to think I can talk to you, I can trust you…its encouragement, trying not to focus on the negative. It's about reinforcing the positive stuff and just being there for them, to support them….'
>
> Jess
>
> 'They know that we are their teachers, but also I think they look upon us as a mentor.'
>
> Sally

5.8.6 Young Person Development

Although less common it was felt that the young people in the young person led provision particularly developed their group identity.

> 'I think like any group, if I was comparing them to group work and forming, norming and storming all those sorts of things. They are a year in and I think they are still very much storming…although they know each other and they trust each other they are not formed as a group yet. I think they are still very much in the early stages, they know who they are, they know what they are about…'
>
> Ruth

Communication skills was another common area of development in the young people.

> '[referring to a young person] …she is now able to communicate with a wide range of people, and some basic life skills because now she can cook meals…'
>
> Jess

Stewart expanded on this common view by describing how this communication has evolved to the point where young people can give their opinion. Moreover they have developed the ability to make informed choices.

> '…he will now ask us what computer we think he needs to buy so that he can continue working….we could all give him potentially conflicting information. But he can now draw all those points together and say 'I think this!'…'
>
> Stewart

5.9 Discussion

This section is structured around the two research questions for phase 2, drawing on the main points before moving to the overall discussion.

5.9.1 The identity of post 16 young people in these alternative settings as perceived by themselves

In the following discussion I outline the main influences on identity recognising the difference between the settings. A challenging past is identified exploring the difficulties in eliciting an understanding of the influence through what is or is not said. The meaning and purpose is situated in the effect of previous events and identified in the identity of young people, through their compassionate and moral values.

My interpretation was that young people identified themselves as being at a different part of their metaphorical journey according to which setting they were in. The young people in the provision led settings seemed to be at the beginning of their journey. The participants in the young people led provision however were further along in terms of addressing their barriers to education and were more able to reflect on their journey. In both cases the influence of past events was identified as part of their identity even if it was not recognised directly. Those in the young person led provision seemed to have a greater understanding that they were not responsible for their difficulties. There was however a difference in how much young people could articulate their past influence.

Winnicott (1965) described a private self within children that is realised through not communicating. He also discussed that this can often be a game of ‘hide-and-seek’ where the children or young people struggle to communicate but want to be found. This was the case for many of the young people at the beginning of their journey. Luxmoore (2017) discussed how for some young people there is a ‘Durability test’ where young people will only discuss their true feelings about their

self once the test has been passed. Professionals identified that they will often gain a partial understanding of a young person's life world experience. However their past very much seemed to initiate meaning and a purpose in life. This matches the hypothesis of Hayes (2004) who proposes that out of pain comes meaning.

An overwhelming aim that the young people expressed was to make a difference. This could be explained through the meaning ascribed to previous difficult situations. Coutu et al. (2010) proposed that when people experience a difficult situation that through attributing meaning to it, negative emotions can be connected to valued actions, giving significance to their life. This was identified by the young people who emphasised a strong desire to make a difference and hold people accountable. The young people also identified caring for or looking after others as part of their perceived identity.

This compassionate identity could be explained through the Dynamic-Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation (DMM) (Crittenden et al., 2001) as discussed by Hautamäki (Ed). (2014). This is a theory of resilience which is based on a human need for safety, including the ability to change. This could be demonstrated in young people who adopt organised strategies which include caregiving. Sarah for example identified herself as a nice caring female which fosters a sense of fulfilment and meaning whilst adding significance to her life. This gives her an added strength which might promote security and reduce anxiety.

Collectively the young people aspired to achieve successful employment, however for them what was important was their values. Money seemed less important than

living life appropriately with respect for others. Having relationships with people they could trust and rely on rather than mixing with people who were not genuine was also important. This relates closely to the difference in values and worries that was identified by Forte, Jahoda and Dagnan (2011). This goes some way to explain that for young people who have experienced significant worries their values and aspirations are different to those who have not. For them their values are centred more around security, relationships and appropriate behaviour. Commonly the things that have been threatened in their past through for example feeling alone as described by Andrew.

5.9.2 What the Young People and Others Working with them Perceive as Influencing their Identities, Including their Participation in the Alternative Settings.

The staff identified the induction phase as a time that is important to build relationships and trust. The young people did not identify this as an 'introduction phase' directly however they did acknowledge how much they appreciate the unconditional support of staff. Thus they have built a bond, or trust that offers them the security to grow into themselves. As a dominant theme the relationship with the mentors was generally perceived as having the greatest influence on participation and in turn the identity of young people. Moreover this seems to be central to the development of the young people.

This could be explained through the causal effect of a relationship between mentor and protégé as having a positive effect on students (Bayer, Grossman & DuBois, 2015). Moreover the emotional closeness across mentoring relationships including support and mediating was identified as particularly influential. Crittenden (2000) described how identity is shaped by a reciprocal process that

can establish a protective interpersonal world. The mentor role is therefore identified as a causal opportunity to influence the self-identity of the young person. This was identified by both the staff and the young people as a significant step in making the young people feel contained (Bion, 1965). Thus unwanted or overwhelming feelings and thoughts would be held or contained by the mentor until the young person was able to cope and deal with them.

In accordance with Rogers' (1961), following this period of insecurity these young people attempt to achieve parity with an aspiration of becoming the person they would like to be (the ideal self) and their actual self (self-image). Thus their journey is one of knowing what they don't want and moving towards what they want. The young people were surprisingly open about the direct and in some cases traumatic effects of the past. Wingo et. al. (2010) discussed how it is not possible to know how much resilience can be effected by trauma. However in accordance with Crittenden (2000) following a phase of containment the young people demonstrated the ability to develop their own adaptive response to their life world experience.

Adopting self-protective strategies as an approach is something that is common in the young people. The difference in these approaches can differ greatly in terms of judgements and values and I argue that this is something that can be difficult to understand. For example, Daisy seemed to be very unforgiving of other young people who don't adopt the same strength and resilience. Whilst for Andrew adopted meaning and status are important values, identifying with a military identity. My interpretation is that for Andrew, there is a need to resect and make sense of his past that has motivated him to strive for honour, possibly over shame. Perhaps this is why his relationship differs from some of the other young people.

This could be explained by relating it to a study across social, emotional and academic domains family and peer related difficulties related to parental deployment (Chandra et. al. 2010). In this case values of the parents can greatly affect the children. Cairns (2011) writes about ancient Greek values and the importance of honour as an almost impregnable defence from shame. This could also explain the need to adopt military values.

I suggest that this requires a non-judgemental acceptance at both a staff and peer level. Even if they are unable to articulate their feelings my interpretation is that there is an understanding that this is how these young people need to be and it is their own journey. My reflection is that the there is a greater understanding within this environment from both staff and peers who have often experienced their own difficulties. This is something that can resonate in the subconscious of a young person and offers another example of how the experience of the past can influence the future self. Even if others have not experienced the same past they understand the experience of being on a journey and thus accept and support each other. This environment was often described as a ‘family’ with some people choosing to embrace the feeling of security by attending the provision on days they were not required. This could be explained in terms of the desire for a secure base (Bombèr, 2007).

My interpretation is that the foundation of this psychological relationship is an example of the propinquity effect (Festinger et al., 1950). Through sharing the same provision with frequent interactions within the same space or provision a bond is formed. Thus building a trust and sense of reliability with the mentor and young person. With the security of the support that will metaphorically catch them when they fall there seems to be a shift along the continuum from dependence to

independence. This I feel is understood to be a unique relationship that is key to the young person developing their own secure identity through a dependency on the mentor.

The role is in some ways like a guardian angel, or a big brother or sister that looks out for the young person. This understanding and feeling of responsibility for the young person is one that seems to be accepted by the young person whilst they aspire to develop their independence. This is key to the foundations of confidence and personal growth, supporting the self-belief to be the person the young people wish to be.

Chapter 6 Overall Discussion

The findings are combined with the reviewed literature and discussed in the following chapter. The chapter is structured by the main points from both phases in relation to the aim of the study. The discussion is organised by bringing together salient points from the literature review and combining themes to concentrate areas of focus. The sub headings are therefore constructed through merging the overriding areas of significance in post 16 support outside mainstream and the influence on identity.

6.1.1 Context of Inclusion

In the following section I unpick the difficulties experienced in the journey to an appropriate post 16 provision. In contrast to the literature I place the challenge less around availability of provision outside mainstream and more about process. Part of this seems to be set in an ethos that encourages inclusion within mainstream provision. This is not suggesting that mainstream provision does not aim to support young people with SEN. Merely that this is embedded in thinking that habitually sees mainstream provision as an appropriate provision for all young people (Warnock, 2005). Farrell (2006) in accordance with Warnock suggested that a view has developed where inclusion in schools is now seen as more important than education. Norwich (2013) argued for a social educational aim that rejects the education versus inclusion dichotomy searching for resolutions that require compromise in principles with a focus on the needs of the young person. This is the stance I have adopted arguing that special schools and alternative provisions can be appropriate, depending on the need.

Norwich (2013) highlights views of a medical model that sees disabled people as the problem, whilst a more social view posits that barriers are caused and exist within society. The social view suggests that society discriminates against people with impairments and excludes them from involvement and participation. This seems to advocate an inclusive community which draws me to the progress made through the Warnock report (DES, 1978). This report was an advocate of inclusion by challenging the use of labels, or diagnostic categories suggesting that children can be stigmatised unnecessarily.

Post 16 seems to be an arena where this becomes a complex issue. Warnock advocated a move away from categorising a particular label of disability to the concept of 'Special Educational Need' (SEN). However I suggest that in some cases this has influenced a more challenging environment to understand our learners in terms of what provision they can access. Staff highlighted how mainstream provisions such as colleges aim to achieve 'bums on seats' with an inclusive ethos. Thus it could be argued that a desired educational opportunity in an inclusive environment is available. Sfard (1998) suggests that part of learning is about becoming a participant within a community which could further advocate an education within mainstream.

Provoked by the current financial climate the Localism Act (DfCLG, 2011) promotes synergy in terms of bringing together educational provision to maximise efficiency. To achieve a desired financial efficiency in the same way that schools are now encouraged to, there seems to be a preference for provisions that advocate inclusion. Thus supporting growth in universal mainstream provision in the same way as academies and multi-academy trusts (MAT's) (Rumble & Thomas,

2017). The options at post 16 for young people outside mainstream were identified by Ofsted (2016) as limited suggesting a growth in one provision for all.

The data identified that there were a number of provisions around the local authority and neighbouring authorities. What was alarming however was the journey a number young people had been on before finding a provision that maximised their ability. Commonly the young people identified that they had failed in their previous provision. In their view the expectation was that they would tailor themselves to the provision which was an area the young people felt they had failed. The young people consistently felt that the problem was within themselves rather than a reaction to things that happened. Thus they felt responsible for the antecedent, behaviour and consequence (Hanley, Iwata, & McCord, (2003), relying on others to functionally analyse their difficulty to support a solution through transition to appropriate provision.

This could be due to an expectation to achieve inclusivity induced by society and the custom of the current educational pathway to post 16. This might sound like I am holding colleges responsible, this is not the case and as acknowledged many colleges and mainstream provisions aim to support the needs of the young person. Although less commonly commented on it was felt that FE colleges might need to recruit as many as 4000 to 5000 students with competition for places, so these colleges might not have the capacity to sit down and talk about their learners. Moreover, there is a clear pressure to fill the places which could explain how young people with significant needs could find themselves in a provision that they struggle to engage with. Thus the current attitude towards post 16 is one that induces a desire to achieve inclusivity.

6.1.2 Dilemma of Difference

In the following section I explore the complexity of the dilemma of difference in terms of this research. I address the difficulties when an existing condition in a provision such as stairs limiting wheel chair access for example is implied as acceptable. The complexity is further compounded through a lack of clarity of the young people's needs and a difficulty in categorising the young people in this research. In particular I consider the current situation and the appropriateness for those young people with complex needs.

Minow (1990) first used the term 'dilemma of difference' by asking the question:

> When does treating people differently emphasise their difference and stigmatise or hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatise or hinder them on that basis?
>
> *(Minow, 1990: 20)*

Minow (1990) discussed how avoidance of considering the dilemma objectively in each case can be influenced by 5 different assumptions. Norwich (2008) draws on assumption 5 which I suggest is relevant to this research stating: *the status quo is natural, uncoerced and good.* This clarifies the difference between actions that change the status quo and those that maintain it. To illustrate this further he draws on Minow's example of buildings that are not constructed for wheelchair access. In this case the building might imply a neutral, and equal position, however as the building directly affects access of those in a wheelchair they are directly stigmatised and therefore have diminished opportunity.

