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"I don't know what ready was, but I just knew I wasn't."

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“I don’t know what ready was, but I just knew I wasn’t.”: An Interpretative Phenomenological Inquiry into the Reintegration Experiences of Young People with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Kerry Gibson

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law.

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Abstract

Reintegration is a type of educational transition that can facilitate inclusion by supporting young people who have been permanently excluded to return to mainstream school. Many young people with SEMH needs who experience permanent exclusion attend pupil referral units before reintegrating back into mainstream school.

The broad aim of this study was to explore the experiences of young people with SEMH needs who have reintegrated from a pupil referral unit to a mainstream secondary school. The research questions asked; how do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream from a pupil referral unit make sense of their experience? How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream school? And what role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with four participants. Participants also completed visual timelines during interviews to support their thinking. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed as a methodological framework and a method of analysis. Four overarching themes emerged as significant to participants' experiences. These included; the meanings ascribed to reintegration; factors impacting on agency; sense of self and school connectedness. Findings were discussed regarding how each overarching theme and corresponding subthemes relate to extant literature on reintegration and inclusion and psychological theories on concepts such as transition and identity development.

Implications for further research and Educational Psychology practice are discussed. Suggestions are made in terms of a good practice guide for practitioners working to support young people with SEMH needs around reintegration. To promote the accessibility of this written account to a wide audience, including children and young people who are interested in research on this topic; plain language summaries of the key points of each chapter can be found at the end of chapters one to five.

Declaration and Acknowledgements

Firstly, thank-you to the four young people who gave their time to share their thoughts and feelings. This research would not have been possible without your commitment and your honesty.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by special reference in the text, the work is the candidates own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with assistance of, others is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed:

Date: 5th September 2019

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
BPS	British Psychological Society
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme Framework
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
DEdPsy	Doctor of Educational Psychology
DfE	Department for Education
DfWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EP	Educational Psychologist
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
KS	Key Stage
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PCP	Personal Construct Psychology
PCP	Person Centred Practice
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SLC	Student Learning Centre
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Topic of Reintegration

Inclusion is an ideal which dominates current educational discourses in the UK. It is the backbone of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice (SEND CoP) (DfE, 2015); the legislative document which promotes and outlines educators' commitments to inclusive practices and the removal of barriers to learning for all children and young people. A key element of the UK government's commitment to inclusive education involves the reintegration of young people who have experienced exclusion from mainstream school. The SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) states the '*presumption in law of mainstream education*' for all children and young people. This statement emphasizes the government's legal responsibility to support reintegrative practices for young people who have been excluded, so that they may successfully re-establish themselves within mainstream environments.

Existing research focusing on the importance of supporting reintegration highlights risk factors associated with school exclusion. These include; low academic achievement, unemployment, social isolation and exclusion, youth offending and recidivism and mental health issues (McAra & McVie, 2010; Cole et al, 2003; Armstrong, 2017; Timpson Review, 2019). These risk factors are exacerbated for groups of children who are considered more vulnerable due to experiencing social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) (Timpson Review, 2019). Many excluded young people with SEMH needs are placed in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). Authors have highlighted these kinds of placements are not meant to be long-term (Thomas, 2015); that the purpose of this provision is to provide respite, to mitigate negative consequences of exclusion and to prepare young people for the transition back to mainstream (Brown, 2011).

Effectively planned and supported reintegration into mainstreams from PRUs can therefore be thought of as protective measures which can counter the risks associated with exclusion and as vehicles for inclusion. Given its potential to achieve these aims, the significance of the topic of

reintegration is demonstrable, as is research that seeks to understand factors that are important to young people in supporting successful reintegrations. For these reasons, it is the focal process of research; which seeks to explore the experiences of young people who have reintegrated into mainstream settings from pupil referral units.

1.2 Personal and Professional Background to the Study

On a personal level; a third of the way through Year 9, I moved schools. From a large local authority (LA) maintained school to a smaller, independent school a 45-minute bus journey away. At the time, I remember feeling that I had little say in the matter and recall feeling anxious about the transition. I recall feeling very different from peers in my new setting. I felt that the world I had come from was very different to the one I found myself in. I was unsure what to talk about with pupils there; I found it tricky to find common ground and to make friends. The girls in my new school said that they all liked going for coffee. At the time, I was under the impression that coffee was for grownups. I felt rather uncomfortable in the new uniform (a pink and purple wool kilt, purple blazer and hat) particularly on the public bus, on which many pupils from my old school also traveled for part of the journey, wearing a very different uniform. On reflection, I remember starting to become aware of some of my future options as I was exposed to different opportunities offered by the curriculum. At some level, I feel I went through a process of questioning my identity as I struggled to work out how to belong in this new school. It is this experience that provides some context for my genuine empathy with young people who undergo a transition to a new school, especially when it has different expectations from the one they have come from. I am genuinely curious to hear what their experiences of transition to a new school are like. I also want to communicate that it is important that their voices are heard on the matter of reintegration, in order to inform what adults at multiple systemic levels can do to support pupils who have these experiences.

At a professional level; my interest in working with young people with SEMH needs stems from one of my first jobs as a teaching assistant in a specialist SEMH school. Its remit was to support

and educate young people with SEMH needs, most of whom had been excluded from mainstream. During this role I started to become aware of the struggles faced by these pupils in terms of the connotations that their label of SEMH (at the time, it was 'EBD': Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) had in terms of how aspects of society constructed and responded to their needs. Listening to their views enabled me to understand that often these pupils seemed to feel they had little control over what happened in their lives. I also started to become aware of how resilient the young people I worked with were. They would turn up for school every day, despite often having to make long taxi journeys, and, with support from staff who showed understanding, respect and a good sense of humor, could make a great success of their education.

My journey on the Educational Psychology Doctoral Programme has presented the opportunity to develop my knowledge and experience in relation to my interest in working with young people with SEMH needs. My experiences have enabled me to understand the views of authors who suggest that SEMH may be the only label of SEND that actually increases the risk of school exclusion and wider social marginalisation (Jull, 2008) and are therefore also a group for which successful reintegration into mainstream education can be a transformative experience in terms of possible life trajectories.

I wanted to take the opportunity presented by the doctoral thesis to draw on personal experiences and professional interests to develop my understanding of young people's views regarding the opportunities and challenges of reintegration into mainstream schools. I feel that hearing from pupils themselves about what it means to have this experience; what helps and what makes it more difficult, could be a positive step in the direction of developing policies and practices which effectively and responsively support pupils to successfully complete transitions from PRUs into mainstream schools.

1.3 Origins, Significance and Aims of the Research

Tuning in to developments in educational psychology research, literature, theory and practice over the last three years has illuminated issues that seem to present particular systemic challenges or recurrent themes; ideals or processes that should be being realised but seem to struggle to come to fruition and questions around why this might be.

One such issue seems to be the reintegration of pupils with SEMH needs into mainstream education from PRUs. The next chapter explores in further detail what current literature tells us about reintegrative practices for this group, highlighting issues such as; concerning rates of permanent exclusion for SEMH pupils (DfE, 2018), facilitators and barriers to reintegration, the language used around this process, attitudes of receiving schools and the pros and cons of PRU placements.

This study aims to address some questions around reintegrative practices by asking young people directly about their experiences. With growing consensus amongst educational psychologists (EPs) regarding the importance of gaining, including and acting on the voices of young people in research contributing to the development of effective practices (DfE, 2015), this study aims to uphold this commitment by listening authentically to those who have lived the experience under investigation. Drawing on what the literature already tells us and taking inspiration from what it does not tell us; questions are asked about the qualities of the experience of reintegration in terms of processes, systems, meanings and impacts on sense of self and future aspirations. Literature searches highlighted a gap insofar as research which has explicitly sought the perspectives of young people with SEMH needs who experience a reintegration into mainstream from a PRU. This research ultimately aims to contribute to understanding and developing effective policy and practice in this area, by putting the young people who reintegrate at the centre of the conversation. The research questions are as follows;

1. How do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream from a PRU make sense of their experience?
2. How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream school?
3. What role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

1.4 Research Setting

This research is situated within the mainstream schools in which the participants have reintegrated. Four young people, who attend four different settings are interviewed, all of whom have completed a transition from a PRU to a mainstream setting. Three of the mainstreams are local authority (LA) maintained, one is part of an academy trust. The local authority in which the research took place is a largely rural community in the South of England. The researcher is an Educational Psychology Doctoral student, on placement within the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in the LA.

1.5 Epistemological Stance and Methodological Orientation

Ontologically, this research aligns with a relativist perspective; assuming that reality can be conceived of as multiple truths that are socially constructed through language, social interactions and experiences within the contexts of history and time (Gergen, 2001).

Epistemologically, this research takes an interpretivist position; seeking to make sense of participants lived experiences whilst embracing the influence of the researchers own interpretations and values on any knowledge gained through research.

Given the aim to explore and illuminate lived experiences, I have chosen to take a qualitative approach to addressing the research questions. Using the theoretical framework of

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); I attempt to elicit the experiential perspectives of young people on what it means to them to transition back to mainstream school. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis; where data drives the generation of detailed and complex findings through the identification of patterns across datasets (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

1.6 Questions of Definition and Terminology

For clarity and transparency, it is important to define some of the key concepts and terminology within this research, starting with the term, social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). This term is the label used by educators to refer to category of Special Educational Needs where there are concerns about a young person's social interactions, emotional regulation and/ or mental health which present at home and/ or at school and require support and intervention from adults. This study acknowledges the definition of SEMH within the LA in which the research is situated, which states the following;

The term SEMH refers to difficulties which a child or young person is experiencing which act as a barrier to their personal, social, cognitive and emotional development. These may manifest themselves in many ways and may be communicated through internalising and/ or externalising behaviours. SEMH difficulties occur along a continuum from developmentally appropriate behaviours (normal testing of boundaries and challenging authority) and issues in relation to milder more transient difficulties, to persistent and significant difficulties affecting relationships with themselves, others and within the community. These behaviours may reflect underlying Mental health needs such as anxiety or depression, trauma, obsessive compulsive disorders and issues relating to disrupted early attachment relationships; or they may be in response to learning difficulties or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained.

The research explores young peoples' experiences of reintegrating after time spent in alternative provision. All participants in this study reintegrated from what is most commonly referred to in England and Wales and legally defined in terms of remit as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). However, the LA in this context refers to this kind of provision as a Learning Centre.

The remit, inclusion and exclusion criteria for the LA's learning centres are the same as the legal remit of the traditional Pupil Referral Unit. This includes being an LA maintained provision accepting children and young people who may or may not have an educational, health and care plan but who are unable to attend mainstream or specialist LA provision due to issues such as sickness, exacerbation of special educational needs or being subject to temporary or permanent exclusion from school. Like PRUs, learning centre placements are intended to provide support for learning and other needs on a temporary basis before a supported transition to a permanent school placement is facilitated.

The literature review chapter refers to the term PRU given that this is the language used most commonly throughout the relevant literature that was examined. However during interviews, the participants use the term learning centre consistently. Language is a powerful tool in terms of construction of meaning and it is therefore interesting to acknowledge the potential connotations that the research context of 'learning centre' may have in terms of the experiential perspectives of the young people in this study. This language has the potential to invoke different interpretations of meaning than, say, the language of 'referral unit'. It is important to acknowledge that in the use of language that constructs the provision as being about 'learning'; there may be implications in terms of how the participants view and value learning or how they position learning within the meaning of their experiences of reintegration and wider education. It is also interesting to acknowledge the potential impacts of the use of the language 'learning centre' in terms of constructions and expectations of professionals who work in the LA. On reflection, this could be an interesting topic of conversation for EPs to engage with during team or service discussions.

Finally, it feels important to clarify the language used to describe the process of reintegration. Reintegration can be thought of as a type of educational transition; involving the physical movement from one setting to another. Throughout this research and written account, the pathway of leaving a PRU and enrolling at a new mainstream setting is most frequently referred to as reintegration but contextualized and occasionally referred to as a type of transition.

1.7 Plain Language Chapter Summary and Outline of Structure

Research about schools, young people and psychology should be accessible to everyone. For this reason, a plain language chapter summary can be found at the end of chapters one to five. These sections provide an easy to read summary of key points from each chapter.

Why is it important to research the topic of reintegration?

- Inclusion is about the rights of all young people in the UK to be able to attend a mainstream school if this is what they and their family want.
- Reintegration happens when young people who have been excluded from school are supported to return to mainstream school. It is a process that helps to support inclusion.
- It is important to ask questions about what currently happens around reintegrations so that we can find out what is working and what is not working. Then we can make positive changes and improve services for young people who reintegrate from PRUs to mainstream schools.

Aims of this research

- There is lots of research that has looked at the topic of school exclusion and some that has looked at reintegrations. Previous research has asked parents and teachers about their views on reintegration, but there is less research that has asked young people about their views on it.
- The current research asks young people with SEMH needs about what it was like to reintegrate into a mainstream school from a PRU, because the researcher feels that they are experts on what it is like to do this and that their views can help adults to make this process work better for everyone.

Where did this research take place and how was information collected?

- The researcher collected information by interviewing four young people. These young people had been excluded from one mainstream school, spent some time in a PRU and then reintegrated into a new mainstream school

The summary at the end of Chapter 3 –Methodology, will explain in more detail about how information was collected for this research and the way that information has been listened to, thought about and used by the researcher

Outline of Structure

The written account of this research project will follow the structure below;

- Introduction – the chapter above, introducing the topic, why it is important to study and what questions have been asked.
- Literature Review – this chapter looks at previous research that has been done and what has previously been written about the topic of reintegration and other topics that are linked to it. It presents and looks critically at different arguments, theories (or ideas) relevant to the topic and talks in more detail the gap in the research that this study sets out to find information on
- Methodology – this chapter is included to give the reader a clear idea of what has been done in the research, how and why. It describes what kinds of research tools were used (such as interviews), how the research was planned and how information was collected and analysed.
- Findings – this chapter describes the participants’ responses; what the young people who took part said and how come this was important. It is meant to show what was similar and what was different about what each participant said and as well as things that came up a lot and seemed most important.

- Discussion – This chapter uses the three research questions as headings to pull together what was talked about in the literature review with what the current research found and looks in them in reference to other theories about psychology and education. It compares what has been found in this study with what other researchers have found and discusses whether the findings are similar or suggest a different view. How information found can be useful to Eps is discussed as well as some plans for how it could be used by schools.
- Conclusions – This chapter sums up what has been done and gives the reader a clear sense of what the research has been about, found and what the next steps might be for other researchers who are interested in this topic.
- Reflexive Account – This is more personal to the researcher and talks about her experience of doing this research. It is important to show the reader what influenced her decision making and thinking as she carried out the research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to address the following questions;

- 1) What does the literature already tell us about inclusion; what is it and why is it an important goal in relation to pupils with SEMH needs?
- 2) What does the literature already tell us about reintegration: what is it, what are the views of different stakeholders on it and why is it an important goal for educators in respect to pupils with SEMH needs?
- 3) What does the literature tell us about some of the psychological concepts linked to the process of reintegration as a school-based transition?
- 4) What are the gaps in the literature that are important to address in order to develop a better understanding of what it is like for young people with SEMH needs to reintegrate back into mainstream school?

Reading around the topic brings to light much psychology that has been linked to the experience of reintegration into mainstream education by young people with SEMH needs. Psychological concepts that have relevance include but extend beyond; attachment, belonging, identity, meaning-making, resilience, inclusion, school connectedness, agency and competence beliefs. I have chosen the following topics to focus on because I am looking at reintegration through the lenses of inclusion and transition. I feel that due to some of the psychology implicit within these topics, they have relevance and are interesting to explore in relation to the construction of a reintegration as a significant transition. Topics have also been chosen that are relevant to the conceptualization of reintegration as a way to promote inclusion.

This chapter will examine; Inclusion and exclusion (2.2); The inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs in mainstream schools (2.3); PRUs: context, purpose and critique (2.4); Practical and

theoretical perspectives on reintegration (2.5); Pupil perspectives (2.6); Pupil self-concept and the significance of possible selves (2.7); Other stakeholder perspectives on reintegration (2.8); Theoretical perspectives on transition (2.9); Transition and sense of self (2.10); Plain language chapter summary (2.11)

A systematic approach to the literature review was conducted to identify publications relevant to the reintegration and transition of young people with SEMH needs from alternative learning provision to mainstream settings. A manual search using internet search engines such as google scholar was initially completed to explore ideas around the topic of inclusion and reintegration of pupils with SEMH needs. Online literature searches were then conducted, applying Boolean Search Logic, using the following databases; PsycInfo, The British Education Index, ERIC and Web of Science. Search terms and keywords were used in various combinations, including; “reintegration”, “transition”, “return to school”, “pupil views”, “perspectives”, “experiences” and “pupil voices”. The full list of search terms, combinations and inclusion/ exclusion criteria can be found in Appendix A. Relevant literature was shortlisted by title and abstract. Abstracts were read and articles were then selected or discarded based on relevancy to the topic using further inclusion and exclusion criteria. All selected articles were read in full, critically reviewed and analysed in terms of their key findings and recommendations for further research. The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) was used as a guide to critically review articles. Appendix B includes a sample of how the CASP system was used to critically review research. Searches of some educational psychology journals were also completed independently. These include 2000-2018 editions of; Educational and Child Psychology and Educational Psychology in Practice. Further literature was also found through consideration of the reference lists from relevant articles found through database searches. Unpublished literature such as Doctoral Theses have been included in the systematic literature review, where relevant. Non-academic literature including policy and documents published by independent and government bodies have also been considered.

2.2 Exclusion and Inclusion: from policy to practice

Inclusion is an ideal that dominates current educational discourses in the UK and internationally. It runs as a thread throughout the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities code of Practice (DfE, 2015) which dedicates a section to inclusive practices and the removal of barriers to learning. The code refers to articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and The Children and Families Act 2014 and states that;

“The UK Government is committed to inclusive education... and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education. The Children and Families Act 2014 secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEN should be educated.”

SEND Code of Practice, 1.26

Differing definitions of inclusion exist within educational literature and this can lead to confusion about what it should look like when operationalized. At its most fundamental, inclusive education is about education practitioners making the necessary adjustments so that children and young people with all different types of needs are supported to access mainstream settings and learn alongside their peers. For example; a mainstream setting seeking and following advice from an EP to make adjustments to classroom set up and staff training so that they are able to support a young person with SEMH needs to achieve in lessons and enjoy other aspects of school life. The opposite of inclusion could be described as segregation; where young people with SEND are educated separately from peers who have no identified SEND.

In more detailed terms, Dyson (2004) describes inclusion as the identification and minimization of barriers to learning for all pupils. Gibb et al (2007) talk about inclusion as exceeding the physical placement of children in settings and being about mainstream settings making adaptations to curriculum and teaching which mean that pupils are able to make social and academic progress. Thomas (2015) talks about inclusion as being a sincere attempt to eradicate educational inequality and not just a commitment to educate pupils with SEND in mainstream

settings. The idea of true inclusion transcending pure physical placement of children in settings might also lead to suggestions that it should aim to encompass other child-school relational constructs such as school connectedness. School connectedness relates to the extent to which a child believes that adults and peers in their school genuinely care about them, their learning and their individual needs (Centre for Disease Control (CDC), 2009).

Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance states that permanent exclusion can only be sanctioned by a head teacher and only on disciplinary grounds. The guidance also says it should only be used as a last resort, in response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school (DfE Timpson Review, 2019 p.5). When a pupil with SEMH needs is excluded they are often placed in a PRU (Lawrence, 2011) until a more permanent placement at a new mainstream school or a specialist school can be found. When a permanently excluded child is offered a place at a new mainstream school, this is what is referred to as reintegration into mainstream; they are transitioning back into mainstream education. It feels important and of interest here to highlight the language used to refer to returning a child to mainstream education from alternative provision; the term reintegration is almost exclusively employed. Educational researcher and behaviour support teacher Thomas (2015) suggests that this term is not fit for purpose nor indicative of the true spirit of inclusion and proposes that the term *reinclusion* should be applied instead. Thomas suggests that *reinclusion* sets the precedent for the attitude of the receiving school as willing and ready to support the transition of a young person into their setting in way that is going to lead to successful outcomes for that child. On reflection, I also feel that this term is suggestive of a more holistic process and of a commitment to developing a child's school connectedness over pure physical placement in a setting. However, I have chosen to retain the term reintegration within this research for the purposes of clarity and continuity with the language of the current discourses explored.

The rate of permanent exclusion in England and Wales has increased steadily over the past six years. It has increased by 15.5% for all pupils since 2012 and 12.5% since 2013 (Jalali and Morgan, 2018). From 2015 to 2017 it increased from 0.08% to 0.10% of pupils in state funded primary and secondary settings. This equates to roughly 10 in 10, 000 pupils. 83% of this figure relates to secondary schools, where around 20 in 10, 000 pupils were permanently excluded in 2017 (DfE, 2018; Timpson Review, 2019). In terms of demographics; late key stage three (KS3) (ages 13-14) and key stage four (ages 15-16) are overrepresented in the data. This is particularly concerning given that this is a critical age in terms of preparing for adulthood (SEND Code of Practice, 2015). 14-year-olds made up 25% permanent exclusions in 2016/17. Other over-represented groups include boys, children in care and pupils eligible for free school meals (DfE, 2019). The Timpson review reports the latest figures which indicate that 78% of all permanent exclusions were received by children who either have an identified SEN, are classified as in need or are eligible for free school meals.

In response to increasing permanent exclusions; The Timpson Review of School Exclusions was commissioned by the DfE amid rising concerns for the trajectories of excluded pupils. It corroborated many of the findings of a previous review by Cole et al (2003) and found that permanent exclusion continues to be associated a range of significant risk factors in terms of outcomes for young people and that of permanently excluded pupils, only 7% were successful in achieving good passes in English and Maths GCSEs (DfE, 2019). This figure goes down to 4.5% in reference to pupils who attend alternative provision such as PRUs post-permanent exclusion. The statement, '*presumption in law of mainstream education*' (SEND Code of Practice, 1.26) carries significant connotations in relation to the government's responsibility to support reintegrative pathways for young people with SEMH needs who are excluded. It justifies their responsibility for supporting effective reintegration of young people back into mainstream settings after periods of time spent not in education or in alternative provision such as PRUs, in order to mitigate some of the risks identified by research such as that by The Timpson Review (DfE, 2019) and Cole et al (2003). It is of note however, that in the most recent review of school exclusion (DfE, 2019) the word reintegration appears just twice within the 128-page document.

There are authors who suggest that inclusion is an ideal that is yet to be fully realised in practice within the UK education system (McCluskey 2015), particularly in relation to pupils with SEMH needs (McSherry, 2012). The following section explores this in more detail.

2.3 Including pupils with SEMH needs: why is it critical?

Firstly, it is important to review how significant the issue of inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs might be. Secondly, it is important to highlight the risk of potentially negative trajectories of pupils with SEMH needs who are permanently excluded and those who attend PRUs. By explicitly acknowledging the risks associated with this pathway it is possible to understand the significance that successful reintegration into mainstream can have in terms of the potential to change pupil trajectories in a more positive direction. This in turn provides justification for exploring the reintegration experiences of pupils so as to inform policy and practice, with a view to increasing successful reintegrative practices and protective pathways for this group.

Poor behaviour was reported as the reason for 35.7% permanent exclusion in 2016/17, making it the most common cause (DfE, 2018) and the most commonly linked with pupils with SEMH needs. Visser et al (2005) found that the externalising nature of the needs of pupils with SEMH needs meant that they were more likely than any other groups to be excluded. Jull (2008) highlight that SEMH needs may be the only SEND categorisation that actually leads to increased risk of exclusion and related marginalisation, suggesting that the label itself can carry negative connotations. Tootill and Spalding's (2000) research findings which looked at the views of young people with a label of SEMH's perceptions of school suggest that the inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs in mainstream settings is one of the most significant challenges facing those committed to inclusive practice in the UK. Results of a review of UK reintegration practices by Farrell et al (1999) concluded that very few pupils with SEMH needs returned to mainstream school after experiencing permanent exclusion. For her doctoral thesis on the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils, trainee EP Lown (2005) reviewed LA data over a six-year period between 1999 and 2005 relating to pathways of permanently excluded pupils. She found that only 25% successfully reintegrated into mainstream placements. She defined successful as

pupils maintaining a placement for 3 or more terms (one academic year) given her view that support systems and plans are likely to have run their course or reduced over this period of time. Whilst this is acknowledged as a justifiable definition, an operational definition of a successful reintegration is not employed for the purpose of this study, as it is concerned only with young people's' experiences of reintegrating; not whether or not they sustained their placement for a specific amount of time.

Jalali and Morgan (2018) conducted a study seeking to compare the perspectives of primary and secondary pupils with SEMH needs on the attributions of their difficulties and their views towards PRUs and reintegration. They used life grids and individual interviews to collect data. They suggest that although there is strong evidence confirming the protective role of supportive and inclusive school systems on educational outcomes for pupils with SEMH needs, this group remain the most likely to experience multiple referrals to alternative provision, which can contribute to the maintenance of issues that create barriers to learning. Issues highlighted by this study as problematic for this group in relation to reintegrations included a lack of mainstream school connectedness, external attributions of needs, external locus of control and low self-worth; more so amongst secondary than primary pupils. The study's research design seems robust in terms of an appropriate qualitative method (IPA), elements such as including pilot interviews and member checking as well as rigorous data analysis procedures. It was interesting that the researchers immersed themselves in the schools and built therapeutic relationships with young people through group work before recruiting participants from this pool. This could be criticized as it could have led them to start to build knowledge and preconceptions of their potential participants which could have impacted their interpretations of findings and any conclusions drawn. However, they acknowledge this as a potential limitation and attend to reflexivity by using a reflective journal.

These and other authors highlight the potentially serious implications for individual pupils, their families and wider society, that could result if the UK education system continues to exclude and segregate young people with SEMH needs. Permanent exclusion and placement in a PRU

have been linked to negative trajectories including offending and imprisonment in youth and in adulthood (Timpson Review, 2019; Cole et al, 2003; McAra & McVie, 2010) social isolation (Gill et al, 2017), unemployment (Sutherland and Eisner, 2014) and mental health issues (Armstrong, 2017). Cefai and Cooper (2009) suggest that young people with a label of SEMH needs can experience victimization within a system that constructs them as failing yet fails in itself to provide appropriate provision. The House of Commons Library published a briefing paper in 2018 looking at young people described as NEET: Not in education, training or employment. It finds that 26% of pupils permanently excluded at KS3 are categorised as long-term NEET. The paper discusses that drop-out of or non-reintegration into mainstream education and vocational courses is high for this group. Amongst its recommendations it suggests that effectively supported transitions, such as reintegrations, can be appropriate interventions to reduce the rate of drop-out and subsequent numbers of NEET pupils (Powell, 2018).

As previously noted, Lown's (2005) review found that only 25% PRU pupils successfully reintegrated into mainstream placements. Given that many pupils in PRUs have SEMH needs (Timpson Review, 2019; Cole et al, 2003) this evidence contributes to the view that reintegration is most likely to fail with this group. Attempts to reintegrate can result in what has been called the '*revolving door effect*'; where young people experience multiple transitions between PRUs and mainstream provision (Pillay et al, 2013). Young people having to experience multiple transitions between settings is concerning when considering what psychological literature and theory tells us about the importance of links between young peoples' experiences of belonging and school connectedness and competence beliefs such as self-esteem and self-concept (Martin et al, 2017). These relationships are discussed in further detail later in this review.

Literature seems to suggest that inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs remains a challenge. Hodkinson (2010) discusses that it can be thought of as an area where socio-political policy and philosophy is moving more quickly than everyday practice. The next sections look at research and theoretical perspectives on PRUs and on reintegration in greater detail.

2.4 Pupil Referral Units; context, purpose and critiques

The importance of supporting successful reintegration can again be justified when looking at what literature tells us about the definitions and intended purpose of PRUs and the journeys of excluded pupils. Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act states that LAs have a statutory duty to make arrangements to provide education for excluded pupils (DfE, 1996). Statistics suggest that the majority of young people (56%) are placed in a PRU after their first permanent exclusion. Other pathways include placement in a new mainstream setting (14.5%) and enrollment in further education colleges (6.5%) (Cole et al, 2003).

Placements in PRUs are advised as short-term solutions, focusing on intervention based on the exclusion reasons and needs of the child. Authors comment that PRUs were never intended as long-term provisions and that LAs should not view them as such (Thomas, 2015). Brown (2011) highlights the legal remit of PRUs as provision for compulsory school age children that should provide respite, aim to mitigate negative consequences of exclusion and prepare for transition back to mainstream as soon as a child is deemed ready. However, evidence suggests that contrary to their intended purpose, PRUs are often providing long-term placements for pupils, with many remaining on roll for over 6 months (Wilkin, Gulliver and Kinder, 2005). This could be considered as a systemic failing given that in relation to exclusions; schools are advised by the DfE to reintegrate children as soon as possible (DfE, 2018). This is supported by research suggesting that the likelihood of successful reintegration diminishes the longer a child spends out of mainstream education (Parsons, 1999) and evidence that one third of young people who complete KS4 in alternative provision such as PRUs go on to be classed as NEET (DfE, 2019).

Heavy criticism within the literature exists in relation to the effectiveness of PRUs in supporting pupil needs and leading to successful outcomes. In 1996, Garner suggested that their very existence confirms the continued segregative practices in relation to pupils with SEMH needs. Taylor (2012) documents the low attendance rates in comparison to mainstream settings. OFSTED (2016) reported serious concerns in terms of the quality of provision and lack of high aspirations and effective intervention strategies in PRUs in England. The House of Commons

NEET Report (2018) found that 27% of PRU pupils end up categorized as long-term NEET (i.e. NEET for over one year). The more recent Timpson Review also calls into question the standards of education received by permanently excluded young people (DfE, 2019).

Bouhours and Bryer's (2004) study explored the life trajectories of pupils who had been excluded and spent time in a PRU, before reintegration was attempted. The retrospective research design was complicated to follow and seems to include the examination and coding of many different types of data including paper archive records and electronic records from different organizations and services. This impacts on the clarity of the findings, however the discussion includes some interesting insights relating to the efficacy of PRU models. The authors concluded that intervention which focused only on educational aspects of children's lives was an inadequate solution for the complexity and multi-contextual nature of the problems faced by this group. The authors suggest these children require a long-term and significant commitment from the education system to foster changes in inner resilience and access to external resources. Addressing the issue of reintegration, they suggest that multiple-risk models of intervention that match the complexity of risk-laden developmental trajectories are needed to prevent young people bringing unaddressed needs with them into new settings (Bouhours and Bryer, 2004).

There is some evidence within the literature that is more supportive of the PRU model. Smaller class sizes and staff understanding of attachment, nurture principles and SEMH needs have been reported as benefits (Jalali and Morgan, 2018). Maltese EP Spiteri's (2009) work on identity development through the life course involved applying a grounded theory approach to exploring the identity development of five young men who had experienced school exclusion and PRU placement. Participants reported that attending a PRU opened up their view of the world and enabled them to interpret their interactions within it from a different perspective. Cole et al's (2003) review of excluded pupils found that those who attended PRUs reported found that relationships between pupils and staff were much more positive than in most

excluding schools. They reported that 19% of the young people spoken to viewed their exclusion and placement in a PRU as a positive.

Using a life path tool and narrative oriented analysis (Hiles and Cermak, 2008) Educational psychologists Tellis-James and Fox (2016) explored the stories that eight PRU pupils with SEMH needs told about their futures. The study found that participants discussed this move as a positive turning point in their lives. They reported an increased sense of agency in terms of their ability to learn and these experiences led them to recognise personal skills which they had previously not acknowledged and that they had options available to them for their futures. Agency is an important prerequisite to social and emotional wellbeing. Agency relates to the degree that a child believes they can make a meaningful impact on the world around them (Nutbrown, 2012). Agentic factors include competence beliefs such as self-concept and self-esteem as well as perceptions of how much control a child feels they have over themselves and others (Martin et al, 2017).

Jalali and Morgan (2018) discuss that PRUs effectiveness should be considered in terms of their propensity to bring about positive behaviour change in young people. These authors suggest that that the cognitions underpinning the needs of pupils placed in PRUs remain largely unchanged during the course of their placements. They suggest that this confirms the ineffectiveness of such provision in providing intervention which leads to sustained positive changes in young people's' self-perceptions and ability to access mainstream education. Perhaps most significantly, this study argues that longer-term PRU placement can lead to the development and maintenance of mental health difficulties, including feelings of depression and inadequacy, which can have an adverse effect on pupil reintegration readiness.

2.5 Practical and Theoretical Perspectives on Reintegration

The GKH Consulting Group, et al (2004) produced a report in conjunction with the DfES entitled The reintegration of children absent, excluded or missing from school (Research report No. 598). In this report, reintegration is defined as;

The efforts made by LEAs, schools and other partners to return pupils who are absent, excluded or otherwise missing from mainstream education provision.

GKH Consulting, Holden McAllister Partnership and IPSOS Public Affairs, Report No. 598

This section explores two issues. Firstly, it explores what research indicates about practical aspects that can serve as facilitators and barriers to reintegration. Secondly, it looks at the more theoretical perspectives which inform the reintegration process.

2.5.1 Practical Issues: facilitators and barriers

The GKH (2004) surveyed 150 LAs and carried out case studies in 14 LAs, looking at reintegrative practices in relation to a number of groups of young people. It was found that 90% had formalised approaches for reintegrating permanently excluded pupils; generally funded by LAs, as well as the Vulnerable Children Grant and European Social Fund. This report suggests LAs reported successful reintegrations in 75-82% of cases. However, it should be noted this was in relation to LAs own varying definitions of success, making it difficult to collect, compare and examine UK wide reintegration data. Data used to inform success criteria included data on transitions from PRUs to mainstreams, attendance rates, attainment data and anecdotal data from case studies.

Research suggests that barriers to successful reintegration include school-based factors. These can include reluctant attitudes of mainstream schools, unresponsive national curriculum content and structure and poor understanding of SEMH needs as particularly salient issues (GKH Report No. 598, 2004). Lawrence's (2011) findings also suggest school-based factors such as the ethos of receiving schools is vital to the success or not of reintegrations. Lawrence (2011)

used focus groups to collect the perspectives of 18 PRU and mainstream staff on the process of reintegration of secondary school pupils. The aims of her study become clear through her exploration of background literature which highlights the need to find out from school staff what needs to be changed to improve reintegrative practices. Systemic barriers suggested by Lawrence and other researchers include a lack of role clarity and poor communications between PRUs and mainstreams (Lawrence, 2011) poor planning, poorly timed integrations and premature withdrawal of support (Lally, 2013). External barriers highlighted by research suggest that a lack of support from and collaboration with parents can cause issues, as well as schools' difficulties in accessing support from external agencies such as EPs.

Literature also discusses facilitators to reintegration. The GKH study (2004) found the widespread use of flexible timetabling and personal education plans as well as multi-agency involvement from social services, EP services and youth workers. In relation to permanently excluded pupils; alternative provision was cited as useful, but more so when this was followed by a phased reintegration which employed the use of key workers. An inclusive ethos in the receiving school was also cited as an important facilitator. Other studies have reiterated these findings. Cole et al (2003) in their review of young people who are permanently excluded interviewed staff and young people about what works regarding reintegrations. They highlighted the importance of the skills and training of the staff in receiving schools and the relationship building between staff and young people. Having a key worker or reintegration teacher was deemed important and these authors recommend that policy development should focus on supporting these roles particularly. This recommendation prompts reflection on the role of the EP in terms of reintegrative practices. It could suggest that EP utility in this context is around the provision of training and skill development for key staff whose role is to support and nurture groups of young people with SEMH needs undergoing transitions to new schools after exclusion.

Collaborating with parents and use of a joined-up approach utilising effective communication by multi-professionals are cited as important in terms of positive outcomes. Listening to the

voice of the young person on their motivations and wishes for the future is highlighted as a key focus for this multi-agency professional work (Lown, 2005). Cole et al (2003) found that timely responses to reintegration was integral to success as it led to the maintenance of structure and routines for excluded young people and was deemed to send a supportive message to families that LAs value them and their education.

2.5.2 Theoretical Perspectives

Literature around reintegration includes acknowledgement of the importance of the language used by receiving schools and how this may be reflective of the underlying attitudes which contribute to the success, or not, of reintegrative practices. McSherry (2012), who has conducted and published research on the reintegration readiness of SEMH pupils with University College London, highlights the pitfalls of schools framing reintegrative transitions as *trial placements*. She advocates that this highlights schools' non-committal attitude and retention of the option to revoke offers of placements to pupils who do not meet their standards and expectations. She proposes that this is counterproductive to the realisation of truly inclusive practices; where schools would show a committed acceptance and willingness to make the reasonable adaptations necessary for successful outcomes.

McSherry's view is shared by Tootill and Spalding (2000), who tracked a reintegration initiative in one specialist school over a four-year period with the aim of highlighting key issues and good practice in the implementation of reintegration programmes for SEMH pupils. They found that emphasising reintegrations as new starts or clean slates is important in helping young people to leave behind their previous negative school experiences, such as exclusions. They advocated that then pupils are encouraged to view their reintegration as expected to succeed and something which they have earned. However, they also found that options to offer trial placements were seen by settings as a facilitator of reintegrative practices. Perhaps this suggests that mainstream settings may feel safer in taking permanently excluded pupils if they know they have a period to assess and review their own capacity to support them effectively. This study provides valuable suggestions of key theoretical considerations emerging as

indicators of effective reintegration practices. Through gathering data from pupils, staff, parents and EPs, the authors also highlight the contrasting perspectives of different stakeholders and in doing so demonstrate the complexity involved in developing practice in this area.

The literature emphasizes the attitudes of young people towards their reintegration as being of equal importance as systemic or external factors (Lown, 2005). Thomas (2015) proposes a Reintegration Readiness model. He suggests that, as opposed to schools being asked to prove their readiness to include; young people should work to justify their readiness to integrate into a mainstream setting. My interpretation of this theoretical stance is that it is controversial; potentially placing disproportionate responsibility on young people as opposed to advocating for shared responsibility with settings. However, research does suggest pupil attitudes are important. Interviews of receiving schools' staff by Cole et al (2003) found that reintegration depended in part on pupils' willingness to accept school rules and routines and the extent to which pupils expressed determination to make a success of new placements. Jalali and Morgan (2018) refer to the maladaptive cognitions and coping strategies of young people with SEMH needs as being underestimated in terms of their impact on reintegrative processes. They suggest this justifies Thomas's reintegration readiness model in that it emphasizes the importance of within-child psychological factors as being integral to reintegration success.

