

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC
EXPLORATION OF
RELATIONSHIPS IN RESIDENTIAL
CHILD CARE**

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY



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DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained within this thesis has not been submitted for any other Degree at any other university. The content found within this thesis has been entirely composed by the candidate, Nadine Helen Fowler.

ABSTRACT

The significance of relationships in residential child care in Scotland has grown in policy, practice and academic writing. Introduction of *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* and current narratives around 'love' in residential settings have demonstrated a shift in mainstream ways of viewing daily life in care settings. Examining relationships in residential care is not a new endeavour: academics have written extensively about the need for residential practice to be relational. These relationships have been contextualised by sociologists as enacted practices and felt connections, rather than biological ties of traditional kinship.

This thesis explores the processes through which relationships are enacted and understood in residential care. Data was obtained through an ethnographic study conducted across three residential houses in Scotland. The fieldwork lasted a total of 10 months from May 2016 to February 2017 and involved 49 staff members and 17 young people. The majority of data was derived from participant observation, totalling 104 days of fieldnotes. These were supplemented with semi-structured interviews in all three houses, involving 22 staff members and 5 young people.

Two main themes were identified in the data. Firstly, the setting of each residential house as both a workplace and a homeplace, governed by systemic processes which could interrupt people's enactment of relationships or facilitate bonding opportunities, permeated everyday residential life. Secondly, both staff members and young people behaved with some ambivalence towards relationships. People's closeness with others could be met with suspicion, resulting in a dichotomous process where participants would both attempt to bond with and distance themselves from others. This thesis concludes that relationships for staff members and young people are enacted in small, every day moments and are a significant factor in residential care.

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I also wish to let my participants know that the time I spent in all of the residential houses was precious to me. I did not anticipate forming such close bonds with the staff members and young people that I met during this process, and I have become acutely aware of the investment that participants give to researchers. Throughout fieldwork, we saw each other on both 'good' and 'bad' days, days when we were happy and days when we were not. The significance of each participants' contribution to this study cannot be underestimated, and I cannot express just how grateful I am to them for allowing me extended access to their lives, and for enabling me to share parts of my life with them as well.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with exploring relationships in residential child care using ethnographic methods. The study involves three residential houses for children and young people across two local authorities in central Scotland. The main aim of the thesis is to understand how staff members and young people navigate their relationships in the context of residential child care. The thesis considers the relationships between everyone within the broad boundaries of each house, and includes an examination of both ‘horizontal’ relationships – those between young people and young people, or staff members and staff members – and ‘vertical’ relationships – those between staff members and young people, or managers and staff members. In attempting to understand those relationships, the thesis engages broadly with academic writing on residential child care, relationships, emotions and interactions.

Academic, policy and practice interest in relationships in residential child care has grown in popularity in recent years, alongside the introduction of *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* and the current narratives around ‘love’ in residential settings. Of note here is the influence of the voluntary sector, with organisations such as *Who Cares? Scotland* paving the way for more meaningful conversations around relationships and looked-after children. Central to this discourse is the experience of relationships from the perspective of the young people, and their need for ‘good’, ‘loving’ relationships. In these discussions, staff members are largely viewed as adults who aid children, rather than autonomous people with their own social and emotional connections independent of their role in the care of children. This thesis aims to ‘plug the gap’ in current literature on relationships in residential child care by including a consideration of staff members, which is largely absent aside from notes on staff member turnover and job satisfaction (Colton and Roberts, 2007; Ainsworth and Hansen, 2018). Attention is paid to the navigation of relationships rather than their characteristics (Noblit, 1993; Moore et al., 2018) or therapeutic potential (Moses, 2000; Ruch, 2007; Kendrick et al., 2011).

A BACKGROUND TO RELATIONSHIPS IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

Although it is uncommon for children in Scotland to grow-up outside of their family home, those that do can live in a myriad of settings, such as kinship care, foster care, residential care or secure accommodation (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Despite calls to view the service as a ‘positive choice’, for children and young people who cannot live with

their families the use of residential child care has consistently been viewed as a ‘last resort’ (Crimmens and Milligan, 2005; Knorth et al., 2008; Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012; Smith et al., 2013; Mollidor and Berridge, 2017). As such, the children and young people living in residential settings are likely to have undergone multiple placement breakdowns (Anglin, 2004; Connelly and Milligan, 2012; Mollidor and Berridge, 2017), while also experiencing increased stigma and being viewed as ‘troublemakers’ (Selwyn et al., 2010). Whilst this thesis is not an attempt to understand the wider care setting, nor is it placed to directly challenge the uses and functions of residential settings, the complexities of the residential system, as highlighted above, directly influence the perceptions of residential child care as a site of relationship work.

Therefore, as a setting, residential child care can be a holding site of intense trauma. The young people living in residential houses have likely experienced many moves through the looked-after system, such as previous placements in foster care, kinship care or returns to the care of their parents (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Additionally, their experiences of familial relationships are likely to have been challenging, and relationships are unlikely to have been a site of constant positive emotional and physical comfort (Archer and Gordon, 2013; Emond, et al., 2016). The residential house then functions as a space in which young people have to navigate the effects of their past relationships while forming new relationships. This space is responsible for containing the routines, rhythms and rituals of residential care, as well as the emotional and relational aspects of everyday life (Maier, 1979; Keenan, 1991; Lefebvre, 2007; Smith et al., 2013).

Alongside children and young people, residential houses are also sites which contain adult relationships. The staff members working in residential settings are tasked with aiding children in their recovery from past traumatic experiences. However, this task also involves understanding and using the experiences of staff members themselves. Life-space models of care reinforce the need to appreciate experiences of staff members alongside experiences of young people (Redl and Wineman, 1951; Gharabaghi and Stuart, 2013). They argue that where young people bring their past experiences into the life-space of the residential house, staff members do also. The way in which people act, react and interpret their actions is based upon their own experiences both inside and outside of the house, as well as their perception of other people’s experiences (Keenan, 1991; Gharabaghi and Stuart, 2013). For this reason, staff members’ experiences of residential care and relationships is given equal.

For the purposes of this thesis, the residential house serves as a context for relationships to be viewed and understood. Understanding relationships in this context through a sociological lens also involves an exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of relationships, interactions and emotions. The work of Smart (2007), May (2013), Baxter (1990; 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; Baxter and Montgomery, 1996; Goldsmith and Baxter, 1996) and Goffman (1959) demonstrate that relationships are complex phenomena which involve both 'feeling' and 'doing'. Smart (2007), as well as Emond (2016) and Lovatt (2018), further argue that relationships can contain an element of materiality, whereby people draw understandings from their relationships through their belongings. Relationships are, overall, understood as active, rather than passive; people navigate their social worlds through interpreting both their actions and their feelings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

My personal interest in this topic began during my Undergraduate degree, where my dissertation sought to understand social workers' decisions to remove children from parental care. This sparked an interest in looked-after children more generally, with a view to exploring the experiences of those who worked in the social care sector, as well as the children they worked with. Moving on from my Undergraduate dissertation, my Master's thesis investigated the role of residential child care workers as 'parents' to the children and young people in the residential house. From conducting this research it became apparent that residential workers saw their role as in conflict: they behaved in parental ways, but were clear that they were not 'parents' to the young people. It was at this juncture that it seemed important to investigate these relationships further. If staff members were not parents, then what were they? How were staff members' roles viewed by young people? How did the staff members and young people *feel* about each other? Although this Doctoral study does not address these questions directly, the process of reflecting on my previous work pushed me to consider relationships in residential child care more widely.

Coinciding with my own personal interest in the topic of relationships in residential child care, it became clear during my Master's research that more research was needed to fully understand the experiences of young people *and* staff members in residential settings. While an acknowledgement of the importance of relationships is not new (Redl and Wineman, 1952; Maier, 1979; Emond, 2003; Emond et al., 2014; Rabley et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2018), the perspective of staff members in residential settings is missing. What is available is an account of staff members' care work alongside managerial expectations (see

Mezies Lyth 1988; 1989). In reflecting on my Master's research, the addition of staff members' perspectives is an important one, given their significant role in the lives of the young people they care for.

Additionally, literature which explores the daily relational experiences of people in residential settings is largely set within sub-categories of work. For instance, work which deals with touch (Smith, 2009; Lynch and Garrett, 2010; Steckley, 2010; Smith et al., 2013; Eßer, 2018), 'caring care' (Maier, 1979), managerial care (Smith, 2009; Rogowski, 2011; Ruch, 2012), leaving care (Dixon and Stein, 2003; Coyle and Pinkerton, 2012; Gallagher and Green, 2012; Adley and Jupp Kina, 2017), care ethics (Smith, 2010; Steckley and Smith, 2010; Tronto, 2010; Collins, 2015), and love (Emond, 2016; Smith, 2016; Vincent, 2016; White, 2016). Within all of these categories, the use and function of relationships in residential settings is explored. However, relationships in residential child care, and between looked after children and their care-givers more widely, have largely been viewed through a 'healing' or functional lens. These 'healing' or functional relationships are talked about as a tool which can aid children and young people in their recovery from traumatic past experiences, rather than a more rounded aspect of daily life for adults and young people (See Redl and Wineman, 1952; Maier, 1979; Barton et al., 2012; Archer and Gordon, 2013). On the other hand, my intention is to understand relationships from a more nuanced perspective, focusing on how people do relationships with one another, building on the work of authors such as Smart (2007), Emond (2003; 2016) and Lovatt (2018), who, within their respective disciplines, have demonstrated the multi-faceted nature of relationships as well as the ways that people do, understand and navigate them.

The study sets out to understand the ways that people in residential houses navigate their relationships with others in these houses. The focus of this research is to explore the 'doing' of relationships, highlighting the processes through which staff members and young people spend time together, undertake daily activities and connect with one another. The thesis draws on the theoretical background which highlights the influence of interactions, emotions and dialectics in relational processes. The context of the residential house is particularly important, and the navigation of relationships is, therefore, understood within this contextualisation. The routines, rhythms and rituals of daily life are woven throughout the findings Chapters, where it becomes clear that navigating relationships cannot be understood independently of the situations in which those relationships occur. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?
- (2) How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?
- (3) What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?
- (4) What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?

THE THESIS STRUCTURE

Following this introduction, Chapters 2 and 3 outline the literature and theoretical backgrounds of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on understanding residential child care. The residential system in Scotland is explored, as is the context of residential care and its history. Attention is also paid to debates around touch and love, while exploring the research on ‘doing care’. Chapter 3 then turns to examine relationships and the various theoretical lenses through which the navigation of relationships can be understood. The Chapter largely explores the sociological background to relationships, with a short section detailing some workplace and childhood considerations. It is at through these literature Chapters that the two predominant research areas – residential child care, and relationships – connect to form a picture of the study’s purpose.

Following an overview of the current literature, the thesis moves to Chapter 4 and explores the methodological, ethical and practical aspects of doing ethnographic research. The steps taken to conduct the study are interwoven with previous research on ethnographic methods. It is here that the reader is introduced to the participants, the three houses (Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells) and the two local authorities (Hillview and Seaview). The Chapter finishes by outlining the analytical framework and providing some notes on the presentation of data.

The second half of the thesis is devoted to the findings of the study and connecting the observed experiences of staff members and young people in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells with the wider literature. Chapters 5 and 6 explore the main themes that were identified and emerged from the data, with each Chapter dedicated to a single overarching theme. In Chapter 5 the navigation and doing of relationships is connected with the context of residential child care, exploring the role of policy and practice as well as children’s rights and daily life in the residential house. Following this, Chapter 6 explores the ambivalence of staff members and young people towards their relationships within the residential house.

The Chapter looks at the connections between people, the emotional components of relationships, relationships and belonging in the residential space, and the complexities of the residential house as a homeplace and workplace. A key component of this Chapter is the way in which people can have contrasting and ambiguous feelings about their relationships, and how these contrasting feelings are navigated in this context. Finally, the thesis concludes with an exploration of the wider relevance of this work for policy and practice, while also underlining the contributions it makes to sociological thinking on relationships and residential child care.

STYLISTIC NOTES

In the current literature on residential child care, the houses in which young people live and staff members work are typically known as ‘residential units’, which contrasts with earlier depictions of residential houses as ‘children’s homes’ (Smith, 2009). However, I have found that neither term fully encompasses the function of these buildings or what it is like to live and work in them. Additionally, the language used by participants in each residential house in this study varied, with the manager of Bruceford indicating that they were currently moving to call the house a ‘young people’s home’, and the staff members in Wallacewells and Stewarton opting for ‘the unit’ or their own colloquial nickname for the houses (which was a variation of their ‘real’ names¹). Given that there were disagreements between fieldsites on the terminology, and the professionalization of the term ‘units’, I have opted to refer to all fieldsites as ‘residential houses’, or simply ‘houses’, throughout. This term is used throughout as a replacement for ‘residential units’ and ‘children’s home’, and is intended to capture the meaning of each building as a ‘house’ in which people live and work, whilst encompassing the terminology of both ‘home’ and ‘unit’.

Throughout this thesis, the academic writing is proliferated with the use of first-person language. This follows the expectation that ethnographic research be transparent and reflexive (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). In using the first-person throughout, I attempt to differentiate between my role in the research, my decisions, and my overall approach, and the wider literature considerations. Doing so also demonstrates the difference between my voice and the voice of my participants, particularly in Chapters 5 and 6, where the findings of this thesis are presented. Where I am included in data excerpts, I use either first-person language or my own name (Nadine) alongside the participants’ pseudonyms. The

¹ There is no discernible way to allocate a pseudonym for the nickname of Stewarton which would capture both the ‘type’ of nickname and the way in which participants used it. The nickname for Wallacewells was the name previously allocated to the house before the local authority acquired it.

presentation of data itself also differentiates between my voice and that of participants by indenting all excerpts and including any direct quotes from participants in italics. All data is presented using the dialect of participants, with Scottish slang frequent throughout. As such, any uncommon phrases are explained in footnotes throughout. Finally, I differentiate between young people (YP) and staff members (SM) by indicating, in brackets, the role of each participant once in each paragraph or excerpt, dropping the brackets to reduce the interruption of the narrative, and re-adopting the brackets after each paragraph or excerpt.

CHAPTER 2: LIVING AND WORKING IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

Before considering literature on relationships and their role in understanding everyday life, this Chapter aims to outline the current residential child care context in Scotland. To begin, focus is given to discussing the role and function of residential settings, the characteristics of people who live and work there, how residential child care fits within the wider historical and social system, and ongoing debates in the residential sector. Following this overview of the Scottish system, attention turns to current research on relationships in residential care. This is situated within the current movement for love and intimacy in Scottish debates about the care of looked after children and young people. Additionally, there are some key topics in the academic debate around relationships in residential settings. These substantive topics do not always seek to explore relationships, or more accurately they do not claim to be exclusively about relationships in residential child care. They do, nonetheless, situate themselves within the realms of understanding relationship-based practice and people's connections with one another. Discussion of relationships in residential child care is, therefore, situated within literature which examines the doing of care, such as the debates which influence daily aspects of life for staff members and young people, as well as discourses of touch and love.

THE SCOTTISH SYSTEM

As a sector, residential child care continues to be viewed as a 'last resort' in placement options, positioning residential facilities as the worst choice for children, used only when all other placement possibilities have been exhausted (Milligan and Stevens, 2006; Smith, 2009; Berridge et al., 2011). 'Governments have repeatedly asserted that residential child care can and should be a positive choice' (Hill, 2009: 13), yet this 'last resort' narrative persists, following a policy preference for family-type care over that provided in 'institutions', leading to a situation whereby residential child care is often left to 'pick up the pieces' when other placements break down (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Internationally, residential care for children is said to be viewed more positively, with placements higher in other European countries: in Denmark and Germany over half of their looked after young people are in residential placements, just less than half in the Netherlands and around one third in France (Shaw and Frost, 2013). Nonetheless, the preference for family-like care has frequently been reported across international contexts, with a policy and research consensus regarding the importance of a family environment over an institutional one (del Valle and

Bravo, 2013). Part of this narrative can be attributed to the negative association between residential houses and abuse scandals (Corby et al., 1998; Smith et al., 2013), as well as institutionalisation (Green, 1998), leading to ongoing critique and suspicion. Additionally, ‘...many local authorities appear at best unsure as to how they should be using residential childcare services and at worst continue to utilise it as a residual resource’, which further contributes to this ‘last resort’ narrative (McPheat et al., 2007: 16). This viewpoint does not adequately take into account the complexities facing the sector or acknowledge that for some young people it can be the best placement option (Anglin and Knorth, 2004). These issues have been mirrored in practice across the UK in recent years, where the overall proportion of looked after children in residential settings has decreased, despite an increase in the proportion of children in foster and kinship placements (Connelly and Milligan, 2012).

At 31st July 2017, 14,897 children and young people were looked after in Scotland, generally aged 18 years and under² (Scottish Government, 2018a). This includes children looked after at home and away from home. Of these children and young people, 1,509 were living in residential accommodation, the majority of which (619) were local authority residential houses (‘local authority home’), with the remainder described as: ‘voluntary home’ (112); ‘residential school’ (375); ‘secure accommodation’ (56); ‘crisis care’ (0), and; ‘other residential’ (332)³ (Scottish Government, 2018a: 5). Where the terminology ‘residential child care’ is used in this thesis, reference is generally made to accommodation described as ‘local authority home’ and ‘voluntary home’, equating to 731 children and young people. Although many of the arguments made will relate to the other types of residential accommodation identified, it is not the intention of this project to examine specialist residential services, such as residential schools, secure accommodation, crisis care, and those described as ‘other’. Residential child care as a term, however, remains fairly broad, meaning that literature referred to throughout may discuss some of these specialist services in their use of ‘residential child care’.

Looked after children and young people in Scotland are typically placed in care through a legal process. The most common of these is compulsory measures of ‘supervision’,

² The Scottish Government’s (2018) ‘Children’s Social Work Statistics 2016-17’ does not include an exact age range, instead presenting data for the following year groups: under 1, 1-4, 5-11, 12-15, 16-17, 18+ (see Scottish Government, 2018b, *Children’s Social Work Statistics Scotland 2016-17: Additional Tables*). At points, data is broken-down further, with an age range of 18-21. Nonetheless, the overall statistics for all looked after children and young people remain non-specific, with most looked after children and young people under 18 years old (14,773).

³ It is stated that ‘the bulk of the “other residential” placements are private/independent residential placements for young people with complex needs’ (Scottish Government, 2018a: 5).

as defined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, under Section 52 (2) actions described as ‘for the protection, guidance, treatment or control of children under a set of conditions’ (Connelly and Milligan, 2012: 2). Of all looked-after young people in Scotland during 2017, 10,203 (around 68%) were accommodated under compulsory supervision orders (Scottish Government, 2018b). It is the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 which defines children as ‘looked after’ by local authorities, a term introduced earlier in England and Wales through the Children Act 1989. Those children and young people not looked after under compulsory measures of care tend to come into the care sector under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Section 25 is a voluntary agreement whereby the young person’s parents agree to their placement in care, usually following a crisis (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). During 2017, 2,458 looked after young people in Scotland were accommodated under a voluntary agreement, equating to around 16% (Scottish Government, 2018b). The majority of children and young people living in residential care are placed there for child care and protection reasons (Smith, 2009). Usually this will occur when children have experienced neglect, abuse, ‘inadequate parenting’ or parental substance misuse, or may be related to involvement in the youth justice system (Scottish Government, 2008).

Residential child care has predominantly become a placement for older young people (Smith, 2009), with 1,320 young people over the age of 12 years in residential settings (more than 85% of the total 1,509) (Scottish Government, 2018b). Additionally, residential houses throughout the UK typically care for children with additional support needs and those whose needs have not been adequately met in foster care (Schofield et al., 2017). It is likely that young people in residential care will experience frequent placement moves (Milligan and Stevens, 2006), stigma (Ridge and Millar, 2000; Emond, 2014; Mollitor and Berridge, 2017) and a heightened risk of social exclusion (Winter, 2010). Schofield et al. (2017) further highlight the prevalence of mental health issues and low educational attainment for young people in residential settings, with poor outcomes suggested to be the result of children and young people in residential care not having access to the ‘...learning opportunities or support they require’ (Hill, 2009: 53). This lack of support also results in: an increased likelihood of involvement in criminal activity (Stevens, 2004); higher levels of behavioural issues (Conlon and Ingram, 2006); and, poorer health outcomes (McCool and Stevens, 2011) than other children and young people in the general population.

Currently, residential houses are small in size, replicating a domestic rather than institutional environment (Milligan et al., 2006; Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Single rooms for young people are standard, with an increase in en-suite provision. There

has also been an increase in mixed-sex facilities, rather than single sex ones (Smith, 2009). This aim to create a domestic rather than institutional space is, however, somewhat difficult, given the prevalence for staff member and manager offices, where record keeping, paperwork and professional phone calls can take place (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). From the 1960s onward, the trend has been to place residential houses in local communities, which has not been without its difficulties (Smith, 2009). For instance, residential houses often struggle to ‘fit in’ with their host communities. These residential houses are largely provided by local authorities, voluntary and independent organisations (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). This trend is not mirrored as strongly in England, where the for-profit sector has a larger presence than in Scotland (Milligan et al., 2006). Although, this is not due to a deliberate strategy of promoting or prioritising independent residential services, rather a consequence of reducing local authority provision and the size of residential houses, providing space for the growing private sector to occupy (Shaw and Frost, 2013).

The role of caring for children and young people in residential settings falls to paid staff members. This work has largely been viewed as ‘low-status’ in comparison to social work, although perceptions are changing (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). This is largely due to the increase in professional registration, the launch of specialist qualifications and the increasing influence of theoretical and practice frameworks in care settings (Milligan and Furnivall, 2011). Residential workers are currently required to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), providing evidence of ‘good character’ and relevant qualifications for the role (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). A staff member can register with the SSSC without a ‘relevant qualification’, however, there are a range of qualifications recognised for work in residential facilities. These qualifications include: qualified social worker, teacher, psychologist or music therapist; Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Social Care, and; Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 3 in Health and Social Care (Milligan and Furnivall, 2011; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). More recently, the National Residential Child Care Initiative (NRCCI) *Workforce Report* recommended that all staff members in residential settings be qualified to degree level or equivalent from 2014 onwards (Davidson et al., 2009). The *Standard for Residential Child Care* echoes this requirement for degree-level qualifications, acknowledging the role of previous learning and outlining a collaborative approach to introducing the degree qualification between the SSSC, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children (CELCIS) (CELCIS and SSSC, 2016).

Increasing the qualifications of the workforce in residential care follows a pattern of professionalisation and managerialism in the care sector more widely, attributed to historical abuse scandals and wider shifts in political discourses (Smith, 2009). The impact of these wider influences is discussed later, however, at this point it is worth noting that:

Residential child care exists within particular historical, cultural, political and professional contexts. An understanding of these wider macro-systemic influences is vital to any understanding of the ways in which care is currently conceived and practised.

(Smith, 2009: 1)

These ‘macro-systemic’ influences highlight the role of past and present social, cultural and political debates in shaping residential care as it is currently understood. While children were largely placed in alternative care by their own parents in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the process of removing children from parental care and into group-care settings is not a new one. There have been a number of comprehensive accounts and historical investigations of residential child care in Scotland (Asquith, 1995; Abrams, 1998; Jackson, 2006; Shaw, 2007). Alongside conceptions of childhood and family, it becomes clear that residential child care as it is now known has a long and troubled past. With still-emerging abuse scandals, media influence and increasing bureaucratic pressures (Smith, 2009). This section is a brief exploration of the development of residential child care, specific to the Scottish system, from the emergence of abuse scandals in the 1950s. The fraught past is a reminder of what came before, an outline of the systems that influenced residential care as it is now known, and an explanation of current risk averse, protective and managerial care (Smith, 2009).

Developing Alongside Professionalism, Abuse and Scandal

Residential care, in the form of small group homes over large institutions, were in development early in post-war Britain. Post-war preferences for foster care over residential care, alongside commitments to deinstitutionalisation, were based largely on Bowlby’s (1958; 1969) attachment theory, as well as the theoretical developments proposed by Bettelheim (1950), Redl and Wineman (1951; 1952) and Treischman et al. (1969). These developments paved the way for psychoanalytical frameworks which challenged the separation of ‘treatment’ (by social workers and therapists) and ‘care’ (by residential staff members). They argued that residential settings could be modified to be therapeutic in nature, encouraging a reflection on the practices of residential workers and the function of group care. It is argued that therapeutic models were never fully implemented in the UK (Warwick, 2017). However,

the significance of adult-child relationships in residential care was highlighted, and residential settings across the UK moved from large-scale orphanages to smaller units (around 20 young people) (Smith, 2009). These therapeutic interventions have re-emerged to some extent, informing current 'life-space' models and residential practice (Warwick, 2017), discussed in more detail later in this Chapter. Alongside this shift in practice concern, criticism of 'total institutions' (such as prisons, hospitals and mental health asylums) were reported in the work of Goffman (1968), Polsky (1962) and Wolfensberger (1972). These criticisms surrounded the stripping of people's autonomy and agency, which enhanced a growing movement towards deinstitutionalisation and community-based care.

Building on these theoretical developments, the 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of professionalising discourses in substitute care and social work provision. In Scotland, the publication of the 1964 Kilbrandon Report saw the introduction of several changes to the care system, the principal being the implementation of the Children's Hearings System when the Social Work (Scotland) Act was passed in 1968 (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). The Children's Hearings System predominantly moved offending proceedings for children and young people from criminal courts to a non-criminal panel of lay-persons from a young person's community. It also situated cases of children in need of care and protection within the same panel of lay-persons, who were tasked with making decisions relating to alternative care, treatment and community supervision. Alongside the implementation of the Children's Hearings System, the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 began to situate residential child care within the wider social work system. Provisions were made to bring into local authority social work departments comprehensive powers covering child care, welfare, social support, and supervision of offenders and after-care of prisoners, whilst highlighting a duty to promote social welfare and give advice and help to people who need it (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Similar provisions were made in England and Wales, following the Seebohm Report in 1968 and the Children and Young Persons Act 1969. The shift in care provision and the situation of residential child care within social work is said to mark the beginning of 'professionalisation' of residential child care (Smith, 2009).

In moving towards the professionalisation of residential child care during the 1970s and 1980s, it is argued that 'spatial and emotional distance' was encouraged between carers and those cared for, resulting in a 'depersonalisation of the care task' (Smith, 2009: 29). Overall, intimacy became suspect at an ideological level, where it was said to 'foster dependency' or 'open the door to abuse' (Smith, 2009: 29). The growth in size of local authority social work departments led social work managers to consider alternatives to

residential child care (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Residential houses increasingly accommodated smaller numbers of children and young people, placement lengths were shortened, live-in 'house parents' dissipated and 'professional level training' began (Milligan and Stevens, 2006; Smith, 2009). These developments saw a shift in the way that relationships were perceived and formed between staff members and young people, with contemporary practice bound by policy and procedures, limiting the scope for relational practice (Kendrick and Smith, 2002).

This move towards professionalism coincided with some areas of Scotland refurbishing residential houses and reducing reliance on voluntary-sector provision, such as Quarriers, Barnardo's and Aberlour (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). In the late 1980s, social work departments moved to locate residential houses in the same local areas that their residents were from. These areas were largely deprived, with the aim of placing children close to their families proving difficult given the social issues of the neighbourhoods, issues which led to hostility towards the residential houses and their residents (Connelly and Milligan, 2012). As a result, many of these houses were subsequently closed and relocated, with local authorities choosing more mixed or prosperous areas than before, while attempting to remain close to residents' communities. During the same period, the use of residential houses reduced in England, with the sector decreasing from 25,000 houses to just under 2,000 from 1981 to 2001 (Kendrick, 2012). Here, moves were made to close local authority houses and rely on the private market instead (Milligan and Stevens, 2006). Similar moves were not unheard of in Scotland, with Fife accompanying Warwickshire in attempting to dispense of their residential provision altogether (Smith, 2009). Overall, the professional preference for family-like placements saw residential care become increasingly identified as a residual service of growing expense (Smith, 2009).

The late 1980s were also marked by the public emergence of multiple abuse scandals in residential child care. Abusive practices were uncovered across the UK, with the 'Pindown' regime in Staffordshire between 1983 and 1989 considered the focus of the first major inquiry (Smith, 2009). This regime claimed to be rooted in 'psychological justifications' while masking an extreme, physically abusive approach to managing behaviour (Levy and Kahan, 1991). The practice involved punishing young people who had absconded or refused to attend school by locking them in their sparsely furnished bedrooms and depriving them of possessions and company (Shaw, 2007). While the Pindown inquiry is regarded the first of the numerous inquiries in the 1990s, Shaw (2007) reports that 72 inquiries were held in the UK between 1945 and 1996. During this time, there were two notable inquiries in

Scotland, the Edinburgh Inquiry in 1999 and the Fife Inquiry in 2002, following two major reviews, *Another Kind of Home, a Review of Residential Child Care* (Skinner, 1992) and *Children's Safeguards Review* (Kent, 1997). Skinner (1992) was tasked with examining what residential child care provided to children and young people and its quality. This report did not focus specifically on abuse, but Skinner (1992) recommended independent elements to any investigation regarding abuse allegations against staff members. The 1997 Kent Report, on the other hand, set out to explicitly consider the dangers faced by children living away from home. In this report, Kent (1997) highlighted that there were a worrying number of cases of abuse being brought before Scottish courts, warning against complacency. Both the Edinburgh Inquiry and Fife Inquiry were conducted in response to three staff members being convicted of sexual abuse of children living in the residential houses where they worked: two in Edinburgh from 1973 to 1987 and one in Fife between 1959 and 1989 (Shaw, 2007). These inquiries provided several recommendations for change in residential care that have impacted the sector to date. These included reframing staff recruitment, training and retention, allowing young people to raise concerns about management, improving safeguarding of children, and better management of visitors (Shaw, 2007).

In discussing abusive regimes in residential child care, Green (2001) argues that abusive practices can take hold in environments where non-abusive staff and victims of abuse are silenced by abusers in positions of power. Drawing upon Goffman's (1968) theory of 'total institutions', Green (2001) suggests that non-abusive staff can become complicit in abusive regimes and are hindered in their ability to whistle-blow as they become ingrained in the abuses of power. Ineffective whistleblowing systems in these 'total institutions' leave powerless children and staff silenced by bullying and victimising (Warwick, 2017). In addition, Milligan and Stevens (2006) have recorded several shared characteristics of abuse scandals. These include residential houses being operated by 'confident' unit managers, with unchallenged practices due to unaware or uninterested external management. Historically, religious ideas of illegitimacy, social class and moral judgement, especially in Ireland, regarding young people from lower working classes populated arguments about the 'moral dirt' of children (Ferguson, 2007). This conceptualisation of children and young people increased their susceptibility to abuse, whereby powerful adult abusers were able to shame young people into silence by questioning their moral worth (Warwick, 2017).

The abuse of children and young people in residential child care has had widespread impact in Scotland, across the UK and internationally. Summarising, Smith (2009: 38) states '...the period from the early 1990s onwards has been one of unparalleled scrutiny'. Despite

arguments by Shaw (2007) and Smith (2009; 2013) that caution against imposing 21st century perspectives on historical events, it is clear that historical events continue to have an impact on 21st century perspectives. Notably, abuse and scandal in residential care, and alternative care more widely, are not entirely historical issues. At present, there are two ongoing inquiries in Scotland tasked with investigating both abuse (The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry) and current experiences of all forms of care (The Independent Care Review). The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry takes a semi-historic approach, investigating any abuse of children in care in living memory, meaning that anyone who was abused in any period until December 2014 is of focus (The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, 2018). On the other hand, the Independent Care Review is attempting to understand all experiences of care, from any care experienced person, their family, carers, and organisations and professionals that work with them. In doing so, the aim is to ‘...identify and deliver lasting change in the “care system” and leave a legacy that will transform the life chances and wellbeing of infants, children and young people in care’ (The Independent Care Review, 2018: 2). These ongoing investigations demonstrate the lasting influence of abuse and scandal on the current residential sector.

Ongoing Debates

The history of residential child care has had a substantial impact on the current formation of the residential system. As a result of these scandals and inquiries, residential houses are places of increasing regulation, sensitive to public scrutiny and subject to numerous procedures developed to prevent abuse (Warwick, 2017). They have also been impacted by wider societal concerns about risk, the changing nature of childhood, and romanticised notions of the nuclear family as the best place for children to grow up (Smith, 2009). This increase in regulation, mirrored throughout social care, was largely supported by the 1997 New Labour Government in their ‘Third Way’ of policy formation (Smith et al., 2013). New Labour introduced legislation across the UK in 2001 to regulate the care sector and set standards against which residential facilities were to be inspected and regulated. Other procedures rooted in safeguarding and improvement include child-focused complaints processes, detailed guidance on recruitment and training of staff members, and the protection of whistle-blowers (Kendrick and Smith, 2002). While legislative changes to regulate care were largely introduced to improve services and safeguard the public, Smith et al. (2013) argue that they have not been as successful as desired, largely viewed as a burden by staff members and contributing to an increase in paperwork and reporting. This focus on protection, although arguably beneficial for ensuring children and young people are safe, can have repercussions for other areas of residential practice. Smith et al. (2013: 19) suggest that

‘...child protection predominantly identifies safety with systems and procedures rather than with emotions and relationships’. In relying heavily on systems and procedures, rather than emotions and relationships, relational elements of care are particularly affected. This is best demonstrated by Howard (2012: 42):

Children in care will not be best served if the marginalisation, trauma and lack of proper parenting they have experienced are met in the residential setting by social care workers who are strangled by bureaucracy and paperwork and who feel the need to “cover your back” at all costs. Doing what appears to be very important “other things” can robotically take precedence, starving the child of what he/she really needs – someone who is there for him/her when needed.

The argument is that practitioners are now required to carry out many paper-based activities, such as daily logs, inspection forms, care plans and review papers, which are heavily regulated by inspectors, residential frameworks and policy makers.

These paper-based activities are rooted in bureaucratic practices which can be seen across care sectors. The influential work of Isabel Menzies Lyth (1988; 1989; 1999) and her studies of nursing, and later residential child care, demonstrates the significance of bureaucratic practices and the impact they have on daily caring activities in organisations. Menzies Lyth identifies many feelings that nurses experience in relation to those in their care which are likely to resonate with residential staff as well, including pity, compassion, love, guilt, anxiety, hatred, resentment and envy. The intensity of these feelings can increase when nurses are also expected to deal with the complex feelings of their patients and their relatives, or in the case of residential care the feelings of young people and their relatives. As Menzies Lyth (1988: 49) states, ‘...the hospital, particularly the nurses, must allow the projection into them of such feelings as depression and anxiety, fear of the patient and his [sic] illness, disgust at the illness and necessary nursing tasks’. In caring for others, the organisations in Menzies Lyth’s work employed a number of strategies to mitigate the emotional, psychological and physical effects of the care task. These include similar bureaucratic, paper-based activities to those identified above. Menzies Lyth (1988) argues that task-based activities, such as record keeping, relationally separates the nurse from their patient. These bureaucratic practices work alongside other ‘defensive techniques’, such as: ritualising task-based activities and using these to navigate and organise caring; controlling and denying one’s feelings to maintain an era of professionalism; sharing the decision making burden

with checks and counter-checks to avoid a single person holding responsibility, and; avoiding change in frameworks and practices until times of crisis, maintaining the familiar and avoiding the unknown. The overall purpose of these defensive techniques stemmed from the organisation's desire to eliminate situations, events, tasks, activities and relationships that cause anxiety (Menzies Lyth, 1988). Alongside Menzies Lyth, Smith (2009) argues that these techniques are also employed in residential child care, where organisations seek to mitigate anxieties regarding adult-child relationships and their abusive potential.

Key to these discussions of organisations employing defensive techniques is the impact of these techniques on staff members. When discussing her research in adolescent institutions, Menzies Lyth (1988) outlines the way that the primary task in any organisation, in this case to care for young people, can become distorted with other tasks and activities which detract from the 'primary task'. This is problematic, as '...unless the members of the institution know what it is they are supposed to be doing, there is little hope of their doing it effectively' (Menzies Lyth, 1988: 222). When considering residential care as a 'humane institution', in Menzies Lyth's words, one must also consider the impact of other social systems and the wider community, which often influence these institutions and create confusion and doubt in the 'primary task'. Where residential care is concerned, work with young people is:

...likely to evoke powerful and primitive feelings and fantasies in staff who suffer painful though not always acknowledged identifications with clients, intense relations both positive and negative to them, pity for their plight, fear, possibly exaggerated, about their violence, or harsh, primitive, moral relations to their delinquency.

(Menzies Lyth, 1988: 230)

Where the feelings of staff members are not acknowledged, or where defensive systems are in place to prevent staff members from forming bonds with the young people in their care, they again detract from the 'primary task' – caring for young people. As such, regulation and anxiety-avoiding routines have also influenced direct practice between staff members and young people.

One implication of regulation and anxiety-avoiding routines is the increasing suspicion and scrutiny relating to touch in residential child care. Smith (2009) discussed the fear and reluctance of staff members themselves to engage in activities which would provoke

allegations. In the aftermath of abuse scandals residential workers themselves began to be viewed as a danger to children they cared for, with Kendrick and Smith (2002: 50) arguing ‘...there is a danger that, in interpreting “safe-caring”, there is a presumption that close adult-child relationships are intrinsically suspect and should be discouraged’. In interpreting new regulations and procedures, McWilliam and Jones (2005) state that staff members became primarily concerned with their own safety, largely by avoiding being alone with the young people in their care. Elsewhere, staff members report being afraid to get ‘too close’ to young people, worried that their actions will be scrutinised and misinterpreted (Brown et al., 2018). What remains crucial is that ‘...staff should know what they are expected to achieve and should have adequate management support in doing so’ (Menzies Lyth, 1988: 227).

Despite the inherent protective practices in residential care which resonate as a result of the sector’s history, there are signs that relational practice is regaining significance in the policy agenda (Smith et al., 2013). *The Munro Review of Child Protection* (Munro, 2011) recently called for the realignment of social work practice from procedural frameworks to relationally based ways of working. Policy developments, including *Getting it Right for Every Child [GIRFEC]* in Scotland (2005) and *Every Child Matters in England* (2003) also include relational elements. Both of these policies promote an idea of parenting, either in families or via corporate parents (Smith et al., 2013). Given that local authorities delegate the function of corporate parenting to those who perform day-to-day care (Scottish Government, 2008), they are well positioned to be influential helpers and enablers in a young person’s life. The current system of residential child care is, therefore, largely influenced by its history. As a sector which provides care for some of the most vulnerable children and young people, current regulatory, risk-averse and anxiety avoiding practices frame adult-child relationships as precarious (Smith, 2009). As Smith (2009) argues, one needs to understand the historical development of the residential environment, and its current complexity, to develop a ‘feel for the game’ (p.102).

A NOTABLE SHIFT: RESIDENTIAL CARE, LOVE AND INTIMACY

This research has been embarked upon at a time when ‘love’ in residential care has become a key talking point in policy, practice and literature. This is not something new, per se, as many authors discussed in the next section, such as Maier (1979; 1991) and Redl and Wineman (1951; 1952), highlight the importance of love and intimacy when caring for children and young people in residential settings. However, largely attributed to the context

of fear and abuse discussed above, relationships in residential settings moved from discussions of love and intimacy to discussions of care, attachment, and atonement (Smith, 2009). Within this history of moving away from ‘love’ in the literature, White (2016) documents the decisions by John Bowlby (1958; 1969) to term his concept ‘attachment’ after rather than ‘love’, attributing the change to finding a more ‘scientific’ term. This accompanied an indication that ‘attachment’ is something workers can aspire to, whereas love could be considered too subjective, relying on people’s individual feelings, rather than something that can be prescribed (Vincent, 2016). Nonetheless, there has been a move ‘back’ towards love and intimacy in residential literature, with key works, such as those by Smith (2009) and Smith et al. (2013), advocating that one cannot be expected to engage with people in the close context of residential settings whilst ‘removing’ love.

At present, love is a key feature of public debates on the alternative care of children and young people in Scotland. Largely attributed to *Who Cares? Scotland* in their campaigning prior to the introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Scottish Government have made very public statements regarding the need for looked after young people to be loved, with corporate parents responsible for creating spaces and cultures where this can occur. Recent examples include Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, stating that ‘every young person deserves to be loved’ as she announced initial plans for the Independent Care Review (Brooks, 2018), which Fiona Duncan, chair of the Independent Care Review, echoed (ibid: n.p.):

In conversations with children and young people about love, we’ve been trying to figure out what that feels like and if the system was a loving system what would be different.

Such statements have cemented ‘love’ as something that organisations, professionals and policy makers should aspire to for children and young people in care settings. This has led to the development of a dedicated ‘love work group’ in the Independent Care Review, and taking ‘pledges’ of love from a variety of organisations, professionals, and young people as part of the review’s remit (Independent Care Review, 2017; Moore, 2019).

While recognition of love continues to gather pace across the Scottish sector, political recommendations that young people, particularly those looked after away from home, need love and intimacy are not new. For instance, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that children should grow up in ‘an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding’ (UNCRC, 1989: preamble). Although the UNCRC specifies that

children should also grow up in a family setting, growing up in an atmosphere of love has been publicly promoted in care environments throughout the 21st century. In 2008, the Scottish government released *These Are Our Bairns*, a guidance document for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent. The document itself aimed to lay the foundations for giving children and young people in alternative care the same ‘love, security and chances that any good parent would give their child’ (Scottish Government, 2008: v). Similar sentiments are echoed in *Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People* (Scottish Government, 2015), which builds on the recent *Getting it Right for Every Child* [GIRFEC] initiative. Here, it is argued that all looked after children should have a carer that makes them feel safe and loved, a social worker that listens to them, and a mentor or advocate that values them for who they are. In residential care specifically, love is identified as an essential component of residential child care practice in *A to Z of Residential Child Care* (Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care [SIRCC], 2010). In the section on love, Duncalf (2010: 36) poses questions for what love is or means:

Love is not ‘all or nothing’ and can vary in depth and in the way it is shown within different relationships. Love can, and indeed does, come in a variety of different forms...

Duncalf’s questions highlight that before addressing how love presents itself in residential practice, it is pertinent to devote time to understanding ‘love’ as a concept.

In considering what one means by ‘love’, Wolf (2018) suggests that love involves ‘caring deeply and personally about something for its own sake’, that ‘love orients us in and roots us motivationally to the world’ (p. 1). She discusses people’s propensity to discuss love in a myriad of ways; to love one’s friends, family, pets, country, belongings, favourite hobbies, television shows, and so on. Wolf highlights how people are asked to love enemies, neighbours and other people in general, demonstrating that:

...love famously does *not* always add to our pleasure; it often detracts from it – not only when love is unrequited, but when one’s loved ones get sick or get fired, when they must be far away from us, and, of course, when they die.

(Wolf, 2018: 2, original emphasis)

Acknowledging that love is not always positive directly contrasts with most people’s inherent beliefs regarding love. Many of these inherent beliefs are also challenged by Simone de Beauvoir in her work on ‘authentic love’. In her book *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir’s

discussion of adult-adult relationships states that authentic love is founded on the basis of reciprocal freedom, where each party must experience themselves and the person they love as independent selves; no person should sacrifice elements of their own self-hood for someone else's development (de Beauvoir, 1949). Authentic love is also a choice, where one should be free to choose whether to love, something that de Beauvoir contrasts to romantic love between men and women, where a woman's choice is not always freely made due to their positionality in the social world. Cleary (2017: 16) argues that de Beauvoir's work on authentic love remains important, as 'tensions in relationships come from the ways in which people seek to escape their freedom, and the associated responsibility of justifying their own lives, through love'. Nonetheless, authentic love does not necessarily relieve us of this responsibility. As Wolf (2018) points out, there are very little choices when it comes to love, whether that is the love between an adult and another adult, or between adults and children, or indeed children and children. Where one might consider that people can choose their friends, even if they cannot choose their family, Wolf suggests that 'once you have your friends, you have them for life' (2018: 5), even if they are not people you would necessarily choose, and even if you do not like them as much as you once did. While this is not necessarily true, in the sense that friends can come and go, and that one can choose to stop being friends with someone they once loved, Wolf's overall argument that the love between friends exists without initially 'choosing' that love remains relevant. The choices involved in de Beauvoir's authentic love, then, are not always readily available.

To this point, then, love is a deep caring, a guiding feeling, and, potentially, a choice. Pismenny and Prinz (2017) add to this by theorising the ways that love can be felt. Where 'people report being overwhelmed by the feeling of love' (Pismenny and Prinz, 2017: 2), this feeling is unlikely to be ever-lasting. They echo Wolf in stating that love is not always under one's control; it is something that is hard to get rid of, even as it falls on a spectrum of pleasant and unpleasant. In Jollimore's words, love is, overall, something in between rational and arational (Jollimore, 2017). Where it can be difficult for people to know why they love someone (or something), they are typically able to find something lovable about them (or it). In this manner, someone can say what they love about someone else, and although this is often the reason that they are loved, this is not *always* the case (Jollimore, 2017). For instance, one might love someone else's laugh, but this is not the reason we feel love for them as a person. Some love, then, is inexplicable. Nonetheless, the attributes of love can be described. Wolf (2018) describes love as an intense feeling matched with a desire to be mutually caring and sharing, where people wish to physically express their loving closeness.

It is also a mechanism through which people declare a commitment to another person, it makes people think about others in a way that inspires action. In sum, love is having strong feelings for another person, caring for them and acting in their best interest. Love is declaring that you are committed to another person, a commitment entered into freely (that is, one has not been forced into love by wider societal factors such as economic or political oppression), even when it is not a feeling that one has necessarily *chosen* to enter into.

At this point, it is worth reiterating that the study conducted here is not about understanding love in residential child care. It is, however, about exploring all aspects of relationships in residential settings, including those that are intimate or loving. As such, it is anticipated that love will be part of the interactions that are witnessed. Above this, though, is an acceptance that the work on love in residential settings (and indeed wider care-related settings) demonstrates some underlying aspects of relationships more widely. Smith et al. (2013) for instance argue that ‘...the intimacy of such settings and the encounters that take place within them makes the growth of strong relationships that might rightly be considered loving almost inevitable’ (p.43). In Smith et al.’s discussions, love is understood as something that happens through the daily routines, rhythms and rituals people take part in. The overarching aspect of love as relational is what makes the narrative of love in current literature so relevant.

Vincent (2016) relates love in residential settings to love in other professional child and caring settings. She discusses the influence of the health sector and education sectors in understanding relationships in the context of residential child care. Vincent argues that love has many components, including ‘...care, acceptance, empathy, sympathy, compassion, presence, recognition, respect, honesty, commitment, trust, and a sense of community’ (2016: 8). As will be discussed in Chapter 3, all of these components can be present in relationships more generally, especially those which are considered ‘close’ or intimate. What Vincent (2016) highlights, however, is that love is not passive, it is active and intentional, where people communicate their love through actions as well as words. This perspective is echoed by Emond (2016) who stresses the importance of belongings in love. Taking the examples of friendship bracelets in residential care, Emond argues that the giver of a friendship bracelet holds the receiver in mind through the process of making the bracelet, and that ‘...through the bracelet, the giver is being symbolically connected to the receiver, even when they are not physically together’ (2016: 41). Through the symbolic nature of belongings, including friendship bracelets here, the closeness of a relationship is actively and purposefully enacted.

In continuing her discussion of love in child and youth care practice, Vincent (2016) argues that it is impossible for a person to separate their values from their interactions with others, or from their decision making. As such, love and emotional components of relationality are continually present in everyday 'doings' of care. Smith (2016) argues similarly that '...love is an inevitable feature of child and youth care' (p.1). Given its prominence in everyday aspects of the residential milieu, understanding love is useful when exploring relationships. In fact, White (2016) cautions against the fearful practices which try to eschew love and intimacy from care work, stating '...it can leave a vacuum all too easily filled by those who distort the whole notion of love, and those who abuse the very ones we seek to safeguard, nurture and love' (p.26). As such, the inevitability of love should not be overlooked or turned-away.

While the components and nature of love are discussed by researchers, so too are the connections that love creates for both staff members and young people. Smith (2016), for instance, acknowledges that love can exist in a myriad of professional relationships and in a host of different ways. There is an understanding that staff members, in the giving and receiving of gifts from young people, are responsible for storing and maintaining those materials (Emond, 2016). There is also an indication that that residential care should create an environment that acknowledges 'being crazy about a kid you work with, talks of strong emotions, emotions that might take us in the direction of considering that carers might even love those they care for' (Smith et al., 2013: 42). Within these narratives of love, it is accepted that staff members can love the children and young people they care for, just as the young people can love the staff members. However, these narratives of love suggest that staff members and young people can or should love each other equally, and that young people want deep, loving, intimate relationships with staff members. They do not take into account that some young people will only live in residential settings for short periods of time, whereas others will live their long enough to see staff members come and go, as they begin their employment and move on to other jobs. Ultimately, Smith (2009: 123) writes:

A question that persistently surfaces in residential child care is whether workers can or should love those they work with. In many respects... can they not love them?

There is an overall feeling that love is largely deemed unprofessional, and that staff members should not expect any love they feel for a young person to be reciprocated (Smith, 2009).

Overall, narratives of love, as discussed, demonstrate the need for strong emotional connections, as well as an appreciation of relationships as something active and engaging. That being said, while love is centre-stage in current political and professional debates in Scotland, strong emotional connections between people in residential child care can also occur without terming them love. It is for this reason that this thesis discusses relationships in a more nuanced way, seeking to understand how staff members and young people ‘do’ relationships with one another, whether participants consider these ‘loving’ or not. Talking about love in residential settings, therefore, is about more than love alone: it is about demonstrating the value of relationships in care settings. Currently, the value of relationships and love is understood, but it is against a backdrop of historic abuse and overarching fear and misunderstanding (Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2013). The doing of relationships in residential settings, therefore, must consider these relationships within the current context of care more widely.

DOING CARE

Following an overview of the current system of residential child care in Scotland, alongside the historical development of this system, attention now turns to understanding daily caring practices. This section aims to introduce the reader to some key conceptualisations of the care task, while highlighting the role of the residential environment as a function of relationships. In understanding the ‘doing’ of care, the work of Maier (1979; 1991) and Redl and Wineman (1951; 1952) provides a useful backdrop to the principles underpinning the roles of staff members, young people, and the residential environment in the task of care. This body of literature remains a relevant source for exploring residential child care, as the work of these authors continues to be influential in academic and practice understandings of care. In taking some of the main concepts explored by Maier (1979; 1991) and Redl and Wineman (1951; 1952) as the foundation for its structure, this section examines the residential milieu, life-space working, and routines, rhythms and rituals, while linking these to current debates in the literature.

The Residential Milieu

The concept of ‘milieu’ is said to reflect the overall atmosphere of the residential environment when staff members and young people are together. As Smith (2009: 87) states, ‘it is the “feel” of a place’. Redl and Wineman (1952) argue throughout their work that the entire milieu of a residential house is an important aspect in the care of children. At this point, their terminology is slightly dated, as they refer to ‘treatment’ of ‘delinquent’ young

people throughout, but their arguments remain influential. Redl and Wineman (1952: 283) write:

...we are convinced that the very way the house is laid out, the very policies of housekeeping that are in vogue, in short everything that happens during a day and night may be made part of the most essential treatment plan and may assume top priority of treatment relevance at any given one time

Their suggestion is that all elements of living and working in a residential house, from the furniture and décor to the activities and personal relations, influence the act of caring. Their arguments are echoed by Maier (1979) who advocates for seven core components of care, each one intrinsically linked with the other. In these components, the milieu of the residential house holds presence, both in the physical environment and in the emotional components of staff members and young people navigating the care setting together.