In the case of young people with special educational needs it is not a simple solution as the vulnerability can be less obvious. However, following encouragement to engage in a mainstream setting there is expectation that the young people will tailor themselves to the provision as there are limitations to the

flexibility of the mainstream environment. For example, they cannot change the number of people who attend, the location or the noise created by other young people. Throughout the research individual differences have been highlighted and although some young people carry labels it has been stressed that all young people are different. It is therefore very difficult to categorise the young people and state who should or should not access mainstream or non-mainstream. What is clear however is that there are a number of young people who have struggled to negotiate their way through the post 16 arena and found themselves in a provision for ‘bespoke learners’. There is a clear commonality in terms of what has not worked in mainstream according to the young people and staff. These include:

- The size of the provision and physical environment seem to be key to success.
- Not having a mentor that acts as a secure base, understanding the young person and helping them to develop their self-confidence.
- Not having a tailored curriculum that demands a provision to offer education beyond reasonable adjustments expected through differentiation.
- Having an environment that is too busy or noisy.
- Having a space where life skills do not need to be established.

These have all been raised as reasons why educational placements in mainstream have broken down. It could be that mainstream provisions are unaware of the difficulties or aim to support young people by encouraging them to become more resilient. It could also be because of assumption 5 where a neutral, equal position is implied but the environment is not accessible for these young people, directly stigmatising them.

6.1.3 Decision Making

In the following section I address the issues that arise within the decision making process. In contrast to the literature I raise the point that many young people do not want the burden or responsibility of making the decision about their post 16 setting. Thus it is important that when this is the case this is an informed view with appropriate knowledge of the young person and available provision. This is explored in terms of what knowledge about provision professionals and in particular educational psychologists should have to support the process as an advocate. This is also placed within the added complexity of the EHCP as a gateway to provision outside mainstream.

Kennedy (2015) highlighted a lack of placing the young person at the centre of planning. In particular that young people with SEND were the most often not listened to suggesting others make decisions for them. My interpretation of the attitude of the young people in terms of making decisions about an appropriate post 16 provision was that this was a very important to them. However, commonly the young people were not ready for the burden or responsibility to make this decision. Thus many would relinquish the decision making responsibility to a professional (Maddison & Beresford, 2012). Although it is important that the young person is at the centre of the planning in accordance with SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014), the young people may need professionals to make the decision on their behalf.

This reignites the debate discussed in the findings about having sufficient knowledge about post 16 provision, the young person and what sort of environment might be appropriate. In terms of knowledge educational

psychologists and professionals who work with young people transitioning to post 16 provision should have enough knowledge to support an informed decision. As Norwich (2000) discussed the fluidity of the educational psychologist role due to its links with interconnected systems places educational psychologists in an appropriate position to support this process. Through considering the mental health, educational aspiration and what the young person wants, an informed decision is accessible. Thus as the young people transition into adulthood an appropriate provision can then be accessed.

It is important to be mindful that many young people have been in provisions that have broken down. He and Crews (2007) discussed the window of opportunity and how young people start to move towards aspirations of independence. I argue that it is therefore understandable that many young people feel that a change in environment at a time when there is a shift in educational surroundings and routines will be appropriate. This could indeed be the case for many young people who have struggled in mainstream previously. However it is also possible that the vulnerability a young person has will prove too much to cope in mainstream during post 16 as it did pre 16. This was commonly the case for the young people in this research. Whilst young people should be encouraged to make an informed decision, which should of course be respected in accordance with legislation (DfE, 2014) this can be an issue if the placement breaks down.

Staff in the provision led settings commonly discussed that although not all their learners had an EHCP the majority did. Moreover, my interpretation is that those without an EHCP were the exception rather than the rule. It is therefore generally expected that a young person would have an EHCP to draw the funding for the support they need. This is partly the reason why these provisions can support the

young people adopting the underpinning principles that tailor to the needs of the young person. This is something that needs to be considered within the post 16 arena as systemically it seems that to attend a provision outside mainstream an EHCP already needs to be in place.

This could pose an issue as the young person concerned might not have needed an EHCP in their previous provision. The EHCP is a 20 week process (DfE, 2014) which I suggest changes the approach to supporting transition to post 16. In some ways this seems inappropriate, however the EHCP can be a gateway to appropriate post 16 opportunity. Consequently this would need to be in place before post 16 provision choices outside mainstream are made, at least for back up, just in case a provision in mainstream broke down. The decision about making an application for an EHCP might seem controversial, as EHCP's are designed to support the present rather than predict future potential difficulties. However I suggest that an understanding of the potential systemic issues should be shared.

6.1.4 Transition to adulthood

Through understanding what provision is available and matching this to the need of young people, transition to adulthood can be supported effectively. Thus avoiding stigmatising vulnerable young people that struggle to access the inclusivity required in a mainstream environment. Environment and the role of staff as mentors seemed to be a focus in the data. Although less commonly discussed it was commented on that the development of the young people relied on having the right sort of person as a mentor. This was considered by an educational psychologist as more important than teaching qualifications. I suggest this draws

on Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), recognising the importance of building a sense of security and eradicating maladaptive stress and anxiety.

In terms of supporting the young people a model that embraces physiological needs ensures that young people have appropriate shelter, sleep, food and clothes (Maslow, 1943). This can be supported through the family or guardian but needs to be explored further through the provision. The role of the mentor is identified as key to achieving this and the induction phase is again highlighted as a period when this trust is nurtured. Bayer, Grossman and DuBois, (2015) promote this advocating a good relationship between mentor and protégé as having a positive effect on students. This supports a connection with both the provision, the staff and the other students that attend the setting. This is consistent with Crittenden (2000) who highlighted that the greater the opportunity to integrate with secure experiences and environments (including family and mentors) the more sophisticated the adaptive responses. The size of provision and number of students can have an impact on this as identified in the data. Through these successful relationships and feelings of security, self-esteem can be nurtured allowing the young person to develop and foster aspirations for the future.

My interpretation is that this is what the staff and young people identified when discussing the underpinning principles of each provision. Common principles that are important are shown below:

- Flexible and bespoke according to the needs of the young person
- Having an expectation that they might need to find a different way to teach
- Feeling safe
- Be Perceptive and consistently believe in the young people
- Knowing the young person
- Gradually help the young person to integrate into the wider world

- Enabling the young person to see their own worth
- Supporting young people to learn about themselves
- Help them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses.
- They [the young people] need a positive outlook as they often don't get this at home.
- Remember that no two young people are the same.
- Employ the PACE Model as an approach - if a student can make one attachment in life then they can make others.
- Be prepared to support the parents
- Achieve a positive staff relationship through using first name terms
- Matching the tutor to the young person.

That is not to say that a wide and varied Curriculum is not important, as Sankardas and Rajanahally (2015) discussed for many young people there is a clear aspiration for employment. And the staff and young people identified courses in Art, Catering, Animal Care, Painting and decorating (including wallpapering), IT (Computers), Media, Construction/building, Science and Work Skills to prepare young people for work experience and future employment. However, it was identified in accordance with Jahona and Dagnan (2011) that for some young people being in an environment where they are not bullied, feel secure, have someone they can depend on and making and keeping friends is most important. This is not a linear process and we should accept that some young people will manage an aspiration to seek employment but aim to feel secure. Thus in accordance with Wedell (2008) a flexible educational system should relate to the hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943), including basic needs such as safety and subjective well-being (SWB) by fostering positive feelings (Tay & Diener, 2011).

Kearney (2007) discussed serious short and long-term difficulties associated with school refusal, or in this case 'leaving school'. I suggest that these difficulties are closely associated with future opportunities. Kearney (2007) highlighted social alienation, school or college dropout and a decline in occupational achievement.

Thambirajah, Grandison and De-Hayes (2008) identified this refusal as a consequence of stress exceeding support. They also identified the direction of causality as relevant. Drawing on the experience of Aaron who is by his own admission NEET, it seemed clear that much of his situation was a consequence of his experience.

Thus through a lack of understanding of the support required for young people with complicated special educational needs the stress of a young person can exceed the support. I suggest this is an important dilemma to address when considering pathways to post 16. I wonder if functioning in an employment capacity is achievable if young people cannot first function in a societal capacity. At the centre of this is Aaron's own particular difficulty which in this case is understanding how the world understands him and how he effects the world as a result of his autism. This is highlighted as a contributing issue when problems of this nature are unidentified or poorly understood (Thambirajah, et. al., 2008).

Perhaps this is where the fluidity of the educational psychologist role could grow in developing an understanding of the aspirations of a young person without expectation. To offer opportunity for young people to have a rich and secure life world experience with a balance in their psychological equilibrium through supported emotional well-being. There was a common view that the main role of the post 16 provisions was to aid transition to adulthood. In line with Wedell (2008) the general feeling was that what is most important is to make the young people feel secure and give them the skills to live a rich independent life.

6.1.5 Identity

In the following section I discuss the identity of young people through the lens of themselves and others who work closely with them. The influence of significant life events is highlighted as a commonality and placed within the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). I make the point that it is important to understand the individual needs of each young person. I do however draw upon the influence of a significant past event as a pivotal point that commonly influences meaning and feelings of self-worth. This is presented as a cause which directly effects the self efficacy and motivation of the young people involved in this study.

Lawrence (2011) highlighted the importance of a child's self-perception, views of education and motivation. To gain an understanding of the young people I present the self perceptions and influence on these self perceptions as key. The data has revealed that the young people in this research have commonly been through a significant life event that has had an impact on their view of self. This had a significant effect on their sense of meaning and it is this meaning and sense of self value that seems to have had the greatest influence on the identity of the young people. Commonly negative life experiences were identified as having an influence on the meaning of young people, directly influencing their motivation. This is consistent with the literature which identifies life satisfaction, self-efficacy and resilience as positively associated with meaning (Schulenberg, Smith, Drescher & Buchanan, 2016)

In terms of the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) there are four main areas which are often explored to understand the needs of a young person. These are often used to categorise the area of difficulty giving a generic label which suggests

particular difficulties. For example, communication and interaction could encompass autistic traits without considering the particular traits of the individual regardless of the label. I present this approach as a within child or young person perspective, as it attempts to generalise traits rather than considering the individual. This is important because only through knowing a young person in an individual, and detailed person centred way can the appropriate bespoke support be achieved. My interpretation is that in my study the young people fell into two main categories, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Communication and interaction. This could confuse the issue as one difficulty could easily affect the other. For example a young person who is bullied because of their autism (communication and interaction difficulties) might then struggle with social emotional and mental health difficulties due to being bullied, as commonly discussed in the findings.

The background and what has led to the difficulty that has caused this is where the difference seems to be. Moran (2010) separates two possible influences but accepts that they can be intrinsically linked. These two opposing influences are presented as nurture or nature (attachment or autism respectively). Moran (2010) however does acknowledge that it is possible that both can co-exist and presents them in the Coventry Grid. The effect of the cause seems to become even greater when placed in a mainstream educational environment which is often communicated through challenging behaviour or school refusal (Thambirajah, et al,. 2008). For these young people noise, busy environments, being bullied because of their difference or struggling to understand instructions due to their literal view of the world limits their inclusive opportunity. Moreover it induces

anxiety that was mutually identified. This is recognised in the identity of these young people who struggle to access traditional or mainstream settings.

For these young people I suggest provision outside mainstream as appropriate. Many of the young people have had a traumatic event in the past that acts as a barrier to finding their way of being (Rogers, 1995). In terms of the motivation this has a massive impact on his self-efficacy and approach to life. As Rogers (1995) reflected, when unappreciated we can feel diminished and these feelings can affect our behaviour and in turn our aspiration. This is the case for these young people which above all is the commonality they share in their identity. However all of the individual journeys are different thus it is appropriate to recognise the individual differences and support their sense of meaning and in turn self-worth, life satisfaction, resilience and self-efficacy.

6.1.6 Self Values

I identify the post 16 period of life as one where young people have the aspiration to prepare for adulthood. The nature and nurture influence is raised highlighting the environmental influence as having a particular impact on young people forming their values. In terms of developing self values the need to protect one's self is discussed matching the findings with the literature (Crittenden et al, 2001). This time identified by Nuttal and Woods (2013) as crucial time for young people with SEND in terms of their psychological wellbeing is explored. I make the point that addressing anxiety and poor psychological wellbeing needs to be achieved within education before a focus on academic preparation for employment. Preparing for Adulthood (PfA, 2018), identifies employment as one of the four important aspects of transition. This is accepted with the caveat that it can be

limiting if individual anxieties are not supported first. A mentoring principle is identified as appropriate and I propose this as an appropriate mechanism to support the development of self values and appropriate aspirations for young people.