In terms of other pupil characteristics that influence the success or not of reintegration; theories of resilience are considered in the literature. In their study entitled; '*Is resilience possible?*', Bouhours and Bryer (2004) talk about the 'ordinary magic' of young people's ability to adapt as an enabler of positive developmental trajectories in the presence of risk. On reflection, I like this term these authors apply to normalise resilience in young people; which they define as an unlikely, unexpected or improbable positive outcome in the presence of risk (Bouhours and Bryer, 2004, p115). The ability to adapt positively to change and succeed despite the presence of negative experiences and risk factors seems directly applicable to the journeys undertaken by young people who are excluded and then reintegrated. These authors highlight

statistics suggesting that young people who are permanently excluded tend also to have additional risk factors in their lives, including SEMH and social care needs (Howard, 2003) meaning that exclusion can be conceived of as a process which increases risk for potentially the most vulnerable groups. They argue that negative trajectories for excluded pupils can be changed by the influence of protective factors which increase resilience, such as reducing negative reactions to change, increasing pupil self-efficacy, creating new opportunities and, within the vein of positive psychological theories; reframing negative experiences in a positive light. On reflection, it could be argued that these factors represent the very goals of the process of reintegration, thus providing justification for the significance of the process as integral for improving outcomes for excluded pupils.

It is also of interest that these authors apply resilience theory to argue against models of service delivery which advocate for short-term removal from mainstream followed by reintegration suggesting that this solution fails to recognise the complexity of the multi-interactional and layered risk factors that are present in the lives of young people who might experience school exclusion. They suggest that, rather than attempting to inject resilience in a short-term intervention, such as a PRU placement, a more effective response would be to design school systems which are multi-contextual and holistic in their recognition of risk complexity and resilience-increasing factors throughout the whole developmental trajectory.

Lown (2005) discusses the importance of responsive academic support, effective emotional support and valuing the quality of relationships between adults and young people and those of young people and their peers. These concepts link to social-cognitive theories of personal and interpersonal agency (Bandura, 2001); two constructs that have been demonstrated to impact on academic success and social and emotional competence (Martin et al, 2017). Again, these feel important in terms of the EP role given that their remit encompasses assessment, information gathering and consultation with a view to supporting access to learning, social and emotional competence and the development of school wide positive relationships. EP involvement in regard to these aspects could be seen as critical in the context of young people

with SEMH needs, for whom accessing learning and social and emotional competence can be particularly problematic (Martin et al, 2017).

This section has explored some facilitators and barriers and other important theoretical considerations relevant to reintegration. School based, external, systemic and pupil factors all seem to play a role in the success or otherwise of what the literature suggests is a vital but challenging process. However, available research also suggests that no one single approach has emerged as being consistently employed or successful. Tootill and Spalding (2000) assert that if the UK education system were truly inclusive, the practice of reintegration would not present itself as an issue at all, as young people would all belong to one system. However, with current rates of exclusion high and getting higher, reintegration remains a relevant concern for educators and also therefore, for EPs.

Key themes that emerge from research highlight the importance of the education system adopting policies and practices which increase the likelihood of a successful outcomes for this group of young people (Thomas, 2015). However, what also emerges is a lack of research which explicitly seeks and acknowledges the views of the young people at the heart of this issue. Jalali and Morgan (2018) highlight that seeking the voice of young people who experience reintegration is essential in exploring and designing practices which facilitate the long-term inclusion of this group. It is the aim of this study to seek such views. This research aims to find out from young people what their experiences of reintegration were. It seeks to find out what they can tell us about what helps; what makes the process more challenging; how young people who have this experience measure success; and the psychology that may be implicit within these types of transition and in doing so, help illuminate some of the unanswered areas from the literature reviewed above. The next section explores existing relevant research that has explicitly sought the views of young people on experiences of PRU placement and reintegration.

2.6 Pupil Perspectives: The voices of young people with SEMH needs

In reference to the voice of the child, article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child states that;

“Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child; the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

(UNICEF, 1990 p.5)

Policy development over the last few decades has helped to establish and grow consensus amongst EPs and other professions regarding the importance of including the voices of young people in research contributing to the development of effective practice. Gaining and acting on pupil voice is a thread which runs through the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015). Howarth (2004) advocated that understanding young people's' experiences serves to illuminate the lived realities of the individuals at the centre of issues. Tellis-James and Fox (2016) state that valuing and seeking the voices of young people with SEMH needs is of particular importance, as research suggests they are amongst the most vulnerable, the least empowered and that their views are often different from the professionals they work with (Cooper, 2006; Cefai and Cooper, 2009). Corrigan (2014) suggests an acknowledgement amongst professionals of the limited representation of pupil voice has, in recent years, pushed forward efforts to elicit pupil voices on their education for the purposes of planning and policy development. A body of research continues to grow, focusing on asking young people with SEMH needs what helps in terms of supporting their education (O’Riordan, 2011).

As noted above, Tootill and Spalding’s (2000) paper entitled, *‘How Effective can Reintegration be for Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties?’* explicitly seeks the views of young people on the subject. These researchers tracked the progress of 26 young people who had completed a reintegration programme from one specialist provision back to mainstream primary and secondary schools between 1994 and 1998. Retrospective interviews were

conducted with young people, as well as other parties (parents, teachers and EPs) regarding their opinions on the programme, once a mainstream placement had been formerly offered or not after a trial period (21 out of 26 pupils were offered a permanent placement at mainstream, 5 returned to the originating specialist provision). It is acknowledged that this study was published nearly 20 years ago, and so its relevance to today's context may be limited. The write up of the study does not include any specific questions asked of young people, nor does it clearly communicate the purpose of the interviews in relevance to the aims of the research. However, it is amongst the few that have explicitly sought the views of young people who have undergone this transition and the insights are directly relevant to this research. The authors found pupils viewed the support of a reintegration teacher as paramount. They reported benefiting significantly from additional pastoral support in mainstream settings to scaffold use of coping strategies they learned whilst in alternative provision. Concerns raised included worrying about being able to keep up with peers academically, getting to lessons on time and managing homework expectations. Participants also reported significant difficulties around forming friendships. The importance of being accepted by peers was discussed by all young people interviewed. Secondary school interviewees reported this being particularly challenging, as they faced breaking into friendship groups that were long-established. Tootill and Spalding's study concluded that support from peers is of real importance during reintegrations. The authors recommend the provision of programmes which tutor young people in peer mentoring and mediation techniques so that they may support reintegrating pupils to establish routines and develop positive relationships.

The importance of mentoring relationships during transitions back into full time education was also highlighted as significant in a study by Gorlich (2014). He used Poetic Inquiry to explore the perspectives of marginalized young people. The author states that Poetic Inquiry has value as a research approach insofar as it facilitates open-ended representations of the people and phenomena studied by psychologists and educators (Gorlich, 2014) and can lead to insights into what works for whom. The study's methodology could be criticized in that because it is newer and more creative, it is also less well documented and less robust than some more empirically

established qualitative methods. The findings also relate to a context outside of the UK. However, the study reveals interesting and evocative findings relating to the reintegration experiences of 11 young people who have found themselves struggling to engage with the education system. The author highlights how young people often construct themselves as responsible for their difficulties with education and that this can also be a view adopted by adults (Simmons and Thompson, 2011). Gorlich suggests this within-child thinking (where problems are constructed as coming from the child rather than being produced by poor practice at the interface between a child and the systems in which they interact) can lead young people to shoulder responsibilities which are better considered and addressed at a systemic level. Gorlich's findings highlight young people's struggles for individualism within systems which they felt constructed them as failures if they experienced difficulties conforming easily to the expectations of compulsory education. Young people's poems communicated a feeling of being stuck; of finding it challenging to move forward on their own. Participants communicated that these feelings were often alleviated by support from mentors, who exercised patience and empathy as they helped young people move through transitions and reintegrations. The poems illuminated the experience of change for young people who communicated trying to do their best with the personal resources they had. Gorlich's conclusions highlight the importance of considering suitable time frames needed for young people to engage with change processes.

In 2014, Corrigan conducted research into the effectiveness of using person centred planning (PCP) with young people reintegrating into mainstream education after exclusion. Pioneers of person-centred approaches, Murray and Sanderson (2007) advocate it as aiming to elicit directly from young people what they perceive to be important to and for them in order to facilitate their inclusion into education and to wider society. Young people who had been previously experienced exclusion were invited to engage with PCP in support of their transitions back into mainstream and were then asked to reflect on their experiences of the process. Using a longitudinal, action research design as a framework for evaluation, Corrigan sought the views of six pupils, as well as other parties involved, about the outcomes of PCP in terms of empowering young people and encouraging professional collaboration. The research design

benefits from data being collected through questionnaires at two points: after an initial PCP meeting and again at a review meeting (these took place between six and 19 weeks after the initial meeting). The sample of young people is small (n=6) however, the study's methodology is robust in that it collects data at different points of the reintegrations, from multiple stakeholders, using two methods of data analysis. Questionnaires included 11 rating response questions (using a five-point Likert Scale) based on the core elements of PCP, as well as open-ended questions, the responses of which were analysed thematically. She concluded that person-centred approaches to reintegration led to positive impacts. Young people experienced reduced power imbalances and there was a reported strengthening of relationships between stakeholders. These relationships served to facilitate collective understanding of strengths and needs through the use of, for example, one-page profiles. The study also found use of PCP led to positive longer-term impacts on young people's SEMH needs, school attendance and educational achievements. Corrigan's findings support the small but growing evidence base related to the efficacy of person-centred practices across education.

Other research focuses on young people with SEMH needs experiences of education more generally and factors they perceive as either supportive or as barriers to positive school experiences. In 2010, Cefai and Cooper conducted a review in response to the issue of young people with SEMH needs being the least represented in terms of pupil voice. The study is included in this literature review as I feel it provides a helpful summary of the small body of research which exists on this topic and saliently highlights the vulnerability of this group. Cefai and Cooper (2010) reviewed eight qualitative studies which included the views of secondary school pupils with SEMH needs on their school experiences. Applying thematic analysis, they found five key themes in relation to school-based factors which pupils identified as contributing to their school difficulties. Themes included poor relationships with teachers and feeling victimised by school systems that seemed unfair and unjust (Massa, 2002; Magri, 2009). A theme around feeling oppressed and of having no voice emerged: with particularly salient statements from interviewees, such as, '*Nobody asks for my opinion*' (Magri 2009, cited in Cefai and Cooper, 2010 p.189). Such oppressive practices led to what Clarke et al's (2005) study

suggests were attempts by pupils to resist adopting the values of schools whom they felt did not listen to them. An emotive theme of boredom and frustration emerged; pupils reported finding it difficult to engage in a curriculum which they felt had little relevance to their lives and potential futures. Exclusionary practices were also found to be significant: pupils reported feeling that the rigidity of systems imposed unrealistic expectations for change on their part with little flexibility. Most significantly for my research; Cefai and Cooper's review found that most of the young people who were given a second chance at a new school after exclusion reported developing a more positive view of education and that this impacted positively on their self-concept and belief in their own abilities. Drawing on his previous research, Cooper coins this phenomenon *positive resignification* (Cooper, 1993).

The authors of this review acknowledge it could be criticised in that it only focuses on school-based factors in the complex lives of young people and could therefore be argued to attempt to view an extremely complex issue through a very narrow lens. Additionally, it should be noted that this finding and other assertions within the studies reviewed by Cefai and Cooper are interpretative in that they are based on the researchers making sense of their participants' accounts. They should therefore be considered within a socio-constructivist perspective which acknowledges the co-constructive nature of what is reported and the reflexivity of the researchers' subjective relationship to the data. That said, this review is comprehensive in its appraisal of a number of qualitative studies that sought the view of pupils with SEMH needs. It usefully draws together commonalities in the issues experienced by this group and points to some areas of practice that could be a focus for improving systems in response better supporting pupils with an SEMH label. I feel the findings raise important and relevant considerations in the context of my study. They suggest that pupils can view reintegration as a second chance and that this can lead to positive changes in competence beliefs such as self-concept. They also suggest there are lessons to be learned from pupils' views on what may need to be considered in order to support young people with SEMH needs to reintegrate into new settings successfully. Addressing concerns highlighted by pupils, such as focusing on providing a curriculum that is related to the real lives and imagined futures of this group and

developing supportive relationships between teachers and pupils based on genuine valuing of pupil opinions could work towards structuring reintegrative practices which lead to transformative experiences and successful outcomes.

Cefai and Cooper (2010) conclude with recommendations about how gaining children's' voices can serve as an empowering and emancipatory experience. They reference Norwich and Kelly (2006) who highlight the significance that empowering young people with SEMH needs can have in terms of preventing exacerbation of difficulties. They also suggest that eliciting voice helps young people to gain insight into their own needs and how these function within the contexts of their learning and relationships. This demonstrates the utility of research into this area in informing the EP practice. As professionals whose contact with young people consistently involves gaining their views, it is arguable they have the skillset and an ethical responsibility to use this information purposively to support young people's development of self-understanding; either through direct work or by consultation with teams around children. It is suggested that empowering discourses can support young people to feel more in control and take greater responsibility for their behaviour (Norwich and Kelly, 2006); both of which are important proponents of building positive self-concept (Bandura, 2001), personal agency (Martin et al, 2017) and in the construction of positive possible selves (Markus and Nurius 1986). The next section focuses on research that has explored the psychological concept of possible selves in relation to young people with SEMH needs. Self-concept is also explored in this section, as intrinsically linked to the construction of possible selves and as integral to successful reintegration into mainstream settings.

2.7 Pupil Self-concept and the Significance of Possible Selves

In their 2010 study, Cefai and Cooper reported the voices of young people with SEMH needs who described mainstream school as an unhappy and unpleasant experience. Pupils discussed feeling that the curriculum content and learning expectations were ill-matched and sometimes directly conflicting with their lived experiences and cultures. Most concerning perhaps, were pupil reports of feeling victimised by a system which labelled them as deviant or as failing (Cefai

and Cooper, 2010). The authors raised the issue that these systems functioned to negatively impact these pupils' self-esteem, which in turn led to young people doubting their own competencies.

The idea of positive competence beliefs such as self-esteem and self-concept and its link to motivation was explored by psychologists Markus and Nurius (1986), who proposed the psychological construction of Possible Selves to explain how these are related. They propose a theoretical framework whereby positive self-concept can be measured in terms of the extent to which individuals can imagine versions of themselves in the future as taking positive or successful pathways. Possible selves can be multiple and are the manifestation of pervasive aspirations, motives, fears and threats which function to regulate behaviours (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Markus and Nurius link an individual's repertoire of imagined future selves to that individual's intrinsic motivation to engage in behaviours and interactions in the present which are consistent with the likelihood of a particular trajectory in the future. The process is seen as dynamic and multi-modal; a feared or hoped for future self can function as motivation for behaviour and shape a person's working self-concept.

Oyserman and Fryberg (2006) highlight that children and young people most commonly construct school-focused selves. Research has found that young people who have been excluded often have negative perceptions of themselves in the future and limited ambitions for the future (Cole et al, 2000). These are concerning findings when considered in light of the idea that having ambitions is a proponent of positive possible selves and of motivation to engage in behaviours that increase the likelihood of positive, desired outcomes (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

Curious about the impact of different school experiences; Mainwaring and Hallam (2010) applied possible selves to compare the aspirations of 25 secondary students from mainstream (n=9) and PRU cohorts (n=16). Semi-structured interviews were conducted, asking pupils how long they had been at their school and why they were there, due to the researchers' view that

pupils' exploring their school histories would also provide information related to what they felt their future options and possibilities were. Interpretation of data was framed using the existing constructs of positive and negative future selves and therefore this kind of deductive approach to analysis could be criticised for its propensity to promote researcher bias. Also, interviews lasted no longer than 20 minutes, which is arguably a small timeframe in which to build rapport, explain the purpose and collect data that can be translated into such significant claims as proposed by the authors. However, Mainwaring and Hallam concluded that 100 percent of pupils from mainstream setting discussed positive possible selves. This compared with only 69 percent of PRU educated pupils. Mainstream pupils discussed clear future plans, demonstrated awareness of potential barriers and conceived of alternatives. These aspects were much less frequently reported by PRU pupils, who discussed many versions of negative possible selves and who perceived that many options or pathways were impossible for them. The findings suggest that young people who attend PRUs display more vulnerability in terms of possible selves and hold more negative perceptions regarding their future prospects. Dweck (1999) discusses how the internalisation of goals is linked to the development of self-concept, which is in turn linked to motivation to pursue goals. Critically, Mainwaring and Hallam's research findings could be interpreted in a way that suggests PRU provision supports pupils to internalise goals to a lesser extent than mainstream placements do. However, the difference between the possible selves of the two groups could also be influenced by the fact that PRU pupils have typically experienced rejection from educational settings in the form of fixed-term and permanent exclusions. These findings lend support for the value of supporting reintegration into mainstream settings from PRUs; to mitigate the effects of rejection experiences and those which serve to engender and maintain negative perceptions of future selves in young people. The concept of Possible Selves feels like a potentially useful line of inquiry within the current study; to explore if and how participants' reintegration experiences influence their construction of future selves. It is therefore included as a possible avenue of exploration within the interview schedule (see Appendix F and G).

Possible selves were also explored by Tellis-James and Fox in their (2016) study focusing on the positive narratives of eight KS4 young people with a label of SEMH needs who attended a specialist provision in London. This study has theoretical foundations in positive psychology (a concept coined by Maslow in 1954 and which has since been described as the study of what makes life worth living (Peterson, 2008)), and took an optimistic stance; exploring the prospect that negative life experiences can produce positive, protective qualities in young people such as resilience, self-determination, self-belief and pride. Narrative-oriented enquiry was used to analyse the narratives of participants, with a focus on illuminating their aspirations and future selves. The authors' findings present a challenge to discourses which frame young people with SEMH needs as having poor resilience. They highlight the propensity of this group to construct positive meaning from difficult experiences. Some examples of this include participants reporting feeling determined to make a better life for themselves after school exclusion and discussing permanent exclusion as propelling them to work harder in their education.

Supporting the development of positive possible selves in reintegrating pupils may have some potential to enhance young peoples' competence beliefs and increase their motivation to engage with positive behaviour change and also with the values of new settings. As previously noted, the values or ethos of reintegrating schools seems to be an important factor influencing the success of these types of transitions. Schools who have an inclusive ethos and who communicate willingness to support young people with SEMH needs transition successfully back into mainstream are suggested to experience more positive outcomes in terms of successful reintegrations. Whilst the voices of pupils are fairly sparse in the research; a number of studies exploring the perspectives of other stakeholders regarding reintegration are available. The following section explores some of this research.

2.8 Other Stakeholder Perspectives on Reintegration

As noted above the voice of the young person should be paramount in research exploring pupil experiences of education and it is also important to collect and consider the views of those who support young people throughout their educational journeys. Cefai and Cooper (2010) note

that the potential for differences between the perspectives of different stakeholders should be recognised and used to open a dialogue which values the voices of all involved. During transitions back to mainstream education from PRUs, a number of stakeholders are involved; these include parents, SENCos, Head teachers and other teaching staff. This section explores what the research tells us about what it is important, what works and what does not regarding reintegrations, from the perspectives of these other parties.