The residential milieu, as defined above, is also a core component of current relational child and youth care practice. Those who favour this model of residential care discuss the importance of a ‘co-created space’ between staff members and young people (Garfat and Fulcher, 2013). While not a universally applied model of care in residential houses across Scotland, relational child and youth care practice provokes one to consider the role of the residential environment in everyday care and relationships. As Garfat and Fulcher (2013: 9, original emphasis) argue:

This *co-created space* represents the “hub of the wheel” around which all other characteristics of practice revolve. We often call this co-created space between us *the relationship* and this involves more than just “having a relationship” (even a good one) with the other person. Rather, it means that the Practitioner is constantly attending to the *co-created space between us*, wondering – for example – “is it a safe place?”, “is it a learning space?” or “is it a developmentally appropriate place of experience?”

The ‘co-created space’ between staff members and young people is largely relational, rather than physical. That is, Garfat and Fulcher (2013), and relational child and youth care practice more generally, encourage workers to reflect on their connections with young people and consider the nature of these connections. These connections will influence the ‘feel’ (Smith, 2009) of the residential space. For instance, Warwick (2017: 148) indicates that ‘...who was on shift and who was on shift together, shaped the milieu’. This view is echoed by Redl and

Wineman (1952) who structure their writings of the residential milieu using the following sub-headings: a house that smiles, props which invite, space which allows; routines which relax; a program which satisfies; adults who protect; symptom tolerance guaranteed, old satisfaction channels respected; rich flow of tax-free love and gratification grants; leeway for regression and escape; freedom from traumatic handling; ample flexibility and emergency help, and; cultivation of group emotional securities. Running through Redl and Wineman's (1952) concepts of the milieu, they begin by arguing that staff members in the residential setting need to be sensitive to young people's wants and desires around furniture and décor, 'sacrificing' their own personal preference in style and function. Additionally, the function of the residential space, it is suggested, needs to be flexible enough to accommodate reasonable style and use requests from young people, while remaining useful to all the young people in the house. A significant part of achieving these goals involves considering the 'co-created space' (Garfat and Fulcher, 2013) between staff members and residents.

The influence of the milieu in 'doing care' is further explored by Maier (1979; 1991). Maier (1979) identifies seven components of care, which he stresses are important factors in the daily lives of staff members and young people. He states that the seven components of care are: bodily comfort; differentiations; rhythmic interactions; predictability; dependability; personalised behaviour training, and; care for the care givers. The components of rhythmic interactions and predictability will be discussed later, under *Routines, Rhythms and Rituals in Residential Child Care*, however, the other five components highlight the influence of the milieu in residential settings. Within these components, it is argued that 'little things' in the physical space, such as straightening a young person's bedding, enables a young person to 'feel actually treated with care' (Maier, 1979: 162). In acknowledging each person's individuality, staff members are encouraged to tailor their 'little things' to each young person independently of the other young people, but alongside the milieu of the wider house. Redl and Wineman (1952: 303) make similar arguments, stating that '...it is essential that they [young people] get a heavy dose of affection, as well as gratifying life experiences'. Furthermore, the residential environment should allow for 'leeway' in daily practices, giving young people space to explore the milieu outside of established routines and 'escape'. Ultimately, '...the care given and received requires frequent and undisturbed extended periods of time together in order to find a mutual fit' (Maier, 1979: 167). Accompanied by a 'sense of certainty', working in the milieu provides opportunities for young people to learn from those adults that hold meaning for them.

However, in being attentive to the residential ‘space’, the task of doing care requires workers to balance multiple perspectives and intentions. Anglin (2004: 177) discusses the ‘struggle for congruence’ in residential care, whereby he witnessed staff members trying to simultaneously work in the ‘children’s best interests’ while ‘maintaining control’ – that is efforts by staff members to maintain control of young people, as well as efforts by managers to maintain control of staff members. He writes that ‘...these efforts to *maintain control* were seen to be competing in multiple ways with serving *the best interests* of the residents’ (Anglin, 2004: 177, original emphasis). The competing priorities of residential services are recognised elsewhere, with an acknowledgement that ‘...inevitably, each system embraces value preferences, organisational features, and occupational characteristics that reflect its own primary purpose or tasks’ (Fulcher and Ainsworth, 2006: 5). The competing priorities of the milieu identified here will influence the ‘feel’ that one has for the residential house (see Smith, 2009). These competing priorities are important for understanding relationships in residential settings, alongside the current political landscape of ‘love’ and intimacy, as research demonstrates that care is a generally ambiguous task (Jakobsen, 2010). Managing bureaucratic processes, as highlighted above, and wider systemic influences on the care setting is a concern of staff members and managers in the residential house. Where some staff members place relationship-based matters at the heart of daily practice, others focus more on practical tasks, including bureaucratic processes, meal-planning and helping with personal hygiene (Jakobsen, 2010). Anglin’s (2004) observation that staff members need to manage competing priorities in their role demonstrates the complexities of creating a milieu for the young people in their care.

Overall, Redl and Wineman (1952) position the milieu as an important characteristic of living and working in residential child care. From a relational perspective, there is then an understanding of the milieu as an important facet in people’s relationships with one another. In noting that the work of Redl and Wineman is situated within a large residential facility for boys in the USA, framed within the practices of their time, the arguments they make remain influential. As Smith (2009: 98) suggests, the ‘feel’ of the place will be evident to all who enter the house:

...all who live and work in a home need to feel an investment in its layout and appearance. They should share in everyday chores and consider ways they might contribute to the “feel” of a centre

Accompanied by Maier's (1979; 1991) discussions of the core components of care, it becomes clear that 'doing' care in the milieu of residential settings requires nuanced exploration in a thesis which seeks to understand relationships. The understanding of the milieu of a residential house forms the basis for the remaining discussions in this section: the life-space and routines, rhythms and rituals. Understanding the role of a residential house's physical layout and daily practices is integral to navigating the relationships within that house.

Living and Working in the Life-Space

The milieu, as described by Redl and Wineman (1952) forms a key component of the life-space model of care (Keenan, 1991; Gharabaghi and Stuart, 2013; Warwick, 2017). As a specific practice orientation, the life-space model of care is not one employed across the entirety of residential facilities in Scotland. However, it is widely utilised in North America and is key to Scottish teaching on residential child care (Hart et al., 2015). Smith (2005: 28) argues that the life-space is '...a way of thinking about how workers and children coexist in sharing everyday living and working spaces'. Life-space work originated from the early research of Bettelheim (1950) when challenging the separation of 'treatment' and 'care'. The concept was further developed by Redl and Wineman (1952; 1957) before being formally recognised by Trieschman et al. (1969) in their work *The Other 23 Hours*. Trieschman et al. (1969) emphasised the importance of recognising everyday work that occurs beyond 'professional' meetings with social workers, psychologists, and so on. Life-space work was, in this respect, developed from the acknowledgement that the 'real work' of care occurred outside of traditional hourly meetings between looked after young people and staff members during day-to-day moments of their lives (Warwick, 2017).

Smith (2011) differentiates between the milieu and the life-space by arguing '...daily life events, which are shared by care staff and young people in residential settings, are exploited by the care team to help the young people gain an understanding of their life experiences' (p.13). Here, the focus in the life-space is the work that is undertaken in and outside the milieu, rather than the milieu itself. The overarching theme in life-space work is that many different 'parts' of a young person's life will connect to form the whole life-space, meaning that each entity (the residential house, the family home, a young person's school, their wants, wishes and fears, alongside the relationships in these spheres) is valued as important in the young person's overall experience. The life-space conceives of the milieu as '...an organic whole within which is located a constantly varying set of systems and

subsystems' (Keenan, 1991: 220). Everyone in the life-space, and everything that happens in it, are considered important in understanding one's feelings and actions. As such, what staff members feel, think and do have just as much of an impact as what young people feel, think and do. The overarching idea is that no single person in the life-space can be understood in isolation – everyone and everything needs to be recognised as a whole. There is, once more, a reliance on rhythms and rituals for working and living in the life-space, but Gharabaghi and Stuart (2013) highlight four dimensions of the life-space. These are termed the physical, mental, virtual and relational dimensions.

Much of the theory behind the four dimensions of the life-space is encapsulated in the discussion of the milieu before. That is, the life-space model of care shares many core components with the milieu. Firstly, the physical and mental dimensions detail the space where the lives of young people unfold, in this case the residential house, and the way that people make sense of that space (Gharabaghi and Stuart, 2013). There is an understanding that this physical dimension spans many different spaces (Bachelard, 1994), including the physical dimension of school, the residential house, and the wider community. Within this physical dimension, young people develop meaning from the experiences they have, internalising feelings, descriptions and memories of spaces. They bring these internalised feelings, descriptions and memories of spaces with them wherever they go, and they influence their understanding of new spaces and the actions they take in their daily lives. What is key is that staff members do this too, meaning that each person in the residential house has their own internalised feelings, descriptions and memories of space which might vary vastly from person to person. While Bachelard was not writing about residential care specifically, he argues that once these spaces have developed a mental dimension, people become connected to them:

Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination.

(Bachelard, 1994: xxxvi)

Secondly, the relational dimension, as described by Gharabaghi and Stuart (2013), is where young people's and staff members' relationships with people, including friends, professionals and family members, can be understood. This dimension is not always visible to others, given the ability of relationships to evolve and exist across boundaries. As such,

the relational dimension is largely under-represented in life-space discussions of care. Particularly life-space discussions of staff members' relationships in their wider social worlds, and how these relationships might impact their navigation of the life-space as well as the young people's. Finally, the virtual dimension of the life-space details technology-driven contexts as well as imaginary contexts. These can include games, social media, and the wider internet, as well as dreams, nightmares and future desires. In the virtual dimension, Gharabaghi and Stuart (2013: 13) stress that '...young people find opportunities to reconstruct their identities, and even their biographic stories'. This is also true of staff members, who are navigating their own wider social worlds, as well as dreams, nightmares and future desires, during their time in the residential house.

The life-space gives young people a framework to transfer learning and experiences into the real world (Redl and Wineman, 1951). The main principles rely on '...using everyday crises to help children learn new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving' (Hart et al., 2015:9). There is an overarching argument for work which includes '*presence*, doing *with* rather than doing *to*, and the central importance of the relationship' (Steckley, 2013: 25, original emphasis). Smith (2005) is keen to emphasise that life-space work is at the heart of daily residential practice, as it is rooted in (often) mundane, everyday shared spaces and actions. Life-space work recognises the residential house as a place where children and young people can learn and grow (Smith, 2005). Life-space work also acknowledges what Gilligan (2006) calls 'life's ordinary plenty'. He argues that '...everyday opportunities, simple phrases, simple decisions, chance contacts and chance events can all help weave the rich tapestry of a child's development' (p.41). The life-space takes account of the group dynamics of residential child care, acknowledging the nuances of everyday practice as important to children in care while positioning the role of relationships between adults and children as being central to practice (Ward et al., 2003). It also requires an understanding of the everyday routines, rhythms and rituals that are undertaken during care (Warwick, 2017). It is these routines, rhythms and rituals that link everything already said about 'doing' care.

However, what is largely missing from life-space work, and the literature surrounding the life-space model, is an understanding of staff members' experiences. While research recognises the influence of the life-space on a young person's life, and the ability of staff members to use the life-space to therapeutically help children navigate their time in residential care, there is a lack of nuance in the writings on life-space work and staff members, their time working in residential houses and their experiences of relationships in the life-space. This is something that this thesis aims to illuminate.

Routines, Rhythms and Rituals in Residential Child Care

The routines, rhythms and rituals in residential child care, as aspects of the milieu and life-space, are an important factor to consider when examining relationships in this setting (Warwick, 2017). It is clear from what has already been discussed in this Chapter that any attempt to understand the ‘doing’ of ‘care’ needs to consider the influence of routines, rhythms and rituals, given their key role in conceptual understandings of the care task. Although all three concepts are inextricably linked, demonstrating a need for predictability and dependability in the residential settings, they are also unique in their conceptualisation by different academic authors. Taking each in turn, this section will outline what is meant by routines, rhythms and rituals before exploring their place in residential child care.

Routines are said to provide a structure to the daily activities of a place (Smith, 2013). Together with rituals, Keenan (1991) argues they are ‘...part and parcel of the cultural regime of any given establishment’ (p.222). Stewart (2007: 1) argues that everyday life is compiled of ‘things that happen’. Routines are the everyday expectations and practices, such as when mealtimes, bedtimes and school-times occur, as well as what is expected during these occurrences. Although largely associated with the ‘mundane’ (Pink, 2012), routines connect people communally and collectively in ‘ordinary life’, even when felt ‘personally’ (Highmore, 2011). Routines in the residential house also provide a sense of predictability to life (Smith et al., 2013; Punch and McIntosh, 2014). Redl and Wineman (1952: 292-293) discuss routines as:

...the mere existence or evolvment of a time schedule for certain life tasks, the mere repetitiveness of the same or similar situations to be gone through in the morning, in the evening, at bedtime, the mere development of a clear expectation pattern of just what the sequence of evening treat, story telling, lights out, etc., would be, would in themselves, after the first resistance was overcome, have a relaxing, quieting, and soothing effect on the personality of our children.

Thus they provide a framework for life in the residential house, drawing on everyday practices to develop a ‘...well-known “script” for daily interactions between staff and children’ (Punch and McIntosh, 2014: 77).

Rhythms also form part of this ‘script’, but their nature as compared to routines is slightly more nuanced. Smith et al. (2013) discuss Maier when they argue that the concept of rhythm is better placed to capture the aspirations of a residential house, rather than the

doing of daily practices. They suggest that rhythms present ‘... a state where order develops organically’, rather than through the deliberate implementation of routines (Smith et al., 2013: 21). The organic nature of rhythms is also identified by Lefebvre (2007), who argues that this organic component is often displaced by mechanical manifestations of rhythms. Lefebvre (2007) stresses that rhythms centre on repeated movements and practices: ‘...no rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without *reprises*, without returns’ (p.6, original emphasis). Repetition is said to cement a rhythm, but it can also introduce a rhythm. That is, while one repeats actions in everyday life, repeated movements and practices develop a rhythm of the everyday. Lefebvre, in developing his conceptualisation of *Rhythmanalysis*, is especially keen to emphasise that ‘measure’ is a key concept in rhythms:

...rhythm seems natural, spontaneous, with no law other than its unfurling.
Yet rhythm, always particular... always implies a measure. Everywhere there
is a rhythm, there is a *measure*, which is to say law, calculated and expected
obligation

(Lefebvre, 2007: 8, original emphasis)

Within residential child care, rhythms refer to the way that workers and young people comfortably share a space (Warwick, 2017). This comfort is a clear measure of Lefebvre’s rhythms: if one is not comfortable, then there is no rhythm. As Garfat and Fulcher (2013: 17) argue, ‘...connecting in rhythm with people helps to nurture and strengthen connections and a sense of “being with” that person’. Overall, rhythms manifest in a sense of being ‘in tune’ with one’s environment, where rules and expectations become explicit, rather than in need of continual reinforcement (Smith, 2009; Garfat and Fulcher, 2013; Warwick, 2017). Rhythms also bring a measure of predictability to residential life (Smith, 2009), with Maier (1979) indicating that rhythmic experiences are essential in developing a sense of continuity. Rhythms of coming and going, of acknowledgement and simple repeated gestures, such as greeting someone at the door of the family home or special handshakes on the street, are all examples of the predictable nature of everyday life (Garfat and Fulcher, 2013). Rhythms are particularly useful in residential settings, where continuity between shifts, for instance, requires attention.

Rituals are again differentiated from routines and rhythms. They are discussed as practices with meaning and significance for staff members and young people, which become embedded into the residential milieu (Smith, 2009). These rituals are appreciated as simple, everyday aspects of connection and care in residential settings. These rituals ‘...represent a

confirmation of sound cultural practice' (Maier, 1979: 168). The key to understanding rituals alongside routines and rhythms is exploring the significance of rituals to people in the house. The nature of rituals as practices which develop out of meaning, rather than established routines and rhythms, situates them as significant in relational aspects of daily lives. It is within rituals that social events, such as birthdays, Christmas and Halloween, can be celebrated (Smith et al., 2013). The idea is to create a sense of "this is how we do Christmas here" (Smith, 2009: 101). However, rituals are also small, everyday practices, such as the organic high-five between a young person and staff member that occurs during every greeting (Smith, 2009). The appreciation of these mundane activities and connections between people in the residential house demonstrates an understanding of the significance of rituals.

Within the context of this thesis, it is anticipated that routines, rhythms and rituals will form an important aspect of daily activities and 'doing' relationships. Within these routines, rhythms and rituals one can begin to understand relational aspects of care. For instance, Punch and McIntosh (2014) argue that '...the routine of sitting around the table together for a meal bridged not only the generation gap but also the worker/person gap through coming together with the aim of meeting a shared need' (p.81). Although they also caution that routines could have a negative impact on relationships, highlighting the institutional and managerial practices of routines around food at times, the indication is presented that routines, rhythms and rituals can be daily practices through which relationships are navigated.

RELATIONSHIPS: NAVIGATING (AND OVERCOMING) BARRIERS

Relationships in residential child care is a key academic area of interest. While some authors approach the topic by attempting to understand the impact of relationships on a young person's development in and after care (for instance Dixon and Stein, 2003; Cashmore and Paxman, 2006; Gilligan, 2008; Wade and Munro, 2008), others seek to explore the nuances of relationships as an aspect of everyday care (for instance, Emond, 2000; 2003; Moore et al., 2008). Relationships are also a key feature of other substantive areas of research in residential care, including discussions of touch (Steckley, 2010; Smith et al., 2013) and care ethics (Steckley and Smith, 2011). Smith et al. (2013) argue that these substantive topic areas are an important aspect of the life-space (discussed above), in which relationships are navigated. This section, then, seeks to introduce the reader to the current knowledgebase of relationships in residential child care.

Relationships in residential settings, particularly between staff members and young people, are messy, unpredictable, ambiguous and fluid (Maier, 1979; Smith, 2009; Steckley and Smith, 2011). Smith (2009) argues that there is a need to embrace the complexity of these relationships, as they are necessary when attempting to understand the ‘nature of care’ (p.121). Work which has sought to understand the dynamics of adult-child relationships in residential care have found that the main qualities which influence whether young people will get on with staff members are: a caring and nurturing disposition; consistency with rules and expectations; continual interactions; open communication; trust; laughter, and; shared interests (Rabley et al., 2014). These building blocks of relationships can provide close, enduring connections for young people. Additionally, Moore et al. (2018) identified that trusting relationships between young people and staff members are characterised by staff members showing they care, persisting when things are tough, recognising risks for young people and being available when the young person needs them. Furthermore, they identified barriers to these trusting relationships such as administrative workloads, a focus on targets, standards and planning, staff member turnover and boundary concerns. Notably, Moore et al. (2018) highlight that young people found it ironic when staff members were discouraged from spending too much time with them due to fears of abuse accusations. This ambiguity in staff member and young people relationships is recognised elsewhere. Smith (2009), for instance, highlights that he ‘...became aware that, for some staff, procedures could be used as a substitute for building close and authoritative personal relationships’ (p.x). Moreover, scandals of abuse have resulted in a distancing of the professional relationship, ambivalence about the nature of relationships with children and young people and concerns about touch and physical contact (Kendrick & Smith 2002; Steckley 2012).

In addition, Kendrick (2013) reports that some young people describe their experiences in residential care as being family-like. In discussing the ‘family metaphor’, Kendrick (2013) attempts to reconceptualise the nature of relations, relationships and relatedness in residential care. He argues that individual relationships in the residential house are created and recreated through the routines, rhythms and rituals of daily living. Similar arguments are made by Punch and McIntosh (2014) in their paper on food practices in residential care. They argue that ‘...food can be viewed as a “safe” medium through which emotional care can be communicated’ (p.75), particularly in current managerialist approaches to care. Whilst daily routines, rhythms and rituals can replicate family-like environments, Kahan (1994) clearly states that residential staff members cannot replace parents of young people in their care, but they are likely to fulfil many parental roles and tasks (see also Fowler,

2015). In the current notion of corporate parenting, Utting (1991) states that corporate parents should be warm and personal beyond traditional expectations of institutions. As such, Kendrick's (2013) depiction of young people referring to staff members in kin terms, such as 'dad' or 'sister' is not unwarranted, given their potential in undertaking family-like roles.

Relationships between and amongst staff members and young people are said to be at the 'heart' or 'core' of residential child care practice (Ward, 2006; Smith, 2009; Kendrick, 2012). They form a significant part of residential care and should not be underestimated (Warwick, 2017). Many academics have argued that the quality of relationships between staff members and young people are the most important feature of residential work (Treischman et al., 1969; Smith, 2005; 2009; Narey, 2016). However, Smith (2009) suggests that children's rights and the protective nature of residential practice can '...build barriers between children and those who care for them' (p.11). This viewpoint is echoed by Butler and Drakeford (2005) who highlight that children's rights can result in suspicion around staff member-young people relationships. This is said to create an environment in the residential house that causes anxiety and insecurity for staff members, who act in ways which seek to limit the threat of having their actions questioned (Smith, 2009). The insecure environment results in an attempt by staff members to care with gloves on (Horwath, 2000). To some extent, building practice around children's rights adds to the ambiguity and ambivalence experienced by staff members in their relationships with young people.

In conceptualising young people's relationships with other residents, Emond's (2000) PhD research provides a detailed overview of the processes that young people use to navigate their relationships. She identifies the resident group as being a potential source of advice, support and encouragement, where some young people felt able to stick up for one another and share their possessions with those they trusted. Emond (2003) explores the difficulties that this could cause, where young people would withdraw their support or staff members would require them to remove their support. She states that the young people would find this difficult to manage, as they felt their skills were being rejected, often in moments of acute distress. Emond (2003) is clear to emphasise that no member of the resident group had a fixed role or group position, but all young people in the group experienced moments of being most and least powerful. Residents would seek out other young people for advice or support specific to their knowledgebase and experience. At other times, young people would take it upon themselves to offer advice and support to other residents, momentarily increasing their hierarchical status (Emond, 2003). The fluidity that

Emond identified in her 'social currency framework' was of direct contrast to previous research by Polsky (1962) which had formulated fixed hierarchical explanations of young people's relationships.

Academic investigations of young people moving on from care highlight a number of relational considerations in the 'leaving care' process. Wade (2008) argues that leaving care is a time when relationships are particularly important, with young people re-evaluating the relationships they have with people in their lives to determine if they can be relied upon in the future. The Care Inquiry, established in England by a group of charities to determine how best to provide stable support argued that 'relationships are the golden thread in children's lives' (Care Inquiry, 2013: 9). The concept of 'felt security' provides a useful way to conceptualise the role of relationships in young people's transitions out of care (Cashmore & Paxman, 2006). Felt security is about young people feeling secure and stable in their care setting, which is associated with the development of meaningful and trusting relationships with carers and others who occupy an important place in the child's life (Gilligan, 2008). For relationships to endure over time, young people need to experience compensatory and redeeming relationships with their care-givers (Wade and Munro, 2008). The main issue for those leaving care involves the loss of contact with ex-carers (Dixon and Stein, 2003). In terms of residential care, a key challenge is how best to prepare workers for continuing relationships with young people they have previously cared for, while they are expected to embark on caring responsibilities for other young people (Dixon and Stein, 2005).

Ultimately, current narratives in the policy and practice landscape of residential care in Scotland have paved the way for legislative changes that appreciate the importance of love and intimacy for young people. The introduction of Staying Put Scotland guidance (Scottish Government, 2013) and Part 11 (Continuing Care) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 builds parameters for young people to remain in positive care placements until the age of 21, with continuing support until 26 years old (McGhee, 2017). The Staying Put Scotland guidance (Scottish Government, 2013) recommends that looked after young people be '...encouraged, enabled and empowered to stay in positive care placements until they are ready to move on' (p.13). This follows an acknowledgement that young people have a basic need for belonging, connection and 'felt security' (Cashmore and Paxman, 2006) alongside a need to be claimed by those who care for them (NICE, 2015). McGhee (2017) argues that relationship-based practice is the 'bedrock' of good care, one which is a key enabler to children and young people remaining in their care placement longer. These policy priorities develop a commitment both legislatively and academically to consider

the role of relationships in residential care, and alternative care more widely, and were a key motivation behind embarking on this project.

Despite recent policy and practice developments which hold young people's relationships, whether with staff members or other young people, at the centre of residential care, there is little research which considers staff members' relationships with young people or other staff members. Some notable work, such as the *Food for Thought* project has highlighted the importance and influence of staff members' thoughts and feelings in residential work. For instance, Emond et al. (2014) argue that staff members, as well as young people, come to the residential house with their own strong thoughts and feelings. They are tasked with managing these feelings, as well as absorbing the feelings of other people in the house (Steckley, 2012). Emond et al.'s (2014) work outlined the way that staff members might use the rituals of residential life to contain and order their work and feelings, as well as the lives of the young people they cared for, while acknowledging that these same rituals could become 'hot spots' for emotions and tensions. In addition, such ritualised food times could provide staff members with an element of privacy, in that they could communicate a break from the usual duties and take time to connect with one another (Emond et al., 2014). These insights into the way that staff members experience residential life are, nonetheless, limited. In looking to understand relationships between and amongst staff members and young people, this thesis aims to contribute to the limited knowledge of staff members' relationships in residential care.

Discourses of Touch in Residential Settings

As Smith et al. (2013: 44) note, '...one of the most obvious and most powerful ways to express care is through physical touch'. However, within the context of residential child care, physical touch is complex. 'No touch' policies and fear of accusations of abuse result in staff members who are reluctant to fully and naturally engage in physical touch as a caring aspect of everyday life (see Lynch and Garrett, 2010; Steckley, 2010; 2012; Smith et al., 2013). The moral panic of 'no touch' practices (Johnson, 2000) has resulted in a wider culture of fear related to touching children, and in confusion and inconsistencies in guidance, policy and practice. Where clear guidance, policy and practice is lacking, there is also an erosion of trust in adults' motives and actions (Piper et al., 2006). The lack of clarity on touch practices is another example of the ambiguity and ambivalence in residential care highlighted by Kendrick (2013): '...ambiguity is enacted on a day-to-day basis and affects the way in which residential staff members relate to the children and young people in their care'. Unclear

guidance on touch is an aspect of care where no matter how normal residential houses attempt to be, there is an awareness that they are not a 'normal' or typical living arrangement for young people (Anglin, 2002). Steckley (2012) follows Bion's (1962) work on containment to argue that young people require touch to know that they are cared for. This is echoed somewhat by Eßer (2018: 293) who states that '...touch can be used to show that a relationship is not just professional in a "classical" sense, but also personal'. Children's early experiences of touch involve feeding, holding and soothing (Bion, 1962). As the child ages, the need for touch does not necessarily dissipate, but the form of touch may evolve. Those who live and work in residential care report many complexities in navigating touch through everyday care (Steckley, 2012). Touch, then, is a key topic area for anyone seeking to understand the navigation of relationships in residential care.

Research has highlighted a number of differing perspectives and uses of touch. Briefly, these can be split dichotomously into 'positive' and 'negative' narratives of touch. 'Positive' forms of touch have been conceptualised using the following key themes: 'tender forms of touch' (Eßer, 2018), 'physical restraint, touch and catharsis' (Steckley, 2012); touch as a central 'practice of intimacy', and 'playful touch' (Warwick, 2017). In tender forms of touch, the role of staff member comfort is highlighted as an issue for consideration. Where staff members are uncomfortable with touch, they are less likely to engage in physical manifestations of caring (Eßer, 2018). Additionally, those that do engage in touch are likely to be more intrinsically comfortable with such contact. This presents an interesting narrative for viewing touch in residential settings, whereby the actions of each individual staff member require some consideration based on personal preference (Eßer, 2018). Steckley's (2012) connection between physical restraint and catharsis, whereby young people act in ways which instigate restraining practices to achieve physical comfort and connectedness, highlights the need for staff member comfort with touch – even when that touch is largely viewed as 'negative' (see below). Eßer's (2018) 'tender forms of touch' echo some of Warwick's (2017) discussions of touch as a 'practice of intimacy' and 'playful touch'. Warwick (2017) argues that 'hanging out' together forms a large part of the relationships between adults and children in residential care. In this 'hanging out', touch was used to '...convey concern towards children, congratulate, support, nurture and protect children' (Warwick, 2017: 249). In her identification of 'playful touch', Warwick argues that children were likely to instigate touch more often than staff members, using techniques such as practical jokes, play-fighting, or jokingly asking staff to touch their wounds.

On the other hand, the use of touch by some workers has been identified as a way to control children, demonstrating one's adult authority over children by touching them in ways that made the children feel uncomfortable (Warwick, 2017). Themes such as 'touch as risky' (from the perspective of staff members), 'touch as aggressive' (from the perspective of young people), 'aggressive touch and staff members' (Steckley, 2012), 'constraining forms of touch' (Eßer, 2018), and 'distancing practices' in touch (Warwick, 2017) situate physical contact between staff members and young people as a potentially 'negative' experience. Taking Warwick's (2017) 'distancing practices' as an example, staff members are said to both 'blame and embrace' risk-averse practice, using management cultures to '...justify the avoidance of physical and emotional closeness with children, whilst simultaneously blaming these distancing practices on the cultures within which they exist' (p.249). Alongside Warwick's distancing practices, many 'negative' discussions of touch focus on physical restraint practices. Eßer (2018) argues that Scotland's current restraint practices directs research into touch towards physical restraint, rather than positive or 'relational' touch. In her work on containment, touch and physical restraint, Steckley (2012) suggests that staff members are fearful of touch, as it opens them to accusations of abuse, while young people perceive staff members' use of touch, especially during restraint situations, as aggressive. Additionally, staff members are aware of the dangers of aggressive touch from young people, with some of Steckley's (2012) respondents reporting injuries from young people in their care as a result of restraining them. Aggressive perceptions of restraint, then, result in situations whereby staff members may not be confident in physically restraining young people and using the techniques accordingly (Eßer, 2018). One of the main issues this raises relates to Steckley's (2012) assertion that for some young people physical restraint is a cathartic process. Steckley (2012) reports that some young people behave disruptively in attempts to push staff members into being physical with them via restraining them. Although this behaviour is problematic, staff members who are fearful of physical restraints risk depriving young people of the cathartic touch they so desire.

Overall, physical touch is important in relational activities, but in residential settings this touch is far from simple. Lynch and Garrett (2010) argue that appropriate touch has to be initiated by the young person, enacted for practical reasons, safety oriented, play focused, comforting and reassuring, facilitating communication, and accompanied by greetings or farewells. In addition, inappropriate touch involves encouraging or initiating touch, rather than waiting on a young person to initiate, touching in specific bodily locations, personal care, and lengthy physical contact (Lynch and Garrett, 2010). Where staff members should

be aware of inappropriate touching, and equipped to manage any instances where inappropriate touching is witnessed, this awareness should be managed within the context of young people's needs (Smith, 2009).

Exploring Care Ethics

In exploring care ethics and residential care, Steckley and Smith (2011) argue that public care needs to surpass the current instrumental focus and promote children's growth and flourishing. They suggest that policy initiatives have been characterised by technical rationality, which represents a failure to consider what 'care' might mean within a residential setting (Smith, 2009). Steckley and Smith (2011) position care ethics as offering an alternative to technical and rational paradigms of care, offering the tools to critique and reconceptualise current contemporary residential care. Orme (2002) highlights current regulation of residential care from the private to the public domain. This has influenced practice in residential settings, where workers are not only responsible for responding to the needs of the young people they care for, but also to the needs of wider social policy agendas (Steckley and Smith, 2011). From a care ethics perspective, this results in a professional caring environment which privileges 'caring about' over 'caring for' (Noddings, 1984; 2002).

'Caring about' young people reflects a predisposition to ensuring children are well treated but does not require any direct care, whereas 'caring for' requires carer's involvement in the practices of care (Steckley and Smith, 2011). Where social workers, for instance, can 'get by' 'caring about' children, a key task of residential workers is to 'care for' young people. Steckley and Smith (2011: 185-186) stress that these workers:

...work at the level of the face-to-face encounter, engaging in embodied practices of caring such as getting children up in the mornings, encouraging their personal hygiene, participating in a range of social and recreational activities with them and ensuring appropriate behaviours and relationships within the group. They are also confronted with the intensity of children's emotions and get involved in the messy and ambiguous spaces around intimacy and boundaries.

Noddings' (1984; 2002) definition of care has been extended by Fisher and Tronto (1990) and Tronto (1994) to include 'care receiving'. 'Care receiving' provides the basis for being cared for, and their responses to that care. Here, care is seen as a two-way process, rather than care being 'done to' someone being cared for. The reciprocal nature of 'care receiving' subsumes the policy dynamic which places residential workers as 'dispensers of care'

(Steckley and Smith, 2011: 186). Complex psychodynamic processes in care can, therefore, emerge within relationships. These ‘care receiving’ perspectives better acknowledge the agency of children and the messy, complex, ambiguous nature of relationships (Steckley and Smith, 2011).

Literature on care ethics emphasises that care is an activity and a disposition (Tronto, 1994), as well as a practice and a value (Held, 2006). In Held’s (2006: 4) view, ‘...a caring person not only has the appropriate motivations in responding to others or in providing care but also participates adeptly in effective practices of care’. The importance of listening (Koehn, 1998), interpretation, communication and dialogue (Parton, 2003) is emphasised in care ethics. These are considered vital for effective relationships, while providing the basis of attunement, maintaining boundaries and containing contexts. Additionally, the concepts of fallibility, flexibility (Hamington, 2006) and humility demand more prominence in ethical practices of care. Fallibility acknowledges the space necessary for mistakes, while flexibility provides the opportunity and ability to learn from mistakes and adapt accordingly. Humility underlies both characteristics. Gilligan (2006) argues that humility and flexibility help to build a legacy of relationships for vulnerable children and young people. Steckley and Smith (2011) highlight the relevance of fallibility, flexibility and humility in life-space work, where children’s mistakes are viewed as opportunities for growth and learning. In taking a care ethics approach to residential settings, workers are encouraged to further consider the grounding of these concepts in relationships. In sum, Steckley and Smith (2011: 193) argue that:

Notions of safety and outcomes have come to eclipse growth and flourishing, yet growth and flourishing are the higher imperatives of residential child care. Care ethics offer a more resonant, confident voice for reconceptualising residential child care and more meaningfully informing policy and practice.

CONCLUSION

Any attempt to explore relationships in residential child care cannot be achieved without examining the historical context of residential practice. This Chapter began by outlining the current system of residential care in Scotland, situating the context of care within historical developments of the residential system. Of paramount concern in these initial sections is the influence of historical abuse scandals on current risk-averse, protective practice. Here, it becomes apparent that residential care has a long and convoluted past,

where significant changes have occurred in attempts to regulate the care sector (Kendrick and Smith, 2002). In attempting to control for any abusive practice, Smith and colleagues (2009; 2013; Kendrick and Smith, 2002) emphasise the negative impact that managerialist, risk-averse policies can have on relational practice. The indication is, therefore, that the historical development of residential child care continues to impact practice today.

After situating current residential practice within the historical development of residential child care, the Chapter highlights the role of 'love' in Scottish notions of residential care today. Attention is given to prominent media campaigns for looked after children and young people to feel loved (Independent Care Review, 2017; Brooks, 2018; Moore, 2019), and the difficulties that this can cause in the residential context. The Chapter highlights a commitment by policy-makers, practitioners and academics to acknowledge the importance of relationships in residential care in young people's experiences. These relationships, although complex, messy, unpredictable, ambiguous and fluid (Maier, 1979; Smith, 2009; Steckley and Smith, 2011), form a key part of life-space work and care experiences (Garfat and Fulcher, 2013). The reader is provided with an overview of love and intimacy in residential care, as well as the theoretical developments of love as a concept (such as Vincent, 2016; Cleary, 2017; Wolf, 2018). The main message is that relationships are once again being placed at the centre of narratives around alternative care for children and young people (Scottish Government 2008; Duncalf, 2010; Scottish Government, 2015), but their focus on love and intimacy is complex and messy (Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2013). However, the literature presented here focuses on relationships as 'caring', emphasising that despite their messiness they can be useful for staff members who care for young people. This perspective is limited, as it offers little acknowledgement of what these relationships might be, what they might look like, and what they might include.

In moving from discussing the historical and current residential context, the Chapter focuses on 'doing' care. Here, the literature of Maier (1979; 1991) and Redl and Wineman (1951; 1952) provide the backdrop for understanding the residential setting, through the milieu, life-space, and routines, rhythms and rituals. The role of relationships and intimacy in the residential environment is introduced to the reader via these theoretical models of care. As Garfat and Fulcher (2013) suggest, relationships in residential care are actively constructed and reconstructed in the residential environment. Conceptualisations of the milieu and life-space provide an avenue for exploring these relationships, while the work on routines, rhythms and rituals forms a key part of the everyday, ordinary lives that staff members and young people experience (Highmore, 2011).

Finally, the Chapter ends by providing an overview of the academic work on relationships in residential care. While highlighting that much of this work is contained in current academic debates, such as touch and care ethics, Smith et al. (2013) have reframed the life-space to take account of these practice areas. What appears key in these sections is understanding the needs of young people in out-of-home care to be cared *for* and *about*, in appropriate ways. The following Chapter seeks to introduce the reader to theoretical debates around relationships, focusing on interactions, belonging and emotions as a way to unpick the nuances of people's connections. The aim is to demonstrate how relationships are defined, how they are done and described, and what they mean to people, while contextualising these theoretical debates in residential child care.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISING RELATIONSHIPS IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

The previous Chapter provided an overview of residential care in Scotland, situating the discussion within historical developments before moving to explore current themes in policy, practice and academic writing. Chapter 2 also highlighted the importance of relationships in these themes as well as current residential work, drawing particular attention to the current political and social influences of the concept of ‘love’ in residential care. This Chapter seeks to further explore the concept of relationships, suggesting that people navigate their connections with others through numerous social and emotional processes. The role of interactions, emotions and belonging in relationships is highlighted, with the Chapter also devoting time to discussions of ‘practices’, ‘displays’ and ‘dialogues’ in people’s connections with one another.

Overall, the aim of this Chapter is to locate relationships as a key concept in this thesis. The Chapter begins by situating relationships in residential child care, before providing an overview of how relationships are being defined. Attention then turns to developing a more nuanced discussion of relationships as a sociological concept. These discussions are structured as *Doing Relationships*, *Describing Relationships* and *The Meaning of Relationships*. Throughout these sections, the reader is reminded of the particular nuances of relationships in residential care, whereby policies, rules and surveillance impact the way that people do, describe and attribute meaning to their relationships. While the previous Chapter introduced the reader to many of these challenges, it was highlighted that many conceptualisations of relationships in residential care focus on relationships themselves as ‘caring’. This Chapter expands that discussion, and demonstrates the many ways that relationships are understood, performed and experienced, particularly in residential settings.

While it is acknowledged that there are substantial bodies of literature examining relationships across many disciplines, doing and describing relationships and their meaning is of key importance to the research questions this thesis seeks to answer. Additionally, the ethnographic approach taken here is best suited to explore these aspects of relationships, given the opportunity it affords to observe how people interact with, and talk about, one another.

RELATIONSHIPS IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

Relationships in residential care will be explored in this thesis by drawing on the conceptualisations of doing, describing and meaning. However, residential care as a setting for exploring relationships has some unique complexities that require unpicking. Of note here is Goffman's work on total institutions, where he examines social life in institutional settings. Although this work was conducted during historical periods of institutionalisation, it remains relevant in this thesis, as it helps to demonstrate how people navigate their relationships in 'unusual' social settings. In addition, Goffman's work has been the basis for many of the historical changes to residential care set out in Chapter 2. As Smith (2009: 27) states, '...bowdlerised versions of Goffman's (1968) total institutions were swallowed whole to stereotype and justify the non-use of residential care'. As such, despite the limitations in Goffman's work, his concept of 'total institutions' continues to form the basis for many policy and practice changes.

Goffman's (1968) conception of total institutions in his work *Asylums* has been applied across a number of contexts in the decades that have passed since his publication. Goffman himself identified different institution types, including prisons, asylums, military barracks and certain religious orders (Goodman, 2013). Other applications include hospitals, residential care for children and adults, and large boarding schools. Goffman conceptualises total institutions as:

... a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life.

(1968: 11)

While residential care is not 'cut off' from wider society, nor do residents typically lead an 'enclosed formally administered round of life', his arguments around total institutions as places of residence and work are important. They echo my earlier assertions that the residential house is both a homeplace and workplace, where multiple roles are performed in any given day. In these institutions, Goffman's use of 'total' reflects the following:

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried out in the immediate company of a large *batch* of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same things together. Third, all phases

of the day's activities are tightly scheduled with one activity leading at a pre-arranged time into the next, the whole sequence of events being imposed from above by a system of explicit, formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally the various enforced activities are brought together into a single *rational plan* purportedly designed to fulfil the *official aims* of the institution

(Goffman, 1968: 17, original emphasis)

These total institutions encourage a 'mortification of self', where people are 'stripped' of their identity in favour of uniformity in the institution. This loss of identity can prevent people from presenting their usual self-image, as found in typical interaction.

While I would argue that current residential care in Scotland does not follow all of Goffman's characteristics of total institutions – they are no longer large-scale, nor do they 'strip' people of their identity – some of Goffman's attributions remain. For instance, while residential houses do not necessarily require that all young people carry out the same tasks, in a strict schedule of activities, they continue to follow formal rules and official bodies do create a rational plan to achieve the aims of the house. Nonetheless, this 'rational plan' is largely co-created with the institution and is not 'imposed' on them 'from above'. Overall, the four key components of 'total' in Goffman's 'total institutions' are unrepresentative of residential care today, and were arguably absent from residential child care even when Goffman was writing about total institutions.

Overall, what can be noted is that residential houses largely do not encompass the most important criteria of Goffman's total institutions: 'formally administered round of life' (1968: 11). That is, residential houses are formal institutions who follow some formal rules to plan their activities and daily routines, but daily life is not 'formally administered'. While residential houses might have once been large-scale buildings that demonstrate the physical nature of total institutions, today they do not maintain the social components of total institutions as Goffman described. That is, while they do, to some extent, remain bureaucratically controlled, following a (somewhat) rational plan of activity in one physical place (Goodman, 2013), staff members and residents spend much of their time in the residential house freely interacting with one another.

Residential child care and residential houses themselves are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. However, Goffman's (1968) description of total institutions demonstrates specific challenges for understanding relationships in these settings. Exploring people's

relationships in residential houses requires an understanding of the context in which these relationships are occurring. Goffman's (1968) work highlights that interactions are impacted by the rules that govern institutions. People's connections are governed by external forces and influenced by the expected social norms in residential care. While Goffman's concept of total institutions is an important one to explore, the forces which impact relationships in residential care are varied and complex.

In exploring relationships in residential care, then, one must consider the continued conceptualisation of the residential house as an institution, governed by external rules and incorporating daily practices to maintain these rules. While Goffman's (1968) work on total institutions remains only somewhat relevant, given the changes in the physical make-up of residential houses over the years, as well as practice developments which encourage individual, relationship-based practice, his theoretical description of interactions in total institutions as dependent upon the social norms and expectations in those settings does influence the research conducted here. The history of literature that has been hostile to residential care continues, and as Smith et al. (2013) demonstrate, Goffman's work on total institutions '...can still be applied uncritically to residential child care settings... even although current day homes and schools are far from Goffman's portrayal of the "total institution"' (p.3-4). Consequently, '...suspicion of institutional care is a persistent thread in social work belief systems' (Smith, 2009: 27) and will clearly impact the relationships that people are able to form in residential houses.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS

In this thesis, I propose that relationships are a combination of interactions between people that elicit feelings of connectedness and the partaking of shared activities and experiences together. While it is not my intention to classify relationships into 'positive' and 'negative' categories, nor is it my intention to say whether relationships can have a 'positive' or 'negative' impact on someone's life, I do posit that the interactions, connectedness, activities and experiences that people share in relationships can be both warm and intimate, as well as fraught and upsetting. To use a quick pop-culture example, *Batman* and *Robin*, from the popular DC franchise, can largely be referred to as partners, sharing many friendly encounters while working together to solve many crises. This does not mean that their relationship is any more or less significant than the relationship that *Batman* shares with *The Joker*, who he frequently conflicts with and could largely be described as his enemy. The key

is that both relationships involve a series of interactions and have an impact on *Batman's* life, his daily activities as well as his sense of self and grounding in the world.

These examples of relationships in *Batman's* life can be said to be 'personal' relationships. That is, they are relationships which hold significance for *Batman*, and for *Robin* and *The Joker*. For Goffman (1971), 'personal' relationships are discussed as social relationships between people who have 'given up' some of the boundaries and barriers that ordinarily separate them from others. They are present when people '...relate meaningfully and significantly to one another across distances, in different places and when there is no pre-given genetic or even legal bonds' (Smart, 2007: 7). *Batman* and *Robin* maintain their close partnership even when they are not together. *Batman* and *The Joker* consider each other to be an adversary, no matter the time or place – even when they are seen to temporarily suspend their conflict in the name of the greater good. These relationships are close and 'personal' because they elicit strong feelings, have a meaningful history and '...the familiarity makes it unnecessary to think too much about how you should behave' (Hinde, 1997).

Of course, it is worth stating that relationships in general do not need to be as significant as either *Batman* and *Robin* or *Batman* and *The Joker*. Both of these relationships are prolonged, intense and extremely important in *Batman's* life. People can have many interactions and experiences that would be defined as relationships without holding the same significance as the two illustrations here. There are many allies, villains, victims and supporting characters in the DC comics that *Batman* has a relationship with, and there are many with whom he simply encounters or interacts on occasion and without forming a 'relationship', per se. And this is where a key distinction is made: people form relationships through repeated interactions over a period of time (Hinde, 1976). There is a difference between time-limited interactions of very little to no significance – such as smiling at a fellow commuter once on the train to work, or thanking the barista for your coffee in a café you never visit again – and repeated encounters over a longer period of time – smiling at the commuter with the green glasses every time you see them on your shared way to work, or repeatedly thanking the same barista who pours your coffee every morning. These examples do not necessarily mean that you are close to either the commuter or the barista, as described above, but you have formed a *relationship* with each other within the confines of your respective routines. In short, you have played the same part to the same audience on different occasions, cementing the relationship that you share, no matter how significant or insignificant that relationship might be in one's own understanding of one's social networks (Goffman, 1959; 1971; Hinde, 1997).

Overall, Hinde (1976: 3) attests that:

...every relationship must involve a series of interactions in time; what the participants think about the relationship must be in some way related to those interactions; and description of the relationship must ultimately be derived from them.

It is in this argument that the central point of my thesis lies: in order to explore relationships, one must consider how they are 'done', how they are described and what meaning they hold to people. The remainder of this Chapter, then, draws on existing literature to conceptualise relationships through doing, describing and meaning. The aim is to provide the reader with an understanding of the theoretical influences in this thesis, demonstrating further how I conceptualise relationships while providing some notes specific to the context of relationships in residential child care. In doing so, I draw the reader's attention to the current debates around residential care already discussed in Chapter 2 and to the specific context of relationships as described earlier in this Chapter. The overall message is that while existing literature generally conceptualises relationships within the realms of family, friendship and romantic relationships, relationships in residential care reflect many of these aspects whilst also functioning within a specific spatial, social and temporal atmosphere.

DOING RELATIONSHIPS

While this Chapter has outlined some thinking about relationships as a product of interactions, connectedness and shared activities, it is yet to examine how 'doing' relationships is embarked upon by people. In thinking about how relationships are done, one must move beyond how relationships are conceptualised to how relationships are enacted in everyday life. To unpick what I mean by 'doing' relationships, I refer to Lefevre's and colleagues' (Lefevre et al., 2008; Lefevre, 2015) 'knowing', 'being' and 'doing'. Lefevre's work examines the communication competencies of social workers when working with children (Lefevre et al., 2008; Lefevre, 2015). Here, the practical aspects of 'doing' are discussed separately from the theoretical 'knowing' and the embodied and emotional 'being'. Lefevre et al. (2008) argue that 'doing' communication with children involves micro-skills, such as listening, interviewing and information exchange. These micro-skills are the practical, person-to-person interactions between social workers and children. These practical aspects are said to be underpinned by knowledge and values ('knowing') as well as ethical commitments and emotional and personal capabilities ('being') (Lefevre et al., 2008). The 'knowing', 'being' and 'doing' of communication with children intersect to develop skilled

practitioners. This intersectionality is demonstrated in Figure 1 (adapted from Lefevre et al., 2008).

'Doing' relationships, then, is a practical illustration of the connections between people, involving both a theoretical 'knowing' of the relationships being done, and an emotional, personal 'being' between the people 'doing' them. While Lefevre and colleague's work is focused on social workers and the children they work with, the concepts of 'knowing', 'being' and 'doing' can be applied to residential care as well. However, Lefevre et al. (2008) discuss these adult-child relationships within the professional boundaries of a social work interaction, as opposed to prolonged daily contact. As such, while their conceptualisation of 'knowing', 'being', and 'doing' are useful for understanding the professional competencies that staff members bring to their relationships, their application to residential care is limited. For instance, adult-child relationships in the residential house will be different to the adult-child interactions social workers engage in during their limited time with children. Additionally, the work of Lefevre and colleagues does little to illustrate how staff members will relate to one another, or how young people will relate to staff members. As such, one needs to understand some key components of relationships and how they are navigated.

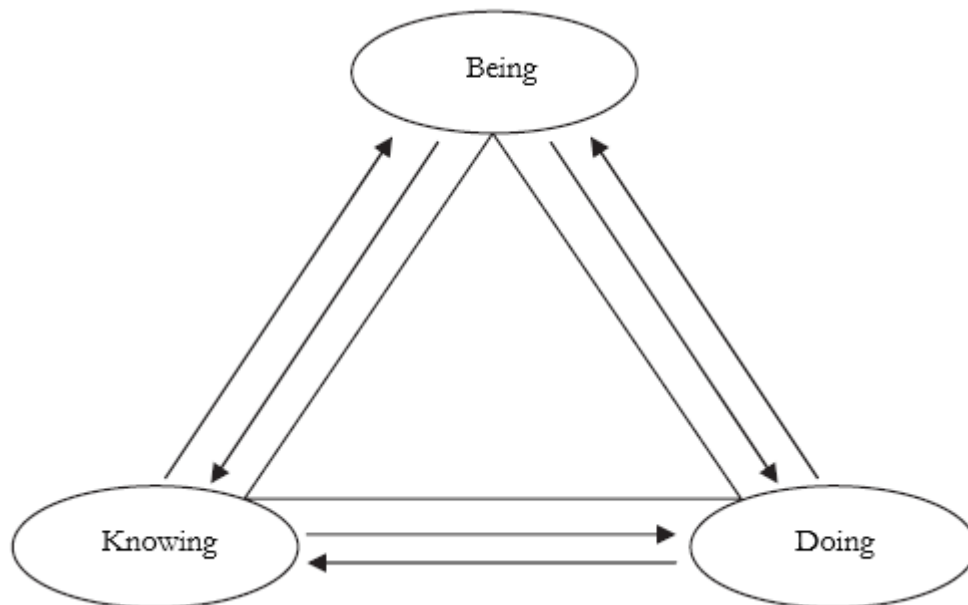


Figure 1: The Intersection of 'Being', 'Knowing' and 'Doing' Domains, Adapted from Lefevre (2008: 167)

In her work on personal life, Carol Smart (2007) argues that there are five core concepts inherent in understanding families and relationships. She lists these as Biography,

Embeddedness, Relationality, Imaginary and Memory. In her exploration of these, she suggests that they overlap with one another (see Figure 2), conceptualising both the ‘doing’ of relationships and the ‘thinking’ of relationships. These concepts encompass Lefevre and colleagues’ ‘knowing’, ‘being’ and ‘doing’ of relationships, highlighting that navigating and understanding relationships involves both an exploration of relationship ‘practices’ (see Morgan, 1996; 2011a; 2011b) and the emotional and mental internalisations of relationships. Taking each of Smart’s five concepts provides an initial framework for examining the ways that people navigate their relationships in the social world.