He and Crews (2007) identify the window of opportunity as a period of development that is of great importance to young people. Young people start to move to a point where they attempt to negotiate a shift from being children to young adults. Thus transition happens not only to a new educational setting but a springboard to adulthood; there is social and educational expectation that young people move along the continuum from dependence to independence. There are a number of things that can influence this, both developmentally and environmentally. However, the environmental influence of an educational experience (Dahlgren & Dahlgren, 2008) cannot be understated. This experience can be positive or negative often due to a young person's ability to cope with the change and expectation that they will need to be more independent. For some, this experience in a mainstream environment is not one they are ready for and the experience will greatly affect the young person. Thus both negative and positive experiences are influential for a young person establishing values and standards they choose to live by.

It seems logical that if this experience has an extreme negative effect on a young person then they are going to take on values that shield themselves from danger (Crittenden et al, 2001). Even at a subconscious level the findings revealed that many of the young people needed to be in a safe place and avoided potential anxiety provoking situations. I therefore argue that the matching of provision plays a large role in the development of personal values that a young person might

identify with. In accordance with Nuttal and Woods, (2013) the transition to post 16 as a point in transition that is a crucial time for young people with SEND. Psychologically this can have a major influence on the personal and social development of a young person particularly during periods of feeling insecure.

As Nyström (2009) discussed the concept of self-development is wide and I argue that the data has highlighted the importance of considering life development holistically. There is understandably a focus on education as an academic preparation for employment, however it could be argued that this is a reductionist view. I present a more appropriate definition of education as including life skills such as using public transport, cooking or understanding money to support independence. My interpretation of the data is that these young people have needs that are far more general, many of which are taken for granted. Trust seems to be a difficult value to accept following the influence of an event that is often traumatic. This was identified as something that takes time to build but is important within challenging negative constructs that these young people have. Thus moving from a point where a young person is struggling with anxiety at a level they cannot cope with at a difficult time.

What was highlighted is just how comprehensive and individual a journey this is. This highlights the individual differences in terms of need of each learner, however I suggest the journey is detailed. Rather than just a provision knowing a young person there seems to be a greater requirement for a more person centred approach. The young people initially seem to lack confidence and belief in themselves and are in a place where they need someone to contain them whilst they grow. This relationship with a key worker or mentor, known as the propinquity effect is something that the young people are extremely grateful for (Festinger,

Schachter, Back, 1950). Thus the more a key worker sees a student, communicates with them and makes time for them, the more likely the student is to like, build trust and recognise what they have in common with their key worker. Consequently an adaptive relationship is formed through a common bond.

Bayer, Grossman and DuBois, (2015) highlight the positive influence a mentor can have through a common bond. This is consistent with the findings that advocate this relationship as an opportunity for young people to evaluate their own values and the values their mentor might have. The young person then finds opportunity to adopt appropriate values modelled by their mentor. This could explain why the young people commonly aspired to help and support other young people with similar difficulties. It could be that the young people see the mentor as a role model and aspire to be like them. Staff who worked closest with the young people discussed their approach as being genuine, person centred, consistent, supportive and non-judgemental. Many of these values are then mirrored in the young people as a way that they want to life their life.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Aim

The principal aim of this research was to gain an understanding and interpretation of the support available outside mainstream education for young people. This extended to an understanding of the experience of these young people and what is the most effective way to support successful transition to adulthood and independence.

7.2. Summary of Findings

The previous chapter discussed the findings in light of the existing research. The following presents a summary of the main findings, their contribution and significance.

It was acknowledged that the post 16 arena is a growing area with mixed opinion about knowledge of post 16 provision outside mainstream. This is such a developing field it is recognised that those involved in the decision making process cannot know every provision in terms of the establishment or what they offer. However, as there is such a growth in the diversity in the options young people have, it was highlighted that there is an importance in offering an informed choice. Generally there was a feeling that a careers service should hold all the knowledge. In this case as careers service in the South West. However this did highlight difficulty around making an informed decision. There seems to be two factors to consider, firstly choice and secondly an environment that the young person can manage. This has contributed to the literature by highlighting further complexity within the decision making process.

This is significant because the post 16 arena has now become a complex area where there is greater work required to inform a comprehensive understanding of the environment. This is not as simple as passing the decision to the young person and their family. The process of post 16 decision making is an important time for young people and their families. This can be stressful and many young people find the process a burden they don't want to hold without support. The next step is often unknown and difficult for young people who previously would not have continued their education. This requires support with matching the need of the young person and the provision to support this process as an advocate. Moreover the importance of knowledge could expand to an understanding of the statutory process depending on the prerequisite of the most suitable provision.

An approach working back from the ultimate goal could be appropriate incorporating a planning process such as Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) (Pearpoint, O'Brien & Forest, 1998). Thinking back from the final aim or vision this offers opportunity to map out actions and steps towards the goal which could be created as a ladder of success, starting with planning the immediate action. It is however important that the process includes a team that knows and cares about the focus person.

Stressing the importance of knowing the young person was a further contribution to the literature. This is significant as categorising the learner gives a within child or young person perspective of the person. I advocate caution when categorising young people according to the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). Common labels such as autism, ADHD or OCD were explored, however, the most important recurring contribution was the importance of accepting that all learners are individuals. Tailoring the support in a person centred way is presented as a successful

underpinning principle, recognising the needs and supporting them. Thus a balance is required between matching the young person to the provision and matching the support of the provision to the young person. It should however be acknowledged that physical characteristics of provisions are a predominant challenge for young people including noise and the volume of other students. This is significant as it highlights the importance for developing smaller provision outside mainstream.

Having identified the importance of recognising individual differences this study contributes a greater understanding of these young people whilst recognising this understanding came from a small sample. It was commonly found that the identity the young people shared in these alternative settings was a journey following a difficult past. This was often a turning point that they needed support to cope with. They understood disability regardless of their own difficulties and wanted to help others and have meaning in their lives. Whilst it was identified that some of the young people wanted to be successful, what was most important for them was to achieve the feeling of being valued, safe and in secure relationships with friends and family they could trust.

This is significant because it offers an understanding of how to support the young people and what is appropriate to expect in terms of their aspiration. It was primarily the relationship that the young people had with a significant member of staff that offered the greatest influence on the identities of these young people. What emerged was the importance of a mentoring figure and the relationship that is developed between the student and the key member of staff who works with them. This approach and time to build rapport through an introduction phase is an aspect that is important in supporting young people. Through developing a bond

the young people identified an understanding of themselves. Thus they assumed values that they choose to live by as they developed feelings of self-confidence and self-belief that informed their identity. This is particularly significant as it offers an understanding of the importance of a mentoring role and the influence it can have on young people with significant needs.

7.3 Methodological Contribution

The literature review acknowledged the influence of new legislation for special educational needs (DfE, 2014) and the rise in the minimum age young people can leave education to 18 (Education and Skills Act, 2008). This has raised awareness of a gap in understanding about post 16 education for vulnerable young people who struggle to access mainstream provision.

This study adopted an approach that is in its self a contribution to knowledge. Though employing a methodology that supported its participants to feel comfortable, equal and relaxed it has maximised opportunity to gain an empirical understanding. Although it is acknowledged that this research cannot be completely ethnographical, through applying this as a principle I have elicited rich data. With professional and adult participants it is less complex to achieve a relationship where participants feel open to talk. However it is the interaction with young people that offers a methodological contribution to gaining knowledge from young people as participants.

The time taken to develop a relationship with the young people was an important feature, breaking down any power relationships and seeing the researcher as equal to the participant. The use of more accessible interview techniques to elicit rich data is also a feature of this study that contributes to knowledge of research in

this area. Using images to present a discussion rather than interview questions is a technique that is particularly successful. Whilst exploring concepts about identity and what influenced this identity through personal construct psychology techniques, a greater level of understanding can be achieved. As a psychological tool the drawing your 'ideal self' process enables young people and those that work with them to understand themselves and their journey beyond that of a verbal interview. Thus I advocate this methodology as a strength in gaining deeper understanding beneath the surface, contributing to knowledge.

7.4 Contribution to Educational Psychology Practice

It seems inevitable that as the educational environment changes the role of the educational psychologist will continue to adapt. Vukoja (2017) presents two considerations about the role. One defined by specific skills and service aims that might need to be extended to support a new age group and another that applies existing knowledge and experience to practice. In many ways the process and approach to practice could remain the same, adopting whatever framework of practice a psychologist might choose to use. It is the sharing of psychology that provisions and in turn young people could benefit from. However, in terms of practice I suggest there is a balance between both approaches including a need to extend the development of knowledge.

The contribution of educational psychology then becomes about two areas of development. Firstly, professional development of the educational psychologist, and secondly how the provisions could benefit from having educational psychology involvement. Thus on one hand matching young people with

appropriate provision and on the other hand supporting provisions to develop their provision to meet to needs of complex young people.

7.4.1 Knowledge

The dilemma of knowledge or process was raised by educational psychologists. Psychologists interviewed who did not work in the post 16 environment admitted that they often did not think beyond the transitions that they supported. For example, if a psychologist only worked in the primary sector they did not think beyond the secondary transition. I suggest that as psychologists we should think more holistically rather than just in the here and now. I argue that a child's future opportunities are always in the back of a parents' mind. Whilst that might not be a focus, a knowledge across all key stages through into post 16 and possibly up to 25 offers a wider view of a child's development.

In terms of knowledge I argue that an understanding of the post 16 arena for young people with SEND can significantly change the thinking within educational psychology. Educational psychologists are well placed to offer information and discussion about appropriate support. As in any other transition they would not typically state where a child or young person should go. However, they should be armed with an understanding of the options to employ the dilemma of difference as a model for consideration for parents and young people. They are also armed with elicitation techniques to help young people understand themselves. I therefore argue that there is a need for a generic understanding of what provision there is for young people.

Accordingly the role should extend to drawing together an understanding of the environment and an understanding of what the young person's needs are

psychologically across the four areas of the Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). This can then offer greater opportunity to give a holistic view of what is appropriate for the young person to enable parents and young people to make a more informed decision. Thus making the decision more accessible armed with knowledge to match post 16 environments and what might stigmatise a young person acting as a barrier to transitioning to adulthood and independence. Or perhaps more important being able to support a decision making process that supports opportunity through an appropriate environment.

7.4.2 Process

I argue that psychologists are well placed to support this decision making process, however there is a need to have an underpinning knowledge, and revision about child development at this age. Through a psychological lens provisions could also benefit from educational psychology input to understand the dilemma of difference. This could also support any systemic changes within provision both mainstream and non-mainstream. Firstly this could encourage progress around matching. However, this could also include thought around how to develop and tailor practice and environment to the needs of the young person.

This research has highlighted the expectation of the young person to manage or move to another provision. I argue that even with the size and capacity of students there are things that could be done to make provisions more inclusive. For example, silent areas, the design of safe areas or support areas that incorporate input from young people with SEND as a safe place to go. Perhaps an extension of the mentoring role, with regular supervision from educational psychologists to support the role. This does however pose the issue of trading. Currently in this

local authority educational psychologists are not commissioned for post 16 work that is not core and statutory. There would need to be discussion with commissioners to do some work in this area. However, I suggest that this could be a worthy project, particularly if it removes barriers for young people and reduces the number of placements that breakdown.

Support from educational psychologists could also include INSET for staff who are less familiar with psychological theories relevant to young people with SEND. For example attachment theory, or discussions around the extent to which independent learning can be achieved. This could extend to the influence of traumatic experiences such as domestic abuse or indeed developmental challenges such as autism or ADHD. This could also include training on how to manage or develop independence in young people, which could include the role of a mentor as a key adult. Moreover it could be possible to have discussions with the local authority about developing a mentoring services which could extend to having a peer mentor and a key worker as a mentor. I suggest this could become practice for all young people with SEND under educational psychology training and supervision.

7.5 Researcher position

I acknowledge that other researchers could have approached this project differently adopting a more positivist approach. However I did not ground the contribution of this study in proving or disproving a hypothesis. I highlight the importance of gaining an understanding of the post 16 environment within the context of young people with SEND who struggle to access mainstream. This is a difficult area to elicit knowledge as many young people who have an empirical

understanding have experienced difficulties and challenges that are barriers to their development. For this reason I have adopted an Interpretivist ontology with the aim of getting as close to achieving an equal status as the participants involved as possible. I found this both an informative and rewarding approach, forming a relationship that enabled me to understand and appreciate the participants.