Systemic processes refer to the ways in which systems around a child (for example; family set-up, school systems, local authority practices and government policies) communicate and interact with the child and with each other to produce outcomes for individuals and groups of children categorised with different types of needs. Looking at how systemic processes operate is key to identifying reintegration facilitators and barriers; things that help and things that work against successful reintegrations. Thomas (2015) explored the perceptions of educational professionals around the process of reintegration of pupils with SEMH needs from a PRU to a mainstream setting. He looked at pupil referral and tracking data before conducting a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. Thomas' study indicated that educational professionals identified more barriers than facilitators of inclusion; lending support to the view that it tends to be a process characterised by complexity and challenge. He found education professionals' in different settings (primary, secondary and PRU) reported, with great consistency, variables of facilitators and barriers; the most highly rated of which across all types of settings were systemic variables. These included the length of time a young person spent out of mainstream education, receiving school ethos and support from PRU staff to the receiving school. Secondary schools rated within-child factors as being of highest importance, more so than PRU or primary settings. Facilitators included pupils having a positive attitude towards the transition, being willing to adopt mainstream rules and expectations and pupils using learned or planned coping strategies. This is an interesting finding as it suggests secondary school staff report an external locus of control in terms of successful reintegration (a feeling that outcomes are attributed to factors outside of the school's control). It prompts reflection on the degree to which settings adopt responsibility for reintegrations if they attribute success or otherwise to

the attitude of the transitioning pupil and less so to their whole-school approach to inclusion. Thomas' findings are also consistent with evidence from similar studies which highlight staff perceptions of the importance of; having an inclusive ethos characterized by understanding and effective communication (Armstrong, 2017); as little time spent out of mainstream as possible and strong relationships characterised by support between PRU and mainstream staff groups (Grandison, 2011; Tootill and Spalding, 2000).

Thomas (2015) writes of his concern that inclusion is an ideology not yet fully realized in practice and notes that his findings are fairly pessimistic. Gibb et al (2007) reported more optimistic findings in their study entitled, 'Pathways to Inclusion'; where they looked at a partnership programme between a specialist and mainstream provision which achieved higher than average levels of successful reintegration (defined as a pupil maintaining their place at mainstream one year after reintegration, which happened 20 out of 23 attempts). The authors advocate for the importance of learning from examples of effective practice in terms of relationships between specialist or alternative provisions and their mainstream counterparts. Using individual, semi-structured interviews they collected the perceptions and experiences of both setting's staff groups on children's inclusion in mainstream after reintegration; identifying twice as many facilitators than barriers. Again, systemic factors were most commonly discussed; including outreach support from specialist provision staff and each setting valuing the other's strengths and experience. Peer acceptance was also valued as important; workshop programmes had been developed to promote positive and supportive peer relationships between existent and reintegrating pupils. Barriers included inflexible attitudes of staff and some individual factors, such as pupil's interpersonal and assertiveness skills. The study relates to primary settings and the findings may not necessarily be as relevant to the secondary school context. However, Gibb et al suggest that examples such as this and the growing political emphasis on inclusion more widely may be calling into question more traditional views on the remit of specialist provision and their relationships with mainstreams.

Lawrence (2011) conducted focus groups seeking the views of 18 PRU and mainstream staff, aiming to find out what needs to change to improve reintegration practices. Her findings support the above studies in terms of the perceived importance of similar systemic and pupil factors. In addition, the importance of non-intimidating reintegration meetings, explaining processes to young people and parents and gaining the support of parents was discussed. Significance of pupil self-esteem was noted; echoing the findings of Cole et al (2003), the DfES (2004) and Parsons et al (2001) and reiterating the potential importance of exploring possible selves with this group. Lawrence's study has a clear aim supported by transparent research questions and a method of data collection that is appropriate in seeking answers to those questions. She highlights some valuable points, including the perceptions of Senior Leadership Teams that reintegrative practices do need to be improved and that a reflective approach was seen as important. Participants felt that the expectations of receiving school staff needed to be clarified and managed within open and honest relationships. Interestingly, Lawrence also asserts that non-inclusive attitudes amongst mainstream schools can lead PRUs to misrepresent the true extent of the needs of reintegrating pupils which can mean receiving schools are unprepared to effectively support needs. Other barriers identified include young people being fearful or worried about returning to mainstream or having pervasive SEMH needs which staff felt were too severe to be met within mainstream education. Lawrence also highlights the potential utility of EPs in training mainstream staff to support the needs of young people with SEMH needs who reintegrate from PRUs.

Amongst their recommendations, all the studies reviewed in this section advocate for more research which explicitly explores pupil perspectives on reintegration. Lawrence's (2011) findings were collated into a good practice guide document for settings. This prompts reflection on how the findings from my study could have potential utility. It is hoped that insights from this research may contribute to the growing evidence-base regarding young people's views on good practice in this arena.

2.9 Theoretical Perspectives on Transition

Reintegration is a type of transition. Many different definitions of transition exist, linked to varying contexts and localities of change processes. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a transition as moving from one state or activity to another. More philosophically, Dearden (2004) suggests transitions represent opportunities of possibility, where the process of change allows a person to develop in different ways. Rose and Shelvin (2017) note how transitions have been found to be particularly challenging for young people with SEND. Groups most at risk of negative impacts of transition include young people with ASC and SEMH needs (Kelly and Farrell, 2012). It seems important therefore to consider theories of transition within this review. The purpose of this is to acknowledge the psychology that may be implicit within the experiences of young people who undergo a transition from a PRU to a mainstream school and how we might use this knowledge to better inform systemic support for reintegration.

Fisher (2012) proposes a 13-stage model regarding the process of transition; the Personal Transition Curve (see figure 1). It considers the emotional stages of change; the feeling states one may experience as they move through a change process and in doing so, provides a useful model from which to consider some of what may be involved in the experiences of young people transitioning from PRUs to mainstream schools.

suggests this stage can occur when we are able to map personal construct systems onto new contexts comfortably. He warns that unrealistic expectations at this stage can lead individuals to form ill-fitting psychological models of future selves. This prompts reflection on the potential utility of employing personal construct psychology (PCP) in reintegration interventions with young people, to gain insight into the construct systems they may use to understand themselves and others in a new setting. It also lends support for research suggesting management of expectations is key to successful outcomes. The Fear and Threat stages could also be managed effectively with support involving PCP and work around identity, as Fisher suggests they arise from the threat of imminent changes to one's core belief and behavioural systems. Fear around potential impacts on self-perception is suggested to be a primary source of resistance to change (Frances, 1999) and therefore potentially of great concern to educational professionals aiming to support young people to adapt to new educational contexts successfully.

Fisher's model professes that change produces tensions between existing and future constructions of the self. He advocates the importance of individuals' understanding and accepting how a change process will interact with their personal construct systems. Working from this model, the aim of professionals involved in school transition interventions seems to be about: supporting understanding and expectations; managing risks associated with negative feeling states such as anxiety, fear and anger; and developing protective factors such as self-belief, self-concept and coherent, positive identities.

Further insights into how theoretical perspectives can support reintegrating young people come from Cheney's (2012) paper aiming to provide transition tips for settings working with SEMH needs. He reviewed a number of transition support programmes available for this group at secondary level. Commonalities between programmes reviewed that were successful in supporting transitions included an emphasis on building resilience and self-determination. Cheney refers to Field et al's definition of self-determination as; a combination of skills, knowledge and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated,

autonomous behaviour (Field et al, 1998, p.2). This means young people having skills they can use (such as literacy or social skills) and self-belief that they can apply these skills to reach their goals and they can also recognise their own control over positive outcomes they may experience. Self-determination then, is linked under the umbrella of social-cognitive theory, to personal agency. Other important components highlighted by Cheney as useful in transition work included using strengths-based and person-centered approaches, such as personal futures planning. Evidence seems to suggest that transition programmes inclusive of these approaches which effectively build self-determination are more likely to lead to positive outcomes such as young people achieving desired employment (Bullis et al 2002; Maloy et al, 2010). Cheney (2012) suggests that policy and practice development should focus on building self-determination approaches into transition planning. He stresses that this is particularly essential for pupils with SEMH needs, who may struggle more than others with self-determination.

Other authors who offer theoretical perspectives on educational transitions include Cook et al (2008) who discuss the importance of young people being provided with opportunities to practice skills and strategies they may learn at PRUs so they can generalise them to different settings. This work, these authors suggest, should take place prior to reintegration back to mainstream, advocating for staged transitions incorporating short visits and time for reflection. Australian EP Cumming (2017), who writes about the need for a flexible approach to reintegrations also highlights the importance for transition plans to be gradual. His research, employing a single case study design, evaluated the efficacy of a Flexible Integration Model which was based on the theoretical framework of Person-centred planning. He reported a positive response to the approach, recommending that plans should allow time for co-teaching between PRU and mainstream staff and time for young people to familiarise themselves with expectations and routines of mainstream settings and to practice applying learning and strategies.

It seems that there is some consensus in terms of professional views on the psychology involved within transitions and of what constitutes effective practice in transition planning.

However, research gaining pupil voice on what it is like to complete a transition back to mainstream school remains sparse. This gap that requires addressing in order to explore whether young peoples' views concur with professional opinion and ultimately to develop models of transition planning which keep the young person at the centre of the process.

2.10 Transitions and Sense of Self

Conceptions of the self (self-perception, self-concept and identity) seem to be present as a thread through literature on transitions and reintegrations. They seem to be the psychological constructs implicitly woven into all others reviewed in this chapter; linked to notions of possible selves, self-concept, self-determination and resilience. Acknowledging literature that discusses the relationship between transition and sense of self or identity therefore seems important for this review. Literature suggests that transitions are times of reconstruction for young people (Ackesjo, 2013); times where, whilst moving through a cycle of change; core beliefs, values and other facets of identity are reviewed and reconstructed. Personal construct theorists discuss the impact of transition on sense of self as involving a process of realignment in terms of how one's identity, beliefs and values guide behaviour during such times. It is suggested that behavioural change and values realignment can occur as people strive to become their preferred identity and to move away from actions which feel link to undesired identities or that with which people are no longer comfortable (Kelly, 1955; Beaver, 2011).

In relation to school-based transitions, some research explores the role of identity and processes of identity reconstruction. Ackesjo (2013) looked at transitions to compulsory school from preschool. Her results suggest that children are active agents within transitional processes and that they employ strategies to adapt comfortably to new settings. Strategies include border making; where young people effortfully distance themselves from old settings by acting in ways that draw definite borders between them as preschoolers and them as primary schoolers. She found that processes such as border-making seem essential for children to leave behind constructs of identity that will be unhelpful in their transition to a new context. Ackesjo identified borders being drawn by her participants in, for example, their statements highlighting

what they used to do in their old setting and what they do in their new setting. She asserts that entries and exits within school journeys require pupils to consistently reorient themselves and re-examine who they are. She advocates for the importance of understanding the processes by which young people go about border marking and realigning identities so as to better understand and support their experiences of transitions. This study's design seems robust, with data collected in three different schools over 18-months using an ethnographic approach. The findings are clearly stated and expanded on by the author using interesting psychological concepts. The data relates to primary aged children with no identified SEND and so findings are not specifically related to the group with which the current study is concerned. However, considering if and how young people with SEMH needs engage in similar processes during transitions back to mainstream may be useful in understanding the more subtle, internal challenges present during reintegrations. Ackesjo (2013) suggests pupils invest effort and energy into deconstructing old and reconstructing new identities during transitions. This prompts reflection on the degree of motivation needed during this process. It could be argued that finding motivation to invest may be more challenging for young people who have experienced perceived rejection from previous schools, in the form of permanent exclusion and more challenging still, for those whose SEMH needs impact their view of themselves as able to succeed.

Ecclestone (2007) writes an academic paper centering around the idea that school transitions involve a shift from one identity to another. She considers different theories of identity as she develops the argument that identity is about a process of being and becoming. Ecclestone suggests that transitions become challenging when individuals struggle to find a narrative that facilitates the transfer of the self from one context to another. Further challenge can come when a person experiences conflict between their desired ideal possible self (Markus and Nurius, 1986) and their perception of how external pressures such as school systems want them to be (Hayward, 2005). Effective interventions at this stage are suggested to include self-reflection to draw out positive or resilient identities that are capable of developing coping

strategies to manage expectations of the self in new systems encountered during transitions to new environments (Fisher, 2012; Beaver, 2011).

Ecclestone's (2007) paper is interesting in that whilst she writes about the relationship between transition and identity and considerations to facilitate effective transitions; she also argues that overemphasizing transitions as inherently problematic risks pathologizing what is a normative process for all humans. She warns against political discourses that construct transitions as disruptive and daunting experiences as risking depicting young people who struggle with them as more problematic or less able to cope. She suggests research communicating that transitions for some specific groups are unmanageable without formal support discredits the potential for transitions to be viewed as opportunities to display resilience and capacity for adaptive change. Ecclestone cautions that this can lead to educational discourses narrowing the definition of a successful transition to a young person who successfully navigates through educational arrangements.

On reflection, I think Ecclestone is suggesting that we need to consider the depth of individual and systemic psychology implicit within experiences of transitions in education. I feel that her paper neatly draws together other ideas presented in this review across different research topics. For example, the need to consider a holistic view of young people who experience reintegration is communicated and the importance of constructions of identity, framed within the context of systemic models, seems vital. Ecclestone also reiterates the views of other authors writing about the importance of valuing the potential positives to be found when exploring experiences that are often constructed as negative or risky.

2.11 Plain Language Chapter Summary

Why are inclusion and reintegration important goals for pupils with SEMH needs?

- The number of pupils being permanently excluded in England and Wales has been increasing over the last 6 years. This is a problem because research tells us that

permanently excluded pupils are less likely to get good GCSE grades, go on to further education or get a job as an adult. They are also more at risk of developing mental health problems, getting into trouble with the police or feeling isolated from their community

- Lots of pupils who are excluded have SEN, such as SEMH needs. Some research says that pupils with SEMH needs are more likely than other pupils to be excluded, more likely to go to a PRU and least likely to return to mainstream school or other education after exclusion.
- Reintegration should help excluded pupils with SEMH needs to get back into mainstream education from PRUs and help to avoid some of the above risks. If pupils are staying in PRUs for a long time or get excluded again soon after reintegrating, it means that the school system might not be working as it should be and this can have negative consequences for the pupils.
- It is important to ask questions and do research about reintegrations so that we can find out what is and what is not working in the system and make changes so that more young people with SEMH needs reintegrate to mainstream school from PRUS and that this goes well and they keep their place.

What helps and what does not help to make reintegrations successful?

- Facilitators are things that seem to help pupils to reintegrate successfully. Research says these include things like:
 - A stepped approach with enough time given for pupils to visit their new schools before starting
 - Support from key workers
 - Mainstream staff taking the time to build positive relationships with reintegrating pupils
 - School staff listening to the views and wishes of pupils and using these to plan flexible timetables and lessons that are personal to each individual pupil. These things are called Person-centred practice.

- Mainstream school staff understanding how to support pupils with SEMH needs and giving support with friendships, feelings and learning
 - PRU and mainstream staff working together and communicating well
 - PRUs and mainstream schools working with professional such as EPs
- Barriers are things that seem to make reintegrations more difficult for pupils and schools to do successfully. Research says these include;
 - Schools not feeling they can support pupils with SEMH needs or needing better understanding of how different pupils might need different types of support.
 - PRU and mainstream schools not communicating or working well together
 - Schools having problems getting support from other professionals such as EPs
 - Not enough planning and not enough support for pupils when they start their new mainstream school

What do young people with SEMH say about their experiences of school and of reintegration?

- Research has found that young people with SEMH needs sometimes feel school can be unfair, that they do not get on with their teachers, do not feel listened to by adults and that lessons do not feel usefully related to the goals they have for their future
- Some young people who have gone to PRUs have said that they got on better with PRU staff than mainstream staff
- Research has found that pupils who reintegrate worry about things like being able to catch up and keep up with school work and homework, making friends and getting to lessons on time
and finding it hard to be themselves
- Research also found pupils felt that it was useful to have a key adult that they could talk to and to help them to cope at their new mainstream school. These are sometimes called mentors or key workers.

- Possible selves are thoughts about what your future might be like. Pupils who have SEMH needs or who have been to a PRU seem to have less positive thoughts about themselves and what they can achieve in the future compared to other pupils.

What theories (ideas) are there about the psychology involved in transitions from one school to another?

- Reintegration is a type of transition and research suggests transitions can be difficult for young people with SEMH needs to cope with.
- Some theories suggest people can experience different feelings in stages as they go through transitions, including anxiety, happiness, fear and acceptance.
- Research suggests there are some things adults can do to help pupils to cope with different feelings they could have as they transition to mainstream from PRUs. These include being clear about expectations, helping pupils to learn and practice coping strategies and helping pupils to feel positive about themselves and their abilities
- Some psychological theories suggest that when pupils change schools they may make some changes to how they feel, think and talk about themselves (their identity) and what they feel is important about life (their values) so that they can feel more comfortable in their new school

What are the gaps in what we already know that we want to find out more about by doing this study?

- Research on reintegration has asked for the views of parents, school staff and EPs
- There is not much research that asks young people who have reintegrated into mainstream from a PRU what it was like, what was helpful and what was not so helpful.
- This research aims to find out from young people what their experience of reintegration was like so that we can add to the evidence base and make suggestions that might improve the process for schools and improve the experience for young people

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study takes a qualitative approach to elicit the experiential perspectives of four young people on what it means to them to transition back to mainstream school after spending time in a PRU. This chapter covers the following sections; Research Aims and Research Questions (3.2); Justification for Methodology (3.3); Theoretical Foundations of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (3.4); Potential Limitations of an IPA Methodology and Consideration of Alternative Approaches (3.5); Research Design: Evaluating Quality in IPA Research (3.6); Interview Method and Procedures (3.7); Data Analysis (3.8); Reflexivity (3.9); Plain Language Chapter Summary (3.10).

3.2 Research Aims and Research Questions

The early work of educational psychologists (EPs) such as Ravenette (1999) and Kelly (1963), as well as publications such as *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2004) and the Farrell Report (Farrell et al, 2006) have contributed to the evolution of societal attitudes towards children (Gibson, 2018). There is now broad acceptance that children are important sources of information on matters that concern them (Hardy and Majors, 2017 p13). This has led to a growing appreciation of the need to include the voices of young people within research given the acknowledgment of the valuable contribution their views can make to influencing practice and policy development (Corrigan, 2014). There is also increasing recognition that young people with SEMH needs are amongst the most vulnerable and least represented group in terms of voice within educational and psychological literature (O’Riordan, 2011). In response to this, as the previous chapter highlighted, efforts seem to have been increased to seek and report the views of young people with SEMH needs on their school experiences.

The psychological concept of possible selves (Mainwaring and Hallam, 2010) is one topic discussed within this research given the current study's interest in how the future selves of young people with a label of SEMH may be impacted by reintegration to mainstream school. The importance of supporting successful reintegration into mainstream settings as a way to mitigate the risks associated with permanent exclusion is also recognised in the literature. There are some studies highlighting views of professionals (e.g. PRU and mainstream staff) on the facilitators and barriers to effective reintegration, as well as broader theoretical perspectives on the process of reintegration and school-based transitions. However, a review of the literature highlighted that there remains a gap insofar as a lack of research which has explicitly sought the perspectives of young people with SEMH who experience a reintegration into mainstream from a PRU. In acknowledging what the literature already tells us, this study aims to bridge some of the previous work and address the gap in the public state of knowledge. This research is qualitative and focuses on the meaning of experiences, participant sense-making and communicative actions (Smith et al, 2009). The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of young people who have undergone a transition back to mainstream school from a Pupil Referral Unit.