While Smart’s (2007) concepts are largely used to illustrate how families relate to one another, they can be applied to understand relationships in residential care. Doing so builds on previous work that has demonstrated how residential care can be considered another type of family, whereby staff members and young people engage in routines and rituals similar to those of traditional families (Dorrer et al., 2010; McIntosh et al., 2011; Emond et al., 2014) and where kin-terms have been used to describe young people’s relationships with other people in the residential house (Kendrick, 2013).

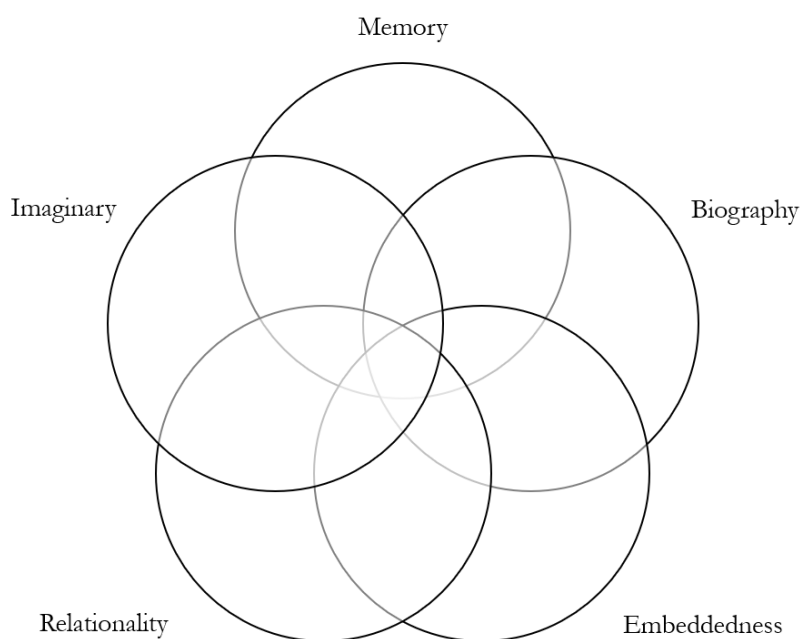


Figure 2: Overlapping Core Concepts of Families and Relationships, Adapted from Smart (2007: 37)

Smart (2007) suggests that the process through which people share their memories, or work together to create shared memories, creates strong bonds between people as they develop a sense of familiarity. After all, memories are closely connected with emotions and a key part of identity formation (Misztal, 2003). Smart (2007) goes on to argue that sharing

memories forms the basis of what she calls 'biography'. Biographical aspects of relationships, which rely on anchors for memories – such as photographs, objects or documents – elicit stories in people which they may or may not choose to share with others. As Miller (2008) argues, possessions are a profound aspect of social life: '...usually the closer our relationships are with objects, the closer our relationships are with people' (p.1). People can feel a closeness to their possessions independently of others, but these objects can bring forward memories and stories which, upon being shared, develop connections (Smart, 2007). Relationship formation occurs when biographical stories are shared between people who are emotionally close to one another, with relationships displayed (Finch, 2007) and practiced (Morgan, 1996) through the giving and receiving of biographical objects, such as the photographs, objects and documents discussed above. Furthermore, in exploring the concept of imaginary, Smart (2007) highlights the way that one's relationships are both thought about and imagined, through personal musings, desires, thoughts and emotions, relating these to the social and cultural contexts in which people live.

In the final concepts of relationality and embeddedness, Smart (2007) explores the notion of connectedness in relationships even further. She argues that relationships have an element of embeddedness where lives become interwoven, making it impossible for relationships to simply end. This embeddedness reflects the 'stickiness' of relationships and the tenacity of the bonds and links between people, especially those one would consider as family, kin or close friends. The stickiness of embedded relationships is viewed as neither a good nor bad thing, it is simply a recognition of relational complexities between closely connected people. Where relationality is examined, two main points are raised. The first is an acknowledgement that people develop and understand the world through their kin relationships: '... in other words, without both formative and on-going relationships we do not develop our own sense of personhood or even individuality' (Smart, 2007: 46). The second is the affirmation that when one speaks of a relatedness to kin, one is not necessarily referring to blood relatives. The approach that Smart adopts is attributed to Carsten (2004) who suggests that people can place equal importance on the relationships they have with others who are not strictly kin, in that they are not biologically related to one another, but who occupy the same emotional, cultural, locational and personal place to one another.

These five concepts, then, are a helpful means of exploring the processes through which people navigate their relationships. Through creating and sharing memories, telling stories of one's upbringing and personal belongings, taking the time to reflect and imagine one's relationships, and considering the ways in which people relate to one another, people

are forming and interpreting their relationships with others whilst understanding the embeddedness of those relationships (Smart, 2007). Smart's key concepts of personal life correspond with changing narratives of families and connectedness. It is reported that:

...personal relationships are today less dependent on marriage and blood ties, with family bonds and commitments going far beyond the nuclear co-resident family and extending across households linked by friendship, vicinity, dissolved marriages, step-parenting and care arrangements.

(Wall and Gouveia, 2014: 352)

The evolving nature of families and personal relationships is widely documented (Jamieson, 1998; Roseneil and Budgeon, 2004; Smart, 2007; May, 2011). With these changes in understanding how people connect with one another, there is an acceptance that biological ties are less relevant to people's navigation of their relationships than other relational components.

Relationships as Interactions

A key component of 'doing' relationships is understanding how people interact with one another to form memories, share stories and build relationality between one another. Goffman (1959) explores the techniques that people use to manage the impression that others have of them, and to adhere to societal expectations and norms. In doing so, he sets out a number of considerations necessary for understanding the different ways that people navigate their social relationships with others. He presents a dramaturgical metaphor of people's interactions and relationships, outlining both the deliberate and implicit actions of humans in the social world. Goffman (1959) likens human interactions to plays, with actors, frontstages, backstages, and audiences, whereby people will work individually or in teams to achieve their desired impression. It is argued that Goffman's interactional approach to relationships and his recognition of power and context offers a useful parallel to the core concepts of families and relationships discussed by Smart (2007).

Goffman (1959) suggests that people navigate their daily interactions by drawing upon understood social norms to convey their intentions and maintain positions in society. He argues that people's interactions with one another are guided by their motives, detailing a framework for everyday interactions which includes a discussion of 'performances', 'fronts' and 'settings'. Goffman (1959) highlights the way that people use both physical locations and material objects (the 'front'), such as décor and furniture, to assist in delivering the

message that they are trying to convey. Goffman observed that when two people meet, they attempt to glean information about each other to help them define the social situation. He suggests that ‘...observers need only be familiar with a small and hence manageable vocabulary of fronts and know how to respond to them in order to orient themselves in a wide variety of situations’ (1959: 16). For instance, understanding the front that a child or staff member displays in residential child care may require the ‘audience’ to draw on their knowledge of families and households more generally, or typical adult child relationships, or even workplaces and organisations. The performers and audience members rely on known expectations of the front, such as settings, appearances and manners, and routines and rituals, to understand the interactions that take place *within* the front and *outside* the front (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman’s main arguments suggest that the smooth flow of social life is dependent upon people accepting the impression that others attempt to convey to them (Branaman, 1997). Goffman (1959) believed that it was in a person’s best interest to control their interactions, done so by learning as much about their audience in any social situation as possible. He suggests that despite the possibility of changes to the ‘routines’ in a given front, audience members will be able to use their previous experiences of similar situations to ‘figure out’ what message is being conveyed. Additionally, where the front is altered but the routine is retained, audience members will gain knowledge about the front using memories of similar routines in other fronts. Goffman (1959) expands on his discussion of ‘fronts’ to introduce the concept of ‘front region’ and describe the places where performances are given. He contrasts this with ‘back region’, used to refer to places where a performance can be ‘knowingly contradicted’ (p.69). These are now known more widely as Frontstage and Backstage, where people make use of the setting and their team-mates to perform in the frontstage, and a ‘...performer can relax; he [sic] can drop his [sic] front, forgo speaking his [sic] lines, and step out of character’ in the backstage (Goffman, 1959: 70).

When presenting a front, there are several conscious and unconscious actions that performers take to achieve their desired impression (Goffman, 1959). Goffman discusses much of these actions by suggesting that people will conceal or exaggerate aspects of their lives to others: ‘...if an individual is to give expression to ideal standards during his [sic] performance, then he [sic] will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards’ (Goffman, 1959: 26). Overall, ‘...a performer tends to conceal or underplay those activities, facts and motives which are incompatible with an idealized version of himself [sic] and his [sic] products’ (1959: 30). He, therefore, suggests that people will hide

parts of themselves that they do not wish others to know, while revealing features which show them to be what they say they are. Within this dramaturgical discussion, there is a narrative of story-telling, where people tell the stories that they wish to be heard through their interactions, keeping for themselves the stories that they do not intend to share.

When working in a team to give a performance, Goffman (1959) argues that people first must decide on the front they are performing, and that when team-mates arrive at a decision all members of the team are obliged to follow it. When a mistake is then made by a member of the team in the presence of an audience, the remaining team-mates often have to suppress their anger or disappointment towards their team-mate and maintain the front agreed upon, 'covering' the other person's mistake. As such, '...it is apparent that if performers are concerned with maintaining a line they will select as team-mates those who can be trusted to perform properly' (Goffman, 1959: 56). The conceptualisation of interactions and relationships presented by Goffman offers a theoretical lens through which to view everyday interactions in the residential house, taking account of the influence of wider social, cultural and political forces. In residential care, where one might consider the staff members or young people as team-mates to each other, there is a need for staff members to make sure they maintain the same performance in front of young people, even if they happen to disagree with their fellow staff members, and vice versa.

Goffman (1959: 73) argues that '...the line dividing front and back regions is illustrated everywhere in our society', however, '...there are many regions which function at one time and in one sense as a front region and at another time and in another sense as a back region' (p.77). This viewpoint is also echoed by Andersen (2014: 485), who noted '...the same physical space may serve as a front stage at one moment and backstage in the next'. For instance, he suggests that a region which is regularly conceived of as being a frontstage can be seen to be a backstage before and after each performance, where team-mates will discuss, rehearse and establish the front they wish to relay to the audience. Where one might joke or mock a team-mate, this can be an intimate act in the backstage, but disrespectful in the frontstage. Additionally, when the team-mates are alone without an audience, there is a need for fellow team-mates to maintain the impression that they can be trusted with the secrets of the team. At times, then, this backstage behaviour also involves maintaining a front in the company of one's team-mates: '...one may feel obliged, when backstage, to act out of character in a familiar fashion and this can come to be more of a pose than the performance for which it was meant to provide relaxation' (Goffman, 1959: 82). As such, even in backstage behaviour one might be witnessing a performance of roles, rather than a true

representation of character. This is particularly interesting in residential settings, whereby staff members will be required to maintain working relationships with their fellow staff members, as well as potential personal relationships, perhaps encouraging them to feign interest in topics of conversation or activities that might otherwise be viewed as boring or uninteresting.

Goffman's work has given an insight into the ways that people navigate their social lives and relationships. He has taken the metaphor of drama and theatre to highlight the conscious and unconscious work that goes on between people in their daily lives. In doing so, his work has become 'vital and important' (Scheff, 2010: 185). Within the context of this study, Goffman's dramaturgical model can be useful in understanding how people interact with each other, and how these interactions form the basis of relationships. Central to his thesis is that people follow a set of established social rules which they adhere to as they move through their lives, they understand how to behave in the presence of others based on previous experiences in similar settings and adjust accordingly (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) indicates that, as social beings, people can interpret what is expected of them, and behave in an appropriate manner for the impression that they are trying to foster. In doing so, they are aware of the settings in which they operate, choosing to show intimate personal characteristics only when doing so would be acceptable, and maintaining a formal presentation of themselves when necessary. Where relationships are concerned, the way in which people interact with one another, the meaning behind those interactions, and the social processes at play are all important factors in understanding relationships. Goffman's work provides a landscape for understanding the relationships that people have with each other. In reiterating Hinde's (1976) argument, what people think of their relationships, and how they describe them, is linked to understanding their interactions. As such, Goffman's theory of interactions and his dramaturgical model are an important theoretical lens for understanding how people do their relationships.

Relationship Dialogues

Baxter's (1990; 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; Baxter and Montgomery, 1996; Goldsmith and Baxter, 1996) work on relationship dialogues and relational dialectics provides a further interesting lens through which relationships can be understood. In her discussion of relational dialectics and relationship dialogues, Baxter (2004a) uses the work of Bakhtin (1981) to explore her thoughts on personal relationships. She sets the starting point for the conceptualisation of relationships as a dialogue – where one understands oneself through

one's opinion of the *self* and the *other*. In taking the metaphor of dialogues, she suggests that Bakhtin is primarily concerned with '...a simultaneous unity of differences in the interpretation of utterances' (Baxter, 2004a: 109). Thus, people's understandings of selves and relationships are constituted in communication (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996). Her extensive work on the subject highlights the significance of people's communications in the development and understanding of their social relationships. Of interest is the way that people talk to and understand each other in relationships, but also the way that people talk about and interpret these relationships more generally. Although she thoroughly highlights many of Bakhtin's arguments in her work, and has explored numerous avenues through her conceptions of relational dialectics, there is no scope in this thesis to synthesise all of these. I will focus, therefore, on highlighting the key messages of her work as they relate to the 'doing' of relationships.

Where developing romantic relationships is concerned, Baxter (1990) highlights the role of contradictions in relationship dialogues. In turn, she discusses (a) autonomy-connection, (b) openness-closedness and (c) predictability-novelty. Her main arguments can be summarised as follows: (a) people need to forsake their autonomy in favour of connections in relationships, however, connecting too much can destroy relationships because each individual becomes lost; (b) engaging in open discourses is necessary for developing intimacy, but openness can create vulnerability in one's self; (c) where there is a need for predictability, excessive repetition can be too rigid and detrimental to relationship development. Baxter (1990) suggests that these contradictions are expected across all stages of a relationship's development. There is a potential for these contradictions to exist in the development of many relationship-types, whereby the continual interplay of the individual needs of each person and the requirements of relationship engagement and relationship parties is in constant flux. Furthermore, it is possible that these contradictions exist well into relationship establishment and navigation, not simply at the point where relationships develop (Baxter, 1990).

Alongside the myriad of relationship contradictions, Baxter (2004a; 2004b) highlights the significance of shared time-space experiences, which she calls 'chronotopic similarity', in developing and navigating one's relationships. Baxter argues that chronotopic similarity, which relies upon people taking part in both 'mundane communication' and 'major events', is the basis from which many relationships are transformed and maintained. Her work with Goldsmith (Goldsmith and Baxter, 1996) found that people's engagement in small talk, catching up, joking around, making plans, and gossiping were frequent

occurrences in the 'doing' of relationships. These chronotopic similarities accompany 'turning points' as significant relationship builders. Baxter (2004a; 2004b) states that events such as 'quality time', 'passion events' (such as sexual relations) and 'relationship talk' enable growth and expression in relationships because (i) people experience them jointly with other members of their relationship parties, and (ii) members of those relationship parties discuss the shared experience and memory of the turning point event, through activities such as sharing stories, reminiscing, or celebrating and commemorating. Baxter suggests that by taking part in activities together and talking about those activities, people begin, and continue, to form relationships with one another.

In discussing relational dialectics, Baxter (2004b) attempts to find meaning in people's differences. Through examining the ways in which people differ from the people they have connected relationships with, the importance of contradicting dialogues can be understood. Baxter (2004b: 8) takes the perspective that where '...traditional approaches to relationships have articulated the grand narratives of connection, certainty, and openness', the ability of relationship parties to maintain their 'autonomy' needs further consideration. This autonomy of individuals in relationships can result in difference, rather than sameness, which can be understood as a foundation for individual growth in each relational person (Baxter and West, 2003). Additionally, Baxter (2004a: 111) highlights the main advantage that difference can portray in developing one's relationships more generally:

In being open *to* another person, one is willing to listen to him or her from that person's perspective, to display receptivity to what that person has to say, to be open to change in one's own beliefs and attitudes.

(original emphasis)

This demonstration that another's opinion is important and worthy of consideration, can either strengthen a relationship between people or simply display the existing strength of said relationship. It is in this manner that difference is as important to relationship navigation and understanding as sameness.

As a process through which the navigation of relationships can be explored, then, relationship dialogues provide an avenue for understanding both the similarities and differences that people communicate in their relationships. The purpose of discussing relationship dialogues in this thesis is to explore the ways that people interact with one another, and how they understand those interactions. Baxter's work on the subject offers a

lens through which the contradictions and complexities of relationships can be understood. Where doing relationships is concerned, Baxter and colleagues highlight that the way people talk to each other, and talk about their relationships, is an important aspect in understanding how people interact with one another. She demonstrates that people do not have to agree with one another, nor do they have to agree on the relationship they have with each other, in order to be considered connected. In addition, she highlights that this difference can be a benefit to people's relationships, as it allows them to consider their own perspectives in a more nuanced way. In accompanying the work of Morgan and Finch, a clearer path which traces doing relationships as a product of actions, routines, interpretations, communications, sameness and difference can be seen.

Practicing and Displaying Relationships

Understanding how people do relationships, however, needs to move beyond exploring how people interact with and talk about one another: one needs to explore the message that people are trying to convey with their interactions. Morgan's (1996) work on family practices and Finch's (2007) displaying families demonstrate how people interact in certain ways in order to project the message that their relationships are family-like in nature, cementing their closeness and telling the world that they are significant to each other. Morgan (1996; 2011a; 2011b) argues that family practices are the small, routine aspects of family lives, such as reading one's child a bedtime story or cooking dinner for one's partner. These examples are the 'doing' of relationships. Finch (2007), on the other hand, posits that family practices, and the relational actions of others, need to be communicated to and understood by relevant others.

The concepts of family practices and displaying families are useful when studying personal relationships, as:

A focus on practices and display is useful in managing the challenge of deepening our understanding of families and personal relationships while navigating through a wide range of settings and circumstances, as practices and display offer the possibility of moving away from thinking about families in terms of categories which are supposedly, a priori, significant.

(Dermott and Seymour, 2011: 12)

While both theories place families at the heart of discussions, they accept that what 'makes' a family is contested (Morgan, 1996; Finch, 2007). The focus on acts, and an interpretation

of the meanings of acts, places the arguments put forward by Morgan and Finch, respectively, as prime theoretical lenses through which people's actions in relationships can be studied. Given that the objective of this thesis is to explore relationships in residential child care, where the residential environment continues to try and replicate 'family-like' homes (Smith, 2009; McIntosh et al., 2011), understanding the practicing and doing of relationships can aid in the interpretation of those relationships which exist between, and within, groups of staff members and young people.

Central to Morgan's (1996) conceptualisation of family practices, is that the term 'family' refers more to a quality rather than a thing, suggesting that there is no 'fixed' definition of family. The argument is that '...many people use the word [family] flexibly and situationally, with reference to particular, although not necessarily fixed, sets of others' (Morgan, 1996: 187). This is similar to Smart's (2007) discussions of relatedness, whereby kin, and by extension family, do not have to be biologically related to one another, and are instead understood more fluidly as being conceptualised by emotional, personal and locational connections. Where Morgan (1996) defines practices, he highlights that these are active, everyday, regular, fluid, and biographical in nature. Family practices are said not to have a 'thing-like' existence, instead being contextualised and understood by the social agents engaging in practices (Morgan, 2011a). These practices form part of the normal taken-for-granted relational activities of people, such as mowing the lawn or feeding the children, to use Morgan's (1996; 2011a; 2011b) examples, which are embedded in elements of people's biographies. As such, to the agent taking part in these family practices, and to the observer witnessing them, '...family practices are to do with those relationships and activities that are constructed as being to do with family matters' (Morgan, 1996: 192). In other words, the shared understanding of what families are, or more importantly what families do, is relied upon to understand one's own actions as being family practices.

For context, Morgan's notion of practices refers specifically to the routine aspects of doing family life (Finch, 2007). In the ritualised behaviours of bedtime routines, such as reading stories to one's children, or shared mealtimes, where dinner is prepared and eaten at the same time every evening by the same people, the social actors taking part in these routines are enacting family practices (Finch, 2007). However, they can only be deemed as being family practices because these activities are understood as being what families do (Morgan, 1996). There is a reliance upon other social actors understanding the actions and daily routines of families, not just on families themselves knowing what families do. In the case of navigating relationships, then, Morgan's (1996; 2011a; 2011b) notion of family

practices enables one to interpret and engage with relationships through the lens of everyday tasks and the personal, emotional and relational significance attached to those tasks.

Finch (2007) expands on Morgan's initial arguments that families engage in activities and behave in a manner which is understood to be familial through practices to suggest that these practices form part of a 'display' of being family. Finch (2007: 66) states her central argument as being: '*families need to be "displayed" as well as "done"*' (original emphasis). In defining display, Finch (2007) posits that the actions of people engaging in family practices need to be both communicated to and understood by relevant others. The actions themselves, such as the image above of reading one's children a bedtime story, are practices. However, the way in which these practices are *shown* to be familial, where those relevant others understand that the practices being done are done as a 'family', is what constitutes the 'display' of families. Ultimately:

Display is the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute "doing family things" and thereby confirm that these relationships are "family" relationships.

Finch (2007: 67)

Dermott and Seymour (2011: 17) argue that '...practices of display are centred on those in close social proximity and/or direct contact', with an elaboration that 'individuals are saying specifically that "this is my family and it works" and not that these are "just" important social relationships to me'. The relevance of family as the central point of Finch's arguments is justified as being the social construct through with meanings and interactions are widely understood. Finch (2011) herself argues that one cannot simply discuss display in connection with all relationships, instead suggesting that a display of other relationships would need further discussion. The same is arguably true of Morgan's (1996) family practices, whereby the core arguments of Morgan's work revolve around individuals' (those within and outside of the family) shared understanding of what family means. Residential child care offers an interesting challenge to this perspective. Within the care literature there is an assertion that residential facilities often attempt to operate on a family-like basis (Smith, 2009), alongside the shared temporal and physical space that those living and working in residential houses occupy. It is, therefore, interesting to consider whether the daily habits and actions of those living and working together in residential care can be conceptualised as being 'family'. The work of the *Food for Thought* project has applied these concepts of

displaying families and family practices to the routines, rhythms and rituals of daily food practices in residential child care. The arguments made demonstrate that staff members and young people view mealtimes in the residential house as a way to display and practice their relationships with one another (McIntosh et al., 2011; Punch and McIntosh, 2014; Emond et al., 2014). This application of Finch and Morgan's arguments to the residential setting paves the way for a discussion of the ability of staff members and young people to practice and display their relationships with one another, particularly as their relationships are not ordinarily viewed as 'family', despite Kendrick's (2013) assertion that kin-terms are often used to describe these relationships.

Until this point, the Chapter has been devoted to defining relationships and developing an understanding of how people do relationships. Using Hinde's (1976) arguments once again, what remains is an exploration of how people describe their relationships in order to understand how one moves from an 'interaction' to a 'relationship'. While it is not necessarily the intention of this thesis to determine whether staff members and young people in residential care consider themselves family, friends, acquaintances, enemies, workmates, and so on, it is acknowledged that these are common descriptions of relationship quality. People use these terms, and metaphors of these terms, to communicate the closeness, or lack thereof, that they feel for others in their lives. They also function as a key component in Baxter and colleagues' relational dialectics, where one should consider how people talk about their relationships in order to understand the relationships they have in their social worlds. With this in mind, the following section, *Describing Relationships*, seeks to establish how people describe their relationships, and how these descriptions relate to the doing of relationships.

DESCRIBING RELATIONSHIPS

When I refer to describing relationships, I aim to highlight the way that people talk about their relationships with one another, the comparisons that they make and the sentimental terms that they do or do not use. Within the residential care literature, relationships between people in the residential house are often compared to relationships in families (McIntosh et al., 2011; Kendrick, 2013; Punch and McIntosh, 2014). This is largely due to the residential sector's attempts to replicate family life in both physical appearance and residential practice. For instance, moving to smaller residential houses of five to six young people, attempting to build residential properties that 'fit in' to their surroundings, and ensuring that young people each have their own bedrooms replicates what one might

witness in many family homes (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). This propensity for family-like comparisons, then, paves the way for a discussion on the changing nature of family and kinship, and how descriptions of relationships that use the ‘family metaphor’ are particularly relevant in residential settings.

In describing relationships, Kendrick (2013) highlights the nature of family-like relationships in residential care. He argues that young people in residential settings conceptualise their relationships with staff members as like family relationships, describing the staff members using kin terms and highlighting the importance of ‘being there’ for the young people. Similar sentiments are echoed in the work of Punch and McIntosh (2014), who highlight that the family metaphor is used in residential care to influence how mealtimes are conducted, with the main aim being to replicate what happens in an ordinary family home. In both papers, the family metaphor is used to highlight how relationships that are not traditionally ‘family’ relationships can still contain the same emotional connectedness and closeness as traditional family relationships. In choosing to describe a staff member as ‘like an aunt’ or a fellow young person as ‘like a brother’, young people are indicating that their relationships mirror those that are traditionally understood to be close and personal, where both parties can rely on and trust the other to be there for them, while potentially highlighting that these relationships are not without difficulties, just like family relationships.

Using the family metaphor to describe relationships follows recent developments in academic debates on family meanings and practices, which continue to highlight the importance of affectionate bonds and support, but also reveal blurring definitions of kin, non-kin and ex-kin (Wall and Gouveia, 2014). As Carsten (2004) notes, terminology has shifted to recognised ‘relatedness’ rather than ‘kinship’, where equal importance is given to people who may not be strictly ‘kin’, but who occupy the same place in any emotional, cultural and personal sense. Smart (2007) argues that ‘...relatedness therefore takes as its starting point what matters to people and how their lives unfold in specific contexts and places’ (p.47). Pahl and Spencer (2004) discuss these blurring boundaries as a process of ‘suffusion’, where kin and non-kin can be tied closely together. They suggest that the level of commitment in a relationship is largely responsible for determining whether a friend would be considered ‘family’ or not. However, Wall and Gouveia (2014) acknowledge that the opposite is also true: traditional kin, such as brothers and sisters, may occupy a friendship role in one’s life, or they may not, depending on the commitment that they show to one another. There is, therefore, an intertwining between familial and non-familial relationships (Finch, 2007; Jamieson, 2011; Morgan, 2011a; Wall and Gouveia, 2014).

Within these blurred boundaries, people are free to use kin and family terms to describe their relationships with people outside of the traditional confines of ‘biological’ relatedness. When they do, they are using established frames of closeness and belonging to describe how they feel about one another. Understanding the way that people talk about their relationships expands the notion of doing relationships to include what those relationships *look* like. In doing so, we can begin to make inferences regarding what these relationships mean to people, completing the final part of Hinde’s (1976) puzzle: understanding what interactions mean to each other in order to make sense of their relationships.

THE MEANING OF RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are largely considered important in people’s conceptions of their selves and the social world (May, 2011). They form a key part of our daily lives and enable us to feel connected to one another. This connectedness arises from our emotional experience of relationships, as well as the sense of belonging we develop to people and objects in our social circles. As May (2013) argues ‘...we understand who we are partly on the basis of whom we feel we belong (or do not belong) with’ (p.113). The previous sections of this Chapter have outlined how relationships are defined in this thesis, how they are done and how people describe their relationships. This section demonstrates how the emotional component of relationships creates meaning for people, where relationships elicit feelings that drive people to do good for people they like and avoid people they dislike. In addition, relationships influence people’s sense of belonging in the social world, where close relationships can be an important source of support and acknowledgement, and relationships which cause us pain or oppress us can hinder our sense of belonging (May, 2013). As a result, what follows is a discussion of relationships as emotional as well as belonging in relationships.

Relationships as Emotional

While Goffman’s work highlights the social elements of interactions between people, which is an important aspect of doing relationships, much of these interactions are concerned with emotions (Scheff, 2010). However, he makes limited reference to the embarrassment or pain that people feel when their performances are questioned or not believed. Overall, emotional considerations are important for work on relationships, as Burkitt (2014) states:

... we are always in patterns of relationship to other people and to the world, and feelings and emotions form our embodied, mindful sense of different aspects of those relationships.

Without that relational sense there would be no feeling or emotion. I cannot love or hate someone or something without reference to the way I am related to them and they are related to me in given, specific situations and contexts.

(p.15, original emphasis)

Although Burkitt (2014) accepts that emotions are complex, he indicates that ‘...we cannot separate out feelings, or emotions for that matter, from our bodily ways of perceiving the world’ (p.8). Consequently, no discussion of doing relationships would be complete without examining the emotional component of relationships.

Gergen (1994) develops the suggestion that we perform emotions within relationships, building on Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical metaphor. Specifically, Burkitt (2014) takes Gergen’s work and suggests that patterns of relationships contain emotional scenarios, which are ordinarily informally scripted exchanges between people. In these exchanges and scenarios, people perform their emotions, which are not controlled by the person performing them, but are ‘called for’ by the relationships being navigated in each scenario. However, Burkitt (2014) is clear that emotions and relationships are not simply performances of scripted scenarios, they are also indicative of people’s biographies and dispositions in any given situation, whereby people will bring their preconceived understandings and experiences into an interaction in which they participate. It is here that the ‘stickiness’ of relationships can be explored, as relationships ebb and flow and people negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with others (Blumstein and Kollock, 1988). Given that emotions ‘...do not come from outside the relationship and impact on it, but are constituted by those relations that make up social life’ (Burkitt, 1997: 41), the ebbing and flowing of relationships in negotiation and renegotiation processes are central to developing and navigating emotions in relationships.

As has been suggested, Smart’s (2007) core concepts of relationships and personal life rely not only on social interactions but on the emotional interpretations of such interactions. After all, ‘...emotions are the “glue” bringing people together’ (Turner and Stets, 2005: 1). For instance, memories, or remembering more generally, are often thought of as the processes by which people recall past experiences, thoughts or interactions. However, Misztal (2003) argues that this definition of memory is too simplistic. She suggests that the process of memories relies on one person to do the remembering, with an acknowledgement that it is impossible for someone to remember everything that they have experienced. As a result, what is remembered is done so through a process of selection

(Miształ, 2003). Smart (2007) states that selecting memories is done so interactively, or socially, with the development of memories being influenced by different values and emotions which guides someone's selection of those memories. The selection of these memories is a combination of one's social interactions and emotional attachment to memories, given that 'what we remember is closely associated with emotions' (Smart, 2007: 39).

Within this emotional component of memories, Lazarus and Lazarus (1994) indicate that people's emotions have 'dramatic plots' which enable them to readily recognise, recall and understand what they are feeling at any given moment. They argue that '...the plot reveals the personal meaning we have assigned to an event, which in turn arouses a particular emotion' (Lazarus and Lazarus, 1994: 5). The inverse could also apply, with the arousal of a particular emotion eliciting a vivid memory. For instance, Smart (2007) suggests that people might remember very happy or sad occasions because they have invested emotional capital in those situations, but those same emotions can be evoked in a new event, triggering the memory of that past happy or sad occasion. She states that 'feelings influence what we recall' (Smart, 2007: 39), and 'emotions give meaning(s) to personal relationships' (Smart, 2011: 37). If the relational process of creating and sharing memories is, therefore, emotional, then so are the relationships that people have via those memories.

Additionally, relationality and embeddedness are inherently built upon the underlying emotional connections that people have with others. Accepting that people develop an understanding of the world through kin, but that kin are not necessarily blood relatives, Smart (2007) offers an alternative explanation: that kinship refers to people that are closely connected through strong emotions. Additionally, in examining the tenacity of relationships and the unlikelihood of relationships to end simply, Smart (2007) highlights the complex emotional connections that embed people in their relationships. Given that 'emotions are a vital tool for getting along in the world' (Lazarus and Lazarus, 1994: 3), it is hardly surprising that they influence our relational connections. In interpreting the way that people do their relationships, then, the emotional components of Smart's five concepts cannot be overlooked. In fact, they form the basis of establishing the meanings that people attach to relationships.

The emotions discussed here demonstrate how doing relationships can elicit feelings in people: telling people stories of your childhood, reminiscing over photographs and shared experiences, and building relationships together all influence the meaning that people attach

to their relationships. They also impact the extent to which people feel that they 'belong' in their social world. This belonging is explored further below, but relies upon people's emotional connections to other people, places and objects.

Belonging and Relationships

Given that the work of this thesis is to examine relationships as they occur within a given context, it would be remiss of this Chapter not to devote time to a discussion of relationships, places and 'things'. There is a body of work which argues that people will develop a sense of belonging to the environment in which they are navigating their relationships, and that place-making activities are important for the development of this belonging (Wilson et al., 2012; May, 2013; Wilson and Milne, 2013). May (2013) characterises belonging as '...feeling at ease with one's self and one's social, cultural, relational and material contexts' (p.3). She identifies three over-lapping aspects of belonging which are critical in unpicking how belonging can impact relationships: relational (between people); cultural (the institutional order), and; material (space and objects). May (2013) further argues that belonging is important for one's sense of connection to the world, whereby developing a sense of connection allows one to gain a sense of self, suggesting that '...one of the ways in which a sense of belonging can emerge is if we can go about our everyday lives without having to pay much attention to how we do it' (May, 2011: 370).

May (2013) draws on Felski (2000) to discuss the idea of home and belonging. The argument is that home is where we begin and end our day, it is where we can be ourselves. This follows Goffman's (1959) premise that backstage behaviour is largely present 'at home'. However, May (2013) is clear in stating that, despite the overarching view of home as a private space that affords sanctuary to people, this is not the case for everyone. As has been outlined, the residential environment aims to perform the functions of homeplace and workplace simultaneously. It cannot entirely be a private space of sanctuary, as there is a level of openness about the residential house in its nature as a public workplace. This is not to say that one cannot 'belong' in a residential house, or that place-making activities cannot be engaged in. Wilson and Milne (2013), for instance, demonstrate the different ways that young people can create belonging in difficult home situations. During their study, they engaged with young people who lived 'at home' with their parents, in foster care, residential houses or secure accommodation, in independent living situations and in supported accommodation. Their experience demonstrated that young people used a mix of sensory tools to create belonging in their environments. For instance, some were keen to replicate

the décor of previous places where they felt a sense of belonging, others associated belonging with material objects, such as soft toys, musical instruments and clocks (Wilson and Milne, 2013). Additionally, actively participating in social activities through personal belongings proved valuable to those young people who could not physically be with others that they cared about. This could be achieved through mobile phones or computer games, which allowed contact over the internet or telephone with meaningful people. Wilson and Milne (2013) further discuss the relevance of pets in creating belonging, whereby young people could give and receive physical affection in new or unfamiliar environments. Predominantly, however, Wilson and Milne (2013) comment on the use of sound and music in young people's creation of sensory belonging. They argue that music could be a source of identity, of comfort, safety and happiness, and it could also provide inspiration and motivation. Music was particularly important to young people who wanted to abolish the silence, especially where they had moved from busy homeplace environments into quiet independent accommodation.

These aspects of sensory belonging and place-making are also discussed by May (2013: 143): '...the extent to which people feel at home in a particular place is partly tied in with how it is designed, built and resourced'. She suggests that places are not 'inherently meaningful', instead they become meaningful to the people who inhabit them, through both what is done in such places as well as the other people that one knows there. This relational process of belonging is inextricably linked to the material culture of those places, as touched on by Wilson and Milne (2013). Miller (2008; 2010), for instance, argues that material objects and possessions are not superficial, they hold profound meaning to their owners. This meaning is linked to how a person interacts with or relates to the things that they own, and how they in return relate to people. To demonstrate, Smart (2007) discussed her own biographical relationship with the photographs of her relatives that she discovered after a loved one's death. Additionally, Lovatt (2018) explores the centrality of personal belongings in the residential care experience of older people. Despite arguing against the premise that residents can transfer a sense of personal identity, home and belonging to new residences simply by taking their personal belongings with them, she acknowledges the strong attachments that people can have to their belongings and the use of personal belongings in practising and creating a sense of home. Lovatt (2018) goes on to describe the relative freedoms that older residents involved in her study had in decorating, furnishing and filling their rooms, and highlighted how personal belongings work with routines and habitual behaviour in allowing residents to claim the spaces of their rooms. She draws on Miller's

(2010) work to conclude that ‘...objects are not just passive repositories or symbols of meaning: They do not merely reflect a sense of home, but actively constitute home’ (Lovatt, 2018: 374). Through these discussions of belonging to places and objects, a picture emerges of the importance that place plays in relational activities. May (2013) summarises her arguments in the following: ‘...the material objects in our lives play a central role in how we connect with people, cultures and places’ (p.146).

These feelings of belonging are part of the meaning that people attribute to their relationships (May, 2011; 2013), with objects and places representing significant elements of connectedness and emotional grounding (Smart, 2007; Lovatt, 2018). Where relationships are concerned, belonging in places and connectedness to objects is formed through people’s interactions and shared activities, all discussed in *Doing Relationships*.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this Chapter has discussed a range of theoretical approaches to how relationships are contextualised in residential child care, how they are defined, how they are done, how they are described and what they mean to. When one considers residential care as the setting for understanding relationships, one must also contextualise the setting of residential houses. This is where the reader is reminded of Goffman’s work, demonstrating influence of ‘total institutions’ on relationships, in order to highlight the influence of rules, regulations and external forces on mixed living environments, such as the function of the residential house as a homeplace and a workplace. Special consideration is given to understanding relationships and childhood, as a demonstration that power dynamics between adults and children also influence the way that relationships are done.

Throughout the Chapter, I have argued that relationships are formed through interactions, shared activities, connectedness and belonging. They are an important part of people’s conceptions of themselves and social life, as they form the basis of people’s understandings of other people. In doing relationships, people do not only interact with others, they convey messages with those interactions to wider society about what they mean and how they look. Here, the reader is reminded of Morgan’s and Finch’s respective practicing and displaying of families, where everyday moments demonstrate a ‘relatedness’ between people by being ‘family-like’ in nature. When considering how relationships are described, space is devoted to understanding the family metaphor and different conceptualisations of family and kinship in recent years. These discussions demonstrate that people use commonly known terms to describe non-traditional relationships, allowing them

to explain to others how they feel about another person without overcomplicating their descriptions. The Chapter then moved to consider the meaning of relationships, where the emotional aspects of relationships and the belonging they facilitate is outlined. Here, it was argued that relationships with others can elicit strong feelings, as can relationships with places and objects.

Overall, then, this Chapter has paved the way for understanding the methodological decisions taken in the Chapter that follows. As outlined in Chapter 1, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?
- (2) How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?
- (3) What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?
- (4) What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?

These questions have been developed to explore the processes that staff members and young people in residential care embark upon to develop and maintain their relationships with one another. The following Chapter outlines the methodological procedures that were undertaken during this study and relates them to wider academic narratives regarding ethnography and ethical research.

CHAPTER 4: THE RESEARCH PROCESS – METHODS, ETHICS AND DATA ANALYSIS

As Chapters 2 and 3 have demonstrated, relationships are a complex social phenomenon to understand, spanning intellectual debates on interactions, emotions, personal life and belonging. These Chapters have also contextualised residential child care as a system which is influenced by wider social and political arenas. Those studies which have sought to examine relationships in residential child care have typically done so using research on touch (Steckley, 2010; 2012; Eßer, 2018), care ethics (Smith, 2010; Steckley and Smith, 2011) and love (Emond, 2016; Vincent, 2016; White, 2016). The aim of this research project is to explore relationships in residential care and the meaning given to them by staff members and young people. This Chapter outlines the methodological processes involved in data collection and analysis involved in the study. In order to allow a nuanced and in depth examination of such relationships, qualitative research methods were deemed most appropriate.

Qualitative methods allow researchers to ‘...approach the world “out there”... and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomenon “from the inside”’ (Flick, 2007: ix). Qualitative social researchers hope to examine the social world in its ‘natural’ state, rather than in an artificial setting, with Atkinson and Hammersley (2007: 7) stating that:

...the social world cannot be understood in terms of simple causal relationships or by the subsumption of social events under universal laws. This is because human actions are based upon, or infused by, social or cultural meanings: that is, by intentions, motives, beliefs, rules, discourses, and values.

The overall argument is that qualitative researchers need to take account of participants’ underlying social and cultural circumstances. Taking an interpretivist approach allows for attention to be given to the meanings and contexts of relationships in residential care. Interpretivists are most concerned with ‘...the meanings people attach to their situations and the ways in which they go about constructing their activities in conjunction with others’ (Prus, 1996: 9). Here, the focus is face-to-face interactions and understanding how people make sense of their relationships, life and place in the world (Pawluch et al., 2005). As the project was most concerned with examining relationships in people’s everyday lives in residential child care, ethnographic methods were selected. The underlying principles and

approaches of ethnography allow researchers to capture people's practices and narratives in an inductive manner (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007) through their routine, everyday lives (Fetterman, 2010).

The project aims to fill the gaps in knowledge outlined in previous Chapters, reflecting the wider aims of the thesis to answer the questions set in Chapters 1 and 3:

- (1) How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?
- (2) How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?
- (3) What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?
- (4) What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?

DOING ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic researchers seek to explain social phenomenon through the lens of symbolic interactionism. Here, the premise is that '...people are seen to knowingly and meaningfully engage the world as agents' (Prus, 2005: 14). Individuals are actively involved in their day-to-day activities and interactions, drawing meaning from them based on an understanding that other people are also actively involved in their creation. Using ethnographic methods, researchers aiming to understand aspects of human life can do so by examining group life as a whole, as well as interactions between individuals, in great depth (Prus, 2005; Murchison, 2010). The researcher is responsible for describing social action in 'thick' detail, in order to make 'thick' interpretations (Denzin, 1989). Arguably, this makes ethnography one of the most appropriate methods for understanding the complex, fluid and meaningful nature of relationships in residential care.

Ethnography is regarded as best-suited to studies which aim to develop an in-depth insight into the day-to-day lives of others (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Geertz (1973: 10) describes the ethnographer as being faced with:

...a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he [sic] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render.

As such, he suggests that the ethnographer must collect ‘thick descriptions’ of everyday activities and interactions in order to understand the setting being researched. These thick descriptions are collected in a number of ways, most typically through participant observation, interviews, focus groups, visual methods and documents (Emerson et al., 2001; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007), depending on the context and appropriateness of each method for the setting (Pink, 2009).

The fieldwork phase of this research lasted a total of 10 months, from May 2016 to February 2017, resulting in 104 days’ worth of fieldnote entries. I spent nine months in Bruceford, May 2016 to January 2017, and one month in Stewarton and Wallacewells, January 2017 to February 2017. In Bruceford, my visits usually lasted six hours and occurred between the hours of 8am and 10pm. In Stewarton and Wallacewells, the visits occurred between 11am and 7pm, for varying lengths of time (see *Visiting Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells* in this Chapter for more details). Throughout this research, I drew upon ethnographic methods to collect both observational and individual interview data from staff members and young people in three residential houses across Scotland, with participant observation forming the main research tool. Taking each of these methods in turn, the following sections describe how the research was conducted.

Participant Observation

It is widely recognised in the social sciences that all researchers, and people more generally, are participants and observers in their daily activities (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). We are all active agents in what we do and say, who take the time to watch and observe what is going on. However, participant observation as a research method is a process of intensive, close, long-term contact with the research participants in their community (Fetterman, 2010). In this sense, the researcher ‘...takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture’ (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011: 1).

Gold (1958) highlights four main theoretical approaches to participant observation: complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer. In this project I took on the role of participant-as-observer, or as Punch (2012) defines it ‘semi-participant observer’. Gold (1958) suggests that the participant-as-observer role is one where researchers observe both formally (such as in scheduled interviews) and informally (during everyday events) while they participate in daily life events. For instance, I

engaged in informal discussions and every-day deeds with participants, such as eating dinner with them or watching movies and television shows, debating and clarifying issues as they arose (Punch, 2001). I also observed participants ‘displaying’ their relationships (Finch, 2007), through consciously engaging in meaningful, rewarding activities, such as having a meal together (see McIntosh et al., 2011). Additionally, despite using different terminology to Gold (1958), Punch (2001) notes that taking the approach of semi-participant observer is often considered most appropriate with children and young people, as the researcher can interact with children, whilst acknowledging that there are limits to their participation, often related to the differences in age, status and power. What is important, however, is that there is a balance between these roles relevant to the research setting, in order to generate an in-depth understanding of relationships in residential care (Murchison, 2010).

I spent the first month in the field observing more than participating, as an attempt to allow participants time to get used to my presence, and for me to gain a better understanding of the daily activities and routines before engaging with participants more fully. As the research progressed, I became more involved in daily activities – such as making cups of tea, clearing the dining room table after dinner, choosing shows to watch on the television – while maintaining my researcher identity. I reviewed my position in the research frequently (something discussed later in this Chapter), in an attempt to balance my role as an observer and researcher in the residential houses. The tasks that I performed in the residential houses were in accordance with Punch’s (2001) semi-participant observer role, making clear the limits to my participation while actively engaging with the staff members and young people in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. I visited all three houses at various times of the day throughout my 10 months of fieldwork. This allowed me to see most aspects of daily life, such as breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime. My visits typically lasted six hours at a time, where I was granted access to all areas of the house, aside from participants’ bedrooms (unless I was invited in by a participant).

Given the nature of ethnography, the majority of my research data came from this time spent observing and participating in everyday life. Traditionally, the main method of recording such interactions is through the use of fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 2001; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010). More recently, digital recorders have been used to support data collection, such as Dictaphones, in order to capture conversations in the research setting (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010). I had intended to use both of these methods, giving participants as much control as possible over when and how to record conversations, in order to capture as much information as possible and provide

the ‘thick descriptions’ outlined by Geertz (1973). However, two staff members in Bruceford expressed concerns over being recorded during fieldwork, and I decided to adapt my practices to accommodate the wishes of participants, instead relying solely on fieldnotes for all observations and informal interactions.

There is a wealth of information available (Bryman, 2001; Pawluch et al., 2005; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010; Emerson et al., 2011; Van Maanen, 2011) which outlines what researchers should try to note-down when doing ethnographic research, especially participant observation, and when this information should be documented. These guidelines point to the importance of ‘detail’ when recording data, as it is only through in-depth details that the researcher can hope to gain an insight into the complexities being observed (Murchison, 2010). For instance, the researcher should be aiming to keep a record of: who is speaking and when; the roles of participants and researcher; the sights, sounds and smells within the setting; formal and informal interactions; routines and habits in day-to-day practices; behaviours and non-verbal communications; differences in dialect, linguistic skills and accents; unusual incidents or acts (those which do not occur on a daily basis), and; the physical setting (such as space, layout and different uses) (Emerson et al., 2001; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Pink, 2009; Murchison, 2010). Furthermore, there is a recognition that fieldnotes should be logged as close to the event as possible. Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) indicate that fieldnotes are best written when the observation is occurring, but when this is not possible they should ideally be noted as soon after the observation as possible. In residential care, it has been highlighted that participants may find the researcher’s constant note-taking distracting, to the detriment of the research (see Emond, 2005). Consequently, I took care not to routinely write fieldnotes when participants were present, instead opting to take the majority of my notes when I was alone in the house or in the immediate aftermath of a visit. On occasion, I took notes in the presence of participants, recording ‘at-the-moment’ fieldnotes during some tasks. For instance, there were times when I would be in the lounge with staff members who were doing paperwork and I would take some small notes, mirroring some of their behaviour.

The exact style and content of fieldnotes, however, often evolves over the duration of the fieldwork (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010). The manner of note-taking can vary for a number of reasons, either because the participants find excessive note-taking distracting, because the researcher feels that details are being missed, or because different activities call for different styles. Furthermore, there are on-going debates about the content of fieldnotes, and whether fieldnotes should be kept separate from field journals

or diaries. Field diaries typically include the researcher's thoughts and feelings about the research, some initial analysis or interpretation and possible questions regarding the data (Murchison, 2010) as well as their difficulties, relationships and reflections on being in the field (Punch, 2012). Emerson et al. (2001) notes, on the other hand, that some researchers choose to incorporate these details into their fieldnotes, keeping everything to do with the research data in one place. I initially set-out to keep my field diary and fieldnotes separate. However, as fieldwork progressed, I began to record field diary details alongside my fieldnotes. It was difficult for me to keep both processes separate, as I would often have many 'field diary' notes to record whilst in the field, such as my own thoughts, feelings, difficulties and relationships (Punch, 2012). Although there is a distinction to be made between fieldnotes and a field diary, as highlighted by Punch (2012), my presence was, at times, distracting for participants, as was my use of a notebook whilst in the residential houses. I felt that merging my fieldnotes and field diary would make this process easier for participants, as I could continue to work with a single notebook, rather than adopting two notebooks whilst in the field.

Interviews

As well as participant observation, 27 interviews were conducted with 22 staff members and 5 young people in order to allow a more focused investigation of relationships and their meaning to participants. Interviewing during ethnographic research provides a unique avenue for data collection, in that the researcher and participant have already established a rapport and are able to engage in a 'genuine exchange of views' (Heyl, 2001: 369). It is argued that the interviewees have 'enough time and openness in the interviews' to explore the meaning they attach to the events in their social worlds (Heyl, 2001: 369). Additionally, Murchison (2010) indicates that interviews provide opportunities for participants to discuss '...experience and perception, opinions, thought processes, symbols, and logical or cultural connections, linguistic practices, and social relationships' (p.106). This makes interviews particularly useful in this research, where social relationships are the main focus.

Heyl (2001) suggests that waiting to conduct interviews until the end of the fieldwork phase provides a more open, two-way conversation between interviewee and interviewer. This assertion formed the basis of my decision to wait until the final month of my fieldwork in Bruceford to begin collecting interview data, where interviews were conducted with two young people and 12 staff members. The same is not true of my time spent in Stewarton

and Wallacewells, where I conducted semi-structured interviews from the beginning of fieldwork. In Wallacewells, two young people and three staff members participated in interviews, with one young person and seven staff members taking part in interviews in Stewarton. This decision was taken as a result of the short timescale I had to collect data in Wallacewells and Stewarton (one month). These interviews explored many of the issues I had examined in Bruceford and provided a way to investigate whether the relational aspects of life in Bruceford were present in other residential houses. An example of the interview schedule used can be found in Appendix 9.

Initially, I had intended to collect interview data using visual methods, mainly photo-elicitation, which were later adapted to task-based methods after participants indicated that they did not want to take photographs and discuss these. The task-based methods adopted were a form of ‘relationships mapping’ (Bagnoli, 2009). During the interview, participants used counters to discuss the relationships that they had with others in the house. Examples of re-created relationship maps can be found in Appendix 11. The use of counters was embraced in different ways and at different levels by the participants. Some participants used the counters throughout the entire interview, moving them around the desk to show the ebb and flow of relationships, expressing the way that some people could be considered ‘close’ at times, but more ‘distant’ at other times. Others would place the counters down in their desired arrangement and then talk about their representation without moving them again until the topic of conversation changed. There were also participants who chose not to use the counters at all. In total, five participants used the counters, all of which were in Bruceford, and 22 declined to use the counters. This task-based approach to the interviews is said to ‘...break up the interviews and make them more varied, fun and interesting’ (Punch, 2002: 54). Bagnoli (2009) also suggests that relationship mapping, more specifically, helps young people to overcome issues they have when talking about difficult aspects of their lives.