I acknowledge that I cannot be part of the community of the young people involved but I have aimed to adopt an ethnographic approach as much as possible. To achieve this I embrace an epistemology that places the importance of understanding the individual through socially constructed procedures. Thus I have employed a qualitative methodology including semi-structured interviews and personal construct elicitation techniques to inform my understanding. My position is that this offers explanation of cause and effect through exploration of individual experiences. In terms of understanding the data, time spent getting to know the young people and transcribing the data was important. Although labour intensive transcribing this gave me greater opportunity submerge myself in what I consider the salient points.

7.6 Limitations

In the following section I explore the limitations of this research. I place many of the weaknesses in terms of my chosen methodology and accept them confidently arguing that the strengths in my research position outweigh the weaknesses. Thus many of the criticisms are centred on validity and credibility in line with a positivist approach.

The research relies on the skill of the researcher to analyse and interpret the data which is acknowledged as subjective. This is placed within context at this time and it is recognised that the findings and discussion could follow a different path with different participants at a different time. A different researcher could also value different themes and place different levels of importance to what was said. It is acknowledged that as a researcher I have my own views which I attempted to remain mindful of. However to ensure understanding of the meaning it is difficult to know how much this has influenced the interpretation. Thus there is the potential for researcher bias beyond interpretation.

Thematic analysis is a messy, complex process and much more challenging than the simple steps that that are alluded to in Braun and Clarke (2006). This needs consistent refinement and honing, and I accept that this process could produce different themes with a different researcher. I also acknowledge that if this research was repeated it is likely that it would produce a different set of themes and categories and the discussion could therefore follow a different path. For ethical reasons, to protect anonymity it was not possible to draw direct links with data from individuals from phase one to phase two. For this reason the findings that related to identity according to the underpinning principles and the experience of the young people needed to be generalised. I also concede that it is difficult to predict the outcome for these young people and the extent that support outside mainstream has made as their journey to adulthood and independence is not yet complete. Further research through a longitudinal approach would be needed to understand this comprehensively.

7.7 Significance of this research

This research is significant because it offers an empirical understanding of the experience of young people who struggle within mainstream settings. It addresses gaps in understanding of what is available for these young people outside the traditional mainstream settings following change in legislation. This extends to the process of decision making and matching provision with young people. It explores difficulty in understanding who these young people are, what their barriers are and highlights the importance of recognising their individual differences. Moreover through gaining an understanding of these young people it is possible to advocate appropriate underpinning principles that support transition to adulthood and independence.

7.8 Where This Research Could Go Next

This research could be expanded by considering the physical characteristics of a provision. This could include an insight into the most appropriate location, internal and external environment and accessibility for young people who struggle to use public transport independently. This could extend to the influence of different acoustics, drawing on the support of acoustic specialists to consider the best way to minimise a heightened sensory overload for some learners. In terms of the environmental effects there are also practical aspects within provisions for example the position of toilets and the experience of the young person when they enter the provision or different areas of the provision.

Future research could also focus on the decision making process from the perspective of the parents and those who work closely with the young person. My experience was that those young people who were not in a secure place during

this process might not be able to comment. It could also be useful to gain the perspective of the young person and their families, to understand their experience of the process. This could extend to an understanding of what is useful for them and the extent they would like to take ownership of the decision making. Through a collaborative approach this could support local authorities to develop a model for decision making and transition to post 16, preparing young people with SEND for adulthood.

A key aspect of this research has been the role of the mentor. This is a time that is identified as a 'window of opportunity' (He & Crews, 2007), when young people can develop values that they choose to live by. The mentor role was identified as key to this, offering the young person opportunity to develop confidence and self-belief through this relationship. I argued that this is more than just a role model and an important and respected rapport that induces feelings of life opportunity. Many of the young people expressed values that I argue are mirrored with their mentored experience. This could be explored further with detailed research into the mentoring role and what this offers in the development of young people in the post 16 arena. This could incorporate an understanding of the propinquity effect (Festinger, Schachter, Back, 1950) within post 16 settings.

7.9 Concluding Comments

I have found this a rewarding and fulfilling project and feel that the topic has been worthwhile. I suggest that the findings will have an impact on a greater understanding of the importance of a varied educational opportunity at post 16. Moreover I feel that this will have an impact on the understanding of young people with educational needs who fall outside reasonable adjustments that can be

offered within mainstream educational settings. It has highlighted that current knowledge is limited and contributes to a wider comprehension of the challenges young people face. Through consideration of the dilemma of difference (Minnow, 1990) young people can benefit from opportunity rather that encouragement towards inclusion thus matching appropriate provision.

This research gives a generalised view of the need to support bespoke learners through an important mentoring relationship offering a secure base for young people. The journey to independence can be complex and requires consideration of what is important for the young person. A push towards employment can be reductionist seeing only a small part of a wider issue. I acknowledge that through fostering a development in confidence and life skills aspiration for employment can be triggered. However, this research advocates a rich post 16 experience that supports a positive vision of independence whatever that might look like for the individual. My future aim is to build on this research and firstly educate those working in the post 16 arena about what I have learnt. Having identified potential future research avenues in this field I would also be excited by opportunity to explore this further.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 One Page Profile

Appendix 2 Information Sheet example

Information Sheet for Adults

Researcher name: Douglas Clarkson

Project title: What Support is available outside mainstream education for post 16 young people who are not comfortable in a traditional learning environment?

Purpose of this research:

In accordance with the Education and Skills Act 2008 the minimum age that young people can leave learning rose to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. There has been an increased focus on supporting young people with their transition to adulthood, in particular post 16 provision. There has been greater awareness of needing to gain the Young Person and their family's views during the process of this education planning after the age of 16.

This research project is designed to gather the views and experiences of young people and their parents/carers as they move into post 16 education with a focus on provision outside the traditional learning environment.

In the first part the focus will be to explore with the young person and their families what provision is available outside mainstream. The focus of the second part will explore how this has influenced the young person's identity. In addition, professionals in further education and the educational psychology service will be asked to contribute their views.

Why is this important to study?

Previous research indicates that it is important to have appropriate education for learners with individual needs as this can impact on their futures. It will be beneficial to explore what support is available for young people outside the mainstream setting as this can impact on their futures. It will also be beneficial to see how this support effects the young person's identity. My research is designed to benefit professionals, families and young people through gaining a greater understanding of what is available for young people and how it influences their development, and it intends to see if improvements can be made.

Do I have to be part of the research?

No, you are under no obligation to be involved in this research and even after you have agreed to take part, you are entitled to change your mind at any point.

If I take part, how long will it take?

Once you have agreed to take part, there will be an interview with the Young Person which is likely to take between 30 and 45 minutes and an interview with the parent(s)/carer(s) or professional should take around the same time for each adult. The location can be discussed for your convenience. The project aims to interview volunteers between March 2017 and September 2018.

What will happen with the interview data?

The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed to allow the data to be analysed. All transcriptions will be coded anonymously to ensure confidentiality. These will be coded by themes. The data will be kept securely on encrypted computer storage. The data could be stored for up to a year, and will be destroyed after completion of the thesis.

Will my interview be confidential?

Yes. The interviews will be completely confidential with no names used in the transcripts or the write up. There will be no identifiable information included in the thesis and data protection procedures will be applied. Some quotes may be used in the write up to demonstrate a theme, however these will be anonymous.

Does this research have ethical approval?

Yes. The Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter have approved this study.

Are there any risks in taking part?

The topic of transition to adulthood can be personal however all of the volunteers will be given information prior to starting and asked if they wish to be part of the research. I hope that effective communication will reduce this risk and the volunteers can feel free to not answer questions they are not comfortable with.

If you agree to take part in this project please sign the attached consent form

Appendix 3 Consent Form Example

Young Person Consent Form Part 1

Title of Research Project

What Support is available outside mainstream education for post 16 young people who are not comfortable in a traditional learning environment?

Details of Project

This research project is in two parts and aims to work out what there is to help people aged 16 or above. It also aims to work out how young people have developed as a result of the help received.

This part of the research will be an interview where I will ask questions about what education opportunities there are for people aged 16 or above.

The aim of this part of the research is to consider what alternative provision is made for young people and what the principles are in these settings.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Douglas Clarkson
Postal address: *Exeter University St Lukes Campus, Heavitree Rd, EX1 2LU*
Email: **dc462@exeter.ac.uk**

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:
Dr Shirley Larkin or Dr Tim Maxwell, Exeter University St Lukes Campus, Heavitree Rd, EX1 2LU.
S.Larkin@exeter.ac.uk; T.Maxwell@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Observation notes, Reflections, Interviews and transcripts of them will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). You will be supplied with a copy of your interview response. Your data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Data Protection Notice

The information you provide will be used for research purposes and your personal data will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation and the University's notification lodged at the Information Commissioner's Office. Your personal data will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties. The results of the research will be published in anonymised form. All participants will have the right to remove their data. All

raw data will be kept confidential. All data will be stored and password protected. Data will be kept for a maximum of five years then destroyed.

Anonymity

Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis.

Consent

PART 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

I give consent to my participation in Part 1a of the research project. I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand that:

- *There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage.*
- *I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.*
- *Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations.*

- *If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared with research supervisors.*
- *All information I give will be treated as confidential.*
- *The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.*

……	……
(Signature of participant)	(Printed name of participant)
……	……
(Signature of parent/guardian)	(Printed name of parent/guardian)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher

Appendix 4 Letter to parents

Douglas Clarkson
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Dear

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Dougie Clarkson and I am a trainee Educational Psychologist. I currently work on placement for XXXXXXX supporting children and young people with educational needs from 0-25.

I have a particular interest in post 16 provision and support outside the traditional learning environment. I have started a research project in that area and would like to gain an understanding of the feelings young people have with experience in this area. My feeling is that more can be done and to achieve this we need to listen to the voice of the young person.

I have included an information sheet along with a consent form outlining information about the project; the right to opt out at any time and how confidentially and anonymity will be respected. I therefore enquire if you would be willing to give permission for your daughter to take part. I will be answering three different questions including mapping what is available, what the principles are that underpin each provision and the identity young people have within each provision. I should therefore draw your attention to the three different parts to sign. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Douglas Clarkson

Appendix 5 Certificate of Ethical Approval

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: What Support is available outside mainstream education for post 16 young people who are not comfortable in a traditional learning environment?

Researcher(s) name: Douglas Clarkson

Supervisor(s): Shirley Larkin
Tim Maxwell

This project has been approved for the period

From: 20/03/2017
To: 31/12/2018

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/16/17/32

Signature: Date: 30/03/2017
(Dr Christopher Boyle, Graduate School of Education Ethics Officer)

Appendix 6 Provision Observation Template

Physical Environment	**Observed Things**	**Interpretation/Reflection**
Space	Posters: Smell (eg. Dettol or industrial): Noise: Loud/echo Carpet: Layout: Rooms: Painted breezeblock walls:	(eg. Drab/open) physical environment. Smells like a…
Facilities/refreshments	Tea/Coffee	
Toilets		
Activity		
Welcoming	Arrival Time: Where does a visitor go: Door: Staff – (eg. Males approach) Staff – YP (only if consent given)	
Accessibility/Parking	YP/Visitors: How do they find the provision is it easy to find / does it feel welcoming before you enter.	Access for wheel chairs / physical/learning difficulty.

Appendix 7 Interview questions for Research Questions 1-3

Possible Question	**Possible follow-up questions**	**Probes**
Do you work or engage with a post 16 provision in this local authority? (Do you attend a post 16 provision)	Which one?	In what capacity? (Go on Tell me more Can you help me understand?) *used in all probes
What other post 16 provisions or forums do you know about other that the mainstream like the local FE college?	What are they called? Where is that? What do they do there? How do they support young people?	Are there any others you could name in this local authority? (I named the place)
What are each of these provisions for?	Can anyone go there?	What are the buildings like?
What is the difference between these provisions?	So what about teacher pupil ration? How you are treated? Your role?	Environment? Attitude? Teacher pupil relationship? Routine?
What is the philosophy of each provision? Or What is the focus of each provision?	What do they offer in terms of education?	Subjects? Vocational?
Why do you think this provision is in place?	Education?	Any other skills?

What are the principals that underpin each provision? Or Why is this occurring?	Ethos?	Support?

