

**Locating Family of Origin Following Family Tracing:
The Experiences of Unaccompanied and Separated
Young People Seeking Asylum**

Tara Parfitt

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ABSTRACT

Unaccompanied young people comprise a significant proportion of forcibly displaced persons in the UK, facing further complications due to their ages and subsequent support needs. The importance of family networks for developing young people, including the negative sequelae of family separation, has been well documented. However, limited research exists with respect to unaccompanied young people's efforts to locate missing family members. The present study aims to contribute to the narrow research base through illuminating how unaccompanied young people experience family tracing procedures by asking them about this directly. To this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight young people to ask them about their experiences of family tracing with the British Red Cross, the singular provider of international family tracing efforts in the UK. Their resulting accounts were analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and three main themes were identified: 'Adjustment', 'Uncertainty' and 'Ability'. Participants experienced distress as a result of family separation and had ongoing concerns about the welfare of missing family members. Nonetheless, they maintained hope and a strong desire to find sought family. Participants resourcefully employed their own search strategies and enlisted the help of the British Red Cross. Adjusting to successfully tracing family members echoed other transitions participants had made to social and legal systems in the UK. Maintaining a sense of purpose in planning for their futures was a common factor for many participants.

These findings have significant implications for unaccompanied young people seeking asylum, emphasising the importance of family tracing and reunion rights for the psychosocial wellbeing of this cohort. Adequate awareness of the implications of family separation and tracing procedures is vital for professionals working with this group to provide appropriate support. Policy revisions are required to broaden conceptualisations of family membership and prioritise the rights of unaccompanied young people as children first and equal citizens.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The following chapter introduces and critiques literature around family tracing (FT) for Unaccompanied and Separated Young People (UASYP) seeking asylum. An overview of the current context for UASYP is discussed, primarily through considering their situation in the United Kingdom (UK), before broadening the lens to explore factors relating to their experiences of leaving their homelands. Experiences of family separation and its implications are emphasised, including subsequent steps taken to search for missing family. The role of the British Red Cross (BRC) in International Family Tracing (IFT) procedures will be explored as a focus for this research¹. The limited prior research into this subject area is presented, with the subsequent rationale for the current study and its implications described. Finally, the study aims and research questions are stated.

1.1 A Note on Terminology

1.1.1 The Issue of Classification

Refugees are defined in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refugee Convention as any person who

owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (1951, p.14).

Asylum seekers are defined as persons who have applied for asylum and are awaiting a decision regarding whether they will be granted refugee status. Those who are not may subsequently be granted leave to remain in the UK for humanitarian or other reasons (Hawkins, 2018).

Although such descriptions exist for the purposes of legal and international affairs, such bureaucratic definitions are disputable because of their subjectivity and variability, with limited agreement among academics and practitioners

¹ The BRC provides support and guidance for asylum-seeking people around basic provisions, travel, healthcare, benefits and psycho-social support. The latter incorporates IFT, which seeks to locate separated family members on behalf of applicants, and family reunion where possible.

(Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Loescher, Long, & Sigona, 2014). Arbitrary distinctions between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration contribute to wider tensions between how society constructs asylum seeking people and how these persons construct themselves. Labels assigned to persons seeking asylum are inherently powerful, meaning-laden and directly affect those concerned, contributing to stereotyped identities. There is an inherent power imbalance in those labelled not being consulted or represented regarding such designations (Zetter, 1991). This highlights the importance of placing the person at the centre of such descriptors, rather than their legal definition of immigration status, so as not to de-humanise or compartmentalise the individuals comprising these groups (Patel, 2003). The terms Refugee and Asylum-Seeking People (R&ASP) and UASYP will therefore be used throughout this account, with an acknowledgment of the above limitations regarding this.

1.1.2 Classifying UASYP

The UNHCR defines unaccompanied children seeking asylum as "under the age of eighteen... separated from both parents and... not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so" (1994, p.121). In the UK, separated children claiming asylum in their own right below the age of 18 are processed as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child/ren (UASC) (Home Office, 2017a). A young person's legal status is not considered by the BRC in providing IFT services and the term UASYP is used within the organisation to refer to young people who have travelled to the UK alone to seek asylum or become separated from any family in the process.

Except where definitions and policy documents explicitly reference UASC, the age range for UASYP described in this study is based on the United Nations (UN) definition of young people as the cohort of 15 to 24-year-olds between education and employment, capturing the period of transition from childhood to adulthood (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). In describing UASYP, it is recognised that the concepts of youth and childhood are social constructions, shaped by discourse, with historical, social and cultural variability (James & Prout, 1997). Adolescence is therefore a constructed period, differing across time and between cultures, with age more reflective of biological changes than social transitions (World Health Organisation, 2019).

Despite having age in common, UASYP are not a homogenous group and have a range of experiences and life situations (Wernesjö, 2012). However, they have some shared experiences in being separated from family and seeking asylum which are worthy of attention.

1.2 A Review of Existing Literature

A literature search was conducted to review relevant papers investigating UASYP's experiences of IFT. A preliminary search was completed before commencement of the study to inform its aims and shape its development. This incorporated searches through thesis repositories, search engines, grey literature and references harvested from other journal articles and publications. Subsequently, a comprehensive, structured literature search was conducted.

1.2.1 Search Strategy

The psychology librarian was consulted regarding optimisation of search terms and to identify relevant bibliographic databases. Searches were completed through the publication databases Academic Search Complete, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, CINAHL Plus, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect and SCOPUS. The final search string included variants of the terms (“asylum seekers” OR “refugees” OR “migrants”) / (“unaccompanied refugee” OR “unaccompanied child” OR “unaccompanied youth” OR “unaccompanied minors” OR “unaccompanied refugee minors” OR “unaccompanied children seeking asylum”) AND (“family”) AND (“separat*” OR “trace” OR “search” OR “look” OR “find” OR “locate”). This was adapted to reflect each database's search options and limitations. Literature sought was shaped by an exploration into UASYP's own experiences of undertaking IFT, especially qualitative accounts of this process (see Appendix A for further information).

A total of 717 results published before 29th December 2018 were identified, and titles and abstracts were screened. Full-text documents were reviewed for 27 studies to determine eligibility. 23 of these made some reference to family separation but were not found to be relevant to FT. Four studies were included as they made reference to FT with young people in other countries; two of these focused solely on FT procedures: (Bazeghi & Baradaran, 2010 and Boothby, 1993) and one focused solely on procedures for a livelihood project with UASC, briefly incorporating FT issues: (Jones, Hiddleston & McCormick, 2014). UASYP's views on IFT were not included in the aforementioned studies, with

one even deeming this unethical (Bazeghi & Baradaran, 2010). No papers were found that looked at IFT for UASYP in a UK context, however one study qualitatively investigated Sudanese male UASYP's experiences of FT: (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson & Rana, 2008) and an unpublished doctoral thesis qualitatively reviewed adult R&ASP's experiences of IFT with the BRC: (Salvo, 2012). This resulted in a total of five studies identified as relevant.

Following the identification of the five papers, I sought to draw on wider literature to provide a broader, more holistic review of factors affecting family tracing for UASYP. Identified areas incorporate: the current socio-political context for UASYP, to inform the reader of the realities and concurrent demands faced by these young people whilst searching for and in the absence of their family members; family separation, including exploring the function and role of families and the causes and implications of separation for UASYP; and finally, outlining family tracing and reunion processes to inform the reader of the rights of UASYP to search for missing family members and the role of the BRC in facilitating this. Responses to successful tracing and reunion are also detailed.

The following provides a narrative synthesis of findings.

1.2.2 The Socio-Political Context for UASYP

A 2017 UNHCR report showed that there were 68.5 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide, with 85% hosted in developing regions. 52% of known refugee people are under 18. That same year, approximately 45,500 asylum applications were made from a conservative total of 173,800 UASC in 67 countries. Many UASYP become separated from their families following war, natural disaster or migration, often travelling to the UK alone (UNICEF UK & Save The Children, 2016), whilst others are victims of trafficking (Home Office, 2017a). They may have fled conscription as child soldiers, witnessed or experienced torture, rape and beatings and the deaths of family members and others, including on their journey to the UK (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010). UASYP therefore share the universal needs of all children, the provision of which has been disrupted, coupled with separation from caregivers. They have further needs specific to the circumstances leading to their departure, perilous journeys and adjustment to new environments (Hopkins & Hill, 2010).

1.2.2.1 Context in the UK

1.2.2.1.1 Asylum Application Process

In 2016, asylum seeking people comprised 6% of all UK immigration at 35,300. (Hawkins, 2018). In the year ending March 2018 UASC asylum applications, mostly from male applicants, stood at 2,307, a 25% decrease on the previous year. 56% of young applicants were granted asylum or other protection and 17% were granted temporary leave. 27% of applicants were refused (Home Office, 2018). The 2016/7 closure of Calais camps saw 769 children transferred to the UK (Refugee Council, 2018) and in 2016 over 900 UASC were transferred from Europe (Home Office, 2017b).

Outcomes for UASYP submitting asylum claims can result in four main decisions; If successful: they may be granted asylum and therefore, refugee status with the ability to apply for settled status after five years. If their claim is refused: they may be granted humanitarian protection with the option to apply for settled status after five years; or where the Home Office is concerned with the safety of the home country, granted UASC Leave until they either reach the age of 17.5 or for up to 30 months, with no option for settled status; or they may be refused asylum and granted no leave to remain. In the latter two instances, applicants may appeal the decision or provide a further application (Department for Education [DfE], 2017).

Assessing children's asylum claims may be more challenging due to UASC potentially having limited awareness of their departure circumstances or appreciation of the risks of return to their home country. They may struggle to provide evidence to corroborate their claim, fully describe details or provide information which goes beyond their personal experience (DfE & Home Office, 2017), especially considering possible confusion from witnessing traumatic events. (DfE, 2017). UASYP are often wary of authority figures such as border staff, police and social services due to previous negative experiences, including use of force, threats and demanding payment (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010).

Issues around immigration status and pending asylum claims are a great source of stress and anxiety for UASYP and long waiting periods can poorly impact on their ability to feel settled (Hek, 2005). Refusal of asylum and low support systems appear to be related to high levels of psychological distress and poor mental health trajectories for UASYP (Jakobsen, Meyer DeMott, Wentzel-

Larsen & Heir, 2017). Government policy has frequently been criticised for treating UASYP as asylum-seekers first, rather than children (Mynott & Humphries, 2002).

1.2.2.1.1.1 Age Assessment

On arrival, UASYP may be subject to age assessments in the absence of identity documents. They may have been unable or unwilling to secure identity documentation from their government and may have claimed to be an adult or travelled on false documentation to enable passage out of their home country (Refugee Council, 2012). Immigration Officers can treat an applicant as an adult based on a visual assessment of their perceived demeanour and physical appearance strongly indicating they are significantly over the age of 18 (Refugee Council, 2018). Applicants may resultantly be denied access to education or other resources (Coram Children's Legal Centre [CLC], 2017a) and housed in adult accommodation or detention in the absence of appropriate, detailed age assessments (Refugee Council, 2012), with negative consequences for their mental health due to detention experiences and the stress of age dispute (Ehnholt et al., 2018).

1.2.2.1.2 UASYP in Care

UASYP are generally placed in foster care under the National Transfer Scheme, allowing countrywide distribution between local authorities away from denser entry point areas (DfE, 2017). 2018 figures until September saw the highest transfer numbers across London, the East and South East, with London alone moving 71 UASC out of area and receiving one transfer in return (Refugee Council, 2018). Cemlyn and Briskman (2003) argue that this distribution is a form of effective dispersal which leads UASYP to face a lottery of local authority treatment and resources and a discriminatory level of provision, with many of their rights disregarded. The importance of a long-term, solid placement is vital in providing a trusted adult and secure base for these young people over the course of time, however, the added situational difficulties experienced by UASYP frequently result in shorter-term placements (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010). Many UASYP face issues of living apart from separated siblings until local authority provision can be made and may face further difficulties accessing other members of their ethnic communities or places of worship due to these distances (Rutter, 2003). Such circumstances can negatively impact ethnic

identity formation for minority group adolescents, affecting their self-esteem and adjustment (Phinney, 1989).

UASYP wishing to remain in education in England must be accommodated by the Local Education Authority until age 19 (Coram CLC, 2017b).

1.2.2.1.3 Health

Upon being registered as 'looked after children', UASYP must have a physical and mental health assessment completed within 20 working days (Coram CLC, 2017c). As most young people draw on parents for support, advice and advocacy around their health needs, the significance of a parental figure is vital in fulfilling this role for UASYP. This responsibility typically falls within the hands of a potentially rapidly changing support network, placing greater pressure on UASYP themselves (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010).

UASYP may experience significant mental health difficulties resulting from their distressing experiences, the construction of which is culturally situated, with radical differences between Western² constructions of mental wellbeing and those of their home culture (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010). Research has shown that professionals often have limited knowledge and training regarding the range of experiences and challenges faced by UASYP (The Children's Society, 2018). One UK study found that violence was a primary flight reason, with UASYP having experienced sexual violence (a third had been raped in their home country) and having witnessed or experienced other forms of violence including war, death and persecution of family members or themselves, lived in hiding, were imprisoned or detained or were victims of trafficking and forced military recruitment (Thomas, Thomas, Nafees & Bhugra, 2003). Discourses of strength in the face of such adversity are often downplayed in perceptions of UASYP, yet UASYP are also resourceful and usually keen to make the best of life in their new environments (Kohli & Mather, 2003).

² The term Western/ised in this account refers to European and North American understandings of psychological and social constructs. It in no way sets out to homogenise difference and diversity within such groups but references dominant colonial discourses that minimise the way of life and therefore oppress, devalue, and stigmatise ethno-cultural minority groups (Marsella, 2013).

Barriers to UASYP accessing mental health support include limited translation facilities and a lack of psycho-education regarding mental wellbeing, with existing screening measures often proving inadequate (The Children's Society, 2018). When applied, such measures have shown that refugee young people's scores on measures of psychological distress were higher than their British counterparts (Durà-Vilà, Klasen, Makatini, Rahimi & Hodes, 2012).

1.2.2.1.4 Public Policy and Discourse

UASYP typically face stereotyping, negative media portrayal and racism (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010). Media representations often exclude refugee and asylum seeking people's own narratives, use dehumanizing language and are contingent on current social and political activities (Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil & Turner Baker, 2008). Sinha (2008) posits that political and media discourses depict threat from an influx of migrant people, 'scrounging' off public resources and welfare benefits and posing health and safety risks, potentially leading R&ASP to construct their identities around such representations (Leudar et al., 2008). Local social problems are thereby scapegoated onto R&ASP, allowing states and communities to distance themselves from their role in creating or exacerbating R&ASP's distress.

Government asylum policy has been punitive and, along with hostile media coverage conflating terrorism with asylum, contributes to public resentment and fear (Tribe & Patel, 2007). Disempowered further by their age, UASYP are often unheard and may minimise alternative stories of resilience and survival due to concerns that these may be legally misconstrued as evidence that they are strong enough to be returned to their homelands (Hughes & Rees, 2016). Such inequalities lead UASYP's rights to be systematically denied, despite their entitlement to protection, services to meet their needs and participation in decisions affecting them (Cemlyn & Briskman, 2003).

1.2.2.1.5 Transitions and Adjustment

UASYP may experience a culture shock following their arrival in the UK due to differences in routine, language, food, parental roles and authority figures, attitudes to animals, education, dress, sexuality and gender, alcohol or religious observance (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010). They contend with a process of 'othering', whereby they are located both within and outside society (Wernesjö, 2012) resulting in dilemmas about how to juggle religious and cultural

expectations with fitting in and surviving within UK culture (Hughes & Rees, 2016). Adolescence is itself a challenging period of transition, incorporating physical changes, identity development and individuation and developing social and sexual relationships (Christie & Viner, 2005). Fleeing alone to a foreign country poses further challenges for UASYP (Jakobsen, Meyer DeMott, Wentzel-Larsen & Heir, 2017). They face multiple separations: from their country, community and family (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010), resulting in distance from cultural contexts and reference points (Hughes & Rees, 2016). Such experiences are likely to have an impact on identity development, potentially delaying or halting this (Hughes & Rees, 2016).

UASYP face further challenges around transitions approaching age 18 including: renewing immigration applications; a change of education provider; and a move from child to adult services, including those they have built relationships with, which may give rise to feelings of losing family twice (Hughes & Rees, 2016).

Despite these challenges, many UASYP in the UK wish to remain and make a positive contribution to society (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010).

1.2.3 Family Separation

1.2.3.1 Deconstructing Family

The term family is a social construction which is not objectively meaningful; human interactions, and human communications especially, create, define and give meaning to family (Holtzman, 2008). Boss (1999) argues that families are psychological constructs, reflecting individuals who the person feels are important to them. She maintains that this psychological family outweighs any biological relationship and may differ from legal or physical family structures (Boss, 2007). Westernised constructs of family are often defined “in a language of biological ties or legal status, in terms of the traditional unit of married parents and their offspring. This image is offered as both the moral and legal foundation of responsible society” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999, p.6). Although social change has led to broader conceptions, there remains less focus on other experiences of family, such as community child-rearing commonly practised by some cultural groups (Holtzman, 2008). Westernised family constructs have influenced research and policy. Mayall (2000) argues that the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is developed from universalised notions of an

individual, free-standing child on a specific developmental trajectory and that it prioritises biologically-based parent-child relationships as more natural and fundamental than other community or family relationships. Such documents typically shape governmental policies and legal practices, and thereby local service delivery, which may have profound implications for persons attempting to access such services which resultantly employ narrower, biologically-based definitions of family membership.

1.2.3.2 The Role of Families

The family serves an important role as an anchor of identity and emotion (Rousseau, Mekki-Berrada & Moreau, 2001). It provides an individual's first experiences of the world and relationships, and a context for growth and development (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). It functions to provide: a sense of belonging, identity, meaning and direction; economic support and protection for its members; and socialisation, education and nurturance (Patterson, 2002). Stable caregiver relationships have been shown to be important for children's development (Winnicott, 1958), providing secure attachment figures from which children are able to safely explore their worlds. This may be disturbed through absent or inconsistent caregiving (Ainsworth, 1989). Attachment relationships can lay the foundations for future attachments (Bowlby, 1969), with stable attachments facilitating the development of social intelligence, the capacity for attentional control and affect regulation (Fonagy & Allison, 2014). Attachment theory has been criticised for being deterministic and neglecting the development of persons within their wider contexts (Slater, 2007). Nonetheless, during times of transition in adolescence, the family provides a stable platform from which young people can develop their independence (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). Many immigrant families comprise extended kin relationships, where children form attachment relationships and receive support from a wide network (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova & Louie, 2002). Therefore, differing social contexts highlight the need for greater inclusivity in describing family membership (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999).

1.2.3.3 How Families Become Separated

Families may become separated in different ways, through voluntary decisions or involuntary occurrences. Separations can occur naturally through family life

stages, such as when adult children leave home, in the event of parental separation, or death of a family member (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989), or adoption and fostering arrangements. Migration can result in profound transformations for families, often complicated by separation from loved ones, including nuclear and extended family members (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). In conflict zones, separation from parents may arise through imprisonment or military recruitment. Children may become separated accidentally or through being orphaned, abducted, or removed by aid workers. They may have an agreement with their parents to live independently, may have run away or may be left in countries of asylum whilst parents resettle elsewhere (UNHCR, 1994). They may be forced to travel without their parents in cases where parents are ill, imprisoned, deceased, missing or have fled for their safety and left their child in the care of family or other community members. Conversely, family members may determine that it is the young person who is most at risk and arrange to send the child to safety, often staying behind themselves due to limited financial resources. UASYP have also succeeded in travelling alone through their own bravery and ingenuity (Ayotte & Williamson, 2001).

1.2.3.4 Impact of Family Separation

Research has shown that family separation is distressing and detrimental to the psychosocial health of R&ASP, especially their mental health due to their concerns about the welfare of their separated family and a desire to be reunited with them (Miller, Hess, Bybee & Goodkind, 2018). Separated R&ASP have been found to show fear for family left behind in conflict zones and feelings of powerlessness as they are unable to help. They may have conflicted feelings and experience this separation as their greatest source of distress, leaving them with unmet socio-emotional needs. This can impact on an individual's integration into their country of asylum (Wilmsen, 2013) due to experiencing separation as a cultural disruption, affecting feelings of agency and self-efficacy in their post-migration life (Miller et al., 2018).

Family separation has been shown to be a source of grief and loss potentially manifesting through worry, guilt and depression, frequently expressed via somatic symptoms (Wilmsen, 2013). The separation experience may be amplified by associated losses and traumatic events including death of loved ones, war and religious, political or ethnic persecution (Suárez-Orozco et al.,

2002), significantly impacting emotional distress (Rousseau et al., 2001). Waiting for news has been shown to be a difficult experience, especially in cases of uncertainty, with individuals striving for finality (Sweeney & Cavanaugh, 2012). A study on R&ASP missing on crossing the Mediterranean found that families were keen to seek information regarding their loved ones and gain closure (Ben Attia et al., 2016). Salvo (2012) found that family separation was just one experience amongst many traumatic events and losses. It can lead to uncertainty about the fate of family members and appears to negatively impact emotional wellbeing through fear, concern and worry. Separated migrant youth reported higher symptoms of anxiety and depression than their unseparated counterparts and experienced family cohesion difficulties on reunion following lengthy separation (Suárez-Orozco, Bang & Kim, 2011).

1.2.3.4.1 Impact on UASYP

UASYP frequently experience family separation and breakdown, resulting in uncertainty regarding the whereabouts of family members (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010). Consequently, UASYP can experience sleep disturbance and poor concentration, repetitive and intrusive thoughts and feelings of guilt and worry. UASYP may experience life as fragile, have concerns about the future and experience distress from past experiences (Kohli & Mather, 2003) before, during and after passage to the UK, potentially resulting in or exacerbating existing mental health difficulties (The Children's Society, 2018). They may differ from their accompanied counterparts in being at significantly higher risk of developing such difficulties due to higher levels of family losses and war traumas (Hodes, Jagdev, Chandra & Cunniff, 2008), typically manifested as internalised, traumatic stress reactions (Bean, Broekaert, Derluyn, Eurelings-Bontekoe & Spinhoven, 2007). They may exhibit fear of rejection and trust issues (O'Toole Thommessen, Corcoran & Todd, 2017), with their wellbeing potentially deteriorating in the face of barriers to settlement or long-term prospects, including immigration processes (The Children's Society, 2018).

UASYP are therefore placed in vulnerable situations where they face dealing with potentially traumatic experiences, unfamiliar living situations in a new society without the guidance and support of a parental figure, compounded by the loss and uncertainty regarding their family members' safety (Wernesjö,

2012). The impact of family loss may influence UASYP's attachments (Hek, 2005) and such loss is typically situated within a context of wider losses of their lives back home, including loss of childhood, relationships, community and culture (The Children's Society, 2018). Separation from parents is an emotional loss for children, evident in losing both the support and protection of a secure caregiver and a role model and guide during the process of identity formation in adolescence (Wernesjö, 2012). UASYP may also endure the pressures of adult responsibilities, such as parenting and providing for themselves (Suárez-Orozco & Hernández, 2012).

Research on family separation generally adopts Western family perspectives and theoretical frameworks, thereby potentially limiting its usefulness in conceptualising immigrant families (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). Considering situations where young people are cared for by others, including siblings or extended kin, in the absence of a parent is therefore important as the loss or absence of such figures may create similar experiences for UASYP (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002).

1.2.3.4.2 Ambiguous Loss

Ambiguous loss arises through an ongoing grief process, complicated by a lack of resolution offering no possibility of closure (Boss, Roos & Harris, 2011) and frequently results from violence and war (Boss, 1999). For UASYP, not receiving a definitive answer as to their family's whereabouts denies them a sense of closure in receiving a concrete outcome offering some finality. In this way, UASYP may become stuck in a process of frozen grief, paralysed by their ongoing despair, leaving their coping resources and stress management abilities overwhelmed due to these living losses (Boss et al., 2011). This resultant grief is unprocessed, and losses un-mourned, leading to difficulties in moving on and greater impacts on low mood, anxiety and conflict in relationships (Boss, 1999). Boss (1999) argues that distress stemming from ambiguous losses is traumatising and immobilising, due to the persistent nature of the trauma being held very much in the present. She perceives that certainty in the knowledge of someone's death is preferable to the continuation of a sense of doubt. She further posits that this unresolved ambiguity and frozen grief can be transmitted across generations. If a caregiver is preoccupied by

their own losses, they may be unavailable to meet the child's developmental needs, such as containing their emotions (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002).

Ambiguous loss may be experienced through family being psychologically present, but physically absent (Boss, 2004), as in the context of migration. Boss' (2007) Ambiguous Loss Model explores how to find meaning despite ongoing ambiguity and absence of information. She describes the importance of discovering hope through religious practices, the company of others, pursuing individual interests, and "meaningful human community" (Boss, 2010, p.144). Although developed from a Western model, the approach highlights the universality of distress experienced by those separated from loved ones; however, the interpretation and manifestation of this distress may vary across cultures and such losses should not be situated solely within the individual, but within wider social and relational contexts (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). Furthermore, the notion of frozen grief differs from alternative approaches to loss which propose that absent family members can be kept alive through conversations and actions, notably through seeing oneself through the eyes of the absent person (White, 1998).

1.2.3.4.3 Critique of Westernised Concepts of Mental Distress

Whilst UASYP's experiences of fleeing and separation are distressing, concerns regarding the construction of mental distress using Westernised concepts with little cross-cultural fit exist (Summerfield, 2001). Patel (2011) describes how the 'psychologisation' of trauma emphasises identifying psychiatric disorders through labels such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Diagnostic processes subjugate the importance of listening to people's distressing accounts and appreciating their inherent value. She argues that diagnoses de-politicise trauma, locating the responsibility for change on the individual. The conflation of distressing experiences with assumptions of resultant trauma is problematic, serving to pathologise such experiences and minimising other aspects of R&ASP's life and journey (Papadopoulos, 2002). Identifying R&ASP groups as victims or traumatised contributes to polarities of victim vs survivor discourses. This is echoed in the concept of resilience, depicted as a personality characteristic of robustness which a person may be seen to be lacking, rather than something shaped by their environment and ongoing challenging life experiences (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Mental health

professionals may create value judgements regarding whether someone's distress is 'significant enough' to be legitimised or warrant a psychiatric diagnosis, a subjective decision potentially determining whether individuals can access professional support. R&ASP may also be drawn into the psychologisation of their experiences for the purposes of accessing resources and strengthening their claim for asylum (Summerfield, 2001). Bracken, Giller and Summerfield (1999) describe how Western trauma discourse shapes and regulates experiences of violence by locating distress in separate individuals and inferring a lack of coping abilities. This distances R&ASP's experiences of suffering from the political and religious contexts it developed from and the political action necessary to counter this.