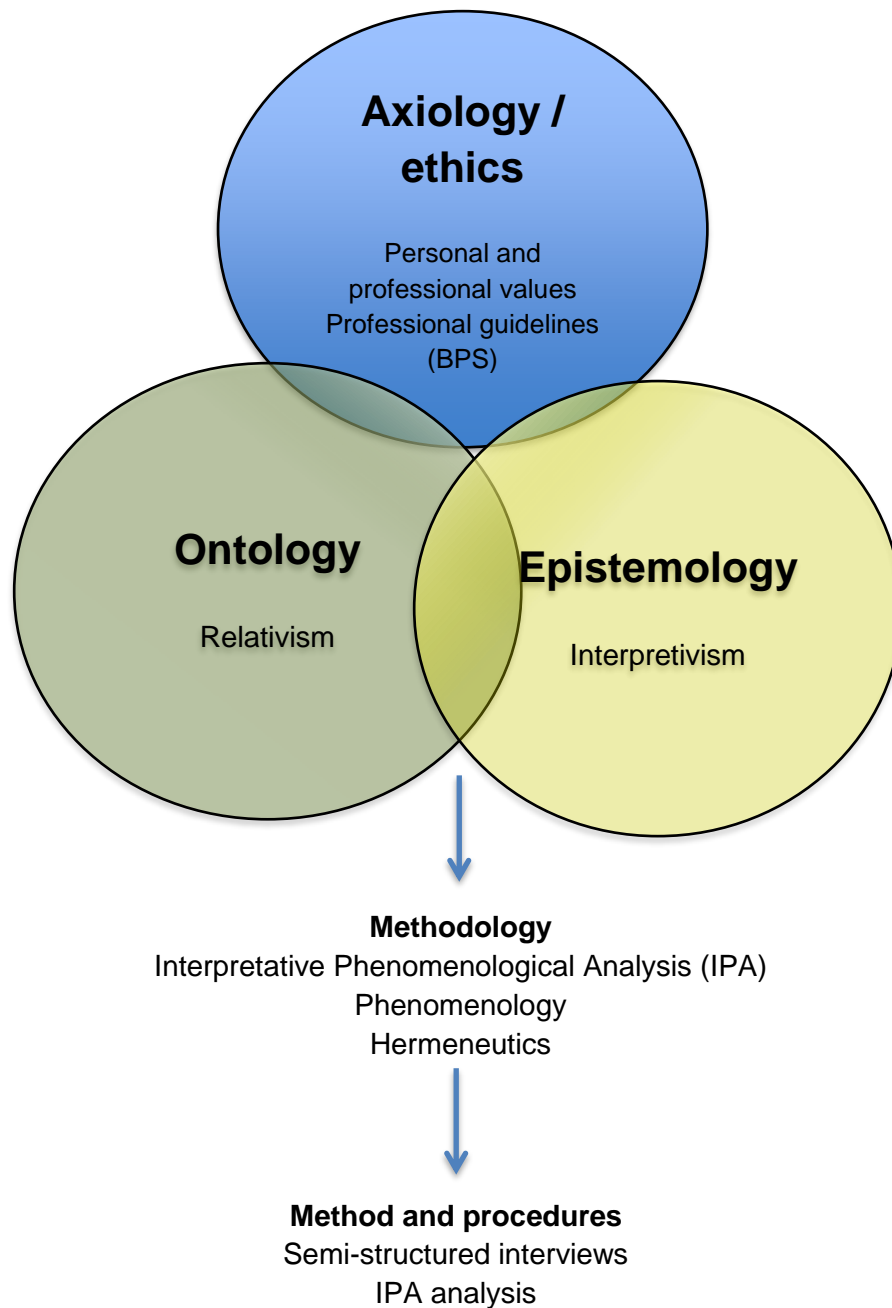
Due to the approach to this study, the research questions are not posed as hypotheses; they are not designed to test any theory but rather to engage with what is already known and to contribute to further understanding of this subject. The research questions are;

1. How do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream schools from a pupil referral unit make sense of their experience?
2. How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream?
3. What role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

3.3 Justification for Methodology

In this section I explain my methodological choices. Kaplan (1964, p18) describes a methodology as, 'the study, the description, the explanation and the justification for methods'. Methods can be thought of as vehicles for communication; choices of which influence what kinds of information can be elicited, in the same way that different channels of communication determine what passes through them (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). It feels important to acknowledge that methodological choices are underpinned by the values and assumptions of the researcher (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002) and should be fit for purpose (Cohen et al, 2000, p73) in regard to the aim of the project.

My methodological choices are underpinned by my positioning in reference to the epistemological, ontological and axiological traditions of IPA. Durant-Law (2006) offers 'The Philosophical Trinity' model as a way of presenting the dynamic interplay between these philosophical traditions. The model asserts that each tradition influences each of the others. For example; a relativist ontological approach (assuming that there are multiple, socially constructed truths) influences the researcher's epistemologically interpretivist view; that any knowledge produced is in the context of them making sense of their participant's sensemaking. The researcher therefore assumes that knowledge gained is not representative of 'the truth', but rather 'a truth'. Other researchers have adapted this model as a useful way to demonstrate their methodological foundations. One such adaptation by Elston-Green (2017) is presented in figure 3.1.



3.3.1 Ontology and the Ontological Position of IPA

Ontology refers to the nature of reality in which knowledge is situated. It is best constructed as a spectrum polarised by realism and relativism. Issues of ontology are concerned with whether or not there is one objective truth which exists independently of our knowledge of it, that can be studied and ‘found’ through research (Durant-Law, 2006). A realist ontological position assumes this and tends to align itself more cohesively with quantitative research methods. A

relativist position has philosophical roots in social constructionism, assuming the existence of multiple truths that are socially constructed through language, social interactions and experiences within the contexts of history and time (Gergen, 2001).

IPA is rooted in social-constructionism and therefore leans away from the assumption that there is one objective truth to be sought. It assumes a reality (a lived experience contextualised in terms of the meaning people ascribe to that experience) can be constructed through language and explored through an interaction between the researcher and the participant. My values as a researcher align more coherently with a relativist perspective and therefore IPA seems a fit for purpose theoretical framework on which to base my exploration.

3.3.2 Epistemology and the Epistemological Position of IPA

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge itself and can be thought of as on a spectrum of positivism and interpretivism. Epistemological questions ask what it means to know something and concern themselves with methods of gaining and justifying knowledge. Quantitative methodologies often acquire knowledge from a positivist epistemological position, which assumes that knowledge should be defined and measured in a way that minimises the researchers influence and biases. Epistemologically, IPA is inherently interpretivist. It lends itself to qualitative methods of data collection as it accepts the influence of the researchers own interpretations and values on knowledge gained through research. As a researcher, I position myself towards a more interpretivist than positivist position, seeking to make sense of my participants making sense and employing reflexivity to take account of how my own values and belief systems may influence any findings. Taking this position, IPA lends itself as fit for the purpose of this research.

3.3.3 Axiology and IPA's Axiological Position

Axiology is concerned with the philosophical study of the nature of values (Bahm, 1984) and also includes the consideration of ethics (Mingers, 2003). There are two broad schools of Axiology which concern themselves with the purpose of knowing; what value there is in knowing and what values underpin the search for knowledge (Durant-Law, 2006). An Aristotelian school of thought advocates that knowledge is valuable in and of itself (Heron and

Reason, 1997, cited in Durant-Law, 2006). An Applied school suggests that knowledge has value as a means to inform, enlighten and to bring about change (Durant-Law, 2006). On reflection, I feel professionally and personally I take a more applied position insofar as my belief in the pursuit of knowledge to inform positive change. Reflexively then, this research also considers the value of what may be gained from an applied axiological position.

As noted above, axiology is influenced by respective ontological and epistemological positions. A more positivist approach would advocate for increased objectivity of a study in the separation as far as possible, of the researcher's values from the research process. An interpretivist approach embraces the values of the researcher as part of the construction of knowledge gained from research and advocates that this is made explicit through processes of reflexivity. In terms of ethics; axiology also concerns itself with a cost/benefits consideration (Cohen et al, 2007) of how important knowledge is in light of ethical issues of human rights and how a balance may be struck between pursuing knowledge whilst upholding the human rights of those being researched. Smith et al (2007) discuss how the IPA researcher approach research from a position of open-mindedness, flexibility, patience, empathy and responsiveness. These are qualities that I value and have endeavored to apply in my commitment to uphold the ethical codes set out by the British Psychological Society and the University of Bristol Ethics Committee. Ethical considerations and ethical conduct related to this research are explored in further detail later in this chapter.

3.4 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): Theoretical Foundations

IPA is a framework for qualitative, detailed and reflective exploration of how people make sense of experiences (Smith et al, 2009) . It lends itself to eliciting the meaning that is ascribed to an experience, where an event such as a life transition, takes on a particular significance. IPA began to emerge as a mainstream approach to qualitative research in the mid-1990s. However, it's philosophical roots date back to the early-mid 20th century, and to notable philosophers (Husserl, 1927; Heidegger, 1927/1962; Sartre, 1943/ 1956 and Gadamer, 1960;1990) who were

linked to the founding concepts and three philosophical pillars of IPA; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009). To make ideology behind this research fully transparent to the reader it is useful to explore these three pillars in further detail.

3.4.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience over scientific knowledge (Husserl, 1945) and the notion that people's' experiences are subject to change based on their relationships with others in the social world (Sartre, 1966, cited in Gibson, 2018). Halling (2008) suggests that in everyday life people are phenomenologists in their listening and interpretation of others' stories. However, Smith, et al (2009) make a distinction between our natural attitude (how we experience the everyday) and a phenomenological attitude; where we step back from experiences and view them through a reflexive lens. This kind of conscious 'seeing of something' is sometimes referred to as *intentionality* (Smith et al, 2009).

The psychological concept of the self and what it means to be human is central to phenomenology. Sartre (1948) discusses how the self is a construct that is constantly becoming, as opposed to a predefined unity that can be discovered in any kind of entirety (Sartre, 1948; Kierkegaard, 1947). On reflection, this ideal aligns the philosophy of IPA with the intent of this research insofar as I aim to explore and make sense of participants' conceptions of self throughout and as a result of a transitory experience; as they become mainstream pupils.

Linked to the idea that what matters is what we will be, rather than what we are, Sartre (1948) also discusses the concept of *nothingness*. It is the idea that what is not there is as important as what is there in shaping one's view of the self and the world around them. I feel this concept could also be particularly salient to this project. In exploring the experiential perspectives of participants, I aim to be open to the possibility that they make sense of themselves in the context of what they perceive was absent during their experiences as well as what was present.

3.4.2 Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics refers to the theory of interpretation, which is the second major theoretical foundation of IPA. Smith, Flowers and Larkin, (2009, p.22) assert that interpretation is an art or craft. In IPA, researchers are making sense of other people making sense of their experiences. When participants grant access to their experiential perspectives, their own interpretation of what has happened is made available for the researcher to interpret (Gibson, 2018); a second order perspective that is inevitably influenced by our own knowledge base, values and belief systems. This is described as the double hermeneutic. Smith et al (2009) advise that in constructing a secondary interpretation, researchers are in the privileged position of having a certain distance from the experience and may also have available to them other narratives within a data set as well as a scholarly or professional relationship with psychological theory. These privileges, these authors caution, come with a responsibility to analyse reflexively; to remain mindful of one's own preconceptions before the process starts and continuously as it unfolds. Being aware of personal biases and worldviews that a researcher brings to an IPA study can assist data to emerge in its otherness and assert its own truth (Gadamer, 1990: 269).

A hermeneutic approach calls for openness, flexibility and reflexivity on the part of the researcher. A further responsibility includes acknowledging that findings are products of subjective interpretations of the participant's sense-making; they are representative only of the reality of the context in which they were interpreted. Prospective readers of written accounts of IPA research could be conceived of as contributing a third hermeneutic dimension (Smith et al, 2009).

Potential for avenues of interpretation within IPA analyses are many and varied but commonly, there is a focus on participants' use of language. Firstly, a researcher's use of hermeneutics serves to explore the implicit meanings of participants' words. In turn, inherently subjective conclusions are drawn that may be very different from those arrived at by a different author exploring the same data set. This again illustrates the flexibility of and need for reflexivity in

applying IPA, for as Brocki and Wearden (2006) advocate; recording reflexive thinking promotes the transparency of the researcher's interpretations.

3.4.4 Idiography

Ideography is concerned with the individual and particular. An idiographic approach commits to this in the sense that a researcher attempts to conduct a detailed and in-depth analysis of a person's account so that they may understand and articulate that individual's point of view. IPA is idiographic in terms of its capacity to explore an individual case in and of itself before moving analysis onto a wider data set, in search of commonalities and divergences (Lander & Sheldrake, 2010). IPA can be applied to illuminate claims of the individual whilst also moving towards commenting more generally on phenomena.

In terms of moving towards the general; Harre (1979) discusses how generalisations may be drawn from an idiographic approach, but more cautiously and in a different way than other forms of inquiry. La Miel (1987) discusses that the 'other' within psychological inquiry take a nomothetic stance towards investigation; meaning it aims to make claims about laws of human behaviour at a wider group level. In using IPA, a researcher takes the stance that idiographic inquiry may lead to tentative claims about what may be significant in the meaning of a particular phenomenon for homogenous groups of individuals.

My responsibility to be idiographic includes a commitment to conduct my data collection and analysis in a way which facilitates participants' experiences to be expressed in their own terms (Smith et al, 2009). This emphasizes the need for awareness of my preconceptions and biases as I undertake research processes. It also justifies the need for data collection methods that function to capture individual experiences in their own right. A semi-structured interview is suggested as an appropriate tool for this aim; this is discussed further in section (3.7) on research design.

3.5 Addressing Potential Limitations of IPA and Consideration of Alternative Approaches

In decisions about methodological choices, it is good practice to consider a range of approaches and possible alternatives to initial preferences and to acknowledge the limitations of any chosen methodological approach. Valuing the importance of methodological choices is essential when conducting research which commits to hearing voices because different methods will have strengths and limitations in their ability communicate those voices and to do the dataset justice. Making the right choice is ethically important in terms of upholding integrity and respecting those whose voices you intend to hear. Figure 3.2 depicts a methods map which provides a useful model for contextualising the potential for methodological approaches to psychological research (Koppa, 2010);



Figure 3.2: Koppa's (2010) Methodological Choices Map

3.5.1 Consideration of Alternative Approaches

A number of approaches presented themselves as potentially appropriate channels through which to achieve research aims that are concerned with exploration of experience and meaning. Two notable alternatives that have utility in this context are Discursive and Narrative approaches.

Discursive approaches are founded in social constructionism (Bruner, 1990) and can be broadly described as being concerned with how language constructs reality and the knowledge of social phenomena (Taylor, 2001). Like IPA, they lend themselves to the exploration and analysis of the meaning of experiences for individuals and assume that the nature of reality is multiplicitous and socially constructed. A discursive inquiry asks how people talk about a subject, event or feeling and analysis will focus mainly on the language within descriptions. I acknowledge that there is a discursive element to my study in that I am engaging participants in a dialogue about experience and attending to the language they use within that dialogue. However, the emphasis on my own interpretation of their use of language and my position acknowledging the influence of my values and beliefs leans my approach towards IPA more so than one which might be described as exclusively discursive, which tends to be less hermeneutic in emphasis.

Narrative approaches are concerned with the telling of individual stories and can be thought of as a real- world approach to the study of what it means to be human (Billington, 2018).

Narrative inquiry focuses on the flow, cohesion and direction of life stories, generally eliciting linear accounts of life experiences with a view to illuminating the learned significance of those experiences (Sandelowski, 1991). A narrative approach is conceptually linked to the construction of the self. Taking an interest in the structure of stories (Gergen, 1998), a narrative approach engages in exploration for the purpose of uncovering how the dynamics of those structures constrain and facilitate human experiences (Smith et al, 2009).

They lend themselves to many and varied angles from which to capture and analyse data and often employ methods that can track and lineate a person's journey, such as a timeline. I am

offering my participants the option to use timelines to help structure their thoughts and feelings as they explore their transitional experience. In this way it could be argued that there is a narrative element to this project. However, as noted above, the double hermeneutic quality and the emphasis on meaning-making within this research aligns more so with IPA than a narrative approach in its purest sense. It could also be argued that an IPA approach facilitates confidentiality, more so than a purely narrative approach.

In choosing IPA, I am inquiring with curiosity founded by the underlying assumption that my dataset will illuminate how participants make sense of the process of reintegration into mainstream school. I am seeking to identify, describe and understand related aspects of individual accounts (Smith et al, 2009). My object of concern is the process of reintegration to mainstream school from a PRU. The experiential claims are those of the participants being interviewed. The questions asked in those interviews are open to allow exploration and are not seeking explanations. The bigger picture is to illuminate the meaning of a process as opposed to the arrival at any specific outcome.

3.5.2 Potential Limitations of Using IPA

In IPA, as with all qualitative research methods, the goal is to capitalise on the opportunities of engaging directly with participants to gain their experiential perspective (Yardley, 2008) whilst acknowledging that that engagement will inevitably impact the analysis of any findings and possible conclusions drawn. As with all qualitative methods, IPA has limitations in terms of its utility as a means to justify such findings and conclusions.

In their publication on the components of successful qualitative research, Braun and Clarke (2013) discuss in detail some of its limitations, one of which includes acknowledging that knowledge cannot be unfastened from the context in which it was generated. This implies that the qualities of data will depend at least in part on the skills and preparation of the interviewer and on the ability of the interviewee to describe and interpret their experiences with an appropriate level of communicative skills to illuminate the nuances of experiences (Tuffour, 2017). In order to address this I have taken steps to prepare myself to enter into interviews

with a level of skill and preparation that achieves an ethically appropriate level of competency as a researcher. I have also carefully considered the language of questions and the provision of inclusive and accessible methods of data capture. This process is discussed further in section (3.7).

IPA can be argued to be limited insofar as its potential ambiguity as a research framework; authors have commented on its lack of standardization (Giorgi, 1997). This is countered by many who refer to the philosophical pillars outlined above as being representative of IPAs robust theoretical standpoint. Braun and Clarke (2013) emphasise the aim of qualitative methods as being about producing accounts that can foster resonance with readers so that they may clarify and expand their understanding of a particular topic. IPA has been criticised for its over reliance on description rather than analysis (Brocki and Wearden, 2006) and for producing accounts which lack generalisability. The former is contested by those who assert that IPA that is conducted with structure and rigour should be able to achieve its aims, overseen by a caveat that broader extensions of IPA findings are limited.

Another criticism is that IPA can elicit what is involved in experiences but fail to offer explanations on why meanings are ascribed to certain phenomena (Tuffour, 2017). The historical and socio-cultural contexts that contribute to perceived qualities and meanings of experiences provide an authentic justification of why those experiences are perceived in whatever way they are (Willig, 2013) and so IPA could be limited in terms of explanatory capacity. However, it could also be argued that IPA does not aim to explain 'why' and is instead concerned with eliciting the meaning that makes up the fabric of human experience.

The next section looks at evaluating IPA research, according to criteria and standards for justifiable and quality research.

3.6 Evaluating Quality in IPA Research

Methods are tools used to achieve a particular purpose, however their application does not automatically assume the production of meaningful and justifiable results. Braun and Clarke (2013) write about certain criteria that can be viewed as standards that must be upheld to ensure the quality of qualitative research. They suggest researchers seeking to produce projects that have integrity should carry out credibility checks to ensure that data produced is justifiable and has coherence. These authors define coherence as accounts that are clearly integrated whilst remaining reflective of the nuances of individual perspectives. They suggest that important parameters to consider in terms of quality include the extent to which a study can argue its reliability, validity and its generalisability. This section will discuss how my methodological choices work towards meeting these parameters for this study.

Goodman (2008a) define validity in qualitative research as a study being able to show what it claims to show. Goodman and others argue that in qualitative work, ecological validity is perhaps the most achievable as it relates to the relationship between a study and the real-world context. It is argued that qualitative methods tend to produce data that reflect real-world contexts more so than quantitative data. This can be achieved through results which either have direct applicability to real-world settings (such as school systems) or when data collection is situated in a real-world context (such as a school setting). There is differentiation in the extent to which different qualitative approaches facilitate ecological validity. An ethnographic approach for example (where a researcher immerses themselves in the lifeworld of participants), could be argued to more comprehensively capture real life as it happens than, say, an interview. Whilst it is a conversation situated in and about the real world, an interviewee is not interacting as they would in their real everyday life (Fine and Gordon, 1989). This study employs semi-structured interviews and therefore as the researcher has some influence over the general direction of the conversation it is acknowledged that there are limits to the ecological validity of information elicited. However, some ecological validity can be claimed given that the enquiry takes place in a school context and centers around real lived experiences of individual pupils.