Appendix 8 Young Person Interview Questions for Research Questions 1-3

Appendix 9 Drawing your Ideal Self
(Draw Non-Ideal self followed by Ideal self)

Tell me 3 things about this person?

Bag

Birthday Present

Family

Friendships

Greatest Fear

History

Future

Scaling (Exploring change)

On a scale from 1-10 (1 person they would not want to be 10 the person they would like to be):

Where do you think you were on the scale when you started at ……..?

Where do you think you are on the scale now? Why?

Why have you put yourself….. and not …..?

What is it that makes you ……. and not …….?

Consider - Progress/same/worse/a long way from where they want to be/focus on movement

Where do you think your parents would put you? Why

Where do you think the staff at ….. would put you? Why

Are there things that have helped you achieve this? (Friends/environment/principles of provision/staff - Influence)

What would you need to do to get here?

Appendix 10 Phase 2 Staff Semi-structured interview questions

How would you describe the young people at …….?

What's unique about these young people?

How consistent do you think their behaviour is day to day? Why? Can you give an example?

What would you describe as the best skills the young people have?

What interests do you feel that they have?

What do you think are their favourite things?

How would you describe the way that people here view themselves? (It could be; Physical/What role do they take within a group/personal traits – impulsive; generous; worry)

How would you describe their self-esteem?

Do you think they know what kind of person they would like to be in the future?

(If yes)How do you think they would describe this person?

To what extent do you feel they have achieved this?

Scaling (Exploring change)

On a scale from 1-10 (1 person they would not want to be 10 the person they would like to be):

As a group where do you think the young people at …… were on the scale when they started at ……..?

Where do you think they are is on the scale now? Why?

Where do you think they would put themselves? Why?

Why have you put them ….. and not …..?

Consider - Progress/same/worse/a long way from where they want to be/focus on movement

What is it that makes them ……. And not …….?

How has your provision influenced this? (Friends/environment/principles of provision/staff - Influence)

What do you feel has been the main influence?

What would they still need to do to get here?

Appendix 11 Observation

Observation: Date: 16/06/2017 Time: 5-7pm Session: Evening
Young person led provision.

<table>
<tr><th>Physical Environment</th><th>Observed Things</th><th>Interpretation/Reflection</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Space:</td><td>Posters:</td><td>Psychical environment:</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">The meeting place for the steering group of the forum is at the same location as the information advice service for special educational needs. There is a large breakout room at the back where courses for ‘the incredible years’ and ‘strengthening families’ go [The PIASS building]. They always happen out of hours from 5-7pm when all the staff have gone home, normally once per month. All other correspondence is done by internet, email/text.</td><td>Smell (eg. Dettol or industrial): The council finance refreshments in the shape of drinks and pizza’s or KFC. This is the overwhelming smell as the young people come in.</td><td rowspan="3">The smell and pictures make the room seem welcoming. There are comfortable seats round a round table and each of the young people seem to have a set seat where they sit. This seems to have a welcoming feel and I felt that with a few things that belong to the young people. Including work that the young people have previously done on a flip chart. They have ownership of the space they use. It is not quiet for long as the taxis turn up. For the forum to work there seemed to be a subconscious understanding that the group is richer for having input from a diverse range of difficulties. There were young people with autistic spectrum condition (ASC), in wheelchairs, deaf and impaired vision (all young people who have given consent to be observed).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Noise:

The room has carpet so they is not much noise, however the computer seems to buzz in the background. The ceiling is reasonably low with a false ceiling so the room is quite dry.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td>Layout:

The room is organised with a large screen in the middle that all the students can see.

Rooms:

The walls are breezeblock, painted blue. There are partitions with blue material on them. These have posters that are relevant to the courses that happen. These include: Emotional regulation, Developmental milestones, development of social and friendship skills and a ‘Blob people’ poster with lots of different blob people on it saying ‘Which Blob Do You Feel Like Today?’ By the door there are refreshments including coke/diet coke, squash, tea/coffee, different pizzas or KFC and plates</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

	and cups so that everyone can help themselves.	
Facilities/refreshments: The facility is all on one floor. It is all on one space, designed to be wheelchair friendly. There is tea and coffee and soft drinks in the room that all the young people can help themselves to.	Tea/Coffee The area has a chill out room feel to it. There are soft drinks, tea coffee	I felt pleased that the local authority seem to realise that importance of young people and what they can offer. The worker who oversees the group seemed to completely understand the importance of understanding that the young people know that this is their space. Moreover, that they have ownership over what they do in their space.
Toilets The toilets are in the foyer when people come in before going in to the meeting area. There is also a disabled toilet	Having the toilets in a discrete place outside the room means that is anyone wants to go to the toilet quietly without anyone knowing they can.	I feel that this would be particularly relevant for students with autism, social and or emotional anxiety. I suggest that this is part of what makes this a successful meeting place. Being able to discretely take yourself away to the toilet without anyone knowing you have gone is important. One can take as long as they want without anyone knowing they have been, in a safe and quiet area away from crowds.
Relationships: Typically there are 5 young people in the group. Each have different disabilities from wheelchair users, deaf, sight impairment ASC. All the young people seem to get on. There is one young person who seems to be more dominant than the others. In fact he is not more dominant but he is louder and the other young people seem to understand that this is a communication of his needs	Age: 16-25 There was clear banter between the group and they seem to be getting to get to know themselves more and more. My observation was that they look out for each other. This is discussed further in my reflection.	Friendly; (because…) Happy; What I found interesting was the rapport between the young people. Whilst each educational need and/or disability has its individual challenges I felt that these young people had a bond between them because they understood disability/disadvantage and I suggest discrimination. <u>PACE/peer acceptance</u> A young person could communicate frustration through

even if they could not articulate it.		loud behaviour and to a certain extent this was accepted. It could be that having experienced their own difficulties they are more accepting of others? <u>Society and discrimination</u> <u>(intentional vs unintentional)</u> I feel that society doesn't always recognise discrimination. Whilst some might not be openly discriminate they can be held these feelings inside. I argue that only when one understands these feelings and has the ability to place them to one side and challenge internal prejudice can we move forward with a recognition of 'the dilemma of difference'. This might seem that I judge this prejudice. I would like to challenge it, but I would like to understand it more. I don't think that people want to prejudice, and often don't realise they are. In fact perhaps it is often the low level prejudice that is the most difficult to address. Sometimes without even realising it there is an importance for society to have a position. A status that elevates them above others. This could be through role, but this could also be through physical/internal ability. A journey to independence can be more challenging for some and I feel that this is not always facilitated in an equal way.

		To illustrate this I draw on physical examples: • Someone who bends down to talk to someone in a wheelchair or without realising it talks to the person pushing a wheelchair. • Equating academic ability with dyslexic tendencies. My suggestion is that there is a clear need to understand disability beyond 'us and them' but embracing the 'we'! This is an attitude however, and not a side or position I would take within the dilemma of difference. We still have a long way to go to understand disability. My frustration is that young people are often made to feel that they should feel grateful for writing on a larger font or wheelchair access. They should not, this is their right and we should do everything we can to manage any power imbalance.
Activity: The young people arrive from taxis at different times and an agenda is normally set, by the young people in a previous meeting, or collaboratively through email.	The young people set things that they feel are important to them. Transport for example, highlighting the difficulties they have and possible solutions.	The young people lead this group, the member of staff has a clear understanding that they need to take charge. She will however have everything ready for them so that hey can get straight on with the agenda. The meeting is only 2 hours and initially seemed to be quite unorganised. However, more recently they have been asked for contribution at particular events [for example, what teachers need to know about disability in an NQT course].

		This has helped them become more focussed and clear about what they want. They are also starting to get to know each other more and more.
Games: N/A	Boys do: N/A Girls do: N/A	N/A
Welcoming: They always happen out of hours from 5-7pm when all the staff have gone home, normally once per month. All other correspondence is done by internet, email/text. The room is already set up for them by the member of staff who co-ordinates the group. This includes all refreshments and some food [pizza or KFC /ice-creams in the summer etc.].	Arrival Time: 5pm -7pm Where does a visitor go: The young people come straight in, past the offices straight into their room. Door: Not necessarily met but given time to come in and get ready. Staff – Very friendly and welcome the young people in. Staff – they say hello, and ask the young people how things are going relevant to each young person. [For example, how have your exams gone/ how did your race go/ how did your interview go etc.] YP approach to staff – The young people seem to respond well to the staff. YP say	There is a great rapport between the young people and the staff. I suggest that this is because there is one main member of staff who supports them. They have got to know her and she supports some of them outside the group meetings. She understands the importance of empowering the young people and allowing them to have ownership. I am not sure if she is aware of this but it is embedded within the PACE model.
Accessibility/Parking There are many parking places outside the venue. This is less relevant as all the young people access the meeting by having taxis. However it is all flat and the taxis can go right to the front door.	YP/Visitors: How do they find the provision is it easy to find / does it feel welcoming before you enter. The PIASS building is fairly well known and easy to find. It is also at a part of the city where it can be accessed easily from outside the city of inside the city. It is an accessible location.	Access for wheel chairs / physical/learning difficulty.

Appendix 12 Excerpt of Provision observation analysis

(Excerpt of Quantifiable interpretation of 3 observed provisions)

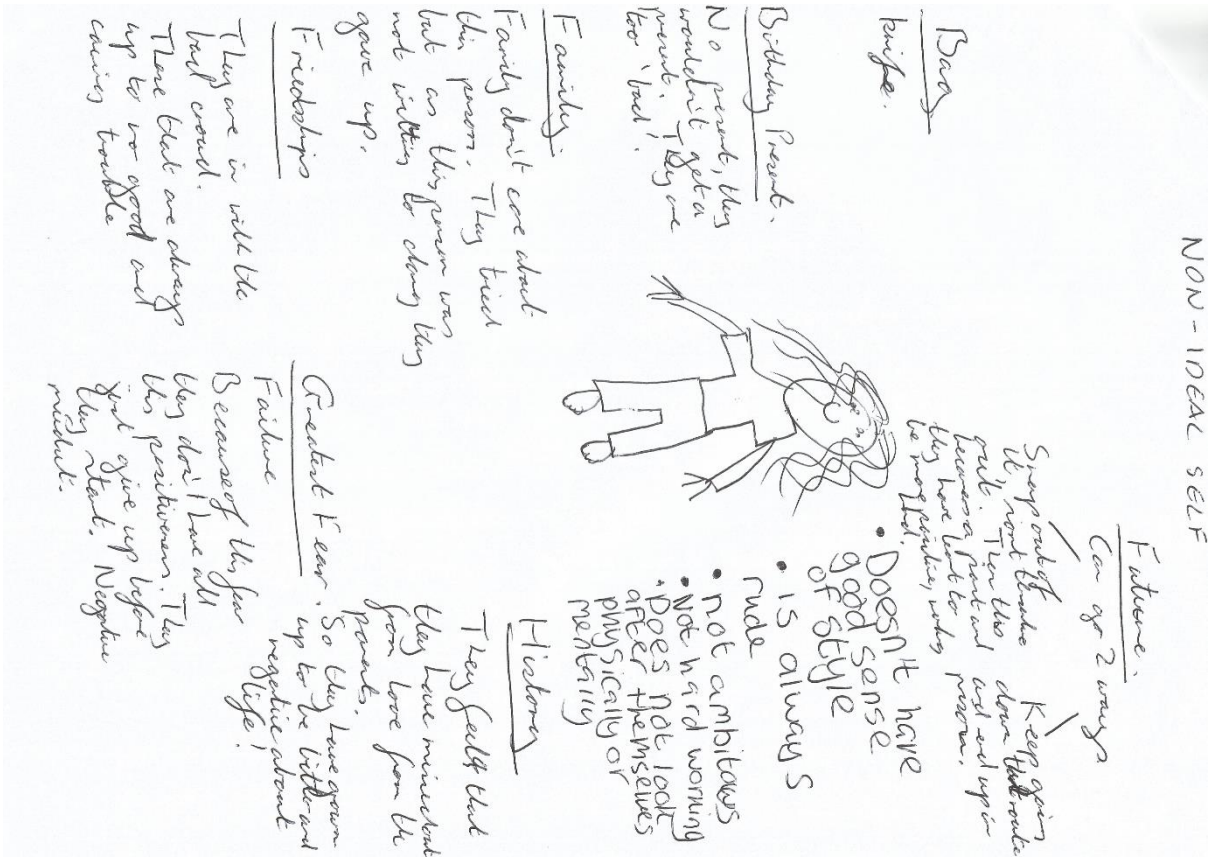
Category	Sub Category	Interpretations
Location	Space	For each of the settings there is a main space which is the nucleus or hub of the provision. The pupil led forum has meetings in a provision provided by the local authority but does other work in strategic meetings for the council. This is in the same industrial estate as one of the other provisions. Part of that provision is a course in catering which is based in a café. This is in the same building as the pupil led forum. I argue that this is relevant as this is the council office that offers support to parents and families, and acts as an advisory service.
	Link to council advisory service	Although not stated there is a clear link between the council office and these two provisions, through location and the support that is offered in terms of the pathway to the post 16 provision. In fact some of the staff have lunch in the café where two students from provision one work. There is also a seated, municipal study area which many of the students use to do functional skills. What I find interesting about this is that they seem to feel more comfortable outside their main environment when doing 1:1 functional skills. My experience through observation was that this was to avoid distraction in a calm area.
	Place/First impression on arrival Anonymity	The two organisation led provisions were difficult to find, both were located in an industrial estate. Perhaps this is due to expense? However, there seemed to be little directions to show where the entrance was as you drive in, and in both cases I thought that I could be in the wrong place. My interpretation was that this could be a benefit for the young people who enjoy the fact that no-one knows who they are or what they are doing. Perhaps the anonymity offers protection from being stigmatised?