Apart from the provision of a range of healthcare services sensitive to UASYP's past experiences (Hopkins & Hill, 2010), social support and connectedness are key for UASYP in providing hope, escape from distress and the opportunity to build relationships resembling family bonds. This emphasises the importance of education for UASYP (O'Toole Thommessen et al., 2017). Where possible and in accordance with UASYP's wishes and best interests, attempts to locate family can consequently play an important role for their mental wellbeing.

1.2.4 Family Tracing and Reunion

1.2.4.1 Looking for Family

Individuals may undertake informal searches for their families, through word of mouth via relatives, churches, elders or traditional leaders (Bonnerjea, 1994), through social networking sites, or via organisations providing FT services. In the UK, organisations supporting FT include the BRC, Salvation Army or Missing People. The latter is restricted to local tracing and search for persons outside the UK necessitates IFT efforts. Socio-political structures place R&ASP in positions of powerlessness, forcing their reliance on providers of assistance (Harrell-Bond, 1986). Resultantly, organisations such as the BRC are vital in facilitating formal IFT procedures.

1.2.4.1.1 FT Procedures and Rights for UASYP

The Home Office defines FT as “searching for a child’s family for the purposes of restoring family links where they have been broken... maintaining established family links... [and] obtaining information as to the family’s current circumstances to assist in the identification of a durable solution” (2017c, p.5). This typically commences with an assessment of the possibility of family reunification, considering the child’s views, protection needs and if this is in their best interests. Risks to UASYP may include wishes to trace persons involved in their exploitation or persecution, such as through forced marriage, involvement in armed conflict or Female Genital Mutilation (DfE, 2017). The Home Office reserves the right to attempt to trace an UASC’s family if deemed safe and must resultantly notify the child (DfE & Home Office, 2017).

The act of searching itself can be of great importance for UASYP in knowing that someone is looking for their family (UNHCR, 1994). Tracing should be commenced at the earliest opportunity under the Asylum Seekers (Reception Conditions) Regulations 2005 (DfE, 2017), with the young person kept informed through each step (UNHCR, 1994). This is in line with the individual’s right to family life under Article 8 of the 1998 European Convention on Human Rights and prioritised within the EU under the Dublin Regulation (European Commission, 2018). Article 22.2 of the UNCRC (1989) sets out the rights of un/accompanied children to trace family for the purposes of reunification and the State’s obligation to facilitate this. International co-operation is essential for tracing to take place and should also occur where UASYP believe their parents are deceased as this is often not the case, though claims should be carefully verified (UNHCR, 1994). Tracing should be vigorous and incorporate a variety of methods, including messaging and photo posting services, with necessary precautions in place to ensure the safety of UASYP and family members being traced, including those who remain in their homelands (UNHCR, 1997).

Non-UK studies have emphasised the importance of community action in tracing efforts. Boothby (1993) investigated tracing for separated young people in Mozambique. Tracing efforts were hampered by national boundaries and physical barriers, placing greater importance on incorporating traditional leaders, community healers and traders, thereby giving rise to higher successful

tracing incidences via word of mouth. Jones et al. (2014) emphasised the role of clan members in FT for separated children in their study of Somali peoples in a Kenyan refugee camp. Bazeghi and Baradaran's (2010) study explored the role of Iranian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), including the Iranian Red Crescent, in supporting UASC following natural disasters. Tracing typically occurred informally, via door-to-door searches and consultation with village elders, with no clear procedures. The work of NGOs such as the Iranian Red Crescent in supporting UASC were described as restricted by local scepticism and unfamiliarity, with perceptions that they should be managed by government organisations. A comprehensive picture of NGOs' involvement could not be gathered through the study, though increased collaboration in family reunion (FR) projects was noted.

1.2.4.1.2 BRC IFT

The UNHCR (1997) advocates for utilising the Red Cross (RC) network for FT where necessary. The BRC forms part of the International RC and Crescent Movement, incorporating RC and Crescent societies across 191 countries. The International Committee of the RC (ICRC) functions as an independent humanitarian organisation.

The BRC's Restoring Family Links (RFL) work provides IFT services, supporting people in the UK who have been separated from family through migration, war and natural disaster. Searches are frequently complicated by language differences in registering names and individuals being on the move or not officially registered in their country of residence (ICRC, n.d.). IFT searches for an applicant's missing family through a network of RC services across different countries, co-ordinated by the Central Tracing Agency. This incorporates messaging services, where RC staff facilitate the exchange of messages between applicants and their families and obtaining a detention certificate in cases of imprisonment (BRC, 2018). Applicants are offered appointments through their local RFL service and can use RFL's Trace the Face website or posters to scroll through photos of individuals searching for family. IFT staff hold a separate Trace the Face database for under 18s, which applicants can view with their caseworker. Interpreters routinely facilitate appointments where required. In 2016, the BRC experienced a threefold

increase in UASC IFT cases amounting to a total of 424, with the first half of 2018 seeing 448 new referrals, mostly (54%) from social workers (Peters, 2018). Social workers are advised to inform UASYP of the BRC IFT service through developmentally appropriate means, except in cases where the child becomes distressed or fearful at the idea of contact. As the BRC does not undertake FT requests from third parties, including the Home Office, requests and findings are communicated solely to the young person; however, decision makers are obliged to request updates on these outcomes, without placing pressure on the child (DfE & Home Office, 2017).

In Salvo's (2012) UK IFT study, participants' previously attempted tracing approaches, including using other organisations and asking friends, proved unsuccessful and they described tracing as a challenging process, even with BRC involvement. All 10 participants received certain news from their trace, with nine receiving good news and one receiving news of death. Half went on to apply for FR through separate routes in the BRC. Finding missing family appeared to lead participants to feel able to move forward with their lives and cease worries about relatives. All participants expressed positive views of the BRC tracing service, though they described being unfamiliar with the tracing process and concerns about confidentiality. Communication with family facilitated by the BRC gave participants feelings of relief, happiness and hope and they expressed trust in BRC personnel, with these acting as a holding environment (Winnicott, 1960) providing support and a sense of security whilst awaiting news.

1.2.4.2 Finding Family

Successful outcomes for IFT include receiving definitive news of a family member's whereabouts or confirmation that they are deceased. Family may be located abroad or even in the same country, with neither party aware that the other has managed successful passage to the UK. FR does not necessarily follow FT and not all UASYP embarking on IFT seek reunification, so this should be in line with their wishes and best interests (UNHCR, 1994). The impact of an unsuccessful outcome for UASYP who started the IFT process with FR as an end goal may therefore be felt twice: in failing to receive the news they hoped for about their family's safety or whereabouts, and in their future hopes of being reunited with these family members being similarly dashed.

Following a successful trace, UASYP may remain apart from their family, maintaining contact where possible. They may face continued separation in the UK if placed in separate parts of the country and therefore unable to live together until local authorities can facilitate this.

1.2.4.2.1 Family Reunion

In the five years to December 2016, over 23,000 people were reunited with family members in the UK (Home Office, 2017b). In 2009, the UNHCR announced that they would no longer fund FR processes and this role was taken up by the BRC (White & Hendry, 2011). Legal aid for refugee FR processes was stopped after 2012, resulting in families in England and Wales needing to hire their own solicitors at great personal expense, or make their own applications within a complicated legal framework (BRC, n.d.). The BRC concludes that “the vast majority of refugees are unable to exercise their FR rights unless they have some form of support... the current scope of provision is inadequate both in coverage and content” (White & Hendry, 2011, p.8). This depicts the contemporary demands and challenges facing UASYP in the UK to access their loved ones.

In 2017, the UK government convened a group of NGOs and international organisations to review processes for the transfer of children from Europe under the Dublin agreement, with a focus on swift transfer, supporting FT and how to evidence family links (DfE & Home Office, 2017). However, in practice only individuals with particular immigration status can sponsor FR visas, with children under 18 unable to act as sponsors (British Red Cross, n.d.). The Home Affairs Select Committee has branded this “perverse” (2016, para 41). Grandparents, cousins or informally adopted children have no rights to reunion under this scheme. Studies have raised ethical issues regarding governmental policies requiring DNA testing to affirm family relationships for reunion to take place (e.g. Miller, Hess, Bybee & Goodkind, 2018). Organisations have called on the UK government to expand its criteria for qualifying family to incorporate: parents; dependent relatives and those whom an applicant is dependent on; young relatives, including stepchildren and de-facto adopted children reliant on family for their wellbeing at the time of application; children and siblings above age 18 who had not formed their own family prior to fleeing; and post-flight

spouses and their children who are part of the family unit (Refugee Council & Oxfam, 2018).

Where FR has been possible following separation, studies have shown variable outcomes. These may cause destabilisations in family functioning, which are usually temporary or may persist over time, or conversely may serve to bring families closer together to make up for lost time (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). In Salvo's (2012) study, FR was shown to have a positive impact on participants' wellbeing and family functioning.

1.3 Research on UASYP's Experiences of IFT

Luster et al. (2008) investigated family separation, tracing and reconnection with a cohort of Sudanese male refugee youth: the "Lost Boys of Sudan" (p.444) separated by civil war and resultantly resident in Kenya, Ethiopia and the United States (US). A modified grounded theory approach was used to interview 10 participants in the US, with an average age of 25.8 years, separated from parents between the ages of 3 and 12. All participants described involuntary family separation through warfare or fleeing to displacement camps. They experienced distress from ambiguous loss through missing parents and worrying if they were alive, and experienced feelings of loneliness, sadness and depression immediately following separation. Other losses experienced included loss of emotional support and of the comfort, protection and support provided by parents. The youth sought this out through other relationships with peers, elders and caretakers, enabling them to hold onto hope as a source of strength which helped them through their journeys. Some participants used the RC messaging service to attempt to contact family, with two receiving replies. Of these, one felt this provided him with relief, even though he later heard of bad news, and the other was sceptical about the authenticity of the letter, fearing it was fabricated or solely included positive news to keep up his morale. The study does not specify the exact number of applicants who used the RC service. Three participants heard news via word of mouth from arrivals to their refugee camp. Following their move to the US, participants maintained peer and extended family contact networks and employed these to continue searching for relatives, with occasional success. Following successful tracing, participants' emotional responses to renewed telephone contact with family included feeling overcome with emotion, relief and joy. Some faced scepticism from family in

verifying that the person communicating with them was genuinely their child due to the passage of time, though this was quickly resolved. Communication of bad news, including death of family members, was met with mixed feelings of sadness tempered by relief through the resolution of ambiguous loss. Reconnection impacted on different areas of their lives, including having to navigate cultural and language barriers that had developed over time and distance from their family, and moving into financial provider roles for family back in Sudan for some.

Limitations of this study include its recruitment procedure of snowball sampling, which may have affected the range of experiences reported by participants in limiting these to those who were connected to members of their Sudanese community and willing to share their stories. The study solely investigated male perspectives on IFT from this community, which it attempted to justify in stating that there were far fewer female youth who fled Sudan in the same period, with a small number residing within their local area and that their flight circumstances and resultant living situations were different from their male counterparts. Neglecting female participants from research maintains unconscious research biases and mirrors society's neglect of women's experiences (Indra, 1987). The views of female participants, and those from other cultural backgrounds, therefore remain neglected in existing literature.

1.4 Rationale and Aims

1.4.1 Lack of Research

There are gaps in research exploring IFT with UASYP in a UK context, especially how they make sense of and give meaning to such experiences, as evidenced through no literature search results directly investigating this. The study of UASYP is still a new area. Current literature focuses mainly on adult perspectives of family separation, with previous studies recommending research with young refugee people in a UK context (Hek, 2005) and with a greater variety of age ranges accessing IFT services, including the impact of this process on an individual's associated experiences, and over time (Salvo, 2012). This research is born of these recommendations with the aim of contributing further to the knowledge base around policy making and work with UASYP. It is of relevance clinically and in a real-world context, as UASYP continue to arrive in the UK due to global incidents, with many accessing

services for their psychological and support needs, in which FT can play a major role.

1.4.2 UASYP's Voices in Research

Research concerning UASYP remains limited and their participation and perspectives on their own experiences often restricted (Wernesjö, 2012), with few studies directly reporting their own words, thereby silencing them (Hek, 2005). There is a paucity of research into how UASYP's wellbeing and life situations are impacted by structural processes of social exclusion, power and racism in their post-flight country (Wernesjö, 2012). Issues such as access to and navigating processes of FT develop from these experiences and it is therefore vital that UASYP are given spaces to discuss their FT experiences and reflect on such processes if they feel able to. It is important that such research does not solely focus on UASYP's vulnerabilities, but on their agency and resources also (Wernesjö, 2012), with each account a testament in its own right.

1.4.3 Implications

Acquired knowledge from this research is intended to give voice to UASYP's IFT experiences, creating alternative narratives of such experiences and how they make sense of these. Offering practitioners and policy-makers alternative perspectives aims to facilitate the development of interventions seeking to improve UASYP's life situations (Turton, 1996). UASYP's needs and best interests should be prioritised and acted on accordingly, crucially through enabling their right to participate in the structuring of their childhoods and contribute to policy and social thinking, rather than perceiving them as non-adults who are unable to participate in political debate (Mayall, 2000). Sharing findings directly with participants reduces the risk of outcomes being held exclusively among those in positions of power (Krause, 2017), crucially opening this debate up to UASYP, whilst acknowledging their inherently disempowered positions.

1.4.4 Research Question

The above rationale gave rise to the following research question:

How do UASYP make sense of their IFT experiences?

CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

This chapter presents the epistemological position and methodological approach adopted for the purposes of this research. The study's design and procedures are outlined, including ethical considerations. Data analysis processes are described before concluding with the importance of reflexivity.

2.1 Epistemological Position

Epistemology, the philosophical consideration of the theory of knowledge, considers what it is possible to know and how we can know this (Willig, 2013); "the relationship between the knower and the known" (Langdrige, 2007, p. 4). It thereby underpins claims to knowledge (Harper, 2012).

Perspectives regarding the construction of reality may be viewed as existing along a continuum (Coyle, 2015), incorporating ontological assumptions about what there is to know about the world and people (Willig, 2013). Such positions range from: realism, perceiving 'reality' as existing independently from the observer, with research providing the key to accessing this; to relativism, perceiving 'reality' as "dependent on the ways we come to know it" (Coyle, 2015, p. 17). Historically, positivist/realist epistemologies have been more closely linked with realist ontologies and their stance that knowledge can be gained through empirical observation (Robson, 2011). Conversely, social constructionist epistemologies more readily ally themselves to relativist ontologies, questioning how individuals construct versions of 'reality' and viewing research findings as forms of realities (Coyle, 2015).

Debates on terminology regarding epistemological positions are plentiful and raise many questions; the researcher's ultimate endeavour is to identify the type of knowledge they seek to produce to select an appropriate methodology to generate such knowledge. Adopting an epistemological position for research guides the identification of objectives, strategies and what it may be possible to discover (Willig, 2013), thereby informing the research methodology (Langdrige, 2007).

A critical realist position was taken for the purposes of this research. Such a stance combines realist ambitions to gain understanding of 'real-world' processes with an appreciation from a relativist perspective that the data gathered by the researcher "may not provide direct access to this reality" (Willig,

2013, p. 11) and that we cannot know this 'reality' with any certainty (Coyle, 2015). Rather, 'reality' should be investigated "cautiously and critically" (Pilgrim & Bentall, 1999, p. 262). The ontologically realist element of this epistemological position acknowledges the material and embodied realities UASYP face, including fleeing their homelands and navigating established asylum-seeking processes, with an appreciation that data gathered from UASYP can provide information about this reality, without directly mirroring it (Harper, 2012). Rather, there is a need to "go beyond the text" (Harper, 2012, p. 89) and consider relevant contextual, historical and social factors mediating UASYP's experiences (Willig, 2013). The importance of maintaining a critical stance considering the "radically relational" (Wertz et al., 2011, p.84) nature of research acknowledges that whilst the thematic focus remains on the subject matter and gaining knowledge, the researcher's values, methods and other qualities are inevitably included.

2.2 Methodological Approach

2.2.1 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

Qualitative approaches enable researchers to take non-numerical perspectives in seeking to explore people's experiences through how they are described, understood and given meaning (Coyle, 2015), how they make sense of the world and experience events (Willig, 2013). They do not seek to investigate cause and effect relationships as more commonly employed by quantitative approaches, but rather the "quality and texture of experience" (Willig, 2013, p. 8), "what a subject matter is in all its real-world complexity" (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 2).

As the focus of this research and its research questions seek to explore how UASYP make sense of their IFT experiences, adopting a qualitative approach was felt to offer the best fit for facilitating participants to express their experiences through their own words. This would offer a more in-depth exploration of UASYP's experiences than quantitative methods would allow. Furthermore, subjectivist methods are well-suited to qualitative approaches. These can function to resist the potential to create judgements about people resulting from aggregate data and the propensity for individuals from particular groups, including UASYP, being defined by such data (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2010).

2.2.2 Rationale for Methodological Choice

Differing methodologies vary in how they seek to answer research questions and their accompanying epistemological assumptions (Willig, 2013). Therefore, whilst multiple qualitative methodologies may be applied to the same research area, their focus and approach may vary greatly. In considering a suitable methodology for this research various methodologies were compared, and a phenomenological approach was selected in the form of IPA, which examines how people make sense of their life experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA aims to give voice to and make sense of people's experiences (Larkin & Thompson, 2012) "through a lens of cultural and socio-historical meanings" (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p.180).

IPA shares some elements with other qualitative methodologies: whilst IPA and Inductive Thematic Analysis seek to explore participants' experiences in depth, the former remains focused on the individual's phenomenology whilst the latter delays interpretation and seeks patterns across different accounts to generate common themes (Frith & Gleeson, 2012); Grounded Theory and IPA share an inductive approach, though the former lends itself to developing theoretical models from the data (Harper, 2010), even where cases provide conflicting data (Lyons, 2015), which differs from IPA's idiographic focus and emphasis on the power of individual accounts (Smith, 2004); Narrative Analysis, similarly to IPA, is interested in people's stories, however the focus for Narrative research is on how these accounts change in time (Harper, 2010); IPA and Discourse Analysis (DA) share a common thread in their focus on context and language, with the latter suited to exploring contested issues (Harper, 2010). However, DA focuses on the social function of discourses, whilst IPA is less concerned with why individuals experience their worlds in particular ways and focuses instead on providing a detailed description of participants' lived experiences (Lyons, 2015).

Considering the above, IPA was felt to best suit the researcher's epistemological stance and the exploratory nature of the research question. IPA is particularly well-suited to considering significant and life-transforming existential issues and events, and the construct of identity (Smith, 2004). It

therefore allows for the exploration of each UASYP's reality through the use of language to elicit the meaning and subjective experiences of each participant, without homogenising these.

2.2.3 IPA's Theoretical Underpinnings

2.2.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the philosophical study concerned with experience and existence (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). The aim of a phenomenological approach is to portray the essence of a person's experiences; this typically involves gaining comprehensive descriptions from individuals who have first-hand knowledge of particular experiences in order to understand the meanings they may have attributed to such events (Moustakas, 1994). IPA's phenomenological lens is concerned with each individual's subjective experience of an event, rather than its objective 'truth' (Smith & Eatough, 2015) and how these meanings and perspectives are "unique to the person's embodied and situated relationship to the world" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 21).

2.2.3.2 Hermeneutics

Central to hermeneutics, the "theory of interpretation" (Eatough & Smith, 2008, p. 189), is a focus on consciousness and experience, with an appreciation of how they are shaped by history (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher utilises interview protocols or texts to provide an account of such conscious experiences, enhanced through reflective interpretation to gain a more meaningful understanding of a person's experiences and the phenomenon being described (Moustakas, 1994). IPA acknowledges that access to participants' experiences is impacted by the researcher's perspective, and that this is required to facilitate their interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). This gives rise to a double hermeneutic, encapsulating the process of participants making sense of their experiences and the researcher's interpretation of participants' meaning-making processes (Smith & Eatough, 2015). The researcher is then able to construct a framework for understanding these experiences that builds on participants' language and conceptualisation.

2.2.3.3 Idiography

IPA's meaning-making processes consider the subjective meanings and significance attributed to major life experiences by a particular person in their particular context; an idiographic perspective (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). From this perspective, individual accounts are as powerful as wider perceptions and can facilitate deep understandings, although they often remain neglected in psychological research (Smith, 2004). IPA moves from individual cases to wider perspectives, whilst maintaining a clear focus on each individual account (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA acknowledges that such experiences are communicated through language and that reality can be both constrained by and contingent on this. However, it argues that language comprises just one facet of communication (Eatough & Smith, 2008) and that there are inevitable limitations in accessing experience through any research (Smith, 1996). Attending to non-verbal and other communication in data collection is therefore vital.

2.3 Procedure

2.3.1 Co-Constructing the Research

Contact was made with the BRC to pursue potential research opportunities based on previous collaborations with the University. The study's focus was identified from a selection put forward by the BRC to meet the organisation's needs and the researcher's professional and research interests. It was developed through meetings and consultation with key personnel from the BRC, including their internal co-production team, to shape the final agreed project. Close liaison with BRC staff was maintained throughout the research regarding co-ordination of recruitment, logistics and sharing of resources, progress and feedback. BRC mandatory training was completed to learn about the organisation itself, its internal working procedures and the role of IFT services. An identified link worker from the BRC was assigned to co-ordinate liaison and recruitment, facilitating ongoing contact with individual IFT case managers in offices around the country.

2.3.1.1 UASYP Consultant

Conducting research inherently raises implicit power relationships and inequities, necessitating a shift to include participants more in this process as an ameliorating consideration (Wertz et al., 2011). Prior IPA research has involved participants in ethical considerations and developing interview schedules (Larkin & Thompson, 2012) and this was felt to be an important contribution in shaping this study considering UASYP's frequent exclusion from research. A BRC case manager was allocated to co-facilitate a focus group of 2-3 young people to act as consultants (See Appendix B for the recruitment flyer). Challenges with recruitment led to only one UASYP who had previously successfully used the IFT service recruited to this position. The rationale and scope of the project were explained to the consultant and the interview schedule and resources presented, with a clear acknowledgment regarding the scope for his involvement. The consultant was invited to contribute his thoughts and feedback, which included: finding the study and its focus to be relevant; recommendations for changes to the order and wording of interview questions, for instance moving questions about emotional responses to separation further down the list to start with less emotive questions; and tips for the interview process, such as considerations around explaining the use of recording equipment and my role as an independent researcher unaffiliated with the Home Office. These recommendations were fully incorporated into the final study.

2.3.2 Participants

2.3.2.1 Recruitment Strategy

Smith et al. (2009) describe how IPA's phenomenological focus necessitates the recruitment of purposive samples of participants sharing particular lived experiences. They note that such participants may potentially be more challenging to access and maintain engagement with, highlighting the importance of establishing ongoing rapport with key gatekeepers from the outset. Access to participants was organised through the BRC due to their holding a confidential database of successful traces across the country. To foster a collaborative network, I attended BRC meetings and spent time in local offices getting to know the teams. Information packs regarding the research were disseminated to all IFT case managers, including accessible participant

information leaflets for recruitment (Appendix C). Caseworkers used their personal judgement to identify suitable participants based on their knowledge of these young people and their current life circumstances. Some negotiation and feedback regarding recruitment was an on-going consideration between caseworkers and myself to navigate balancing the need to safeguard the young people with offering them the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they felt able and wished to participate. Following initial contact by the caseworker, those who expressed interest were offered the opportunity for further discussion around the topic with me.

An initial target of between 10-12 UASYP was agreed for the purposes of this research. IPA retains a non-prescriptive and flexible stance regarding methodological issues (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Resultantly, there is no fixed number of cases required for IPA analysis, with acceptable numbers ranging from single case studies to larger sample sizes; six to eight participants is considered an acceptable amount for the purposes of professional doctorate level analysis (Smith & Eatough, 2015). The initial sample size was selected with the aim to pursue publication of findings and, in considering the very limited numbers of UASYP achieving a successful trace through the IFT service, a higher target was initially set to galvanise the recruitment process considering the anticipated resultant difficulties.

2.3.2.2 Selection Criteria

Inclusion criteria for the study required participants to:

- Be aged between 16 to 25 (inclusive)³
- Have travelled to the UK seeking asylum alone or become separated in the process
- Have accessed the BRC IFT service to search for family and received a successful outcome

³ The chosen age range was selected to capture perspectives from participants who could consent to engaging in the research independently. This was felt to be important when considering the basis of their involvement with IFT services as unaccompanied and separated individuals. Although the age range used to define young people may include individuals at different developmental stages, the selected age range sought to demonstrate the experiences of UASYP as a cohort, including participants who may have begun their IFT process some years previously whilst younger.

2.3.2.3 Demographics

A total of eight participants took part in the study and the final sample comprised six male and two female participants between the ages of 18-24. Two further participants who had initially expressed some interest in the project did not proceed to the interview stage and another did not attend for their scheduled interview. Reasons for this could not be established as the young people did not respond to further contact regarding the study. Two participants selected to have an interpreter present to facilitate the interview⁴ and one requested a family member to be present for the interview. Participants were invited to select a pseudonym to maintain anonymity; five participants selected their own pseudonym and three requested I select one on their behalf. Pseudonyms were selected from internet databases in accordance with participants' cultural and religious backgrounds. Detailed information regarding each participant has not been explicitly noted here in an attempt to preserve confidentiality due to the limited numbers of UASYP with successful traces across the country stemming from a single service.