Generalisability is a contested issue in relation to qualitative research. Due to its position that knowledge and meaning are contextually situated, there is a school of thought that to produce generalisations is not the goal of qualitative approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2013) as instead they tend to seek to illuminate experiences within particular contexts. However, it could be argued that generalisations are possible when over time, a body of work covering the same phenomenon demonstrates consistencies cross-contextually. Goodman (2008a) discusses that flexible generalisability may be an appropriate and achievable goal; when a study provides evidence of a particular form of interaction performing a particular function. Sandelowski (2004) argues that idiographic generalisability can be achieved when a researcher's rigorous analytical processes lead to the construction of themes that are salient enough to arguably represent a common quality of a particular phenomenon. Lincoln and Guba (1985) however, suggest it might be more appropriate to work within the bounds of transferability, rather than generalisability. In the former; researchers aim to justify how findings may be transferable to different groups of people or different contexts. Transferability feels like a more appropriate goal for this study. Findings and implications from the study of young people with SEMH needs reintegrating to mainstream in one LA context might arguably be transferable to the process of reintegration for young people in other LA contexts or those who may reintegrate from different contexts, such as secure schools or other alternative provisions.

Reliability in qualitative methods is concerned with the extent that research and its subsequent findings can be thought of as dependable or trustworthy (McLeod, 2001). One useful framework to assist the production and evaluation of reliability and other principles in qualitative research is offered by Yardley (2008). She developed four validity principles in a framework entitled; 'Open-ended flexible quality principles' (Yardley, 2008). These can be applied to any qualitative project. Yardley (2008) reinforces that it is not possible for all studies to achieve perfection across all qualities but suggests researchers need to hold all four in mind and work towards achieving some to a justifiable degree. I am using this framework to guide my decision-making throughout the research process so that my work reflects, to a defensible

degree, an effort to produce a quality piece of qualitative research. The principles and steps I have taken to address them are as follows;

- 1) **Sensitivity to Context:** this is concerned with ensuring as far as possible that data is collected in a way that is sensitively attuned to participants socio-cultural context and position, which in this case relate to adolescent school pupils who have SEN and who have experienced disruption to their school experiences. In my interviews, I have aimed to be sensitive to context with a schedule that is open and flexible enough to facilitate participants being able to talk about what matters to them. My contextually sensitive analysis aims to account for how participants socio-cultural positions sculpt production of their experiential accounts. For example; how their experiences of exclusion and PRU placement impact might impact their self-perceptions and possible selves.

- 2) **Commitment and Rigour:** this can be achieved when researchers communicate a thorough and in-depth engagement with their chosen topic. I hope to achieve rigour through the application of a robust research design and methodological choices that facilitate a robust and in-depth engagement with the topic and data. In terms of commitment; on a professional level, my values include seeking and authentically representing the voice of the child in a way that helps promote agency. I am also committed to promoting inclusion through research and practice which facilitates the meaningful participation of all young people in their educational journeys. This research aims to contribute towards both of these agendas. At a more personal level; as noted in this study's introduction, I have experience of moving to a new school as an adolescent and I feel these past experiences motivate and strengthen my commitment and genuine curiosity to hear participants' perspectives on a similar experience.

- 3) **Transparency and Coherence:** this relates to clear and powerful analyses which elicit persuasive and transparent interpretations of datasets (Yardley, 2008). For example; the use of a robust approach to analysis such as thematic analysis using a transparent

framework such as that offered by Braun and Clarke (2013). It also signifies the importance of a cohesive fit between research questions, methods to answer them, choices for presenting them and thorough explanations of these process to readers. I have attempted to make transparent the philosophical and theoretical positions which underpin my methodological choices. I have chosen an approach which I believe in and which aligns with my personal and professional values. For coherence, I have carefully considered the wording of research and interview questions so that they align with my overarching aims, for example; framing questions in terms of exploring meaning rather than a more discursive angle of how participants talk about experiences. For transparency, I have included data capture tools that I feel have utility in illuminating meaning and nuances throughout accounts. I have used a form of member checking (Seale, 1999); the practice of checking back with participants during analysis to assess whether I have understood and represented their views accurately and authentically. I feel this is an important way to balance accurate representation of experiential claims with my own values-based interpretations. Member checking can support the production of findings which are trustworthy and authentic. It can be vital when the aim is to seek voice and help to address issues of power in research processes; positioning the individuals as the authority on their own experience (Braun and Clarke, 2013). There are those who contest the practice within IPA, suggesting that it does not align with its critically interpretivist position (Taylor, 2001:322). After consideration of different forms of member checking, I have chosen to adopt an approach advocated by Tracy (2010); Member reflection. This choice is based on the fact that my aims align with Tracy's interpretation of the concept; the goal is to share my interpretations of findings with participants and provide a platform for them to query meanings and language, offer feedback and affirmations and to contest anything they feel I have misrepresented or not understood. In using thematic analysis, I aim to produce an analytical account that is rich in interpretation as well as respectful of idiography. My thematic analysis is guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) 15-point criteria for good thematic analysis. The full checklist can be found in Appendix I. I aim to present my findings clearly using visual

systems such as tables and thematic maps; these are useful in making transparent to the reader the analytical trains of thought that lead to findings.

- 4) **Impact and Importance:** impact can take a theoretical and/ or socio-cultural direction. In the former, a project which will contribute to developing or creating new understanding around a phenomenon. The latter relates to how a study might contribute to positive change at a social or systemic level. I would like to contribute to the wider understanding of the meaning of reintegration for young people with SEMH needs, however it is acknowledged that this contribution may be limited by a small sample size and the limits of generalisability of IPA findings. It is likely that of most importance and most achievable for me is to produce a study whose findings can contribute to positive changes with school systems that operate to support reintegrative practices. This is a key aim of this work.

3.7 Research Design: Method and Procedures

3.7.1. Sample

The purpose of IPA is to seek rich and detailed understanding of what an experience is like for a particular person and the meaning that they ascribe to that experience. Sample sizes are typically small. Smith et al (2009) advise between four and 10 is appropriate for doctoral level research. The aim is to ensure the elicitation of rich accounts through a rigorous analysis. A further aim is to draw out similarities and divergences across accounts, with a view to eliciting salient themes whilst maintaining the individuality of experiential claims. With this in mind, the sample for this study is n=4. This felt like an achievable sample size to work with given the time constraints of this project and the challenges of accessing a hard to reach participant group, whilst also likely to produce enough data to contribute to purposeful analysis and useful findings. A relatively homogenous sample facilitates the exploration of convergence and divergence to a usefully detailed degree (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The participants have been purposefully selected on the basis that they share a common experience; they have all reintegrated from a PRU to mainstream school after experiencing exclusion from a previous

mainstream. These uniting factors facilitate the exploration of themes in relation to the meaning of their experiences. Uniformity, as far as possible has been achieved by considering social factors such as age group and needs categorisation. The inclusion criteria for this study are as follows;

1. Participants are young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 of compulsory school age. This age bracket has been selected based on evidence which as discussed in Chapter 2, suggests that KS3 and KS4 are areas of highest concern in relation to school exclusion (Timpson Review, 2019) and young people considered NEET (Powell, 2018)
2. Participants have education, health and care plans which state SEMH needs as their primary need, based on involvement from EPs, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Youth offending services or other professionals. This group was chosen based on evidence to suggest that young people with SEMH needs are most at risk of exclusion and associated risk factors as well as evidence that discusses the gap in research explicitly seeking the views of this group.
3. Participants have completed a transition from a PRU to a mainstream setting within the last 18 months. This time frame was selected to facilitate a wide enough criteria to obtain a sample whilst also aiming to access participants whose experience has occurred recently enough to facilitate reflection. The final sample obtained after the recruitment processes was made of pupils who had at the time of writing this account, maintained their placement in their reintegrating mainstream schools.

The sample for this study includes 4 male young people, aged between 13 and 16 years. An operational definition of a successful reintegration is not crucial to the purpose of this study as it is concerned only with young people's' experiences of reintegrating; not whether or not they sustained their placement for a specific amount of time. However, for contextual clarity; all participants had maintained their placement in mainstream at the time of being interviewed.

It is acknowledged that the participants in this study are all male and therefore the study does not represent the voices of female pupils. This was not a purposeful decision on the part of the researcher and female participants were sought but were not available to interview within the timeframes. The availability of more male participants may reflect the social context insofar as the demographics of young people who are more likely to experience exclusion, PRU placement and reintegration include more males than females. Also, the methodological choices and parameters of this study did not intend to focus on exploring and highlighting gender differences explicitly. Given these factors, the researcher feels comfortable that the participant sample was appropriate for fulfilling the research aims of hearing voice, illuminating experiential perspectives and exploring potential meanings around reintegration and there is not certainty that the inclusion of female participants would have led to significantly different findings. However, it is important to acknowledge the potential for variance in terms of what might hold significance for female young people who spend time in PRUS and who reintegrate in relation to males and that therefore including the voices of both genders may have deepened or layered data analysis.

Moving forward, further research which includes the voices of females who have reintegrated from a PRU to a mainstream school will be useful in order to illuminate convergence and divergence across this group, highlight potential gender differences in terms of experiences and contribute to the developing knowledge base around reintegration experiences.

3.7.2 Recruitment

The recruitment process was facilitated through referrals from gatekeepers; EPs within the service were contacted initially and asked for their knowledge of young people within their link schools who had completed a transition to a mainstream setting. EPs for the PRUs were also approached and asked about young people they might have worked with who had transitioned from the PRU to a mainstream setting. At this stage, the researcher did not ask for names, but initials and year groups.

Potential leads were followed up through an email between the Head Teachers of settings, SENCos, link EPs and the researcher. This email explained the reason for contact, the purpose of the study and requested contact with the setting to discuss the project further. It also included Head Teacher Information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix C). Once Head Teachers had consented for their schools to participate, phone calls with setting staff followed where further explanation was given; the point of contact at this stage was always the SENCo. Potential participants were approached by the SENCo initially, as a known and trusted adult where they were given Information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix E) seeking their assent to an initial meeting with the researcher to discuss this study. The initial consent forms adhered to the ethical code of Bristol University and the BPS; clearly stating participants right to decline, to withdraw at any point prior to planned meetings and clearly stated that agreement to an initial meeting did not constitute any obligation for further involvement. Parent/ carer information letters and consent forms were also provided, via the SENCos (see Appendix D).

Initial meetings with participants were conducted at their mainstream schools. These lasted for around 30 minutes, in which time young people were informed about the purpose and nature of the study. They were invited to ask questions and were also given a summary of the interview schedule to familiarise themselves with the kinds of topics they could expect to discuss during an interview. The researcher was clear during these meetings that there was no obligation to say yes to interview and that if they agreed, interviews would be audio recorded, stored securely up to 2 years, transcribed and written up into an account that would be made available to access on the Bristol University Website and Libraries. This initial meeting was also used to build rapport and to communicate my professional background and role as a researcher in this context. I discussed that my role in the context of the study was as a researcher, not a trainee EP. I included that I would be unable to directly follow up issues that they talked about in a professional capacity. This came with a caveat that it was my responsibility to follow up any safeguarding concerns and that these would be passed to the safeguarding lead, in line with the school's safeguarding policy.

Young people were then given one week from the date of initial meetings to think about participation and were contacted by the researcher via an email to the SENCo following this time period to gain final assent. Once assent had been obtained for a formal interview and participants had been asked for their preferred location from a choice of three settings (school, home or EPS office), dates and times were set up. Participants were also sent a secondary consent form at this stage, confirming their agreement to be interviewed, recorded and informing them of their right to withdraw for up to 1 month after the date of the interview.

3.7.3 Data Collection

I chose to collect data through interviews which took place during the second meeting with participants. IPA benefits from encouraging participants to provide rich, detailed accounts and interviews are an appropriate vehicle for the elicitation of thoughts, feelings and experiential perspectives regarding a phenomenon (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Using semi-structured interviews enabled me to gently guide the direction of the interview in relation to the purpose of the study, whilst also enabling participants to speak freely, be reflective and take the dialogue in the direction of what mattered to them. Interviews were planned to last for around an hour; this was deemed an appropriate timeframe to collect useful data and for interviews with child participants. I would like to acknowledge some ethical considerations of data collection, including participant's right to privacy and the concepts of non-maleficence and beneficence, before discussion of the development of the interview schedule, interview aides and pilot interview.

3.7.4 Ethical Considerations

The BPS ethical code of conduct for practice and research reinforces the importance of doing no harm (BPS, 2014). Throughout the process I have endeavored to uphold this commitment and to ensure the safety and comfort of participants. This should always be the position adopted by psychologists when conducting psychological research with human participants, including populations that could be described as vulnerable, such as children and young people.

The following considerations represent my commitment to do no harm to participants throughout the research process.

A participant's right to privacy can be thought of three-stranded; incorporating the sensitivity of information they disclose, the types of settings under observation and how the information they provide is disseminated (Diener and Crandall, 1978). The setting can be thought of as their schools and then further contextualised as the interview itself. The information sought is of a potentially sensitive nature as it relates to a personal experience of transition inclusive of thoughts, feelings and highly personal reflections on participants' lifeworld and sense of self. All young people were informed about the limits of confidentiality; they were informed that their identities would be anonymised with pseudonyms (chosen by themselves) and that every effort would be made to minimise identifying them or their schools. These efforts included carefully removing any potentially identifying information from transcripts and written accounts.

Cohen et al (2007) discuss the tension between the cost to participants and benefits of gaining information through research. There was the potential for participants to be emotionally affected by being asked to reflect on a significant and potentially emotionally charged life experiences. In order to mitigate this risk as far as possible, I was careful to plan a schedule that invited participants to discuss topics at the level of detail they felt comfortable with and remained mindful throughout interviews of cues or signs that a participant may wish to change or move around any topics or issues. I attempted to gain verbal consent throughout interviews around particular issues that may be associated with increased sensitivity, such as asking about friendships, by asking if it was okay to continue a line of inquiry. I included the offer of a debriefing, where participants were offered the opportunity to debrief about the interview with either myself or a trusted member of staff. This person was identified during the initial meeting. After each interview, I passed the young person over to their identified safe adult, where they were given the opportunity to feedback or just have some space and time to reflect before rejoining their timetabled activities.

Beneficence refers to the concept of gain; whom a study benefits. In line with Cohen et al's (2007) recommendations, I felt it was important to balance my gains as a researcher with the potential gains to participants as far as possible. I informed participants that they and their settings would receive a copy of the study and I have included plain language summaries at the end of every chapter to increase the accessibility of the written account. As previously noted, member checking or member reflection (Tracy, 2010) was conducted with a view to increasing the agentic nature of the experience for participants, address power relations and as a platform for participants to comment on my interpretations of their perspectives.

The quality of an interview is dependent on the skills and preparation of the interviewer. I drew on my professional experience and values as a trainee EP to help ensure that the quality of my presentation facilitated a useful and comfortable experience for participants. I used my knowledge of Rogerian (Rogers, 1957) ideas around an effective helping relationship to communicate my genuine curiosity, non-judgement of and unconditional positive regard for participants and their experiences. I endeavored to use active listening skills, being mindful of the use of nonverbal communication (nodding, appropriate eye contact and an open posture). I engaged in reflecting back, reaffirming I had attended to and understood what participants said. I attempted to present with a consistent research persona by remaining mindful of my role and some interactional habits that may compromise an interview by influencing the participant and increasing the risk of researcher bias. Reflections on my presentation during interviews are included in the reflexive account (see Appendix N).

3.7.5 Interview Schedule Development and Pilot Interview

Smith et al (2009) suggest that preparing an interview schedule facilitates the researcher applying a loose agenda to the dialogue, whilst having enough flexibility to follow up matters that arise as meaningful to participants. I initially constructed a semi-structured schedule with 7 questions (see Appendix F) that were designed to address the research questions without asking them verbatim. Interview questions in the original schedule included; *'Can you tell me about what it was like to leave the learning centre and start at this school?'* and *'What does it mean to you to come back to mainstream?'*. I was aware that some of the concepts might be a

bit complex and that as I was working with young people, some questions might need further clarification. For example, the term 'meaning' is an abstract concept which can be difficult to define and put into context. I included lists of prompts, as suggested by Smith et al (2009) under each question to help draw out insights and further exploration, such as; *'can you tell me a bit more about that.?' and, 'I am wondering how come that was important to you?'*. The phrasing of questions aimed to be open and expansive and to move from initially descriptive to more analytical and evaluative. This was a purposeful decision given that Smith et al (2009) advise participants may become more comfortable and therefore more open to engaging in reflection at deeper, more personal levels as an interview unfolds.

I also offered the option for each participant to make a timeline. This option was offered as a helpful visual tool to map significant events and illustrate their journeys. Jalali and Morgan (2018) suggest that timelines can be a useful aid to support the flow of dialogue in interviews. Visual aids during data collection sessions are also argued to be useful in that they can facilitate a more relaxed and comfortable approach to the discussion of sensitive topics (Wilson et al., cited in Jalali and Morgan, 2018).

Conducting a pilot interview enabled me to reflect on my experience of positioning myself within a researcher role and to evaluate my competency as a researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). It was also a useful way to reflect on my research questions and schedule in terms of their utility and sensitivity and on my approach to analysis. Following the pilot interview and preliminary analysis, I followed Smith et al's (2009) three step process for reflection which advises;

1. Taking samples of the transcript and cover up the interview questions
2. Read the participants text and consider the ideal follow up question
3. Compare the ideal to the actual question and reflect on differences

Following this guide led to useful insights into what went well; for example, questions that seemed to lead to fruitful discussion and shared understanding of the participant's experience.

It also enabled reflection on aspects of the interview that seemed less productive in eliciting information relevant to the research questions and language that may be too abstract or confusing for participants. For example; I reflected that the phrase, '*what does it mean?*' is abstract and potentially intimidating for participants, after noticing the participant's reaction to this question. He found it difficult to answer and asked me what I meant several times before saying he did not know. Following the above steps, I changed the phrasing of Question 2 from '*What does it mean to you to come back to mainstream?*' to; '*What is most important to you about being at this school?*'. The revised interview schedule and highlighted changes can be found in Appendix G.

As well as prompting important reflections on how to develop the utility of my approach to research, the pilot interview also yielded significant data that has direct relevance answering the research questions of this study. I have therefore included it within the findings and within the final written account.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA was chosen as an appropriate method for data analysis for this research as it allows for rich and detailed interpretations of participants making sense of their experiences. Smith et al (2009) discuss the procedural commonalities of IPA as moving from the particular to the shared and from the descriptive to the interpretative, as emergent, subordinate and superordinate themes are produced. The process is inductive; where tentative generalisations are produced from idiographic accounts. It is also iterative; whereby the process of thematic analysis is repeated to produce a sequence of interrelated outcomes. Thematic Analysis can be thought of a vehicle for an IPA journey; a bottom up approach where data drives the generation of detailed and complex findings through the identification of patterns across datasets (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A researcher's aim in thematic analysis should be to identify convergence and divergence (Eatough and Smith, 2008) by developing a 4-way dialogue including the researcher,

the participants, the dataset and knowledge of psychological theory.