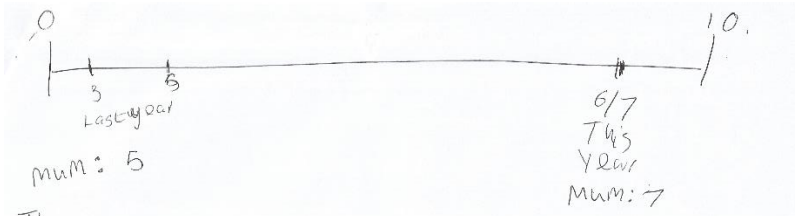
	Parking Transport arrangements Accessibility	Further research could offer an insight into the most appropriate environment, and location for a post 16 setting. Parking was an issue in both estates, although there was some parking, it was often full, and it was difficult to know where one could park or if the parking was already allocated. This only seems to be an issue for visitors, as all staff were aware where to park, and either had parking permits or had worked out parking arrangements. However, I wonder if in time this could become an issue, currently the young people in all three provisions are dropped off or arrive by taxi. If however they chose to drive, taking advantage of opportunity until they are 25, supported by an EHCP then this could become an issue. This does also raise an issue of independent transport, a life skill that many of these young people in all three provisions are developing.
Building External	Size Look /environment	All three provisions were an appropriate size. The forum only needed a room that was a reasonable size. The other two provision led buildings were large, one was accessed by going up some stairs which could be a barrier for young people needing wheel chair access, and one was on the ground. Externally my experience was that the two provision led buildings lacked appeal. They didn't seem particularly inviting and in both cases I was unsure if I was in the correct place. Both were situated amongst other industrial buildings, my experience was that this took a bit of getting used to. There were garages, body work places and a sign maker to name a few. One of the provisions offered plastering, construction, decorating and building courses so perhaps the appearance was relevant to that. However, my first impression was one of uncertainty in terms of the students, knowing that many of them were anxious and had communication and interaction and/or social and emotional, mental health barriers that have influenced a breakdown in previous settings.

		Actually, my observation was that this didn't seem to effect the young people attending the provision. In terms of the forum, my only reservation was that if people who worked for the advisory service were working late then walking through a crowded room could be a challenge. However, this never seemed to be the case and the young people involved seemed to know any staff in the provision from the council.

Appendix 13 Draw your ideal self activity

(raw data example, please rotate to see full illustration):





Then

I was open to change but I didn't know if it was going to happen 100%

Now

→ Because I've worked hard and put myself in a place where I am to and have a choice to achieve.

→ - Positive mindset.
- More grown up / Mature.
- More confidence.

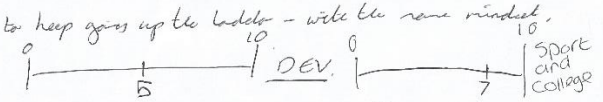
YPF

- Knowing that I am working for change to improve things, that yes it will take a long time but it will happen.
- I relate this process to nee - Process of change / development.
- By keeping on doing what I'm doing and being open to change. At the start I felt people were ignorant to disabilities then that is when the change will happen.

- I feel that the isn't working to an individual yet for me to feel a development individually.
- I feel part of something that works he be part of change
- I feel more important as someone
- Development through the responsibility you have
- You feel like you are a part of working, working in plat.
- We see ourselves as a team working together.
- Starting to get roles, we are slowly finding roles within the group.
- The roles vary according to the list of things we need to get done.

  Some are willing to talk
  Others behind the scenes leading up to meetings. Chairs about topics.

- I just need to keep going up the ladder - with the same mindset.



Because this is what I am always doing day-to-day.

IDEAL SELF

History

Not good as he didn't have a father figure / superhero dad. Difficult time growing up. But instead of dwelling on it she worked to be all she could be herself.

Future.

Strength after Strength due to her positive minded and hard work. She will keep building herself.

Bag.

Make up - to top up if she needs to.
Bank card.
Purse

- sophisticated/classy
- hardworking/determined
- Ambitious
- dedicated
- strong minded
- powerful
- successful

Birthday Present.

Clothes.
Shoes
Make up
New car - Lambo / Ferrari (tangerine colour).
Sports kit - trainers
Gym equipment (living the dream).

Greatest Fear.

Failure
She doesn't want to fail or not have what she has worked for. That she might lose everything.

Family.

Very supportive
they love her alot.
She has been brought up well
She only has a mum.
Because her mum/dad split when she was young. She stuck with her mum.
Her mum has been like a mum and a dad.
Because it means she can be so close to her mum.

Friendships

She has a lot of jelous friends who pretend to be friends but are not.
They don't truly like her.
She appreciates her friends and has a blind eye but deep down knows what is like but knows its lonely if you don't have anyone.

Appendix 14 Young person led provision Interview

Research questions **4. What is the identity of post 16 young people in these alternative settings as perceived by themselves?** **5. What do they and others working with them perceive as influencing these identities, including their participation in these alternative settings?** Influence on Identity	**Code**	**Category**	**Theme**
This young person felt that this provision was not there to develop the person involved as an individual but highlighted the importance of being involved in something important that will make a change. Being part of making a change and developing the support for other young people with SEND was important to her. She saw being part of this group as important and made the point that between the young people they were 'slowly finding roles within the group' thus group identity seemed to be important to them. In terms of the roles within the group she saw this as fluid which seemed important to her, depending on the topic, the understanding and what each young person bought to the each particular issue.	Not there to develop person Provision will make a change Support for YP with SEND Slowly finding roles Group identity Fluid roles Topic Understanding Using each person's talent	Role of provision Importance of participation Importance of participation Group process Group process Group process Group process	Personal Growth Purpose in Life Purpose in Life Personal Growth Personal Growth Personal Growth Personal Growth
Ideal Self My reflection was that for this person not having a father figure in her life was a significant conflict that she needed to consider. The question for her	Significant primary carer	Family influence (father left when she was very young however this young person highlights the	Relationships

seemed to be how much did this influence her? There was a clear chance that this person could have become bitter and negative about life and I'm sure that at times this person could have experienced these self-constructs. However in the ideal self-construct she described the importance of a strong relationship with her primary care giver (mother) and how instead of dwelling on this became strong. When discussing the family it was clear that the young person felt that it was up to her to make a decision about how her family dynamic could affect her. She reflected on how a negative response came from a supportive parent that she didn't want to engage with. Interestingly she had a choice. I feel that this is significant as we all a have a choice to make about how much we will respond to support that is there for us. However I argue that for this young person the choice is more difficultly when carrying a disability. This requires strength and resilience. She described how her mum had been both a mum and dad and as a result she is now so close to her mum. She is also aware that she could easily have followed a less desirable path and identified a knife as an object she would have in her bag as a non-ideal self. Other core constructs which seem important to this young person are having a sense of style, having good manners, being ambitious and hardworking and looking after herself both physically and mentally. My feeling is that this young person has had to work hard and perhaps has had to battle to	Could have become bitter and negative Importance of strong relationship with primary care giver Strong as a result of experience Choice to become strong Complexity of disability Inner strength Resilience Could have followed opposite path Good manners Ambitions Hardworking No excuses	influence her mother has had on her) Life choices Family influence Life experiences / choices Life choices Influence on choices Personal characteristic Life choices (what I find interesting is that commonly YP's seem to have identified a point where they had to make a choice to either become a who they want to be or who they don't; an alter ego if you will) Personal attributes to be successful	Pivotal point in life Relationships Pivotal point in life Pivotal point in life Personal Growth Self-description Pivotal point in life Self-description

prove herself which has made her less forgiving of other young people that don't try. Being strong minded seems to be important and I feel that many young people need to build a resilience to battle with any challenges that are thrown at them. In some ways it is possible that although we think we live in a society that is not discriminate it is about how the young people with SEND feel and how they manage to overcome their difficulty and constructs about how the rest of society perceive them. Taking a pride in her appearance was important to this young person and presents for the ideal self-reflected this including make-up, clothes, shoes. The opportunity for success was also important including a New car and living the dream. My feeling during this interview was that allowing opportunity was almost patronising. The judgement of allowing opportunity almost identifies that there is not equal opportunity. This young person was clear that she felt she had experienced many false friends. She is aware that it can be lonely without friends but feels that many friends can fail to be genuine. However, true friends are clearly important to her. There is a clear fear of failure and she worries that with all the hard work that she is putting in that she might not achieve what she wants to. As a result a positive mindset to achieve is important to her and that has induced an inner strength to work hard and keep working to build on herself. <u>Scaling</u>	Strong minded Resilience (because even though the intension is not to be discriminate, sometimes people communicate their judgements) Appearance Make-up, clothes, shoes Opportunity for success New car Equal opportunity Experience of false friends True friends over lots of false friendships (friendships are important to her but they must be genuine, this illustrates that she has previously had a poor experience of friendships) Importance of a positive mindset	Approach to life Hidden discrimination Values Personal Presentation Developmen-tal influence Personal achievement Development al influence Friendships Friendships Approach to life	Self-description Self-description Self-description Self-description Personal growth Self-description Personal growth Relationships Relationships Personal Growth

This young person split her self-construct into two areas, her personal development (internal) and what she can (physically) achieve with her sport and college work. Interestingly they are not the same and her internal construct was a 5 when her core self or external projection was a 7. She felt that in terms of her development as a composite score that her mum would have seen her as a 5 last year, she would have seen herself as a 5. However she felt that both her and her mum would have seen her as a 7 showing a clear development during the year. She felt that a year ago the big difference was that although she was open to change, she was not sure if it was going to happen. Perhaps this is a difficulty for all young people with difficulties to overcome. The fear of the unknown and what is going to happen. Will you be given choice? Will people understand you? Will you be able to do it? And What will happen? This young person puts her development down to working hard and pushing herself when she has a chance to achieve. Maintaining a positive mindset, growing up and becoming more mature and finally becoming more confident. These are personal attributes that she has taken into the YP led provision. However, she feels that these are things she has been able to offer as she has developed rather than developing as a result of the provision. However, in her words: Knowing that she was working for change to improve things that yes it would take a long time but it will	Personal development Physical development Sport College work (Internal projection) – 5 (External projection) – 7 Mum – 5 (last year) Mum – 7 (last year) Open to change Not sure what was going to happen Fear of the unknown Choice Will people understand? Can I do it? Working hard Pushing herself Maintaining a positive mindset Growing up Becoming more mature / confident Working for change to improve things Relationship between her change /	Internal Appearance Appearance Internal Developmental identity (What was interesting about this is that many of the YP's seem to have identified how they find it difficult to recognise their personal improvements and development. Perhaps this is to do with how they feel, rather than recognising their core self. Perhaps a reason why 'others' see the development as more than some YP's is because they can't see into the internal self, it is hard to relate the core self to the internal self). Apprehension Developmental influence (it is important to note that this young person feels that her personal development is due to growing rather than as a result of the YP led provision. They are however attributes that she brings to the provision) Motivation	Personal Growth/Self-description Self-description Personal Growth Personal Growth/ Relationships Personal Growth Personal growth Personal growth Purpose in life

happen was an inspiration. She related the process to herself in terms of change and development. Finally, by keeping on doing what she is doing and being open to change. At the start she felt people were ignorant to disability. She felt that the development for all people with disability of all kinds will grow as the change in people's understanding of disability grows.	development and change for other people with SEND Importance of understanding of disability to achieve change.	Reason for change Developmen-tal influence.	Purpose in life Purpose in life