Pseudonyms	Age Range	Countries of Origin	Sought Family
Aaleyah	18-24	Afghanistan	Mother
Birhan		Eritrea	Father
Genet		Iraq	Siblings
Hasham		Somalia	Uncle
Javad			Nephew
Mike			
Sohrab			
Usf			

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

Six participants located at least one of the persons they set out to trace, with one successfully making contact with their family through the BRC messaging

⁴ Excluding participants from research due to their language ability has been viewed as unethical, and at worst illegal (Resnik & Jones, 2006), with a lack of qualitative research with non-English speaking populations contributing to obstacles to developing appropriate psychological services for minority ethnic groups (Vara & Patel, 2012).

service. Two participants were unexpectedly found by another family member, including siblings and cousins. Of those who had made successful contact, five were able to meet with their family members.

2.3.3 Data Collection and Interview Process

Although the over-use of interviews in qualitative research has been noted (e.g. Harper, 2010), it remains the most common process for data collection in IPA due to its flexibility in facilitating the exploration of participants' experiences through responding to real-time interactions (Eatough & Smith, 2008).

Conducting individual interviews was felt to be important with this population in considering their particular life experiences as these: afford participants a greater sense of control during the process; ensure that each participant's perspective and voice is considered; and capture the phenomenology of each individual participant (Frith & Gleeson, 2012). Logistically, a focus group design would not have been possible due to the vast geographical separation between participants.

A semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix D), consisting of open-ended questions, was developed as a guide to conducting the interview. This was felt to be important in reducing potential anxieties through providing a clear structure and expectations of the interview process to facilitate UASYP in telling their stories. The interview schedule was developed in collaboration with BRC staff and the UASYP consultant, funnelling down from more factual questions to more personal and potentially emotive ones as rapport was established (Willig, 2013). I adapted my language to each participant's abilities and drew on my professional experience of working with young people to establish a good rapport at the beginning of our meeting and monitor and review interactions throughout the interview (Smith, 2004). This involved adopting the position of a "naïve interviewer" (Willig, 2013, p. 30) to facilitate interviewees' naming of implicit beliefs and concepts.

Interviews lasted up to 55 minutes, engaging certified interpreters recruited through the BRC's independent, external interpreting service to ensure impartiality where necessary. Interpreting services were offered to all participants in line with the study's objective to give voice to, and thereby empower, minority ethnic groups in research (Murray & Wynne, 2001). This is

justified in IPA guidelines, where the gains of research with non-English speakers were deemed to sufficiently outweigh the cost of not having a shared language with the researcher (Smith, 2004). Accordingly, I was mindful that this may necessitate my taking a more active role in guiding the interview (Smith, 2004) and of maintaining a critical awareness of the dynamics of using an interpreter, including issues of power (Vara & Patel, 2012; Patel, 2003). One interpreter was present in the room and the other interview was facilitated through telephone interpretation. Further considerations and reflections on interpreting are detailed in the Discussion chapter.

On meeting, participants were given both summarised and detailed information leaflets regarding the study and these were explained to them (Appendices E-F). Consent forms (Appendix G) explaining their right to withdraw were completed and the anonymous and confidential nature of the study were explained. Participants were reminded that they could change their mind or stop the interview at any point and without consequence, and that they were free to say as much or as little as they preferred. All interviews were audio recorded following consent and final agreement to participate. At the end of the interview, participants were engaged in an informal discussion around how they had found the interview and how they were feeling. A debrief sheet containing information on support organisations (Appendix H) was outlined and given to participants. A small incentive for participating in the study in the form of a £20 voucher and participation certificate (Appendix I) were given to participants to thank them for their contributions to the study. Reimbursement of travel expenses was also offered.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

2.4.1 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained through the University of East London School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-Committee (Appendix J) and through the BRC's internal ethics panel.

2.4.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent was sought from all participants to ensure an understanding of the "nature, purpose and consequence of the research" (Thompson & Chambers, 2012, p. 28). Accessible resources were developed to provide information to participants considering their language abilities and

developmental stage, incorporating pictures, photographs and succinct, jargon-free language where possible. Participant information sheets and consent forms were read aloud and explained to participants and opportunities offered to discuss any queries.

2.4.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The principles of confidentiality were described to participants, primarily employing the term 'privacy' for verification, and the anonymisation of personal, identifiable information was outlined, including with interpreters where relevant. Exceptions to confidentiality in the event of risks to personal safety or the safety of others were highlighted. The process of sharing the research results through dissemination and publication were clearly explained, and key terms such as thesis and journal defined to leave no uncertainty about who will have access to these (Greig, Taylor & MacKay, 2013). Emphasis was placed on the process of audio recording and its purposes in transcription and data analysis to help participants understand the necessity of using such a device, with a clear acknowledgment that this was in no way linked to immigration interviews. A step-by-step account of storing audio recordings on a password protected computer was detailed, including deletion from the recording device and subsequent access to recordings solely by the researcher. Participants were informed of the deletion of audio recordings following examination and of transcripts up to 3 years following this to allow for publication.

2.4.4 Safety Considerations

In an attempt to reduce anxiety and provide a sense of stability in the abstract process of participating in a research project, interviews were conducted at participants' nearest familiar BRC premises around the country and on one occasion at a participant's home due to a greater distance between this and the nearest site. This allowed participants to access BRC staff in the event of any significant distress (Greig et al., 2013). In line with BRC policy, it was planned to have a member of BRC staff present in the room if participants were aged below 18.

Ethical considerations in interviews are embedded in the researcher's judgement and daily practice (Thompson & Chambers, 2012) and I was aware of the need to draw on my professional experience to respond to any instances of distress during interviews and respond accordingly, including addressing any

unanticipated ethical issues arising throughout the research in a continuous, collaborative process (Wertz et al., 2011). Following interviews, the debrief process allowed for the provision of guidance to accessing further support where necessary.

2.4.5 Interview Context

Sensitivity to context is vital in appreciating the interaction between the interview situation and resulting data gathered (Smith et al., 2009). I was attentive to how the interview context influenced the process, through considering who was present in the room and the inherent power dynamics involved in this, including my own social identity in relation to participants. Preparation through familiarising myself with each “participant’s cultural milieu, and the status of the interview within this milieu” (Willig, 2013, p. 29) was therefore central, along with a critical awareness of what interviews meant to each participant considering parallels with Home Office or BRC interviews (Willig, 2013). I therefore paid close attention to participants’ non-verbal cues and focussed on “showing empathy, putting the participant at ease, recognizing interactional difficulties, and negotiating the intricate power-play where research expert may meet experiential expert” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 180).

2.4.6 Dissemination

Research findings will be shared with participants, which respects participants’ contributions in the spirit of reciprocity (Mackenzie, McDowell & Pittaway, 2007) and enables them to use or share the results as “multipliers” if they wish (Krause, 2017, p. 25). Providing both the full report and a summary version written in an accessible format for young people and non-native speakers of English addresses issues of power in not solely offering participants a brief, ‘child-friendly’ version (Hopkins, 2008). Initial impressions from the study have been shared with the RFL management team and the final report will be disseminated to the BRC, with the potential to develop findings into a research report published through the organisation. Publication of findings in a peer-reviewed journal will be pursued with the intention to bridge the gulf between research and clinical practice (Wertz et al., 2011).

2.5 Transcription and Data Analysis

IPA necessitates the audio recording and transcription of all interview accounts (Smith & Eatough, 2015), which acts as a “verbal expression of the interviewee’s mental processes” (Willig, 2013, p. 9). Consequently, all transcripts were recorded verbatim, excluding identifiable information, and identified by pseudonym. Transcription conventions are detailed in Appendix K.

No fixed method of analysis is prescribed in IPA; rather, it emphasises an analytic focus characterised by an “iterative and inductive cycle” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 79). Smith (2004) advocates for a ‘good enough’ analysis, whilst striving to push the analysis further. Therefore, Smith et al.’s (2009) analytic process was adopted for the purposes of this study, which emphasises a thorough, systematic and sufficiently idiographic analysis, moving beyond description to interpretation, and combining important aspects from individual participants with shared themes across participants.

2.5.1 Analytic Process

The procedure for analysis of transcripts was undertaken in a phased process and is detailed as follows:

Step 1: Reading and re-reading	Transcripts were read closely several times to become more immersed in the data.
Step 2: Initial noting	Initial notes on anything of significance or interest were made in the right-hand margin, attending to descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments.
Step 3: Developing emergent themes	Annotations were condensed into themes and phrases reflecting participants’ words in the left margin, incorporating psychological concepts and abstractions.
Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes	Preliminary themes were clustered on the basis of connectedness. Each cluster was given a superordinate theme title to convey inherent themes. A

	table of superordinate themes and those constituting them was created.
Step 5: Moving to the next case	Steps 1 to 4 were repeated for each individual transcript, bracketing off ideas from other accounts.
Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases	Tables of themes from each account were placed alongside one another and connections between them identified. A final table of superordinate themes was drawn up to incorporate shared themes reflecting the whole data set.

Table 2: IPA Method of Analysis (Adapted from Smith et al., 2009; Smith and Eatough, 2015).

Examples of the above stages of analysis are presented in Appendices L-O. Peer validation of analysis has been described as preferable to ‘member-checking’ in IPA studies due to the interpretation and amalgamation of multiple accounts (Larkin & Thompson, 2012); therefore, comparative analysis with one example of analysis was completed with a fellow research colleague to this end. Supervision was provided through the Director of Studies in: guiding the research process; demonstrating the completion of an initial coding of a transcript and theme construction; and reviewing suggested individual and overall theme maps to search for coherence and ensure this was in line with IPA standards.

Patterns across themes are described in chapter three.

2.6 Reflexivity

2.6.1 Epistemological Reflexivity

Epistemological reflexivity (Willig, 2013) considers how the approach to shaping the study leads to an inevitable impact on what the findings are and how these are interpreted. Conducting the study from a different perspective will therefore potentially have led to varying outcomes. In considering this research, analysis of findings will be viewed through an IPA lens, with an appreciation that the theoretical concepts and methods applied are constructed from a Western

perspective. I maintained epistemological reflexivity through questioning myself and my assumptions and having an awareness of the limits to this, which I consider further in the Discussion chapter.

2.6.2 Personal Reflexivity

Maintaining a reflexive stance in IPA to reflect on one's "perceptions, conceptions and processes" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 80) is an important aspect of this approach. Throughout the study, I was mindful to consider how my own experiences could be brought to the research and how these could impact on my interpretations, especially through the double hermeneutic dynamic, which emphasises the "intersubjective relationship between the researcher and the researched" (Harper & Thompson, 2012, p. 6). Incorporating a self-critical disclosure in qualitative research recognises the science of research as being an inevitably "human enterprise" (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 84), and the following reflexive statement is a personal acknowledgment of this.

2.6.2.1 The Researcher's Position

As a trainee clinical psychologist completing this research as part of my doctoral training programme, I considered my motivations for undertaking this avenue of study and how this has been shaped by my personal experiences. My professional work has focused on children and young people, stemming from a passion for using my position to advocate for the rights of those placed in disempowered positions. Through my work, I found that many young people experienced disempowerment due to their age, social disadvantage, poverty, racism and experiences of violence. It struck me that the experiences of forcibly displaced young people seeking asylum incorporate many of these aspects simultaneously and this fuelled my interest in using this research opportunity to invite UASYP to give voice to their experiences. Whilst I may marginally share some experiences of being an immigrant to the UK with participants, I do not share their position of R&ASP and am aware that my personal perspective will influence how I consider the data.

I identify as a white woman who was born and raised in Malta. Whilst frequently considering the impact of my gender on my life experiences and opportunities growing up, I seldom had cause to consider race in a largely white community until immigration became a national 'hot' topic in light of persons risking their lives to travel from Africa to Malta by boat. I noticed that the media did then, and

continues to, polarise discourses on 'economic migrants' versus 'refugees' and that this filtered down into societal discourses about who should be 'allowed in' and whether our 'small island' would be 'overwhelmed'. I felt a strong sense of betrayal from my government with regards to their refusing to accept R&ASP seeking safety in port as someone who has, as have many in my national government and community, experienced freedom of movement between countries. The aftermath of the Brexit referendum gave rise to some of my most profound experiences of racism that at times felt somehow sanctioned. Coming from both British and Maltese heritage in this context gave rise to conflicting feelings of shame, anger and exclusion for me. These experiences strengthened my resolve in working and completing research with UASYP.

I am mindful that my experiences of gender and family have been shaped by Western perspectives to a degree, with cultural differences around a greater practice of shared childcare in Malta, where many children, including myself, are co-parented by grandparents or other family members. My inclusion of participants identifying as female in the sample was motivated by my feminist perspective and the historical exclusion of women from research with R&ASP. My position in conducting the study with UASYP necessarily highlighted differences in race, power and in some cases gender between us, and I acknowledge this may have influenced what participants felt able or unable to say during the interviews.

2.6.2.2 Research Journal

I kept a reflexive journal throughout the research to note and consider the influence of my preconceptions on the study and analysis of collected data (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). See Appendix P for an excerpt.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS

This chapter presents conceptualised shared themes derived from detailed analysis of participant interviews.

3.1 Overview of Themes

Three main themes were constructed from the data: Adjustment, Uncertainty and Ability. Super-ordinate themes and associated sub-themes were structured into separate categories (Figure 1), though they overlap considerably. The use of active forms of words is purposive in illustrating UASYP's ongoing negotiation of changing and challenging life experiences. Transcript extracts illustrate themes in participants' own words (accompanied by pseudonyms and line numbers). The prevalence of themes across participants is mapped in Appendix Q. Results are further discussed in relation to existing literature and the study's research questions in chapter four.

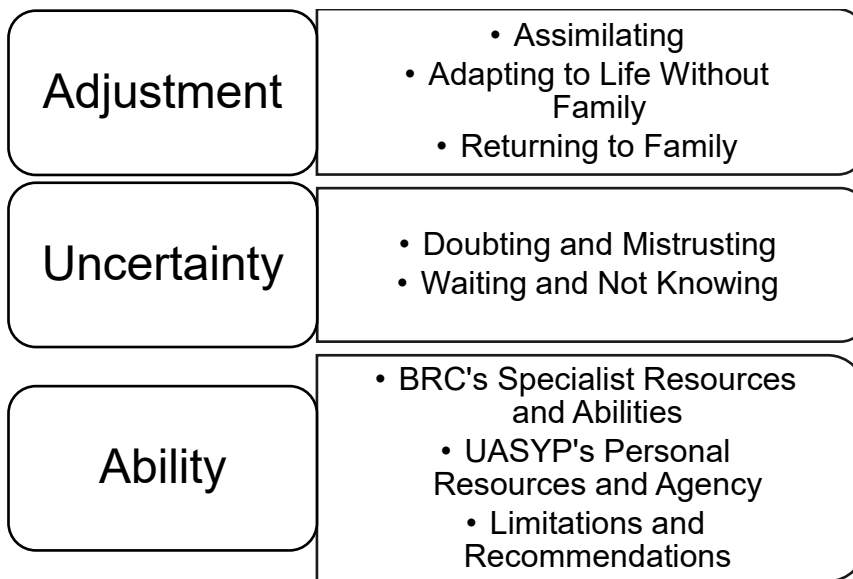


Figure 1: Representation of super-ordinate themes and corresponding sub-ordinate themes

3.2 Adjustment

3.2.1 Assimilating

Participants assimilated unfamiliar and unsettling experiences, including: facing and responding to the consequences of traumatic events and their role in family separation, subsequently adjusting to life away from their homelands and negotiating and accommodating requirements from persons in positions of authority.

Although not directly asked, six participants referred to circumstances leading to their separation from family members, with some describing these in great detail. This suggests the active role such pre-flight experiences continue to play in participants' lives and tracing efforts and their potential consequences of increased psychological distress. Many of these experiences could be perceived as traumatic, as illustrated by Usf and Birhan's experiences of being captured and imprisoned:

Usf⁵: 91-97

ISIS took him to the prison, [] they were try to kill them [] they kill one his friend behind him. When they hit him, him, and after that he was fainting. When he wake up he saw it's broken head, broken arm, broken his legs, everywhere is broken

Birhan: 45-60

My government they taked me [] to national service

Interviewer: Ok!

And when I gone there my mum she is told everything, "He is injured, he is not going to national service, he is underage". They said "No, no it doesn't matter" [] and they said to me if you not take this gun or something they taked me to prison

Participants' vivid accounts illustrate the dangers they faced in their home countries and the choice of remaining at home being ultimately removed from them. They suggest that participants considered the multi-faceted consequences of these distressing events, including facing their own deaths and potentially those of their family members, and used the limited power available to them to flee to safety. The consequences for participants' wellbeing could be pervasive. Javad described feeling frozen in a powerless state of uncertainty about whether the ongoing war in his country would mean he would survive from one day to the next:

Javad: 413-415

Are they gonna shoot me now? Am I gonna die today? Am I gonna die tomorrow?

⁵ Communicated via interpreter

Javad's questioning portrays his ongoing anxieties in the face of ceaseless threats to his life. The impact of such experiences had the power to change participants as people, as Javad elaborates:

Javad: 387-401

I'm seeing my people dying, like an explosion happen see, the leg is there, the head is there [] I'm very quite a strong person having seen these things because I seen them when I was such a young age, I've seen them a lot [] like "Oh, it's normal" [] it's nothing different between human and an animal down there

Javad's experiences of war and violence are depicted as becoming normalised and personalised ("my people"). His use of explicit detail clearly communicates how he has become desensitised to such shocking occurrences and emphasises his having to be tough to survive and having become stronger due to witnessing distressing events from such a young age. He demonstrates the consequences of war in causing the value of human life to become meaningless, as though he himself had no more value than an animal for the slaughter in an almost hellish depiction of his homeland ("down there"). Distressing events may therefore become familiar or expected for UASYP:

Mike: 333

Now like everything I used to it

In describing the aftermath of such events and seeking safety, some participants considered how adjusting to UK life took time, felt challenging and was complicated by encountering a different language:

Birhan: 225-228

So people they don't understand me. After this I'm just give up again and again. Even one year or two year it's feeling bad in this country because it's hard everything for me

Birhan's account suggests he felt disheartened by his communication being consistently misunderstood and a sense of feeling overwhelmed by all the new transitions ("everything"), leading him to both persevere in his efforts "again and again" and give up at times due to frustration. Being new to the UK was also described as a source of confusion and potential culture shock. Mike described

what it felt like to arrive in a country that was very different from what he had known previously:

Mike: 251-257

Transport, and people and houses and the government. I mean, let's say it's [laughs], everything is different here and back home, everything is different

Interviewer: Sure. How did you feel when you noticed all this coming?

[laughs] I was feel I dunno very well... was quite confused to be very honest

The overwhelming nature of this transition to an unfamiliar country is depicted in Mike's extensive emphasis of every aspect of society ("everything") being different. His incredulous laughter may demonstrate the initial impossibility of facing yet another task after fleeing war, and how unimaginably different things in the UK may have been from his expectations. His palpable confusion may parallel the overall confusion UASYP may feel about their pre- and post-flight experiences, and the potential sense of isolation in negotiating this layer of complexities without familial guidance. This manifested in participants' descriptions of negotiating and accommodating requirements from authority figures, in the form of police, social services, the Home Office and judicial system. Especially pertinent were implications about how traumatic experiences may have shaped responses to authority. Mike explained this in contrasting the UK police with those of his home country where guns, and by association violence, is the norm:

Mike: 388-391

Here you see the local police how politely they are and there I mean normally, when you were young how the young people scared from the guns, each police have the guns

His repeated emphasis ("guns") may represent feeling endangered and demonstrate how UASYP may grow up fearing individuals in positions of state authority, potentially resulting from abuses of power.

Birhan noted the constant turnover in social care professionals, "*one is coming and then again, the other one going*" (371-372), which may have triggered feelings of losing family again. He described a sense of resentment in feeling uncared for when younger, and therefore potentially more vulnerable, and of

being interrogated about his background and the validity of his asylum claim by social workers:

Birhan: 377-381

Even when I was under age they never care about me, but they know background me you know. One social worker they came here now, and he is check to my background everything nothing you know, he's not found nothing, so he stressed me

Sohrab echoed this stress in his ongoing negotiation of immigration procedures over ten years feeling “*just like a prison*” (295), and a sense of injustice when considering his brothers have been granted leave to remain whilst he continues struggling:

Sohrab: 278-286

He is allowed to stay in this country and he's got everything but, my older brother as well he's got British citizenship and I'm the only one without anything
Interviewer: *Really?*

Yeah and I have to go every month to (location) for signing. To be honest when I go to signing all night I can't sleep, I'm just thinking about this, going in my mind... and to go there is like waiting one and a half hours, it makes me feel so, so stressed

Sohrab's comparison suggests that having leave to remain amounts to having “everything” and that his not having this negates everything else he has achieved, as though having nothing. Both accounts demonstrate the impact of immigration processes as a source of stress and anxiety, impacting on participants' ability to feel settled in the UK. UASYP's relatively disempowered positions are emphasised in their interactions with those in authority. Mike highlighted a lack of competent understanding from the judicial system and Home Office about his context: “[they] *should know about more about my country*” (381-382), and balancing explaining this to the judge overseeing his immigration case with not wanting to “*disrespect the man*” (378):

Mike: 399-409

They say to me “How about if we send you back home like stay on the city?” and I said to him like [] if I got back to (capital city in home country), and even I don't speak the (local) language, this is the, that will be the first problem for me,

and the second problem will be for me like to live without house, without anything so, how is that possible? And 'specially in (home country) if you stay in front of somebody door they will ask you straight away who you are! It's not like England I mean, to stand where you ever like

This extract portrays the myriad difficulties of UASYP being sent to unfamiliar locations in their country of origin where they know nobody and have nothing, including the ability to effectively communicate. It implies that England has provided Mike with a place of safety, which would be lost if he were sent elsewhere. Mike's surprise that the judge overseeing his case appears ignorant of the threat this could pose to his life and ability to survive far away from home or any support system highlights a stark realisation of the lack of protection for the rights of UASYP.

Such accounts present the complex skills many UASYP draw on to negotiate unfamiliar, and at times intimidating, structures for themselves, including independently adhering to established immigration protocols whilst respectfully advocating for themselves during legal hearings. How these abilities, and previously described difficulties, are applied to family tracing is discussed in later sections.

3.2.2 Adapting to Life Without Family

For most participants, leaving home was their first experience of being separated from family. However, two participants spoke of having lost all family members, and their resultant search for their last living family member. Genet described searching for her nephew following her sister's death, whilst Javad searched for his uncle having previously lost his parents. Separation for these participants could therefore be amplified by prior losses, with their hopes resting on finding just one person.

Adjusting to family separation could be a challenging and worrying experience:

Mike: 120-123

At the time I was like my first time to being separated from my family and it was quite a difficult for me, and I was really worried about them but now it's like I used to it

Getting “used” to being without family may have served a dual purpose: to manage worries and prevent this distress from affecting integration into UK life. Three participants described coping through trying not to think about this absence, and how discussing it was distressing in exacerbating thoughts of separated family, potentially reifying this separation:

Sohrab: 168-172

Sometimes I didn't want to talk I just leave it wait, wait for that.

Interviewer: Yeah, kind of like tried not to think about it

Yeah try not to think about it because otherwise you give me like stress or anything

Living without family therefore impacted on participants' wellbeing, with these losses manifesting through worry or low mood: “*Your mood is drop*” (Javad: 357). All participants experienced family separation as difficult, painful and making life feel harder, especially as young people without family to guide and protect them:

Birhan: 513-514

It's difficult without my mum here

Mike: 546-547

When you're being separated from the family with young age it's really difficult and you feel like very upset

Some participants explained that these difficult feelings could spill over into sleep:

Usf: 200-203

Feeling bad because especially in the night time he when he is sleeping just he is like speaking and when he wake, he wake up a lot of time and he feel stressed, depressive and not very well

Sohrab: 192-194

Just sometimes in dreaming, dreaming sometimes you miss them, but I was like whatever I was doing I was focused on that one like school or learn English here

Whilst participants may have distracted themselves through studies etc. whilst awake, distress manifested fully when their defences were down in sleep. Mike

illustrated how sleeping arrangements in themselves were a symptom of separation that required adjusting to, potentially through losing a sense of security:

Mike: 341-342

It was quite difficult because there I used to sleep with my mum and my brother, same room

Many participants spoke of transitioning to receiving support through the care system from foster carers or key workers in shared accommodation. Hasham explained how being cared for when missing family could be a painful and stark reminder of being without them:

Hasham: 216-222

Interviewer: Ok, so when your foster carer was looking after you, it was reminding you of your mum maybe?

Yeah it was reminding me back my family, definitely. 'Cause even if I, like how you say, I feel was really bad in my room, so I was even watching TV so was I remember back family so as she was bringing like glass with plate, something you know, so that was burning inside

The intensity of this pain (“burning”) suggests that missing family remains very much alive, especially considering Hasham had likely experienced the same care of meal preparation from his own family members. Many participants were passionate in describing what being without family felt like:

Mike: 560-563

How would you feel if your child go out from you without contact or anything? Even if you have a contact with him, so how do you feel? Like sad

Mike’s questioning reflects the bi-directionality of distress from separation, empathising that this must be affecting his parents as much as it does him.

Participants explained how being without family had changed them. This was especially evident in an increased sense of responsibility, which could play out in the tracing process. Genet spoke about her “*obligation*” (211) to care for her nephew when she is hopefully reunited with him:

Genet⁶: 151-152

I'll take all the responsibility when he comes here, I'll be his everything

This encompasses the totality (“all”, “everything”) of what Genet is prepared to do for her nephew, along with an appreciation that she is the only family he has. An unanticipated transition to parenting could be experienced as a big pressure during late adolescence/early adulthood. Since finding his unaccompanied younger cousin, Mike described naturally moving into more of a parental role with him. He reminisced about times where he had no responsibilities back home:

Mike: 313-314

The young people there, just eat and sleep, nothing to worry about it [laughs]

Having “nothing to worry about” may imply that now there is plenty to worry about for Mike, and the difference between having the protection of parents to having to go it alone in the UK. Birhan described taking on a parental role in actively protecting his younger brother from news of their mother:

Birhan: 509-513

He is pressure more than me because he is underage, I don't want to say too bad things []. Sometimes even I am lying to him because “Yeah someone is they found my mum just calm down and wait to me”

Birhan’s “lying” to his brother may demonstrate a need to put his own concerns (“pressure”) about their mum to one side to prioritise emotionally supporting his brother, thereby potentially not getting any support himself.