The interviews were typically recorded with a Dictaphone, as agreed by participants. All but two participants, one young person and one staff member, agreed to be recorded. For the participants who did not agree, I used my notebook to take written notes of the conversations I had with them. I then typed these notes as soon as I could, often in the evening after the interview. All data was stored confidentially and anonymously throughout the research process. I assigned pseudonyms to all participants upon entering the field, this facilitated the protection of participant’s personal information. The research data was predominantly stored electronically on a password protected laptop and USB storage device,

with paper copies of fieldnotes stored in a locked filing cabinet in my locked office at the University. The storage devices, such as the USB storage device and Dictaphone, were held in my locked filing cabinet when not in use, further protecting the data gathered. Once interview recordings were moved from the Dictaphone to the laptop and USB storage device, they were deleted permanently from the Dictaphone.

Reliability, Validity and Generalisability

Generally speaking, ethnographic work, and qualitative studies more widely, have faced criticism over their ability, or inability, to be considered reliable, valid and generalisable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Traditionally, such concepts have been applied in positivist research to measure the credibility of findings, where reliability is a measure of the ability to replicate research findings and validity relates to the accuracy of the research (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982). In such a tradition the notion of generalisability questions whether the findings from the sample under investigation can be applied to the wider population (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). More recently, however, efforts have been made to demonstrate the ability of qualitative research, and indeed of ethnographic work, to offer reliable, valid and generalisable arguments. For instance, Becker (2007: 5) argues that ‘...we look for “representations of society,” in which other people tell us about all those situations and places and times we don’t know firsthand but would like to know about’. To tell about those situations, and to understand society, there is a need to employ a variety of methods. Ethnography, is, therefore, an important aspect in this ‘telling’.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) suggest that ethnographers can apply standards of reliability and validity to their work, provided that they are transparent and reflective throughout their arguments. This can be achieved through: explaining the role of the researcher and their status within the participant group; being clear about which participants provided the data and any decisions to include or exclude certain individuals, and; being explicit about how data was collected and analysed throughout. Additionally, Mason (2002) argues that it is possible to make generalisations from qualitative research, given the ability of qualitative analysis to examine how a phenomenon has developed, how it works, and how it compares to other social phenomena, alongside explanations of causation and prediction, most commonly associated to quantitative research. Mason (2002) does, however, assert that qualitative research is most suited to making generalisations about theoretical implications, with the strength of generalisability lying in a study’s sampling strategy, methodology and analysis. She emphasises that qualitative researchers should consider the kind of

generalisations that their research questions allow, and the different lessons that can be learned and applied to other settings.

I have used the work of LeCompte and Goetz (1982) and Mason (2002) throughout this study to ensure robust reliability, validity and generalisability. In being reliable and valid, I have discussed my role as researcher in the section *Positioning Me*, ensuring that transparency of method and analysis is dispersed throughout the thesis. Additionally, where data is presented I have been clear about who was involved in any interaction, differentiating between participants' direct dialogue and my own fieldnotes using italics. Furthermore, the research questions identified suggest that generalisations can be made about people's relationships in residential child care, their experiences of these relationships, and the processes through which they navigate these relationships. Further Chapters demonstrate how the study's findings can have implications for the current Continuing Care agenda and the public-political push for 'love' for looked after children, as well as the ever-evolving residential environment.

FIELDSITES

In total, 49 staff members and 17 young people from three different residential houses gave permission for their interactions to be recorded during the fieldwork process. Within these numbers, 22 staff members and 5 young people took part in one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The three houses that took part in the study were situated within two different local authorities. The local authority of Hillview was responsible for the house of Bruceford, and the local authority of Seaview was responsible for both Stewarton and Wallacewells. Table 1 below presents the names of participants (using the pseudonyms allocated at the beginning of fieldwork), the houses with which they were affiliated and the local authority responsible for those houses.

All three houses that participated in this research had common features, which will be explored, but they were also unique in many ways. The location, physical appearance, roles and routines varied across all three houses. Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells were local authority residential houses which were mostly representative of those throughout Scotland, housing five to six young people at a time and employing permanent and relief staff members working on different shift patterns (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). Exploring their layout and physical appearance will pave the way for some more in-depth analysis of the roles, routines and spatial significance of life in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. It will also provide the reader some clarity about the fieldsites chosen.

Hillview		Seaview			
<i>Buceford</i>		<i>Stewarton</i>		<i>Wallacewells</i>	
Staff Members	Young People	Staff Members	Young People	Staff Members	Young People
Phoebe (M)	Jasper	Henry (M)	Benjamin	Henry (M)	Theodore
Ruby (SCO)	Aidan	Owen (AM)	Christopher	Owen (AM)	Summer
Jessica (SCO)	Maddison	Sebastian (AM)	Aaron	Adrian (AM)	Marshall
William	Erin	Penelope (AM)	Aurora	Christian (AM)	Elise
Elijah	Ethan	Clara (AM)	Freya (ER)	Harper	
Oliver		Zara	Ava (ER)	Luna	
Scarlett		Annabelle		Cameron	
Emily		Emma		Holly	
Liam		Leah		Caleb	
Sienna		Wyatt		Orla	
Ivy		Heidi		Willow	
Rosie (R)		Robyn		Hallie	
Amelia (R)		Niamh (C)		Bella (C)	
Grace (R)		Megan (D)		Violet (D)	
Ella (R)		Bonnie (Ad)		Bonnie (Ad)	
Evelyn (R)				Sabrina (S)	
Olivia (R)					
Florence (R)					
Aria (R)					
Evie (V)					
Millie (S)					

M = Manager | AM = Assistant Manager | SCO = Senior Care Officer | C = Cook | D = Domestic
Ad = Administrator | R = Relief | S = Student | V = Volunteer | ER = Ex-resident

Table 1: Participant Affiliations, Residential Houses and Local Authority Information

Buceford

Buceford was the sole residential house for its local authority, Hillview, and was located within the community that it served. The house sat at the end of a ‘council estate’, blending well into its surroundings. Buceford could house five young people at any time, with 11 permanent staff members during my fieldwork and eight regular relief staff members. At the time of fieldwork, Buceford also hosted one volunteer staff member and one social work student on placement. From the outside, Buceford appeared as two semi-detached houses, as was the pattern of properties on the remainder of the street. In reality, Buceford was a single two-story detached property. There remained two front doors, mirroring each other with the accustomed symmetry of local authority housing, although

the front door on the right of the building was used more frequently than the other. Bruceford also had a driveway, which could comfortably fit two vehicles, with an extra three parking spaces outside. These spaces also served the remainder of the street. The house was accompanied by a small front garden with some flowering plants, and a back garden with decking, a vegetable plot, small greenhouse and shed. Ultimately, from the outside there were no markings or characteristics denoting Bruceford as being a residential house.

Inside, a door had been added between the properties to link what was originally two separate houses together, creating a lounge and dining room at the centre of the house. This was the only modification inside to link the two properties, meaning there were two staircases providing access to the upstairs area, which remained split. For example, when upstairs on the left side of the house, you could only access the right side by going downstairs, through the dining room and lounge, to ascend the staircase on the right side of the house. The downstairs area of Bruceford could be easily mapped from one side of the house to the other. Overall, Bruceford had a number of shared and private spaces. These included a lounge, dining room, kitchen, conservatory, staff toilet, two staff offices, five bedrooms for young people (one of which was considered accessible for people with disabilities and contained a wet-room en-suite), one staff bedroom, and two main bathrooms.

The shared spaces of the house (lounge, dining room, conservatory and kitchen) were typically decorated and furnished to cater for the many residents and staff members of the house, with more seating and appliances than one might expect to find in an ordinary family home. For instance, the lounge included three sofas, two three-seater sofas and one two-seater, a television, and a fish-tank which housed Dory⁴. In the dining room there was a table which seated eight people and three computer stations, which the young people could use with staff permission. The conservatory was furnished with a two-seater sofa and a matching chair, facing another television, some games consoles (such as an *Xbox 360* and *Nintendo Wii*), and some board games, books and puzzles. For the size of the property, the kitchen was described as small, with staff members and young people frequently complaining about the availability of the worktops, making comments like: “The size of this kitchen is ridiculous” (Sienna, SM); “There’s just no room to move in there” (Amelia, SM); “I feel like we’re dancing around each other” (Emily, SM). Nonetheless, during my time in

⁴ This is a pseudonym.

the house Bruceford seemed to adequately cater to the needs of everyone who lived and worked there.

Stewarton

Stewarton was one of two residential houses in the local authority of Seaview. The local authority had been responsible for the maintenance and running of Stewarton for many decades. However, more recently they acquired Wallacewells from another provider. Stewarton could sleep 6 young people at any time, with 5 young people, 12 residential staff members, one domestic staff member, one cook and one administrator (the administrator was shared with Wallacewells) present during my fieldwork. I was told that relief staff members were also employed on occasion, but that this was rare. Stewarton was a two-story, semi-detached Victorian property, situated on a main road. The house resembled the style of those around it, but was somewhat identifiable due to the small sign above the door with the name of the house. There was no off-street parking, but the house was shielded for privacy with some bushes and a low-level wall. From the outside, the building was grand, with storm doors leading to the main front door in the centre, and a bay window at either side with views into the lounge and dining room. There was also a shed in the front garden, a vegetable plot at the side of the house, and some outbuildings in the back garden.

Inside Stewarton, the front door led to a large hallway, with lounge, dining room, kitchen, staff office, mixed-use office, meeting room and utility room all leading off this hallway. An extension had been added to the back of the property that housed the meeting room and a staff bedroom, accessed via the meeting room. The staircase was grand, in the centre of the hallway, leaving to an upstairs landing and hallway with 6 bedrooms and 2 main bathrooms. Many of the bedrooms had originally been larger rooms, split in half and dividing the bay windows at the front of the property, to accommodate the necessary number of young people.

Stewarton was furnished to accommodate the large group of people that could be in the house at any point. In the shared spaces, there was a mixture of everyday, ‘homely’ furniture and functional, ‘workplace’ furniture. For instance, the lounge had three three-seater sofas and a single-seat chair, coffee table and large television with *Sky* subscription and ‘Smart TV’ facilities, such as *Netflix* and *YouTube*. On the other hand, the meeting room had a large table with seats for eight people that resembled a more office-based than ‘homely’ appearance. There were also games consoles in the meeting room, such as an *Xbox 360* and *PlayStation*. The dining room had a mixture of ‘workplace’ and ‘homely’ furniture, with a

professional-looking table, similar to one found in conference suites or hotel meeting rooms, which seated eight, a sideboard with cutlery and serving equipment, and a computer which the young people could use when staff members agreed. Unlike Bruceford, Stewarton had a large kitchen, deemed appropriate for the size of property. There was a somewhat 'industrial' feel to its appearance, with food safety signs in place, two large fridges – one for meat and one for dairy, as per suggested storage regulations – and stainless-steel worktops.

Wallacewells

Wallacewells was the second residential house that the management team at Seaview were responsible for. The local authority had acquired the property from another organisation within the few years that preceded my research. It was located on the site of an old List-D⁵ school and had originally been one of the boarding houses for the school. Wallacewells could house six young people at any time, with five young people in residence during my fieldwork. At the time, there was also 12 permanent staff members, one cook, one domestic staff member, one administrator (shared with Stewarton) and one social work student on placement. It was located on the outskirts of the town that it served and was difficult to access with public transport. The old school building was still in situ on the grounds, as were three other boarding houses, one of which was now used as another local authority building, unrelated to residential care. The remaining buildings, and some outbuildings, were largely unused. The school, for instance, was a large Edwardian building, boarded up and cordoned off in parts. There was plenty of space on the grounds for staff members to park their cars, and the house was surrounded by a lot of green space with plants and some football goalposts. In addition, Wallacewells had access to a pool table and other recreational activity, such as table tennis, in one of the outbuildings of the old school. Staff members and young people would use this space for socialising, and it was explained that ex-residents were also granted access:

Caleb (SM): *“Aye, some of the old boys will come up and play with the pool table. They’re always welcome to come and visit, and some of them do so almost weekly. They’re over there just now. It gives them a sense of belonging. We also play football on Thursday nights,*

⁵ List D schools were implemented as a result of the *Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968* and replaced 'Approved Schools'. Approved Schools typically served offenders, although children could be placed on 'care or protection' grounds. With the introduction of the 1968 Act, Approved Schools became known as List D schools and were integrated into the child care system, with responsibility for placing children in List D schools falling to the Children's Hearings System. By 1986, funding for List D schools transferred to local authorities, rather than central government, with List D schools, alongside 'special needs' schools, coming to be known as 'residential schools' (Connelly and Milligan, 2012).

5-a-sides, and the boys here get invited along, with the boys that used to live here too. We get a good turnout, aye.”

(Fieldnotes, kitchen/diner, Wallacewells)

This combination of outdoor space and unused buildings set Wallacewells apart from the other fieldsites and wider Scottish precedents.

The long, rectangle building of Wallacewells was a detached-two story house with a single long corridor downstairs and another long corridor upstairs, running the length of the building with connecting staircases at either end. Unlike Bruceford, the entire upstairs was connected. Downstairs, there was a foyer, hallway, three staff offices, a large lounge, computer room, kitchen/diner, staff toilet, young people toilets, utility room, ‘family room’ (a lounge-like living space used for family meetings and contact) and self-enclosed apartment, with a lounge and kitchen. I was informed that this space was used mainly for young people transitioning out of care, who were learning ‘life skills’, or by visiting families who wanted some private space. No time was spent upstairs in Stewarton, aside from a single visit to the house while arranging access to the fieldsite. As such, other than one field diary entry where I write that the corridor is long with bedroom doors on either side, I did not note details about the upstairs layout of the house. I was told that bedrooms had been converted to provide en-suite bathrooms, which staff members said made the house feel almost like a ‘hotel’ for the young people. This was in contrast to usage as a boarding house for the List-D school, where staff members recalled that each bedroom would sleep four young people.

In shared spaces, Wallacewells was furnished and decorated in similar taste to Stewarton. The lounge had two three-seater sofas, two single-seat chairs, one footstool, a coffee table and a large television with the same subscriptions and Smart TV facilities as Stewarton. The kitchen/diner was, again, industrial-looking, with vast worktop space, a large cooker, and two fridges. The cooking/eating space was separated by a breakfast bar, with a dining table that could seat ten in the dining area. The computer room had two computers that the young people could use when agreed, and a television with games consoles. What was most notable about the interior of Wallacewells was the remaining aspects of the boarding house that interrupted some spaces. For instance, the kitchen/diner had a large internal window which looked out to the hallway, with two doors that could be used to access the room. There were also interior windows into one of the office spaces and between the foyer and main hallway. Additionally, the downstairs toilets for young people were split

into a boys' toilet and a girls' toilet. Again, efforts had been made to make the house look 'homely' and comfortable, however, of all the houses Wallacewells was the most 'institutional'-looking in nature.

ENTERING THE FIELD

I made initial contact with five different residential services in Scotland during January 2015, as part of a scoping activity to gauge interest in the study and gain an indication of ethical processes in local authority services. Contact was made via a mutual colleague, Simone⁶, who is well-known in the residential child care field and introduced me to the managers of the five houses contacted. I met with two service managers after this initial contact, and one of those provided the details for a third manager. As suggested by Emond (2005), such meetings are important for building trust with the participants and wider organisations. Furthermore, they develop a line of communication for further exploration of access. Ultimately, two of the three managers I met with committed to taking part in the study, provided that their local authority, employed staff members and current residents also agreed to be involved. Fieldwork did not begin until February 2016, whereby some contact continued between myself and the two managers, Phoebe and Henry⁷. This section will outline the procedures taken to beginning fieldwork in all three houses, focusing on gaining access and consent.

Negotiating Access

As Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) suggest, ethnographers often seek to conduct their research across more than one fieldsite, and this project was no different. I felt it would strengthen the quality of the data gathered if I were to visit multiple fieldsites, as it would otherwise be more difficult argue that observed phenomena existed in more than one organisation. Drawing further on issues of validity and reliability in ethnographic research already noted above (see Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010), conducting research across the three houses provided opportunities to see whether my observations of relationships were applicable across other similar settings. The selection of Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells was opportunistic and dependent upon their geographical location. For example, the chosen fieldsites were geographically close enough to my home for commuting, and each were very much supportive of the research (see Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Additionally, all three fieldsites were well established residential houses,

⁶ This is a pseudonym.

⁷ These are the pseudonyms allocated to the managers of Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells throughout the thesis.

with good to excellent Care Inspectorate reports. The willingness of fieldsites to be part of the research, nonetheless, depended upon the relationship between myself and relevant gatekeepers.

Arguably, gaining access to the chosen fieldsites depended on my ability to develop trust and a shared understanding of the research aims with ‘sponsors’ and ‘gatekeepers’ (Emond, 2005; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Sponsors are individuals in the field who ‘vouch’ for the researcher and the wider research, such as participants with whom the researcher forms an initial bond with, whereas gatekeepers are more formal systems of access, such as managers and organisation leaders (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Ultimately, both sponsors and gatekeepers were important access tools in my research, as trust and acceptance was vital when conducting research in such a complex environment. The main sponsors in this research were my colleague, Simone, and the managers of each facility, Phoebe and Henry. Gatekeepers were Phoebe, Henry and the wider local authority management.

Access was ultimately granted upon gaining ethical approval from The University of Stirling and both local authorities. I attended team meetings with staff members at both Bruceford and Stewarton (staff members from Wallacewells were also present at the meeting in Stewarton) to discuss the proposed research and introduce myself. At these meetings, I provided some initial information leaflets (see Appendix 1) for staff members to review before committing to meet again. These meetings were an important first step in negotiating consent (as outlined below), as they allowed staff members to become equipped to also act as ‘sponsors’ when I met with the young people residing in each house.

Gaining Consent

Gaining informed consent is an essential and complex part of the research process (Mason, 2002). Doing so ensures that participants know what they are agreeing to take part in and understand the implications of their participation. Matthews and Ross (2010) highlight that consent should be given freely on the basis of the researcher providing clear information on: what the participants will gain from the research, why the research is being done and what practicalities the research will involve. Due to the complexities of this particular research project, it was important to gain informed consent from a number of different parties. These parties included staff members (as well as house managers), children and young people and, at times, their parents. On the advice of Phoebe, the manager of Bruceford, the social worker of each young person was also given information about the

study (see Appendix 5), but they were not explicitly asked to consent to the study taking place, as they were not participants in the study, nor were they positioned to consent on behalf of the young people taking part. To best demonstrate how informed consent was gained for each of these groups, each process will be explored separately.

Main Participants: Staff Members, House Managers and Children and Young People

Staff members and house managers were the first participants to be approached for consent. This process followed the belief that in order to gain access to the children and young people involved, it was imperative that the adults acting as ‘gatekeepers’ understood the aims, purpose and methods to be used (James et al., 1998; Hill, 2005). Therefore, I spent a significant amount of time discussing the research project with staff members, both in group settings and individually. This allowed questions to be raised and answered and ensured that any concerns were addressed (Emond, 2005). In doing so, not only were the adults taking part in this study able to give informed consent, they were also well-placed to aid the researcher when discussing the project with the young people involved (Emond, 2005).

The children and young people in this study were approached for informed consent separately from staff members and their parents. Wyness (2012) indicates that children are now commonly regarded as participants in research instead of ‘objects’, highlighting the need to consider their consent as different to that of their parents or caregivers. Seeking this consent separately ensures that all participants receive information in a space where they feel comfortable asking questions and not in a situation where they feel pressured to take part (Morrow, 2009). In doing so, I aimed to avoid circumstances where a young person felt pressured to give consent because staff members or their parents, who are powerful, influential adults in their lives, agreed to take part. Consent was discussed in groups and on a one-to-one basis, as with the staff members and house managers, to offer young people plenty of opportunities to ask questions or express concerns. It was important that the young people were fully informed of what the research involved before committing to take part, especially given the length of time that I would be present in the houses.

Informed consent from all main participants was sought initially through a written consent form (See Appendix 6 and 8). Participants were also given information leaflets to accompany consent forms (See Appendix 2 and 4). These information leaflets outlined the aims, purpose and methods used in this study, as well as details of what would be done with the data gathered. These leaflets provided useful information which participants could

consult when I wasn't around to answer questions. However, consent was also discussed and negotiated frequently throughout the research process to remind young people, staff members and house managers what they had agreed to participate in and how the information they discussed would be used. This is a necessary part of conducting long-term, ethnographic research whereby participants may need reminded of what they have agreed to take part in, ensuring that consent remains informed throughout as part of an on-going process (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Morrow, 2009). Consequently, verbal consent was also required at times, especially when topics of conversation were particularly emotive or centred on sensitive issues.

Parents

Informed consent was also sought from the parents of the young people who continued to legally hold parental rights and responsibilities. This was the case for all but two young people, who were already over the age of 16. It is generally considered good practice to ensure that parents fully understand what their children are being asked to take part in and to be afforded opportunities to discuss this participation (Hill, 2005). As with the main participants of this study (i.e. staff members, house managers and young people), the aims, purpose and methods used in this research were explained fully to parents when consent was sought.

The staff members in all three houses sought consent from the young people's parents over the telephone on my behalf and recorded this on written consent forms (see Appendix 7). This decision was taken for a number of reasons. First of all, the staff members in each residential house had already built a rapport with the young people's parents. This approach provided an avenue for parents to be given the information they needed to make an informed decision from people they were already familiar with. Secondly, it meant that I could remain distant from the young people's past for as long as possible. I made the conscious decision not to know details of the young people's admission to care, nor their family histories, before getting to know the young people myself. I did not want to be viewed as another adult who knew their history before they had chosen to share their stories with me themselves. Asking staff members to collect consent from the young people's parents achieved this distance. Nonetheless, parents were provided with an information leaflet (see Appendix 3) and encouraged to reach-out using my contact details should they have any questions for me. Additionally, whenever parents visited the residential houses I would

introduce myself and remind them of the research being conducted and my role in the houses. All parents of young people aged under 16 consented to their child's involvement.

Non- Consent

The issue of non-consent is of particular concern in ethnographic research where some participants may agree and some may not (Moore and Savage, 2002). All of the staff members in the three residential houses studied agreed to take part. Two young people elected not to take part, and one young person in Bruceford was deemed unable to take part due to their particular circumstances and capacities. This decision was taken following considered discussion with Phoebe (manager at Bruceford), whereby it was agreed that the young person did not fully understand her new placement in the residential house or the research being undertaken, nor was she able to appreciate my role in comparison to the staff member role. I discussed with the young people what their non-consent meant for the research, explaining that I would be in the house to observe the staff and young people who had agreed to take part. Research indicates that where participants withhold their consent, they are generally satisfied with the study to take place around them (Emond, 2000). This was true of the young people who decided not to participate, and it was agreed that I would not take any fieldnotes specific to those who did not consent, but I would continue to write about other participants' behaviours around those young people. Where young people did not agree to take part, or it was deemed that they were not capable of consenting to take part, they were not allocated pseudonyms. Given that the interactions consenting participants have with these young people were likely to remain relevant to the study, these young people are simply referred to as 'young person' in any data excerpts reported in this thesis.

DOING FIELDWORK

Ethnography, as a research method, involves researchers going to places where people are, in an attempt to see the social world from the perspective of their participants (Lambert et al., 2011). For the purposes of this research, doing ethnography meant visiting three different residential houses – Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells – for a prolonged period of 10 months. This section examines the processes of visiting Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells, alongside the practical, methodological and ethical considerations that needed attention throughout fieldwork.

Visiting Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells

I began visiting Bruceford in May 2016, on average three times a week for six hours at a time. This timescale was developed in conjunction with the staff members and young people in Bruceford. Amongst us, we agreed that three times a week was suitable for the needs of participants, especially in the initial months where they were still getting used to my presence, and for the requirements of the research. I would visit at varying times of the day, between the hours of 11am and 8pm for the most part. These times were chosen to be sensitive to the needs of the people in the house, with busy and necessary homeplace and workplace practices, such as getting ready for school and bed, and hosting team meetings and training, taking place outside of these times. As fieldwork developed, I began to visit earlier in the morning and later at night, to gain an insight into the morning and night-time routines and rituals of life in Bruceford. Again, this was agreed in conjunction with the staff members and young people present. By the time I left Bruceford in January 2017, I had been present for periods of time between 8am and 10.30pm

I did not visit Stewarton or Wallacewells until fieldwork in Bruceford had ended. I visited for a total of one month following a similar pattern to that in Bruceford: three times a week. However, Stewarton and Wallacewells were further from my own home than Bruceford and, given their close locations to each other and positionality as part of a single local authority (Seaview), I adapted my visitation schedule to gain as many different perspectives as possible. For the first two weeks of fieldwork in Seaview, I visited Stewarton in the mornings, from 11am to 3pm, and Wallacewells in the evening, from 3pm to 7pm. For the final two weeks of fieldwork, I visited each house separately between 11am and 7pm, electing not to stay later or arrive earlier to protect my own safety, due to the likelihood of hazardous driving conditions. Given the dates of fieldwork in Stewarton and Wallacewells, the evenings and mornings were dark with frequent snowy and icy weather, meaning that if I had travelled earlier or later I increased my chances of being vulnerable to road accidents or severe weather conditions. This unfortunately meant that I did not witness any night-time or morning routines in Stewarton or Wallacewells, hearing about these only during interviews or everyday conversations with participants.

When visiting all three houses, I would typically spend a lot of time in the lounge, either with participants or on my own, as the routines and rituals of the residential house took place with me or around me. I would eat my meals with the staff members and young people in all three houses, sharing the meals they had prepared during dinner, and often

doing the same during lunch. The details of my roles and participation in each house will be recalled later in this section.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

All information gathered and stored was done so confidentially and anonymously. Pseudonyms were allocated to participants from the outset of the research to ensure that participant's information and details were protected. Research has indicated that if participants are offered the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms, participants may choose to share these pseudonyms with each other, compromising the confidentiality and anonymity of data (Emond, 2005). However, it remains common for researchers to allow participants to choose their own pseudonyms. Doing so is said to be important to participants, where care and thought is put into their pseudonym choices, which take account of rules and customs around naming as relevant to them personally (Allen and Wiles, 2016). It has also been argued that choosing pseudonyms can be a particularly useful and fun way of ending the research process (Morrow, 2008). Overall,

There is growing recognition that pseudonyms have moved from being a simple way for a researcher to confer confidentiality and anonymity on research participants to a far more nuanced act of research, affected by issues of power and voice, methodological and epistemological standpoint, and considerations of the research consumers...

(Allen and Wiles, 2016: 153)

Nonetheless, for participants in ethnographic projects the allocation of pseudonyms is somewhat complex, as the decision to reveal one's chosen pseudonym to others in the research group, or those outside of the research, can compromise the confidentiality of other participants (who have not chosen to reveal their pseudonyms) and it is likely that participants may forget the researcher's presence at times (Emond, 2005). As such, I allocated pseudonyms myself, choosing names at random for all participants.

It is important that the researcher protects participants from harm, especially where children and young people are involved (James et al., 1998). Consequently, participants were told that if they were to disclose information that could have put themselves or others at risk of harm, or that may have caused me to become concerned for the safety of the participant in question or others, then this information would need to be discussed further. At no point did any participant disclose any information which caused me any concern.

However, I had identified the house managers as appropriate contacts should this have occurred.

Confidentiality and anonymity are important both to me personally and for protecting the information disclosed by participants, however, the nature of ethnographic research means that it is impossible to guarantee complete anonymity and confidentiality. Participants may be able to identify each other because they were in the room when the interaction took place, or because they recognise some piece of information about a fellow participant, given that ‘every person is identifiable by a unique set of expressions and experiences that set him or her off from other human beings’ (Van Den Hoonaard, 2003: 145). Additionally, including general background information about participants, such as age, ethnic origin or gender, may be enough to reveal someone’s identity. Although I took great care to keep all of the information that I recorded during fieldwork confidential and anonymous, I also made participants aware of the possibility that they could be identified, particularly by other participants, upon publication of the research.

Departure and Arrival of Participants

Throughout the course of the research process, I was prepared for the possibility that some participants would leave the residential house, either finding alternative employment (staff members) or moving on to another placement or independence (young people). It was also likely that new members of staff or new residents would join the residential house throughout this time. In the event that a participant was to leave the residential house and research process, I prepared to discuss with them what should happen to the data already recorded and whether they would be happy for this information to be used in the remainder of the research. Only one participant left the research process, a young person who I called Lucas. His departure was sudden and unexpected, and so I did not have the opportunities I expected to have to discuss the information that I had already collected with him. Instead, I asked staff members who were still involved with his care to check whether he was happy for me to keep the information I had already recorded in the data, which he agreed to.

When new (potential) participants arrived in the houses, I had planned to follow the above informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity procedures. Again, these procedures were to be discussed fully and frequently with arriving participants to ensure that they were fully informed and aware of the research aims, purpose and methods. As highlighted previously, these participants would also be free to decline consent and choose not to take

part in the research. The exact nature of this non-participation was to be discussed with them, to ensure that they were clear about what they wished to be excluded from and included in. Only one potential participant joined the research during fieldwork. However, it was deemed that the arriving young person was unable to fully understand what participation in this research entailed, as this was their first residential placement and I was leaving the field within six weeks of their arrival. As such, giving this participant space to understand her new living arrangements was prioritised, and she was not included in the research.

Positioning Me

The process of detailing the researcher-participant relationship forms a key part of reflexivity in ethnographic work. Ethnographers aim to understand cultures and events from within, while attempting to maintain a level of distance from their participants and the wider field. Achieving this balance between immersing oneself in a culture whilst remaining distanced is termed the insider/outsider challenge (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). The insider perspective is that of those being studied, whilst the outsider perspective is that of the observer (Harris, 1990). In this research, the insider perspective refers to what people think about their own behaviours, actions and interactions, and why they act in these ways. On the other hand, the outsider perspective involves the interpretations and assumptions made by the researcher about these behaviours, actions and interactions, as well as their meaning, in relation to wider literature and theory. Ethnographers are faced with the challenge of not making assumptions about why people behave the way they do, as this risks producing a purely outsider account of the research setting (Harris, 1990).

Reflexivity is the main process through which ethnographers address the insider/outsider tension (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Being reflexive involves recognising that although researchers are initially outsiders, their presence and involvement in daily activities do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they influence the researcher-participant interactions, which has an overall impact on data analysis (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Power imbalances and emotions, as well as the researcher's gender, age, and ethnicity can all impact the research process (Lumsden, 2009; Punch 2012). As a result, ethnographic researchers engage in a continual process of critical self-reflection, attempting to identify areas where they influence the participants and what this might reveal about their social worlds and the research in general. In being reflexive about my role in the research, the relationship I developed with participants, the measures I anticipated taking to managing my

role and the resulting impact of this on the research is my main focus. This follows the focus of this thesis on relationships, and considers my relationship with participants as a key part of the research process, as one cannot study relationships without also taking account of their own connections within that study.

Relationships between researchers and participants in the ethnographic field can be complicated but are an important aspect of the researcher's time in the field. Researchers often build close, trusting relationships with participants taking part in their study (Fetterman, 2010). These relationships need important consideration in this study, where relationships and relational practices are the main focus. I spent a lot of time negotiating the participant-researcher relationship in this study, thinking carefully about my roles and responsibilities in the residential houses. I made it clear to participants that I was not a staff member and, as such, it was not my responsibility to perform strictly staff member roles, such as disciplining young people or being involved in the completion of paperwork and other bureaucratic processes.

While I made it clear to participants that I would not be performing the role of staff member in the residential house, my position as an adult, with the perceived responsibility and trust of other adults in the residential houses, ultimately meant that I faced some complex social roles in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. For instance, although I opted not to answer the telephone at any time, I would occasionally answer the front door, but only if I had seen who approached the door and recognised them from previous encounters. Murchison (2010) notes that researchers should be clear about exactly what they will participate in, how they will participate, and with whom they will participate. This decision was taken to try and minimise any resemblance between my role as researcher and the other adults' roles as staff members. However, I was often given a set of keys to the residential houses in order to access the main staff member toilet, used by all adults in the residential houses (as well as the staff member office in Bruceford). While I almost always used these keys exclusively to access the toilet and occasionally the office⁸, also unlocking a cupboard on one occasion in Bruceford, the set of keys I was given could unlock all of the rooms in the residential houses. This meant that there were occasions when young people would ask if I could let them into their room, or into the staff office to collect something. In doing so, the young people were signalling that they knew I wasn't simply an observing

⁸ While in Bruceford, I kept my personal belongings, such as my handbag, in the staff office. Access to the staff office using the keys given to me was solely to get things from my handbag, such as any snacks I had brought to the house, extra stationery, or medication.

researcher, but I was also an adult in the residential house who had access to spaces that were restricted to them. While I did not allow the young people access to any of these restricted spaces on any occasion, instead asking them to locate a staff member and seek their assistance, I was aware that my role could be compromised by the possession of keys, at least until it became a more mundane part of my time in the houses. I was faced with choosing whether to interrupt staff member routines in order to ask for keys for the toilet or potentially isolating young people by embracing this small aspect of staff life in the residential houses. In this way, having keys conflicted with my choice not to answer the door or the telephone. Where I was expressly trying to minimise any perceptions of me as a staff member, these were more difficult to manage because of my access to keys for the houses. Having keys, therefore, impacted my ability to manage my 'personal front' (Goffman, 1959), and was in direct contrast to the identity I attempted to impress upon participants (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Nonetheless, at no point did any young person make a comment regarding my access in the house that caused me to worry about their perception of my having keys, and if they had I would have refrained from accepting keys for the remainder of fieldwork. However, this positionality as an adult in the residential house did influence the access I was granted, and no doubt had an impact on the way that young people perceived me.

Similar issues with my adult, but not staff member, role in the residential houses also occurred when I took a walk with Aidan (YP) and Sienna (SM) in Bruceford. During this walk, Aidan and Sienna talked about splitting up to go to different stores. At that moment, I experienced a dreadful fear that I would have to choose someone to accompany. I became very aware of my adult role, and the expectations that others might have for me. Would I be expected to accompany Aidan, who was 14 years old at this point, so that Sienna could go on her own errand whilst knowing that he was still accompanied by an adult? Or would I be expected to go with Sienna, so that I was not left alone with Aidan in any situation that could compromise my ethical safety as a researcher. This is a dilemma often discussed in ethnography, whereby the researcher '...must often try to find ways in which 'normal' social intercourse can be established' (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007: 70). With this in mind, if I went with Aidan and anything untoward happened, such as him getting hurt or some other public emergency, I may have been ethically or legally obliged to lend assistance, because of being an adult accompanying someone under 16 years old. While this is not a problem per se, the nature of the emergency could have left me open to difficult decisions. Additionally, if I had accompanied Aidan, there is an ethical risk associated with working with vulnerable

children, where I could have left myself open to potential accusations of inappropriate behaviour. Thankfully, Aidan and Sienna decided not to split up, and instead they would accompany each other on their respective errands. As such, I did not have to make a decision in the end. However, the encounter exemplified the awkward roles that researchers fulfil in ethnographic work, constantly being required to think on their feet and respond to active situations as they arise.

When discussing doing ethnographic research, Fetterman (2010) suggests that the researcher needs to incorporate time to get used to living in the field. Although this usually refers to different cultures whereby researchers have embarked on studying groups of people in a country different from their own, such sentiments apply here as well. During fieldwork, I was not ‘living’ in the field, nor was I studying these issues in an entirely different culture, but the residential house as a ‘culture’ was new to me. As such, I still required time to adjust to a different culture, where there was different daily routines, rituals and practices. I spent a significant amount of time with the participants in this research, and I worked hard to mitigate any emotional ‘losses’ felt by participants or myself when the fieldwork reached completion. I discussed my role in the participants’ lives frequently, constructing a process for ending the relationships built that was comfortable for both participants and myself. I made it clear to participants that I would not be visiting them after leaving the field, instead likely visiting only once the doctoral process was finished to discuss the reports being written. It was important to discuss these issues with participants from the outset, being honest and building processes that helped to protect myself and participants after fieldwork was discontinued (Emond, 2005; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007).

Overall, while I set boundaries for myself in order to maintain my positionality in the research, these boundaries often had to be flexible and accommodate the practicalities of the residential houses as well as the needs of my research. This is not uncommon in qualitative research, especially ethnography, where the researcher needs to be responsive to changes in the field and work closely with participants throughout (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010). In addition, while these changes in my original boundaries may have impacted how I was perceived by participants, I do not believe that participants ever fully viewed me as a staff member in the residential houses. For instance, I reflect in the *Findings* section of this Chapter that young people’s voices and perspectives are not as present in the data as anticipated, and it is possible that this was somewhat due to my flexible boundaries. Nonetheless, by reinforcing my boundaries throughout regarding discipline, decision-making, paperwork and staff member responsibilities, participants

seemed clear about my role. This was demonstrated in comments made during fieldwork, such as ‘That’s not Nadine’s job’ (Aidan, YP), ‘Even when Nadine’s here, it needs to be one of you [staff members] who stays here with Aidan (YP)’ (Phoebe, SM), and ‘Don’t look at Nadine, she’s not involved in this decision’ (Zara, SM).

LEAVING THE FIELD

In negotiating access to all three fieldsites and informed consent, I had made participants aware of the timescales for the research and some proposed dates for the duration of fieldwork. In Bruceford, this timescale was fairly fluid in the beginning, informing participants that I would be around for nine months, meaning I would be leaving in January 2017, but without setting specific dates. In Stewarton and Wallacewells, the timescale was more concrete from the outset, as the data gathering period was a lot shorter than that of Bruceford. As stated earlier, it is important to ensure that participants are fully informed from the outset and throughout (Emond, 2005; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Towards the end of my time in all three houses, I would mention my leaving date frequently to participants, either voluntarily or in answering their questions asking when I would be finished with fieldwork. After setting a concrete date in Bruceford I made sure to communicate this with participants regularly.

After spending a prolonged period of time in Bruceford, as well as the month I spent in Stewarton and Wallacewells, I had a lot of mixed feelings about finishing fieldwork. I was both sad to be leaving behind the participants that I had been spending a lot of time with, and excited to begin analysing the data collected. The time I spent in Bruceford, for instance, provided an extensive period of time to get to know the participants in this study. One staff member got married, another confided in me that she thought it was time to leave residential work, three young people had their birthdays, I was there around Christmas and New Year, and I had numerous personal conversations with both young people and staff members during this time. For these reasons, leaving Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells was both a necessary, practical task that would eventually lead to the completion of my thesis, but it was also an emotionally fraught time. Not only this, but the participants also appeared to have mixed feelings about my leaving, especially in Bruceford.

When I first began visiting Bruceford in May 2016, I had told participants I would be around for roughly nine months, likely until January 2017. This remained the case throughout fieldwork, when participants – usually staff members – would ask ‘how much longer are you going to be here?’, and similar questions. It wasn’t until mid-January 2017

that I clarified with participants that I would be finishing on 31st January 2017. In the final two weeks leading up to this, I did a ‘count down’, telling participants clearly how many days I had left in the house. However, this didn’t stop some participants from misconstruing my count-down for excitement to leave. This was illustrated in conversation with Amelia (SM) whilst we were both in the kitchen. She was preparing dinner for everyone, whilst I was explaining my plan to tell both staff members and young people how long it would be before I left in days, rather than weeks. This was her reaction:

Me: *‘I’ve decided I’m going to start telling both you guys and the young people how long it is before I leave in days, rather than weeks. I mean, I only have 14 days left, and I’m not really sure anyone is grasping how soon that is going to come around.’* [giggles]

Amelia: *‘Really? Is that all that’s left? God, that’s not long!’*

Me: *‘No, it isn’t, really! Which is kind of why I’ve decided to start counting down in days.’*

Amelia: *‘Are you just that excited to leave us?’* [giggles]

Me: [laughter] *‘No, of course not! I think it’s just easier to count in days so that everyone is aware how soon it is that I’m leaving.’*

Amelia: *‘Yeah, that’s understandable.’*

(Fieldnotes, kitchen, Bruceford)

Although Amelia appreciated why I was doing the count-down, it took me by surprised that her initial reaction was to think I was doing so because I was excited to leave Bruceford. Nonetheless, it made me more sensitive to how this could be perceived by staff members and young people, resulting in my choosing to reiterate whenever asked that I wasn’t doing a count-down for any other reason than to reinforce how little time I had left to visit the house.

Upon leaving Bruceford, I immediately began pursuing access to the services in Seaview – Stewarton and Wallacewells. I had already received approval from the local authority in Seaview, but I had yet to begin gaining consent from the staff members, young people and their parents. I left Bruceford on 31st January 2017, before meeting with the team manager of Stewarton and Wallacewells on 1st February 2017. When in Stewarton and Wallacewells, the focus of data collection was not one of a lengthy time in the field,

nevertheless, many of the same practical aspects of leaving occurred in Stewarton and Wallacewells as they did in Bruceford. This included buying presents, making sure everyone was well informed, being clear on boundaries once I left, and taking the time to say goodbye to each participant. However, unlike Bruceford where I bought a *Now TV Box* for the staff members and young people, I elected to purchase a smaller gift for the participants in Stewarton and Wallacewells. This was partly because both houses already had subscriptions to *Sky TV* and *Netflix*, and partly because I wanted to buy both houses the same present. Instead, I purchased a large box of sweets for participants to share and a house plant, for each house. I did this deliberately, so that participants moving between both houses could see the same house plant and be reminded of their contribution to my study and the gratitude that I felt for them. The gifts were accompanied by Thank You cards for both houses, which contained lengthy messages from myself with anecdotes about my time in the house and sentiments for the future. Finally, unlike Bruceford, there was no goodbye buffet or card for me when I left Stewarton or Wallacewells.

THE DATA

As discussed, this research contained a mix of observations and interviews as the main research methods. This data was recorded and stored in the form of fieldnotes, audio recordings and interview transcripts. Upon transcribing, editing and securely storing the audio recordings, the original audio was deleted. This resulted in a mix of text data which required analysis. Given the wealth of data collected (104 days of fieldnotes and 27 interview transcripts), NVivo 11 was used to assist in the storage, organisation and coding of the data. The remainder of this section outlines the analysis processes adopted and the decisions taken in presenting the data throughout the thesis.

Data Analysis

Before analysing the data collected, I embarked on a process of data storing and organising. To do this, I adopted two main approaches. Firstly, I scanned copies of my hand-written fieldnotes into PDF form for electronic storage, selecting to store these on a password protected USB drive, enabling the fieldnotes to be analysed using NVivo 11 computer software. I then stored the original fieldnotes in a locked filing cabinet in my office. I elected not to type my fieldnotes, as the wealth of data meant that there was no time to dedicate to this. If I were to begin the research process again, I would type my fieldnotes from the beginning of data collection, as scanned copies of hand-written fieldnotes were difficult to work with in NVivo 11. Secondly, I transcribed the audio data collected from

semi-structured interviews with participants. I did the bulk of this transcription myself, paying an external transcription service to do eight of the interviews recorded. These transcripts, along with the original recordings, were also stored on a password protected USB drive.

A thematic approach to analysing data was applied, using Becker's (1970) Sequential Analysis. In ethnographic work, it is commonly accepted that the data analysis stage of research is not distinct from the data collection stage. Instead, data analysis tends to occur throughout the research process, alongside the collection and storage of research data (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999; Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Gobo, 2008; O'Reilly, 2009). Conducting data collection and analysis simultaneously is said to allow the researcher to unveil important and recurring issues in their research that require further investigation, going 'further and deeper into the research problem' (Charmaz, 2006: 48). By engaging in such a reflexive process, the researcher is in a better position to ensure that when they leave the field, they have collected data on all interesting and important phenomena to answer their research questions (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007).

These 'closely intertwined processes' (Gobo, 2008) of data collection and analysis are particularly favoured by Becker (1970) in his development of sequential analysis. He encourages researchers to engage in initial analysis processes throughout data collection, as this can aid the researcher in determining the most important research problems that need to be addressed. This enables the collection and analysis of subsequent data by guiding the researcher's focus and understanding, in a way that would not be possible if data analysis was only carried out after the completion of all fieldwork. In using sequential analysis to interpret ethnographic data, the researcher first develops some initial 'models' to explain their findings. This is done by applying existing theoretical frameworks and interpretations to the data collected in the early stages of research. These initial models are then developed and expanded upon throughout the research process to enable the formation of complete models. The completed models can be understood as the research findings, and conclusions regarding the research problems and questions can be drawn from these models.

It is worth noting, that although a simultaneous process, researchers will often place some distance between collecting data and beginning to analyse this data. Having a period of time at the beginning of the research process to solely collect data without analysing it can allow the researcher to become familiar with the research field and the procedures for recording information. As such, ethnographic practices usually see the researcher begin to

analyse data after a period of time in the research setting solely taking notes, observing and recording data (Gobo, 2008). From the beginning, I would note any recurring practices or observations, paying particular attention to everyday routines. However, I spent 12 weeks in Bruceford before I began to analyse the data gathered in any depth. These initial analyses from week 12 onwards allowed me to identify knowledge gaps and issues which required further investigation. This also enabled me to identify and apply relative theoretical frameworks from an early stage in the data collection and analysis process, which I believe to be beneficial in further data collection efforts.

Becker (1970) advocates the use of sequential analysis for analysing documents, interview data and observational recordings and fieldnotes. Becker (1970) identified four different stages in data analysing: (1) selecting and defining problems, indices and concepts that are likely to best explain the field being studied; (2) checking the frequency and distribution of observed phenomena; (3) developing a general model of the field being studied, using the individual findings, and; (4) checking the accuracy of concepts, models and statements, and ensuring that the presentation of findings preserves ‘thick descriptions’. The first three of these stages ordinarily occurs when the fieldwork is ongoing and the researcher is continuing to collect data. Where the fourth and final stage is concerned, it is expected that this will take place after the completion of fieldwork.

Despite this convention, Becker (1970) highlighted that analysing data whilst in the field can be difficult, given the pressures of time and other issues which can arise. As such, steps two and three (checking the frequency of phenomena and building a model of the field) are frequently not conducted systematically until fieldwork has ended. This was the case here, given the intensive and time consuming nature of the research, which allowed little time for in-depth analysis during fieldwork. Although the analysis was already underway by the time that fieldwork was concluded, time was dedicated to the systematic completion of steps two, three and four after March 2017, whereby the data was coded and categorised, resulting in the development of themes.

Through analysing the data in this way, two main themes became clear: doing relationships within the residential setting, and; ambivalence around relationships in residential child care. These two key themes are used to structure the following two Chapters, taking each theme in turn to discuss the findings of this doctoral project. Within these two Chapters, sub-themes related to each main theme are also examined. Finally, the

relevance of these themes in answering the research questions outlined above is also explored within the Conclusion sections of Chapter 5 and 6, and throughout Chapter 7.

In presenting data excerpts, the following formatting conditions should be noted. Each data excerpt is indented on both sides of the page. This follows the convention for all literature and data quotes that have preceded this explanation. Where a participant is quoted directly, the dialogue is italicised to differentiate between the participants' voices and my own. The origin of data (fieldnotes or interviews) is indicated, alongside the location within each house and the name of the house that the participant lives or works in. Finally, where two excerpts follow each other without being separated by elaborative text, the end of one excerpt and beginning of another is indicated with a sequence of ellipses.

Findings

In analysing the data and preparing this thesis, it became clear that much of my fieldnotes and interview transcripts tell the story of relationships in residential child care from the perspective of staff members, with less information from the perspective of young people. The views and experiences of young people remain present, however, this is to a lesser extent than one might anticipate. During fieldwork, I found that my access to young people was limited by a number of factors, some of which could result from normal teenage life, while others may be a direct result of my role as a researcher. For instance, in reflecting on my time in the field it occurred to me that I did not spend much time with the young people. In Bruceford, young people were allowed to spend significant amounts of time in their bedrooms, even during mealtimes, and they often did. Although I spent significant time with Aidan (YP), the exposure to other young people was in the form of small glimpses when they would emerge from their bedrooms either to go out and socialise or to spend small amounts of time with staff members. In Stewarton and Wallacewells, my access to young people was further limited as the young people in both houses were very socially active, often not spending a lot of time in houses. I suspect that this was aided by the 'bus pass' system that existed in Stewarton and Wallacewells, whereby young people would be given a daily bus ticket which could be used for unlimited travel around the local area, something not implemented in Bruceford.

I accept that some of the decisions I made while in the field may have also impacted my access to the young people, and, therefore, the data that I was able to record. It is possible that my presence in the house was a factor in the decision of residents at Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells electing to spend time in their bedrooms or to leave the house

and socialise. This was never communicated to me, either by staff members or young people, and so it is not something that can be stated as certain. Additionally, it was a conscious decision of mine to stay in the shared spaces of the houses, rather than in the private spaces of young people, meaning that I would not take it upon myself to visit a young person's bedroom without invitation. As a result, for young people to feature more heavily in the research they would have been required to spend more time in the shared spaces of the house or invite me into their private space more readily. This decision was taken to respect the privacy of young people, and to enable them to be as active or passive in the research as they wanted. Their lack of presence in the shared spaces, however, impacted the data gathered, as did my own reluctance to ask the young people if they would like company outside of the shared spaces.

Nonetheless, arguments about young people's relationships in residential child care do feature in the following Chapters. There are times when the themes highlighted are heavily saturated with data about staff members, rather than young people, and I have indicated clearly whether the same aspects of relationships were recorded for young people or not. The impact of this is discussed further in Chapter 7.

CONCLUSION

This Chapter has discussed, in detail, the research process undertaken in this study and the methodological considerations that underpinned the research decisions. Given the key elements of transparency in ensuring that a qualitative project is credible, the arguments presented throughout this Chapter have been imperative in showing how the research was conducted in a thorough and robust manner. The Chapter began by introducing the methodology and the practicalities of conducting research in the setting of residential child care, before moving to describe: the research settings; negotiating and gaining consent; the processes of doing fieldwork; leaving the field, and; the details of data collected and analysed.

An ethnographic approach was chosen for this study, as the research questions relied on an ability to understand people's conceptualisations of their relationships, but also their 'doing' of these relationships. As such, it became imperative that relationships were both talked about and *seen* to address the research aims: (1) to explore relationships in residential child care; (2) to understand how staff members and residents navigate their relationships in the residential house, and; (3) to investigate the importance of context in understanding relationships. Additionally, taking an ethnographic approach allowed for the greatest opportunity to develop trusting relationships with the staff members and young people in

each residential house. In moving through this Chapter, a balance was struck between reviewing literature on ethnographic methods and outlining the specific decisions I made in this study. Doing so demonstrates both the practicalities of conducting this research and the theoretical underpinnings of the chosen methods. This situates my decisions as a researcher in a robust literature grounding.

Alongside an in-depth description of the chosen methodology and resulting practicalities, the ethical implications of this study have been interwoven throughout the sections presented in this Chapter. Given the focus on residential child care, and the inherent vulnerabilities of the young people participating, alongside the continuous nature of residential houses as observed and regulated environments, there were numerous ethical considerations which required attention to outline how the safety of participants and myself was managed. Much of this was discussed in *Entering the Field* and *Doing Fieldwork*.

The following two Chapters detail the findings of this study, with the final Chapter offering some conclusions and implications for the wider field. I do not claim that these findings are applicable to all young people or staff members in all residential houses. Additionally, given the ever-changing nature of both young people and staff members in the residential environments, I cannot say that the experiences detailed are reflective of those for all young people and staff members that have or will live and work in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. The findings, therefore, are discussed in relation to the specific group of participants living or working in the residential houses during the time of fieldwork. These are addressed thematically and explored in relation to the wider literature background of the context under investigation. As such, the themes that were identified through data analysis are understood by interweaving theory, policy and practice to provide messages and implications for future work in the context of residential child care and relationships.