Appendix 15 Excerpt of Young Person Interview

YP Interview Post 16 provision	Code	Category	Theme
[The interview starts with mentor present] So how long have you been at this provision? Since I was 14, back then we used to cook the residents food and stuff. [mentor] The residents were elderly in self-contained flats, it was like a little community there were hairdressers and kitchens in there and we used to run the lunch service. Have you always been interested in cooking? Yes.	Purpose of provision	Structure/ subjects	Provision Routine

So when you became 16 did you think about where you are going to go, or had you chosen to stay here in this provision?			
Staying here. We went up to another town for a bit then we came here.	2nd Placement	Ownership/ choice	Journey to current provision
Do you live in this area?			
Yes			
That must have been quite a journey?			
[mentor]			
I used to pick ..... up in the morning and we would drive there together, then I'd take her home afterwards. And we did that for a year.	Travel	Mentor support	Staff Influence
So when you got to 16 was that an easy decision to just stay at this provision?			
Yes.			
Did you consider anywhere else?			
No.	Knowledge to support post 16 planning	Ownership of decision	Barrier to traditional settings
Did you know of any other provisions for post 16, or places that you might have gone if this provision did not exist?			
No not really.	Knowledge to support post 16 planning	Ownership of decision	Barrier to traditional settings

Do you know of any provisions in this area for post 16 now?			
No.	Knowledge to support post 16 planning	Ownership of decision	Barrier to traditional settings
So tell me what does this provision offer?			
I learn cooking stuff, maths and English and some other bits and bobs.	Cooking, maths, English	Curriculum	Provision Underpinning principles
And so do you learn maths and English at specific levels?			
Last year I did an exam for entry-level three, so this year I am working on level I.	Exams	Curriculum	Provision Underpinning principles
So do you have any ideas of what you would like to do when you leave this provision?			
I like catering and stuff so catering probably.	Post provision	Future	Staff influence
[mentor leaves]			
So what other things can you study here?			
They do bits in the other building but I can't remember what. But they have computers and things in there.	Building Computers	Curriculum	Provision Underpinning principles
Is there anything else away from the classroom with the computers that they do?			
I'm not too sure.	Knowledge of provision	Ownership	Barrier to traditional settings

So you said you hoping to go into catering, what do you think you're learning in the cafe that will be useful?			
I learn about measurements, and how to learn to cook.	Applied maths Cookery	Curriculum	Provision Underpinning principles
So what do you think makes a good cook?			
You need to be able to chop things, know how to turn the oven on, get the right ingredients know the timings. I'm quite good at that, I knew about it before but I've learnt it more here. I've got better.	Self evaluation	Curriculum	Staff Influence
So do you have different people teaching you the other subjects like maths and English?			
Yep a teacher comes in to teach maths and English on a Wednesday and she teaches it here. It's different to how school was, I was quite naughty and school.	English Self evaluation	Curriculum Behaviour/ communication	Provision Underpinning principles

Appendix 16 Observation Categories and Codes Phase 1

Category	Code
Location	Space Link to council advisor service First Impression on arrival Anonymity Parking Transport arrangements Accessibility
Building External	Size Look Environment
Building Internal	Arrival Meet and greet Hierarchy of needs (Maslow) The role of the staff Environment Toilets (including need for discretion, privacy and dignity)
Provision For Individual Learners	Work space Break areas
Meeting Spaces	Rest area Forming a group identity The role of the staff
Internal Environment	Floor and ceiling Stairs Walls Ownership of space

Appendix 17 Codes, Categories and Themes - Phase 1

Codes	Categories	Themes
Purpose of provision Calm environment Appropriate atmosphere Induction Flexible Curriculum Clear boundaries/rules Appropriate staff relationship Work at students pace 3 days provision 2 days placement. Year 1 Foundations (work based skills-level 1) Year 2 work experience (with a member of staff-level equivalent GCSE) Year 3 autonomous work experience and relevant course (Paid work). Split timetable 260 hours course work 190 hours non regulated learning developing life skills	Structure	**Provision routine**
Cooking Customer service Time Money Animal care Work on a farm as a medium to enhance employability skills Curriculum	Life/Functional Skills	
Travel Struggle to manage Need to build confidence Problem solve Person centred Celebrate individual differences Positive relationship Extra exam time Encourage conversation	Mentor support	

Model conversation (talk about their interests) Model responsible adulthood		
Online gaming ICT Programme design Mobile phones Card tricks Art Decorating (attention to detail). Focus on phones with cameras Videos (media) Computer games Computer programmes Computer literacy	Maximising Strengths	
2nd Placement Other provisions Career service involvement Interaction with other professionals SW charity Course not interesting so changed Dilemma – knowing the provision vs getting better support	Ownership / Choice	**Journey to current provision**
Bullying Inability to concentrate School refuser Lack of aspiration Drop out Decision making influence	Effect of peer behaviour	
NEET Mainstream FE College School refuser Poor secondary experience Fail exams Fail re-take Lack of staff control Lack of certainty Not relevant (home educated) Other post 16 provider	Previous provision	

Mainstream school PRU		
Parents grieve over the child they never had Stress Meltdowns Broken parents Different systems Passed from professional to professional Difficult backgrounds Battered Exhausted Confused	Family	
EHCP Involvement of other staff Post 16 planning Teacher informed decision Charity support Can't remember Stressful process	Planning	
Knowledge to support post 16 planning Knowledge of provision Transition meeting Burden of decision Complexity of decision Avoidance of decision Understanding of decision	Ownership of decision	**Voice of the young person**
Mentor for younger students Support to overcome barriers Change through talking to people Make things more equal Be a force that challenges inequality Make the stigma go away Collective way to be heard	Aim	
Teamwork Opportunity to speak Give opinion about SEND Travel and transport Limited agenda but make a difference	Group work	

Feeding data to inform change Strategic influence Information and advice Overcome barriers Long process Group identity Leadership skills		
Self evaluation Lack of ability to cope with other courses. 'It was my fault.' Knowing yourself Peer perception	Feelings	
Gain experience Learn skills Package of qualifications Cooking Catering Mathematics Applied mathematics English Science Examinations Building Computers Cookery Art ICT Childcare Photography Work with babies Painting Decorating Plastering Wall papering Brick laying Electrics Welding Blacksmith Skills for employment over academics Childcare Carpentry Vocational pathway Money Time Measurements	Curriculum/Qualifications	**Underpinning Principles**

Getting on a bus (springboard to learning how to drive)		
Work and learning coach Mentor Early help Supporting young people's lives Building strengths and interests Foster aspiration for employment or mainstream education. Develop a realistic vision for employment Prepare for independent living. Provide opportunities and chances. Build group activities. Exam support Access to services and facilities Access to support Support understanding Support SEMH Feeding data to inform change Strategic influence Promote accountability Positive change for young people with SEND Equality for SEND United voice Acceptance of disability Community Values Changes to integrate with the community Educate about disability Knowing the student Support independence Support to adjust Meet consistent government changes Channel of information Group development	Role	
Self evaluation Communication Induction	Behaviour	

Take young people out of challenging situations Consistent support Never give up Find the right way to help Promote the chance to succeed Helping the student understand the point		
Relaxing / Therapeutic atmosphere Quiet Without interruption No rushing Stress free Appropriate place to work Build positive relationships Be a family Support participation Opportunity to speak Opportunity for young people to voice their concerns Small size means more support One to one SHEAP: Stay safe Healthy Achieve Positive contribution	Environment	
Small bespoke providers Having enough small providers Believe in the young person Ethos of understanding Knowing the barriers Supportive staff Supportive employers Family support Knowing how to engage with young people Relaxed dress code Relaxed environment (Chillout room) Time Encouragement Flexibility	What works	

A comprehensive EHCP Knowledge of strengths and needs Passage of information Help for those without an EHCP Regular reviews Small opportunities as a stepping stone Work with mentors Work based learning Relationship with a significant member of staff (1:1 mentoring role). Relationship with family. Family and provision joined up. Must be safe Be creative, not mainstream Recognise anxiety Gain trust through sharing their interest. Avoid anxiety provoking environments Regularly reflect on progress Challenge self-fulfilling prophecy Use positive terms: I can… I want to… I am… Acceptance Dividers in the room to break up sound Ignore labels (all autistic children are different) Give them a reason to trust Appropriate staff training Understanding them as teenagers Changing outlook of SEND Consistency Reliability Model adulthood Opportunities to socialise.		

Understand that employment might not be for everyone Reduce social pressure		
Post Provision Work experience Confidence Work in special school Give something back Value to society Independence Financial stability	Future	**Transition to adulthood**
Educational development Level I diploma Level II A levels Functional skills ASDAN's Job skills GCSE Vocational Cisco course (applied technology)	Qualifications	
Ability to reflect Inspiration from your own thoughts Step outside comfort zone Talk through worries	Coping strategies	
Parents Family Friends Key staff Professional advice/support	Other support	
Customer service skills Ability to interact with employers Punctual Appropriate dress Communication	Supported development	
Shy Relationship with staff Relationship with provision Getting started in life Building confidence Building trust Anger management	Personal development	

Accepting autism Fulfilment Motivation		
Farm for students with autism Time at provision Physical space Small groups Forum to involve strategic planning FE College – Hair and beauty Noisy – no carpet Breakout spaces	Current provision	**Knowledge of post 16 provisions.**
Size of provision Class size Large groups Noise FE College Poor organisation No understanding of need Negative effect Business course (FE college) Sports coaching (FE College)	Previous provision	
Open days Careers fair FE College (wide variety of courses) FE College – main provider Sports College Colleges outside this authority Work experience Apprenticeship providers Traineeship 6th Form at mainstream school Always changing Lack of suitable provisions for SEND Limited research into other provision Charities Army course	Other provision	

IT provider specialising in communication and interaction skills. Residential – social care Youth work No 6th form special schools		
Advantage for provisions that 'draw their own funding' Funding Bands: Band 1 £4000 (from local authority) Band 2 £6000 (students with EHCP) Schools apply for Band 1 & 2 (funding 1 year behind) Band 3 Extra application of funding if provision over £11,001. EHCP's only funded if progress made. LA pay in advance for some provisions they feel appropriate for learners. Need for 'bums on seats' for Local authority funding. Taxis not funded Support benefits for parents	Funding	
ADHD Autism OCD Anxiety Confusion Processing difficulties Low motivation due to autism Sensory issues	Developmental difficulties	**Barrier to traditional settings**
Head Injury Escape Violence Abuse Chaos Wheelchair user Disability	Physical Injury	
Attachment difficulties Inability to cope	Personal Difficulties	

Anxiety Mental episode Provision refusal Understanding of provision Selective memory Nervous Breakdown in previous provision Non-attendance It wasn't for me Feeling alone Need for containment Poor emotional wellbeing Lack of the right support Vulnerable Triggers/worries from the past Isolated at home Youth offenders SEND as identity		
Consistent negative feedback Fixed teaching styles Mainstream pressures (results) Lack of visual prompts Systems (challenging interview processes) Within child approach Noise (other students; ticking clock; echo) Child in care Looked after children Inaccurate assumptions from staff/peers Authoritive approach from staff.	External influence	
Rely on staff Physical support Appropriate support Active listening Encouragement Calm Will to help PACE model Interest in young person Understanding strengths and weaknesses	Positive approach	**Staff Influence**

Trust Self evaluation Find the right path View of provision Aim to stay in current provision Serving customers Knowing/learning about yourself Developing self worth	Self belief	
Build relationship with staff Build relationship with peers Interact with society Improve young people's lives Educating yourself with their help	Aspiration	
Having the right person Individual characteristics Understanding of adolescent Understanding of attachment Understanding of developmental difficulties Secure base Ability to mentor Meet young people where they are Emotional containment Assurance Management	Qualities	
Choice and guidance Careers information Targeted transition work Complex out of area SEN Mostly in this authority Encourage young people to take opportunities Work closely with young people Go through options Pick up young people when it doesn't work Support parents and young people until 25	Role	**Practice**