Participants also expressed increased responsibility in considering the practicalities of embarking on IFT. Some described feeling responsible for the welfare of RC staff and villagers, as searches in their homeland could be very dangerous. Javad illustrated this responsibility in deciding how to search for his uncle and understandably not wanting to shoulder the responsibility and “*guiltiness*” (43) of a ‘bad’ decision, potentially causing people to be harmed or killed:

⁶ Communicated via interpreter

Javad: 175-177

So many people die every day because of other people but I don't want anyone else die because of me

Hasham echoed this, resulting in mixed feelings about balancing responsibility with wanting to find family. He explained the dangers of his village to BRC staff:

Hasham: 178-183

I say "If it's problem there, if you can't go so please don't go, maybe you gonna get problem for yourself as well" I told them, I say "Very careful" [] So, I was worry about this and only I was happy to find out my family

These extracts depict the enormity of tracing decisions for UASYP, and how these complexities and their consequences are wisely considered, potentially beyond anticipated developmental abilities. Further consideration of UASYP's roles in tracing procedures is described in section 3.4.2.

3.2.3 Returning to Family

On receiving positive news of family, participants described a rollercoaster of responses that could be hard to put into words, possibly due to feeling overwhelmed with emotion:

Aaleyah: 184-185

Oh, I can't express the feeling [laughs] because I was so happy

Sohrab: 232-233

I don't know how to explain my feeling, but I was so, so happy

Along with a feeling of happiness, many participants reported being overcome with joy on re-connecting with family:

Birhan: 474

I'm just cry, I can't stop anything

Aaleyah: 215

I just hugged him [laughs], I cried a lot, it was the best feeling

Participants spoke of how their initial reactions could be one of disbelief: "couldn't believe it" (Javad: 497) and amazement: "so amazed" (Sohrab: 64) that what they had waited so long for was actually happening. This was expressed through accounts of the news feeling surreal and dream-like,

especially in considering that participants may not have expected to find their family alive:

Javad: 493-494

Well it was quite shocking when I heard he's alive, I said oh, I just like am I dreaming or am I like, I'm here?

Mike: 452-455

I wasn't expecting to be a real [] It was kind of like dream you know?

Birhan: 470

Even I'm really alive or something you know like? [laughs]

Usf fully expected his brother to be dead at the hands of ISIS, so hearing news that his brother was alive felt almost like a revival:

Usf: 283-284

He feel that his brother is died and after that he live again you know?

These feelings of disbelief highlight how UASYP may prepare for the worst happening to their families, potentially as a method of self-preservation to cope with receiving bad news; any good news could therefore feel like an unexpected bonus. This news could be complex, resulting in mixed emotions. Hasham recounted his joy at receiving a letter back from his family, but how this instantly deflated when he found half the message had been redacted by government forces in his homeland:

Hasham: 225-230

I was really happy, I was, run away to the bus stop, I get in the bus, I came straight here so they give me the letter [] I open the letter, so the letter all was, I got the message from my family, so the half letter was, they put, they did the pen on it

Hasham's description portrays his confusion in learning that his government had the power to view personal correspondence, and the vulnerabilities this may have left his family open to. Mixed emotions are also described in Birhan's account: initial excitement and repeatedly jumping up for joy at finding his brother, followed by the sudden drop caused by the reminder that his mum was still missing when he instinctively wanted to share this news with her:

Birhan: 451-455

I can't control my emotion and then I can't speak even on my phone! And then [laughs] I'm just like you know [laughs] jumping and jumping and jumping and again on my home and then I went try to call someone or you know to tell them after this and again I'm just think my mum to say that

Finding family members could therefore feel like a double-edged sword, with many participants sharing similar responses to the bittersweet nature of joy coupled with painful reminders of those still missing. The process of continued searching is expanded upon in section 3.3.2.

Participants spoke of re-adjusting to knowing their found family were alive and, where contact had been established, of having them in their lives. One element of this adjustment process involved coming face-to-face with how time changes people. Mike described how it had been a long time before he saw his cousin again, and noticing “*face changing*” (456):

Mike: 433-434

When I saw him I was quite shocked because when I was, I mean when I left (home country) he was a young boy

This may parallel Mike's own experiences of being a “young boy” on leaving home and how he has since grown into a man; his “shock” may have resulted from a representation of his own experiences reflected back to him. Aaleyah poignantly confronted how she had changed over time to resemble her mum more, despite their separation from a young age, leading her brother to recognise her based on this:

Aaleyah: 198-199

I think he remembered me because my features are like my mum a little bit so yeah, so he remembered me

Discourses around visibly growing up may represent the length and consequences of family separation for UASYP: a possible sense of fear or insecurity about what or how they may be changing whilst they are apart, and whether family and associated aspects will be recognisable or irreparably changed should they be reunited.

Another element of re-adjusting to family was getting used to having them around again. Birhan expressed that having his brother in his life meant he could speak about all things family to him, potentially keeping their mother present through their conversations:

Birhan: 519-520

When I want to say something and I say to him about my family

Javad described how it was initially tough to contact his uncle again, and how the long break created feelings of unfamiliarity or discomfort that he had to work through:

Javad: 565-566

Second time it was easier to speak, the third time get like easier and easier, now it's kind of normal to talk to him

Feeling “kind of normal” suggests that things have not reverted to how they were previously, and an appreciation that perhaps they might not. This highlights how UASYP’s expectations of tracing may potentially differ from the reality brought about by separation.

Participants verbalised what it felt like to have family back in their lives and how this could change things for the better. Mike described the positive consequences of being with his cousin on his wellbeing, implying that this felt rejuvenating and a respite from other difficult aspects of life:

Mike: 513

Like sometime when you go to holiday, feeling relaxed

Usf expressed how living with his brother, sharing their previous routine and knowing “*that his brother is with him*” (234-235) again, led to life feeling “like before” (251) and potentially more reassuring. Sohrab described gaining a sense of strength and safety from having his brother around:

Sohrab: 242-244

There's my brother here and feel more strong as well so, like, I know someone else around me so, you feel safe as well

Feeling “strong” and “safe” highlights the vulnerabilities experienced by UASYP whilst alone and separated from family. ‘Just knowing’ someone else is around may subsequently play a powerful role in containing the emotions of UASYP.

Participants expressed that finding family “*does change your life*” (Javad: 604) for the better. Birhan described how the overwhelming “pressure” to find family had halved since finding his brother:

Birhan: 532-533

First it's full pressure, now it's half of that is gone, you know?

Finding all sought family members could provide a sense of certainty and closure:

Aaleyah: 245-248

Back then I, I didn't, like I didn't know if I could see him again, so yeah it changed [sighs], yeah it changed so much, to know that I have a brother and he is here with me

Aaleyah's sigh is a powerful appreciation of how different things could have been had she not found her brother. Similarly, Javad's questions about himself and his journey to safety would have gone unanswered had he not found his uncle:

Javad: 592-596

My life's changed at least now I knew my uncle is alive, I got some family back home and I had a worry always in my mind “Where is my uncle? What's happened to me? Why I'm here today?” this all question was looking for answer, today I'm not worry about these question, because I got all the answer

Javad's questioning demonstrates his confusion about his pre-flight experiences. It implies that getting answers from his uncle helped give meaning to these experiences and complete a chapter of his life.

3.3 Uncertainty

3.3.1 Doubting and Mistrusting

Nearly all participants described a sense of doubt or mistrust about figures in authority, including those who support the tracing process. This is understandable in the context of participants' distressing experiences at the hands of authority figures in their homelands and encounters whilst fleeing.

In discussing the BRC's role in IFT, there was a sense that trust had to be earned, with participants often approaching tracing procedures with caution: "*At the beginning I didn't like them*" (Javad: 11). Birhan explained his mistrust of the BRC "*because it's not my family, they don't know me*" (147); this implies that family members remain the only people Birhan feels he can trust. It also highlights a sense of suspicion following his experiences of betrayal by his government and doubt from immigration services. Doubts about the BRC's impartiality were also described. Both Javad and Birhan expressed that they were initially concerned that the BRC may have something to do with the Home Office and their asylum claims:

Javad: 72-74

I was like mmm is that gonna anything with Home Office? Is that gonna anything with Government?

Javad expressed that his understanding was hampered by having limited English and the stress of what may have felt like taking a gamble with trust even after meeting them: "*Still I was 50/50 unsure*" (90). Birhan was dubious as the contact details for the BRC were handed to him in documents from the Home Office:

Birhan: 601-604

My paper they give me Home Office and there is Red Cross, there is different part I think so, so little bit I'm just worry [] they not sending me the Home Office or something

This demonstrates how UASYP make decisions independently about engaging in IFT, potentially without the family members they might usually ask for advice about such a decision.

Participants expressed doubt that the BRC would actually be able to help with finding family:

Aaleyah: 14-15

First I, I was not sure if they could help but I just said, I just said I'm gonna try and you never know

This extract depicts taking a leap of faith, echoed in Sohrab's initial sentiments: "*I just give it a go, I said you never know*" (30-31). Sohrab described being

dubious about whether the BRC would complete a legitimate search, or simply a 'tick-box' exercise:

Sohrab: 129-131

They maybe not doing it [] maybe they'll take my interview and just close it and that's it

These extracts are revealing in their portrayal of an understandable sense of cynicism in UASYP, which may have developed from their prior experiences of individuals or organisations offering assistance.

Some participants described experiencing secondary doubts following successfully tracing family. Genet doubted how she would be able to bring her nephew over to the UK from her homeland and "*what's going to happen when he comes?*" (164); a potential appreciation that her life will be permanently changed by becoming a carer. Genet's doubts about the future illustrate how UASYP have to concurrently contend with uncertainties and distressing past experiences.

On hearing his uncle was alive, Javad experienced doubts about whether it was really him and whether contacting him would lead to any pressure for financial support. His hesitancy led him to buy a new SIM card to make the call and to initially "*put the phone down*" (552) as he felt it was so difficult to speak to his uncle again after four years:

Javad: 509-516

It's kind of difficult to talk to someone you haven't talked to him for ages, like he left you and you don't know what was the reason he left you. And kind of I was always like thinking "Why he left me down there alone"? [] "Maybe he is horrible person" but I found out no he's not, I was wrong. That was my imagination about my uncle. Because he left me there alone and then I travelled all this country, this journey alone

Javad's account describes how his having to escape from his home country led to potential feelings of anger and resentment towards his uncle. His distress and potential sense of abandonment are emphasised in his repetition of being "left" totally "alone" and "imagination" that only a "horrible" person would leave a

child behind. It throws into relief the consequences of war and persecution of individuals, including its ripple effects for families and children.

3.3.2 Waiting and Not Knowing

Participants described difficulties associated with waiting for news of family and the impact of not knowing about their family's safety, highlighting the distressing impact of uncertainty on the waiting process. For some, waiting for IFT felt insignificant in comparison to the length of family separation:

Usf: 48-50

For a long time, more than four years, he don't see his family and for this time it's no problem there is twenty day, one month, because there is for four years he waited

For the majority of participants, all stages of tracing felt like a "long, painful process" (Genet: 193):

Hasham: 48-53

It was long yeah, definitely was long, I was like, when we do, when it's our Eid like we do Ramadan so tomorrow is Eid, that night is very long for us. So, it was, definitely long, yeah [] Even one minute is coming like one hour

These descriptions emphasise the slow passage of time for participants and how distressing this could feel. Hasham's account suggests that waiting felt like the longest and most testing night in fasting for Ramadan before feasting at Eid, and therefore a sacrifice that is "worth it" (Sohrab: 351) when considering good news may result. Participants described a sense of powerlessness in just having to wait and not being able to "do anything" (Javad: 352)

Sohrab: 175-176

What I can I do like? It was not in my hand or anything, so it was out of my reach

Being "out of reach" suggests a sense of frustration and helplessness in participants' best efforts not being enough to find or help family themselves. Participants described accompanying feelings of guilt and self-blame in how things might have been different, perhaps linked to grief and loss. Birhan wondered whether not becoming injured would have prevented him from having to flee to safety and leave family behind:

Birhan: 125- 127

If you not happen with my leg or sometimes, you know when I imagine, if you not, they not problem ever, at all

Participants also described feelings of hopelessness and giving up at times, portrayed in Sohrab's sense of defeat and realisation that he may not find his family:

Sohrab: 53

Maybe that's it, my family is gone

This contributed to stress and ambiguity in not knowing whether family members were alive or dead:

Sohrab: 147-149

Because if you don't heard about your family you're thinking what happened to them? They alive, they...?

Sohrab's tailing off suggests the alternative is almost too painful to name. Birhan expressed how this source of stress could be all-consuming and result in him not attending to his own basic needs, as these felt less important than actually finding family:

Birhan: 479-481

Doesn't matter if you I'm not eating if you are not drinking or sometimes you know, I'm not really care about anything

Participants' distress appeared to stem from uncertainty and fear for their family's safety. This was especially poignant given that participants had their own lived experiences of danger and could thereby vividly comprehend the kinds of danger their families faced back home:

Javad: 415-427

Here, when you going to work or going to university, going to college, whatever you going, you're one hundred... you're sure you coming back home. As in, I'm talking about the safety [] (In home country), when you leave your house, you not sure you coming home, back home. You saying bye to your family...

Interviewer: For like the last time...

Yeah, the last time, exactly. Because you walking next to the person, the same

as you, nothing different, suddenly explode next to you. What you gonna do with it? Nothing. You don't have anything to protect you.

This description highlights life's fragility and the unanticipated, unpreventability of death in such dangerous circumstances. Descriptions of being blown up ("explode") invite the reader to consider the impact and tenuousness of living in such circumstances, where chance is all that separates one person from the next. The consequences of living in 'limbo' about one's personal safety, and its impact on family life in every goodbye potentially being the last, suggest a sense of helplessness as even family cannot provide protection. Mike echoed a helplessness that his family could be killed and avoiding the internet at times due to its reminders of the dangers in his country, illustrating an appreciation of the consequences of war for absent family members:

Mike: 325-328

Because when I go to Google I feel really bad to be very honest because a war and people and killing each other you know and even like killing is not in my religion but still people do it

Participants employed other strategies to cope with the wait. These included having "patience" (Aaleyah: 105) and maintaining hope despite the worries:

Hasham: 45

I was hopeful yeah to find my family

Genet: 147

I didn't lose hope, but I used to worry so much

Sohrab described drawing on his religious faith to inspire such hope and patience:

Sohrab: 177-191

So, I said maybe what we do, do patient, wait or. Because Muslim you know they say patience is the, anything is hard for you, you just need to be like patient [] in a prayer I was just saying give my family life, a good life and hope they're alive

Participants also described getting support with waiting from friends and family:

Javad: 215-216

You need to talk to someone, you can't keep it all inside otherwise...

Javad's tailing off implies the potential consequences on wellbeing of managing stresses from family tracing without support. He linked this to the limited nature of secure foster placements where UASYP could potentially get support with such issues: "*They don't have a person they can trust or [] talk to*" (213).

Hasham emphasised having this trust to open up about issues of the "heart" with his foster carer and how such emotional support was vital in the absence of family:

Hasham: 382-384

So, if anything, if I was worry or sad, she was look after only 'cause I was live with her so she was look after, only she was knows about my heart

Not all participants had a source of support and could feel alone with waiting at times. Birhan explained how he would avoid sharing his distress with others for fear of stressing them out too:

Birhan: 411-416

I don't want to say every day to people like you know, when I just say one time or two time just my mum I said them but I don't want to just again and again, again and again to my friend or to another person. I want to help me but say, but if you say everyday even they stressed them again. I'm stressful and stressful to another person again

This emphasises the unrelenting nature of missing family "again and again" and carrying this distress largely alone, through feeling responsible for protecting others from stress.

Whilst waiting rewarded participants with a positive trace, most described "*still waiting*" (Aaleyah: 240), either to live with their located family members or in continuing their search for other family members, as Birhan emphasised three times:

Birhan: 119-120

Still I'm searching to my mum now, that's it. That's... its very, very difficult for me still, still

3.3 Ability

3.3.1 BRC's Specialist Resources and Abilities

Participants frequently discussed the set of specialist resources and abilities that the BRC brought to family tracing. These included their connectedness as a worldwide network and the support provided to UASYP throughout the tracing process. Participants described how they could not have found family without IFT through the BRC:

Usf: 294-295

If there is not family tracing how can he find his brother?

This was especially pertinent given participants' positions as UASYP, potentially without "anyone who can help or support me" (Genet: 49-50):

Aaleyah: 313-316

It's a good thing for people here, the refugee like me they come here and they get separated from their families and if, Red Cross they support people [], they help

This highlights the BRC's relative position of power to trace family members compared to UASYP's. Many participants emphasised this power and resource through their descriptions of the BRC's expert knowledge of IFT procedures and their connectedness to other RC networks. Hasham recalled being informed by his peers that the "Only way is Red Cross" (15). Sohrab echoed this concept in his account:

Sohrab: 135-137

I know the place, my place, even the government who's got power, they can't go there as well. I dunno how this Red Cross went

Sohrab's description suggests incredulosity that the BRC are in some ways more powerful than the government in his home country. It further highlights his relatively disempowered position. Conversely, many participants described ways in which power was afforded to them during their searches with the BRC. They commented on how the BRC were generally open and transparent in explaining tracing procedures and took things "step-by-step" (Usf: 311-312) to ensure participants' understanding. Most felt that the BRC had given them a good understanding of the sequence and process of the tracing:

Javad: 200-205

They explained it in the first meeting briefly, they said “We gonna go down the village, start from there, then come to Europe, start from Europe, and then we got website, which is Trace the Face”, they show it to me, “Where you put your information here, your picture here and that’s the three way we can look”

Having access to the intricacies of the tracing process may have helped participants to gain a sense of control and agency in a process where they may otherwise have felt left in the dark or excluded. Participants appeared to appreciate the honesty in being told “*what can happen and what cannot happen*” (Genet: 31-32):

Birhan: 245-247:

They said to me first “If you like sometimes we fail or sometimes we found so you have to understand” they said to me, [] she telled me true, everything true

This implies that a transparent and frank approach was not the norm for participants, but that this was vital in establishing a trusting working relationship. Its consequences in helping participants feel confident that the BRC would keep to their word about confidentiality were especially important for those who were concerned about IFT procedures impacting their family’s welfare:

Usf: 313-314

They say this information confident

Birhan: 610-611

She not say anything to anyone without me you know. And after this I feel confident.

Such trust could therefore inspire confidence in participants, and possibly function to restore their faith in organisations. This transparency was important even where participants were informed of unsuccessful tracing outcomes:

Sohrab: 56-57

They said “No, unfortunately there’s no good news but that’s what we heard”

Most participants noted how they were frequently contacted and updated on their search:

Genet: 254-255

They always call me, they always get in touch with me, they update me

Sohrab emphasised the importance of such regular contact in providing reassurance about the tracing and that participants were held in mind during the wait:

Sohrab: 315

It was feel good and I said ok wait maybe normal

This process of being held in mind was also noted by participants in the BRC following-up after successful tracing, which was experienced as “*Very helpful*” (Usf: 583):

Javad: 620-621

They did email ask “How did it go? How did you find him? Is he fine?”

Hasham described how this support helped him to feel he was not alone with things, especially considering the absence of family figures to guide him:

Hasham: 439-441

I was thinking someone else, they worry about me, I wasn't think only I am, so someone help me as well

Participants described ways in which the BRC were sensitive to their context as UASYP. This was evident through quelling participants' anxieties by explaining their impartiality from immigration proceedings:

Javad: 75-77

[They] told me “We don't have any connect with the Home Office, with the Government”

Hasham also described how BRC staff reassured him not to worry about their safety during tracing procedures, thereby removing this responsibility from him:

Hasham: 180-182

They say “No problem, if place is dangerous we no going there, so if it's alright we gonna find out”

Participants frequently commended BRC staff for being supportive throughout the IFT process. They were described as encouraging and trying their best, even at times when participants' hopes may have dwindled:

Birhan: 254-255

"We do best and we try" she said to me, "We not give up"

Genet described how she felt hopeless before working with the BRC, but they re-inspired this sense of hope:

Genet: 217-218

Before there was no hope, I didn't have any hope, but they gave me hope

Participants expressed that the BRC provided "full help" (Birhan: 575), including with difficulties not related to IFT:

Hasham: 386-387

Many time they call me they say "Come, any help if we can we gonna do help with you"

Birhan explained that his caseworker intervened when he was threatened with eviction, through liaising with his social worker and providing reassurance:

Birhan: 568-571

They kick me out from my own house because [] the contract is done and then they said to me on I think it's on one week, "On one week you can leave this house" they said to me, and even on this thing they support me

Interviewer: Really?

Yeah and they said "I just call to your social worker [], we sort out don't worry about this, just you go to your college or do what you do"

Birhan's account highlights the multiple difficulties UASYP face in managing housing, college and immigration proceedings, whilst searching for family, and its emotional consequences.

Participants also spoke about how the BRC emphasised their personal choice in tracing matters and gave them time to think about decisions, thereby alleviating the pressure on participants and emphasising their sense of agency:

Javad: 146-150

I said ok then I got time to think about what I'm gonna do, make my mind [] because they didn't bring the paperwork, so it wasn't lots of pressure on me to sign, should I sign it? Should I not? Should I sign it now? What I'm gonna do?

This reiterates UASYP's abilities to weigh up and make complex decisions about family tracing, including whether and how to engage with the BRC, and an appreciation of the consequences of such decisions on missing family.

3.3.2 UASYP's Agency and Personal Resources

In considering the BRC's skills in family tracing, participants inevitably discussed their own abilities and experiences. They acknowledged their limited power and resources in searching for their families and how they were largely unsuccessful in their own tracing efforts:

Birhan: 218-219

It's big country and then I can't research everything here

This suggests that Birhan felt 'small' or insignificant in his tracing efforts. At times, this sense of powerlessness led some participants to feel disheartened and give up on their own attempts to trace family members:

Usf: 186-188

He don't know what can he do, and therefore he stopped trying to find them

Sohrab: 118-121

Without the Red Cross I could not do anything. The war is there and fighting there and no communication so and no postal like here so nothing. I was just given up

These extracts illustrate the limited capabilities of UASYP in trying to contact family members during times of war and its associated consequences. Despite these, many participants described striving to do all they could to find family in "so many ways" (Genet: 18). They gave accounts of drawing on their own resourcefulness to use the internet and social networking to hear of any news:

Birhan: 306-310

[I] try by myself to who is on Calais, who is on (neighbouring country) or like [] before my friend or sometimes (home country) people they come everyday, you know like, every year and I'm just try on my Facebook to say "Hello everyone and you know my mum?"

Participants reported mixed successes with this approach, with most being unsuccessful:

Hasham: 150-151

I use it yeah after yeah years, years, after two years so there is I didn't find nothing

Hasham's account illustrates how long ("years, years") his own unsuccessful attempts to trace felt. Conversely, Mike's searches proved fruitful in reuniting him with his cousin:

Mike: 151-152

I try from the internet er, the only I find my cousin who is in England

"The only" highlights the bittersweet nature of Mike's success, in gaining his cousin but still missing his immediate family members.

Persevering and continuing to try to find family members were commonly discussed by participants:

Sohrab: 218

I'll try my best

Aaleyah: 145-146

I said maybe it can happen, I'll never know, so I said oh, it's gonna be ok and I'm gonna keep trying

Aaleyah's extract portrays her determination to find her brother and the self-encouragement and hope she drew on to motivate her to continue her search. Genet echoes this in her account of persevering with her nephew's case over years:

Genet: 140-141

He is two years and half now and I tried since he was less one month, one month old

Participants' agency was also evident in working with the BRC. Despite having limited abilities compared to the BRC, participants "*gave them all the information*" (Genet: 84-85) to search for their family members:

Sohrab: 77-78

I give all the information. I was just giving everything

“Giving everything” implies a sense of emotional effort that participants invested in the tracing process, and the lengths they were willing to go to find their family again.

Participants’ sense of autonomy was demonstrated through embarking on IFT being “*my choice*” (Sohrab: 207; Hasham: 370). Participants also made choices around how the search was carried out, such as in Hasham’s case where he requested that some messages he sent to family be cancelled for fears of their safety:

Hasham: 332-334

I was thinking some happen, so I say I’m not gonna send a third letter. So, I say “Cancel the second letter as well”.

This was mirrored in Javad’s account, in choosing and voicing how he wanted to undertake his search:

Javad: 44-45

I said “I don’t want you guys to go down the village and asking people”

These extracts emphasise how many UASYP can make their voices heard despite their relatively disempowered positions.

3.3.3 Limitations and Recommendations

Many participants discussed how their abilities in tracing were limited by barriers at times. Mike described how completing a search in his home country, which was affected by war and had differing cultural norms to the UK, could be complicated:

Mike: 296-293

I mean specially in (home country) you’re gonna ask for example for women, because women normally stay at home and the only place they’re go to them relative or either grandmother, grandfather something like this, or the sister [] the only things you can ask for man and normally man is not at home

Mike’s extract depicts the challenges associated with tracing via home visits, where men would be primarily sought in line with culturally appropriate behaviour but may be absent at work or having also fled for their own safety. Participants also spoke of the impact of war leaving their villages with “*no connection*” (Hasham: 155) to the internet or telephone system to contact

family. Such complications could also limit the BRC's own abilities in IFT, resulting in limited success and the majority of participants still searching for missing family members. The issue of who is defined as family further complicates FR processes, as evident in Genet's subsequent struggles with attempting to bring her nephew to the UK to live with her:

Genet: 239-242

Interviewer: Do you feel like the fact that he's not your own child has made it harder for you?

Yes, I think so, that's what they said to me as well. That's what makes it hard

This represents the hurdles many UASYP face in re-connecting with kin who are important to them, but may not fall within Western definitions of family.

Whilst commending the BRC's efforts in IFT, some participants also expressed ways in which it could be improved. Whilst many participants felt they had gained a clear understanding of IFT procedures, three expressed in their accounts that they remained unsure of what exact processes would be undertaken:

Aaleyah: 68-69

I dunno how they, what they did but they just found him [laughs] that's what I know

Genet: 21-22

I'm not sure exactly how and they didn't tell me exactly how they going to help

Usf: 140-145

They don't say but they say, they told him just you can come to the office [] just told him you have appointment

This may have been due to variability between teams and caseworkers, or to participants not understanding or attending to such information at the time, but was shown to be important for other participants in making decisions about how to complete tracing. It also illustrates that UASYP could have varying experiences of IFT.