CHAPTER 5: DOING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL SETTING

This Chapter will examine the function and navigation of relationships within the residential milieu. As a reminder, the residential milieu is the overall atmosphere of the residential environment when staff members and young people are together. It is the co-created space that staff members and young people live and work in (Garfat and Fulcher, 2013). In addition, the residential milieu is largely referred to as the ‘feel’ of a place (Smith, 2009), and encompasses both the physical aspects of the house (such as the décor and furniture), as well as the personal relationships and acts of caring (Redl and Wineman, 1952). As discussed in the literature review, the role and function of residential child care is influenced by many factors. These factors will also influence the way that staff members and young people experience the residential setting and the relationships within that setting. Living and working in a residential setting presents young people and staff members with the need to familiarise themselves with the milieu of care that surrounds their daily practices (Redl and Wineman, 1952).

During this project, it became clear that staff members and young people navigate their relationships on the basis of this milieu, alongside the bureaucratic and managerial processes imposed on them (see Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2013). In exploring the residential context, reference will be made to the wider bureaucratic processes, decision making practices, child protection agenda, and routines and rituals of the residential houses. These discussions will be situated within the current context of residential care in Scotland, where love and intimacy are recognised as an important facet of care (Independent Care Review, 2017; Brooks, 2018; Moore, 2019). The goal of this Chapter is to highlight the influence that the wider residential system holds over relationships, but also the influence of relationships over wider care practices. Understanding how bureaucratic processes, for instance, allow staff members and young people to enact their relationships, or how those relationships facilitate the development of bureaucratic processes, will provide a unique insight into the complexity and messiness of relationships in the context of residential child care.

As a reminder, this research presented here aims to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?

Doing Relationships within the Residential Setting

- (2) How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?
- (3) What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?
- (4) What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?

This Chapter will present data which addresses all four of these questions, but particular focus is given to question 1, 3 and 4, with question 2 addressed in more detail in the following Chapter.

RELATIONSHIPS AND BUREAUCRATIC PROCESSES

Bureaucratic processes permeated life in all three of the houses, appearing to influence relational activities and emotional aspects of participants' interactions. These included internal and external meetings, training sessions, paperwork, professional visitors, pocket money and medicine distribution, impacts of shift patterns, informal expectations, and other external influences (such as budgets, local authority business, school, wider policies and procedures, and staff member qualifications). These bureaucratic practices impacted people's relationships in the residential house in a variety of ways. Of note is their ability to 'take over' daily life, with record keeping in particular taking the attention of staff members for large periods of time. While this is not necessarily unusual in a residential setting, it does demonstrate some of Menzies Lyth's (1988) arguments regarding the 'primary task' of the residential houses. If the primary task is to care for children and young people, why did bureaucratic processes form such a large part of daily life? In prioritising paperwork and the management of professional visitors, shift patterns and people's expectations, the ability of staff members and young people to create loving, intimate relationships is somewhat impeded. Overall, this section will demonstrate how the need for organisations to be bureaucratic entities, and staff members' internalisation of these bureaucratic processes as the 'primary task', impacted people's relationships in the residential houses.

Paperwork

One of the most prominent bureaucratic processes in the three houses was what staff and young people referred to as 'paperwork'. Staff members not only had to work within the realms of the young people's statutory Care Plans – a form of paperwork in and of itself – but they also had to complete various records and logs throughout the day. These included daily food hygiene records (completed as part of any cooked meal and food delivery), cash records (prepared for every shift change), change over notes (also prepared

for any shift change), and young people's logs (detailing young people's activities in the last 24-hour period), as well as occasional fire safety checks. Punch and McIntosh (2014) highlight that the kitchen is one of the most bureaucratic areas of a residential house, given the focus on food safety. Paperwork forms a key part of managerialist approaches to care (Menzies Lyth, 1988). The managerial ideology of how to 'do care' is rooted in overarching beliefs regarding what constitutes professional practice, situating paperwork within the wider system of the care setting. Due to the prominence of paperwork, daily life in the houses was often permeated with completing, reading or filing papers. On many occasions, the demands of paperwork would interrupt on-going relational activities in the houses. An example of this is shown below:

Emily (SM), Ruby (SM) and Elijah (SM) have been in the lounge talking about their families and joking about the questions the children in their families ask them:

Ruby: *"My wee grandson keeps asking all these death questions, like 'are you going to die?', 'are you going to die today?', 'am I going to die?'. It's amazing what goes on in their little brains!"*

Elijah: *"Aye, the stuff they pick up... it's so weird!"*

Emily: *"It's probably because you've had a death in the family. Now they know what that is and they just pick up all these things. They just want to understand."*

Ruby: *"Oh aye!"*

The conversation was ongoing until Phoebe (SM) came into the lounge to ask the staff members if they could look at the daily notes in the young people's files, because they're not being signed properly. Elijah and Emily have gone to do as Phoebe asked, whereas Ruby had gone upstairs to make the staff member bed.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Emily, Ruby and Elijah had been taking a moment to share aspects of their personal lives with each other whilst in the residential house, arguably engaging in an important facet of relationship building. May (2013) demonstrates that sharing aspects of one's personal life with others builds closeness and belonging between people. Taking moments to share aspects of each other's personal lives was not uncommon for staff members and young

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people in the residential houses. In these moments, they would often share intimate details of their lives which they would use to bond with each other. Nonetheless, when these activities are interrupted by workplace expectations, such as the bureaucratic processes of paperwork, this sharing is often abandoned in the moment and can, ultimately, be discouraged. The tension of being 'at work' in a domestic space heightens the possibility that paperwork will interrupt moments of personal conversation, as one navigates the homeplace-workplace dyad. For Phoebe to interrupt the ongoing conversation, the remaining staff members could perceive the request as a message that staff members should not be so close with one another, and should instead focus on the 'work' they had to do. While this is not necessarily what Phoebe had intended, her role as the house manager can direct the overall tone of the residential environment (Menzies Lyth, 1988; Smith, 2009). However, completing paperwork also offered opportunities for staff members and young people to spend time together, as was witnessed when everyone in Bruceford was asked to complete paperwork for the Care Inspectorate:

I arrived in Bruceford today and all of the staff members and young people were in the dining room filling out forms. At first I wasn't sure what they were for, but I was later told they were filling out questionnaires for the Care Inspectorate, who were coming to visit at some point. I was able to hear Maddison (YP) and Aidan (YP) asking questions about the form. Maddison and Aidan seemed unsure about the purpose of the form and the need for it, but were filling it in all the same.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

In this example, taking the time to complete paperwork for an upcoming inspection offered staff members and young people the chance to spend time together partaking in a shared activity, which they otherwise might have been unlikely to do. Engaging in shared activities is another aspect of relationship building that has been indicated to facilitate intimacy and understanding in residential settings (Smart, 2007), whereby people make use of their shared experiences to relate to one another. In this particular example, people in Bruceford were given an opportunity to spend time with Maddison, who ordinarily spent the majority of her time in her bedroom. During the nine months that I spend in Bruceford, this was one of the few occasions where Maddison sat at the dining room table and engaged in conversation or activity with other members of the house. I would suggest that the need to complete paperwork, and to engage with other people in order to do so, was the main

factor which led to Maddison's presence in the dining room on this day. While it is not necessarily the case that spending time together completing this paperwork enhanced any of the connections that Maddison had with people in Bruceford, it did provide a key opportunity for Maddison to 'check-in' with other people in the house and 'catch-up' with them during a shared task. As such, paperwork not only interrupted relational activities; it also facilitated them.

As well as interrupting and facilitating relationships, the expectations around paperwork could cause friction in relationships. When people disagreed with an aspect of paperwork, or when it reflected an unpleasant aspect of life in the houses, this could lead to tensions, often between staff members and young people. In the following example, Aidan (YP) is unhappy with a Risk Assessment, which forms part of his Care Plan, that Sienna (SM) has shown him:

Aidan has just approached Sienna to disagree with the Risk Assessment form that she asked him to sign:

Aidan: *"What is this? The police need to be called if I...?"*

Sienna: *"Aye, only if you abscond..."*

Aidan: *"Naw, it says here..."*

Sienna: *"Aye, we've to call the police instead of restraining you."*

Aidan: *"That's bullshit! When was the last time I was restrained in here? I was like 11!"*

Sienna: *"Aye, that's just what's been agreed."*

Aidan: *"That's the biggest load of crap I've ever read! Who wrote this? It's ridiculous! I'm not signing this."*

Sienna: *"Okay then..."*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Aidan's upset originated from the argument that if he left the house, the police would need to be called. Throughout fieldwork, Aidan's movements outside of Bruceford were highly scrutinised, as staff members were worried about the activities that he took part in when he was unaccompanied. As such, there were occasions when Aidan would leave Bruceford without permission. The suggestion that were he to do this the police would be called

immediately seemed to upset him. Sienna tried to persuade him that this was not necessarily the case, and instead the Risk Assessment reflected a process which instructed staff members not to attempt to keep him in the house against his will. This disagreement over paperwork was interesting, as Aidan and Sienna were ordinarily very close. Although some friction is arguably an aspect of closeness in relationships (see Emond, 2016), it was significant that this was friction which was not a direct result of either Aidan or Sienna's behaviour. Instead, the friction was caused by requirements to legislate for any risk to Aidan. The wider system required this to be formally recorded and adhered to by staff and, in turn, their responses to Aidan would be determined by this written statement.

Finally, paperwork could also interfere with people's expectations of daily life in the houses. Alongside interrupting relational activities, as discussed above, paperwork could be seen to interrupt some household routines and rituals, as the process of completing paperwork also becomes a daily routine. At times, staff members or young people would interrupt their own activities or arrange activities around the completion of paperwork. In the below example, we see Scarlett (SM) contemplate the best way to engage in the bureaucratic process of paperwork whilst maintaining what she believes to be an appropriate atmosphere in the house:

Scarlett has been debating whether to go and write what she has been calling 'reports' for a while now:

Scarlett: *"I just can't be bothered. It's a Sunday. I just can't be bothered doing it, you know?"*

Me: *"It must be hard, because it isn't like working in an office or anything."*

Scarlett: *"Exactly! And I like Sundays in here. I like them to be quite chilled."*

Me: *"Just like when you're in your own house?"*

Scarlett: *"Yeab! I think they should be about putting your feet up and relaxing. That's why I've been looking up the time for these shows and getting Aidan in the shower – so that he can chill before bed."*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The example above demonstrates the way that people in the house could, at times, view paperwork as a nuisance which permeated the everyday aspects of life. It was seen by many staff members as taking them away from being with the young people. Menzies Lyth (1988)

writes extensively about the bureaucratic processes which are used by organisations and managerialist regimes to limit personal contact between staff members and the people they care for. While it is not my suggestion that paperwork is used in the residential house deliberately to limit personal time between staff members and young people, Menzies Lyth's work demonstrates that this interruption is a product of wider organisational and managerial practices. It appeared to serve as a reminder that the residential house was different from that of a family home despite best efforts to recreate this environment in everyday routines and rituals. Whilst all families will have to juggle the administration around running a household, Scarlett demonstrated the duality of the residential house as both a workplace and a homeplace, whereby paperwork had to be completed even when there was a preference for being 'chilled'. This echoes some of Anglin's (2004) arguments that staff members are tasked with managing competing priorities, which can influence what is seen as 'work' in the residential house. Where paperwork was viewed as a work-based task which needing completing on a relaxing Sunday by Scarlett, Scarlett's resulting inference that other parts of her work, such as spending time with young people and relaxing in the residential house, were not 'work' was not uncommon. Ultimately, this example demonstrates how paperwork can come between a staff member's sense of belonging and connectedness to the house as a homeplace, internalising the space as a workplace instead.

While Menzies Lyth (1988) is clear that organisations, not individual people, are the ones to push the importance of paperwork and limit staff member connections to those they care for, my time in the field suggests that staff members are just as likely to internalise this attitude in their daily work. In Sienna's (SM) conversation with Aidan (YP) above, she uses the risk assessment as a way to detract attention from individual staff members and place blame on the paperwork itself. This allows Aidan to feel his frustration, but not take it out on Sienna personally. Where Phoebe (SM) asks the other staff members to check some paperwork records for signatures, she is emphasising the importance of the paperwork they complete in the residential house and interrupting their more informal gathering. Throughout fieldwork, paperwork as a facet of the milieu in each residential house was a visible barrier to, and enabler of, relationships. However, it was also an established aspect of the routine in each residential house (see Redl and Wineman, 1952; Punch and McIntosh, 2014), where paperwork was an expected aspect of daily life.

Understanding Professional Visitors

Alongside paperwork, the bureaucratic processes of professional visits, either from social workers, external managers, training professionals or school staff, was observed as impacting the relational aspects of life in the residential houses. Where efforts were made to replicate a family-like environment in all three houses, professional visitors served as a reminder that these houses were not family-like. These reminders seemed to resonate with both staff members and young people, with frequent remarks questioning the need for or intentions of a visit by residents and workers. At times these visitors interrupted activities, but they could also facilitate them: they could create relational opportunities or undermine them, and they could themselves present moments of relational practice between people in the house and the visitors present. One such example of professional visitors interrupting life in the residential house is shown below, where staff members and young people are being trained in Fire Safety:

Fire Safety Training is being undertaken in Bruceford today. An external trainer is in showing staff members and young people how to use fire extinguishers and fire blankets. He arrived at 10.10am, instead of 11am, and interrupted the Change Over meeting that was happening:

Ruby (SM): *"He does this every time!"*

She insisted that he would just need to wait to get started. Jessica (SM) answered the door to him and he went back to his vehicle to wait until he could come in and set-up. Jessica came into the lounge to say that he had called and said he would be in early.

William (SM): *"He called yesterday to say that he would be in a bit early, but he didn't say 10am."*

Sienna (SM): *"Aye, 10.50am would be early, 10.10am is a bit much!"*

Once the Change Over meeting was finished and Ruby went to let the training man into the building, she came into the lounge to relay what he'd told her:

Ruby: *"He says he called and said he'd be in at 10am as he needs an hour to set-up. There's clearly just been a misunderstanding."*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The trainer's early arrival interrupted the routine Change Over meeting, which staff members viewed as an inconvenience. However, it also presented an opportunity for staff members to bond over this shared inconvenience, communicating their disapproval of his early arrival and 'inside' knowledge of him as a visitor, sarcastically commenting that 'he does this every time'. This shared bond of inconvenience is a display of collective understanding, where staff members openly showed their solidarity with each other and their expectation that other staff members sharing this experience will feel similarly to themselves. Arguably, this level of understanding, an almost unconscious belief that the people you are sharing the experience with will feel the same way that you do, is an illustration of the intimacy staff members shared with each other. Maier (1979) argues that being able to predict other's reactions, and act accordingly is an example of intimacy between people. Staff members in particular were expected to be 'in tune' with each other throughout their work. This display of intimacy was possible here solely because of the visitor's presence. As such, the presence of professional visitors is presented as an inconvenience and as an opportunity for participants to connect with one another over their shared experiences and opinions.

Professional visitors could also lead to friction and confrontations in the residential house. In the example below, the relationships between Aidan (YP), Scarlett (SM) and Ivy (SM) is challenged, resulting from the mess left by a professional visitor to Bruceford:

Aidan (YP) is insisting that he isn't going to clean his room after the handyman left it a mess:

Aidan: *"I'm no cleaning that!"*

Scarlett (SM): *"I'll help you in a minute."*

Aidan: *"Nut! You can do it all by yourself."*

Scarlett: *"Is there any need to talk to me like that?"*

Aidan: *"Well, you [speaking to Ivy (SM)] should've told me that was happening today!"*

Ivy: *"Was I here this morning?"*

Aidan: *"Naw, but someone should've told me..."*

Ivy: *"Well, there's no point in getting annoyed at me and Scarlett when we weren't even here."*

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Ivy later went into the conservatory and realised that the Handyman had left a big mess in there too, complaining to Scarlett that he obviously hadn't been very professional when clearing up.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Aidan's upset at the condition of his bedroom was not influenced by Scarlett or Ivy. However, as the only available adults in the house to air his frustrations to, Aidan argued with Scarlett and Ivy, stating that he should not be responsible for cleaning the mess in his room, as it was not a mess that he created. Here, an interruption to Aidan's day has occurred due to the workplace nature of the residential house, which might not have occurred in a different care setting. Ivy and Scarlett's recommendation that Aidan consider why he is upset with them, when they were not responsible for the mess created, demonstrates an attempt at getting Aidan to view the situation from their perspective. In the concept of 'imaginary', Smart (2007) discusses the way that relationships are thought about and imagined by people. She argues that people's personal musings, desires, thoughts and emotions connect to form a picture of the relationships that people have with one another. Here, we see Ivy and Scarlett attempt to encourage Aidan to reflect on his relationship with them, and their role in the events that have upset him. In doing so, they reflect the core concepts of 'imaginary' as a part of relationships. The example highlights the impact that professional visitors can have on life in the residential house, challenging relationships and causing friction where friction may not have ordinarily been present.

Finally, professional visitors offered a unique opportunity for 'outsiders' to pass judgement on activities and daily routines in the residential house. This judgement could have lasting impacts on decisions made in the residential house, and for the staff members and young people living and working there. In the example given, Phoebe (SM) discusses a time when the decisions of staff members were questioned:

Phoebe and I were having a bit of a chat in the lounge today. She told me that a local authority manager once visited and told her off for allowing staff members to Hoover in their pyjamas. Phoebe said to me that she couldn't understand why anyone would want to vacuum in their pyjamas. I told her that I do this all the time, because I know that vacuuming will just make me hot and sweating and I wouldn't want to get my clean clothes all hot and

sweaty. She replied to say that she needs to get up and ready for the day before she feels comfortable doing any housework.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

As another example of the workplace-homeplace dyad, the conversation above highlights the scrutiny that life in the residential houses receives, alongside the scrutiny of staff members in particular. In arguing that staff members should not be active in the house whilst wearing their pyjamas, the encounter between Phoebe and the external manager demonstrates the different views about 'professional practice' in a residential child care context. Where literature has been keen to demonstrate that the role of staff members in residential care is complex, embodying a number of different activities, routines and practices (see Maier, 1979; Whitaker et al., 1998; Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2013), those outside of the residential milieu, including local authority managers, can naïvely perceive the actions of staff members as not being very 'work-like'. It may be suggested that such perceptions can interrupt the relational belonging of both staff members and young people in the residential house, where professional identities meet personal relationships. Where staff members bring their own feelings and routines to the residential house, as per the life-space model of care (Gharabaghi and Stuart, 2013; Warwick, 2017), they can be at odds with the feelings and routines of other staff members and managers, both inside and outside of the residential house. This complex navigation, where vacuuming in one's pyjamas is frowned upon in a way that it would not be in that staff member's ordinary family home, is unique to institutional settings and discourages staff members from embracing their own personal routines and rituals, instead prioritising the 'outward facing' perception of the residential house as a 'workplace', rather than a homeplace. This has an impact on people's overall feelings of connection with the residential setting, as staff members in particular are scrutinised for doing something that might otherwise be natural in their own homes. However, that it is a workplace must also be taken into account. The complexity of personal and professional boundaries in this environment played a significant role in the moral and ethical dilemmas which appeared to be associated with 'doing' relationships in residential care.

The Impact of Shift Patterns

Given the significance of individual staff members in the relational activities of the residential houses, it is perhaps unsurprising that shift patterns were a bureaucratic process that impacted life for young people. Young people, and staff members to an extent, were

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frequently concerned with who would or would not be working in the houses on any given day. This appeared to stem from both a preference for certain people, and from an understanding that daily life would be influenced by the people you were surrounded by at any given time. In the examples below, we see how different staff members, and the shifts that those staff members are on, can have an influence on the mood and expectations of young people:

Earlier, I hear Aidan (YP) as Sienna (SM) if she was going home tonight. He sounded concerned that she wasn't going to be staying in the house on a 'sleep in'. She responded by telling him that she was staying, and he seemed pleased, exclaiming with "yay!". I then heard him ask her later in the evening again whether she was staying, to which she repeated that she was.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Aidan (YP) and Erin (YP) are eating breakfast together in the dining room. Erin called through to ask who was working tomorrow, to which Sienna (SM) replied that it was Scarlett (SM) and Jack (SM), as Oliver (SM) was off sick. Erin seemed shocked by this:

Erin: *"Jack?! Aidan, did you hear that? Jack is in tomorrow."*

I wasn't sure whether this was shock or happiness, as I was in the lounge listening to their conversation. Erin also asked who was working later today, to which Sienna replied that it was Elijah (SM) and Ivy (SM).

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The absence or presence of staff members would influence the expectations of young people, with both of these examples illustrating how young people liked to be informed of staff members' presence, and to be prepared for whoever would be on shift. That residential houses were workplaces where many adults will come and go provided an interesting context in which to study relationships. Given the houses attempted to function as homeplaces to the young people living there, it makes sense that they would be interested to know which adults they would be seeing on any given day. Shift patterns can also impact the rhythm of each day in the houses, with Smith (2009) arguing that predictability is a key part of rhythms in residential life. Garfat and Fulcher's (2013) acknowledgement that

rhythms provide continuity between shifts may also explain the desire of young people to know which staff members are working, as these rhythms make explicit the rules and expectations in the house. Aidan's happiness that Sienna was staying in Bruceford indicated an intimacy between the two in that he clearly wanted to spend time with her. The same was not true of all staff members. By contrast, Erin's shock and surprise that Jack would be working appeared to have resulted from the young people being used to an established pattern of staffing. During the nine months that I spend in Bruceford, I never met Jack. I believe that Erin's shock in this instance originated from a period where Jack's presence in the house was limited, leading Erin to begin to expect that he would not ordinarily be there. Consequently, the shift patterns of staff members were of concern to the young people; they would either be afforded or denied the opportunity to engage with adults they had or had not grown close to or were familiar with. This form of engagement, or lack thereof, is an interesting aspect of creating belonging and connectedness, whereby people value contact with others in order to connect to them (Smart, 2007; May, 2013).

It was also clear that shift patterns affected the ability of staff members to connect to young people, and to each other, in the houses. One such example of the impact that shift patterns had on relationships between staff members is highlighted below, whereby Emily (SM) found herself in a lengthy phone call with Scarlett (SM):

Emily: *"Sorry, I didn't mean to be on the phone for so long there. It's just, I haven't seen Scarlett in so long. Our shift patterns have changed, and I don't think I've seen her in more than a month, between the different shifts and both of us having time off. I mean, she's been away on honeymoon and stuff and I haven't even been able to catch up with her about that."*

Me: *"That's alright, you don't have to explain yourself to me."*

Emily: *"Naw, I know, but I just think, you know, that we used to be really close – we're good friends! – but we've not seen each other recently and I wanted to ask her how her honeymoon was, and what they got up to, if she enjoyed the wedding and stuff. It's been so long, that it was so nice getting to spend some time speaking to her. It's one of the biggest issues doing shift work, because people you used to spend a lot of time with, you now don't really see."*

Me: *"Yeab, I can't imagine that is easy. Do you see much of her outside of here?"*

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Emily: *“I mean, we’ve done stuff before, but not really recently. With me being off ill for so long and her preparing for the wedding and doing the honeymoon and stuff, we’ve not been able to really see each other.”*

Me: *“No, that makes sense. It must be difficult.”*

Emily: *“Oh, God, Nadine, aye. It’s really hard. You get into a habit of seeing someone and spending so much time with them and sharing so much of your life with them, and then the shifts change, and you don’t really see them anymore.”*

(Fieldnotes, downstairs office, Bruceford)

Here, we see that Emily has taken an opportunity to ‘catch-up’ with Scarlett, after spending a prolonged period of time working separate shifts to her. What is clear from this interaction is that Emily considers her bond with Scarlett to be a strong one, whereby she sees Scarlett as both a friend and a colleague. However, she has been unable to participate in that friendship due to the requirements of the workplace, where it has not been necessary to have Scarlett and Emily working a shift together. It could be suggested that this resulted in their personal relationship being tested, as they have been unable to share experiences or to partake in shared activities because of the changing shift patterns. Instead, this example shows how they employ other key concepts of relationships, as described by Smart (2007). Both Emily and Scarlett are relying on Smart’s ‘memory’ in their interaction here, as Emily seeks to learn details of Scarlett’s honeymoon. The process of Scarlett sharing her memories of her honeymoon is suggested as a key component of bonding (Smart, 2007). It follows other bonding moments, such as Emily being a guest at Scarlett’s wedding and both partaking in a group spa retreat. In these activities, Emily and Scarlett create memories together which serve to demonstrate their closeness and provide opportunities for them to reminisce over time spent together.

Of note is the function of the residential house in relationships between people. As a workplace that requires staff members ‘sleep over’ together, there is a level of intimacy not ordinarily found in working relationships. Even in other institutions, such as hospitals and prisons, staff members who work over night together are unlikely to do so whilst in their own pyjamas or actually sleeping. As such, the milieu of the residential house, as a place where staff members sleep, has a unique influence on people’s relationships with one another. These relationships are viewed with some risk, as there is the fear that staff members could become ‘too close’ (Smith, 2009). The reliance on safe systems and

procedures, rather than emotions and relationships, has a profound impact on relationships in the residential houses (Smith et al., 2013). While I am not suggesting that Emily (SM) and Scarlett (SM) had been deliberately separated in their work shifts, fluctuating shift patterns in general can impact the daily lives of both young people and staff members. The ability, or inability, of staff members and young people to predict routines and rhythms in the house is linked to knowing who is on shift and when. As Garfat and Fulcher (2013) state, rhythms of coming and going are important in life-space working, influencing one's sense of being in tune with one's environment (Smith, 2009; Warwick, 2017). What is of note is that changes in shift patterns will, therefore, impact the rhythms of the house and the relationships that people have with workers and residents.

Managing Informal Expectations

Alongside the established bureaucratic processes of paperwork, professional visitors and shift patterns, the staff members and young people also had to contend with managing informal expectations. These expectations took the form of roles or duties which were placed on staff members and young people, either through their own personal interpretation of what was and was not expected of them, or through the expectations of others. Examples included situations where staff members or young people had made an 'extra effort' in their interactions with others in the house. These 'extra efforts' were predominantly undertaken by staff members, in that they appeared to be beyond what was ordinarily expected of their 'professional' role for the young people that they cared for. This was witnessed in the 'little things' that they did for young people:

Ivy (SM) and Erin (YP) are sitting at the dining room table. I can hear them talking about things they are shopping for online. Ivy is ordering a gift for Erin's boyfriend's birthday. From what I can hear, Ivy is paying for it using her own account and Erin is giving her the cash for the order from her savings.

[The next day]

I was in the lounge during Change Over today, where Ivy and Liam (SM) were sitting with Phoebe (SM) talking about the events from the previous night. Phoebe commented that Ivy should not have ordered the gift for Erin's boyfriend from her own account. She says that doing this puts the staff members in a vulnerable position, as they can be accused of taking money from young people and not following procedures. Ivy defended

herself, saying that she didn't mind and that they didn't have many other options, as Phoebe had taken the credit card home with her. Phoebe accepted this, reaffirming that staff members should avoid doing this in the future, and asking that Ivy makes sure the events are written up and signed by someone who witnessed her ordering the gift and taking money from Erin, just to be on the safe side. Ivy agreed to this.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

As can be seen, the 'extra efforts' of staff members were often 'little touches' of kindness, forming gestures of closeness between staff members and young people, and embodying personal aspects of the relationships between people in the houses. Nonetheless, these 'little touches' could be hindered or disapproved of within the more formally regulated and managed context of the residential houses. The wider social and economic system governing residential care then places caution and anxiety upon Ivy's practices. The indication here is that staff members have to be careful not to be 'too involved' in the young people's lives, and that Ivy has risked something by going above and beyond for Erin (Brown et al., 2018), despite the literature which states that young people should have staff members who go above and beyond for them (Scottish Government, 2008; Smith et al., 2013; Brooks, 2018). Ivy herself did not seem to think she had done anything 'wrong', instead she believed she had done something 'nice' for Erin, a young person she cared very much about and someone she wanted to see happy. Although this instance does not represent anything 'wrong' about the bureaucratic practices of residential child care, it highlights the complex realms through which staff members and young people enact and navigate their relationships (Smith, 2009; 2016; White, 2016). The interdependence of formalised, regulated practice and the everyday inter-personal feelings and beliefs about relationships, such as how they should be done, formed a nexus in which relational encounters took place. Bureaucratic processes appeared to be an everyday part of relationships in residential child care, just as relationships were an everyday part of bureaucratic processes.

WORKING ALONGSIDE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND CHILD PROTECTION

Many of the existing bureaucratic processes which applied to the houses involved in the study were developed and introduced to facilitate the protection of children and young people living in residential child care (Milligan and Stevens, 2006; Smith et al., 2013). Indeed, many children and young people find themselves living in residential settings due to child protection concerns in their family lives (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). An

awareness of children's rights and child protection concerns is an important aspect of life in residential child care. Historical practices of care, which resulted in the abuse of some young people by the adults charged with protecting them, have left a legacy of risk-averse practice and suspicion of adults who work in public care settings (Kendrick and Smith, 2002; Smith, 2009). Children's rights and child protection concerns in staff members' and young people's relationships were evident throughout fieldwork. Staff members worked hard to protect the young people in their care from harm, with the young people also attempting to protect each other. Additionally, outside influences, such as news stories and emerging agendas, re-highlighted the importance of child protection and children's rights. These influences also took the shape of 'warnings', in that staff members became increasingly aware of their vulnerability in a sector where adult-child power dynamics are fundamentally complex (McWilliam and Jones, 2005).

This section aims to demonstrate the role of children's rights and child protection concerns in the residential houses studied. The interactions observed, and conversations had during fieldwork, suggest that, at times, staff members and young people were very aware of the complexities of residential child care, either due to its 'checkered past' or due to emerging disclosures and investigations concerning residential child care (see Smith, 2013; 2017; The Independent Care Review, 2018; The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, 2018). These complexities influenced relational activities in the houses, appearing to impact the way relationships were done (or avoided) as well as participants' understandings of relationships. What follows is an account of the influence that children's rights and child protection had on staff members and young people when enacting their relationships.

Child Protection and Young People's Safety

The realities of life in the houses meant that staff members often made decisions based on their concerns for the safety of the children and young people that they cared for. They would allow or deny young people the opportunity to leave the house, to have use of their mobile phones, to be active on the internet, or to watch television based on their interpretation of the risks that these situations posed to the young people in their care. Decisions were made in numerous ways, as will be discussed in the following section, but were ultimately undertaken by staff members for young people. This resulted in child protection and young people's safety holding an influential place with regards to relationships in the residential houses. Thus, interactions between staff members and young

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people became heavy with power and hierarchical understandings of each other's roles. An example of these power dynamics and hierarchical roles is seen below:

The staff members believe that it is possible that Maddison (YP) has been taking inappropriate photographs of herself (after seeing bikinis, small dresses and stiletto heels strewn across her bedroom floor, despite Maddison not wearing these in public or around the house). Phoebe (SM) explained that they had approached Maddison on Monday to ask her to give Elijah (SM) and Ruby (SM) permission to look through her phone – as Ruby is a senior member of staff and Elijah is 'tech savvy'. Maddison had argued against this, and so staff members had prevented her from using her phone since then.

[One week later]

Ruby has told me that they've managed to check Maddison's phone today:

Ruby: *"We've managed to check Maddison's phone today, so we've still got it."* [This was in response to Maddison coming downstairs asking to use the PC in the dining room].

Me: *"Oh really? That's good then."*

Elijah: *"Aye, but she had gone through and deleted a load of stuff."*

Ruby: *"Aye, so we don't really know what's on it or not."*

Elijah: *"She had given her PIN to a fiend and had them go through her stuff and delete Snapchat and stuff."*

Me: *"What? Remotely?"*

Ruby: *"Aye..."*

Elijah: *"So we've still got it here."*

Me: *"So if anything comes through or if you want to go through it again will you get her down to go through it with you?"*

Ruby: *"No, because it's a child protection issue now."*

Me: *"Ah, so you'll just go through it yourselves?"*

Ruby: *“Aye. And if there’s anything we want to talk to her about we could get her down.”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The worries that staff members had concerning Maddison’s behaviour demonstrate an intimate knowledge of Maddison’s routines and ‘normal’ behaviour in the house. In order to appreciate that Maddison did not ordinarily wear clothing of this nature, staff members had to be acutely aware of her activities in and outside of the house. This awareness highlights the nature of relationships between staff members and Maddison. Staff members were able to notice when Maddison’s behaviour was different to that which she normally presents: wearing revealing clothes, refusing to give staff members her mobile phone when asked, and deleting information before they could review it. They have witnessed inconsistent actions from Maddison which reveal facts and motives that are incompatible with the performance she is attempting to give (Goffman, 1959). From the data it did not seem that Maddison had a particularly close relationship with anyone in Bruceford. She chose to spend a lot of time in her bedroom and rarely socialised with other members of the house. However, staff members had clearly taken the time to get to know Maddison, interpreting the clothing they found in her room to be something she was ‘hiding’ from them. This awareness of Maddison’s interests and motivations could be attributed to some form of familiar knowledge of Maddison and her interactions (Goffman, 1959), whereby the ability of staff members to read the situation and to act accordingly is both a product of their training, but also of their familiarity with Maddison.

Nonetheless, the ability of staff members to make decisions based on perceived risk highlights the previously documented power dynamics between children and adults, where adults can make decisions for children that children would not be able to make for adults (James et al, 1998; Mayall, 2000). Maddison’s initial reaction to staff members wanting to check her phone may be because she thinks they are ‘snooping’ on her, invading her private space and impeding her ability to navigate her social world freely. This was communicated at times by the young people in all three houses, where they sometimes viewed the protections that staff members put in place as being a nuisance or demonstrating a lack of trust in the young person’s judgements. As such, while residential care as a sector is largely risk-averse and scrutinised (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012; Smith et al., 2013), the young people in particular experienced this scrutiny quite acutely. Their dual position and children who needed to be protected, and children who lived in a public sphere, meant that their expectations of privacy were challenged. Overall, the decision-making abilities that

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staff members had, in comparison to young people, represent a wider aspect of the care setting, in that adults working in the residential sector are responsible for justifying their actions, or inactions, while working under a microscope of care, scrutiny and historical abuse (Smith, 2013; 2017).

Staff members were also worried about any future use of mobile phones. In preparing for Aidan's (YP) birthday, staff members were keen to purchase a mobile phone for him. This was in response to their knowledge that he desperately wanted a mobile phone, but that he was unlikely to receive such a gift from anyone else present in his life. However, they believed that Aidan's use of the internet could be problematic at times, as he had previously attempted to access content which was legally limited to those aged 18. This prompted staff members to consider how they could reasonably protect Aidan from such content:

Staff members are talking about buying Aidan a mobile phone for his upcoming birthday. However, they're sharing concerns that he might visit some inappropriate websites. Despite having other young people in the house who already have mobile phones, they haven't yet set-up Parental Controls online. They were asking me for advice about this, wondering whether I had had any experience that I could share. I told them I was unsure what they could do, but that I would be happy to help them investigate. During this, Emily (SM) and Phoebe (SM) realised that their internet provider had their address wrong. Emily also found it frustrating that blocking inappropriate websites also blocked staff members from accessing the *Lottery* website that they used as a team in Bruceford. They were finding the whole system very confusing, and resigned themselves to contact the local authority IT department, as they wanted to make sure they were providing a safe environment for Aidan to use his new phone in.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

Working within the duties of child protection and young people's safety may have seemed unfair or unnecessary to the young people. Nonetheless, they formed an important facet of the wider residential care setting. This did not undermine the relational work staff members were doing – engaging with young people, understanding their wants, needs and wishes, and advising them when needed – but instead afforded opportunities for staff members to display their relationships with, knowledge of, and connectedness to the young

people in their care (Finch, 2007). In creating an environment where Aidan could safely use a mobile telephone, staff members accepted the difficulties that Aidan was going through, but demonstrated a desire for him to have access to all of the same opportunities as other young people. Their decision to buy him a mobile phone for his birthday was part of acknowledging that he was unlikely to get a 'big' present from his parents, unlike the other young people in the house. As such, they were aware that in order for him to experience what it would be like to be 'spoiled' on one's birthday, they felt they had to be the ones to spoil him. In the purchasing of a mobile phone for him, they have appreciated the relational value of objects (Miller, 2008; Lovatt, 2018). Staff members have acknowledged that Aidan will be unlike his peers if he does not have a mobile phone, and have resolved to give him the same opportunities that they have. This appeared to be a clear display of care towards Aidan, where staff members showed that they understood his wants, needs and desires. They employed Smart's (2007) 'imaginary', where one has to imagine what someone else feels about a situation, to speculate how Aidan might feel on his birthday, and how he might experience not getting a 'big' present from his parents. Here, they resolved to do what 'any other family' might do and give him the same opportunities as other young people. This happened on a number of occasions during fieldwork, and is largely interpreted as an example of the intimate relationships that exist between staff members and young people.

The Role of Outside Influences

Dominant discourses of professional practice and child protection were also evident in the outside influences on relationships, love and intimacy within the houses. Outside influences in this context is taken to mean any form of influence on daily life in the houses that was not directly related to the residential houses themselves. This included, for example, any media story, personal anecdote or wider systemic issue which was not organised by the residential houses themselves, the local authorities that they served, or the regulatory bodies involved. One such instance of outside influences impacting relationships in the residential house can be seen in Owen (SM) and Caleb's (SM) conversation below:

Owen and Caleb have been talking about a news story about a young boy who was living in residential care who died while on a bus (see BBC, 2017). The story reported how the 13-year-old had left without permission and without taking his diabetes medication with him. Owen and Caleb were defending the residential staff members involved while reflecting on how they would have acted:

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Caleb: *“I mean, he was 13! What are they meant to do? They weren’t to know he didn’t have his medication, and even if they did, they called the police and did everything they were supposed to...”*

Owen: *“Exactly! But you know someone’s going down for this! I don’t think the staff did anything wrong, but you know what it’s like. We’re the easy ones to blame...”*

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Wallacewells)

Owen and Caleb’s discussions around an emerging media story and the feelings this engendered demonstrated the everyday influence of current narratives surrounding residential child care. Current narratives which present children as in need of protection and adults as a danger to that protection, perched alongside the memory of historical abuse and the ongoing Independent Care Inquiry and Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry in Scotland, are no different. The concerns of Owen and Caleb highlight the ongoing scrutiny of staff practices. Their indication that ‘someone’s going down for this’ demonstrates an understanding that adults are ultimately held responsible for all harm that occurs to children in their care, including those which have resulted from the decisions and actions of children themselves. This conception of children as ‘in development’ and in need of adult guidance is widely acknowledged in the literature (Knapp, 1999; Handel et al., 2007; Matthews, 2007). From the data it appeared that it was the almost constant awareness of this responsibility and the sense of potential exposure and blame which impacted on the daily relational activities inside the house. The following account highlights this impact, with Owen relaying his concerns about an ex-colleague and the bearing that his friend’s treatments has had on the perception of his own roles and practices:

I spent some time in the lounge talking with Owen (SM) today. He was telling me about a friend and ex-colleague of his who has recently been accused of historical abuse towards a young person he cared for whilst working as a residential staff member. Owen didn’t seem to believe that his friend was capable of this and spoke of the effect that such accusations have on both the people accused and people currently working in residential settings.

Owen: *“I mean, he’s in his 80’s. There’s no way he did this! I don’t know why someone has come forward and accused him, but that’s what we’re up against. Sometimes I just don’t know if I’m in the right job anymore. We put ourselves out there again and again to*

care for these young people, and it just takes one of them to accuse you of something and then you find yourself in a prison cell! I mean, I just don't know if I can keep doing it. Especially when there's young people like [new resident] who just take you for granted and lash out at you all the time. I'm getting old, Nadine. This is a young man's game sometimes!"

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Stewarton)

Owen's story can be taken for what it was: an isolated incident of a staff member expressing concern about a friend. However, I would argue that his story demonstrates a wider fear among staff members, following an ever-present, although largely silent, awareness that they could be falsely accused of doing something wrong, illegal and dangerous to the children and young people in their care.

Owen's concerns were not unfounded, alongside his personal experience of a friend who has been arrested, there are countless news stories of social workers, caring professionals, and residential workers themselves who are blamed, shamed and ill-famed for oversights, misjudgements and inaction (Smith, 2013; 2017). Such outside influences cause disturbances in the interactions and relationships between staff members and young people, with Owen himself admitting that it leaves him questioning why staff members 'put ourselves out there again and again to care for these young people'. His language indicates that the wider residential setting makes it difficult to consciously and continuously open yourself to relationships with young people, if those relationships are to breakdown or to be used against you. It was unclear whether the closeness between staff members and young people that Owen seems to be referring to was desired by all staff members on a personal level, or whether it was felt to be an important part of the job they had signed up to do. Nonetheless, this feeling of closeness as dangerous is not necessarily unusual or unique, with Vincent (2016) and Smart (2016) indicating that people are likely to build defences which protect themselves from emotional hurt or turmoil in the face of unstable or ever-changing relationships. However, where residential care is concerned, these defences from emotional hurt or turmoil cause staff members to second guess themselves, over think their actions and can prevent them from wanting to develop close, intimate relationships with the children they care for. For instance, the work of Brown et al. (2018) indicates that staff members fear the repercussions of their actions, both the scrutiny they face from the wider residential sector, and the potential that young people could misinterpret their actions and report them for inappropriate behaviour. Brown et al. (2018) discuss instances where staff members even

fear saying ‘no’ to the young people they work with. Where staff members do attempt to distance themselves from the young people they work with, as a result of the scrutiny they face, the young people can be ‘starved’ of what they really need ‘someone who is there for him/her when needed’ (Howard, 2012: 41). With this in mind, the necessities of ongoing scrutiny in residential child care undoubtedly impact the ability of staff members to connect with, and invest in, their relationships with the young people they work with, should they so desire.

Historical abuses in care are also likely to have impacted young people’s perceptions of the residential setting and the relationships they undertake within that setting. Young people did not directly discuss the influence of historical abuses on their experiences of care with me, nor did I observe them doing so with anyone else. However, they did display some assertiveness when discussing what they believed they were entitled to, or in highlighting their negative opinions of decisions in the houses. For instance, Aidan’s (YP) reaction to some paperwork he received from the Children’s Hearings System caused him to become frustrated with the way his entering care was talked about:

Aidan: *“See, naw, that didnae happen! Why are they saying I punched him when I didnae? Why does it say that’s why I ended up here? That’s no what happened!”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

His words indicate an anger at incorrect information, potentially highlighting the tension that young people feel when living in a residential setting that they have little control in. The wider involvement of the Children’s Hearings System in decisions taken about the young people, as part of the political and social system of care involving other organisations and legal frameworks, causes Aidan to feel compelled to defend the story of his care as he recalls it. He seemed determined to ‘stick up’ for himself, rather than allow someone to misrepresent his experiences. Despite being instigated by outside forces, moments like this, however, have a direct impact on other people in the residential house as well. While Aidan was upset about the letter from the Children’s Hearings System, he vented his frustration to the staff members present, who are not responsible for the inaccuracies that he felt were portrayed in his paperwork. It is possible that this fear of misrepresentation lies in the narrative of residential care as risky and potentially dangerous, whereby he has worked to prevent himself from becoming silenced (Warwick, 2017). During my time in the field, the young people did seem to demonstrate some awareness of the history of residential care and the potential vulnerability of children in a regulated care sector. They were keen to ensure

that their opinions, beliefs and stories were understood and taken seriously. Aidan's indignation seemed to be an extension of this wish to be heard and appreciated.

The outside influences which impacted the residential houses seemed to do so in two key ways. Firstly, worries about how relationships could be perceived by those inside and outside of the house were intensified when something influential happened, such as a new media story about dangerous practice in residential care. Such worries could influence how staff members view their relationships with young people. Where these relationships might have been caring, intimate and even loving, the scrutiny of working in a residential setting encourages staff members to sanitise these relationships (White, 2016) and 'care about' rather than 'care for' young people (Noddings, 1984; 2002). Secondly, perceived inaccuracies caused by the wider residential context, such as Aidan's feelings regarding his Children's Hearing paperwork, demonstrate a barrier to relationships. This barrier is not ever-present, it comes and goes depending on the presence or absence of an outside influence. In Aidan's case here, the relationships he might ordinarily have in the residential house have been threatened by him having to reconsider his story, his history and his understanding of his care setting. The ability of these outside influences to 'creep up' on people is important, as these unexpected moments threaten key elements of predictability and rhythm in the residential house and people's relationships.

Being Relational within Risk and Power Dynamics

In my time at Bruceford, numerous comments were made, usually sarcastically, by staff members when acknowledging both the blame that young people placed on them for things going wrong, but also the power that young people held in complaints and criticisms. Below, we see staff members reflect on some of the comments young people have made about them, and the potential impact of those comments:

Ruby (SM) and Elijah (SM) were in the lounge before Elijah left for the day. They were talking about the young people, specifically Maddison, and what it's like to work here by exchanging anecdotes about the comments young people had been making recently:

Ruby: *"Aye, it's all Ivy's (SM) fault she [Maddison] didn't make it to school today. She only woke her up once at 9.20am..."*

Elijah: *"Aye, It's all Ivy's fault."*

Ruby: *"Aye... They'd have ye hung if they could!"*

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Elijah: *“Aye... Well, I mean, I’m just a nosey bastard!”*

Ruby: *“Aye, and I dinnae ken what I’m talking about...”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Here, the indication is that staff members are often blamed for things that ‘go wrong’ for the young people. These complaints in and of themselves represent the picture that staff had at times about the young people’s perception of them. This responsibility is echoed in the literature which indicates that adults are ‘in charge’, which results in their being held to account when the children and young people they care for ‘act up’ (Wyness, 2012). However, the messages above also demonstrate an ability on the part of staff members to bond over this ‘blame’. During the fieldwork staff were observed to exchange sarcastic remarks, bantering with each other frequently. In these moments, through sharing their experiences and recalling past events together, their staff member experiences allow them to bond with each other. They react empathetically to each other’s stories and show an understanding of one another’s situations. They also take the chance to comfort one another with stories which echo a ‘you’re not alone’ tone. Interactions such as those discussed in this example demonstrate some of Smart’s (2007) overlapping relationship concepts. For instance, in sharing stories of being blamed by young people, they create a space to recall memories and use these to form a connection. Additionally, by using their shared experiences to demonstrate their empathy towards their colleagues, one can see some of the ways that relationships become embedded, whereby people’s lives become interwoven as a result of their shared experiences and the way that these are internalised.

Where the overall culture of residential care scrutinises the work of staff members and creates an environment where fear prevails, organisations distance themselves from the actions of individual staff members, leaving them to deal with any fall out themselves (Brown et al., 2018). This lack of shared responsibility has created an environment where staff members are bonding over their individual, but shared, blame. That is, while they are individually blamed by the young people they work with, they are able to compare experiences of this blame and create a bond and intimacy between themselves. This tendency to blame individual staff members, however, has a negative impact on their ability to form close, intimate connections with the young people they work with. Where relationship-based practice aims to create space for staff members to connect with young people, working in an environment where each action is scrutinised like this results in staff members caring for young people ‘with gloves on’ (Horwath, 2000).

Nonetheless, there were very real moments of concern and worry in managing risk and power dynamics which occurred during the fieldwork. The implication is that measures which protect children from abuse and harm can be exploited in moments of anger and frustration. Staff members and young people alike can be left feeling dismayed, betrayed and unsupported when such an exploitation happens:

Just as I was leaving Bruceford I went into the downstairs office to collect my things. Ruby (SM) and Liam (SM) were in there having a conversation about recent events in the house. Ruby told me that Aidan (YP) had accused Liam of inappropriate behaviour in a *Facebook* post. Erin (YP) had raised the issue with staff members after she noticed a status he uploaded:

Ruby: *“So Erin comes down, saying ‘you’ll never guess what Aidan has done!’, and she was really annoyed, like really annoyed. She said he’d posted a status saying ‘Liam [surname] is a big peado.’”*

Me: *“No...?”*

Liam: *“Aye...”*

Ruby: *“So Liam has been off work for the past two days while we investigate. We confronted Aidan who said that he did it because he was annoyed and wanted to lash out. At no point did we think it was true! I mean, we just didn’t. But there’s procedures we need to follow, you know?”*

Me: *“Yeah, I can imagine.”*

Ruby: *“So it worked out alright, I mean he apologised and told us he didn’t mean it, he was just angry. He took the status down and he was really sorry for it. But I mean, Erin hasn’t even spoken to him since it happened, she’s raging. It just could’ve been so much worse, you know?”*

Liam: *“I mean, imagine if any of my friends or family had seen it? Imagine if people believed it?”*

Ruby: *“Liam could’ve lost his job and everything! I mean, these things ruin people’s lives. The young people in here hold so much power. They just have to say one tiny thing and it can cause so many problems. I mean, it all turned out okay, but even in this situation,*

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where we knew Liam had done nothing wrong, we still had to suspend him for two days. That's two days where he wasn't able to work or anything!"

(Fieldnotes, downstairs office, Bruceford)

The accusations levied at Liam by Aidan are discussed in a manner which suggests that the policies and procedures which resulted in Liam's suspension were followed as a precaution, indicating that there were no real moments when other staff members believed that Liam was capable of being the threat to safety that Aidan had suggested he was. Nevertheless, his accusations had a very real impact on Liam and the relationship that he felt he had shared with Aidan. Additionally, Aidan's accusations also impacted the relationship that Erin felt she had with Aidan, no longer seeming able to engage with him after 'betraying' Liam. Although the situation was resolved in a matter of days, Aidan's ability to call into question the motives and behaviours of Liam highlights the very real possibilities that staff members and young people face, where their closeness is a site of comfort and suspicion.

Situations such as these can potentially reinforce the protective nature of bureaucratic practices, and discourage closeness between staff members and young people. This is reflected in Menzies Lyth's (1988) writing, where organisations are said to prioritise bureaucratic practices as a barrier to staff members' potentially upsetting close relationships with people they are caring for. While Menzies Lyth discusses the way that policy and managers reinforce bureaucratic work, such as paperwork, to distance staff members, there is the potential that it may discourage staff members from opening themselves up to appropriate close, intimate relationships with young people. There is the potential that staff members themselves will internalise the protective nature of bureaucratic work and distance themselves from hands-on care work. This is particularly problematic when the primary task of the residential house is to provide care for young people (Menzies Lyth, 1988). While my data indicates that this was not necessarily the case, with staff members 'putting themselves out there' whether the risk of accusation was present or not, it is an important point for future residential practice, especially during a time where love is something desired for all children and young people in care.

DAILY LIFE: ROUTINES AND RITUALS AS RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF CARE

Research has indicated that residential living takes place within a milieu, where routines and rituals play an important heightened role in the daily activities of both young people and staff members (see Redl and Wineman, 1952; Maier, 1979; Smith, 2009; Punch and McIntosh, 2014). It makes sense, then, that these routines and rituals would provide an

avenue for navigating and enacting relationships to take place. From the data, through the routines and rituals of institutional life, staff members and young people could interpret, build and embody their relationships with other people in the house. The section presented here discusses these issues in more detail, paying particular attention to the relational aspects of life in the residential house as part of routines and rituals in activities and practices.