It is acknowledged that IPA is a subjective process (Smith et al, 2009). However, methodological validity, reliability and fidelity can be increased by analytical processes which observe a “systematic and rigorous” (p.80) approach. The next section demonstrates the approach adopted to achieve the above goals; following a framework suggested by Smith et al (2009).

3.8.2 IPA Data Analysis

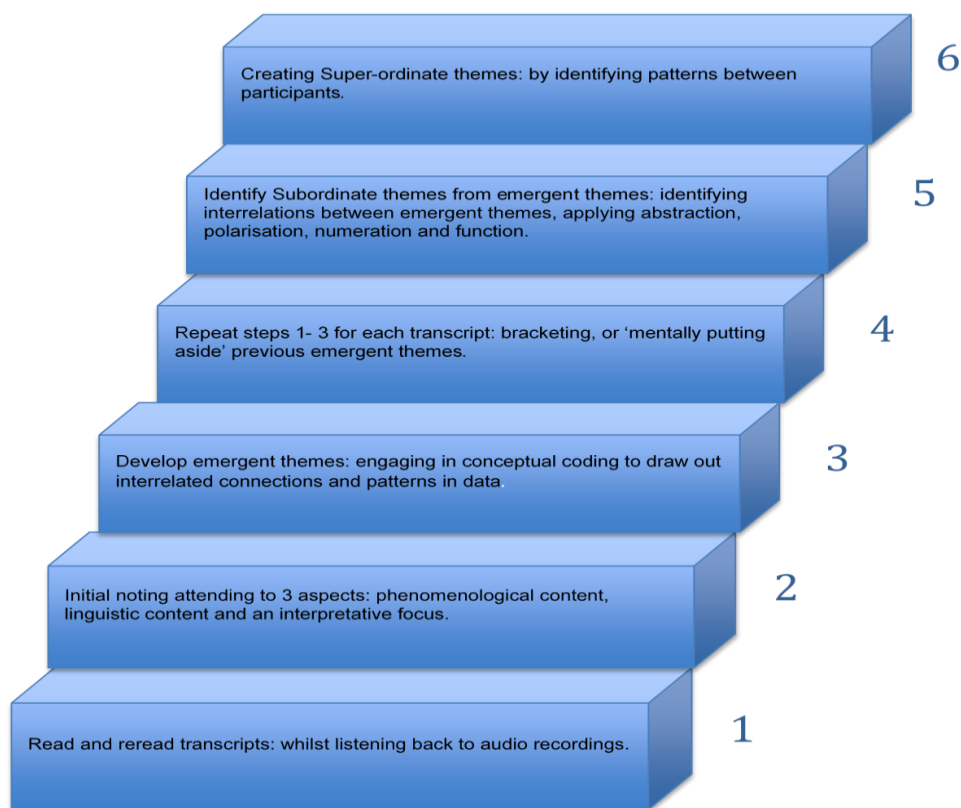


Figure 3.3: Data analysis Steps Followed, based on Smith et al 's (2009) Framework for IPA

- 1. Read and reread transcript** - Transcription was completed by the researcher, as Parker (2005) suggests this enables one to listen back and to notice additional aspects that may have been missed in the moment, as the interview took place. These include elements

such as silence, hesitation and laughter. These can represent important nuances in the accounts of participants and are useful to reflect on during transcription given that it is a process where something that was meant to be heard is translated into something that is read (Parker, 2005). These have been marked where appropriate in the written transcripts (see Appendix J for excerpts and examples), which have been produced as line numbered landscape documents with three columns. Columns, left to right, are headed '*original transcript*', '*exploratory comments*' and '*emergent themes*'. As the transcripts were read, the audio-recording was listened to alongside, in order to remain actively engaged with the participant's dialogue.

- 2. Initial noting** - At this point a 3-stage process of reading and attending to different aspects was conducted, recorded in different colours to code exploratory comments accordingly. Phenomenological content was explored during the initial stage; focusing on objects that structured participant's descriptive comments around their understanding of events and what was important for them. Secondly, linguistic features were noted, focusing on the potential meaning of pauses, silence, etc. Thirdly, the reading took on an interpretative focus; where meanings within the text were explored in an attempt to understand how participants made sense of their experiences. Noting was supported by processes including; underlining words or phrases that seemed important and indicating my reasons for interpreting them as important and writing any words that come into mind as I read through the transcripts, marking these with question marks.

- 3. Develop emergent themes** - Smith et al (2009) suggest that emergent themes should have "*enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstraction to be conceptual*" (p.92). At this stage, the researcher engaged in conceptual coding. Each transcript was re-examined to map the interrelated connections and patterns between notes to draw out concepts that could be viewed as emergent themes in participant's thoughts, feelings and words. For example; the feeling of *isolation*, or thoughts about *peer*

support. These were transferred to a new document and organised initially by participant (see Appendix K for Thematic Analysis Table including emergent themes from each interview). At this stage, I was beginning to develop my interpretative understanding of the participants' world in relation to my own experiences and knowledge. Smith et al (2009) suggest this is called a *Gadamerian Dialogue*.

- 4. Repeat steps 1 - 4 for all transcripts** - The above steps were repeated for all four interviews. In keeping with an idiographic approach, the researcher aimed to approach each transcript on its own terms, before considering the dataset as a whole. 'Bracketing' was used to support this approach; a process of 'mentally putting aside' emergent themes from previous transcripts and considering each new transcript in and of itself (Smith et al, 2009, p.100).

- 5. Identify subordinate themes from emergent themes** - At this stage, the analytic focus shifted towards identifying interrelations between emergent themes and coordinating them to produce sub-ordinate themes. This meant focusing more on the notes made rather than the verbatim transcript data. This was achieved by thinking around how themes fit together and at this stage some of the emergent themes were discarded. A number of processes were used at this stage, advocated by Smith et al (2009). Abstraction, for example; which is a way to group emergent themes together under a heading which appropriately summarises them. An example of this would be emergent themes around feeling behind in learning, wanting to catch up with learning, the curriculum, and negative views of themselves as learners were collapsed under a sub-heading of; '*learning*'. Polarisation was also used; where emergent themes are explored in terms of oppositional relationships rather than congruence. For example; themes around change versus no change in self-perceptions. Contextualization was looked at; identifying any key contexts within narratives that emerged as related to particular meanings. An example of this would be; the meaning of leaving the learning centre or the meaning of the first day at a new school. Numeration was applied, in order to look

at the frequency with which emergent themes presented themselves throughout and across transcripts. Function was explored; looking at positive and negative language and its potential meaning in terms of how participants positioned themselves within their experiences. For example; victims of systems that did things 'to' them or active participants who felt involved in decisions made during their journeys. This process ended when it was felt a 'saturation' point had been reached; when it felt comfortable that relationships between emergent themes had been explored in enough detail that subordinate themes represented them accurately and sensitively.

- 6. Creating superordinate themes by identifying patterns between participants** - The final step in the analysis was to use the above processes in step 5 to connect and cluster subordinate themes into superordinate themes. These can be thought of as main or key themes which categorise subordinate themes. At this stage, subordinate themes can in themselves become superordinate or sub-categories of the latter. This process is mapped out in table form in order to make transparent the thinking around analytical categorisation (see appendix K).

3.9 Reflexivity

'The position of the researcher makes subjectivity into a crucial resource in the research process and into something that can be made visible to the reader so that it is also useful for them if they want to take work forward'

Parker, 2005:26

IPA is an interpretative approach in which the researcher's historical, institutional and personal experiences are located alongside and within the participants experiential accounts. This section discusses the importance of being reflexive in qualitative research and highlights some reflexively ethical questions that are important to consider (Kvale, 1996). It is important to

observe this part of research, as in its absence, our own prejudices can take precedent in research' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

Several strategies have been drawn on in this study in a commitment to reflexive action. Firstly, I have produced a reflexive account (see Appendix N). This documents my thoughts and feelings on my relationship with the research at different points throughout the process. Within this there are some more structured reflexive accounts of, for example, my thoughts about each interview undertaken. For this, I have written a set of questions, asked of myself after each interview. They are as follows;

1. *How did I feel during the interview/ at X point/ after the interview?*
2. *What did I feel the participant might be feeling?*
3. *How did this affect my position to the research?*
4. *How did I manage the above?*
5. *What did the participant convey to me by producing this particular account on this occasion?*

Supervision has been used as a forum to reflect on utility and purpose throughout the development of the study. I have also used peer supervision forums (with fellow doctoral students) to reflect on my position as a researcher and the issues of power and privilege that present themselves in the context of a doctoral student conducting research with young people in schools. Some reflexively ethical issues I have endeavored to bear in mind include the tendency for psychology to normalise or pathologize experiences in relation to psychological and socially constructed models of childhood, transition and disability. I have attempted to avoid being dogmatic in my thinking, whilst acknowledging that my personal and professional values will inevitably sway the conclusions drawn from my own research. In attempting to share values-based reflections with the reader within the reflexive account I am aiming to make readers aware of my values-based thinking that has informed the findings. Throughout the analysis and interpretation of findings I have also attempted to remain mindful of whether or

not my interpretations are consistent with the boundaries of the commitment I made to the participants, which was to explore and report on their individual experiences of reintegration.

3.10 Plain Language Chapter Summary

What are the principles that guide this research?

- Ontology is the study of what is real or true. It can be thought of as a scale with opposite ends; realism and relativism. People who believe in relativism think that everyone has their own ideas of what is real and these are based on individual experiences of culture and society.
- The researcher agrees with this idea. She thinks that reality is made up of what people say, think and believe about the world and these views should all be respected and valued as everyone has their own individual understanding of the world. This means the researcher has taken a relativist approach to studying participants because she is using interviews to find out about their understanding of the world. She is interested in what they think (their understanding), the way they describe things (their language) and their beliefs (their ideas about the world).
- Epistemology is about how we think about knowledge and can be thought of as a scale with opposite ends: positivism and interpretivism. The researcher is taking an interpretivist approach because she thinks that what she knows and believes about the world will influence how she interprets and writes about what the participants say.

How was this research carried out and why were these choices made?

- This study uses IPA, which is one way of analysing research. It has three key ideas; phenomenology (the study of what happens in real life), hermeneutics (the way people interpret what others say) and idiography (valuing and studying the perceptions of an individual person).

- Because the researcher aims to interpret what was important to individual young people about their real-life experiences, IPA was chosen because it is a useful way to achieve this aim.
- Four young people were interviewed at their mainstream schools. Questions were asked from a list and young people were also given the opportunity to talk about what was important to them about their experience. Interviews were recorded and written up word for word by the researcher.
- All participants took the opportunity to draw a timeline of their journeys during their interviews. This was helpful in supporting them to think about events in the order that they happened.
- Thematic analysis was then used to explore the data and find common themes about what was most important and most significant to participants.
- The researcher has kept a reflective diary to remain aware of her thoughts and feelings as she carried out the research and make these clear to readers.

How can we assess the quality of this research?

- Qualitative research can be assessed by three things; validity (how valid it is), reliability (how reliable the findings are) and generalisability (how much the findings can apply to people or situations outside of the study).
- The researcher has taken steps to work towards achieving these three things but is aware that there are limits, due to things like time and the number of participants she has, to how much she can achieve all three things.
- The steps taken include; having a good knowledge of the topic and of how to carry out qualitative research, making her decision-making and thinking clear to reader, thinking carefully about what interview questions to ask and how to ask them, checking back with participants after interviews to make sure she has interpreted information correctly, using evidence-based guidelines to help analyse information and compare participants' perceptions and being tentative and careful about any claims made about the findings.

- The researcher also applied the BPS and Bristol University codes of ethics to make sure no harm came to any of the young people who took part in the study.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the presentation of findings from the interpretative phenomenological analysis of the dataset. This will be present through: introducing the participants and then presentation of findings through discussion of the four superordinate themes and their subordinate layers. The four superordinate themes are discussed as follows; Meanings Ascribed to Reintegration (4.3); Factors Impacting on Agency (4.4); Sense of Self (4.5) and School Connectedness (4.6); plain language chapter summary (4.7).

4.1.1 Participant Introductions

Fortnight God is in year 10. He transitioned back to mainstream school after spending two terms at a learning centre following exclusion from mainstream for disruptive behaviour and had maintained his placement for around 13 months at the time of interviewing. Fortnight God (as readers might guess) reported that he loves to play computer games. He also plays football, loves sweets and aspires to be part of a local football team. Fortnight God was interpreted by the researcher as quite shy and as having quite low self-confidence. He describes himself '*miserable*' and does not like to smile. He values friendships, being listened to and having time to himself. It felt to the researcher that it was a significant achievement for him to share his thoughts and feelings about his reintegration in contribution to this research; given his view that he often finds it difficult to talk about how he feels. Throughout the interview, Fortnight God was calm, considered and his dry sense of humour came through. He seemed to grow in confidence and became chattier as he relaxed. He also changed his pseudonym from Fortnight Noob (a low status character in the game) to Fortnight God after he had completed the interview. The researcher has reflected on the possible meaning attached to this within the reflexive account. Overall, the researcher got the sense that Fortnight God was happy to be back in mainstream school, due to feeling like he belonged more so there than at the learning centre.

Tom is in year 9. He had recently transitioned back to mainstream (around 6 months ago) after spending a year at a learning centre following permanent exclusion for disruptive behaviour. Tom reported that he likes playing computer games but also likes being outside. He said has strong bonds with his friends, most of whom he thinks are still at the learning centre. Tom wants to be a YouTube Blogger and talked about what he needs to do to achieve that goal. During the interview, Tom seemed cool and calm and was happy to talk through his personal experiences of different schools and the impact they had had on him. It seemed that Tom values respect from peers and adults and felt that he received more respect and support whilst at the learning centre than since his reintegration. The researcher interpreted Tom as having self-belief and resilience as he discussed some of his views around his aspirations, despite the challenges he had experienced in his life, including becoming involved with Youth Offending services. Overall, Tom seemed to feel very strongly that he was happier and belonged more at the learning centre than at mainstream school.

Leon is in year 10. He spent a year at a learning centre after being unable to attend mainstream school due to a significant trauma involving the death of his younger sister, which led to mental health issues. Leon appeared to be extremely self-reflective and talked about his experiences honestly and openly. He appeared to take responsibility for his actions and the researcher interpreted him as extremely resilient. He said he values family and friendship and strives to be the happiest he can and to make the most of life. Leon also said he is keen to do his best to work towards a positive future, although he is not sure what he wants to do yet in terms of a job or higher education. During the interview, he presented as friendly and enthusiastic and talked at length around the topics we explored. Overall, the researcher got the sense that Leon had mixed feelings about his time at the learning centre. He enjoyed some aspects of it but seemed to suggest he was happier to be back in mainstream school due to having access to a wider peer group whom he relates to. Leon also constructed his reintegration as being about healing or '*getting better*'. He spoke about how he felt he was able to return to mainstream school due to him changing his behaviour and being less naughty.

Ovuey is in year 9. He was excluded from a mainstream secondary in year 8 and spent around 6 months in a learning centre before reintegrating to a mainstream academy. He had maintained his placement for around 6 months but reported that it had not been an easy start. He explained that he was excluded on his first day and has had multiple internal exclusions since. Ovuey is very articulate and has a good sense of his strengths and needs. He presented as self-reflective and has a strong sense of his own individuality. Being able to be himself seems to mean a lot to Ovuey. He also said he values support from friends and staff who have a good sense of humour. He said he loves cars and trainers and aspires to have a family of his own one day. Ovuey was very positive about his time at the learning centre. He enjoyed the supportive attitudes of staff and felt like they were funny and friendly. He also enjoyed the curriculum at the learning centre and he seemed to suggest he felt it was more relevant to his life and future goals than the mainstream curriculum he now accesses. Ovuey was calm and collected during interview; he seemed to enjoy being able to have his say on his experiences and communicated strong opinions about some aspects of his reintegration that he felt were handled poorly by adults. Ovuey also had some insightful thoughts about the mainstream school system he had reintegrated into in terms of what needs to change to make school a more positive experience for him and other pupils.

4.2 Presentation of Findings

Themes are discussed as word-based labels which represent clusters of meaning generated from the researcher's interpretation of the participants transcripts. In accordance with Smith et al's (2009) framework for thematic analysis, themes are generated and presented at three levels;

1. Superordinate Themes: overarching clusters of meaning within which layers of subordinate and emergent themes are contained
2. Subordinate themes: generated from interrelations and coordination between emergent themes and feeding into overarching superordinate themes

3. Emergent Themes: more detailed interrelated connections and patterns in participant's thoughts, feelings and words that can be viewed as both grounded and conceptual.

Themes are discussed in terms of the researcher's interpretation of the participant's sense making, supported by extracts from interview transcripts. Thematic analysis is an inductive process and therefore the narrative presentation of findings draws on analysis developed from participants experiential accounts and is further informed by psychological theory and the researcher's experiential knowledge.

Inclusion of extracts from all participants served to make clear the basis for the researcher's interpretative thought processes; evidencing links between participants' accounts that form the basis of theme generation. Extracts from participants are also used in order to promote an idiographic approach; so that the voices of individual participants can be communicated whilst also making claims at a group level. Convergence and divergence within clusters of meaning are considered, where analysis indicated that there were qualitative or directional similarities or differences in individual participants' experiences around a theme.

During analysis and throughout this chapter, research questions are not referred to minimise the influence of the researcher's potential biases and preconceptions shaping the analytical thought processes and shifting from an inductive focus. Research questions are considered in the discussion chapter, which explores the relationship of the findings to existing literature and theory as well as any findings that may be indicative of new directions to consider in relation to the research questions.

Table 4.1 Presentation of Themes

Superordinate Theme: Meanings Ascribed to Reintegration		
Subordinate Themes		
Valuing Learning	Readiness	Possible Future Selves
<i>Emergent Themes</i>		
<i>Valuing Learning, Being Behind, Curriculum, Negative View of Self as Learner</i>	<i>Feeling ready to leave learning centre, not feeling/ being ready, Preparation/ Warning</i>	<i>Interest in Future Self, Negative Possible Selves, Positive Possible Selves, Positive Future Thinking, Meaning of Reintegration as linked to Possible Future</i>
Superordinate Theme: Factors Impacting on Agency		
Subordinate Themes		
Self-knowledge of Strengths & Needs	Locus of Control	Systemic In/ Flexibility
<i>Emergent Themes</i>		
<i>SEMH Needs, Using coping Strategies, Self-knowledge of Needs, Challenges of too much freedom</i>	<i>Voice/ Views, Feeling listened to Choice, Lack of Choice, Feeling 'Done to'</i>	<i>Systemic Flexibility/Inflexibility, Need for Systemic Change, Trust in Systems, Curriculum</i>
Superordinate Theme: Sense of Self		
Subordinate Themes		
Self-perceptions	Indicators of Change	External Influences

<i>Emergent Themes</i>		
<i>Self-perception, Ability to be self, Loss of identity through SEMH Needs, Negative self-perception, Neg view of self as learner</i>	<i>Behavioural Change, Change, (No) Change to sense of self, Using coping strategies</i>	<i>Identifying with Mainstream, Construction of self in reference to others, Models of self in different Contexts, Reintegration as a Threat to sense of self</i>
Superordinate Theme: School Connectedness		
Subordinate Themes		
Peer Connectedness	Staff Connectedness	Perceived Support for Needs
<i>Emergent Themes</i>		
<i>Belonging, Connectedness, Social Connection, Peer support, Peer Group Identification, Non- identification with Learning Centre Peers</i>	<i>Staff Support, Staff Relationships, Staff attitudes</i>	<i>Support structures, Lack of Support, Valuing External Professional Support, Having needs met, Isolation, Inclusion</i>

4.3 Meanings associated with Reintegration into Mainstream School

From all participants' accounts some common factors emerged that signified meanings associated with their reintegration into mainstream school; concepts that seemed to hold particular significance in relation to their reintegrative experiences. These meanings were sub-categorised into three themes, wherein participants reported commonalities in terms of what was valuable to them about mainstream school, what was important to them about their positionality in reference to transitioning and what that transition meant to them in terms of

their future prospects. The three subordinate themes associated with the meaning of reintegration into mainstream school emerged as follows;

4.3.1 Valuing Learning

Valuing learning and school work was a construct held by all participants. Each talked about the value of learning; of wanting to learn, of being able to complete work and of work as being *'the point'* of school. This arose at several points during each interview despite that notably, none of the participants were asked directly about the value of learning or lessons. Learning emerged as a concept consistently held as valuable during conversations about what was important to them about school or things that they were finding more difficult about reintegrating;

Tom... *"Work. That's what schools for. I'd rather do work than just sit there, bored."*

Fortnite God... *"I want to learn and I do put my hand up. But they only say the littlest thing that don't even help me."*

Ovuey... *"You need to learn to get a job."*

A strong sense of the negative impacts of not being able to access learning and of being behind peers in learning emerged. All participants used the language of *'being behind'* their peers. Tom talked a lot about how being behind meant that he would never catch up and he seemed to view the gap between him and his peers as too bigger hurdle to overcome. Ovuey linked his perceived inability to complete work to his self-concept; to feeling stupid. Leon talked about the increased work demands of mainstream school and of needing to catch up.