Some participants described how initial contact with the BRC was affected by their limited English at the time and that complications could arise with the use of interpreters. Javad emphasised the importance of having an interpreter

present in the room to facilitate meetings with the BRC, whilst also describing difficulties he encountered. These included limited availability, difficulties with interpreters going off topic at times, interpreters not understanding him due to speaking the wrong dialect and signal problems when using telephone interpreting services: *“you never get a good understanding from the phone”* (675). Resultantly, he recommended having an interpreter present in the room who speaks the same dialect. Javad made further suggestions, including: improvements to the tracing website due to a glitch with age filters, which could result in a large pool of results and *“make the process boring [], you give up”* (727-728); providing information leaflets on IFT to help raise awareness in countries with limited technology access; and giving UASYP time to think about and decide on tracing procedures:

Javad: 179-184

It's good to give young people time. The meeting should be not that long, short, briefly explain everything and then “Ok, we will go, we leave you now, you got time, one week, two weeks or two days, three days to think, then we'll come back with paperwork, if you wanna sign and give us permission to start then we start”

This highlights the responsibilities UASYP face in making such decisions, the diligence with which they embark on tracing processes, and therefore the importance of having thinking space between appointments.

Some participants described a desire for increased contact during the waiting period, including more frequent verbal updates:

Aaleyah: 22-23

We waited for three month and they didn't reply anything

Sohrab: 329-330

They could call like “We're still waiting”. Yeah, that would be more helpful

These extracts highlight the important role the BRC provides in containing the emotions of UASYP during the tracing process and how anxieties about bad news may intensify when updates, including of no current outcome, are limited. This need for containment may also play out when informing UASYP about

tracing outcomes, as Javad illustrates in his recommendation for immediately informing young people of a successful trace:

Javad: 476-484

They said "Oh, we got news about your uncle" but it's nice to say it in the phone "He is alive". Until this time this person is gonna "Oh, is he alive? Is he dead?" So much stress, so much pressure and to be honest I had a like interview going on and I had some exams you know like. Yeah sometimes it's good to tell straight away and the person is release from the stress. I know if it's a bad news don't tell him, just say "We wanna come over and see you" and then you can tell him, but if it's a good news just tell me straight away

Javad's perspective emphasises the stress faced by UASYP in IFT and how the BRC could expand on opportunities to quell such significant anxieties from spilling over into other aspects of life that may also be stressful.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

This final chapter will review the study's research aims and situate its findings in the context of existing research literature. A critical review is presented, followed by implications for clinical practice, policy and future research opportunities.

4.1 Synthesis of Findings

The current study aimed to gain an understanding of how UASYP make sense of their family tracing experiences given the dearth of research with this population generally, and specifically in relation to IFT. To this end, this research employed qualitative methods to directly ask eight UASYP about their experiences of IFT.

The previous chapter analysed participants' responses to interview questions regarding their IFT experiences with the BRC from a psychological perspective, giving rise to three major themes: Adjustment; Uncertainty; Ability.

4.1.1 Adjustment

UASYP's experiences of FT involved multiple processes of adjustment and re-adjustment. Participant accounts appeared to depict many such adjustments as responses to loss: loss of a previous life and self, resulting from fleeing traumatic experiences; loss of family and its support, protection and nurturance; loss of childhood resulting in increased responsibility; loss of a sense of familiarity resulting in adapting to a new society; loss of a sense of trust and belief regarding figures in authority. UASYP typically face multiple separations (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010) and being without family appeared to especially contribute to this sense of loss for participants, potentially amplifying these (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). For UASYP, navigating separations and losses often coincides with their developmental transition to adolescence and young adulthood, exacerbating an already challenging period (Jakobsen et al., 2017). The role of families is of increased importance during any period of transition (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989) and participants described the additional difficulties of facing such transitions without their family members, who typically provide support and guidance (Patterson, 2002). This highlights the function of family members as attachment figures providing a secure base from which developing young people can safely explore their worlds (Ainsworth, 1989). Functioning

without attachment figures led participants to be prematurely pushed to take on adult responsibilities, including: parenting roles for younger family members; independently engaging with the BRC around IFT; and feeling responsible for BRC staff undertaking tracing procedures. This illustrates Burton's (2007) concept of childhood adultification, where young people assume adult responsibilities and roles prematurely due to challenging circumstances. Adultification was echoed in participants' descriptions of having to be tough to survive being alone and adjusting to life in the UK, when inside this felt very confusing, and a potential culture shock (Simmonds & Merredew, 2010).

How participants made sense of their IFT experiences appeared to be very grounded in prior experiences of fleeing traumatic events and leaving family behind. Their experiences of violence as a primary flight reason, echoed in previous research findings (Thomas et al., 2003), were distressing and created worries about the fate of their missing family members. This is consistent with prior research detailing the impact of trauma and separation on UASYP's mood and wellbeing, with consequences of increased psychological distress (Durà-Vilà et al., 2012), sleep difficulties (Kohli & Mather, 2003; Wilmsen, 2013), fear and worry (Salvo, 2012; Wilmsen, 2013), poor concentration and guilt (Wilmsen, 2013).

Distressing pre-flight experiences and post-flight difficulties with hostile immigration procedures influenced how participants responded to figures in authority, with the majority feeling unsupported by professionals outside the BRC in their search for family members. Losing support, such as through the frequent turnover in social care professionals, could revive feelings of abandonment or being uncared for, possibly triggering feelings associated with losing family again (Hughes & Rees, 2016). As in previous research, ongoing immigration procedures were described as a source of stress and anxiety, impacting on UASYP's ability to feel settled in the UK (Hek, 2005). Participants described a sense of injustice at this which, along with experiencing challenging immigration interviews, have been found to potentially trigger post-traumatic reactions (Schock, Rosner & Knaevelsrud, 2015). Distressing interactions with social services and immigration proceedings may thereby possibly contribute to re-traumatising UASYP.

Whilst moving on with establishing a new life alone in the UK and fearing the worst had happened to family members, participants were faced with unexpectedly re-adjusting to having family back in their lives. Reports of disbelief at hearing family were alive illustrated that participants may have psychologically prepared to never see family again to safeguard their emotional wellbeing. Luster et al. (2008) identified a sense of overwhelming joy at finding family members. This was mirrored in this study's findings, however for participants searching for multiple family members, their joy was tempered by sharp reminders of those still missing. The separation experience was personified in participants coming face-to-face with the passage of time on meeting found family members, and potential fears about irreparable changes this represented.

Successful tracing had positive repercussions for wellbeing, providing some relief from the pressure and distress of missing family members, gaining strength from those found, and re-igniting hope of finding others. Participants in this study described re-establishing a close connection with family members where reunion was possible, contradicting previous research where cohesion difficulties arose following lengthy separation (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

4.1.2 Uncertainty

Participant accounts were peppered with uncertainty, with doubt and mistrust emerging as common threads throughout. Trust issues are frequent consequences for UASYP (O'Toole Thommessen et al., 2017), especially considering trust's relational nature and how mistrust can be functional for UASYP in their given contexts (Ní Raghallaigh, 2014). Ní Raghallaigh (2014) found that causes of UASYP's mistrust were influenced by: prior experiences; being accustomed to mistrust; mistrust from others; unfamiliarity with people; and concerns about telling the truth. She describes how trust is far easier to destroy than build and that UASYP's trust is affected by both their prior social environments and subsequent post-flight ones. These findings fit with participants' accounts depicting doubt and mistrust as a mechanism of self-preservation and survival. The consequences of participants' distressing experiences led to hesitation about trusting others and their motives, echoing what they may have encountered on their journeys to the UK. This was mirrored in their accounts of corrupt and abusive institutions and unjust immigration

procedures. Participants faced doubts about their own and their families' futures, illustrating how UASYP concurrently contend with such doubts and distressing past experiences (Kohli & Mather, 2003).

Doubting and mistrusting played out in participants' IFT interactions with the BRC. Participants recounted initial doubts that the BRC were independent of the Home Office and whether they would legitimately embark on IFT procedures on their behalf. A sense of trust being earned was implied, including with found family members at times, such as in one participant's initially cautious approach to re-engaging with found family members, mirroring the occasional scepticism reported by Luster et al.'s (2008) participants.

Uncertainty has been shown to be detrimental to psychosocial health in this population (Miller et al., 2018; Wilmsen, 2013). The consequences of doubt were described in the context of waiting and not knowing about the fate of family members. Participants described contending with a plethora of difficult emotions in the face of waiting for news: guilt about how things might have been different had they not fled to safety leaving family behind; hopelessness and powerlessness at not being able to do more; alone-ness; stress and worry. Similarly to Luster et al.'s (2008) findings, participants described distress from family separation and frequent preoccupation about the fate of their families. This appeared to compound other practical worries and stem from uncertainty and fear for their family's safety, as previously found (Wernesjö, 2012). Participants' feelings of guilt and self-blame resulting from feeling responsible for separation events may well be the manifestations of grief and loss from family separation, as described by Wilmsen (2013). Their vivid accounts and memories of traumatic pre-flight experiences appeared to contribute to a real appreciation of the dangers faced by remaining family members, in line with prior research depicting war and its associated traumas and losses as exacerbating separation experiences (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002).

Uncertainty has been shown to negatively impact waiting processes (Sweeney & Cavanaugh, 2012), and coping with waiting was unanimously described as a challenging experience by participants. Many described the wait as painful and enduring, with this persisting when some family members were located but not others. Participants described different facets to waiting, including an all-consuming element, echoing Boss' writings on ambiguous loss and frozen grief

(Boss et al., 2011), whereby participants dedicated much of their time and emotional effort to searching for family, whilst conversely moving forward with their lives in the UK through learning English, attending to their studies and immigration proceedings and building relationships with friends and their wider community. In the latter sense, participants focused their energies on progressing and for those who were able, potentially keeping absent family members present through conversations with found family members. This mirrors White's (1998) account of keeping lost relationships alive in conversation as a means of processing grief.

UASYP are often resourceful (Kohli & Mather, 2003), developing resilience strategies in coping with prior distressing events and enduring uncertainties, including awaiting immigration status (Sleijpen, Mooren, Kleber & Boeije, 2017). Participants in this study displayed resourcefulness and resilience through coping with uncertainty by: keeping faith and patience; holding onto hope; and drawing on support networks. Interestingly, religion was explicitly mentioned as a coping mechanism by just one participant and it remains unclear whether others drew on their religious faith to cope, as this was not directly asked. Participants' support networks mostly comprised peers, understandably given that most lived independently or in supported accommodation. For those residing with foster carers or other family members, these relationships were mentioned as a great source of support, illustrating the importance of family networks in providing emotional support to UASYP, including potentially modulating the after-effects of traumatic events (Rousseau et al., 2001). As one participant noted, such support is often unavailable due to limited foster care placements or small numbers of those willing to accept UASYP. A lack of sufficient emotional support led some participants to feel they could not share their distress with peers at times, so as not to upset them or remind them of their own missing family members. Despite such barriers, participants drew on their sense of agency to continue searching for missing family.

4.1.3 Ability

The theme of ability and inability emerged strongly throughout the analysis in relation to how participants viewed their IFT experiences. Participants' FT abilities may be conceptualised as having developed from their encounters in other aspects of life, including the capacity to survive in their homelands and

during their flight to safety, skills in self-advocacy to manage immigration proceedings etc. These experiences demonstrate participants' perseverance, evident in descriptions of not giving up and continuous efforts to trace family. Participants subsequently responded positively to perceiving such attributes in BRC staff, potentially as this enhanced a sense of not being alone with tracing, emphasising the importance of the act of searching itself for UASYP (UNHCR, 1994). Participants achieved varying levels of success in drawing on their own resources to search for family, via social media and networking to spread news of their search and hear of any updates or possible sightings.

Participants contended with limitations to their abilities in the form of barriers to tracing and a sense of powerlessness at not being able to help family members themselves at times; feelings previously reported by R&ASP (Wilmsen, 2013). Barriers included: limited communications connectivity in their homelands; uncertainty about the locations of family members, including whether they had moved on or who could be sought out due to cultural norms; and as noted in previous research, who is defined as family (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). The latter meant that FR attempts to bring non-nuclear family members to the UK were complicated for one participant.

Despite being relatively disempowered in their relationship with the BRC, participants used the limited power available to them to engage the BRC in tracing efforts, with some clearly expressing their preferences for how tracing procedures should take place. Similarly to Salvo's (2012) findings, all participants held positive views about tracing with the BRC. They described how the BRC brought many specialist resources to IFT, including being part of a powerful and connected network. Salvo's findings that the BRC functioned as a sort of holding environment (Winnicott, 1960) were echoed in this study, with the BRC serving an almost parental role in supporting and containing (Bion, 1967) UASYP during the tracing process. This was demonstrated through: participants feeling held in mind through frequent contact and updates; clear boundaries and expectations aiding participants' understanding of tracing procedures; and communicating realistic expectations, including clarity about the possibility of failure. Unlike Salvo's findings, concerns about confidentiality were alleviated through the development of a trusting relationship, possibly resulting from a consistent and transparent approach. Potentially because of

this trusting relationship, several participants were able to provide feedback and suggestions for improving IFT processes. These could be perceived as stemming from circumstances where participants felt less contained, and resultantly experienced greater worries or insecurities. As in Salvo's sample, a small number of participants reported confusion about exact tracing processes, with some sharing a desire for more frequent verbal updates. One participant's request for being informed immediately if a tracing result was positive likely arises from the uncertainty and lack of containment frequently faced by UASYP in other aspects of their lives and tracing experiences. Further suggestions have been noted in the recommendations section.

4.2 Critical Review

A review of the quality and validity of this study is presented utilising Yardley's (2000) criteria for qualitative research, including a consideration of the study's limitations.

4.2.1 Sensitivity to Context

I attempted to maintain an awareness of context throughout the study, holding in mind differences between participants' cultural backgrounds and that in which the research was conducted, including my own perspective as a researcher from a European background.

I completed a broad literature search, critically appraising findings due to the politicised nature of the topic, and developed the study's aims and research questions in response to its neglect of UASYP's voices. I responded to the limited research pool by including further examples of grey literature and contributions from third sector organisations working closely with R&ASP. Maintaining a critical awareness of the study's epistemological position and its roots in Western perspectives of science and reality was important in considering what it is possible to know from this research.

As the concept of academic research was unfamiliar to participants, I spent time establishing a reasonable understanding of the study's rationale and purpose. This transparency was vital given participants' backgrounds as UASYP, and I was sensitive to not recreate an environment of previously distressing immigration interviews by building a rapport and meeting them on familiar ground in BRC offices or at home. Research materials were developed in line

with English being participants' second language, their developmental stage of late adolescence/early adulthood and potentially not having a trusted adult to discuss the research with.

The selection of IPA was purposive in its idiographic emphasis (Smith et al, 2009), which I felt would be most appropriate for giving voice to participants' experiences. Selecting individual interviews was deliberate in offering participants a private space to discuss potentially emotive topics, with the opportunity for myself as a clinician- researcher to be attuned and respond to interactional dynamics occurring in the room. Heavily including participant quotes in my analysis was deliberate in allowing these to speak for themselves and I purposely included experiences reported by single participants to communicate all aspects of experience.

4.2.2 Commitment and Rigour

Commitment to IPA was maintained through close adherence to guiding literature and frequent supervision with my Director of Studies to maintain standards. Completing a research journal (see Appendix P for an extract) facilitated reflection on engaging with the research topic and methodological considerations.

Rigour was considered in achieving an adequate sample size for the methodological approach, with eight participants fully in line with typical IPA recommendations for doctoral research (Smith & Eatough, 2015). Complete interpretation of transcripts demonstrated rigour through multiple readings and in-depth coding of themes according to IPA principles. Presented themes attempted to include a well-balanced presentation of quotations from all participants, and their overall contribution to themes is reviewed in Appendix Q. I drew on my clinical psychology training and skills to enhance the depth of my interpretations of participant transcripts.

A quality audit trail was conducted to illustrate how themes were directly developed from participants' accounts and how choices for the final overarching theme map were arrived at. Appendix L shows an example of initial coding of an individual participant's account, with theme development for the same

participant demonstrated in Appendix M. A full theme table was created for each participant, incorporating super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes and corresponding quotations, as illustrated in Appendix N. Appendix O shows how individual participant themes were grouped collectively to generate the final overall themes detailed in the Analysis section of this account (See Figure 1 in Section 3.1). Finally, Appendix Q evidences final theme distribution across individual participants; all participants contributed to five of the eight sub-ordinate themes, with seven out of the eight participants contributing to a further two sub-themes and six participants contributing to the last remaining theme.

4.2.3 Transparency and Coherence

The method chapter of this account outlines each step of the research process to aid transparency. The literature search protocol is presented in the Appendices, alongside extracts from a transcript analysis, theme contribution and researcher reflection. Multiple excerpts of participant accounts are included to evidence and illustrate my analysis.

Careful consideration of this study's research question and aims, epistemological position and methodological approach were undertaken for coherence.

4.2.4 Impact and Importance

As this study is unique in its contribution to understanding FT experiences for UASYP in a UK context, sharing findings is vital to gaining maximum impact. Besides commitments to disseminate findings with participants and the BRC network locally and abroad, I presented initial impressions from the research to the BRC RFL management team. Resultantly, some considerations for service delivery and future research opportunities have already been implemented based on this feedback including: retaining a two-part system of initial and follow-up meetings for UASYP wishing to embark on IFT; and considering opportunities for further research with UASYP having unsuccessful outcomes in IFT. Consequently, the study's usefulness is not simply as a stand-alone contribution to the literature but in having real-world value as a device for improving service delivery and support for UASYP. Further implications are considered in section 4.4.

4.2.5 Limitations and Considerations

4.2.5.1 Recruitment and Sampling

Recruitment for participants was conducted via BRC caseworkers who had access to a confidential, internal database detailing successful IFT cases. BRC caseworkers selected applicants who they felt would be most suitable for participating in the current study based on considerations of their current life circumstances. This may have inherently biased the sample of participants put forward for interview to those who had more positive or less distressing overall experiences and less struggles in other aspects of life. This study may thereby have not fully captured the voices of all participants successful in IFT. This may also have occurred where participants did not wish to participate in the study or did not attend their scheduled interview, as reasons for their non-participation could not be established. Adding the task of recruitment to BRC staff's already busy workload, coupled with the limited number of successful IFT cases for UASYP, created difficulties in gaining the initial number of participants required for the study. Whilst consultation with one UASYP contributed to the study's validity, aforementioned difficulties with recruitment resulted in just one of the targeted two or three consultants being recruited.

Although one of the study's strengths lies in those interviewed coming from a range of locations across the country, this may have contributed to differing experiences of IFT based on potentially varying approaches between teams. Furthermore, the range of outcomes attributed to a successful trace varied between participants and this variability may have accounted for differences in participants' responses to their IFT experiences.

4.2.5.2 Communication

Whilst all participants were non-native speakers of English, the majority spoke English proficiently and elected to do so during their interviews. In the case of the two participants who chose to use interpreters, these accounts were some of the shortest and less detailed at times. Some complications arose in using interpreters; on one occasion the interpreter arrived late from a previous engagement due to unforeseen circumstances, whilst on another the necessity of an interpreter had not been indicated in advance and this resulted in the use of telephone interpreting. Consequently, opportunities to brief and debrief

interpreters fully, in line with best-practice guidelines (Murray & Wynne, 2001), were not possible. Resultantly, despite requests for a verbatim, first-person translation, third person speech was communicated on one occasion and I did not challenge this during the interview so as not to disturb its flow or disconcert the interpreter. Checking the accuracy, and therefore validity of the accounts (Murray & Wynne, 2001) was not possible due to the use of different languages and interpreters. This drawback was mitigated by participants having a good enough command of the language that they were able to point out any miscommunications directly to myself and the interpreter in English at times. Participants were subsequently asked about the accuracy of interpretation and if they were happy with this, and both said they were.

Having an interpreter in the room may have affected what participants chose to discuss, potentially limiting this due to concerns about confidentiality and being from the same or conflicting cultural communities. Conversely, participants may have perceived interpreters as allies who may have had similar experiences of being forcibly displaced.

4.2.5.3 Participants

Participants hailed from differing cultural backgrounds, which may have limited the generalisability of findings in one sense due to having a less homogenous sample but conversely enabled findings to be more relevant due to accurately representing the population of UASYP completing IFT with the BRC.

The theme of trust played out in my relationship as a researcher with participants. Despite my explanations, participants may have encountered some confusion or doubt regarding my independence from the BRC or other institutions and this may have influenced what they chose to discuss.

Mackenzie et al. (2007) describe how R&ASP may mistrust the researcher's independence and motives and may thus be wary about how their information is used. This was mirrored in participants sharing certain conversations with me after the recording device was switched off, highlighting their suspicion of such devices from immigration interviews despite my assurances, meaning some valuable data was not recorded.

4.3 Reflexive Review

As previously noted, reflexivity throughout the research process is vital in conceptualising how meanings have been constructed by the researcher (Willig, 2013). Whilst R&ASP are frequently positioned as vulnerable and powerless (Papadopoulos, 2002) perceiving UASYP as such is inherently at odds with taking a critical perspective when completing research with them (Thompson & Chambers, 2012). I attempted to maintain as objective a perspective as possible, attending to concepts of having and lacking power when they were raised by participants and considering these in my reflexive journal and regular thesis supervision. I was aware of how power dynamics between myself and UASYP, UASYP and the BRC, and the BRC and myself played out throughout the research process.

In collaborating with the BRC, I engaged in an ongoing dialogue with caseworkers about participant recruitment, attempting to balance an understanding of their protectiveness over clients with the importance of participants being informed of the research and given opportunities to make informed decisions about participating themselves. I drew on Thompson & Chambers' (2012) perspective that whilst there is potential for harm in any research, the excessive prioritisation of a perceived need for protection of 'vulnerable' groups can result in their disempowerment and perpetuate paternalistic research practices.

In my position as a white researcher, I considered power dynamics that may have arisen during interviews. As Hopkins (2008) notes, UASYP might feel compelled to continue with research despite reminders about the option of withdrawing participation due to dynamics of power and privilege. I resultantly aimed to emphasise withdrawal opportunities in a relaxed and normalising manner throughout the research. I observed interesting dynamics in my interaction with participants based on their perceptions of me. Some participants appeared unsure about my role or the scope of my influence, in line with Mackenzie et al.'s (2007) observations that participants may have unrealistic expectations of the researcher or study's capabilities to influence their resettlement processes. It was therefore vital that I explained my role and the scope of this research clearly and repeated this where any misconceptions

arose. At times, participants appeared to respond to me more as a peer, possibly due to my student status, with some asking me about my experiences of accessing education and sharing their aspirations with me. Others also asked about my cultural background based on their surprise at my pronouncing their names correctly, and I found these perceived commonalities helped with rapport-building. I observed a sense of some participants wanting to give back for the help they had received from the BRC, thereby potentially participating in the research out of a sense of duty. This was evident when one participant initially refused the participation voucher until I explained that it did not come from me personally but from my university. All participants thanked me for asking them about their experiences.

I found that it was challenging to balance being a psychologist with being a researcher during interviews. I attempted to address this through using my clinical skills to respond to subtle, non-verbal cues, such as when to desist a line of questioning that may have been too upsetting, whilst adopting the position of naïve researcher in asking what could be considered obvious questions, despite participants responding in a surprised way that these were asked.

I found myself experiencing tensions around the act of analysis, not wishing to impose my view on what participants reported or speak for them. I considered Smith et al.'s (2009) concept of taking on the 'I' to participants' 'P' position in IPA. Resultantly, I employed tentative language in the analysis, fully basing this in participants' own words. I subsequently noticed this impacted on findings becoming less exploratory and more descriptive when considering participants' engagement with the BRC, but this felt important to include as it facilitated participants' feedback in shaping service provision for UASYP.

4.4 Implications and Recommendations

4.4.1 IFT Procedures

This study's findings demonstrated that UASYP generally have complex skills in considering IFT procedures and their implications, belying their younger years. Consequently, there are benefits to an individualised approach to IFT processes with UASYP, incorporating considerations regarding their developmental stage and potential isolation alongside an appreciation of their capabilities. Providing them with suitably comprehensive, contextual information regarding IFT

processes and its consequences thereby facilitates informed decision-making. Building on participants' reports of positive experiences and suggestions from their work with the BRC, recommendations for supporting UASYP through IFT processes include:

- Transparency in communicating IFT procedures, including providing access to adequate interpreting services to facilitate this process. This includes an awareness of the role and limitations of using interpreters and taking adequate measures to mitigate difficulties in communication that may potentially arise.
- Giving UASYP time to consider and make an informed choice regarding IFT, with recommendations for a two-step interview process to initially explain procedures and potential tracing methods before meeting subsequently to gain consent to instigate a search.
- Keeping applicants informed at each step of IFT in line with UNHCR recommendations (1994) through continuous updates, thereby containing their emotions.
- Raising awareness of IFT in countries with limited internet connectivity via flyers and posters to inform individuals of the possibility of searching for separated family.
- Addressing technical glitches with tracing websites to ensure filters function appropriately.
- The use of forecasting: an advance indication of the news to come (Maynard, 1996) may be beneficial during telephone calls to UASYP inviting them to a tracing outcome meeting. Whilst there are inherent dilemmas to such an approach, participants described finding it helpful to be told when news was positive as their anticipatory worries, which would have been present regardless, were alleviated.
- Engaging UASYP as individuals with experience of IFT processes in developing internal policies and working models regarding IFT.

4.4.2 Clinical Practice

IFT processes have considerable psychological impacts and profound emotional consequences for those undertaking them and it is therefore vital that clinical psychologists have an awareness of what these processes entail and how to support UASYP through them.

A fundamental consideration in the direct clinical practice of psychologists and professionals supporting UASYP involves building trusting relationships. As communicated through participant accounts, understanding UASYP's reasons for mistrust is important in developing relationships with them, including working with this mistrust and viewing it as potentially functional to their wellbeing considering previous experiences (Ní Raghallaigh, 2014).