Living with Daily Routines and Rituals

Daily routines and rituals, such as mealtimes and bedtimes, formed the basis of other activities in the house, which were rarely interrupted to facilitate other jobs or activities. Given the prominence of set-mealtimes in the residential houses, these will be discussed first:

Recently, I've heard Aidan (YP) make a few comments at dinner regarding mashed potatoes. He, and occasionally other young people, will ask "*Who made these potatoes?*". Aidan in particular will then make remarks about how good or bad they were, such as "*Aw what?* [pulling a grumpy face]", "*Hmm, okay...*", "*Yay!*". Aidan had a preference for specific people's mashed potatoes, which he made clear through his small comments.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

Bruceford wasn't the only house where preference for specific people's cooking style was aired. Surprisingly, mashed potatoes themselves were a hot topic in Wallacewells as well:

George (SM) was being teased about his mashed potatoes, with both the young people and staff members present for dinner joining in on the 'banter'. Theodore (YP) made a point of highlighting how he was simply fussy about all of his mashed potatoes, whereas the others were simply joining in for fun.

(Fieldnotes, kitchen/dining room, Wallacewells)

Here, we see participants making use of mealtimes to engage in banter and sarcasm with each other. The comments made by young people indicated both a preference for specific forms of mashed potato, but also a comfort in being able to tease staff members about their cooking abilities. This comfort manifested itself often during dinner, where young people would poke fun at staff members, either with regards to something they did in the house or comments and stories they told at the dining room table. Punch and McIntosh (2014) indicate that food practices and mealtimes provided an opportunity for ordinary household

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roles, such as staff member and young person, to be abandoned in favour of an overall personhood. This allowed young people and staff members to interact with one another without the confines of their respective labels and identities in the house. Being able to engage in banter and humour like this helps the staff members and young people to form relationships with each other in the residential house. Its facilitation by routines and rituals highlights the way that people form bonds with each other in the residential house (Redl and Wineman, 1952). Forming connections is an important aspect of relationships, where emotional components of interactions are rooted in security, dependability and trustworthiness (Rabley, Preyde and Gharabaghi, 2014). The routine of mealtimes, specifically, is said to provide a safe way for staff members and young people to safely reclaim power and test relationships with each other (Punch and McIntosh, 2014).

In the following excerpts, another routine and ritual of residential life is discussed, with references made to the relational aspects of bedtime:

I left Bruceford around 10.30pm tonight. Sienna (SM) had begun to get ready for bedtime by bringing out the camp-bed that staff members sleep on. She set this up at the end of the sofas. She told me she was just pulling it out now so that she didn't need to do it later.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Sienna (SM) asked William (SM) whether he wanted to sleep downstairs or upstairs tonight, and he claimed he had no preference. As a result, he let her choose:

William: *"Ladies choice!"*

Sienna: *"Okay then. I'll sleep upstairs, since you're prone to waking up early anyway."*

William: *"Okay then."*

Sienna: *"You can sleep in that empty bedroom if you want. Elijah (SM) and Liam (SM) have been doing it, I've just not slept down here in a while. Saves you pulling out that bed and stuff,"*

William: *"I might. Did I hear someone say that you were ordering a new bed?"*

Sienna: *“Yeah, I ordered one a couple of weeks ago, but they didn’t give me a delivery date or anything.”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The routine of bedtimes for staff members was not unique, with young people following similar routines. What was unique, however, was the ability of staff members to negotiate where they would sleep. Both young people and staff had bedrooms in Bruceford, however, there was only one staff bedroom, meaning that a staff member would also need to sleep in the lounge. Sienna is shown to prepare the lounge for bedtime in the first extract, then discuss with William who should sleep where in the second extract. Here, Sienna displays intimate knowledge of William’s personal routines, whereby they discuss his preference for early-rising and his concern for her preferences. Although his comments could be said to be polite rather than sensitive to Sienna’s preferences, both Sienna and William display the relationships that they have with each other (Finch, 2007) in their debate around who should sleep where in Bruceford. By acknowledging each other’s preference and making efforts to base decisions on these preferences, Sienna and William display their concern for each other’s comfort. While their personal relationship did not seem overtly close during my fieldwork, it is in these ‘little things’ that form part of established routines that we can see how staff members might navigate their professional/personal relationships in the residential house. These ‘little things’ have been discussed in wider literature on social workers and direct work with young people. Whincup (2016) indicated that social workers viewed ‘everything you do with or for a young person’ as direct work (p.974). These ‘little things’ can become big things, particularly to young people. Where social workers were more likely to focus on set activities or the time spent with a young person, children and young people described direct work as simply talking to each other (Whincup, 2016). The overall indication is that different people view the same acts through different lenses, meaning that while it is possible that neither Sienna nor William viewed this small display of closeness as important, it can be seen as part of a larger bank of interactions between the two that influences the relationship they have with one another. This display is not uncommon in daily activities such as this.

Alongside the everyday routines of life in residential settings there were rituals associated with ‘special occasions’. These rituals are not uncommon in everyday practices inside and outside residential settings. Smith (2009), for example, states that it is normal for residential houses to display a sense of ‘this is how we do Christmas here’. Taking the

example of birthdays and Christmas, the section presented here illustrates the relational components of special occasions, where staff members and young people display (Finch, 2007) their connections with one another through a number of processes:

There are ‘Happy Birthday’ and ‘Birthday Boy’ banners on the walls, windows and front doors today. There’s also a ‘Happy Birthday’ balloon and cards in the window. These are for Aidan’s (YP) birthday. He is going to see *Billy Elliot* tonight with Sienna (SM). Ivy (SM) and Ruby (SM) are currently setting up the buffet in the dining for dinner. There is an array of party snacks, paper plates, napkins and paper cups, and the furniture has been moved to create a ‘party’ atmosphere. The table is now against the wall and the chairs have been arranged in a semi-circle so that people can sit around and chat. Aidan’s sister and his dad are also visiting as part of the birthday celebrations.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

.....

It’s Sam’s (YP) birthday today, but I’ve been told he is going straight to his mum’s after school. There are birthday cards on display, but there aren’t any banners or balloons here.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The contrasting examples of birthday rituals highlight the role that relationships play in determining which routines and rituals are adopted and which are not. Where Aidan’s birthday is celebrated with banners, balloons, cards and a buffet dinner, Sam has chosen not to celebrate his in the same way, electing for a display of cards and a visit to his mum’s instead. These two encounters represent the extremes of the birthday celebration spectrum. Where Aidan chooses to take part in birthday celebration with other members of the residential house, Sam opts for the most minimal birthday expression I witnessed during fieldwork. Maddison (YP) and Erin (YP) also had birthdays during my time in Bruceford, and these were met with celebrations somewhat in the middle of Aidan’s and Sam’s. It appeared that the staff members and other young people were able to act according to the wants and wishes of each individual young person, adapting routines, rhythms and rituals to highlight an emotional connectedness highly influential in relationship navigation (see Redl and Wineman, 1952; Smith et al., 2013).

In the lead-up to the festive season, I spent the month in Bruceford where decorations were on display, Christmas dinner and presents were discussed, and staff members and young people alike shared their stories of personal routines and rituals at Christmas time. These experiences functioned alongside the daily routines and rituals of residential life, but culminated in a Christmas gathering in Bruceford:

There was a ‘Christmas Gathering’ in Bruceford today and Phoebe (SM) made an effort to invite me along. There are also a number of other people here that aren’t ordinarily present. Sam’s (YP) family is here, as is Erin’s. There are also some social workers and the *Who Cares? Scotland* advocate is also here. Given the new young person arriving so close to Christmas, Phoebe has also invited a teacher from her school that she is close to. The dining room was set-up with a buffet, the furniture had been moved and the seats were arranged in a ‘party’ style semi-circle, allowing everyone to mingle. The Christmas decorations are also on display, as they have been since the beginning of December.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

As an observer of such events it seemed that the celebration of Christmas was a conscious effort of staff members to be sensitive to the experiences of young people outside of the house, making a ‘big deal’ about the festive season and attempting to do for the young people what they would want to do for their own children (Scottish Government, 2008; Smith, 2009). Similar efforts were made in Stewarton and Wallacewells, where the managers of these houses would throw a Christmas party in Stewarton for all current and former residents, as well as their families. I was invited to their Christmas party in December 2016, before fieldwork began, as it coincided with my efforts to negotiate access to the fieldsites. These rituals reflect a wider sensitivity within residential child care to provide young people with experiences akin to those that occur in ordinary everyday life. The sensitivity in inviting the young people’s families and the new young person’s teacher was an added relational touch which suggested an element of relational display in the routines and rituals of special occasions (see Finch, 2007; Smith et al., 2013).

In exploring the ritualised behaviour of birthdays and Christmas, it is possible to see how staff members and young people made efforts to replicate family-like activities during special occasions. Moments such as these highlight the way that people practiced their relationships with one another (Morgan, 1996; 2011a; 2011b). Morgan (1996) discussed

family practices as reflecting efforts to behave like a family through everyday activities. Examples include having family meals together, playing board games or, as is shown here, celebrating birthdays and significant holidays. By throwing a party for Aidan's (YP) birthday and for Christmas, the staff members and young people demonstrate that they are 'just like' any other family. However, in tailoring their responses to Aidan's and Sam's (YP) birthdays, they engage in some of what Finch (2007; 2011) describes as displaying families. Here, the idea is that people work to show others how their relationships are 'family-like' by partaking in activities which can be seen to be family activities. Similarly to Morgan (1996; 2011a; 2011b), the birthdays allow people in Bruceford to demonstrate their family-like connections. By throwing a party for Aidan and arranging for Sam to visit his mum's house, the staff members and young people are also displaying what they know about Aidan and Sam, and what will make them happy on their special days. This appeared to be an important aspect of life in the residential houses, where staff members in particular would work hard to make sure that the young people had their individual needs and interests respected, while trying to create an environment where everyone could have the same experiences, if they wanted them.

While the work of Morgan (1996; 2011a; 2011b) and Finch (2007; 2011) is specific to families, which residential care is not, they both emphasize that their concept can be used to contexts which loosely resemble families. For Morgan (2011a: 65) he commits to continue to '...write about "family practices" while recognising that the very fluidity of the term as I have developed it allows me to think about intimate or personal practices as well'. It is this fluidity which has allowed their theories to be used to explore residential child care in other work (see McIntosh et al, 2011; Emond et al., 2014; Punch and McIntosh, 2013). Nonetheless, there are particular tensions around residential care as family-like, as opposed to family. These include Sam's decision to spend his birthday with his biological family, rather than in the residential house. Decisions like this re-emphasise the role of the residential house as providing care to young people outside of their families, and while staff members and young people are respectful of this, special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas remind those in the residential house of the relationships that exist outside, and the boundaries created by the residential house.

Living Outside Routines and Rituals

Although routines and rituals played an important function in both daily life and in navigating relationships, there were many activities which took place outside of these

routines and rituals. Some of these replaced existing routines and rituals, such as leaving the house to visit somewhere new or staff members making an extra effort to engage young people in activities that they were interested in. Two such examples include taking Aidan (YP) to an audition in Glasgow and going away for the evening with Maddison (YP) to Edinburgh:

Aidan and Liam (SM) have gone to Glasgow today as Aidan has an audition for a modelling/talent agency. Phoebe (SM) and Aidan have been trying to set this up for a while.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Ruby (SM), Florence (SM) and Maddison are staying in a hotel in Edinburgh tonight, as they are going to see *Billy Elliot* in town. They invited me along to dinner with them, which I thought was nice. I've met them at the hotel and they've been telling me all about their day:

Florence: *"We went for a spa, didn't we? [gesturing to Maddison] And we have lunch down beside the sea. It's been a good day so far, hasn't it? [looking towards Maddison again]"*

Maddison: *"Yeah, we did."*

I had dinner with the three of them and we engaged in small talk, where Maddison remarked that her drink was *"basically a cocktail, but without the alcohol"* and asked Florence and Ruby questions about what it's like to go on holiday with friends and whether they thought she would be the kind of person to go on holiday to places like Ibiza.

(Fieldnotes, restaurant, Bruceford)

These activities demonstrated ways in which staff members adapted to each young person's individual hobbies and interests. The willingness to forego established routines and rituals to cater to young people's wants and wishes suggested a flexibility of residential living which is not always discussed in narratives of residential child care. This flexibility allowed intimate aspects of relationships to shine through, such as painstakingly organising both of these outings to enable the young people to have experiences that they would not ordinarily have. Although much of this Chapter has focused on the bureaucratic, and sometimes

institutional, aspects of life in residential settings, these examples demonstrate that young people had a degree of support to explore their hobbies and extend their social boundaries. Doing so highlighted to young people that staff members valued their spare time activities, as well as their overall happiness. It can also be interpreted as an acceptance of those activities, and of a display of closeness. In organising an outing for the young people which celebrates something they are interested in, staff members display (Finch, 2007; 2011) a familiarity with the young people, demonstrating that they are indeed connected to one another. In Finch's (2007; 2011) notion of displaying families, the processes people embark upon to show others that they have a close bond and 'do what families do' is witnessed in the measures that staff members take to provide young people with exciting and interesting opportunities.

Adapting Established Practices

Although daily life in the residential houses often followed a pattern of established routines, rituals and practices, these established practices were sometimes adapted, at the request of a young person or staff member. One such example involves a request from Aidan (YP) to be allowed to listen to music during dinner:

During the staff meeting today Phoebe (SM) wanted to discuss Aidan being allowed to listen to the radio during dinner time:

Phoebe: *"So Aidan has come to me and asked that he be allowed to listen to the radio during dinner. I know this has been allowed in the past, but I said we needed to discuss it and then decide."*

Most staff members said they couldn't see any issues, but Ruby (SM) commented: *"We stopped it because it just caused arguments. He would get up and down from his seat, changing the channel because he didn't like a certain song and turning the volume up all the time."*

A discussion ensued where staff members tried to come up with solutions.

Phoebe: *"If we leave it in the lounge then he can't get up and down to change it?"*

Liam (SM): *"The trouble is, what I think is loud is different to what others think is loud..."*

Oliver (SM): *"Choosing a channel that everyone likes isn't easy either."*

Ivy (SM): *“The trouble is, he just doesn’t like awkward silence at the table and having to make conversation. He just wants something to fill that void.”*

Ruby: *“He’d be happy with the TV on if he could see the reflection in the fish tank.”*

The conversation continued for quite some time, with all of the staff members taking turns to give their reasons for or against Aidan being allowed to listen to the radio. They decided to give it a try and see how Aidan got on with it, but they wanted to make it clear that this was a trial period and not a final decision.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

Here, we can see the interplay of complex decision-making practices that were not uncommon in the residential settings. In outlining the steps taken to determine whether Aidan could listen to music during dinner, it seemed that coming to a decision was not an easy task. First, Aidan asks Phoebe whether the radio can be playing in the background (step one). Phoebe takes this request to a team meeting (step two). The staff members present discuss whether the request is valid, and what impact the decision to play music during mealtimes could have (step three). A decision is then made to ‘test’ whether playing music during mealtimes is distracting, problematic or troublesome, before making a final decision (step four). A final decision is then made after testing, which is not explored in this segment of data, determining whether Aidan can be allowed to play music during dinner on a regular basis (step five).

This five-step process represents the request, consultation and determination phases of decision-making processes in the house. In all three houses decisions were rarely made without consulting other members of the staff team, or other young people. This is highlighted by Menzies Lyth (1988) who argues that team-members share decision-making to prevent any singular person from being held responsible for the implications of that decision. In this case, the final decision rested with Phoebe, the manager of Bruceford, and the other staff members present in the staff meeting. This complex interplay, rooted in what could be described as workplace practices, highlights a relational component of life in the houses – deciding to adapt established practices was not overtly straight-forward. Aidan’s wants and needs are considered in great detail, as too are the wants and needs of the other residents (and the staff members themselves). These processes can be viewed as highlighting a relational awareness of other people: an understanding of other’s (potential) desires which

can be attributed to elements of closeness and relational bonds (Smart, 2007). A relational awareness such as this indicates that decision-making processes were complex, not necessarily because of institutional policies and practices, but because there were many different people, personalities and preferences that needed to be considered. In and of itself, this demonstrates the overwhelming influence that the everyday navigation of relationships can have on residential life.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this Chapter was to explore the ways that staff members and young people navigated and enacted the relationships that they experienced in the residential houses as part of the wider setting of residential child care. The main arguments presented focused on the roles that bureaucratic processes, children's rights and child protection, decision making practices, and routines and rituals played in these encounters. What has been suggested is that while relationships in residential child care are complex entities in and of themselves, they are both hindered and facilitated by residential child care being a workplace and a homeplace.

The findings presented here outline how staff members and young people work within bureaucratic processes to build their relationships, but also how bureaucracies can disrupt relational practices from taking place. This demonstrated how staff members and young people live and work within the wider policy and bureaucratic aspects of life in residential settings. The indication that bureaucratic and managerial processes were situated in everyday care, but also interrupted this care (Menzies Lyth, 1988) was evident in the residential houses. In discussing the influence of bureaucratic practices in this Chapter, the findings indicate that relationships are enacted through these practices, but are also interrupted by them (see research question 1: How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?). The same is true of the need to work alongside children's rights and child protection. Conceptualising children as vulnerable and in need of protection (Jenks et al., 1998), alongside the literature which demonstrates a continued impact of historical abuse on residential practice (Kendrick and Smith, 2002; Smith, 2009; Warkwick, 2017), impacts the relationships that staff members and young people can develop in residential care. The ability of staff members to form loving, intimate connections with young people without fear of accusations or repercussions is difficult to manage in an environment which advocates for relational practice alongside protective measures (see McWilliam and Jones, 2005; Smith, 2009) (see research question 3: What

impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?).

In the section on *Daily Life* the role of routines, rhythms and rituals in relationship development and navigation is discussed. Here, the way that staff members and young people used routine activities, such as mealtimes, to enact their relationships became apparent. Where Punch and McIntosh (2014) argue that mealtimes present a safe space for relationships to occur, the role of routines and rituals in providing an element of predictability to residential life is also highlighted (Maier, 1979; Smith, 2009; Garfat and Fulcher, 2013). These routines, rhythms and rituals were an important aspect of ‘doing’ everyday residential care and relationships. They both allowed relationships to take place, blossoming and flourishing, but they also hindered them, presenting barriers to enacting relationships. However, daily routines, rhythms and rituals also needed to be flexible, allowing for relationships and young people’s needs to influence relationships, rather than the other way around (Garfat and Fulcher, 2013; Steckley, 2013). On the whole, relationships were a central part of people’s daily routines, rhythms and rituals, and they played an important role in everyday experiences of residential care for both staff members and young people (see research question 4: What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?).

Overall, while the current narrative of residential child care highlights the importance of love and intimacy, it is clear that love and intimacy is something that residential houses can struggle to provide within the context of residential care. Where bureaucratic processes, children’s rights and child protection are concerned, staff members’ actions are scrutinised (White, 2016), and close relationships are discouraged (Brown et al., 2018). While routines and rituals can provide an avenue for some close relationships to develop (Punch and McIntosh, 2014), they can also interrupt relationships as other daily activities are prioritised. While many displays of intimacy are discussed in this Chapter, and these should be celebrated, especially given the barriers present, the main argument is that there is work to be done to facilitate loving and intimate relationships in residential child care and remove barriers to these relationships. The following Chapter seeks to explore the use of the residential space in relationship navigation. The different uses of space by both staff members and young people are explored, alongside the influence of this use on relational practices.

CHAPTER 6: AMBIVALENCE AROUND RELATIONSHIPS IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

Ambivalent relationships were witnessed in all three residential houses. Staff members in particular seemed to struggle to reconcile their professional roles with their personal feelings. Young people also appeared to face difficulties with navigating relationships in the residential houses, both questioning the role of staff members' and their own feelings about others in the houses. At a time where intimacy and love in residential care is at the forefront of policy and practice (Scottish Government, 2008; Duncalf, 2010; Brooks, 2018), the data in this study demonstrates the difficulties that staff members and young people faced when navigating their relationships with one another. While the literature states that young people and staff members should be able to have close relationships with one another, and that these should be supported by policy and practice (Howard, 2012; Smith et al., 2013), it was clear that there remained some ambivalence in people's relationships in the residential house. This ambivalence seemed to stem from the duality of the residential house as a workplace and a homeplace, whereby staff members and residents were aware of the boundaries and limits to their closeness. This aspect of relationships is worth exploring further, especially in a climate which encourages professionalism and struggles to incorporate personal relationships (see Smith, 2009). As such, this Chapter provides will begin by looking at the different ways that people connect with one another in the house, before moving to discuss emotional aspects of relationships, how belonging is created in the residential space, and the inherent complexities of relationships in residential care, specifically in relation to the workplace/homeplace dyad.

This Chapter seeks to build on the discussion presented in Chapter 5 and answer all four of the following research questions:

- (1) How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?
- (2) How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?
- (3) What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?
- (4) What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS IN THE RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

The aim of this section is to outline the different ways that people in residential child care connect with one another. The key themes which arose in the research included spending time with one another, sharing aspects of one's life, and giving and receiving advice. Both staff members and young people engaged in these types of interactions in the houses, either deliberately as a display of their relationships and connections, or unconsciously through their daily practices. The different ways that people used these aspects of daily life to connect will be explored, as will their relation to the wider research literature.

Spending Time with One Another

An everyday occurrence in all three houses involved watching television. Often, staff members and young people would watch television with other people in the house. At times, this was coincidental: a staff member or young person would walk into the lounge and take a seat while someone else was already immersed in a television show. At other times, the activity was intentional: staff members and young people would plan to watch television with others in the house.

Ruby (SM) and Aidan (YP) are in the lounge watching *Dance Moms* on the television. This is a programme I have heard Aidan talk about previously. Ruby has been asking him questions about the show and the people in it:

Ruby: "*So who is she then?*"

Aidan: "*She's the dance coach.*"

Ruby: "*She's not a very nice woman, is she? Look at her shouting!*"

Aidan: "*Yeah, she's always like that.*"

Ruby: "*Oh, he just fell!*"

Aidan: "*Look how good they are.*"

Ruby: "*He'll get marks off for that though, won't he?*"

Aidan: "*Yeah, he will.*"

[A short time passes where no one makes any comments]

Aidan: "*She's famous, that one.*" [pointing to the television]

Ruby: *"Which one?"*

Aidan: *"That one [pointing to the television again] – she has been in a Sia video."*

Ruby: *"Oh really?"*

Aidan: *"Yeab. Look [he pulls out his phone to show Ruby the Sia video]..."*

Ruby: *"Oh aye, I've seen that before. That's her?!"*

Aidan: *"She's the best one in the show."*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Luna (SM) and Bella (SM) were watching *Dirty Grandpa* in the lounge with one of the young people. They had the lights turned down and the curtains closed, mimicking a cinema atmosphere. While the young person laughed along with the jokes and pointed out his favourite parts to Luna and Bella, the staff members seemed less than impressed. They made small comments about how rude the film was, although they seemed to be doing so for the young person's benefit, attempting to 'wind them up'. Nonetheless, they did exchange comments such as:

Luna: *"Are you getting any of this?"*

Bella: *"Not really, it isn't my cup of tea..."*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Wallacewells)

These extracts highlight both coincidental and intentional television watching between staff members and young people. Ruby walked into the lounge in Bruceford while Aidan was already watching television. As such, she spent some time asking him questions about the show, listening to his opinions of the characters, and generally showing an interest in what was occurring. It may be argued that this as an attempt on Ruby's behalf to show Aidan that she was interested in the things he was interested in, and wanted to get to know more about the things he liked. While not overtly discussed as an attempt to enhance their relationship, Ruby seemed to be trying to build a stronger bond with Aidan. Ruby showing an interest in the show that Aidan is watching is a key example of how people attempt to build close relationships with one another. Smart (2007) argues that shared interests are important for people's initial interpretations of one another. In presenting herself as

interested in the same things as Aidan, Ruby is showing him that she is interested in *him* as a person, not simply the shows that he watches (Miller, 2010).

In the second excerpt, staff members had arranged to watch *Dirty Grampa* with one of the young people. They comment that neither of them are understanding the film, or to that matter enjoying the film, but have clearly stayed through it to appease the young person and show an interest in things that he enjoys. These aspects of showing an interest are discussed as being a component of relational care in residential settings (Rabley et al., 2014). Where staff members are tasked with caring for young people, these efforts to get to know them better seem to stem from their desire to care for them, or the expectation that they should. They also follow established family practices (Morgan, 1996), where parents will sit through movies and television shows with their children in order to show them that they care about their interests and that they place their happiness at the centre of the family.

There were times where staff members would also spend time with other staff members. Again, this could happen through watching television or ‘chilling out’ together, but it could also involve displaying intimate knowledge about other staff members (Finch, 2007). The following extracts show how staff members could display intimate knowledge about each other. This knowledge is not intimate in a romantic nature, but demonstrates an interest in other staff members’ ongoing life events and ‘outside’ interests.

Ruby (SM) and Elijah (SM) were in the lounge watching television together. They spent some time discussing Scarlett’s (SM) wedding and the way that staff members get time off in Bruceford. Elijah had asked Ruby if they had had a good night at the wedding, with Ruby replying that it had been a great night. Elijah was also complaining to Ruby that he hardly ever gets time off for staff nights out and stuff, and how he would have wanted to go to Scarlett’s wedding if he had been given the time off. Ruby sympathised with him, saying that she is usually in the same position – hardly ever getting time off to attend nights out or the Christmas party.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Owen (SM) and Caleb (SM) are talking about an upcoming holiday they both have, where they will be going to play golf together. Caleb also elaborated to say that they had previously been on holiday together, somewhat

accidentally, whereby they were coincidentally holidaying in the same place. Knowing that they would both be there at the same time, they arranged to meet together and relax with both of their wives, having lunch and dinner on occasion.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Wallacewells)

Talking about these outside interests and intimate knowledge of each other in the ‘open’ public spaces of the residential house demonstrated the display of closeness referred to previously. It also shows the manner in which staff members can begin to feel comfortable in the residential milieu. By spending time together outside of the house, in the case of Scarlett’s wedding and Owen and Caleb’s holidays, staff members allow their relationships to transcend the physical space of the residential house (Emond, 2016). In transcending this space, the relationships grow in significance to those involved. In Smart’s (2007) terminology, creating memories and shaping a biography together is a component of personal relationships whereby people spend time with one another. The creation of memories and biography is witnessed in the data above, where staff members shared stories of their lives involving activities they have taken part in together. This creation of memories is a key component of forming intimate relationships with other people, as Baxter (2004a; 2004b) notes. Baxter demonstrates the significance of shared time-space experiences, that is ‘chronotopic similarity’, in developing and navigating one’s relationships. The argument is that chronotopic similarity relies upon people taking part in both ‘mundane communication’ and ‘major events’, with Scarlett’s wedding and Owen and Caleb’s holidays demonstrating these ‘major events’. This chronotopic similarity is the basis from which many relationships are transformed and maintained. In deciding to spend time together and make memories, people communicate to one another that they are important to each other.

Just as staff members would spend time with each other outside of the house, something common in general workplace relationships, young people would also spend time with staff members and other young people outside of the house. During fieldwork, I only accompanied people from the residential houses on ‘outings’ twice, once on a trip near the house with Aidan (YP) and Sienna (SM), and once on a trip to Edinburgh with Ruby (SM), Florence (SM) and Maddison (YP). Both of these outings occurred in Bruceford. The outing detailed below involved Sienna (SM) and Aidan (YP), who had planned to go a walk in a nearby area and invited me along with them. This invite was instigated by Phoebe (SM) in her role as manager, who was aware that I was interested in seeing life both inside and

outside of the house with all participants in Bruceford. As such, Sienna suggested that I walk with Aidan and her, and after confirming that Aidan was okay with this, I accompanied them. The following excerpt is lengthy, but provides valuable context for the entire activity:

Sitting in the living room, Aidan was complaining about not having any plans for the day. Sienna suggested that they could go out a walk for a while, inviting him to come with her to her house to collect her dog, before carrying on to walk somewhere nearby. Aidan was excited by this, referencing previous times that he and Sienna had gone to collect her dog and take her for a walk. This time, Sienna invited me along as well, and Aidan agreed that this would be fun. We all got into Sienna's car, with me sitting in the front, to drive to her house and collect her dog:

Me: *"Do you want to sit in the front?"*

Aidan: *"No, it's okay, you can sit in the front"*

Sienna: *"Well, you'll both have to sit in the back once we collect the dog, because she needs to sit in the front"*

Me: *"How about I sit in the front on the way there, and on the way back from Sienna's once we have dropped the dog back off, you can sit in the front?"*

Aidan: *"Okay then!"*

While driving to Sienna's house, Aidan began to reflect on where he had initially wanted to go for a walk. He discussed this with Sienna:

Aidan: *"Do we have to go to that place?"*

Sienna: *"Well, where else would you like to go?"*

Aidan: *"You know the woods near your house?"*

Sienna: *"Yeab..."*

Aidan: *"Can we go there?"*

Sienna: *"But there isn't really very much to do there..."*

Aidan: *"Yeab, but I liked it when we went there last time. And it isn't such a big walk for a day like today."*

Sienna: *"That's true. Well, we can go there if you want?"*

Aidan: *"Yeab, I'd like to go there!"*

Sienna: *"Are you alright with that, Nadine?"*

Me: *"Yeab, I'm happy to go anywhere! I haven't been to either place, so I don't really mind where we go."*

Sienna: *"It'll probably be better with your sore knee and the boots you have on anyway."*

We arrived at Sienna's house to pick up her dog, and we walked up to her door together. Once opened, the dog came running out to us, and Sienna went in to collect her lead. Aidan and I got into the back seat of Sienna's car, before Sienna settled her dog into the front seat. We drove the short distance to the woods near her house and proceeded to have an enjoyable afternoon walking around. At times, Aidan was running with Sienna's dog off the lead, throwing sticks for her and encouraging her to chase after them. At other points, Aidan went off on his own to climb up the side of an abandoned building, or go over to the nearby fields and see what was in them. During these moments, Sienna took the opportunity to talk to me about Aidan and how she felt towards him.

Sienna: *"Look at him. He's a good kid really. Yeab, he's had his problems, but look how happy he is just running around..."*

Me: *"I can't believe he was able to climb that wall. I don't think I'd have got up there if my life depended on it!"* [laughter]

Sienna: [laughter] *"Nab, me neither. This is the kind of stuff he enjoys, you know? Exploring what's going on around him. It's a shame that he's made some silly decisions that mean he doesn't get out on his own to do this stuff. I just wish we could trust him more out in the community."*

Me: *"I'm sure he'll get there. The two of you seem to get on really well."*

Sienna: *"Yeab, we do. He's been with us since he was about 12 and I've been there since that happened. I've had him out on his skates, getting pulled along by the dog before, and he loved it! He was so young then, and in some ways he's just flourished since coming, but in others... He just seems to be unable to control himself sometimes."*

Me: *“Yeah, it must be hard for you and for him.”*

(Fieldnotes, woods, Bruceford)

The outing with Aidan and Sienna provided an opportunity to see how staff members and young people navigated their relationships outside of the house. In this instance, Sienna offered Aidan some leeway in activities, allowing him to choose the location of their walk on the way there, rather than stipulating that this be decided before leaving the house. Her willingness to bend the boundaries of her usual role of decision-maker seemed to show Aidan that she trusted him and wanted to do something that he would enjoy, rather than something dictated by her. Additionally, in bringing her dog with us, Sienna shows a comfort with Aidan knowing where she lives and having access to her pet. Taking Sienna’s dog with us on our walk could communicate to Aidan that she feels he ‘belongs’ in her life (May, 2013), as their ability to bond over playing with her dog on the walk was something unique to them. There is an intimacy to their relationships here, as Sienna has acknowledged that her bond with Aidan is not firmly fixed within the residential house, but is something that persists in different spaces and contexts (Emond, 2016). She seemed to genuinely enjoy spending time with him outside of the house, and allowing him to express himself while there. Aidan, in particular, was a young person who did not socialise outside of Bruceford very often. Additionally, his socialisation outside of the house was rarely independent: in other words, Aidan was ordinarily supervised when outside of the house. By allowing him the leeway suggested by Maier (1979) in everyday practices, Sienna demonstrated that she trusted Aidan and that her atonement to his needs and wishes was valuable. Relationally speaking, Aidan and Sienna’s outing was a process through which they practiced their relationship with one another, choosing to go on an outing in the same way that other families might (Morgan, 1996; 2011a; 2011b). However, the decisions that Sienna made regarding access to her own home demonstrate an effort on her behalf to show care in a ‘safe’ way. She did not want to be seen as getting ‘too close’ to the young people she worked with, and chose to remain firm in some of her boundaries (Brown et al., 2018).

Sharing Aspects of One’s Life

In sharing aspects of one’s life, it appeared that the relationships between and amongst staff members and young people in the residential houses grew, developing a depth of knowledge about those they lived and worked with and using that information to demonstrate the closeness that people shared. For instance, such shared knowledge would form topics of conversation and the basis for spending time together (as outlined above).

There were three dominant types of sharing: young people sharing with staff members, staff members sharing with each other, and young people sharing with each other. The difference between these three themes highlights the ways that people in the house would trust others with the information they shared and the relative selectivity of that sharing. Where some things that were shared were deeply personal and intimate, many were simply everyday pieces of information, although they were clearly still important to the people sharing them.

During the staff meeting, that I was a part of, Amelia (SM) had shared with the group that Aidan (YP) had confided in her a couple of weeks ago about living with his dad. She seemed to value this:

“That’s the first time he’s ever spoke to me about anything like that.”

She said he had mentioned having no food and being dirty, and that he disliked the word ‘poverty’.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Although I did not witness the information sharing that Amelia discussed in the team meeting, it was apparent that she valued Aidan trusting her with this information. Her statement, *“that’s the first time he’s ever spoke to me about anything like that”*, seemed filled with emotion at the time. Whether Aidan had intended this to be the case or not is unclear, but Amelia really valued Aidan’s trust in her. She seemed to view this trust, and his confiding in her, as a demonstration that their relationship was becoming closer and more intimate. Amelia’s acknowledgement that he had not spoken to her like this before demonstrates the memories that she holds of Aidan, and the importance of this interaction to her in their relationship going forward. Using Jamieson’s (2011) concept of practicing intimacy, Amelia considers Aidan’s confiding in her as a practice of intimacy, where she is now able to show how their relationship with each other is done. Staff members in general valued their connections to young people, just as young people valued their connections to staff members (Emond, 2016; Vincent, 2016). In sharing these aspects of one’s life, we see some of Baxter’s (1990) relational dialectics played out, where staff members and young people use conversations to bond. Here, Aidan’s discussion with Amelia seemed to influence how she now viewed their relationship, showing her that the work she had put into getting to know Aidan and show him she could be trusted was being rewarded.

In the data presented below, an example of staff members sharing aspects of their lives with each other can be seen. Grace, Emily and Sienna reflect on what it was like to

grow up in the local area, with Sienna and Emily in particular discussing their shared experiences with a travelling community:

Grace (SM), Emily (SM) and Sienna (SM) were sitting at the dining room table after eating lunch. They were talking about the local area and where they grew up. They were reflecting on what it was like when they were growing up in the area:

Emily: *“They want it to be like it was when we were wee – out until 10 o’clock at night, hanging about the streets and stuff. But they forget that doing that now means getting drunk, doing drugs or smoking a bit of blow. They just dinnae understand.”*

Grace: *“Aye, a ken.”*

Emily: *“I mean, when I was wee everybody knew everybody. But ye knew not to go into like the Gypsy community and stuff. I was always told as a woman not to even go in there. They wouldn’t let you in there.”*

Sienna: *“Really? See, I’ve been in there. They let me in there.”*

Emily: *“Really?”*

Sienna: *“Aye. It was when I was still with my daughter’s dad. We had been out and he’d walked away and left me walking that back road. I had stopped to use the pay phone, and this guy came out to see how I was doing. I had been crying and that, and he said ‘Aw ben, come in, we’ll call you a taxi’ and stuff. I never even gave it a seconds thought, sitting in his caravan and stuff!”*

Emily: *“Aw really? Maybe that was because of your situation and stuff?”*

Sienna: *“Aye, maybe.”*

Emily: *“But when I was wee we knew everybody and it was one of those situations where if you had any soup and stuff left, then you’d be feeding the whole street with it. It’s just no like that anymore.”*

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

Although the indication here is that both Emily and Sienna had different experiences of the traveller community, what is clear is their ability to understand the settings in which their memories took place. Their shared biography of the local area and of similar childhoods (despite an age-gap of sorts, with Emily indicating to me in her interview that she used to

work with Sienna's mum) allowed them to share the experience of their memories more effectively. Smart's (2007) suggestion that biography is important in personal relationships is useful for interpreting Emily and Sienna's interaction and sharing. In sharing stories of their experiences, there is the potential that the bond between Sienna and Emily increases, where their relationship becomes stronger because of the part of their lives that they have shared. Should Sienna and Emily have chosen to share this memory with other people in the house, the level of understanding and interpretive ability might have been diminished. What is worth noting is that Emily knew Sienna's mum, who used to work in Bruceford before Sienna did. Their connection transcends the residential house, where they are connected not just by shared experiences in the community, but by someone else. When it comes to building and strengthening relationships, sharing this understanding and personal connection presents an opportunity for Sienna and Emily to let their guard down around one another, knowing that they do not necessarily have to retain their professional persona as they share personal connections as well. In Goffman's (1959) work on interactions, the ability to let one's guard down around others forms a key part of trusting those we interact with. In abandoning, or pausing, their professional 'front' in order to discuss things happening outside of the residential house, Sienna and Emily have shown that they are comfortable around each other. While this cannot be stated for certain, the people, places and things that connected people in the residential house became clearer when participants shared aspects of their lives with each other.

Of course, not all instances of sharing aspects of one's life were met with such enthusiasm. Frequently, staff members would talk to the young people about their lives, such as their hobbies, interests, or 'what it was like when I was wee' stories. In these encounters, young people would, at times, show interest and respond positively to the stories, encouraging staff members to continue and asking for more details. However, in what might be considered a typical teenage reaction, there were many instances of young people showing little interest in the staff member's life. One such example is presented between William (SM) and Aidan (YP):

William was just telling Aidan that he has joined a choir, suggesting that he's taking a leaf from Aidan's stage school book. He was trying to joke with Aidan, talking about his singing voice and stage presence. Aidan seemed really unimpressed, answering with phrases such as "and?" or "okay".

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

While witnessing this interaction between William and Aidan, it seemed clear to me that Aidan was simply not interested in learning about William's life. William and Aidan were not particularly close. William's attempts to engage Aidan in conversation about his joining a choir, something that Aidan might have been seen to be interested in given his ongoing engagement in stage school classes, seems like a reasonable attempt to create some sort of bonding between the two. This is a common tactic in relationships, where people make small talk with one another to try and establish common areas of interest to connect over (see Smart, 2007; Sias, 2009; Rabley, Preyde and Gharabaghi, 2014). In this instance, Aidan was not interested in William's sharing, but William's attempt to share remains noteworthy. As he was relatively new in the residential house, his attempts to discuss parts of his life seemed to occur more frequently at times, as he attempted to form a relationship with people he worked with and cared for.

Given the culture of residential care as described in Chapter 2, there were instances, particularly among the adults in each residential house, where people were actively encouraged not to share aspects of their lives with each other. One such example involved staff members in Bruceford dissuading me from talking to young people about where I live:

I was in the kitchen with Florence (SM) and Emily (SM) trying to describe where I live when Emily interrupted me to say that she thinks one of the young people's friends lives near me. I confirmed her thoughts, telling her I knew the person she was talking about. She told me not to let the young person know where I live, but I explained that they had already figured out I live there, but they did not know which house exactly.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

At the point of this conversation, young people in Bruceford were typically aware of the general location of my house. One young person in particular knew where my house was in slightly more detail, as they had a friend who lived nearby. This was not something that concerned me at all, however, it was clear that staff members were wary of young people knowing the location of adults' houses. This was despite previously learning that many of the young people knew where many of the staff members lived, because they were in the local area and young people were able to recognise their cars, or would see them walking near their homes. This particular instance of not sharing reflects the fear that staff members feel when it comes to being personal and relational in residential settings (Brown et al., 2018). The rise of 'professionalism' in residential child care has led to the censoring of information

such as this (Smith, 2009). The practice of choosing not to share where you live seems to indicate a preference to create boundaries in the relationship that staff members have with young people, particularly physical boundaries. While they were allowed to know where young people lived, through virtue of working in the residential house, the same was not always afforded of young people. This is not an issue for their relationships, per se, but reflects the wider practice of relying on bureaucratic and managerial rules to govern activities in the residential house (Menzies Lyth, 1988). It can also have a negative impact on close relationships in the residential house, as young people may feel excluded from parts of the staff members' lives. There is a particular difficulty in creating loving, intimate relationships between staff members and young people when such a relationship can be perceived as one-sided, with staff members in control of what young people know about them and young people unable to cross some divides. For instance, Moore et al.'s (2018) discussion of 'boundary concerns' demonstrates that boundaries between staff members and young people can have a negative impact on their relationships. Where bureaucratic and managerial rules are in place to protect staff members and the organisation as a whole, they can prevent intimate relationships from forming and be internalised by staff members as a necessary part of forming boundaries. Although not something largely problematic in the study reported here, the message seemed clear: sharing is alright, so long as you do not share 'too much' (Brown et al., 2018).

Advice Seeking, Giving and Receiving as an Aspect of Connecting

The giving and receiving of advice formed a common aspect of daily life in all three residential houses. Often, three main forms of advice could be seen: staff members giving staff members advice, staff members giving young people advice, and young people giving each other advice. In all of these situations, there is also an element of seeking advice. The data presented here demonstrates that advice was often sought from the receiver before being given. Granted, there were moments of unsolicited advice, but these were not as frequent. To being, staff members giving staff members advice is discussed:

Phoebe (SM) had been given a consent letter from her granddaughter's school. I was in the dining room while she was discussing the letter with Ivy (SM) and Ruby (SM):

Phoebe: *"So it's saying 'help us to share our story with the world.' So they want this to be public? For everyone?"*

Ivy: *“Oh, I don’t know. My kids’ school had one when they were at camp but only parents at the school could see it.”*

Ruby: *“But you’re not even allowed to take photos at school shows or anything...”*

Phoebe: *“Oh now, they’re always snapping away at my granddaughter’s school!”*

Ivy: *“Really? We’re never allowed to do that!”*

Me: *“I can remember when I was at school people were not allowed to take photos or videos.”*

Phoebe: *“No, you can see them all with their cameras and stuff, videoing the whole thing! I was taking photos of my granddaughter at her desk on Monday.”*

Ruby: *“That just doesn’t work for a place like this. You imagine in the new unit, if we’ve got people on supervision orders and protection stuff – we couldn’t allow that.”*

Phoebe: *“I’m just not comfortable I remember when my granddaughter was younger her mum posted photos to Facebook and her dad screenshotted them and posted them to make it look like he had been at the park with my granddaughter.”*

Ivy: *“Like Photoshop?”*

Phoebe: *“Yeah. I’m just not comfortable with it...”*

Ivy: *“Maybe you just need to call them and discuss it more. You won’t be the only one concerned.”*

Phoebe: *“No, they were all signing it with no questions asked!”*

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

Phoebe’s concerns seem two-fold: she does not want her granddaughter to be in photographs which will be made indiscriminately available to the wider public, and; she does not want to risk those photographs being misappropriated by her granddaughter’s other family members, who seem to have limited contact with her. In the exchange above, Ruby and Ivy are sensitive to Phoebe’s plight, offering their experience in the hope that it will help her to come to a decision, and to potentially challenge her granddaughter’s school’s policy. The seeking, giving and receiving of advice in this excerpt demonstrates that Phoebe values the opinion of her fellow staff members. It is likely that this is in part due to their professional experience (Sias, 2009), but it is also possible that this advice seeking is based

on their personal experience of having children – and in Ruby’s case grandchildren – meaning that they can relate to Phoebe’s discomfort. The ability of all three staff members to engage in Smart’s (2007) concept of imaginary, whereby they can put themselves in the shoes of another and imagine the experience based upon their current relationships with that person, is seen in other aspects of daily life in the residential settings, but becomes especially clear in the context of advice. In placing themselves in the shoes of others to give advice, they demonstrate their ability to be empathetic and caring towards other people in the residential house.

Staff members would also give advice to the young people in their care. The following scenario details a young person asking a staff member explicitly for advice, within a conversational setting:

I can hear Erin (YP) asking Amelia (SM) about dying her hair. Erin would like to go blonde, but isn’t sure how best to do this with her dark brown hair. She asked whether highlights or going fully blonde would be better. Amelia said that either stripping her hair or getting highlights would be better. Amelia told Erin that if her main worry was her roots growing in, then highlights would be best.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Although Amelia did not appear to have any specific hair-dressing experience (unlike Sienna, another staff member in Bruceford, who reported being a hair-dresser before working in the residential house), Erin valued her opinion. This is potentially due to the perception that adults hold more knowledge about life in general, as compared to young people, but also likely due to the respect and connection that Amelia and Erin had. In the wider context, Erin was asking for advice as she hoped that the residential house would pay for her hair to be dyed. As such, she was likely trying to ‘get a feel’ for the way that this could happen. Nonetheless, her asking Amelia for advice was a deliberate act. She trusted Amelia to be honest with her and to hold the knowledge required to answer her questions. Erin was being active and intentional in her relationship with Amelia, which has been identified as an important aspect of love and care in residential settings (Vincent, 2016). Asking this kind of advice acknowledges someone’s potential expertise in a subject. As such, not only was Erin trusting Amelia’s opinion, she demonstrated that she knew what Amelia was likely to hold knowledge about and was able to use this information to develop their relationship further, showing Amelia that she trusted her but also that she knew Amelia would have the answer

to her questions. Asking advice of this nature displays the intimacy of Erin's knowledge about Amelia's life in general (Jamieson, 2011). She knows that Amelia also takes pride in her appearance, and that she will give Erin truthful advice based on real life experience.

Finally, the young people would also offer advice to each other in the house. In the excerpt below Aidan (YP) offered to help the new resident in Bruceford who was struggling with a technological issue.

The new young person in Bruceford is asking Aidan (YP) how to get music from the PC on her mobile phone. They are in the dining room together, and Aidan is trying to show the new resident what to do. He is trying to show her how to download music straight to her phone, as well as how to move it from the PC to her phone. Aidan was being very patient, and by the end of the exchange the new young person had some music on her phone.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Much of the advice giving between young people in the residential house took similar forms, whereby young people would seek practical advice from other young people. There were times when young people would give advice about bigger life issues, such as the context of the house or wider processes and 'care work' (see Emond, 2003). In Emond's (2003) discussion, young people take various roles in the residential house depending on the situation at hand. Here, Aidan is taking an expert role, as someone who 'steps-up' to help with loading music onto the new young person's phone. Additionally, by the nature of the young person being new, Aidan is attempting to demonstrate the underlying principles of living in Bruceford. In this sense, he shows that he knows how to work the PCs and the new young person's mobile phone, placing him in a position of power for the interaction. His intimate knowledge of Bruceford's systems and equipment places him in an authority position, and enables him to share this information with someone new to the house. In giving the new young person advice, he also demonstrates an element of connection to this young person in the moment, showing that he cares enough to help, rather than ignore, their difficulties.

EMBRACING EMOTIONS IN THE RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

Life in all three residential houses seemed to involve a number of different emotional connections between people; an everyday aspect of relationships, as discussed in Chapter 3. This section explores emotions in the residential house through the main themes of being

and feeling close, being sensitive to the wants and needs of others, and the lasting impression of ex-young people. These themes demonstrate the underlying emotional components of everyday acts and practices, largely through the emotions that guide these acts, but also by considering the emotions that such acts arouse in people.

Being and Feeling Close

The theme of being and feeling close is used to denote both physical closeness between people in the residential houses, as well as emotional closeness. Physical closeness was present in many of the data extracts used throughout Chapters 5 and 6. In the following data, we see staff members demonstrating an emotional closeness to young people in the house:

Ruby (SM) has not long returned from shopping, where she picked up pyjamas and slippers for Maddison (YP) and Erin (YP) for Christmas.

Ruby: "Oh, I just couldn't resist these [snowman slippers]. I had to grab the display pair, because they only had one pair on the shelf. I ended up putting the first pair back, because I thought 'I can't get one and not the other' and then I saw the display pair and thought 'I'll just have those'".

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Aidan (YP) was talking to Sienna (SM) about the Christmas presents that he got. He was telling her about a hoodie that he was surprised with, that he is wearing now. He was challenging her belief in Santa, saying that he was sure he had told her he wanted this hoodie. The inference seemed to be that Aidan believed Sienna had picked out the hoodie for him, rather than Santa delivering it. She attempted to cajole him a little into believing that Santa did indeed deliver the presents, but he didn't appear to buy it. Sienna later confirmed to me that she had indeed bought the hoodie for Aidan. She said she knew he wanted it, and she wanted to make sure he got a surprise on Christmas.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Through the ritual of Christmas, the staff members in Bruceford demonstrated a knowledge of the young people's wants, wishes and interests, as well as their closeness to young people.

Ruby's assertion that she could not buy something for Erin and not for Maddison highlights an understanding of the closeness between the two girls, as well as a nuanced understanding of their place in the house. Her attempts to make sure that they had equally gifts mirror the practices that parents might make when purchasing present for siblings (Morgan, 1996; 2011a; 2011b). For instance, there was an inherent worry expressed that Erin or Maddison would be jealous if one of the girls received the slippers and the other did not. In order to avoid this jealousy, Ruby made the decision and extra effort to make sure that Erin and Maddison had the same Christmas experiences. This reflects some knowledge of both Erin and Maddison's relationship, who were described by staff members as 'frenemies' in the house – friends who could sometimes be the worst of enemies. Ruby's knowledge of this appeared to influence her decision to treat them equally here. In making sure that both young people received the same slippers, Ruby is also trying to make sure that her 'love' for the two of them is equally distributed. There is the potential that this desire is rooted in beliefs about treating young people equally for fear of being accused of having a favourite or being too close (Brown et al., 2018). There is also the potential that this desire is rooted in traditional notions that siblings should be treated equally, where Ruby's decision reflects an attempt to practice family relationships in the residential house, making sure that no young person was 'left out' in the same way a parent might (Morgan, 1996; 2011a; 2011b).

Furthermore, Sienna's desire to ensure that Aidan is bought a Christmas present that he expressed interest in, and to keep this present a surprise from Aidan, is an element of her closeness with him. Not only did she want him to receive the gift he wanted, she wanted the experience to be extra special by keeping it a surprise. When he realised that the hoodie was one he had pointed out to Sienna, his surprise and happiness seemed to grow, as he realised that she had been listening to him, storing the information for a future time when it would be useful. Sienna's ability to recall which hoodie he was interested in and to purchase this for him is another example of the relationships in the residential house transcending the physical boundaries of the house. That is, Sienna was thinking about Aidan when she was not at work and was making sure that she could surprise him with something he really wanted (Emond, 2016). In both scenarios, the staff members show a clear awareness of the meaning behind objects and the significance that people can attach to personal belongings. By demonstrating their closeness to young people through personal gifts, even when these gifts are given to the young people by the 'house' as a whole, rather than the staff members responsible for choosing them, there are opportunities for the young people to connect to the gifts as well as the people who gifted them (Miller, 2008; 2010; Emond, 2016).

As well as closeness demonstrated through gifts, there was an inherent closeness between some of the staff members in the residential houses. Below the familial connections between staff members in Stewarton and Wallacewells is discussed:

Annabelle (SM) was telling me that Niamh (SM) is her sister. Both staff members work in Stewarton. I've also been told that Leah (SM) is Luna's (SM in Wallacewells) daughter, as is Orla (SM in Wallacewells). Additionally, Penelope (SM) is mum to Willow (SM in Wallacewells).