Parent and young person led. Contacted through young person/parent/provision Signposting Unpick the chaos Separating chaotic lifestyles in the home Support young people 'stuck in their bedroom'. Multy-agency environments Family work Transition EP primary Develop provision ethos Supervision Manage relationships Identifying vulnerable students Developing post 16 in the EPS. Support re-engagement Knowledge of provisions Foster aspirations of the future self Share appropriate information Emotional resilience Therapeutic support Targeted intervention Critical friend Informed view Training events Knowledge of Local Offer		
Special school out of area Pupil Referral Units Complex difficulties Individual differences Matching young people to opportunities Knowledge of systems Identified at school Wobbly Unemployed	Category of young person	
Prevent falling out Person centred planning Inability to fit typical route Young person led	Support with options	

Keep in touch Finding flexible courses Talk through problems Build relationships Understand young people Break down barriers Support independence Focus on feelings Introductions to post 16 providers Normalise transition		
Mainstream Work experience Build employability skills Post 16 Provision or Pre-apprenticeship Traineeship Apprenticeship	Typical route	**Journey to post 16**
Poor exam results Need confidence /teamwork skills (full/part time) Lack of knowledge 12 week course with charity: Teambuilding Work experience Community project Identified at school Significant event (pivotal point)	Breakdown in transition	
Lack of communication Poor exams Poor mental health Poor previous experience Poor life skills (travel and transport/ interaction) Challenge as young people struggle to pick up the phone Social work involvement More time to reach goal Lack of mutual respect	Not engaging	
FE college Out of area FE colleges 6th form	Post 16 provision	**Support outside mainstream**

Apprenticeship Charity Small bespoke provision Bespoke packages Flexible provisions (hours/days & courses) Phased engagement Activities to build skills: Working on a farm; mending bicycles; gardening. Not all funded by the Local Authority. Provisions funded by social care PRU's		
Careers service Information and advice Joint planning Passage of information Being creative Work with mentors Training Skills Experience	Professionals	
Positive relationships Joint decision making Time with young person Believe the young person	Family	
SEND Youth offenders Care leavers Link with schools Link with post 16 provisions	Risk of NEET	**Policy**
Severe learning difficulties Physical and complex difficulties SEMH Communication and interaction New way of working Money comes from different sources	Code of practice	
Year 11's Post 16 Planning beginning year 9 for post 16	Age range	

Raising participation age (RPA) (not monitored) No welfare officer involvement 16-18		
Those not engaged Re-engaging Special school Mainstream with complex needs Building employability skills Concerns about how settings are regulated Gap in professional knowledge	Transitions	
Communication Written skills Lack of work experience Onus on young people Change in choices Exam results Unaware of process Difficulty understanding the local offer Consistent changes Difficult adolescent years Competition for places Need for EHCP Lack of appropriate provision Business model – (FE college need for bums on seats) Noisy, echoy, smelly, architecture, ongoing activity, danger	Barrier to transition	

Appendix 18 Codes, Categories and Themes - Phase 2

Codes	Categories	Themes
Hard working Never give up NEET Autism Imaginative Creative Inquisitive Anxiety (CAMHS) Loyal Kind Caring Considerate Balance between emotion and logic Organised Pride in appearance Make-up / clothes / shoes Good manners Open to change Step up to the mark (as a young parent)	Personal attributes	**Self- Description**
Insincere values Authoritive people People who work for self-gain People who are not genuine	Dislikes	
Unqualified for work No skills for work Anxiety The past Fear Mental health Poor educational experience (Past) Not as confident as I look Harsh critic Improvement is easier said than done Lack of self-efficacy Complexity of disability Fear of unknown Can I do it? Will people understand?	Internal concerns	

Fear of snakes and spiders Fear of wasps Neat hair (in a ponytail) Concept of friends (50-100 friends) Important to have water	Literal self concept	
Cooking Marvell superhero comic Art Being creative Travel Magic Decorating Computers Phones	Interests	
Being alone Unknown A loaner Bullying Crime Hate Corrupt Dishonest Immoral Selfish	Non-ideal	**Pivotal Point in Life**
Unknown No Birthday presents Doing things your way Lack of interest in me Historical struggles	Anonymous	
Difficult childhood Fear that the future will mirror the past Innocence Could have become violent/self centred Participation Involvement Something happened (past experience) Chose to become strong following the experience Understanding disability and difference	Personal significance	
Victimisation Memory of childhood The past (‘I will never be open to it’)	Fear	

Being poorly understood Avoidant Being alone Dying alone Being influenced by bad people Choices (the past could have influenced a selfish self)		
Good family experience Security Anxiety A sense of belonging Amazing Being with people ('getting out of my bubble')	Family	
Loss of friends Close friends (like family) True friends 1 or 2 close friends Support through good and bad Allowing ownership Wanting the best Importance of a strong relationship with the primary care giver	Influence of family and friendships	**Relationships**
Military family Caring family Loving Supportive Past and present (calm – present; 'dysfunctional;' – past). Difficulty understanding (autism) Person centred 'Parents seeing me for who I am' The provision is a family Carer	Categorisation of family	
Letting them down Losing people closest to them Having different values Getting to know people	Worries	
Bad people Disrespectful	Negative influence	

Being nasty Hate False friends		
Meaning Being nice Caring Bravery Making a difference Being a good person To be themselves Help others to help themselves Opportunity to help Maximise talent	Desire	**Purpose in Life**
Being in the military Honour Fight for what is right Kind Forgiving Loyal Self -worth	Values and standards	
Magic tricks Comedy Freedom of mind Self-worth Computer programmes Mobile phones	Entertain people	
Help people Make a difference Support people to look after themselves Get a Job Having money Have a family Get married Buy a house Having good friends Keeping friends Working with staff and friends Avoid being in the background Support other young people with SEND Encourage equal opportunity	Ambition	
Address bullying Mature attitude Freedom of choice	Justice	

Having input Feeling valued Making a difference See this growth happen for everyone else Open minded without prejudice Respect as an equal Importance of justice		
Consistently positive Active listening Accepting 'There when I need to talk' Sense of humour Making time for everyone Acceptance ('some people are fine one day; foul language the next) Take time Earn respect Encouragement Reinforce positives Person centred Talk Take an interest (outside and inside provision) Have a cup of tea with them Interact at the beginning and end of the day.	Emotional support	**Mentor Role**
Trustworthy Honest Dependable 'Making sure everything is okay' Shared experience Clear Structured routine Patience Be there Be in contact (including holidays) Change to support without question	Secure and reliable	
Self belief Focus on achievements (daughter/work) Faith and hope	Influence	

Avoiding silly mistakes Invisible effects (unaware while making progress) Take opportunities Happy Content Independent (basic life skills) Make a change Prepare for work Prepare for adulthood Encourage work placement		
Prepare for interviews Make them feel safe Internal first then vocational Meet their needs Pick tasks they can achieve Work placements they like Match key worker Teach process and skill Encourage ownership.	Support independence	
Uncertainty Unknowing Unsure who I am False sense of hope Really nervous Lack of direction Poor cognition and thinking Limited strategies Insecurity Avoid self reflection	Start of progress	**Personal Growth**
100% attendance Committed Happy (a smile on his face) Positive sense of hope Less shy Confidence (Self-reflection, family reflection, perception of staff). Ability to problem solve/'sort himself out.	Development	

Deal with real life situations Manage good and bad experiences Emotional resilience Learn from mistakes		
Open Easy to talk to Consistent Happy disposition Approachable Not being alone (belonging) Want to help Nurturing Supportive Respect Working in small groups Discussion Inner strength Resilience Positive mindset	Provision influence	
Cooking Baking/budgeting Public transport Money Independence Decision making Career related skills Social skills Be respectful Having the confidence to get involved and make a difference	Skills for life	
Additional needs Autism Mental health ADHD Environmental influence (classroom atmosphere) Difficulty following instructions Pathological demand avoidance 2 or 3 areas of the code of practice (DfE, 2014) Communication and Interaction	Barrier to learning	**Category of Learner**

Social Emotional and Mental Health Individual differences (all different) Self belief Stuck in their bedroom Group work refusal How they feel might not match what they show.		
Time in pupil referral units Managed moves to different provisions Negative transition Lack of structured education Challenging decision making Bad experience (associated with desks / chairs / standard classroom layout) Home educated In and out of CAMHS Single parent families Fostered Looked after by siblings Forced to grow up Missed childhood Facebook (cyber bulling) Varied understanding of why they are in the provision/need for provision	Pathway to provision	
Personal importance Steam trains Rabbits Obsession with computers Coding / writing games Phones (including the working/parts) Cameras Video Media Modern technology Wish to be themselves Computer literacy Music	Individual focus	
Angry	Individual characteristics	

Anxious Uncertainty Withdrawn Acting up Avoid big groups Need for nurturing adult Unique view of the world Resistance to change Only toilet at home Struggle to think about the future All at different stages		
One task at a time Time to relax Chillout space PACE Active listening Understand previous experience Never assume anything	Strategies	**Tailored Curriculum**
One thing in detail Painting Art Tennis Card tricks Mobile phones Computers Design Anime and manga Lego Marvel characters Drawing animation	Focus	
'They allow us to teach' English Maths Everyday functioning Struggle to understand importance National curriculum qualifications	Core subjects	
Settees / coffee table as classroom Outside wider learning Small class size Build relationships Music while working (for some not for others) Chillout room as a safe place	Environment	

Eating together Go to the beach (pick up rubbish)		
Start with an ice-breaker Consistent daily practice Experiential learning Science experiments YouTube Mirroring Break down to small steps Ask them Have a debate Choices Don't challenge their concepts (if they say it was hard, agree) Select positive language Reward Observe – notice – adjust Use animals to relieve stress (stroking a hamster) Limited changes (room layout etc.) Timekeeping through deadlines Flexible delivery Recognise individual differences Take a mentoring role Support parents (understand their journey too) Transition discussion (adulthood) Regular breaks Vary the environments Support through holidays	Routine	
Cooking simple meals Shopping Buying cake in a café Shopping Daily routine Food safety Where to put sharp knives Use of the fridge Washing clothes	Basic life skills	

Hygiene When to wash hands How to store things Repetition Social interaction Public transport		
Dyslexic tendencies Physically clumsy Order of need: Communication and interaction Social emotional mental health Difficulty following instructions Being overwhelmed Too much in their minds Noise People talking Limited friendship experience Limited ability	Individual Challenges	**Knowing the Young Person**
Communication of frustration Avoidance of post 16 decisions Task avoidance Emotional outburst (crying) Unique habits (only eat beans on a separate dish) Refuse to leave the house Need to switch off to cope	Behaviour	
From inside a box Different perspective Excellent observation of colour / touch Regimented routine Repetitive Literal understanding (Jokes) 'I can't read' 'I can't write' 'I can't do anything' Need to know every step	World view	
All different	Traits	

Poor hygiene Dislike cleaning teeth Wear the same cloths Avoid washing (because it doesn't occur to them or they don't like the sensation) Don't understand importance Need clear instructions Literal (have a showers does not mean wash to them)		
Phone Money New car New house Good job	Material aspirations	**Aspiration**
Getting a job Job satisfaction A job looking after people Financial success Security Plan for the future	Employment	
To be the person I want to be To be a good person To be accepted as I am Having family close (more important than anything material) Develop relationships Find true love Feel better about myself Support others Beauty inside and out	Personal	
Part of a family Trusted friends Part of a community Social interaction Manage anxiety Autonomous employment Precise and organised Kind Unique interest Stay in bedroom (with computer games) Frightening	Future self	

Need for key adult Need for instruction Achieving small tasks (linked to money / time) Unachievable for some but not all Not interested Resilience	Independence	**Young Person Development**
Celebrate success Process over result (getting into the exam room) Social stories Allow them to play (computers / animals) Acceptance Curiosity Empathy Calm environment Home influence Student pastoral care TAC meetings Calm, relaxed Don't be a school Everything in bit size chunks Build trust Don't expect anything back Taster sessions	What works	
Difficult family situation Emotional overload Pressure Doing something different Expectation Conforming Understanding different world view (how/why) Identifying long term goals	Challenges	
Confidence (through achievement) Transition to provision Independent travel Sitting with strangers Use of banter From silence to sense of humour Independence:	Developed skills	

Going into town Buying lunch Using the bus		
Cooking Money (value) Using washing machines Daily routine (time) How to shop Mixing and socialising	Functional skills	
Arrive at provision too anxious to understand/ remember the journey. Induction period building trust with the provision/ key person. Influence of mentoring relationship; feeling safe with a secure base. Start to develop their area of interest with the key person. Develop values and future aspirations through mentoring influence becoming more confident with increased skills. Aspire to have meaning and purpose according to the developed values, often with the aim of supporting disability and difference.	Typical journey	