In considering traumatic prior experiences, Burnett and Peel (2001) describe how expressions of psychological distress are not necessarily indicators of mental ill-health requiring treatment. Challenging ideas that talking helps and what the right time for accessing psychological therapy is, if at all, are therefore important. They highlight how talking about problems in therapy is a Western concept which may be unfamiliar to R&ASP and should therefore be explained. They further state that clinicians should not assume that recounting events needs to occur for healing to take place, with this potentially contrary to cultural beliefs about coping.

Where therapeutic interventions are mutually agreed with UASYP, elements from Narrative Therapy may be useful in thickening narratives (White, 1995) of resourcefulness, success and a sense of agency, providing non-blaming opportunities for working through traumatic experiences through collective narrative practices such as the Tree of Life approach (Ncube, 2006). These have been shown to be effective in work with UASYP (Hughes and Rees, 2016) through holding onto understandings of traumatic events whilst not defining young people by their traumatic experiences. Burck and Hughes (2018) emphasise appreciating and contextualising UASYP's resistance and resilience, grounding these in their social history and community approaches including: liberation approaches (Martín-Baró, 1996); identifying resistance to oppression and violence (Wade, 1997); and compassionate witnessing (Weingarten, 2003). Highlighting injustices faced by UASYP as part of clinical work can foster solidarity and thereby resilience: "Solidarity forms contextual resilience, and it is contextual resilience which fosters individual resilience" (Burck & Hughes, 2018, p.235), although the concept of resilience should be approached with caution as previously noted. Clinicians should highlight acts of resistance (Hughes & Rees, 2016) and focus on supporting all aspects of UASYP's lives, including education, welfare and health (Majumder, O'Reilly, Karim & Vostanis, 2015).

Indeed, an absence of social support has been found to have more profound impacts on mental wellbeing than experiencing traumatic events themselves at times (Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg, 1998). Therefore, access to social networks via links with groups from both pre-flight and host communities are vital to UASYP's wellbeing (Burnett & Peel, 2001). Challenging assumptions about family membership allows UASYP to define their own support network and potentially include these persons in therapeutic work.

Appreciating UASYP's life experiences is important in taking care not to replicate separation experiences in therapeutic work through avoiding frequent staff turnover and planning for absences where possible. Importantly, R&ASP's responses to injustice expressed through anger or frustration should not be pathologised (Silove, 2005). Furthermore, consideration of the adultification of UASYP in therapeutic work allows for an acknowledgement of their sense of agency; clinicians may balance affording the young people appropriate choice and responsibility whilst holding onto potential safeguards as a consequence of their life experiences. For psychologists, providing consultation and training in such considerations is an opportunity to inform other professionals about building working and therapeutic relationships with UASYP, along with conducting research and shaping policy to promote the rights of R&ASP (Patel & Mahtani, 2007).

4.4.3 Wider Policy Considerations

A human rights approach to policy and service development would consider the fundamental rights of UASYP as persons and how these are currently being violated through obstacles around welfare, education, health and FT and reunion. Support for refugee young people should aim to provide as normal a life as possible (Burnett and Peel, 2001) and this includes access to the same resources and opportunities available to other young people in the UK.

Participants in this study described the importance of education for them, and how this often maintained their focus during distressing periods. Access to education is a human right that should not be contingent on UASYP's immigration status. A paradigm shift is thus required, where UASYP are involved in shaping policy and service development (Majumder et al., 2015).

The importance of R&ASP's involvement in the development of mental health services has been highlighted (Fernando, 2010). Informing policy around

delivery of NHS clinical services could provide UASYP personal growth opportunities and skill development as contributors, trainers and researchers (Barnes & Cotterell, 2012). It also has benefits for delivery of care and improved outcomes for service users and providers (NHS England, 2017). Considering existing service delivery policy, any required specialist mental health support should be culturally sensitive, adopting a “decentralized, community-based approach for the development of mental health care in a context that actively involves the family” (Silove, 2005, p.38-39) or support systems, rather than following a Western model of psychiatry.

Following participants’ experiences of distressing difficulties with immigration applications, changes to policy in this area are required. These should prioritise UASYP as children first, to foster a supportive environment for their wellbeing and ability to move forwards with life in the UK. ‘Preventative’ measures where UASYP are kept out of the UK, such as in Calais refugee camps as referenced by one participant, are inhumane (Burck & Hughes, 2018) and violate their right to safety and protection as children, arguably amounting to cruel and degrading treatment.

Continuing UASYP’s isolation following their arrival in the UK is also problematic and governmental FR policy requires revision. This needs to be in line with an individual’s right to family life, and more inclusive in describing family membership (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999), echoing calls from other organisations to expand criteria for who qualifies as family (Refugee Council & Oxfam, 2018). To facilitate FR, UASYP under age 18 should be able to act as sponsors for bringing family to the UK to be with them, regardless of their immigration status. Legal Aid should also be re-introduced to assist in negotiating the complex language and legal framework involved in FR processes.

With social care holding the responsibility for UASYP’s provisions, regularly monitored needs assessment and care-plans are vital for UASYP (Burnett & Peel, 2001). In line with participant recommendations, foster placements with adults who can provide UASYP with emotional support are preferable to unsupported placements where possible. Training on the impacts of uncertainty and psychosocial adjustment for foster carers in the specialist needs of UASYP (Majumder et al., 2015) has been recommended to this end. Acknowledging the

importance of connection to UASYP's cultural peer group for wellbeing, accessibility to such groups in considering placement locations or travel allowances is also of great importance.

4.4.4 Future Research Opportunities

This research and its findings are situated within a critical realist epistemology and IPA framework. Adopting alternative epistemological positions and methodological approaches, such as participant observation in Grounded Theory for instance, may have given rise to different outcomes (Willig, 2013), which could contribute interesting alternative perspectives.

Mackenzie et al. (2007) describe researchers' obligations to carry out research that aims to give rise to mutual benefits for R&ASP and their communities. Co-constructing research with UASYP based on their identified needs would facilitate a reciprocal approach to research, where UASYP as co-contributors develop the research topic, its findings and communication of these. However, there are numerous constraints to the participation abilities of children displaced by forced migration (Boyden, 2001). Participatory Action Research could thereby provide interesting opportunities for such collaborative research. Existing studies have included: using photovoice with UASC and foster carers to challenge stigmatised perspectives of fostering UASYP, with participants contributing to a range of subsequent public engagement events (Rogers, Carr & Hickman, 2018); and a partnership group of R&ASP and researchers in Scotland working together on understanding and responding to stigma and discrimination for refugee people (Quinn, 2013).

UASYP are not a homogenous group (Hek, 2005) and this study maintained a particular research focus and inclusion criteria. Broadening its focus may create opportunities for further consideration of IFT processes with UASYP. These could include:

- Expanding the inclusion criteria to include younger children below the age of 16 to conceptualise their perspectives and understandings of family separation and tracing.
- Considering IFT experiences for UASYP in other parts of the UK not captured within this sample and with recruitment from other BRC teams and partners in other countries.

- Exploring IFT with UASYP who have been unsuccessful in their tracing endeavours. This could potentially provide insight into differing and shared responses and themes but requires careful consideration regarding how to engage participants awaiting news of family members without inadvertently raising their hopes.
- Interviewing carers and professionals supporting UASYP with IFT to get a rounded perspective of the benefits and barriers to tracing; potentially involving BRC personnel, interpreters, social workers and foster carers or keyworkers.

4.4 Concluding Thoughts

FT, though central to the experiences of UASYP, remains an often-hidden process evidenced by the dearth of research in this area. It may be overshadowed by other perceived priorities such as mental health or immigration, highlighting the potential de-contextualisation and homogenisation of young people seeking refuge in the UK and elsewhere. Resultantly, those involved with UASYP may be unaware of their FT endeavours in the face of other obstacles and experiences they are required to navigate, including limited awareness of the nuanced and variable outcomes arising from IFT and the potentially enduring nature of such gains and losses. Appreciating the consequences of UASYP's challenging experiences, whilst celebrating their successes and resources is therefore vital in building relationships with these individuals.

The well-documented difficulties of UASYP risk overshadowing their individuality, strengths and resources. Whilst pre and post-flight difficulties may endure, new opportunities can also arise. The eight young men and women in this study described facing overwhelming obstacles and shared stories of survival; bearing witness to these was a privilege and truly humbling. They vividly depicted the injustices facing them in their homelands and in the UK, whilst persevering in holding onto a sense of optimism and opportunity for the future. Participants described drawing on hope and accepting the hope inspired in them by others, such as those supporting them through IFT, despite mistrust clouding their experiences of many adults. Providing support and opportunities to find family members is a matter of great importance, which can make a huge

difference to UASYP during a time of great need. I end this thesis with Javad's reflections:

My life's changed at least now I knew my uncle is alive, I got some family back home and I had a worry always in my mind "Where is my uncle? What's happened to me? Why I'm here today?" this all question was looking for answer, today I'm not worry about these question, because I got all the answer.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Literature Search Terms and Databases

Source	Search Terms	Limiters	Number of Results	Date Conducted
Academic Search Complete (1887 – present)	SELECT A FIELD: (“asylum seekers” OR “refugees” OR “migrants”) AND (“family”) AND (“separat*” OR “trace” OR “tracing” OR “search” OR “searching” OR “look” OR “looking” OR “find” OR “finding” OR “locate” OR “locating”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescence (13-17 yrs) • English 	84	20.12.2018
Child Development & Adolescent Studies (1927 - 2001)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Adulthood (18-29 yrs) • English 	90	
CINAHL Plus (1982 – Present)	SELECT A FIELD: (“unaccompanied refugee” OR “unaccompanied child” OR “unaccompanied youth” OR “unaccompanied minors” OR “unaccompanied refugee minors” OR “unaccompanied children seeking asylum”) AND (“family”) AND (“separat*” OR “trace” OR “tracing” OR “search” OR “searching” OR “look” OR “looking” OR “find” OR “finding”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 	63	20.12.2018
PsycINFO (1800s - present)				
Provider: EBSCO				

	OR "locate" OR "locating")			
Science Direct	TITLE, ABSTRACT & KEYWORD: ("asylum seekers" OR "refugees" OR "migrants") AND ("family") AND ("separation" OR "tracing" OR "searching" OR "looking" OR "find")	N/A	124	20.12.2018
Scopus	TITLE, ABSTRACT & KEYWORD: (("unaccompanied refugee" OR "unaccompanied child" OR "unaccompanied youth" OR "unaccompanied minors" OR "unaccompanied refugee minors" OR "unaccompanied children seeking asylum") AND ("family") AND ("separat*" OR "tracing"))	N/A	35	29.12.2018
	TITLE, ABSTRACT & KEYWORD: (("unaccompanied refugee" OR "unaccompanied child" OR "unaccompanied youth" OR "unaccompanied minors" OR "unaccompanied refugee minors"	N/A	12	29.12.2018

	OR “unaccompanied children seeking asylum”) AND (“family”) AND (“search” OR “find” OR “locate” OR “look”))			
	TITLE, ABSTRACT & KEYWORD: ((“asylum seekers” OR “refugees” OR “migrants”) AND (“family”) AND (“separat*” OR “trace” OR “tracing” OR “search” OR “searching” OR “look” OR “looking” OR “find” OR “finding” OR “locate” OR “locating”))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Sciences • Psychology • English • United Kingdom 	309	29.12.2018

Appendix B: Consultant Recruitment Leaflet



FOCUS GROUP: YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF FAMILY TRACING



- * Are you 16-25 years old?
 - * Are you interested in helping to design a research study about young people's experience of Family Tracing?
 - * Would you like to share your ideas and get some focus group experience?
- If you answered 'yes' to all the questions then I would like to speak with you!

Who am I?

My name is **Tara Parfitt** and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist studying at the University of East London. I am doing a study on young people's experiences of Family Tracing for my thesis research. The study is about young people who have come to the UK alone or left some family behind and are using the British Red Cross Family Tracing Service to find them.

So how can I help?

We will meet once with another young person and have a discussion for around 2-3 hours. I will explain my research to you and you can give me your comments and suggestions about it. The focus group will happen on [date] at [time] at the British Red Cross Office.

What could be good about taking part?

You will get a £20 voucher and certificate to say thank you for taking part and your travel expenses will be paid for.

Taking part means your ideas can help other young people to tell their story and help researchers understand what Family Tracing feels like for young people so they can give them the right support.

What do I do next?

Contact me for more information! You can ask me any questions and I can tell you more about it. My email is u1622895@uel.ac.uk I look forward to speaking with you!

Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Leaflet



YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF FAMILY TRACING



* Are you 16-25 years old?

* Are you going through the Family Tracing process now?

* Would you like to tell your story of Family Tracing?

If you answered 'yes' to all the questions then I would like to speak with you!

Who am I?

My name is **Tara Parfitt** and I am a Trainee Clinical Psychologist studying at the University of East London. I am doing a study on young people's experiences of Family Tracing for my thesis research. The study is about young people who have come to the UK alone or left some family behind and are using the British Red Cross Family Tracing Service to find them.

So what happens in the study?

We will meet for a discussion where I will ask you questions, which takes about 1 hour. I will ask you questions about your Family Tracing story. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. If we need an interpreter, we can have one there to help. The discussion will probably happen in [date] at the British Red Cross Office.

What could be good about taking part?

Taking part means you can tell your story and help researchers understand what Family Tracing feels like for young people, because sometimes young people are not given opportunities to speak for themselves. I want to help other people learn about what young people think and need about Family Tracing, so they can support them well. I plan to write about what I have learnt and put it in a research paper too to spread this message. You will get a £20 voucher and a certificate to say thank you for taking part.

What do I do next?

Contact me for more information! You can ask me any questions and I can tell you more about it. My email is u1622895@uel.ac.uk I look forward to speaking with you!

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Meeting with the Red Cross

- How did you hear about the International Family tracing service at the British Red Cross? *(Possible prompts: Who were you looking for? How did you lose contact?)*
- How did you think the British Red Cross could help you with tracing family?
- Can you tell me about waiting for an appointment? *(Possible prompts: Did you wait long for an appointment? How did that feel?)*
- What was the first meeting like for you and how did you feel about it?
- What did you understand about how they would look for your [family member/s] and what would happen next? *(Possible Prompt: Reminder re- tracing methods if necessary)*
- After, could you talk to anyone about how you were feeling about the tracing process? *(Possible Prompt: Who did you find helpful?)*
- What ways had you already tried to contact your family members before meeting with the British Red Cross?

Waiting for news

- How did you cope with waiting for news? How did you feel? *(Possible prompts: Strengths/friends/family/memories)*
- Did these feelings have an impact on your daily life? *(Possible Prompts: personal relationships, at school/work, wellbeing).*
- Did you feel any pressures to find news of your family?

After receiving news

- What was hearing the news like? How did you feel?
- Have these feelings changed over time?
- Has life changed for you since finding your family? *(Possible prompts: challenges/mixed-feelings/responsibilities?)*
- Did you receive support after contact with your family member/s was restored?

- Looking back on your experience of using the Red Cross, what do you think about it now?
- Could anything be done differently?
- Is there anything that would have made it easier for you?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience of family tracing that I haven't asked you about?

Appendix E: Summary Participant Information Leaflet

Hi!

First of all, **THANK YOU** very much for helping the British Red Cross in this research!

This Information Sheet will give you some more details about your involvement today.

What is the title of the research?

Unaccompanied and Separated Young People's experiences of trying to locate their family of origin through family tracing.

What is the research about?

As you may know, the British Red Cross supports many people to look for their family after they have been separated. Lots of these people are young people like you. We want to understand how young people feel about going through family tracing and what happens after.

What will we do today?

It is important for researchers, like me, to find out what it feels like to go through family tracing so we can understand how to support people better. Previous research on family tracing has mostly looked at adults' experiences of trying to find family, but few people have asked young people about what happened for them and what they think. This is where you come in!

The aim of today is that you, as a young person who has experienced family tracing, can speak about your experiences and help us learn from them.

How will we use the information you share with us today?

Your experience is important and we would like other people to hear about and learn from it. I hope to publish the research so that it can help the work of the Red Cross and other people who support young people with family tracing.

Would someone be able to find out who gave us this information?

No. I will not keep your real name or any other personal information. I will just write down what you say and audio recordings will be stored securely. No one will be able to identify you.

What if I change my mind?

Taking part is your personal choice. You do not have to take part and should not feel under any pressure to do so. You can speak to an adult you trust about it if you would like to. You are free to change your mind and withdraw from the study within 2 weeks of your interview without needing to give any reason and with no disadvantage to yourself. If you withdraw after this, things that you have already shared may be used in the write-up of the study or any further analysis or publication that may take place.

Do you have any questions?

Please ask me! Any time! You can email me after the interview.

My email: Tara Parfitt – u1622895@uel.ac.uk

Appendix F: Full Participant Information Leaflet



PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree it is important that you understand what your participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Who am I?

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and am studying for a professional doctorate in Clinical Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research you are being invited to participate in.

What is the research?

I am conducting research to explore the experiences of Unaccompanied and Separated young people who have accessed the British Red Cross International Family Tracing Service to find their family of origin.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that my research follows the standard of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

What will your participation involve?

I am inviting young people age 16 to 25 to take part in individual interviews. This would involve talking about things like: your experiences of being an unaccompanied young person in the UK, your experience of using the International Family Tracing Service, what has been helpful in this process and what was more difficult and how you are finding receiving news from the service. Previously research in this area has mostly looked at adults' experiences of trying to find family, but few people have asked young people about what happened for them and what they think. Therefore, this project is different because it is giving young people a chance to speak for themselves and to help our understanding of what it is like to live these experiences. In order to take part each participant will need to sign a form showing that they have been given this information sheet about the project and understand their rights in relation to it. The research is not designed to cause you any harm, discomfort or distress. Care will be taken to help the interviews feel as safe and supportive as possible. However, talking about these experiences is a sensitive

area, which may be upsetting, so you will be given information about places where you can get support if needed.

The things people discuss in the interviews will be analysed using a method called Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which looks at how each person, in a specific context, makes sense of their experiences, including significant life events. Researchers use the information gathered from interviews to report on these experiences and use knowledge from psychology to understand and learn from them. The project will be written up as a doctoral thesis and the researcher will pursue publication of the findings in an academic journal.

Where will the interviews take place?

The interviews will take place at the British Red Cross International Family Tracing Service offices, in a private room. The only people who will be present at the interviews will be the researcher, yourself and an interpreter or your case worker if needed. If you take part in the study, no-one else will be able to listen to your recording apart from the researcher. However, if an interpreter was used, it may be that a different interpreter to the one who was present at the interview may listen to a part of the recording to check that what you have said was interpreted correctly. If during the interview you talk about something that may make the researcher think you or someone else may be at risk of harm, they may need to tell someone else about this.

Will other people know I am taking part?

You will be asked to decide on or given a pseudonym (a different name to your real name) which will be used in the write up of the study instead. This is so that what you say is anonymous and other people cannot link what you say in the study to you as an individual. You will not be asked to share this, or any other information with anyone other than the researcher.

What happens to the things I share? Will they be kept private?

At the end of the study your interview audio recording will be transferred from the audio recorder used to the researcher's computer in a password-protected folder. It will be deleted from the audio recorder immediately after this. What you talked about will then be transcribed by writing it down in a word document and it will also be saved in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. The audio recording will then be deleted from the computer. The transcription document will be analysed and accessed when necessary for writing up the research for publication, and it will be deleted when it is no longer needed for the research. Quotes and extracts from things you have shared will be used in the analysis of the research and when it is published or presented. However, no details will be shared which would mean other people could identify you (e.g. your name or where you live). The researcher's supervisor and examiners will be able to look at the anonymised transcripts if they need to, but other people reading about the study when it is finished will only be able to see anonymised quotes you may have said and some basic demographic information about you (like your age and where you come from).

Will I get anything for taking part?

You will receive a £20 voucher as a thank you for your contributions to the study.

Do I have to take part?

No, this is your personal choice and you do not have to take part and should not feel under any pressure to do so. You are free to change your mind and withdraw from the study within 2 weeks of your interview without needing to give any reason and with no disadvantage to yourself. If you withdraw after this, things that you have already shared may be used in the write-up of the study or any further analysis or publication that may take place. Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have. If you are happy to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form before you can take part.

Please keep this invitation letter for future reference.

Contact Details

If you would like further information about my research or have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Email: u1622895@uel.ac.uk

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted please contact the research supervisor Dr. Neil Rees. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,

Email: n.rees@uel.ac.uk

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.

(Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for your interest in this study.

Yours sincerely,

Tara Parfitt, Trainee Clinical Psychologist

September 2018

Appendix G: Consent Form

Informed consent: Giving permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something. This form will also allow us to use the information you share with us today.

Please tick box if you are happy for this:

1.	I have read/ heard and understood the information about the interview	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the time to ask questions about the interview and my participation	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I understand that I can speak to an adult I trust about the study if I wish to.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I choose and agree to participate in the interview	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I understand I can leave the interview at any time. I don't have to explain or give a reason why. I will not be at a disadvantage if I leave the interview. No one will ask me questions on why I have left the interview. I also understand that if I withdraw, the researcher can use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I have read/ heard and understood the procedures regarding confidentiality (what we will do with information that we have which is about you). This could be about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What information we have about you- Where we will keep that information- Why we have that information- How long we will keep that information	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the information from this interview in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I agree to sign and date this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant:

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Appendix H: Debrief Sheet

Thank you for taking part in this research and sharing your experiences of the International Family Tracing Process. The data from this interview will be written up and analysed. You are reminded that if you would like to withdraw your participation from the study then you can do so until 2 weeks from this date.

If anything we have discussed has been upsetting for you or you have any suggestions for future interviews then please let me know and we can discuss things further. You are also welcome to speak to your caseworker at the British Red Cross for further support.

Here are some numbers for support organisations if you should need them:

Support Lines in the UK

Organisation	Information	Contact Details
Get Connected	Free, confidential helpline for young people which helps you find the most appropriate organisation for your needs	0808 808 4994 help@getconnected.org.uk Interpreting is available
Childline	Free, confidential helpline for young people in trouble or danger, which provides support and counselling and can put you in touch with an appropriate organisation for your needs.	0800 11 11 24 hour helpline www.childline.org.uk
NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)	there4me.com gives advice for teenagers through confidential online counselling with an NSPCC adviser.	there4me.com Free Telephone: 0808 800 5000 Interpreting is available
MIND and Young Minds	Mental health charity. Young minds give advice and support for young people.	Helpline telephone: 0845 7660 163 info@youngminds.org.uk Interpreting available
SANE	Offer free information, emotional and crisis support.	Helpline:0845 767 8000 7 days a week 1pm – 11pm Interpreting available

Other Support Organisations

Type of Support	Organisation	Contact Details
Support for young asylum seekers and migrants- young carers, those facing homelessness, advice and advocacy, social activities and support for young men who have been trafficked	The Children's Society	Telephone: 020 8221 8215 Mobile: 07885 972 057 https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/
Sports, Groups for young asylum seekers, English Coaching	Young Roots	020 8684 9140 london@young roots.org.uk
Support for refugees around accommodation, employment, therapeutic support and advice	Refugee Council	Under 18s: 020 7346 1134 Over 18s: 020 7346 6700 https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/

If there are any things that this leaflet does not cover that you would like to know about then please let me know.

Appendix I: Participation Certificate

CERTIFICATE

Has been recognized for participating in a research study. Their important contributions will increase the knowledge of professionals and will help them learn how to most effectively support young people.



Presented by:

Tara Parfitt
Trainee Clinical Psychologist

On this day:

Dr Neil Rees
Programme Director (Clinical)
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
Professional Doctorate in Clinical
Psychology
University of East London

Appendix J: University of East London Ethics Application Forms and Approvals

I. Initial Ethics Application Form

**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
School of Psychology**

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

**FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL, COUNSELLING
& EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

If you need to apply for ethical clearance from HRA (through IRIS) for research involving the NHS you DO NOT need to apply to the School of Psychology for ethical clearance also. Please see details on

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/NHS-Research-Ethics-Committees.aspx>

Among other things this site will tell you about UEL sponsorship

PLEASE NOTE that HRA approval for research involving NHS employees is not required when data collection will take place off NHS premises and when NHS employees are not recruited directly through the NHS. This means that NHS staff can participate in research without HRA approval when a student recruits via their own social or professional networks or through a professional body like the BPS, for example.

If you are employed by the NHS and plan to recruit participants from the NHS Trust you work for, it would be courteous to seek permission from an appropriate person at your place of work (and better to collect data off NHS premises).

PLEASE NOTE that the School Research Ethics Committee does not recommend BSc and MSc/MA students designing research that requires HRA approval for research involving the NHS as this can be a demanding and lengthy process.

Before completing this application please familiarise yourself with:

The *Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009)* published by the British Psychological Society (BPS). This can be found in the Ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard (Moodle) and also on the BPS website

http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/aa%20Standard%20Docs/inf94_code_web_ethics_conduct.pdf

And please also see the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (2015-16)
<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Documents/Ethics%20forms/UEL-Code-of-Practice-for-Research-Ethics-2015-16.pdf>

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION

1. Complete this application form electronically, fully and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (5.1).
3. Include copies of all necessary attachments in the **ONE DOCUMENT SAVED AS .doc**
4. Email your supervisor the completed application and all attachments as **ONE DOCUMENT**. Your supervisor will then look over your application.
5. When your application demonstrates sound ethical protocol your supervisor will type in his/her name in the 'supervisor's signature' (section 5) and submit your application for review (psychology.ethics@uel.ac.uk). You should be copied into this email so that you know your application has been submitted. It is the responsibility of students to check this.
6. Your supervisor should let you know the outcome of your application. Recruitment and data collection are **NOT** to commence until your ethics application has been approved, along with other research ethics approvals that may be necessary (See section 4)

ATTACHMENTS YOU MUST ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION

1. A copy of the participant invitation letter that you intend giving to potential participants.
2. A copy of the consent form that you intend giving to participants.
3. A copy of the debrief letter you intend to give participants.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS (AS APPROPRIATE)

- A copy of original and/or pre-existing questionnaire(s) and test(s) you intend to use.
- Example of the kinds of interview questions you intend to ask participants.
- Copies of the visual material(s) you intend showing participants.

- A copy of ethical clearance or permission from an external institution or organisation if you need it (e.g. a charity, school, local authority, workplace etc.). Permissions must be attached to this application. If you require ethical clearance from an external organisation your ethics application can be submitted to the School of Psychology before ethical approval is obtained from another organisation (see Section 5).