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Stewarton)

There was also a closeness between staff members in Bruceford, with Emily (SM) telling me that she and Ruby (SM) previously worked with Sienna's (SM) mum. This closeness through ties which transcend the physical space of the residential house is not unique in workplaces more generally. It is significant, however, in residential settings, whereby personal relationships between people are part of everyday life. In relationships that transcend the physical space of each residential house, Smart's (2007) concept of embeddedness can be explored. The 'stickiness' of these relationships and the nature of their movement in and out of the house seemed important enough for staff members to tell me. This alone demonstrates an awareness on their part of the value in sticky relationships.

Being Sensitive to the Wants and Needs of Others

Being sensitive to the wants and needs of others was an important facet of caring. The data below demonstrates how the wants and needs of people in the house could influence the developments of new relationship practices:

In the meeting today, staff members were discussing making adaptations to Aidan's (YP) care plan, to allow him more freedom to go outside on his own. Ruby (SM) acknowledged the concerns of others, but stated that staff members "*just need to deal with it*". They were also considering the use of 'chill time' with Aidan, and how best to accommodate his desire to spend more time in the lounge before bedtime (currently he is to go to his bedroom at 9pm, but he would like it changed to 10pm). Ruby was forceful in her recognition that "*this is his hoose after all*", reaffirming that this is something staff members will just have to deal with.

During the same meeting, staff members acknowledged the challenges they face with Aidan and budgeting for Christmas. They discussed spending more

money on his Christmas presents than on those for other young people in the house, in recognition of the lack of presents they expect him to receive from his parents. They spoke about how other young people will get presents from the staff members and their families outside of the house, but this doesn't really happen for Aidan. They wanted to make sure that he didn't feel upset by a lack of presents as compared to the other young people.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

This scenario demonstrates two key things: staff members putting their own wants and wishes aside for the benefit of the young person and their wants and needs (see Redl and Wineman, 1952), and; staff members connecting young people's lives outside of the residential house with the ordinary routines of the residential milieu. Being aware of the young person's expected parental involvement, in this care with reference to Christmas presents, shows an understanding of the life-space of young people as well (Gharabaghi and Stuart, 2013). In changing established routines, such as Aidan's bed-time and the money spent on him at Christmas time, staff members work within the practices of the residential house while demonstrating the need to be flexible and understanding. For Aidan, the hope is that he will experience this flexibility as a show of trust and care, where staff members have listened to his concerns, and have tried to adapt to fit in his new wants and wishes. In doing so, they demonstrate that they trust him to not take advantage of some of the changes and to be responsible with his time.

In the residential houses, young people also demonstrated a sensitivity to the wants and needs of staff members. Below, we see a young person attempt to spare the feelings of a staff member, rather than be honest about what clothing she likes:

Erin (YP) came downstairs from her bedroom to ask Ivy (SM) for some new clothes.

Erin: *"I need some new jeans."*

Ivy: *"Did Ruby (SM) buy you tops when you were in last?"*

Erin: *"Naw! She kept trying to buy me stuff she would wear, and I didn't wanna say 'naw, that's no brow' which is why I don't like going with Ruby."*

Ivy: [rolling her eyes] *"Well you need to be in one night for us to take you shopping!"*

Erin: *"When are you next in?"*

Ivy: *“Friday.”*

Erin: [after a long pause] *“Can we go shopping on Friday, then?”*

Ivy: *“Maybe, I’ll need to see what else is on and speak to Phoebe (SM).”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Erin’s sensitivity to Ruby’s feelings is clear in this situation. She did not want to hurt Ruby by admitting that the clothes being suggested were not to her taste. This strikes me as something fairly common in adult-child relationships. However, within the context of the residential house, it shows how young people value staff members over and above their staff member status. Similar context is provided in the excerpt below:

As Maddison (YP) walked through the lounge to go to school with Emily (SM), who was dropping her off, she commented:

“It’s no fair that you’ve got that poor new lassie doing all the cleaning and that.”

She had walked passed an open storage box on the lounge floor that Millie (SM) had previously been organising.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Maddison’s off-the-cuff comment shows what she believes is and is not acceptable behaviour in the residential house. She is displaying a sensitivity to Millie’s feelings, despite not knowing Millie for very long. The underlying message is that practices in the house should be fair, which Maddison perceives is not the case here.

While much of the data collected often shows staff members being sensitive towards the needs of young people, something which is clearly rooted in the nature of residential care as a therapeutic environment for young people and a workplace for staff members (Smith, 2009; Steckley, 2013), these examples show the reciprocity of relationships within these expectations. Despite there being no inherent need for the young people to be sensitive to the staff members’ needs, unlike the underlying nature of staff member roles, the young people showed great concern for making sure that they did not upset the staff members they felt close to. That is not to say there were not moments when these same groups of people would argue or become upset with one another. It simply illustrates that while the residential sector prioritises the role of staff members in young people’s lives, it is clear that the young people demonstrate concern regarding their role in the staff members’ lives. Being sensitive

to Millie's feelings and 'calling out' what was perceived to be unfair treatment demonstrates the different ways that young people might show they care about staff members.

Finally, staff members demonstrated a sensitivity to the wants and needs of other staff members. This happened frequently in the residential houses, but the below scenario is an example of staff member sensitivity through 'sacrifice' on the part of other staff members. Ivy (SM) volunteers to finish Sienna's (SM) shift, as Sienna leaves Bruceford ill.

Sienna (SM) went home sick this afternoon, which Ivy (SM) offering to stay and do the sleep-in shift for her, despite no longer doing sleep-in shifts herself. This prompted Scarlett (SM) to check on her.

Scarlett: *"Are you sure you're okay to stay?"*

Ivy: *"Well I couldnae have her sitting here in that state, could I? I couldnae dae that."*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Although this is a fairly common aspect of workplace relationships, staff members in many settings can be asked to 'cover' for their colleagues when they are unwell, Ivy's offer comes at a particularly pivotal moment. Ivy had recently stopped working 'sleep-in' shifts, meaning that the replacement of Sienna was, potentially, a bigger sacrifice than normal. This is appreciated by Scarlett, when she checks that Ivy is okay with the arrangement. There is a demonstration of sensitivity between Ivy and Sienna, as well as Scarlett and Ivy. Being sensitive to one another's wants and needs is a clear component of emotional connectedness, where an anticipation of someone else's situation (see the dialectic work of Baxter, 1990). Showing an awareness of Ivy's helpfulness, and making sure to thank her above what might be considered normal, goes some way to show the connections between these women. Ivy's decision to stay at work is both a reflection of her concern for Sienna, who she was keen was able to go home and get better, but also her understanding that without Sienna, Scarlett would need to find someone else to cover the shift at very short notice. Given that Ivy was already in her house, she sees the choice to stay as a simple solution, but something that also helps her two colleagues, and fiends, out of a pickle.

The Lasting Impression of Previous Residents

While the relationships between staff members and young people currently working and residing in the residential houses were of utmost importance and focus in this study, it became clear that the connections between staff members and young people continued even

after young people moved on. In this section, I will explore the lasting impression of such young people on staff members, focusing on the emotional bonds that this relies upon. Below we see Emily (SM) talk about seeing a young person's photo in the newspaper:

Emily was sitting reading the local newspaper in the lounge when she let out an excited noise and called Elijah (SM) into the lounge. When he appeared, she turned the newspaper around to show him and began to describe the woman in the paper as being an ex-resident that both of them had worked with.

Emily: *"Look, it's [young person]! She's just graduated from this training programme."* [Emily began to read from the paper]

Elijah: *"Aw, yeah. Let me see?"* [Emily handed Elijah the paper] *God, I would've barely recognised her if you hadn't pointed out it was her."*

Emily: *"Aw, she's doing so well for herself! I'm so chuffed!"*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Emily's pride in the ex-young person shows that she remains emotionally invested in that young person's life. Her and Elijah went on to talk about other aspects of this young person's life that they were still kept abreast of, such as the children that they had and their relationship status. Conversations like this were not uncommon in the residential houses, with the following extract showing once more how previous residents former residents continued to have an impact on life in the residential houses.

Phoebe (SM) and Ivy (SM) were in the dining room talking about Erin's requests to have her boyfriend at her birthday party and to go on holiday with him to Cyprus next year. This led to them discussing an ex-resident of Bruceford.

Phoebe: *"I'll never forget that time when [ex-resident], her dad, him [ex-resident's boyfriend], his dad and his mum all pulled up in cars here and came trapesing down that path and I'm sitting thinking 'oh God, she's pregnant'."*

Ivy: *"Oh aye, I remember that."*

Phoebe: *"The relationship didn't last long after that."*

Ivy: *"I think it's all the strain of the new baby and stuff."*

Phoebe: *“Oh aye, that baby ended up with his mum for a bit, because she couldn’t cope as well.”*

Ivy: *“But she’s got it back now, doesn’t she?”*

Phoebe: *“Oh yeah.”*

Ivy: *“And she’s not had any more, has she?”*

Ruby (SM): *“No, I’d said to her ‘it all becomes a lot harder once you have more than one’.”*

Phoebe: *“I remember her coming up here and saying ‘could me and the baby not just live down there in that but’ as well. Thank God Erin is on these injections.”*

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

The reflection on previous young people by the staff members appeared to show how relationships transcend both the physical space of the residential house, but also the time component of their lives there. It became clear that staff members continued to think about young people even once they had left the residential house, drawing upon the experiences that they had while the young people were in their care. The memory of the young people performs a biographical function for the staff members, where they recall past experiences as a way to understand their current work as well as their previous achievements. The memory and biography aspects of these recollections relate to Smart’s (2007) conceptualisation of relationships and personal life. The ability of staff members to recall such interesting details about previous residents also speaks to Smart’s (2007) concept of embeddedness, whereby relationships are ‘sticky’. The overall argument is that the bonds between people are tenacious and link people, particularly those one would consider as family, kin or close friends, across time and space. Where staff members feel such connections to previous residents, their moving away from the residential house does not simply end the relationships that they have with one another. Additionally, the emotional aspects of doing relationships is expressed in these discussions, with Emily, Ivy and Phoebe demonstrating Burkitt’s (2014) arguments around being emotional in relationships. These emotional components clearly influence daily life in the residential milieu, where acknowledging feeling as well as doing relationships work in tandem with each other.

CREATING BELONGING IN RESIDENTIAL SPACES

Distinct spaces in the residential house had both explicit and implicit rules and functions in the daily lives of staff members and young people. Explicit rules often managed who could enter spaces and when, such as restricting young people's access to the staff office, or other young people's access to a young person's bedroom. Whereas, implicit rules governed people's expected behaviours in those spaces, with staff members expected to refrain from using their personal mobile phones in the lounge, or young people being expected to wear slippers on their feet. In addition, explicit functions detailed what each room would be used for, such as eating in the dining room and sleeping in the bedrooms. Nonetheless, implicit functions refer to the way that staff members and residents used these rooms in addition to their explicit function, such as catching up with one another in the lounge, or holding meetings in the dining room. These rules and functions impact relationships in two main ways. Firstly, the rules and functions of spaces influenced the way that people would interact with one another, different spaces reserved for different interactions. One example is the staff office as a space for staff members to unwind with one another outside of their responsibility towards young people. Staff would use the office for paperwork and bureaucratic tasks, but they would also take advantage of the increased privacy of the staff office to have more personal conversations with each other that they would not want young people to hear. Secondly, the rules and functions of spaces impacted the way that people would connect with those spaces, the kind of meaning that they would attach to those spaces, as well as the level of belonging that they could form. The overall indication, then, is that the rules and functions of spaces have an impact on people's relationships in those spaces, as well as *to* those spaces, where the level of comfort and connectedness that one feels in a space influences the way that they behave and the types of interactions that they have.

'Catching Up'

'Catch up spaces' appeared important in navigating relationships within the residential houses as they allowed people to share aspects of their lives with each other. In such spaces staff members often reflected on their families, sharing anecdotes about their partners or children, whereas young people would share details of their school day or stories of their families. Sharing their intimate 'outsider' life showed an element of trust and emotional closeness between people. Furthermore, making use of opportunities to catch up could be attributed to 'missing' someone if participants had not spent time with them recently.

There were often moments when participants would be asked about their days and choose not to share, instead sharing details only with specific people. This was particularly true of young people, but staff members would also avoid disclosing too many details to some people. For instance:

Ella (SM) has just welcomed Erin (YP) home from school. When asked how school had been, Erin shrugged and said “*fine*”. She didn’t seem interested in expanding, and Ella didn’t push her.

[Later that day]

Erin is in the kitchen preparing something for dinner. Ruby (SM) is asking how her day was. I can hear Erin telling her that school was fine, expanding to complain about other people in her class. Ruby is reminding her not to let them get to her, and to focus on herself instead.

(Fieldnotes, downstairs hallway and kitchen, Bruceford)

The choice that participants exhibited in deciding who to tell or who not to tell details of their lives relates to Baxter’s work on relational dialectics. Baxter (1990) argues that people’s choices to be open with one another, sharing aspects of their lives, is filled with contradictions. In choosing to share aspects of one’s lives, people open themselves up to being vulnerable around another person. The argument here is that Erin’s choice not to share her day with Ruby may not be a reflection of their underpinning relationship, but rather a decision on Erin’s part to keep parts of her life to herself. However, in making this decision, Ella may have interpreted Erin’s reactions to her and Ruby to mean that Erin was either not as comfortable with her, or that she was in some sort of ‘mood’. In navigating these small catch ups, people opened themselves up to the possibility that someone would rebut their attempts to get to know them a little better. This reflects the ebbing and flowing of relationships, where someone who ordinarily enjoys conversation with another may opt out of that conversation at another time (Smart, 2007). The impact of this can be significant for someone’s emotional understanding of their relationships, as suggested by Burkitt (1997). The result is that while these small instances are unlikely to have any long-term impact on how people interact with each other, it may have an impact in the short-term. When Ella and Ruby talked later that evening, Ruby told her what she and Erin had discussed. Ella reflected that she had tried to talk to Erin about school, but that she didn’t

seem interested in talking with her. While Ruby comforted Ella by telling her that Erin was probably just tired at the time, it seemed that Ella was less convinced.

'Chilling Out'

'Chill out spaces' were spaces where participants spent most of their time together. These were the spaces that appeared to contain the most warmth and physical connection in the houses. They mainly consisted of the lounge and dining rooms, the conservatory in Bruceford and the computer room in Wallacewells. 'Chill out spaces' were where everyday relaxation activities took place. These often involved staff members and young people actively choosing to spend time together, but also staff members or young people who simply desired to spend a quiet moment in a comfortable space. In the examples below, this includes Summer (YP) and Elise (YP) choosing to spend time together putting make-up on, and Aidan (YP) and Scarlett (SM) arranging to play a game of *Monopoly*:

Summer (YP) and Elise (YP) are sitting on the floor in the lounge around a coffee table, at a 90 degree angle to each other. They both have toiletry bags with make up in them, and had brought in some handheld/table mirrors so that they could see themselves applying it. Despite my presence and general conversation, they continued to apply their make-up, foundation first, then powder, eyeshadow, mascara and eyebrows. They had music on in the background, playing via a Bluetooth speaker connected to one of their phones, and they would hum along to the songs that were on. During this time, they would exchange comments and occasionally swap products. One such incident included Elise refusing to lend Summer some of her eyeshadow:

Summer: *"Aw, goin' let me borrow that?"*

Elise: *"Naw! The last time I gave you it, you messed it all up! That's why I can't use that colour anymore."*

Summer: *"Aw, c'mon! You can see me using it. You can just take it back if you see me doing something you don't like!"*

Elise: *"Urgh, fine. But don't go putting your brush right in it like you did last time!"*

Summer: *"Promise!"*

At one point, during the application of make-up, Summer encouraged Elise to draw her eyebrows on to fill them in a bit:

Summer: *“All you need to do is pencil your eyebrows in a bit and then we’re done”*

Elise: *“I dunno, you know I don’t normally do that.”*

Summer: *“Yeah, but I think it would make all the difference. Don’t you think it would make all the difference?”* [directed at me]

Me: *“I don’t know, Elise already has pretty good eyebrows.”*

Elise: *“Why do you draw yours in?”*

Me: *“I have really light eyebrows compared to my hair, and there’s also a couple of patchy bits. Drawing them in helps to fill them out a bit, I think.”*

Elise: [directed at Summer] *“Fine, you can draw them in for me then.”*

Summer: *“Great!”*

Summer then proceeded to draw Elise’s eyebrows in, moving over to the sofa on the left wall of the lounge, using an eyebrow pencil from the make-up collection. Elise pulled funny faces the whole time, while keeping her eyes closed. Summer was concentrating hard, taking her time to make sure she did a good job.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Wallacewells)

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Aidan (YP) and Scarlett (SM) decided to play monopoly at the dining room table. Scarlett had suggested the game to Aidan, although he didn’t seem too keen on playing to begin with. They had both been sitting in the lounge, and he had remarked that he was a bit bored, so Scarlett suggested playing *Monopoly*. He seemed concerned that it might interfere with him watching *The X Factor* later, but conceded to play a game with her. During the game, I needed to grab myself a drink from the kitchen. I took the opportunity to sit at the dining room table with them instead of going back to the lounge.

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

The warmth demonstrated in the relationship between Summer and Elise, alongside the banter and general fun in their time spent together, was apparent throughout fieldwork. Other interactions between the two detailed in this thesis highlight the concern and worry that they feel for each other, as well as the happiness that spending time together evokes in them. Here, they choose to share belongings and to challenge each other at times. It seemed clear that their relationship was one of closeness and intimacy, whereby they genuinely cared for one another, showing this care through small, everyday moments. Additionally, the ability of Scarlett to convince Aidan to spend time with her, and to enjoy spending time together, is something that would not have been possible with every staff member in Bruceford. The connection between Scarlett and Aidan is an important one, which both participants reflected on during interview sessions. Their choice to spend time together, and the unique nature of all ‘chill out spaces’, suggests an ability of participants to make the most of their unconventional homeplace environment. Despite the bureaucratic and hierarchical process in the residential setting (see Chapters 2 and 5), participants were able to actively be warm and engaging with each other and the house more generally. This is further demonstrated below:

I’m sitting on the sofa in the lounge and Aidan (YP) and Scarlett (SM) are moving through the lounge and dining room getting ready to watch some television. They’ve been talking about spending time together on and off all day. They seem to have a routine figured out and are really looking forward to it:

Scarlett: *“Right, if you get the pouf, I’ll finish up what I’m doing and then we can get ourselves all cosy for ‘The X Factor’”*

Aidan: *“Will you make us some hot chocolate, though?”*

Scarlett: *“Aw, what? I was just through there!”*

Aidan: [exaggerated] *“Please...?”*

Scarlett: *“Urgh, fine. But you better have that pouf pulled out and ready by the time I’m done!”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

In this exchange, one can see the warmth and closeness between Scarlett and Aidan. In trying to ‘banter’ with Scarlett to make his hot chocolate, Aidan shows that he knows

how to convince her to do small things for him that she has already said she will not do. This highlights the intimacy between them, where Aidan feels comfortable pushing some boundaries, and Scarlett interprets this as a friendly act, as opposed to any form of rule-breaking. This display of closeness, similar to Finch's display of families (Finch, 2007), demonstrates the emotional connection that Aidan and Scarlett had with each other, which was apparent throughout Fieldwork in Bruceford. They showed their closeness to others through the routines they had with each other that were not shared with other people in the house, such as their Saturday night *X Factor* time. These routines were respected by other people in Bruceford, and space was made to accommodate and encourage them. While other people were allowed to witness their closeness, they were prevented from taking part. Scarlett and Aidan would sit on a sofa big enough only for two, and they only made hot chocolate for each other. They made no attempts to include other people, either by asking if they would also like a hot chocolate, or by inviting them to watch the show, and other people did not try to interrupt their routine either. Small moments such as this, where Scarlett and Aidan would spend time together, indulging in their shared interests, were not exclusive to these participants alone. Summer (YP) and Elise (YP) often displayed their relationship in similar ways during my time in Wallacewells. The display of closeness between Aidan and Scarlett also demonstrates a small moment of warmth and connection which can be understood as their attempt to create a homeplace environment in the house, challenging the workplace dynamics that often presented in the residential houses and allowing them to take part in place-making activities and create a sense of belonging, known to be important in developing close relationships with other people (Wilson et al., 2012; May, 2013).

Personalising Shared Spaces

Within the multi-functional use of space, staff members and young people used different elements of place-making to create a sense of belonging, with things like décor, furniture, accessories or personal belongings taking centre stage in efforts to create a homely environment. As will be discussed, while some concerted efforts were made to enable place-making and belonging, others occurred more holistically. Typically, place-making was encouraged through the personalisation of both shared and private spaces. This was done in a multitude of ways by both staff members and young people.

Typically, residents and workers would be consulted on the personalisation of shared spaces in each house. This took a number of forms, mostly surrounding the decoration and furnishing of different rooms. The young people and staff members living and working in

Buceford, for example, were directly involved in choosing new sofas for the lounge during my fieldwork:

I've not long arrived in Buceford and there are some new sofas in the lounge. When I commented on how nice they were, Phoebe (SM) told me that Maddison (YP) and Ruby (SM) had chosen them together. She said that whenever they redecorate they try to include the young people, and this time Maddison wanted to be involved.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Buceford)

It was clear that this was common practice in Buceford, where efforts to create a 'homely' environment for the young people, promoting their participation in place-making and belonging, were encouraged (Wilson et al., 2012; May, 2013). For instance, Phoebe (SM) suggested removing bulletin boards from the dining room in Buceford because young people had told her this was too 'institutional'. These decisions seemed to recognise that while the residential houses needed to be functional workplaces, their role as homeplaces for the young people also needed to be considered. Where it would be appropriate to have bulletin boards on display in ordinary work environments, doing so in the residential house had been perceived as reminding the young people that they do not live in an 'ordinary' home. This lack of 'ordinary' is something that the staff members appeared keen to address, taking measures to ensure that the young people felt at ease in their surroundings and able to relax when they were in their home. This is an important aspect of belonging, as discussed by May (2013), which shows the sensitivity that staff members had towards the young people's feelings, and the measures they could take at times to create a comforting and soothing environment for them. In co-creating different shared spaces, and allowing young people to be part of decisions in the residential house, and to develop their sensory belonging (May, 2013). May (2013) emphasises that belonging is created through our senses just as much as through our actions and personal belongings. As such, what one sees as they navigate their way through different spaces in the residential house is a key component in their ability to connect to a place. May (2013) notes '...vision tends to be *the* central sense for those with sight' (p.134, original emphasis). Taking the decision to create a space which 'looks' less like an institutional environment is an important step for staff members to help young people feel like they belong in the residential house, and that the residential house is their home.

Although this personalisation of shared spaces was not discussed as frequently in Stewarton or Wallacewells, during my time with them, anecdotal stories were relayed to me by participants about including young people in the decision-making processes around spaces and their uses. See the below quote from Caleb (SM) during an exchange between him and myself:

“We have the building across the road. It’s got like a pool table and stuff in it. Sometimes the old guys, the ones that used to live here, they’ll come up and play pool with us when they’ve got nothing else to do. They’ve asked us in the past, and so now we let them use it when they want. They helped us to decide what should be in it, and we try to keep it as personal as possible, with photos of their time here and stuff. It’s good that they come back, ken? It means that they’ve still got that connection here.”

(Caleb (SM), Fieldnotes, Wallacewells)

Alongside this shared personalisation of shared spaces, there were efforts to create belonging using personal belongings, such as photographs, accessories and sometimes pets. Many of these efforts were explained to me throughout fieldwork, in off-hand comments by the participants about things around the house. Miller (2010), for instance, argues that people’s personal belongings hold significant and profound meanings for their owners. All three houses would display photographs of residents and staff members. However, staff members in Stewarton made an extra effort to point these out to me:

“I mean, you’ll see all the pictures in Stewarton and in here. We do try to claim our young people, and to make sure that they feel like they belong here. It’s not just the ones that live here either, it’s all the ones that have lived here before as well. We don’t just take their pictures down because they’ve moved out!”

(William (SM), Interview, Wallacewells)

This process of using photographs and accessories was understood by staff members as a concerted effort to create a sense of belonging for the young people living there. They were engaging in these place-making practices based on their own understanding of ‘best practice’, current narratives around residential care and the need to work in family-like ways (Smith, 2009). Whether the young people understood these practices in the same way was unclear, but they were aware of the role that the display of materials could play in place-making and belonging.

One way in which the young people engaged in place-making and belonging using photographs and accessories included asking for the staff rota to be kept in the office in Bruceford:

Phoebe (SM) was just explaining to me that they used to keep a staff rota in the dining room, so that young people could see who was on shift today and when everyone else would be back in the house. However, she said the young people complained that this was very institutional and that it made the house feel like a workplace, which they didn't like. Phoebe said they compromised and now keep the staff rota and other notices in the office as much as possible. Nonetheless, I couldn't help but notice that there are food hygiene notices on display in the kitchen.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Whilst demonstrating a great deal of care in the presentation of photographs and place-making practices, the above example demonstrates ways in which workplace activities can be an oversight in place-making and belonging. Although staff were quick to change their practices to suit the young people, the needs of different groups within the same space are arguably an issue in the residential setting. Combining organisational processes with homeplace living causes tensions for the staff members and young people that need considered (Smith et al., 2013). Concessions like these showed the young people that staff members were willing to compromise in order to make the living space more of a homeplace than a workplace. It is in such ways that staff members show the young people that their opinions matter. In doing so, they create space to strengthen and explore their relationships with young people, demonstrating that they are willing to manage boundaries based on the young people's needs. This is an important aspect of relationships, as compromises can show one party (the young people) that the other (the staff members) cares about them. This is something discussed by Baxter (1990), where she demonstrates the ways that people need to forsake their own autonomy in order to form connections with others, creating an openness in order to develop intimacy.

Despite efforts to personalise shared spaces and create a sense of belonging for both staff members and young people, they were not without their challenges. For instance, there were many rules and rituals that hindered the personalisation of shared spaces. Two such examples which predominantly affected young people came in the form of expected behaviours. In Bruceford, there was the expectation that no one would walk around without

shoes or slippers on, whereas in Stewarton residents and staff members were encouraged not to put their feet on the furniture:

Ruby (SM): *“Will you go and put your slippers on? You know you’re no meant to be wandering around in your bare feet!”*

Aidan (YP): *“Why should I have to? I’m quite alright without them!”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Zara (SM): *“Will you get your feet off that chair? I don’t know how many times we’ve had to tell you, but you’ve no tae put your feet on the sofa!”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Stewarton)

In these instances, the young people were defying expected conventions and informal rules, in favour of their own comfort. The young person in Stewarton wished to relax with her feet on the sofa, whereas Aidan preferred to go bare-foot than to follow Ruby’s request that slippers be worn. In defying these rules and conventions, the young people were exercising their own agency in the house (Qvortrup, 1994; Mayall, 2002), choosing to challenge the expectations of staff members. This defiance in and of itself was a form of place-making, whereby young people would challenge the rules placed upon them in order to ‘make their own mark’ on the house (Wilson et al., 2012). Nonetheless, staff members attempt to correct this behaviour, rather than come to a shared conclusion, emphasised how staff members hold the most power in the residential house and was another example of the adult-child dynamic of staff members as rule-makers and children as rule-followers (James et al., 1998).

Personalising Private Spaces

The private spaces in each house were more readily personalised by one person, rather than as a group. This was especially the case in young people’s bedrooms. Young people were encouraged to choose their own décor and furnishings, which would be financed by the houses. Throughout my time in the field, there were few instances of young people personalising their bedrooms, however, it was talked about frequently. Young people would discuss wanting new possessions, such as duvet covers or posters, and staff members would suggest adding to their collection of belongings when they felt their current things were worn. In one such example, Aidan (YP) had just moved from one room in Bruceford to another:

Aidan invited me to see his new bedroom. He was excited to show it off, and when he opened the door he took the time to explain everything to me. There was a wardrobe in the corner of the room, sitting at an angle rather than flat against the wall, and he was most proud of this. He discussed where he planned to put the TV that staff members were ordering him, and how he was doing to get a new duvet cover and posters. He seemed excited, pointing to the walls where everything was to go.

(Fieldnotes, Aidan's bedroom, Bruceford)

Arguably, the ability of young people to personalise their bedrooms presented an interesting opportunity to create belonging within their environment. Aidan would often talk with Phoebe (SM) about the posters and bedding he wanted, asking for a new television or protesting that he *needed* the new blanket that he saw in the shop. For the most part, this was discussed as general conversation, with occasions where Phoebe would arrange for the things to be purchased. In one case, Aidan returned home to find an unexpected surprise in the lounge:

Aidan: *"What's this?"*

Liam (SM): *"I think it's for you. Sienna (SM) brought it back after she'd been at the shops."*

Aidan was holding a fluffy red blanket, newly purchased, that had been left for him on the sofa.

Aidan: *"Oh my God, I can't believe she bought me it!"*

It later transpired that Aidan had given his old blanket to his sister, and had wanted a replacement one.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Aidan's excitement and surprise that Sienna had remembered to buy him the blanket showed a genuine moment of connection with someone else in the house. These 'little things', related to material belongings, further developed the sense of belonging that young people and staff members had in the house (May, 2013). Using stuff in this way, surprising Aidan with the blanket he wanted, allowed Sienna to display her relationship with him to others in the house (Finch, 2007). Sienna was able to show the intimacy that she and Aidan shared, by surprising him with something he had wanted without any real reason. While these actions had to be

agreed by Phoebe and fit within the rest of their practice, they formed a part of the closeness that Aidan and Sienna shared. She demonstrated the intimate knowledge that she held of Aidan and ‘practiced’ this intimacy by purchasing something she knew he would like (Jamieson, 1998; 2011). Her memory of the things that he liked, and her willingness to surprise him, reinforced the warmth that she felt towards him and allowed Aidan to feel genuinely cared about. In addition, she shows how her relationships with Aidan transcends the boundaries of the residential house (Emond, 2016). Such instances also enabled Aidan to create a sense of attachment to the house, through personalising his own space and taking the time to put his own stamp on things (Wilson et al., 2012). Whilst this occurred in many ways, choosing soft furnishings for his new bedroom was an important step in claiming the space as his own and reaffirming his place in the house in general.

Staff members would also engage in place-making activities by attempting to personalise, or safe-guard, their private spaces in the house. This took the form of staff members personalising staff bedrooms. Locked throughout the day, as were young peoples’ bedrooms, staff bedrooms provided the most private space for staff members in all of the residential houses. These spaces were allocated to staff members who were working ‘sleep-in’ shifts. These staff members would sleep overnight in the residential house. In Bruceford, there were two sleep-in staff every night. In Stewarton and Wallacewells, one member of staff worked sleep-in, and another worked ‘waking-night’, meaning that they did not sleep whilst on shift. The staff bedroom presented another space to create belonging for staff members, who argued for a distinction between the staff bedroom as a private space and the rest of the residential house as a shared space:

Given the time of year, conversation has turned towards Christmas again. The staff members are talking about the new resident’s presents, and how these are in the staff bedroom. Liam (SM) is complaining that the staff bedroom is not a storage space, and should be kept clear. Other staff members are agreeing with him.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

In arguing that the staff bedroom should remain a private space, rather than a miscellaneous or shared space, Liam’s comments speak to a distinction that staff members make between their staff member role and their personal time in the residential house. Given that ‘sleep-in’ staff members in Bruceford were not ‘on-duty’ while they slept, something that was explained to me during fieldwork, it makes sense that this is a time where staff

members would attempt to create a sense of personal identity, rather than professional identity. These identity-making behaviours were an important aspect of frontstage activities (Goffman, 1959). Making the distinction, and presenting oneself as ‘professional’ or ‘personal’, is one way in which staff members asserted their own relationships in the residential house. Additionally, by arguing for the staff bedroom to be used only as a bedroom and not as a storage facility, staff members were enacting what little agency they had in the house where decoration and privacy was concerned. As adults in a building dedicated to the protection and support of vulnerable young people, staff members had very little opportunity to consider their own needs and desires. As a direct result of constructions of adulthood and childhood (see James et al., 1998; Wyness, 2012), alongside narratives of residential care as abusive (See Smith, 2009; 2013; 2017), staff members maintained a level of transparency in the house. In personalising the staff bedroom, staff members were containing this transparency to shared spaces in the house, rather than allowing it to encroach on private spaces.

THE INHERENT COMPLEXITIES OF RELATIONSHIPS

As has been acknowledged throughout this thesis, understanding relationships in residential child care involves addressing some of the inherent complexities of the residential setting. Many of these complexities revolve around the residential house as a workplace and a homeplace, where staff members are people who care but are also paid employees, and young people are living with staff members and other unrelated young people while retaining their connections outside of the house. This final section aims to explore these complexities, drawing upon the data gathered in this thesis alongside the literature reviewed to paint a picture of the issues that staff members and young people face when attempting to interpret their relationships with each other in the residential house. The section begins by exploring the workplace/homeplace dyad and the influence that this has on relationships between people.

The House as a Workplace and a Homeplace

The residential houses visited in this study form homeplaces and workplaces for those people that live and work there. It appeared from the data that for most of the young people, the houses were predominantly a homeplace. For the staff members, they appeared to be predominantly workplaces. This dichotomy influenced what people did in the houses and how they interpreted those actions and relational components of daily life:

I was in the kitchen and the magnets on the fridge caught my attention today. I recalled Phoebe (SM) telling me on an initial visit to Bruceford that the use of magnets and photos are encouraged. She also told me that she doesn't like having 'workplace' items, such as Cooksafe paperwork or posters, on display in the house. Some of the magnets were from holiday destinations – like Tenerife – whereas others were encouraging 'healthy food' or 'healthy plates', and some were relatively generic. One had the slogan 'I could do housework, but why would I?' I didn't have a chance to ask anyone about these, as there was no one around.

(Fieldnotes, kitchen, Bruceford)

Despite research which illustrates that the kitchen and food areas of residential houses are typically the most institutional of all (Punch and McIntosh, 2014), there were aspects of homeliness in the kitchen of Bruceford. Efforts had been made to populate the space with objects which represented memories for the young people, as well as small nods to general conceptions of life. I later found out that the Tenerife magnet was one from when the staff members and young people went on holiday together. This holiday involved some young people that were no longer living in the house, but the mementos of their time remained. Holding onto these symbols of past memories and adventures follows some of Smart's (2007) arguments regarding the influence of personal belongings as story anchors. When people choose to keep significant objects, they can use these to discuss the memories that they have of a person, place or time. Choosing to honour the past residents by keeping the magnet appears to demonstrate the way that people in the residential house sought to keep the memories of previous residents alive. In displaying these magnets, the staff members practicing their intimacy with residents. In Jamieson's (2011) conceptualisation of practices of intimacy, she states that practices, enable, generate and sustain a sense of closeness and being attuned to each other. Where staff members have kept magnets from holidays with residents who no longer live in the residential house, they are demonstrating that the close, intimate relationships they had with these young people did not end simply because they moved away from the residential house. Instead, the magnets serve to anchor the staff members to these young people, and they endorse that it is okay for staff members to remember these young people. Additionally, the magnet with 'I could do housework, but why would I?' printed on it is something one might typically see in their own home, as a sarcastic nod to homeplace activities which are typically not enjoyed. These objects

contained symbolic meaning in the residential space (Emond, 2016), with their placing something of specific choice and not simply an incidental occurrence.

Staff members would at times appear to embrace the house as a homeplace, especially when no young people or managers were around. In the instance below, staff members were alone in the lounge and reverted to some of the activities that might be common in their ordinary homes.

Around 6pm this evening I went to settle in the lounge with the staff members present – Elijah, William and Emily – while Aidan (YP) went to his room for 30 minutes of ‘chill time’. Elijah, Emily and William were all on their phones and tablets, with Emily playing Candy Crush. She had even gone to the downstairs office to get her charger and plug her tablet into the socket.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The use of mobile phones and other technical devices was not uncommon in the house, but it was uncommon for staff members to sit together and openly use their devices in the way discussed above. Most instances involved showing someone something on their mobile phone, or using their mobile phone to communicate with their families outside of the house. The above session took place on the same day that Emily had been confronted by Maddison (YP) about using mobile phones in the house. During that confrontation, Emily turned to me and said *“have you ever seen us sit around on our phones?”*, indicating that she was unaware of the ways that staff members use their own personal devices, or that she was trying to present her professional persona, rather than personal one, while in the house. The reality was, however, that staff members would use the residential house as a homeplace, as well as a workplace, although less often than young people. When they did, it replicated much of what would likely occur in their own homes. The use of personal devices here could help staff members create a sense of belonging in the residential house, with May (2013) indicating that people will use personal belongings to create a sense of attachment to the places in which they navigate their lives. By being able to use mobile devices in and outside of the house, these personal belongings transcend the residential space and allowed staff members to bring a part of their personal lives and hobbies into the residential space. Although they seemed fearful that young people, or perhaps managerial staff, would perceive them as not doing their job properly, the literature indicates that by behaving similarly to how they would

at home, staff members were indeed ‘doing their job’, and that these sorts of activities should be encouraged.

Nonetheless, the residential house as a workplace could not be avoided. Little things in daily activities, routines and rhythms reinforced the residential houses as workplaces. The examples below demonstrate how staff members struggled to identify their role in the house, given its workplace function, often relating to bureaucratic processes (see Chapter 5) and typical ‘work’ duties in a more comfortable way than simple homeplace activities.

Sienna (SM) just came into the lounge stating that she was going to take a seat for a bit. She sat on the sofa, looked out the window, then stood up again and went into the downstairs office. This happened just as Phoebe (SM) could be heard unlocking the door as she returned from her meeting.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Emily (SM) was walking through the lounge, where I was sitting on a sofa, when she made a comment about how busy the staff could be in the house:

“In this boose, you move swiftly on from one job to another. I was through there making the dinner and now I’m here and I’m like naw, I’m dealing with this now! [laughter]”

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Here, we see two instances of staff members working within the structural aspects of residential duties. In Sienna’s case, she had been busy with chores, such as vacuuming and cleaning, before deciding to take a seat. When she saw Phoebe’s car approach, her move to go and ‘do work’ instead of sitting in the lounge struck me as something quite common in the house. Staff members often did not feel like they were ‘doing work’ if they were sitting in the lounge, or watching television, or on their mobile devices (see above). This is echoed in Emily’s claim about how busy the house can be: she speaks specifically of things she needs to ‘do’, rather than time spent with the young people or ‘relaxing’. This positions the residential house as a workplace, rather than a homeplace, where staff members feel that they are expected to perform professionally, making it difficult for them to appreciate the value in other aspects of their role (or, more specifically, to see how their managers will appreciate other aspects of their role) (Redl and Wineman, 1952; Smith et al., 2013). What this section demonstrates is the ambivalence that people feel around the role of the house

itself, where understanding what duties staff members and young people have in the house involves first understanding the milieu of the place and how this milieu can be navigated through workplace and homeplace relations.

The Ambivalence of Young People

Young people in the residential house would, at times, struggle to reconcile the role of staff members in the house. This ambivalence could make it difficult for them to appreciate the reasoning behind certain aspects of their daily routines. It could also result in them making comments to the staff members, which staff members would then share with each other when the young people weren't around. This sharing formed an aspect of relationship building between staff members, where the sharing of their experiences enabled them to build empathy for each other and understand their experiences in relation to other people's experiences. However, the young people themselves making these comments demonstrates that they struggle to comprehend the role of staff members at times.

Staff members have been making jokes about the comments that young people make to them during their shifts in the house. They repeated comments such as "*Aye, that's the only reason I come here,*" and "*Oh aye, for my saggy tits.*" They were reflecting on the young people's assumptions that staff members only come to work to make things more difficult for the young people or because it is simply a job to them.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The comments that young people made to staff members, as detailed above, can be understood as young people perceiving staff members as only in the residential house to earn money or make things more difficult for the young people. The idea that "*that's the only reason I come here*" was made in reference to 'telling off' young people and ensuring that they follow the rules of the house. This positions staff members as rule-makers, rather than carers to the young people. Their professional role in the house, versus their personal feelings, is shown to be difficult for young people to understand. On the other hand, staff members seemed genuinely upset that the young people viewed them only as employees or doing a job. This indignation shows that staff members have emotional connections to the young people they care for, despite the bureaucratic and managerial practices that they regularly partake in (Menzies Lyth, 1998). In calling out the young people for the hurtful comments that they have made in the past, the staff members demonstrate that these things stay with

them, potentially influencing the decisions that they make at other times in the residential house.

Young people also found it difficult to comprehend changes in routines and rhythms. In the below conversation, Maddison (YP) does not understand why the new young person is not at school, and why staff members have not ‘made’ her go to school. This comes at a time when staff members were perceived by Maddison as ‘nagging’ her to go to school all the time.

Maddison has come downstairs to the kitchen and is talking to Amelia (SM), who is also in the kitchen.

Maddison: *“How come she’s [another young person] no at school today?”*

Amelia: *“Just because she’s not.”*

Maddison: *“She was there yesterday! She’s supposed to be at school.”*

Amelia: *“You’re not at school.”*

Maddison: *“That’s different. I’m off because I’m not well.”*

Amelia: *“Okay then.”*

Maddison: *“Aye, but she kicks off all the time! She was balling and shouting all day yesterday, shouting ‘fuck off’ and the likes. I want William (SM)! No, I want Grace (SM)’ all day long.”*

Amelia: *“She’s just settling in.”*

Maddison: *“You’re needing super nanny in here... She shouldn’t be getting away with that stuff.”*

(Fieldnotes, kitchen, Bruceford)

Maddison seems to see the staff members as being ‘soft’ on the new young person, rewarding her for ‘kicking off’ and not putting the same pressure on her to attend school the same way that they do Maddison. However, this calls into question the role of staff members in the house. Maddison seems to understand their role as rule-enforcers and as power-holders, rather than adults tasked with helping young people to settle in, encouraging them to overcome difficulties in their lives, and ensuring that the residential house is flexible enough to accommodate each individual young person’s needs. In this case, the staff members have

given the new young person some leeway, as suggested by Maier (1979), and as such have caused tension in their relationship with Maddison. Her decision to confront Amelia shows that she feels treated unfairly, but it also demonstrates the complexity of relationships and the messiness of care (Emond, 2016). This instance shows that, despite some of the efforts made by staff members to treat the young people equally, there are inevitably times when situations arise that mean young people need to retain their individuality. This is something that staff members had to grapple with a lot, but was not always witnessed by young people. Maddison's feeling that she was being treated unfairly is somewhat paradoxical, as she was often allowed to stay home from school when she had been upset and angry before school.

At times, young people would show ambivalence about the wider function of the house. This differed in their ambivalence about the role of staff members, as it focused more on the residential milieu and rules of each house. The extracts below show how rules in residential houses made young people question 'the point' in the house:

The new young person has been asking to call one of their friends, but staff members keep telling the young person "*not now*". The young person has been walking around mumbling:

"What is the point in having someone's phone number if you're not allowed to call them."

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

.....

Aidan (YP) has gone to ask Ruby (SM) when he can have the television on and I can hear an argument beginning because it is still 'school time'.

Aidan: *"When can I put the TV on?"*

Ruby: *"After school hours, so 3pm."*

Aidan: *"But it was on yesterday."*

Ruby: *"Was it? Oh well. Still, after 3pm today."*

Aidan: *"It's no fair, I've not even done anything wrong."*

Ruby: *"You were being aggressive."*

Aidan: *"Maddison (YP) started it!"*

Ruby: *“That doesn’t matter, you still misbehaved as well. That’s why you’ve been excluded.”*

Aidan: *“This is shit. It’s no fair.”*

Ruby: *“Your teacher also says you’ve not to go to your shop thing or your work experience on Saturday either.”*

Aidan: *“What? That’s no up to him!”*

Ruby: *“It is, because it’s school related stuff.”*

Aidan: *“Nut! I arranged these myself, the school had nothing to do with it!”*

Ruby: *“Well, that’s just what the teacher said.”*

Aidan: *“Well I’m talking to him! That’s ridiculous! The school have nothing to do with that stuff!”*

Ruby: *“I’m just passing on the message. Anything school related needs to wait until Wednesday.”*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

Here, the young people show some difficulty in understanding the house as a place where they live, which is meant to provide for them, and the need for rules and routines in the house. The new resident in particular seems confused by the inability not to simply call her friend as and when she wants. Staff members were managing household needs with individual needs, alongside attempting to manage the young people’s needs. This management of rules alongside young people’s wants and wishes is something discussed by Redl and Wineman (1952), who highlight the need for staff members to assist young people in ‘recovering’ from their childhood trauma, which the staff members here are attempting to do. But their attempts are interpreted by the young people as confusing, which can cause ambivalence in their relational work.

The Ambivalence of Staff Members

Where there was ambivalence about the role of the residential house as a workplace and homeplace, and ambivalence from the perspective of young people, staff members also displayed some ambivalence about their role in the residential house. Again, in an exchange where staff members quote things that young people have said to them in passing, the role of staff members is under question.

Ruby (SM) and Elijah (SM) had been in the lounge with us before Elijah left to go home. They were talking about the young people, Maddison (YP) in particular, and exchanging anecdotes about what it's like to work in Bruceford.

Ruby: *"Aye, it's all Ivy's (SM) fault she didn't make it to school today. She only woke her up once at 9.20am."*

Elijah: *"Ob aye, all Ivy's fault."*

Ruby: *"Aye, they'd have ye hung if they could."*

Elijah: *"Aye, I'm just a nosey bastard."*

Ruby: *"Aye, and I dinnae ken what I'm talking about."*

Staff members often have conversations like this, discussing what young people think of them and their role here.

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Bruceford)

The staff members appear to internalise some of the comments that young people make, leaving them questioning their role in the house and their impact on the lives of the young people they care for. In much of what they do, staff members could see the impact they had and seemed to value the 'good' that they saw themselves as achieving. However, in exchanges such as this, I sensed that staff members could find it difficult to continue to care for young people who did not appreciate their caring or who perceived their caring as 'less than' care. Ruby's comment that *"they'd have ye hung if they could"* demonstrates an awareness of the current residential sector and of the power that young people in residential settings hold over staff members. The threat of abuse accusations and the fear of being accused seems to seep into the small things in residential life, such as the comments made by staff members here (see Smith, 2009; 2014; 2017). These threats of accusations or fear of being misinterpreted did seem to impact the way that staff members would interact with young people, and with each other, at times. This is unfortunate, as the current political and legal rules governing residential care do not necessarily intend to cause staff members any fear. Indeed, the rules are there to protect young people, but can sometimes lead to them not receiving the type of care that is also advocated for. This is a particular issue in the current environment, where there is a push for love in alternative care settings, but little recognition of the problematic nature of love.

Staff members would also present some ideas around ambivalence and their roles when it came to their responsibilities in the house. During a staff meeting, conversation turned to helping Maddison (YP) clean her room. Staff members were expressing frustration at helping Maddison, who often allowed her room to get messy and unsanitary. Their frustrations were aired in an acknowledgement that they should be helping Maddison, but with sensitivity to the fact that this role should not always fall on the same staff member:

During the staff meeting, staff members were discussing some difficulties in helping the young people clean their rooms:

Ruby (SM): *“We need to rotate the young people cleaning, because Maddison’s is such an effort. We can’t be having the same staff member deal with that all the time.”*

Ivy (SM): *“I keep telling her she needs to stop flooding that bathroom when she has a bath.”*

They also spoke about dealing with complaints from school:

Ivy: *“I’ve had the school phone me before and say ‘she’s complaining of being starving – does she not have breakfast in the morning?’. I have to tell them ‘no, she doesn’t eat breakfast, but you have to understand this in context – Maddison is always starving!’.”*

Ruby: *“Aye, I’ve said it before – Maddison eats little and often. She’s a grazer – little and often is what she manages.”*

(Fieldnotes, dining room, Bruceford)

Again, the role of staff members in this situation is debated. They appreciate that Maddison needs help to clean her room and look after her belongings, which is not typically unusual of teenagers anyway, but they are frustrated, especially where their caring is called into question. In airing frustrations about school staff stating Maddison is always ‘starving’, Ivy seems to take this as a personal insult to staff members. Ivy makes clear that Maddison is fed appropriately, and that when she arrives at school without eating, this is not because they have not prepared food for her. Again, the responsibility for keeping Maddison clean and healthy is placed on staff members, staff members who appreciate that Maddison, who was 14 years old at the time, is capable of independent thought and choice. As such, the need to keep her room tidy and herself fed can be difficult for staff members to be held responsible for.

Where young people could be ambivalent about staff members, staff members could also be ambivalent about young people. This often took the form of questioning decisions made about them, or questioning the young people's choices of activities and interests. In the final data excerpt, there is a discussion about an incident between two young people, and how the incident was handled. In this discussion, it becomes clear that staff members do not always agree with one another, and this can cause some confusion and difficulties in staff member relationships.

Leah (SM) described how she felt that it was unfair the way that the new young person had been treated compared to Aaron (YP):

Leah: "He hasn't had any consequences for his part in what happened, and he had a blade as well. If he had been caught by the police with that Stanley knife in his pocket, he would've been charged because they take knife crime very seriously. I believe that fair is fair, and how he has got away with everything isn't fair, given that [the new young person] isn't even allowed back here. I just don't think it has been handled well."

Similar concerns about the way that the new young person had been treated were also raised by Robyn (SM) just after change over when she challenged staff about the reason that the young person had been asked to leave:

Robyn: "Why was [young person] put out of here anyway? Why was that decision made?"

Penelope (SM): "I dunno, you'll need to ask Christian (SM) or Owen (SM) as they were here"

Robyn: "Aye, but I thought you had spoken to them? Why was [young person] asked to leave while that was all going on?"

Penelope: "I've just had a run down from Christian, so I'll fill you in when we go into the office."

Despite the issues that this decision seemed to be causing, staff members did express some relief that they had a break from the new young person, discussing how 'quiet' the house was, and how 'settled' everyone else was. Clara (SM) had been the one to mention to me in the office that the new young person was no longer with the house at the moment, and in doing so she aired her concerns.

Clara: *‘I’m not really sure what we can do for them here. It’s difficult, because they need that help, but so do the other young people we have, and at what point do we start to consider their needs over [young person’s]? It’s been so hard to manage [young person] because they’re so demanding that they haven’t been getting the care they necessarily need. Especially since this thing with them and Aaron has been brewing for days, so what’s to stop it happening again if [young person] comes back? Maybe they need some intensive care at the flat? Maybe they need to move on somewhere else... We want to keep [young person], but they’re not doing themselves any favours’.*

(Fieldnotes, lounge, Stewarton)

The main issue that staff members in this exchange seem to have is the idea that the new resident was ‘punished’ for her behaviour, but that Aaron was not. There was an overarching concern that the individualisation of each young person’s needs creates an unfair environment. Where the decision was taken to allow Aaron to remain in the house and visit with his gran, when the new young person was asked to leave, meant that a message was presented to staff members that one person’s behaviour was acceptable and another’s was not, despite the two young people being equally involved in the incident that occurred. Such ambivalence reflects an ongoing debate in the sector around individualising practice (see Smith et al., 2013). This debate flies against many traditional parenting practices, whereby children in the family home are often treated ‘the same’ (or as similar as possible), where parents can be challenged by their children with phrases like ‘but you let my brother/sister do that’. This could cause tension in the staff team, especially where staff members are dealing with the repercussion of decisions that they were not directly involved in. As such, the balance between team-mates in interactions is skewed. If team-mates do not trust one another, and one another’s decision making, then the foundation of their frontstage interactions can cause difficulties in the overall performance of the relationships (Goffman, 1959). Overall, staff member ambivalence presented here was not uncommon, with decisions often facing questions (and this, ultimately, is the role of ‘staff meetings’: to question practice and air concerns in a safe environment).