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates:

- **FOR BSc/MSc/MA STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** A scanned copy of a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. A current certificate is one that is not older than six months. This is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone 16 years of age or under) or vulnerable adults (see Section 4 for a broad definition of this). A DBS certificate that you have obtained through an organisation you work for is acceptable as long as it is current. If you do not have a current DBS certificate, but need one for your research, you can apply for one through the HUB and the School will pay the cost.

If you need to attach a copy of a DBS certificate to your ethics application but would like to keep it confidential please email a scanned copy of the certificate directly to Dr Mark Finn (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) at m.finn@uel.ac.uk

- **FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** DBS clearance is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone under 16 years of age) or vulnerable adults (see Section 4 for a broad definition of this). The DBS check that was done, or verified, when you registered for your programme is sufficient and you will not have to apply for another in order to conduct research with vulnerable populations.

SECTION 1. Your details

- 1. Your name:** Tara Parfitt
- 2. Your supervisor's name:** Dr. Neil Rees
- 3. Title of your programme:** Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
- 4. Submission date for your BSc/MSc/MA research:** May 2019

1. Please tick if your application includes a copy of a DBS certificate
2. Please tick if you need to submit a DBS certificate with this application but have emailed a copy to Dr Mark Finn for confidentiality reasons
(Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) m.finn@uel.ac.uk
3. Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) and the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (See links on page 1)

SECTION 2. About your research

4. What your proposed research is about:

This research aims to explore the experiences of refugee young people who have accessed the British Red Cross (BRC) International Family Tracing Service (IFTS) and who have been unable to locate their family of origin.

In 2016, 3,472 refugees arrived in the UK and over half of refugees worldwide are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2017). Many of these arrivals travelled to the UK unaccompanied or with missing family members. Research has shown that family separation is detrimental to the psychosocial health of refugees (Miller, Hess, Bybee & Goodkind, 2017). It is a source of grief and loss which impacts on an individual's integration into their country of asylum (Wilmsen, 2013). Family tracing aims to support individuals in locating their family of origin through services such as the BRC, who provide the majority of family reunion travel assistance in the UK since legal aid was cut in 2012 (White & Hendry, 2011).

The proposed study is born of recommendations for research which gives voice to young refugees in a UK context and to explore the impact of the IFT process on an individual's associated experiences, and over time.

The study further aims to contribute to the knowledge base around policy making and work with young refugees.

For this purpose, the study poses the research question: How do young refugees make sense of their experiences of being unable to trace family?

5. Design of the research:

The research uses a qualitative design, where refugee young people will be invited to share their experiences in individual Interviews. A semi-structured interview schedule has been created for the purposes of this study. Young people who have previously used the IFT service will be recruited as consultants to the project, contributing to the development of the interview schedule and other relevant areas. Themes will be analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

10. Recruitment and participants (Your sample):

Between 10 and 12 refugee young people aged 16-25 will be identified by IFT staff and recruited in collaboration with the BRC. Although the age range used to define young people may include individuals at different developmental stages, holistically this will seek to provide a fuller picture of the experiences of refugee young people as a cohort, including participants who may have begun their IFT process some time previously. Participants will have accessed the IFT service, receiving an unsuccessful outcome within the last year (consultation is ongoing with the BRC to confirm this timeframe). The sample will be relatively homogenous in terms of country of origin, in accordance with IPA recommendations, and will capture both male and female perspectives so as not to minimise any aspects of the cultural group's experiences. Should recruitment of young refugees prove challenging, the age range for the project will be broadened to include adults over the age of 25.

11. Measures, materials or equipment:

As above, the research will use an interview schedule developed for the purposes of this research project. Please see attachments below for a sample interview schedule.

12. If you are using copyrighted/pre-validated questionnaires, tests or other stimuli that you have not written or made yourself, are these questionnaires and tests suitable for the age group of your participants?

NA

13. Outline the data collection procedure involved in your research:

After information has been given and consent obtained (detailed below), semi-structured interviews will be conducted individually with the young people at the BRC premises in a separate, quiet room, using interpreters where necessary. The use of interpreters is justified in IPA guidelines, where the gains of speaking to non-English speakers sufficiently outweigh the cost of not having a shared language with the researcher (Smith, 2004). Researchers have also argued that excluding participants from research due to their language is unethical, denies their civil rights and is, at worst, illegal (Resnik & Jones, 2006). Interviews will last up to 60 minutes, or in cases where an interpreter has been used, 90 minutes. Participants will be asked questions from the interview schedule, with prompts where necessary. A debrief will take place with participants, and interpreters where necessary, at the end of the interview. Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

SECTION 3. Ethical considerations

14. Fully informing participants about the research (and parents/guardians if necessary):

Participants will be given an information sheet about the project, which fully outlines all aspects of taking part, gaining their consent and their right to withdraw. 2 forms have been created- one for young people age 16 to 18 and one for young people over 18. Both are worded in a style that is accessible for younger people and non-native speakers of English.

For participants who are unable to speak English, the information and consent sheets will be translated when they are in contact with staff at the BRC. Young people under 18 will be encouraged to discuss the project with an adult or legal guardian (the term adult/legal guardian has been used instead of parent in order to remain sensitive to the fact that participants may have no family here and this may be the source of their involvement with the project). Please see a copy of both letters in attachments below.

15. Obtaining fully informed consent from participants (and from parents/guardians if necessary):

Participants will be given a consent form in advance of the data collection to consider. As participants are over the age of 16 parental consent will not be sought in line with Gillick Competence. 2 consent forms have been drafted for 16 to 18 year olds and over 18s respectively. Both are worded in a style that is accessible for younger people and non-native speakers of English. The assent form for 16-18 year olds reiterates that the young person is encouraged to discuss consenting to the study with an adult/legal guardian (as above). Please see a copy of both forms in attachments below.

16. Engaging in deception, if relevant:

No deception will be used in this study.

17. Right of withdrawal:

Right of withdrawal is explained in the participant invitation letter, consent forms and debrief letter. These clearly state that participants are entitled to request to withdraw their participation from the study within 2 weeks of interview with no need to give any explanation or justification for this, and that records/interview transcripts from their participation will be destroyed and will not be used in the research study or any future publications thereafter. After the 2 week time period for withdrawal has elapsed, the forms clearly state that the researcher reserves the right to use a participant's information in the study or subsequent publications when an analysis of the data has already commenced. This section has been worded in a style that is accessible for younger people and non-native speakers of English.

18. Will the data be gathered anonymously?

NO

19. If NO what steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants?

All data will be stored in a password-protected database on the researcher's computer. Participants' names will be changed to conceal their identities and participants will be asked to come up with a pseudonym for the purposes of the study. The participant information sheets explain that basic demographic information on participants will be described in the study, including country of origin and age, however names and other sensitive information will not be disclosed.

Audio recordings will be deleted after analysis. Transcripts will be kept for up to 3 years in order to allow for any further study or publishing of the results and will then be destroyed. Consent forms will be scanned and stored on the researcher's password protected computer in a separate folder to the transcript data and hard copies will be destroyed.

20. Will participants be paid or reimbursed?

YES

If YES, why is payment/reimbursement necessary and how much will the vouchers be worth?

Many refugee young people may experience financial disadvantage as a result of their experiences, and travelling to and participating in this research may place a financial strain on them. Therefore, participants will be reimbursed with a £20 redeemable voucher for their contributions to the study. Basic travel costs will also be reimbursed. This will come from the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology research fund and will be claimed in accordance with departmental policy.

SECTION 4. Other permissions and ethical clearances

21. Research involving the NHS in England

Is HRA approval for research involving the NHS required? NO

Will the research involve NHS employees who will not be directly recruited through the NHS and where data from NHS employees will not be collected on NHS premises?
NO

If you work for an NHS Trust and plan to recruit colleagues from the Trust will permission from an appropriate member of staff at the Trust be sought?
NA

22. Permission(s) from an external institution/organisation (e.g. a school, charity, workplace, local authority, care home etc.)?

Is permission from an external institution/organisation/workplace required? YES

If YES please give the name and address of the institution/organisation/workplace:

British Red Cross, UK Office, 44 Moorfields London EC2Y 9AL

23. Is ethical clearance required from any other ethics committee?

NO

If YES please give the name and address of the organisation:

Has such ethical clearance been obtained yet?

NA

If NO why not?

If YES, please attach a scanned copy of the ethical approval letter. A copy of an email from the organisation confirming its ethical clearance is acceptable.

SECTION 5. Risk Assessment

If you have serious concerns about the safety of a participant, or others, during the course of your research please see your supervisor as soon as possible.

If there is any unexpected occurrence while you are collecting your data (e.g. a participant or the researcher injures themselves), please report this to your supervisor as soon as possible.

24. Protection of participants:

The process of talking about not finding family members may be distressing for the participants in the study. The researcher will use their clinical training and experience of working with adults and young people to support participants in this process and ensure their safety and well-being at all times. This will include allowing participants to express their upsetting feelings and provide breaks where needed. Participants will have the option to not answer any questions they do not wish to.

Contact details for appropriate support organisations for young refugees are listed in the debrief letter; these include support line numbers for mental health support, housing, education and employment, social and leisure activities with other refugees and asylum seekers, support for refugees under 18, English tuition, therapeutic support and advocacy, amongst others. As the research is being supported by the BRC, the researcher will be able to liaise with BRC staff around any concerns or support needs for participants.

25. Protection of the researcher:

Interviews and meetings with participants will be conducted at the British Red Cross premises, where employees of the organisation will be present in the building. The researcher will set up a check-in system with a co-researcher who will not be interviewing at the same time. This will comprise a telephone message to inform the co-researcher when an

interview is commencing and at the end of an interview once it is complete and the researcher has left the participant.

26. Debriefing participants:

Participants will be aware of the full nature of the research in advance through the participant information sheet and will give informed consent in light of this. A verbal debrief between the researcher and participant will be conducted at the end of the interview to check how participants are feeling after describing their experiences; this would incorporate the interpreter if necessary. If any risk concerns are raised or should a participant feel they would like some further support around things they have discussed, then they will be signposted to relevant support organisations, including the British Red Cross staff available to them. Support organisation contact details will be made available to participants in the debrief letter attached.

27. Other: NA

28. Will your research involve working with children or vulnerable adults?*

YES

If YES have you obtained and attached a DBS certificate?

YES

If your research involves young people under 16 years of age and young people of limited competence will parental/guardian consent be obtained.

NA

If NO please give reasons. (Note that parental consent is always required for participants who are 16 years of age and younger)

* You are required to have DBS clearance if your participant group involves (1) children and young people who are 16 years of age or under, and (2) ‘vulnerable’ people aged 16 and over with psychiatric illnesses, people who receive domestic care, elderly people (particularly those in nursing homes), people in palliative care, and people living in institutions and sheltered accommodation, and people who have been involved in the criminal justice system, for example. Vulnerable people are understood to be persons who are not necessarily able to freely consent to participating in your research, or who may find it difficult to withhold consent. If in doubt about the extent of the vulnerability of your intended participant group, speak to your supervisor. Methods that maximise the understanding and ability of vulnerable people to give consent should be used whenever possible. For more information about ethical research involving children see:

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/Research-involving-children.aspx>

29 Will you be collecting data overseas?

NO

If YES in what country or countries (and province if appropriate) will you be collecting data?

Please click on this link <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> and note in the space below what the UK Government is recommending about travel to that country/province (Please note that you MUST NOT travel to a country/province/area that is deemed to be high risk or where essential travel only is recommended by the UK Government. If you are unsure it is essential that you speak to your supervisor or the UEL Travel Office – travel@uel.ac.uk / (0)20 8223 6801).

SECTION 6. Declarations

Declaration by student:

I confirm that I have discussed the ethics and feasibility of this research proposal with my supervisor.

Student's name: *Tara Parfitt*

Student's number: U1622895

Date: 16.02.2018

Supervisor's declaration of support is given upon their electronic submission of the application

I confirm that, in my opinion, the proposed study constitutes an ethical investigation of the research question. Declaration of supervisory support of an application is confirmed once an application is submitted via the supervisor's UEL email account.

II. Initial Ethics Review Decision and Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants

BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Max Eames

SUPERVISOR: Neil Rees

STUDENT: Tara Parfitt

Course: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology

Title of proposed study: How do young refugees make sense of their experiences of being unable to trace family?

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

--

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

To take account of, and decide at your sole discretion the relative merits of adopting, the in-line comments shown on the main document.
--

Major amendments required (for reviewer):

Confirmation of making the above minor amendments (for students):

I have noted and made all the required minor amendments, as stated above, before starting my research and collecting data.

Student's name (*Typed name to act as signature*): Tara Parfitt
Student number: U1622895

Date: 15.04.2018

(Please submit a copy of this decision letter to your supervisor with this box completed, if minor amendments to your ethics application are required)

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER (for reviewer)

Has an adequate risk assessment been offered in the application form?

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

If the proposed research could expose the researcher to any of kind of emotional, physical or health and safety hazard? Please rate the degree of risk:

HIGH

Please do not approve a high risk application and refer to the Chair of Ethics. Travel to countries/provinces/areas deemed to be high risk should not be permitted and an application not approved on this basis. If unsure please refer to the Chair of Ethics.

MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

LOW

Reviewer comments in relation to researcher risk (if any). N/A

Reviewer (*Typed name to act as signature*): Max Alexandre Eames

Date: 15 April 2018

This reviewer has assessed the ethics application for the named research study on behalf of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

RESEARCHER PLEASE NOTE:

For the researcher and participants involved in the above named study to be covered by UEL's Insurance, prior ethics approval from the School of Psychology (acting on behalf of the UEL Research Ethics Committee), and confirmation from students where minor amendments were required, must be obtained before any research takes place.

For a copy of UELs Personal Accident & Travel Insurance Policy, please see the Ethics Folder in the Psychology Noticeboard

III. Amendment Request to Ethics Application and Approval

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
School of Psychology

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO AN ETHICS APPLICATION

**FOR BSc, MSc/MA & TAUGHT PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE
STUDENTS**

Please complete this form if you are requesting approval for proposed amendment(s) to an ethics application that has been approved by the School of Psychology.

Note that approval must be given for significant change to research procedure that impacts on ethical protocol. If you are not sure about whether your proposed amendment warrants approval consult your supervisor or contact Dr Mary Spiller (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee).

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THE REQUEST

1. Complete the request form electronically and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (page 2).
3. When submitting this request form, ensure that all necessary documents are attached (see below).
4. Using your UEL email address, email the completed request form along with associated documents to: Dr Mark Finn at m.finn@uel.ac.uk
5. Your request form will be returned to you via your UEL email address with reviewer's response box completed. This will normally be within five days. Keep a copy of the approval to submit with your project/dissertation/thesis.
6. Recruitment and data collection are **not** to commence until your proposed amendment has been approved.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1. A copy of your previously approved ethics application with proposed amendments(s) added as tracked changes.
2. Copies of updated documents that may relate to your proposed amendment(s). For example an updated recruitment notice, updated participant information letter, updated consent form etc.
3. A copy of the approval of your initial ethics application.

Name of applicant: Tara Parfitt
Programme of study: Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
Title of research: Unaccompanied and Separated Young People’s experiences of trying to locate their family of origin through family tracing
Name of supervisor: Dr. Neil Rees

Briefly outline the nature of your proposed amendment(s) and associated rationale(s) in the boxes below

Proposed amendment	Rationale
Change of the term ‘refugee’ to ‘Unaccompanied and Separated Young People’	Advice from the British Red Cross was that a young person’s immigration status is not considered when embarking on the family tracing process, and therefore the term ‘Unaccompanied and Separated Young People’ is used to encapsulate all clients.
Change of the focus of the research question from ‘young people who have been unsuccessful in tracing family’ to ‘young people currently embarking on the process of family tracing’	The BRC raised ethical queries about contacting clients who have been closed to the service to take part in this research and inadvertently raising their hopes that family had been traced. Discussions therefore identified the need to explore the process of accessing the service with young people, as this has not been done before, thereby eliminating the ethical dilemma as young people would be in constant contact with the service.

Please tick	YES	NO
Is your supervisor aware of your proposed amendment(s) and agree to them?	X	

Student's signature (please type your name): Tara Parfitt

Date: 06.07.2018

TO BE COMPLETED BY REVIEWER		
Amendment(s) approved	YES	
Comments		
Good to know that advice from the BRC has been sought and incorporated.		

Reviewer: Mark Finn

Date: 11/06/18

IV. Amended Ethics Application Form

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
School of Psychology

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL, COUNSELLING & EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

If you need to apply for ethical clearance from HRA (through IRIS) for research involving the NHS you DO NOT need to apply to the School of Psychology for ethical clearance also. Please see details on

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/NHS-Research-Ethics-Committees.aspx>

Among other things this site will tell you about UEL sponsorship

PLEASE NOTE that HRA approval for research involving NHS employees is not required when data collection will take place off NHS premises and when NHS employees are not recruited directly through the NHS. This means that NHS staff can participate in research without HRA approval when a student recruits via their own social or professional networks or through a professional body like the BPS, for example.

If you are employed by the NHS and plan to recruit participants from the NHS Trust you work for, it would be courteous to seek permission from an appropriate person at your place of work (and better to collect data off NHS premises).

PLEASE NOTE that the School Research Ethics Committee does not recommend BSc and MSc/MA students designing research that requires HRA approval for research involving the NHS as this can be a demanding and lengthy process.

Before completing this application please familiarise yourself with:

The *Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009)* published by the British Psychological Society (BPS). This can be found in the Ethics folder in the Psychology Noticeboard (Moodle) and also on the BPS website

http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/aa%20Standard%20Docs/inf94_code_web_ethics_conduct.pdf

And please also see the UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics (2015-16)
<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Documents/Ethics%20forms/UEL-Code-of-Practice-for-Research-Ethics-2015-16.pdf>

HOW TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION

1. Complete this application form electronically, fully and accurately.
2. Type your name in the 'student's signature' section (5.1).
3. Include copies of all necessary attachments in the **ONE DOCUMENT SAVED AS .doc**
4. Email your supervisor the completed application and all attachments as **ONE DOCUMENT**. Your supervisor will then look over your application.
5. When your application demonstrates sound ethical protocol your supervisor will type in his/her name in the 'supervisor's signature' (section 5) and submit your application for review (psychology.ethics@uel.ac.uk). You should be copied into this email so that you know your application has been submitted. It is the responsibility of students to check this.
6. Your supervisor should let you know the outcome of your application. Recruitment and data collection are NOT to commence until your ethics application has been approved, along with other research ethics approvals that may be necessary (See section 4)

ATTACHMENTS YOU MUST ATTACH TO THIS APPLICATION

1. A copy of the participant invitation letter that you intend giving to potential participants.
2. A copy of the consent form that you intend giving to participants.
3. A copy of the debrief letter you intend to give participants.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS (AS APPROPRIATE)

- A copy of original and/or pre-existing questionnaire(s) and test(s) you intend to use.
- Example of the kinds of interview questions you intend to ask participants.
- Copies of the visual material(s) you intend showing participants.

- A copy of ethical clearance or permission from an external institution or organisation if you need it (e.g. a charity, school, local authority, workplace etc.). Permissions must be attached to this application. If you require ethical clearance from an external organisation your ethics application can be submitted to the School of Psychology before ethical approval is obtained from another organisation (see Section 5).

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates:

- **FOR BSc/MSc/MA STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** A scanned copy of a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. A current certificate is one that is not older than six months. This is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone 16 years of age or under) or vulnerable adults (see Section 4 for a broad definition of this). A DBS certificate that you have obtained through an organisation you work for is acceptable as long as it is current. If you do not have a current DBS certificate, but need one for your research, you can apply for one through the HUB and the School will pay the cost.

If you need to attach a copy of a DBS certificate to your ethics application but would like to keep it confidential please email a scanned copy of the certificate directly to Dr Mark Finn (Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) at m.finn@uel.ac.uk

- **FOR PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE STUDENTS WHOSE RESEARCH INVOLVES VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** DBS clearance is necessary if your research involves young people (anyone under 16 years of age) or vulnerable adults (see Section 4 for a broad definition of this). The DBS check that was done, or verified, when you registered for your programme is sufficient and you will not have to apply for another in order to conduct research with vulnerable populations.

SECTION 1. Your details

- 1. Your name:** Tara Parfitt
- 2. Your supervisor's name:** Dr. Neil Rees
- 3. Title of your programme:** Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology
- 4. Submission date for your BSc/MSc/MA research:** May 2019

1. Please tick if your application includes a copy of a DBS certificate
2. Please tick if you need to submit a DBS certificate with this application but have emailed a copy to Dr Mark Finn for confidentiality reasons
(Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee) m.finn@uel.ac.uk
3. Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the **British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009)** and the **UEL Code of Practice for Research Ethics** (See links on page 1)

SECTION 2. About your research

4. What your proposed research is about:

This research aims to explore the experiences of Unaccompanied and Separated young people (UASYP) who are currently accessing the British Red Cross (BRC) International Family Tracing Service (IFTS) and seeking to find family members.

In 2016, 3,472 refugees arrived in the UK and over half of refugees worldwide are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2017). Many of these arrivals travelled to the UK unaccompanied or with missing family members. Research has shown that family separation is detrimental to the psychosocial health of refugees (Miller, Hess, Bybee & Goodkind, 2017). It is a source of grief and loss which impacts on an individual's integration into their country of asylum (Wilmsen, 2013). Family tracing aims to support individuals in locating their family of origin through services such as the BRC, who provide the majority of family reunion travel assistance in the UK since legal aid was cut in 2012 (White & Hendry, 2011).

The proposed study is born of recommendations for research which gives voice to young UASYP in a UK context and to explore the impact of the IFT process on an individual's associated experiences, and over time.

The study further aims to contribute to the knowledge base around policy making and work with UASYP.

For this purpose, the study poses the research question: How do Unaccompanied and Separated young people make sense of their Family Tracing experiences?

5. Design of the research:

The research uses a qualitative design, where UAS young people will be invited to share their experiences in individual Interviews. A semi-structured interview schedule has been created for the purposes of this study. Young people who have previously used the IFT service or other services in the BRC will be recruited as consultants to the project, contributing to the development of the interview schedule and other relevant areas. Themes will be analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

10. Recruitment and participants (Your sample):

Between 10 and 12 UAS young people aged 16-25 will be identified by IFT staff and recruited in collaboration with the BRC. Although the age range used to define young people may include individuals at different developmental stages, holistically this will seek to provide a fuller picture of the experiences of UAS young people as a cohort, including participants who may have begun their IFT process some time previously. Participants will be accessing the IFT service currently . The sample will be relatively homogenous in terms of country of origin, in accordance with IPA recommendations, and will capture both male and female perspectives so as not to minimise any aspects of the cultural group's experiences. Should recruitment of UASYP prove challenging, the age range for the project will be broadened to include adults over the age of 25.

11. Measures, materials or equipment:

As above, the research will use an interview schedule developed for the purposes of this research project. Please see attachments below for a sample interview schedule.

12. If you are using copyrighted/pre-validated questionnaires, tests or other stimuli that you have not written or made yourself, are these questionnaires and tests suitable for the age group of your participants?

NA

13. Outline the data collection procedure involved in your research:

After information has been given and consent obtained (detailed below), semi-structured interviews will be conducted individually with the young people at the BRC premises in a separate, quiet room, using interpreters where necessary. The use of interpreters is justified in IPA guidelines, where the gains of speaking to non-English speakers sufficiently outweigh the cost of not having a shared language with the researcher (Smith, 2004). Researchers have also argued that excluding participants from research due to their language is unethical, denies their civil rights and is, at worst, illegal (Resnik & Jones, 2006). Interviews will last up to 60 minutes, or in cases where an interpreter has been used, 90 minutes. Participants will be asked questions from the interview schedule, with prompts where necessary. A debrief will take place with participants, and interpreters where necessary, at the end of the interview. Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

SECTION 3. Ethical considerations

14. Fully informing participants about the research (and parents/guardians if necessary):

Participants will be given an information sheet about the project, which fully outlines all aspects of taking part, gaining their consent and their right to withdraw. 2 forms have been created- one for young people age 16 to 18 and one for young people over 18. Both are worded in a style that is accessible for younger people and non-native speakers of English. For participants who are unable to speak English, the information and consent sheets will be translated when they are in contact with staff at the BRC. Young people under 18 will be

encouraged to discuss the project with an adult or legal guardian (the term adult/legal guardian has been used instead of parent in order to remain sensitive to the fact that participants may have no family here and this may be the source of their involvement with the project). Please see a copy of both letters in attachments below.

15. Obtaining fully informed consent from participants (and from parents/guardians if necessary):

Participants will be given a consent form in advance of the data collection to consider. As participants are over the age of 16 parental consent will not be sought in line with Gillick Competence. 2 consent forms have been drafted for 16 to 18 year olds and over 18s respectively. Both are worded in a style that is accessible for younger people and non-native speakers of English. The assent form for 16-18 year olds reiterates that the young person is encouraged to discuss consenting to the study with an adult/legal guardian (as above). Please see a copy of both forms in attachments below.

16. Engaging in deception, if relevant:

No deception will be used in this study.

17. Right of withdrawal:

Right of withdrawal is explained in the participant invitation letter, consent forms and debrief letter. These clearly state that participants are entitled to request to withdraw their participation from the study within 2 weeks of interview with no need to give any explanation or justification for this, and that records/interview transcripts from their participation will be destroyed and will not be used in the research study or any future publications thereafter. After the 2 week time period for withdrawal has elapsed, the forms clearly state that the researcher reserves the right to use a participant's information in the study or subsequent publications when an analysis of the data has already commenced. This section has been worded in a style that is accessible for younger people and non-native speakers of English.

18. Will the data be gathered anonymously?

NO

19. If NO what steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of participants?

All data will be stored in a password-protected database on the researcher's computer. Participants' names will be changed to conceal their identities and participants will be asked to come up with a pseudonym for the purposes of the study. The participant information sheets explain that basic demographic information on participants will be described in the study, including country of origin and age, however names and other sensitive information will not be disclosed.

Audio recordings will be deleted after analysis. Transcripts will be kept for up to 3 years in order to allow for any further study or publishing of the results and will then be destroyed. Consent forms will be scanned and stored on the researcher's password protected computer in a separate folder to the transcript data and hard copies will be destroyed.

NO

If YES please give the name and address of the organisation:

Has such ethical clearance been obtained yet?

NA

If NO why not?

If YES, please attach a scanned copy of the ethical approval letter. A copy of an email from the organisation confirming its ethical clearance is acceptable.

SECTION 5. Risk Assessment

If you have serious concerns about the safety of a participant, or others, during the course of your research please see your supervisor as soon as possible.

If there is any unexpected occurrence while you are collecting your data (e.g. a participant or the researcher injures themselves), please report this to your supervisor as soon as possible.

24. Protection of participants:

The process of talking about missing family members may be distressing for the participants in the study. The researcher will use their clinical training and experience of working with adults and young people to support participants in this process and ensure their safety and well-being at all times. This will include allowing participants to express their upsetting feelings and provide breaks where needed. Participants will have the option to not answer any questions they do not wish to.

Contact details for appropriate support organisations for UASYP are listed in the debrief letter; these include support line numbers for mental health support, housing, education and employment, social and leisure activities with other refugees and asylum seekers, support for UASYP under 18, English tuition, therapeutic support and advocacy, amongst others. As the research is being supported by the BRC, the researcher will be able to liaise with BRC staff around any concerns or support needs for participants.

25. Protection of the researcher:

Interviews and meetings with participants will be conducted at the British Red Cross premises, where employees of the organisation will be present in the building. The researcher will set up a check-in system with a co-researcher who will not be interviewing at the same time. This will comprise a telephone message to inform the co-researcher when an interview is commencing and at the end of an interview once it is complete and the researcher has left the participant.

26. Debriefing participants:

Participants will be aware of the full nature of the research in advance through the participant information sheet and will give informed consent in light of this. A verbal debrief between the researcher and participant will be conducted at the end of the interview to check how participants are feeling after describing their experiences; this would incorporate the interpreter if necessary. If any risk concerns are raised or should a participant feel they would like some further support around things they have discussed, then they will be signposted to relevant support organisations, including the British Red Cross staff available to them. Support organisation contact details will be made available to participants in the debrief letter attached.

27. Other: NA

28. Will your research involve working with children or vulnerable adults?*

YES

If YES have you obtained and attached a DBS certificate?

YES

If your research involves young people under 16 years of age and young people of limited competence will parental/guardian consent be obtained.

NA

If NO please give reasons. (Note that parental consent is always required for participants who are 16 years of age and younger)

* You are required to have DBS clearance if your participant group involves (1) children and young people who are 16 years of age or under, and (2) ‘vulnerable’ people aged 16 and over with psychiatric illnesses, people who receive domestic care, elderly people (particularly those in nursing homes), people in palliative care, and people living in institutions and sheltered accommodation, and people who have been involved in the criminal justice system, for example. Vulnerable people are understood to be persons who are not necessarily able to freely consent to participating in your research, or who may find it difficult to withhold consent. If in doubt about the extent of the vulnerability of your intended participant group, speak to your supervisor. Methods that maximise the understanding and ability of vulnerable people to give consent should be used whenever possible. For more information about ethical research involving children see:

<https://uelac.sharepoint.com/ResearchInnovationandEnterprise/Pages/Research-involving-children.aspx>

29 Will you be collecting data overseas?

NO

If YES in what country or countries (and province if appropriate) will you be collecting data?

Please click on this link <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> and note in the space below what the UK Government is recommending about travel to that country/province (Please note that you MUST NOT travel to a country/province/area that is deemed to be high risk or where essential travel only is recommended by the UK Government. If you are unsure it is essential that you speak to your supervisor or the UEL Travel Office – travel@uel.ac.uk / (0)20 8223 6801).

SECTION 6. Declarations

Declaration by student:

I confirm that I have discussed the ethics and feasibility of this research proposal with my supervisor.

Student's name: *Tara Parfitt*

Student's number: U1622895

Date: 06.07.2018

Supervisor's declaration of support is given upon their electronic submission of the application

I confirm that, in my opinion, the proposed study constitutes an ethical investigation of the research question. Declaration of supervisory support of an application is confirmed once an application is submitted via the supervisor's UEL email account.

V. Approval for Subsequent Change to Research Title

Change project title - Miss Tara Parfitt

Date	06 Feb 2019
Doctoral Researcher	Miss Tara Parfitt
Student ID	1622895
Doctoral Research Project	Locating Family of Origin Following Family Tracing: The Experiences of Unaccompanied and Separated Young People Seeking Asylum.
Project type	DProf
Project mode	Full Time
Project start	01 Oct 2017
School	Psychology

Change request form

Project title form

Proposed new title:

Locating Family of Origin Following Family Tracing: The Experiences of Unaccompanied and Separated Young People Seeking Asylum.

Reason(s) for proposed change:

Change of project title to reflect changes to the focus of the study itself.

Researcher form

Having discussed the proposed change of title with my supervisory team, I am satisfied with the change proposed.

Yes

Supervisor form

Supervisor form

We recommend that the change in the registered title of the thesis progress as requested.

Yes

Notes

Research Degrees Leader form

Research Degrees Leader form

Recommend this application for consideration at the School's Research Degrees Sub-Committee

Yes

Notes

The requested change in title is necessary to more accurately reflect the focus of the study. I recommend that the application be approved.

Clinical psychology review group report

Committee report

Comments

Reviewers recommended approval.

Recommendation

Approve

Appendix K: Key for Transcription, Coding and Participant Identification

The following transcription conventions were employed:

[]	Omission of text to shorten quotes
...	Pause
[text]	Non-verbal expression, including laughter, sighs etc.
(text)	Substitution with anonymised information
(inaudible)	Content that was inaudible during transcription

Three levels of initial coding were utilised according to Smith et al.'s (2009) recommendations and categorised as follows:

Green	Content
Purple	Language
Blue	Context

All participants were allocated colour codes for identification throughout the analysis:

Aaleyah	Yellow
Birhan	Pink
Genet	Light Blue
Hasham	Red
Javad	Orange
Mike	Dark Blue
Sohrab	Green
Usf	Purple

Appendix L: Extract of Transcript Annotation

85 B: So, my brother I think something happen before, he told me
 86 when he's (inaudible) he's left my country and my mum again.
 87 'Cause every day they coming my mum "Where are the kids?" -
 88 and if you no bring your kids and government they get all
 89 (inaudible) or something. So, after this my mum again she left as
 90 well. And that's it after this she coming to (neighbouring
 91 country) and then last time, last when I contact my mum from
 92 (neighbouring country) she called me and I'm just (neighbouring
 93 country) she said to me that's it, because she asked for someone
 94 to call for me or something you know. So, after this I lost
 95 everything to contact and after 3 years I found my brother here,
 96 which is (caseworker) you know she found him.

97 I: Yeah

98 B: I mean, (caseworker) she can but it's long story, it's long! It's
 99 here and here, here and here. When I came to here even I take
 100 like year or something because 3 months in [redacted], 4 months in
 101 (neighbouring country), and then in [redacted] same like 2 months, 3
 102 months and in [redacted] same like 4,5 months, total of like 12
 103 months or something.

104 I: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Before you came to UK

105 B: Yeah 'cause every single day and they have problem you know
 106 because sometimes you don't got any food, whole day or
 107 something, on travel and [redacted] is completely, sometimes you no
 108 eat 2 days sometime. Just they giving water or one time a day or
 109 something because without water I can die.

110 I: No, no, yeah

111 B: So, it's like that because. It's hard to say even you know

112 I: Yeah.

113 B: Sometimes when I remember that you know it's long story
 114 even [laughs] that's why I just. That's the last contact with my
 115 mum, that's it, in (neighbouring country) I think so its [redacted] or
 116 about [redacted] something

117 I: Ok

118 B: Yeah [redacted] I think and after this I lose my contact, everything
 119 with my mum. That's it. Still I'm searching to my mum now,
 120 that's it. That's... its very, very difficult for me still, still.

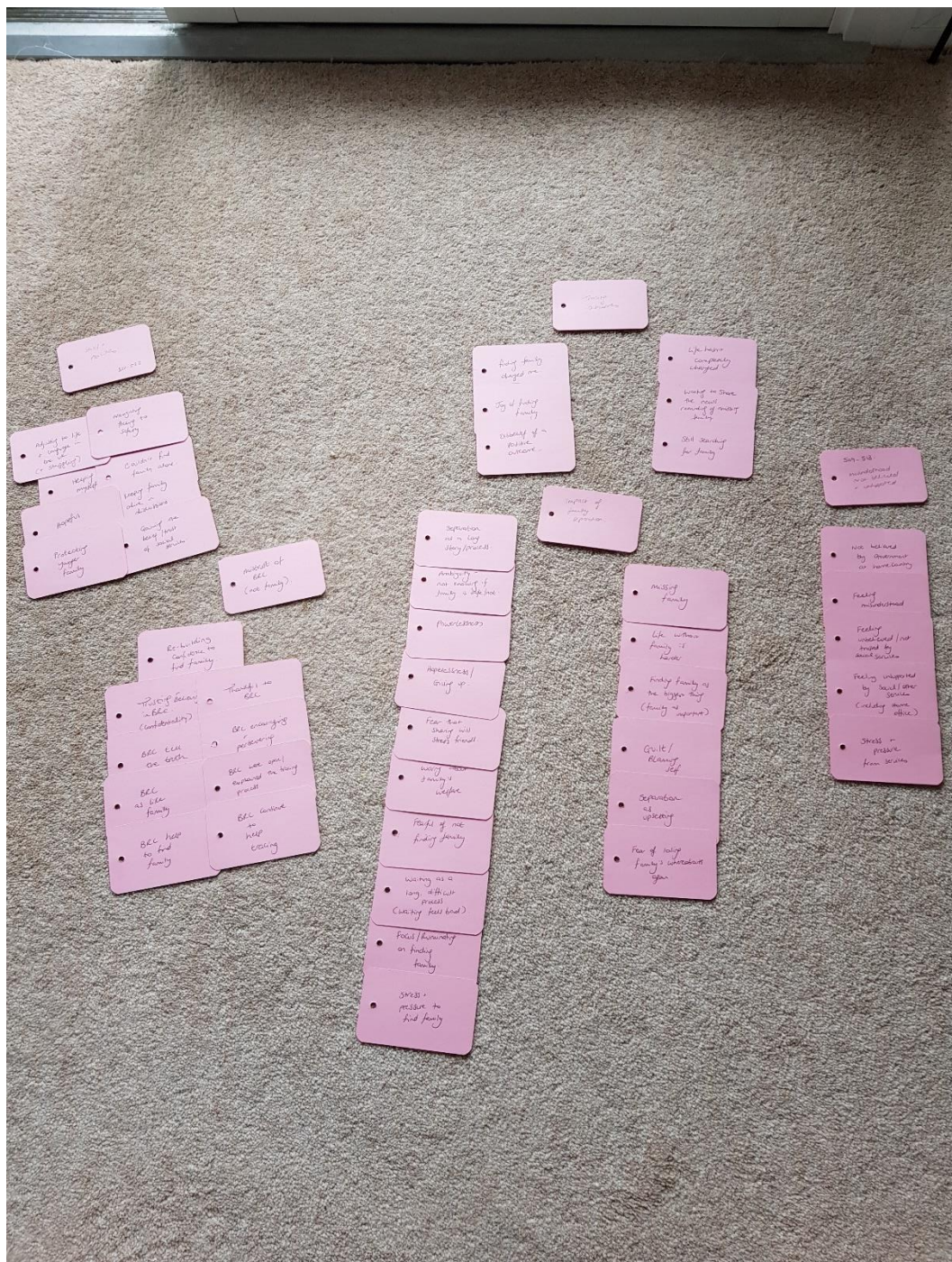
121 I: Yeah, it sounds tough

122 B: Yeah. That's, that's hard. I can't say even what I you know,
 123 sometimes when I remember to my mum, when I say to me,
 124 'cause when I first, first... the problem is first is me you know
 125 'cause. 'Cause when I was in school or in college, you know if you
 126 not happen with my leg or sometimes, you know when I

Threats from Govt.
losing contact
Fleeing as a long journey.
Distressing fleeing experiences
separation as a long story
losing contact
loss still present.
still searching.
separation as upsetting.

brother leg country.
has someone threats show Govt. to men mum left here country to.
Spoke to mum then lost contact 3 years ago. was all contact. found brother after 3 years of leaving.
caseworker did it.
long story / complete body
journey took him a whole year.
lots of moving from one place to another
struggles of fleeing experiences - no food - kept hungry.
kept alive only. Awareness of death.
upsetting to recall fleeing experiences.
long story - time.
last contact w/ mum.
losing contact all losing everything.
still looking for his mum (active)
still very difficult. (emphasis on it).
hard to express emotions / put into words.
remembering mum.

Appendix M: Example of Super and Sub-Ordinate Theme Development for One Participant



Appendix N: Example of Individual Participant Theme Table

Super-Ordinate Theme	Sub-Ordinate Themes	Themes	Line Numbers	Extract
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Couldn't have found family without the BRC • BRC took it step-by-step • BRC helped and supported • BRC supported with Trace the Face search • Tracing was a good experience • Recommend BRC • BRC made frequent contact • BRC facilitated contact and meeting with family member • BRC found family member (thankful) • BRC explained confidentiality (reassuring) • BRC advised on IFT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 294/5 • 311/2 • 265/6;295/6 • 64/5;148/50 • 299/302 • 305/6 • 145/6 • 151/5;268/70;272/3;278/9 • 66/8;153/4;334/6 • 313/21;330/1 • 33/4 	<p>if there is not family tracing how can he find his brother? they talked him yes, step by step Red Cross (name) they help him too much also they show him some picture</p> <p>his experience when they try to find his brother is very good Red Cross is easy way to find some people when they have lost they call him a lot of time</p> <p>they will try to help his brother to take connection with him he meet him... in Red Cross help him to find his brother</p> <p>they say this information confident Red Cross they give him some advice</p>
	BRC'S LIMITATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRC couldn't find some family members • BRC didn't explain tracing process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65/6 • 140/2;144/5 	<p>they can't find his dad and his mum they don't say... just told him you have appointment</p>
	USF'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsuccessful in own attempts to trace family/stopped searching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 169/171;172/6;185/8 	<p>it's very difficult... he don't know what can he do, and therefore he stopped trying to find them.</p>
FAMILY SEPARATION AND WAITING	WAITING AS QUICK AND LONG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting felt quick in comparison to length of separation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48/51 • 48/9;196/7 	<p>it's no problem there is 20 day, one month, because there is for 4 years he waited waiting for a long time</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation from family felt long 		
	COPING WITH SEPARATION/ WAITING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having hope/ a sense that family is still alive Feeling powerless in searching for family Feared the worst/family member had been killed Feared searching would harm family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 235/6;239;242/3;244/5 185/8 73/4;86/7;121/3;196/7;225/7 182/8;318/21;324/9 	<p>he feel that they is ok, they live</p> <p>he don't know what can he do</p> <p>he feel that his brother is died, maybe they kill him</p> <p>maybe it's not good for him, because they catch him</p>
	IMPACT OF SEPARATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separation impacted on sleep Separation was stressful Felt depressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200/1 202/3 203 	<p>feeling bad... especially in the night time... when he is sleeping just he is like speaking and when he wake, he wake up a lot of time feel stressed, depressive and not very well.</p>
	GETTING SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friend was supportive and recommended BRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 206/7;211/2 	<p>specially speaked about his friend</p>
	STILL SEARCHING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still searching for missing family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 235/6;336 	<p>now there's try to find mum and dad</p>
EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO FINDING FAMILY	UNEXPECTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding family member unexpectedly Unaware family member had been living in UK whilst he was too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17;76/7 152/3;160/1 	<p>suddenly saw brother's picture in this site</p> <p>he had been one years and more before him</p>
	DISBELIEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disbelief and amazement at finding family member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 230/1;283/5;287/8 	<p>can't do anything very amaz, good when he saw the picture he say "Oh, it's true, that is my brother"</p>
	HARD TO DESCRIBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding family is hard to describe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 219/20 	<p>it's very difficult to descri, make description</p>

	JOY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joy of finding family • Joy of meeting family member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67/8;70/1;222/3 • 283/5 	became crying; very nice, it's happy
	CHANGES THINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding family brings company • Life has changed (better than before) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 234/5;251/4 • 246/8;250/6;260 	brother is with him; now he live with his brother and he say look like before 100%...better than before
TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES	EXPERIENCING TRAUMATIC EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witnessed murder of a colleague • Persecuted for religious beliefs • Brutally attacked and captured by terror group • Experiences at hands of terror group were traumatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83;94 • 92/3;103/5;181/6 • 81/4;91/7 • 100/1 	kill one of them; they kill one his friend behind him they arrested four Shia Muslim and ISIS they were try to kill them took him to the prison... hit him... it's broken head, broken arm, broken his legs, everywhere is broken very, very, very sad and very tired and he had pain
	GETTING HELP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treated and taken to safety/hidden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99/100;102/5;110/1;113/4;116/7 	help him about the give treat; take him and go to the (other country); hide them

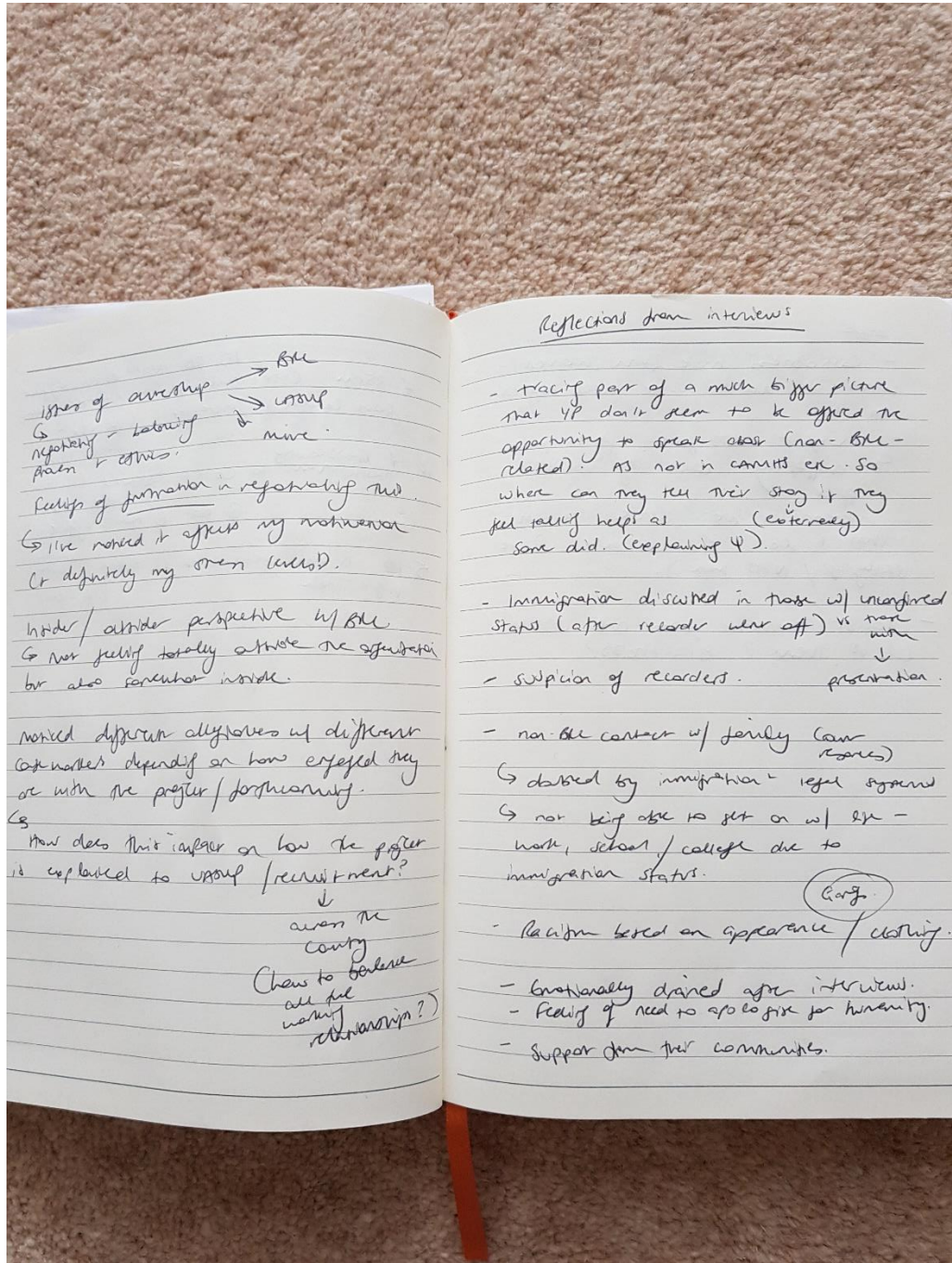
Appendix O: Collective Theme Table for All Participants

PARTICIPANT	SUPER-ORDINATE THEMES	SUB-THEMES	
SOHRAB	IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY	FAMILY IS MOST IMPORTANT	
		FAMILY GIVE STRENGTH/ SAFETY	
	ABILITIES IN FAMILY TRACING	BRC'S STATUS AND ABILITIES	
		BRC'S LIMITATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	
		TRUSTING AND DOUBTING ABILITIES	
		SOHRAB'S ABILITIES AND SENSE OF AGENCY	
	WAITING	COPING WITH WAITING	
		DIFFICULTIES WITH WAITING	
		PASSAGE OF TIME	
		WORTH THE WAIT	
	EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO FINDING FAMILY	JOY	
		HARD TO DESCRIBE THE FEELING	
		DISBELIEF	
	ENDURING LOSSES/ DISTRESS	STILL SEARCHING/LIFE HASN'T CHANGED	
IMMIGRATION DIFFICULTIES			
BIRHAN	SKILLS AND ABILITIES	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
		TRUSTING AND DOUBTING ABILITIES	
		BIRHAN'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
	IMPACT OF FAMILY SEPARATION	WAITING	
		MANAGING DIFFICULT FEELINGS	
		IMPORTANCE OF FINDING FAMILY	
		LIVING WITHOUT FAMILY	
	TRACING OUTCOMES	FINDING FAMILY	
		STILL SEARCHING	
	EXPERIENCES OF BEING UNHEARD/IGNORED	UNSUPPORTED	
		NOT BELIEVED	
		MISUNDERSTOOD	
	HASHAM	SKILLS AND ABILITIES	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
			BRC'S LIMITATIONS
		HASHAM'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
COPING WITH THE TRACING PROCESS		EXPERIENCE OF WAITING FOR FAMILY	
		MIXED EMOTIONS ABOUT TRACING	
		GETTING SUPPORT	
ADJUSTING TO UK		DIFFICULTY ADJUSTING	

GENET	DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY	RESPONSIBILITY
		OBLIGATION
	ABILITIES IN FAMILY TRACING	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		BRC'S LIMITATIONS
		GENET'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		BARRIERS TO FAMILY TRACING
	COPING WITH SEPARATION	FEELS LONG AND PAINFUL
		WORRY AND UNCERTAINTY
		HOPE AND PERSEVERING
		GETTING/NOT GETTING SUPPORT
		ONGOING/ PERMANENT SEPARATION
JAVAD	INITIAL HESITATION	INITIALLY HESITANT RE-IFT
	SKILLS AND ABILITIES	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		BRC'S LIMITATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS
		JAVAD'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
	WAITING	COPING WITH WAITING
		HOW WAITING FEELS
		DISTRESS FROM FAMILY SEPARATION
	ADJUSTING TO FINDING FAMILY	DOUBT, HESITATION AND DISBELIEF
		LIFE CHANGING/ ADJUSTING
		JOY
	DISTRESSING PRE-FLIGHT EXPERIENCES	DEATH BECOMES NORMAL
		SURVIVING
USF	TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES	EXPERIENCING TRAUMATIC EVENTS
		GETTING HELP
	FAMILY SEPARATION AND WAITING	WAITING AS QUICK AND LONG
		COPING WITH SEPARATION/ WAITING
		IMPACT OF SEPARATION
		GETTING SUPPORT
		STILL SEARCHING
	SKILLS AND ABILITIES	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		BRC'S LIMITATIONS
		USF'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
	EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO FINDING FAMILY	UNEXPECTED
		DISBELIEF
		HARD TO DESCRIBE
		JOY
		CHANGES THINGS

AALEYAH	ABILITIES IN FAMILY TRACING	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		BRC'S LIMITATIONS
		AALEYAH'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		DOUBTS REGARDING ABILITY TO TRACE
	COPING WITH BEING APART FROM FAMILY	OVER TIME
		FEELS STRESSFUL
		HAVING HOPE
		GETTING SUPPORT
	COPING WITH WAITING	WAITING FEELS HARD
		WAITING FEELS LESS HARD
		PATIENCE AND DETERMINATION
	EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO FINDING FAMILY	JOY
		HARD TO EXPRESS THE FEELING
		FEELS LUCKY
		CHANGES THINGS
MIKE	FAMILY SEPARATION IS DIFFICULT	WAITING
		CHANGES THINGS
		FEELS UPSETTING
		EMPATHY FOR THOSE AFFECTED
		TRYING TO COPE
		COMPLICATED BY BARRIERS
	FINDING FAMILY IS LIKE A DREAM	FELT UNREAL/LIKE A DREAM
		SHOCK/DISBELIEF
		JOY
	SKILLS AND ABILITIES	BRC'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
		BRC'S LIMITATIONS
		MIKE'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES
	TRANSITIONS	ENCOUNTERING SEPARATION
		ADJUSTING TO LIFE IN THE UK
		NAVIGATING THE HOME OFFICE AND IMMIGRATION

Appendix P: Reflexive Journal Extract



Appendix Q: Map of Theme Contribution Across Participants

Super-Ordinate Themes	Sub-Ordinate Themes	Aaleyah	Birhan	Genet	Hasham	Javad	Mike	Sohrab	Usf
ADJUSTMENT	<i>Assimilating</i>	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	<i>Adapting to Life Without Family</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<i>Returning to Family</i>	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
UNCERTAINTY	<i>Doubting and Mistrusting</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X	
	<i>Waiting and Not Knowing</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ABILITY	<i>BRC's Specialist Resources and Abilities</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<i>UASYP's Personal Resources and Agency</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<i>Limitations and Recommendations</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X