CONCLUSION

This Chapter has explored the flexibility of relationships, demonstrating that they are not static and fixed. Additionally, they are not always entirely pleasant, and people involved in relationships can experience ambivalent feelings about one another. The Chapter focuses on the processes through which people connect with one another, the emotions

involved in life in the residential house, and the inherent complexities of relationships in residential settings (research question 1: How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?). In the first of these themes, I present data which suggests that staff members and young people connect with one another through several active and deliberate practices (see Smart, 2007). The arguments presented suggest that staff members and young people relate to one another in the residential setting, and that they do this through spending time together, sharing aspects of their lives, and seeking, giving and receiving advice. These practices (see Morgan, 1996) are an everyday component of life in residential child care. They are the fabric of all that staff members and young people do together. They are active processes, but they are also everyday displays of relationships and closeness with each other (Finch, 2007).

In the second theme presented, I argue that emotional components of relationships are influential in everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people in the residential house (research question 4: What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?). This section presents data around being and feeling close, being sensitive to the wants and needs of others, and the lasting impression of ex-young people. These themes speak to the influence of emotional bonds on daily life. The closeness and sensitivity between people, and the connections that staff members maintain to young people who have left the residential house, rely on emotions as their basic underpinning. Feeling strongly about another person in the residential house encourages connections between people. However, there are ambivalent undertones to these connections. There are questions around the ability of people in the residential house to embrace these emotions and to connect with those they live and work with. This is especially true from the perspective of staff members, where there is a need to maintain professional as well as personal boundaries (Whitaker et al., 1998; Smith, 2009).

In the third theme of this Chapter, the ability of staff members and young people to make use of the different types of spaces in the residential house, and how this use is impacted by the status of participants in the house despite the conditionality of spaces is discussed (research question 2: How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?). Research highlights that looked after and accommodated young people often hold little power over the decisions made regarding their care (Smith et al., 2013). Additionally, the agency of children more widely is often restricted by the adults around them. This was no different in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. The ambivalent

function of the residential house as a workplace and homeplace was demonstrated through everyday rituals and routines (Redl and Wineman, 1952; Maier, 1979). The residential milieu (Redl and Wineman, 1952) was often impacted by the workplace dynamics and outside influences on different spaces. These outside influences could impact relationships in the house, and restrict participant movement and activities. In response to the relational dynamics of the residential space, active measures were taken to engage in place-making in the houses, with staff members and young people constructing their belonging in the houses through personalising shared and private spaces. These measures were taken through the spaces themselves, their décor and furnishings, and the personal items in these spaces. Creating belonging in this spatial way was a conscious attempt by staff members and young people to demonstrate their connections to things and each other (Wilson et al., 2012). Common practices were evident across all three houses, where the belonging of young people was prioritised over staff members, with the acknowledgement that the houses were homeplaces for young people, and workplaces for staff members.

Finally, this Chapter ends by examining the inherent complexities of life in the residential milieu, where the overall environment of residential child care and influence the relationships that occur in those settings. The house as a workplace and a homeplace, the ambivalence of young people and the ambivalence of staff members are all considered. These inherent complexities are explored through the policies and practices, as well as everyday behaviours and activities, of everyone in the residential house. The main argument presented here suggests that relationships in the residential house are inherently ambivalent as a consequence of structural factors in residential care, as staff members and young people are always likely to feel some element of confusion around their connections to each other (research question 3: What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?). The remainder of this thesis explores the way that these findings relate to the overall aims of the research, while indicating some implications for policy and practice, as well as future research possibilities.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis represents the culmination of an extensive research project, including 10 months of ethnographic fieldwork with staff members and young people in three residential houses: Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. Of interest were the relationships that young people and staff members have in the residential house, focusing on the everyday navigation of these relationships and their significance in the residential setting. Two central themes were identified which helped conceptualise relationships in residential child care and their enactment. Firstly, understanding how relationships are enacted required exploring the specific context of residential child care. It was clear that the bureaucratic processes, paperwork and decision-making practices inherent in residential settings both offered opportunities for the everyday enactment of relationships and interrupted the everyday display and practicing of relationships (Morgan, 1996; Finch, 2007). Secondly, staff members and young people exhibited some ambivalence about their relationships with others in the residential house: while choosing and embracing closeness and connections was demonstrated by both staff members and young people, efforts to resist, discourage and challenge this closeness were also witnessed. This Chapter summarises the findings of the research, directly addressing the research aims alongside implications, limitations and ideas for future research.

DOING RELATIONSHIPS IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE

This thesis had four main research questions. These research questions informed the collection, analysis and interpretation of data throughout the research process.

- (1) How are relationships in residential child care enacted by young people and staff members?
- (2) How are relationships expressed and understood in the residential space?
- (3) What impact does the wider residential environment have on relationships in the residential house?
- (4) What role do relationships play in the everyday experiences of residential child care for staff members and young people?

In concluding the thesis, the following section answers these research questions and summarises the main findings of this study.

This thesis has explored relationships in residential child care, focusing on the way that people ‘do’ their relationships with one another and the impact of the context of

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residential care on these relationships. The thesis began by drawing the reader's attention to the historical nature of residential care, and the influence that abuse scandals and enquiries have had on current residential practice. Here, the context of residential care as managerialist and staff members as highly scrutinised was outlined (Menzies Lyth, 1988; Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012). As a result, staff members work within a culture of fear, and close relationships between staff members and young people are considered dangerous (Brown et al., 2018). Nonetheless, current policy and practice moves have prioritised the need for love in residential care, demonstrating that young people need to experience and feel love, whether they are in alternative care or not (Scottish Government, 2008; Howard, 2012; Brooks, 2018). Existing literature which discusses relationships between staff members and young people, particularly close relationships, is discussed in relation to concerns about touch and care ethics in the residential context (Steckley and Smith, 2011; Steckley, 2012; Smith et al., 2013; Warwick, 2017). What is not clear is how these policy and practice moves account for staff members' feelings. For instance, while commitments are made to ensuring that young people can feel loved, little attention is given to ways staff members can feel comfortable giving and feeling this love to young people and each other.

In Chapter 3, the thesis moves on to explore relationships as a concept, contextualising them within the setting of residential child care. Here, how relationships are defined and done, how they are described, and what they mean to people are discussed. Some key theoretical influences are outlined here, with time devoted to understanding people's interactions with one another (Goffman, 1959), how they create and feel a sense of belonging (May, 2011; 2013; Wilson et al., 2012), and how relationships can be understood as part of family practices and displaying families (Morgan, 1996; 2011a; 2011b; Finch, 2007; 2011). The overall message is that relationships are complex and messy, and residential care as a setting makes them even more complex and messy. Where traditional families are offered a certain amount of privacy in navigating their social worlds, those who live and work in residential care remain part of a semi-public sphere. That is, in residential care the actions of staff members and young people are there to be scrutinised in a way that traditional family homes protect people from. While this scrutiny is somewhat necessary, given the history of the sector, it impacts the way that staff members and young people can connect with one another. People's connections in the residential house are governed by external forces, which influence expected social norms and the overall way that relationships and intimacy are done.

Where Chapter 4 discussed the methodology of this project, which is reflected on in the following section, Chapter 5 introduced the reader to the first findings. Here, the data demonstrates the complexities of relationships in the residential setting outlined in Chapter 2 and 3. The main arguments focused on the roles of bureaucratic processes, children's rights, and routines and rituals in the way that staff members and young people formed and maintained relationships with one another. Overall, the findings demonstrated that bureaucratic processes were situated in everyday relationships, but also interrupted these relationships (1988). At times, they were imposed on staff and residents to prevent people from becoming 'too close' (Brown et al., 2018), but at other times, staff members internalised the importance of bureaucratic processes and they interrupted the relationships that were allowed to take place. This is similar to working alongside children's rights, where the conceptualisation of children as vulnerable meant staff members were viewed as dangerous (Smith, 2009; Brown et al., 2018). In contrast, the roles of routines, rhythms and rituals in daily life enabled people to enact their relationships with one another in a more regulated way. Routines, rhythms and rituals allowed staff members and young people to do relationships with one another in safe activities (McIntosh et al., 2011; Punch and McIntosh, 2014; Emond et al., 2014). Nonetheless, these regulated aspects of daily life were also able to hinder relationships, interrupting otherwise free-flowing activities and preventing people from developing close connections in their own way.

The second findings Chapter, Chapter 6, discusses the ambivalence that people can feel towards their relationships in the residential house, and how this impacts the way that relationships are done and described. This Chapter argues that relationships are not static and fixed, they ebb and flow, meaning that people can feel closely connected to another person, while sometimes experiencing dismay or anger towards that person. It also demonstrates that staff members and young people connect with one another through several active and deliberate practices (Smart, 2007), which influence how they feel about one another and how they choose to spend time together. Additionally, the emotional components of relationships are influential to residential life, whereby the closeness and sensitivity between staff and residents relies on emotional connections between people. Where people can be ambivalent about these emotional connections, there is an understanding that this is part of the ebb and flow of relationships. Ambivalence is also discussed in relation to spaces in the residential house, which are influential in creating and feeling a sense of belonging in one's life. The nature of the residential house as a workplace and homeplace influenced what staff members and young people were able to achieve in

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both private and shared spaces, with the Chapter demonstrating the ways that people would engage in place-making activities in the residential houses (Wilson et al., 2012). The Chapter ends by demonstrating that the inherent complexities of life in the residential milieu influences the relationships that can occur there. There is an understanding that staff members and young people are likely to always feel a sense of confusion around their connections to one another, but this confusion is navigated as part of everyday residential life, allowing appropriate relationships to flourish.

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that there are considerable barriers to close, intimate and loving relationships in residential care. Where the current narrative around love encourages staff members and young people to closely connect with one another, the daily context of residential care continues to discourage close relationships. Staff members continue to report being fearful of abuse accusations and having their motives questioned (see Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2018). In my fieldwork, this suspicion around relationships was not something outwardly presented, but something witnessed and/or discussed in small, everyday moments. Recalling Ivy (SM) being ‘told off’ for using her own bank card to let Erin (YP) purchase a present for someone, and Owen (SM) talking about his worries of one day being accused of doing something inappropriate demonstrate this fear. In addition, where the narrative of love is based on young people *wanting* to feel loved by staff members, the data presented here shows there is some ambivalence towards close, intimate relationships in the residential houses, from both staff members and young people. Where the wider literature promotes these feelings, it was evident that young people themselves can be stuck between wanting close relationships with staff members and maintaining their distance, by either avoiding conversations where they were asked to share details of their life, or struggling with the conception of the residential house as a workplace and a homeplace.

Nonetheless, the data clearly demonstrates that staff members and young people are able to form close, intimate relationships with one another, and that these relationships are not too dissimilar from ‘traditional’ family relationships. In taking opportunities to display and practice their relationships with one another, to show the outside world that they care about and for each other, the participants in this study demonstrate their resilience against these barriers. They are able to form meaningful connections with one another and appreciate these connections deeply. While it is accepted that not everyone had close relationships with everyone else, this mirrors what one might witness in ‘normal’ social relationships, where people do not feel as strongly for some people as they do for others.

What is stressed, however, is that residential care, as a form of alternative care for ‘looked after’ children and young people, affords young people the opportunity to connect with a number of adults with different personalities, interests and mannerisms. As such, it is uniquely placed to offer young people as many opportunities as possible to form loving relationships with at least one person who cares deeply for them.

REFLECTING ON ETHNOGRAPHY

In designing this project, ethnography was always at the forefront of my mind. Deciding to examine and observe relationships in residential care meant acknowledging that I would need to see how people acted in their ‘natural’ environments, for prolonged amounts of time, with access to their social worlds in ways that other research methods could not have captured. This decision was taken due to my firm belief that relationships cannot simply be talked about, they have to be experienced in order to be understood. This is similar to Hinde’s (1997) assertion that to explore relationships, one must consider how they are done, how they are described and what they mean to people. While other methods of data collection, such as qualitative interviewing, might have given insights into some of these aspects of relationships – and indeed, they did offer insights as part of the ethnographic approach to this study – it would not have been possible to see these relationships ‘in action’, or to make the same inferences about how relationships are done. This is where ethnography as a research method is unique: the ethnographer is allowed wider access to the social worlds of participants in order to understand the phenomena under study (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Murchison, 2010; Hoolachan, 2015).

I was acutely aware that residential child care is an environment which is highly scrutinised by external and internal forces. When conceiving of this project, I knew that asking staff members and young people about their relationships with one another could elicit further feelings of scrutiny (Brown et al., 2018). Taking an ethnographic approach allowed me to address the ‘power gap’ between myself as researcher and my participants as researched. This felt important, especially where residential child care is already under a microscope, with staff members and young people aware of the ‘public’ nature of their lives as compared to traditional family homes (Smith, 2009). Where other methodologies would have prioritised my authoritative voice, undertaking ethnographic research allowed me to attempt to rebalance power in the researcher-participant relationships. My ‘outsider’ perspective, and the participants’ ‘insider’ perspectives, allowed me to approach the research based on the acknowledgement that participants are the ones with ‘knowledge’ about their

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social world. As such, it was my hope that I would become more of an insider through developing a close relationship with them, while maintaining some of my researcher distance (Harris, 1990). The overall intention was to make sure that participants were 'heard' in the data, and that their relationships with one another took centre stage, rather than my 'authoritative researcher' perspective of their relationships.

In Chapter 4, I have outlined the decisions I took in the field to limit my power and respect the boundaries of the residential house. While my position as an adult in the context of care for vulnerable children could not be entirely mitigated, I did try to distance myself from the other adults in the residential house. This was important for addressing the power imbalance mentioned above, but also for setting myself apart from the staff members in particular. In researching both young people's and staff member's experiences of relationships in residential care, I could neither take the role of a young person nor take the role of a staff member. This proved to be particularly tricky, as ethnographers usually try to align themselves with the group under study, but I was attempting to align myself with two different, although closely connected, groups, where staff members had distinct roles separate to those of young people, and vice versa. Taking this dual-identity approach was particularly difficult, as I was conscious that I did not want to alienate staff members or young people by aligning myself too closely with one group. As such, I set firm boundaries for my time in the residential house, telling young people that I would not be responsible for disciplining them, completing any reports or being involved in any bureaucratic parts of residential life. In addition, I was clear with staff members that I would not answer the phone, or be able to drive young people anywhere without another staff member being present. Furthermore, there was a blanket rule in place that I could not be counted towards the staff member to young people ratio – that is, my presence in the residential house was always in addition to the required number of staff members.

While these boundaries helped to distance myself from any one role, giving me the flexibility to move between groups, the data collected suggests that I was still seen as more of a 'staff member' than a young person, giving me greater access to staff members and limited data on young people. I have addressed reasons for this in Chapter 4, such as young people's active social lives and the possibility that my presence dissuaded them from spending time in the shared spaces of Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells. This is, undoubtedly, an unfortunate limitation of the research presented here, which set-out to explore how staff members and residents enact relationships. Acknowledging the limited data gathered regarding young people somewhat restricts the ability of this thesis to make

strong assertions about their relationships in the residential houses studied. Additionally, it is possible that there may be areas that I missed or interpreted in certain ways due to my prior experiences and social position (Coffey, 1999). In an attempt to address the impact of my own experiences and position, I critically engaged with my own assumptions and ‘way of seeing’ throughout the project. A large part of this reflexive process involved considering my role in the residential house and setting expectations of myself for both me and the participants. This is detailed in the section *Positioning Me* in Chapter 4.

A key limitation of ethnographic research is generalisability (Bryman, 2004). This thesis is limited in its ability to make assertions about relationships in all residential houses, as the data relates only to three residential houses in central Scotland. Where the enactment of relationships may be similar in some residential settings as identified in Bruceford, Stewarton and Wallacewells, given the different purposes and functions of residential houses in Scotland (Smith, 2009; Connelly and Milligan, 2012; Scottish Government, 2018a) it is unlikely that this is true of all residential facilities. For instance, services which provide care for children with additional support needs, such as physical and learning difficulties, or crisis units providing short-term care to young people with behavioural difficulties. While it is acknowledged that ethnographic work does not necessarily try to be generalisable, the wider literature does demonstrate that the findings from ethnographic studies allow us to say meaningful things about the context under study (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). Every effort was made to interact with as many people who lived and worked in Bruceford, Wallacewells and Stewarton as possible during fieldwork. However, my ability to collect more data was limited by a number of factors. For instance, I could not be in more than one place at one time, and it is possible that while I was witnessing one interaction take place I was missing another important opportunity somewhere else. Additionally, I made the decision to only collect data within the residential houses, except for two occasions where I accompanied participants on outings away from the houses. This constrained my ability to get to know staff members and young people in other areas of their lives. Finally, there remain some staff members and young people who I was unable to spend any meaningful time with. I have recollections of staff members being talked about whose shift patterns never aligned with my visiting times (an example of this is the night shift staff members in Stewarton and Wallacewells, as I was unable to attend these houses too late at night), and young people who I only caught passing moments with, as they spent a lot of time outside of the residential houses.

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Despite these limitations, the themes highlighted in this thesis demonstrated how relationships in residential care are navigated by staff members and young people. Although literature has suggested that relationships in residential care are complex and widely scrutinised, there is little work which has examined how staff members in particular navigate their relationships with young people, and with each other. The work that does exist also tends to focus on one group at a time, with limited research considering both staff members' and young people's relationships simultaneously. In addition, to my knowledge this is the first time research specifically exploring relationships in residential care has attempted to understand the staff and resident group together. Where they have been present in other work, this work has discussed relationships within the realms of other topics, such as the *Food for Thought* project, where food practices in residential care were the focus, but their impact on relationships was also discussed. Therefore, although there are limitations to using ethnographic research methods, the larger contribution of this thesis is its specific examination of staff member and young people relationships in residential child care.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis proposes three key implications for policy and practice. These implications are detailed as follows:

- Risk-averse practice which views relationships in residential care as problematic does not take into account the inevitability of connections between people who live and work together, and the importance of these connections. Research and practice narratives which position relationships between young people as troublesome and bullying (Sinclair and Gibbs, 1998; Berridge, 2011; Green), between staff members and young people as suspicious and inappropriate (Smith, 2009; Brown et al., 2018), and between staff members as sites of increased abusive risk for children (Kendrick and Smith, 2002; Smith et al., 2013) can restrict open dialogue about relationships, connections and closeness. In furthering current research which recognises the positives of relationships in residential care, this PhD demonstrates the everyday nature of relationships while opening a conversation about their place in residential life.
- While an inevitable aspect of living and working in residential care, bureaucratic processes at the heart of managerialism and audit culture (Menzies Lyth, 1988; Smith, 2009; Howard, 2012) have a profound impact on the way that relationships are viewed and done in residential houses. These bureaucratic processes, situated within

the wider context of residential care, need better consideration in policy and practice. The work undertaken here discusses their role in both facilitating and disrupting relational closeness and every day 'care', alongside ambivalence from staff members and young people regarding staff roles and 'work', highlighting a lack of clarity in the residential child care task.

- There remains an uncertainty around appropriate and inappropriate relationships, situated within a fear of abuse scandals and accusations, as well as misinterpretation and understanding (Smith, 2008; 2009; Brown et al., 2018). Discussions around relationships which fail to take account of these concerns neglect to recognise the daily struggle of staff members and young people, who continue to grapple with inconsistent and unclear guidance concerning practice 'dos' and 'don'ts'. There remains a need to review current policies and guidance to give clear messages about relationships in residential care.

Given the limitations discussed above, I have identified the following areas that warrant future research to build upon this thesis:

- A larger scale study, exploring a greater number of residential houses, using ethnographic methods with multiple researchers, would enable an exploration of the findings in other, similar houses. Where this research has attempted to examine relationships in more than one residential house, the time spent in Stewarton and Wallacewells was limited. Future research would benefit from spending equivalent time in the field across fieldsites, ensuring that the intricacies of relationships continue to be explored in depth.
- A project which explores relationship enactment in other care settings, such as foster care, kinship care and secure care would also be beneficial. Residential houses provide placements for a relatively small number of the care population (Scottish Government, 2018a). As such, focusing on residential houses alone does limit one's understanding of relationships for young people and adults across the provision of alternative care. Residential houses are situated within a wider care environment, and so understanding relationships across this wider environment would provide valuable insights.

CONCLUSION

This study began as an effort to combine my own personal interest in relationships and residential child care. While emerging as an increasingly relevant area of social research, what has developed is a PhD thesis which offers a detailed insight into the enactment of relationships in residential child care, as well as the ways in which staff members and young people understand those relationship. In exploring both the workplace and homeplace nature of residential houses, focusing on contextualising relationships and providing and insight into people's everyday relational activities, this thesis concludes with some imperative implications for policy and practice. The overall message is that relationships for staff members and young people are complex. They are formed and maintained through small, every day acts situated within the milieu of residential care; they are significant in the lives of staff members and young people, and; they cannot be boiled down to 'good' or 'bad' encounters. Importantly, staff members and young people are currently able to connect with each other and form close, intimate relationships despite the barriers they face. This thesis has shown not only how young people develop bonds with each other, and how staff members form friendships which transcend the residential space, it has also demonstrated that the staff member-young person relationship forms a key part of participants' lives, both inside and outside of the residential house. The key message is that relationships do not end of suspend simply because people are not in the residential house at any given time. This is something that should be praised, particularly as young people deserve to feel loved, and staff members should be able to give them this love if they feel it. In the current narratives of professionalism, love and continuing care, this thesis calls for an on-going, nuanced discussion around relationships in residential care, in the hope that I have illustrated how necessary they are for both living and working in residential houses.

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APPENDIX 1: INITIAL STUDY INFORMATION

Who am I?

My name is Nadine Fowler. I am a first year PhD student at the University of Stirling. I began my PhD in October 2014, after completing my Master's degree in September 2014, also at the University of Stirling. My research interests centre around looked after children in general, with my PhD focusing on children and young people in Residential Care.

What am I researching?

I am interested in finding out what relationships are like for children and young people in residential care. In my study, I want to look at the kinds of relationships children and young people in residential care have with staff members and each other. I also want to see what relationships staff members have with each other, and the residents. During this process, I will be interested in finding out how important these relationships are to people as well.

Why do I want to do this research?

It has been highlighted that relationships are important to children and adults. However, there has been little research which has looked at how relationships are formed, sustained and ended in residential care. I think this is an important area of research, as children and young people in residential care will have various different relationships with a number of different people. As part of this study, I will also be interested in how important these relationships are to participants. This will also help to show why we need to consider these relationships more in residential care.

How do I want to conduct this research?

I want to spend lengthy periods of time in residential units, to see how staff and young people 'do' relationships. This will involve me visiting up to 3 residential units for at least 3 months each. During this time, I want to visit the unit at least 3-4 times a week for a number of hours. I would even like to visit at different times of the day, possibly over-night.

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Nadine Fowler

PhD Student
University of Stirling

When conducting the research, I will essentially be 'hanging around' the unit, talking to the staff and children, taking part in activities and watching what goes on. This will give me time to see how everyone interacts with each other, as I believe that relationships can't be understood solely by talking about them. Watching how things are done and how people behave with each other will give a better idea of the relationships that are present and how important these are.

I also want to ask the young people to take photos of objects that represent the people they have strong relationships with. It is my hope that these photos will give me something to talk about with the young people, as I know that interview-style questions can be daunting. I don't want to make anyone feel uncomfortable, and this is one way that I think some of the tensions can be relieved.

I want to make it clear that this research is not about evaluating staff behaviour. I know that residential units get observed by a number of different people at various times throughout the year. This is not what I want to do. Although a large majority of my work will involve me sitting, watching and listening to what is going on, I am not doing this to take note of what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. I only want to understand relationships more, and doing research like this is considered a good way of doing so.

When do I want to do the research?

Ideally, I would like to begin my research in October 2015, at the start of the 2nd year of my PhD. This may seem like a while away, but in the research world it isn't. That is why I have come to chat with you so soon. Again, I would like to take at least 3 months to do this research and visit the unit a lot during that time, at different times of the day. I would also like to visit when things that are out-of-the-ordinary are happening, for example during birthday parties or days-out. Again, all of this depends on agreement with your unit manager, you and the young people as well. Also, there is flexibility in this design to allow for times that it may not be appropriate for me to visit. As I've said, though, this is all up for discussion.

The end result

At the end of my PhD, in October 2017, I will publish an 80,000 word thesis based on the results of my research. I will also be hoping to publish some journal articles, book chapters, present at conferences and feedback to residential units and Local Authorities. In all of these publications, I will not disclose your names or the names of the units. This helps to ensure that participants are anonymous and confidentiality can be achieved. Please bear in mind that in rare circumstances there may be moments when I am required to report behaviour that has me worried about a participant, but the exact details of this anonymity and confidentiality will be discussed at a later stage.

What needs to be done before this can happen?

There are a number of steps which I need to go through before the research can begin, and these include:

- Meet with the unit manager to discuss research.
- Meet with all unit staff to discuss research and answer questions.
- Decide whether research is possible and begin ethics process. This involves asking the University and the Local Authority for permission.
- Gain ethical approval from both the University and the Local Authority.
- Meet with the young people in the unit to discuss research and answer questions.
- Get consent from the staff members, the young people and the family of the young people (if required).
- Begin research.

As a result, please remember that I am only at step 2 here. The main goal at the moment is to get your ideas and answer your questions. This will help me in deciding how feasible the research is or what I can do to make the rest of the steps go smoothly. Your help and input at this time is greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email:

nadine.fowler@stir.ac.uk

APPENDIX 2: YOUNG PERSON INFORMATION SHEET

Who am I?

My name is Nadine Fowler. I am a PhD student at the University of Stirling. My PhD focuses on relationships in residential care.

What am I researching?

I am interested in finding out what relationships are like for people in residential care. These relationships concern things such as how people get along, who are friends and who are not. I also want to know how staff members and young people act around each other, what they talk about and how this affects relationships. In my study, I want to look at the kinds of relationships children and young people in residential care have with staff members and each other. I also want to see what relationships staff members have with each other and the residents. During this process, I will be interested in finding out how important these relationships are to people as well.

Why do I want to do this research?

Relationships are important to everyone. But there hasn't been much research about how people get along in residential care. I think this is an important area of research, as everyone in residential care will have lots of different relationships with lots of different people. As part of this study, I will also be interested in how important these relationships are to participants. This will help to show why we need to think about these relationships more in residential care.

How do I want to conduct this research?

I want to spend 10 to 14 days working with XXXXXXXXXX, to see how staff members and young people 'do' relationships.

I will be interviewing staff members and young people. I will also spend some time 'hanging around' the house, talking to the staff and

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Nadine Fowler

PhD Student
University of Stirling

Young People Information Sheet

young people, taking part in daily activities and watching what goes on. This will give me time to see how everyone gets along. I want to do this because I don't think that relationships can be understood only by talking about them. Watching how things are done and how people behave with each other will give a better idea of the relationships that are present and how important these are.

What am I not interested in doing?

I know that residential homes get observed by lots of different people all the time. A lot of the time, this involves looking at whether or not staff members are doing a good job and deciding what needs to be done to make things better. This is not what I want to do. A lot of my work will be focused on interviewing staff members and young people. Some of it will also involve me sitting, watching and listening to what is going on. But I am not doing this to write down what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. I only want to understand relationships more, and doing research like this is a good way of doing so.

When do I want to do the research?

I would like to begin my research around January/February 2017. As I said, I will be visiting XXXXXXXXXX for 10 to 14 days in total. I will not do this until I get permission from you, your parents and the staff members as well. If you do not give me permission, I will still be visiting, but I will not record any information about you.

The end result

At the end of my PhD I will publish an 80,000 word document based on the results of this research. I also want to publish some journal articles, book chapters, go to conferences and feedback to residential houses and Local Authorities. When I do this, I will not disclose your names or the names of the houses. This helps to make sure that you

are protected and your information is kept safe. Please remember that in rare circumstances I might be required to tell someone about behaviour that has worried me. I will only do this if you have said or done something that makes me worried for your safety or the safety of someone else. I will always tell you if I need to tell someone what you have said or done and why.

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: nadine.bowler@str.ac.uk or telephone: 0783 543 1903

You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emond, via email: A.L.Emond@str.ac.uk or telephone: 01786467704

APPENDIX 3: PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Who am I?

My name is Nadine Fowler. I am a PhD student at the University of Stirling. My PhD focuses on relationships in residential care.

What am I researching?

I am interested in finding out what relationships are like for people in residential care. These relationships concern things such as how people get along, who are friends and who are not. I also want to know how staff members and young people act around each other, what they talk about and how this affects relationships. In my study, I want to look at the kinds of relationships children and young people in residential care have with staff members and each other. I also want to see what relationships staff members have with each other and the residents. During this process, I will be interested in finding out how important these relationships are to people as well.

Why do I want to do this research?

Relationships are important to everyone. But there hasn't been much research about how people get along in residential care. I think this is an important area of research, as everyone in residential care will have lots of different relationships with lots of different people. As part of this study, I will also be interested in how important these relationships are to participants. This will help to show why we need to think about these relationships more in residential care.

How do I want to conduct this research?

I want to spend 10 to 14 days working with XXXXXXXXXXXX, to see how staff members and young people 'do' relationships. During these visits, I want to interview some staff members and young people about the relationships that they have with each other. I will also

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Nadine Fowler

PhD Student
University of Stirling

Parent Information Sheet

spend some time 'hanging around' the house, talking to the staff and young people, taking part in daily activities and watching what goes on. This will give me time to see how everyone gets along. I want to do this because I don't think that relationships can be understood only by talking about them. Watching how things are done and how people behave with each other will give a better idea of the relationships that are present and how important these are.

What am I not interested in doing?

I know that residential houses for children and young people get observed by lots of different people all the time. A lot of the time, this involves looking at whether or not staff members are doing a good job and deciding what needs to be done to make things better. This is not what I want to do. A lot of my work will be based on the interviews that I want to do with your child. Although I will also be observing some of what happens in the house on a daily basis, I am not doing this to write down what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. I only want to understand relationships more, and doing research like this is a good way of doing so.

When do I want to do the research?

I would like to begin my research around January/February 2017. As I said, I will be visiting XXXXXXXXXX for a total of 10 to 14 days to do this research. I will not do this until I get permission from you, your child and the staff members as well. If you do not give me permission, I will still be visiting, but I will not ask your child to take part.

The end result

At the end of my PhD I will publish an 80,000 word document based on the results of this research. I also want to publish some journal articles, book chapters, go to conferences and feedback to residential

houses and Local Authorities. When I do this, I will not disclose your names, your child's name or the names of the services I visit. This helps to make sure that everyone is protected and your information is kept safe. Please remember that in rare circumstances I might be required to tell someone about behaviour that has worried me. I will only do this if your child has said or done something that makes me worried for their safety or the safety of someone else. I will always tell your child if I need to tell someone what they have said or done and why.

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: na@ne.fowler@str.ac.uk or telephone: 0783 543 1903

You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emmand, via email: r.e.mmand@str.ac.uk or telephone: 01783 646 7704

APPENDIX 4: STAFF MEMBER INFORMATION SHEET

Who am I?

My name is Nadine Fowler. I am a PhD student at the University of Stirling. My PhD focuses on relationships in residential care.

What am I researching?

I am interested in finding out what relationships are like for people in residential care. These relationships concern things such as how people get along, who are friends and who are not. I also want to know how staff members and young people act around each other, what they talk about and how this affects relationships. In my study, I want to look at the kinds of relationships children and young people in residential care have with staff members and each other. I also want to see what relationships staff members have with each other and the residents. During this process, I will be interested in finding out how important these relationships are to people as well.

Why do I want to do this research?

It has been highlighted that relationships are important to children and adults. However, there has been little research which has looked at how relationships are formed, sustained and ended in residential care. I think this is an important area of research, as everyone in residential care will have lots of different relationships with lots of different people. As part of this study, I will also be interested in how important these relationships are to participants. This will also help to show why we need to consider these relationships more in residential care.

How do I want to conduct this research?

I want to spend 10 to 14 days working with XXXXXXXXXXXX, to see how staff members and young people 'do' relationships.

Relationships in Care Study



UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING

Nadine Fowler

PhD Student
University of Stirling

Staff Information Sheet

When conducting the research, I will be interviewing staff members and young people. I will also spend some time 'hanging around' the house, talking to the staff and young people, taking part in daily activities and watching what goes on. This will give me time to see how everyone interacts with each other, as I believe that relationships can't be understood solely by talking about them. Watching how things are done and how people behave with each other will give a better idea of the relationships that are present and how important these are.

What am I not interested in doing?

I want to make it clear that this research is not about evaluating staff behaviour. I know that residential houses get observed by a number of different people at various times throughout the year. This is not what I want to do. Furthermore, I am not interested in accessing case files or background information on the young people or staff members involved. Although the majority of my research here is concerned with interviewing staff members and young people, I will also be conducting observations. I am not doing this to take note of what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. I only want to understand relationships more, and doing research like this is considered a good way of doing so.

When do I want to do the research?

Ideally, I would like to begin my research around January/February 2017. Again, I will be visiting XXXXXXXXXX for a total of 10 to 14 days. All of this depends on agreement with you, the young people and the young peoples' parents as well. If you do not give me permission, I will still be visiting, but I will not record any data about you

The end result

At the end of my PhD, around October 2017, I will publish an 80,000 word thesis based on the results of my research. I will also be hoping to publish some journal articles, book chapters, present at conferences and feedback to residential houses and Local Authorities. In all of these publications, I will not disclose your names or the name of your workplace. This helps to ensure that you are protected and your information is kept safe. Please bear in mind that in rare circumstances there may be moments when I am required to report behaviour that has me worried about a participant, specifically where you have said or done something that makes me worried for you or someone else. I will always tell you if I am going to report anything that involves you and why.

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: mad.n.fowler@str.ac.uk or telephone: 0793 543 1903

You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emond, via email: r.emon@str.ac.uk or telephone: 0179 646 7704

APPENDIX 5: SOCIAL WORKER INFORMATION SHEET

Who am I?

My name is Nadine Fowler. I am a PhD student at the University of Stirling. My PhD focuses on relationships in residential care. I have prepared this information leaflet for you, as you are involved in the care of a young person who is taking part.

What am I researching?

I am interested in finding out what relationships are like for people in residential care. These relationships concern things such as how people get along, who are friends and who are not. I also want to know how staff members and young people act around each other, what they talk about and how this affects relationships. In my study, I want to look at the kinds of relationships children and young people in residential care have with staff members and each other. I also want to see what relationships staff members have with each other and the residents. During this process, I will be interested in finding out how important these relationships are to people as well.

Why do I want to do this research?

It has been highlighted that relationships are important to children and adults. However, there has been little research which has looked at how relationships are formed, sustained and ended in residential care. I think this is an important area of research, as everyone in residential care will have lots of different relationships with lots of different people. As part of this study, I will also be interested in how important these relationships are to participants. This will also help to show why we need to consider these relationships more in residential care.

Relationships in Care Study



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Nadine Fowler

PhD Student
University of Stirling

Social Worker Information Sheet

How do I want to conduct this research?

I want to spend 10 to 14 days working with XXXXXXXXXXXX, to see how staff members and young people 'do' relationships.

When conducting the research, I will be interviewing staff members and young people. I will also spend some time 'hanging around' the house, talking to the staff and young people, taking part in daily activities and watching what goes on. This will give me time to see how everyone interacts with each other, as I believe that relationships can't be understood solely by talking about them. Watching how things are done and how people behave with each other will give a better idea of the relationships that are present and how important these are.

What am I not interested in doing?

I want to make it clear that this research is not about evaluating staff behaviour. I know that residential houses get observed by a number of different people at various times throughout the year. This is not what I want to do. Furthermore, I am not interested in accessing case files or background information on the young people or staff members involved. Although most of my work will focus on interviewing staff members and young people, some of my work will also involve me sitting, watching and listening to what is going on. I am not doing this to take note of what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. I only want to understand relationships more, and doing research like this is considered a good way of doing so.

When do I want to do the research?

I would like to begin my research around January/February 2017. As I said, I will be visiting XXXXXXXXXXXX for a total of 10 to 14 days.

The end result

At the end of my PhD I will publish an 80,000 word document based on the results of this research. I also want to publish some journal articles, book chapters, go to conferences and feedback to residential units and Local Authorities. When I do this, I will not disclose the names of young people or staff members, or the name of the services involved. This helps to make sure that everyone is protected and information is kept safe. Please remember that in rare circumstances I might be required to tell someone about behaviour that has worried me. I will only do this if someone has said or done something that makes me worried for them or someone else. I will always tell any young person or staff member if I need to tell someone what they have said or done and why.

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: prof.ms.budefr@ltr.ac.uk or telephone: [07835431903](tel:07835431903)

You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emond, via email: r.emonde@ltr.ac.uk or telephone: [01793657704](tel:01793657704)

APPENDIX 6: YOUNG PERSON CONSENT FORM

I _____ agree to take part in a research study that seeks to understand relationships in residential care.

I have read the information sheet given to me by Nadine, and I have been able to ask questions about the study and have these answered.

I understand that:

- Nadine will not discuss anything I talk about with anybody else. BUT if I tell Nadine something that makes her worry about my safety or the safety of someone else, she will have to talk to XXXXXXXXXXXX (team manager) about her concerns. I know that she will not do this without letting me know first.
- Nadine will be spending 10 to 14 days in the house. During this time she will be observing what happens, talking to us and asking us to take part in some interviews.
- I will only talk about what I want to talk about and I know that I don't have to answer any questions that I don't want to.
- I understand why Nadine wants me to take part in these interviews and I know that I don't have to take part in the interviews if I don't want to.
- I know that I do not have to take part in this study at all. I also know that I can stop taking part at any time, even if other people around me are taking part.
- If I decide to stop taking part in this study, Nadine will talk to me about what to do with any information she has already gathered.

Relationships in Care Study



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Nadine Fowler

PhD Student
University of Stirling

Young People Consent Form

- I know that I can ask for all of my information and interview recordings to be destroyed or returned to me. I can also ask for them to be kept but not used in the study.
- I know that Nadine will be using a Dictaphone to record the interviews. I know that I can ask her to stop recording at any time and she will.
- I know what the information Nadine collects will be used for. I understand that my comments and anything Nadine observes will be used to write her PhD may be used in reports, articles, events and lectures. This is to help people understand what relationships in residential care are like.
- If I don't want some or all of my information to be used I can tell Nadine and discuss this with her.
- I know that Nadine will store my information safely, on a password protected laptop and hard drive, or in a locked filing cabinet in her office at the University of Stirling.
- Nadine would like to use an alias to protect me and keep my name private. I agree to this.

If I have any concerns or difficulties I know that I can contact Nadine at the University of Stirling.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: nadine.bowler@stir.ac.uk or telephone: **0783 543 1903**
You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emond, via email: r.emond@stir.ac.uk or telephone: **01796 646 7704**

APPENDIX 7: PARENT CONSENT FORM

I _____ agree to my child _____ taking part in a research study that seeks to understand relationships in residential care.

Relationships in Care Study

I have read the information sheet given to me, and I have been able to ask questions about the study and have these answered.

I understand that:

- Nadine will not discuss anything my child talks about with anybody else. BUT if my child tells Nadine something that makes her worry about his/her safety or the safety of someone else, she will have to talk to XXXXXXXXXXXX (team manager) about her concerns. I know that she will not do this without letting him/her know first.
- Nadine will be spending a 10 to 14 days in the house. During this time she will be observing what happens and talking to staff members and children.
- My child will only talk about what they want to talk about and I know that he/she doesn't have to answer any questions that he/she doesn't want to.
- Nadine wants my child to take part in an interview with her. I know that he/she doesn't have to do this if he/she doesn't want to.
- I know that my child does not have to take part in this study and that he/she can stop taking part at any time, even if other people around him/her are taking part.



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Nadine Fowler
PhD Student
University of Stirling

Parent Consent Form

- If my child decides to stop taking part in this study, Nadine will talk to him/her about what to do with any information she has already gathered.
- I know that my child can ask for all of their information and interview recordings to be destroyed or returned to him/her. He/she can also ask for them to be kept but not used in the study.
- I know that Nadine will be using a Dictaphone to record the interviews. I know that my child can ask her to stop recording at any time and she will.
- I know what the information Nadine collects will be used for. I understand that my child's comments and anything Nadine observes will be used to write her PhD may be used in reports, articles, events and lectures.
- If my child doesn't want some or all of their information to be used they can tell Nadine and discuss this with her.
- I know that Nadine will store all information safely, on a password protected laptop and hard drive, or in a locked filing cabinet in her office at the University of Stirling.
- Nadine would like to use an alias to protect my child and keep their name private. I agree to this.

I agree to my child taking part in this study. I know that if I have any concerns or difficulties I can contact Nadine at the University of Stirling.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: nadine.burder@stir.ac.uk or telephone: **07835 431903**
You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emond, via email: r.emon@stir.ac.uk or telephone: **017864 67204**

APPENDIX 8: STAFF MEMBER CONSENT FORM

I _____ agree to take part in a research study that seeks to understand relationships in residential care.

I have read the information sheet given to me by Nadine, and I have been able to ask questions about the study and have these answered.

I understand that:

- Nadine will not discuss anything I talk about with anybody else. BUT if I tell Nadine something that makes her worry about my safety or the safety of someone else, she will have to talk to XXXXXXXXXXXX (team manager) about her concerns. I know that she will not do this without letting me know first.
- Nadine will be spending 10 to 14 days in the house. During this time she will be observing what happens, talking to us and asking us some questions.
- I know that I do not have to take part in this study and that I can stop taking part at any time, even if other people around me are taking part.
- If I decide to stop taking part in this study, Nadine will talk to me about what to do with any information she has already gathered.
- I know that I can ask for all of my information and interview recordings to be destroyed or returned to me. I can also ask for them to be kept but not used in the study.

Relationships in Care Study



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Nadine Fowler
PhD Student
University of Stirling

Staff Consent Form

- I know that Nadine will be using a Dictaphone to record the interviews. I know that I can ask her to stop recording at any time and she will.
- I understand that my comments and anything Nadine observes will be used to write her PhD may be used in reports, articles, events and lectures.
- I know that she will not use my name or the name of my workplace in these publications.
- I understand that any information collected during this research will be treated as confidential.
- I know that Nadine will store my information safely, on a password protected laptop and hard drive, or in a locked filing cabinet in her office at the University of Stirling.
- Nadine would like to use a pseudonym to protect me and keep my name private. I agree to this.

If I have any concerns or difficulties I know that I can contact Nadine at the University of Stirling.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

If you have any questions regarding my research or anything written here, which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email: nadine.fowler@stir.ac.uk or telephone: [07835431903](tel:07835431903)
You can also contact my supervisor, Ruth Emmond, via email: h.r.emmond@stir.ac.uk or telephone: [01796467704](tel:01796467704)

APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Questions/Topics

Remind participants about different types of relationships – you aren't looking at 'good' or 'bad' relationships. It is okay not to have strong relationships with/feel close to everyone, and they should feel comfortable telling you if they don't, because you aren't going to judge them on it.

Introduce the task you want them to complete –

"I would like you to use these counters to represent people and the relationships you think they have with each other. For instance, if I was doing this task... The distance between each counter shows whether I think those people are close or not. If there is a big distance, then I might not think they have a strong bond. If they are beside each other, then I might think they are really close with each other. Also, I might put them really far apart, if I think they don't get along at all. You can move your counters anywhere you want, and you might want to move them throughout the interview. Does that make sense? Of course, we don't have to use the counters at all if you don't want to. It's entirely up to you."

During the counters/after the counters, focus on the following topics

1. Think about the people that live and work here. Can you show/describe to me the kinds of relationships that you think they have?
2. Can you tell me a bit more about those relationships?
 - a. Who do you think you get along with/feel close to? Is there anyone you do not get along with or feel as close to (remind participant that they don't need to name anyone specific)?
 - i. Why do you think you have these relationships with these people?
 - ii. What can you tell me about how you developed these relationships? I.e. what strengthens/deepens a relationship? What can cause a relationship to have stresses/strains
 - b. Who do you think are close to each other? Can you tell me a bit about people that don't seem to get along as much?

- i. How do other relationships in the home affect you?
 - ii. How do you think these relationships affects other SMs or YP?
3. I'd like you to choose one of the relationships that you've mentioned here to focus on. Can you tell me a bit more about this relationship – what kind of relationship is it? What has strengthened/deepened it? What has caused stresses/strains in it?
 4. What is it like when someone new arrives? Either a YP or SM?
 - a. What common things happen when someone new arrives?
 - b. Do you have any strategies/conversation topics that you rely on that help you to build a relationship with them?
 - c. Do you think anyone you work with (YP or SM) does?
 - d. Have there been any really memorable cases of someone new arriving and the relationships that developed when they did, either with yourself or one that you have witnessed between others?
 5. What is it like when someone leaves? Either a YP or SM?
 - a. What common things happen when someone leaves? SM and YP.
 - b. How does it affect your daily life?
 - c. Have there been any memorable times when someone you have felt close to left? How did that make you feel?
 - d. Have there been any memorable times when someone you had a strenuous or difficult relationship with left? How did that make you feel?
 - e. Can you think of any memorable times when a SM or YP other than yourself has been impacted by someone leaving?
 - i. How did it affect that YP or SM when that person left?
 - ii. How did it affect the home as a whole?
 6. How important do you think relationships are within the residential home?
 7. How important are the relationships you have mentioned to you personally? How do they impact your life outside of the home?
 - a. (SM) would you spend time with a colleague outside of work?
 - b. (YP) would you spend time with another YP outside of the home?
 - c. (SM or YP) would you have any desire to spend time with another SM or YP when either of you have moved on from the home?

APPENDIX 10: LOCAL AUTHORITY ETHICS PROPOSAL



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University of Stirling
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Relationships in Care

Introduction

For my PhD research, I am exploring the relationship dynamics within residential settings for young people. I am interested in the interactions between staff and young people, among young people and among staff members. I am doing this under the supervision of Ruth Emond and Brigid Daniel at the University of Stirling. I will spend around 10 months in a single residential unit observing and listening to people interact with each other. I will also be engaging in conversations and everyday activities with staff members and residents. I will also aim to conduct semi-structured interviews in a second residential facility, where I will be interested in exploring some of the concepts that have arisen during the first phase of research. The main purpose of doing so is to understand how relationships between staff members and young people, as well as each other, are formed, maintained and ended. I am also interested in understanding what these relationship dynamics mean to participants and how they are discussed or 'defined' within the residential context.

What follows is a brief overview of why such issues are important in residential care, and what 'gaps' in knowledge my project will fill. I have also included more detailed descriptions of what I am planning to do and the methods I have chosen to investigate these issues. Finally, I have presented a timetable of events which should help to illustrate what stages and processes have been achieved and need yet to be completed.

Overview

Relationships are largely considered to be an important part of a child's life. Relationships with caregivers and peers help children and young people to

understand the world around them. They also provide a basis for other relationships that children and young people will form throughout their lifetime. Furthermore, these relationships can help children and young people to recover from challenging experiences, providing them with resources to build resilience against future challenging experiences. As a result, understanding the relationship dynamics between children, their peers and caregivers is a necessary concern, especially in residential care.

So far, there have been a number of studies which sought to understand the day-to-day life of children living in residential care, highlighting the role of relationships within these issues. These studies have often identified that relationships with staff members and other residents are very important to young people living in residential care. Such relationships can take a number of different forms. Some researchers have highlighted that relationship dynamics in residential care can have a 'family-like' structure, whereby residents and staff members use a 'family-metaphor' to describe how they feel about each other. These 'family-like' descriptions help to demonstrate what other academics have found regarding caring relationships, namely that they are about love, care and support rather than biological ties.

However, these studies have not fully focused on relationships and relationship dynamics. Many of these findings were identified in research which sought to understand everyday practices in residential care, where the importance of relationships was a secondary issue. For this reason, my research will be fully devoted to understanding the relationship dynamics in residential care, as well as their importance to residents and staff. In this manner, I am interested in how relationships between staff and residents are formed, maintained and ultimately ended.

How the Research will be Conducted

During this study, I will be concerned with the relationship dynamics between young people and staff members in the residential units. As such, the young person-to-staff, young person-to-young person, staff-to-staff and staff-to-young person relationship dynamics are of interest to me. I hope to explore these relationship dynamics using a mixture of participant observations (ethnography) and semi-structured interviews.

Throughout the entire project, I will visit two residential units in Scotland. At present, I have been in one of these units for a number of months carrying out the ethnographic portion of my PhD. The next step is to focus on conducting semi-structured interviews with staff members and young people. There are a number of reasons for taking these two approaches, which will be outlined below.

Ethnography

I have spent a sustained period of time in one residential unit already. During this time, I have been interested in seeing how the residents and staff members interact with each other. The ethnographic approach has allowed me to observe these interactions and have informal discussions with participants about everyday issues as they occurred. This has helped to make the staff and young people feel more at ease with my presence and has allowed me to 'blend in' to the background of these activities.

Ethnography has also provided me with a chance to see how these relationship dynamics are formed and re-formed between staff and residents, in a manner that is not wholly possible with other research methods. For instance, I believe that relationships, what they look like and their importance to people, cannot be fully described using words alone – they need to be observed and understood alongside other, everyday practices. This approach has allowed me to see the relationship dynamics as they occurred, and offered plenty of chances to negotiate the research purpose and process with participants. Consequently, the staff members and young people involved have had more of an opportunity to 'take control' of the research and the data produced.

Semi-structured Interviews

The ethnographic methods mentioned above have already provided a substantial amount of data for this project. However, it is important to understand how these experiences of relationship dynamics relate to the wider field of residential child care. For this reason, I would like to conduct some semi-structured interviews in your facility with staff members and young people. These interviews will provide an opportunity for me to discuss my emerging findings outside of their current setting. Conducting interviews will also allow me to better understand how staff members and residents think and talk about their relationships, which cannot be done by ethnography alone.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Throughout the research process all of the information I gather will be collected and stored anonymously and confidentially. Participants will be given pseudonyms, which will replace their real names during data collection and the write-up process. The exact nature of these pseudonyms will be discussed at a later date with all participants involved. This information will be held confidentially and not discussed with any other participants. However, if participants disclose any information that causes me concern for their safety or the safety of anyone else, I will discuss this information with them and make them aware as to whether I feel this information needs to be passed on to another party. Prior to the research commencing, I will discuss with the unit managers who they believe should be informed in such a case, and I will make all participants aware of the process for passing on worrying information to this party.

I will also ask everyone who participates in this research to provide informed consent at the beginning of the research. This consent will be gained from the local authority, unit managers, staff members, young people and parents where necessary. This consent will be discussed frequently during the course of the research, as it is often necessary to remind participants what they have agreed throughout. Such processes help to alleviate any confusion or anxiety about how the information will be used.

After the Research

The data generated from this research will be used to complete my PhD thesis. This is a large body of work (around 80,000 words) that will enable me to gain my Doctorate. In addition to this thesis, however, I hope to produce a number of more accessible documents. Most notably, I will be aiming to produce some journal articles which will be available to other academics in this area, as well as many professionals who are involved in residential care. Furthermore, I will be producing some 'impact' documents, which will

outline my findings and their implications and be available to all participants, as well as other residential units and Local Authorities who are interested in my work. If appropriate, I will also present my findings to the residential unit, in order to answer any underlying questions about the outcomes of my research and to discuss their importance to the work of the unit. Accompanying these productions will undoubtedly be a number of presentations and conference papers, again highlighting the work that has been done and the findings produced.

If you have any questions regarding this research which have not already been covered, you can contact me via email at: nadine.fowler@stir.ac.uk

APPENDIX 11: RE-CREATED RELATIONSHIP MAPS