Tom... *"Cus I'm so behind. They might as well send me back to the learning centre."*

Ovuey... *"I didn't really do much work (at the learning centre) so I felt stupid."*

Leon... *"But here you get tons of work and you get homework. And I've been behind so much, so*

I need to catch up.”

Tom... *“I’m behind. It’s s**t. I will never be able to catch up, never in a million years. That’s not even an option.”*

This subordinate theme seems to be categorised by a commonly felt negative quality. To all participants, learning seemed to represent the point of being in school and was also discussed as a facilitator or barrier to inclusion. Being behind was associated with not being able to be in class given that participants attributed accessing education separately from their peers to being too behind to keep up in lessons. The impact of not being able to access learning on self-concept and it being a worry in relation to future life also seemed significant.

4.3.2 Readiness

The concept of readiness was discussed by all participants in relation to whether or not they felt ready to leave the learning centre and return to mainstream school. Participants were asked about how ready they felt, which sometimes prompted further discussion about what it meant to be ready to reintegrate. Leon scaled his readiness to leave the learning centre using a scale of 0 and 5. Fortnite God, Tom and Ovuey all discussed readiness as being related to the time they had to prepare for their transition.

Ovuey... *“I just knew I wasn’t ready. I don’t know what ready was, but I just knew I wasn’t.”*

Fortnite God... *“Cus I wasn’t really ready. Cus, it was getting a bit late cus I didn’t know and then they just said.”*

Tom... *“2 weeks. I didn’t like it. I was just like, nah, I’m going there.... They should have gave me longer. Months.”*

Ovuey and Leon talked about the impact of not being ready on their ability to cope in mainstream, to access classroom learning and to concentrate in school.

Ovuey... *"I wasn't ready. Well I got excluded on my first day. I definitely wasn't ready."*

Leon... *"I was about a 2 out of 5 ready. Because I'm like, still now, the reason why I'm up in this nurture place is because I'm, I can't go into class."*

Ovuey... *"I got told I was ready and I wasn't. It meant I need to start concentrating and which, I can't. I can never concentrate."*

The concept of readiness to reintegrate into mainstream school seemed to have a dual meaning. It was discussed in terms of not having enough time to prepare for transition to mainstream school; all participants talked about wanting to have been warned early in the process of reintegration and as feeling they would have benefited from having more time to prepare for transition. Secondly, readiness was conceptualized as meaning how ready they felt to cope with factors associated with mainstream school such as behavioural and learning expectations. Overall, participants communicated the concept of not feeling ready as being significant to the meaning of their reintegration.

4.3.3 Possible Future Selves

All participants discussed the meaning of school as being related to their possible future selves. School was constructed as a necessary vehicle to achieve future life goals, such as getting a job, a car or having a family. Leon made comparisons between how his life would be if he stayed in school versus potential future selves if he dropped out. Paying attention in lessons and achieving in core subjects was important to him for his future employment. Getting support for learning and homework was important to Fortnite God for him to move forward in school and beyond. Tom discussed the impact that not accessing certain creative subjects might have on his ability to create content for his career aspiration of being a YouTuber.

Leon... *"I should pay more attention... for like, getting a job or something. I'm never going to be able to get away from not doing any subjects cus obviously I need my core subjects."*

Fortnite God... *“Yeah, cus I kind of need it (more support to move forward).”*

Tom... *“I’m not in lessons. If I’m not in lessons, then how can I create?”*

Leon... *“If I dropped out of school, to be honest, my future would probably be sat at home eating take away or playing Xbox.”*

Ovuey and Tom discussed their future selves in relation to their reintegration into mainstream school, but with notable divergence in terms of how hopeful they were for a successful outcome. When asked about possible futures; Tom reported feeling hopeful that he could achieve anything he wanted to, whereas Ovuey talked about the likelihood of him not getting the grades he needed to achieve his aspiration of becoming a mechanical engineer.

Tom... *“I have a good job. I’m a youtuber. Anything’s possible. Yeah, make it happen init.”*

Tom... *“I believe I can do it. If you can see someone else do it then you know you can do it.”*

Ovuey... *“Probably not... Probably won’t get the grades.”*

Ovuey... *“I’d need a miracle.”*

Analysis revealed divergence amongst participants’ experiential accounts of how hopeful they were about achieving future life goals. This divergence seemed to be associated with whether or not they felt they were going to be able to achieve academically in mainstream school. Being able to achieve the necessary grades in certain subjects held meaning in terms of impacting future life trajectories. Tom was notably more positive than other participants about the possibility of achieving his preferred future self, despite reporting that he was behind in

lessons. His hopefulness seemed to be influenced by self-belief in his ability to succeed despite challenges.

4.4 Factors Impacting on Agency

A sense of agency refers to one's knowledge that their thoughts, feelings and views have a meaningful impact and translate into actions that influence change (Kellet, 2012). The following themes emerging from analysis of the data were conceptualized as being related to the concept of agency. Self-knowledge is a trait that the researcher interprets as potentially agentic if responded to appropriately at the interface between the child and the systems in which they interact. The degree to which participants communicated feeling they had a voice and a sense of control over events in their lives was interpreted as having an impact on personal agency, as was participants' perceived flexibility of school systems to meet their needs.

4.4.1 Self-knowledge of Strengths and Needs

All participants in the study communicated a sense of self-knowledge of their own school-related strengths and needs. They talked about strengths in terms of their use of coping strategies and knowing what worked for them in terms of support strategies. They also seemed to frame knowing what they found more difficult about school as a strength.

Fortnite God... *"I leave my lessons. I've got an exit card which I use if I'm stressed or anything... It helps. Yeah, but I haven't been using it as often."*

Leon... *"Staying in nurture will help me. Then following that work into...and having a lot of help from teachers and having my exit card."*

Tom... *"If I don't want to do something, I won't do it."*

Leon... *“When I’m more free... I’m like a four out of ten. So I’m not that good. I’m below average really.”*

Young people talked about their needs in a frank and honest manner. They communicated an understanding of their own needs, which were related to learning and to social, emotional and mental health. Tom and Fortnite God talked about knowing what they needed in terms of support for their learning. Leon and Ovuey talked retrospectively about their SEMH needs impacting on school life, pre-reintegration. Leon discussed the continued impact of his SEMH needs after reintegration.

Tom... *“They would have to put like loads of time into me to help me get back on track, which they don’t have the time, which is fair enough.”*

Fortnite God... *“I know I do need a bit of extra help with my homework.”*

Leon... *“I wasn’t thinking straight. I wasn’t thinking of others. I was all about me and I like, just did whatever I wanted.”*

Ovuey... *“In the learning centre I couldn’t sit on a chair for over 15 minutes and work.”*

Leon... *“I wouldn’t be able to cope sometimes. I’d be walking around. It’s a big room, big classroom, loads of kids. That’s why I’ve got this (exit card).”*

Self-knowledge of strengths and needs came through in analysis of each transcript. Knowledge of strengths has been interpreted as participants’ discussion of using coping strategies and of knowing what they needed to support them to learn. Knowledge of needs was interpreted in conversations about difficulties in coping in the classroom, catching up with learning and coping with homework expectations. This theme has been interpreted as having meaning in terms of agency insofar as it’s potential as a focal point for professional involvement. Young people's

knowledge of their own strengths and needs can be thought of as having agency-promoting possibilities if this self-knowledge is actively sought, listened to and acted upon by professionals through channels of evidenced based practice such as person-centred approaches.

4.4.2 Locus of Control

All young people discussed their experiences at different points throughout their transition back into mainstream school using language which communicated a sense of their locus of control. Language such as, *'they said'* and *'I got told'* was used throughout all accounts, suggesting that young people felt an external locus of control or were communicating a lack of choice or voice regarding their experiences of reintegration.

Ovuey... *"I just got told."*

Fortnight God... *"After a day they said I was going back... I would have liked to have been warned."*

Tom... *"I don't know how it went. It was just like, yeah, you're coming here. And I was just like, great."*

Ovuey... *"There was nothing I could do to not, or to stay in the learning centre."*

Ovuey... *"They told me and before I could say anything I was already here."*

There was some convergence and divergence at an individual level in Leon's experiential account; he talked about sometimes feeling listened to and sometimes feeling as though he had little choice in decisions relating to him.

Leon... *"I was saying I didn't want to go, but I had to. But I didn't really have a choice, but I had a say on it, kind of?"*

Leon... *"I was happy I was given a say because I could say my feelings and that about how I felt about coming back to mainstream."*

An external locus of control was evident in young people feeling as though they had things done to them rather than done with them. This related to perceptions of not wanting to leave the learning centre; views around not wanting to leave but as having no choice were heard from all participants. A relationship between not wanting to leave and the feeling of not having a voice in decisions about reintegration came through within this theme; the prospect that the latter influenced the former prompts interesting reflections in terms of working with young people around planning reintegrations.

4.4.3 Systemic In/Flexibility

Participants discussed the relative flexibility and inflexibility of school systems as meaningful aspects related to their reintegration. Fortnite God talked about being unsure of the limits of the flexibility of support systems that he had previously found beneficial. Tom discussed how systemic inflexibility seemed to impact on staff time and the support he then received from staff. Ovuey talked about feeling as though the rigidity of the system in his mainstream school impacted negatively on his ability to cope with the process of reintegration and perceived a lack of responsiveness to different young peoples' needs.

Fortnite God... *"I used to have this lesson off. I was going to ask about it but I don't know that I'll get it now because I don't have geography anymore. But it helped me with my homework and now my homework is building up on me again."*

Tom... *"If the teachers had time, yeah. Teachers should go off for two lessons, and then come back."*

Ovuey... *"(Here) it's like one rule for everyone."*

Reflecting on his experiences pre and post reintegration; Ovuey discussed divergence in his experiences of systematic flexibility at the learning centre and at mainstream school. Through this comparison he constructed a perception of the need for systemic change in terms of how mainstream school supported young people with SEMH needs.

Ovuey... *“That’s what they changed at the learning centre. If they found something didn’t work for you then they would change it.”*

Ovuey... *“It’s definitely the school as well. Something major needs to change. Cus otherwise kids are gonna keep getting kicked out. And if nothing changes then that’s just gonna keep happening.”*

If agency can be conceptualized as knowing that one’s thoughts and feelings have an impact on the world and lead to change, then the views of participants regarding the flexibility or inflexibility of school systems to change in response to their needs and views during reintegration can be considered as impactful on their sense of agency.

4.5 Sense of Self

This theme is concerned with how participants constructed their sense of self during interviews. Each young person talked about themselves using ‘I’ statements that described aspects of their sense of self; these have been interpreted as self-perceptions. Young people described points in time or acts that signified changes to their sense of self throughout the transition from the learning centres back to mainstream school; these are referred to as indicators of change. External factors that influenced participant’s sense of self also emerged; these included the impact of others’ views on participant’s sense of self as well as the impact of environmental context; being situated in different school environments.

4.5.1 Self-perceptions

Participants made statements about themselves that communicated their self-perceptions. Statements about the self were made about how they perceived themselves as learners and in reference to their social, emotional and mental health.

Fortnite God... *"I'm crap at writing."*

Leon... *"The reason I've got an exit card is based on that I'm not very good in lessons."*

Ovuey... *"I'm angry. I'm angry all the time."*

Tom... *"(Mum) would describe me as a little s**t."*

Fortnite God... *"Well, not miserable miserable, but just like, not smiling. I don't like smiling, it hurts your cheeks."*

Constructions of the self as 'naughty' were heard from all participants. Tom commented that his reintegration didn't mean anything due to the fact that he had continued to perceive himself as naughty at the learning centre and after the transition to mainstream school.

Tom... *"It didn't mean anything because I was naughty all the time anyway."*

There was convergence and divergence across participants' accounts regarding their views as to whether change after reintegration into mainstream school was possible in terms of their sense of self. Ovuey talked about feeling like he had always been naughty and that that was unlikely to change. Leon talked optimistically about the capacity for change, using a scale of 0-10 to indicate the direction and degree of change he thought possible.

Ovuey... *"I've always been a little murder, always getting sent out of class in year 2 and 3 and stuff like that." Guess I just like disrupting. Being a class clown.*

Ovuey... *"Something needs to change, me. But it's not gonna happen."*

Leon... *"I think I can change, got up to a 6 or something?"*

Young people constructed themselves as naughty, disruptive and as not very good far more often than they used positive language to refer to themselves. Positive statements about the self were not offered from any of the participants, suggesting young people held negative self-perceptions. Whether reintegration was meaningful to young people was associated with whether or not they experienced changes in their self-perception or whether they perceived that there may be the potential for change.

4.5.2 Indicators of Change

Participants' accounts contained descriptions of particular points in time or acts that signified changes, or no change, to their sense of self throughout their experiences of reintegration. These took on a behavioural description, as participants described aspects of their behaviour, coping abilities and their social, emotional and mental health which indicated a change to their sense of self.

Fortnite God... *"I haven't even used my exit card once yet."*

Leon... *"I found out that like, I didn't have to be there anymore because I was getting better. I wasn't getting angry, I wasn't running around, like running away and like I used to."*

Using behavioural markers, Ovuey discussed that his intentions or motives had changed, even if his outward behaviour had not;

Ovuey... *“Um, well, rude, if I’m rude like towards a teacher, it’s me having my say on something.”*

Whilst there was convergence amongst young people in their use of similar behavioural indicators to mark change, there was divergence in whether or not change had been perceived based on those indicators. Ovuey used the concept of being disruptive to indicate a lack of change in sense of self. Fortnite God perceived a behavioural change as being significant to his experience of reintegration. Leon talked about how behavioural indicators of change held meaning regarding the reason for his reintegration. Tom discussed how he had continued to identify as naughty.

Ovuey... *“Yeah, still disruptive. That’s not changed one bit.”*

Fortnite God... *“I changed a little bit. My behaviour.”*

Leon... *“There was no reason for me to be at the learning centre anymore, cus I’d already been good enough to leave.”*

Tom... *“I was naughty all the time anyway.”*

All of the young people talked about the concept of changes to their sense of self using behavioural terms. Their behaviour in class, ability to cope with aspects of school and behavioural interactions with staff held meaning in terms of whether they had experienced changes to their sense of selves in relation to reintegration.

4.5.3 External Influences

Young people constructed their sense of self in relation to their perceptions of how others saw them. Fortnite God scaled changes his self-perception in reference to how annoying he felt he was to peers. Leon also referred to being annoying. Tom discussed how his segregated learning

situation and non-inclusion in mainstream lessons after reintegration meant that he had experienced a lack of opportunity to interact with peers which in turn, meant he was unable to evaluate whether he had changed or not.

Fortnite God... *"I used to be a 5 out of 5, but now I am probably like a 2."*

Leon... *"When I'd be like really annoying to them, they wouldn't want to be my friend, so I was like, all on my own."*

Tom... *"Can't really tell because I'm not with people. I'm not with my friends in school. If I was with my friends then I'd be able to tell, just like distractions and stuff or something."*

There was convergence in participants' accounts of adopting a similar model of the self and a role which seemed to function to locate them and their sense of self in relation to their peers. Young people talked about adopting this role both in the learning centres and after reintegration and about it being important to them, despite its propensity to evoke negative consequences.

Ovuey... *"I've always been a class clown. I'm not going to change that."*

Fortnite God... *"Making people laugh. I like making people laugh. Even if it gets me into trouble."*

Leon... *"Just being a funny person and just talking to people. So yeah, and I've got so many friends now."*

The environment emerged as having a meaningful impact on sense of self. Ovuey described the mainstream school he reintegrated to as a threat to the degree to which he felt he could be his authentic self without experiencing consequences. Leon and Fortnite God constructed

themselves as identifying more with a mainstream environment, based on some behavioural traits of peers within the learning centres. Tom talked about belonging more at the learning centre than at mainstream school.

Ovuey... *“Be yourself, but don’t be too much yourself or you’ll get into trouble.”*

Ovuey... *“To not get into trouble all day I would have to be a 0.”* (On a scale of 0-5 of being himself).

Leon... *“In my old school, we would have kids there with serious problems who went to school and got into like loads of fights. Cus of people like that they had to lock the doors.”*

Fortnite God... *“Cus I go there learn, that’s why it’s called a learning centre. But they just go there to mess about. They just all mess about.”*

Tom... *“I did (belong there)”*

Perceptions of being annoying or distracting were evident in all young people’s accounts of themselves in reference to others. It is interesting to note the language they used and the labels they ascribed to themselves insofar as whether this language comes from the young people or from others around them; prompting reflections on whether young people with SEMH needs internalise these labels as self-perceptions and use them as indices of change. The pros and cons of adopting a social role within a peer group was discussed. Participants also talked about a sense of sameness versus otherness, where they seemed to relate to or distance themselves from peers in different school settings.

4.6 School Connectedness

School connectedness has multiple definitions within relevant literature (Garcia-Moya et al, 2018). The CDC (2009) suggest school connectedness can be conceived of as the degree to which pupils believe that adults and peers in school care about their individual learning and social needs. The concepts of feeling connected to, included in and supported by peers, staff and other aspects of the school environment emerged from analysis; these have been grouped together as a superordinate theme of school connectedness.

4.6.1 Peer connectedness

Participants constructed meaning in their reintegrations in relation to connections with peers. Getting to know other young people, finding confidence in peer relationships and enjoying connections with peers during unstructured times were significant.

Ovuey... *“When I got to know more people I started to feel more part of this school.”*

Fortnite God... *“My friends gave me confidence to go into lessons.”*

Leon... *“Now I’m so happy because I get to sit with everyone at dinner.”*

Fortnite God... *“Sometimes I walk home with my mates.”*

Tom’s experience of feeling connected to peers was divergent from the other participants in that he felt more connected to peers in the learning centre than to the mainstream counterparts. This impacted on how happy he felt about reintegration. Leon and Fortnite God discussed feeling happier about a greater degree of perceived support from peers at mainstream school in contrast to their pre-reintegration experiences.

Tom ... *“I was more happy (at the learning centre) because I get on with people older than me.”*

Leon... *I've got so many friends who support me here. I know most of the people here because I play a lot of football.*

Fortnite God... *"My friend, he listens to me. It's nice."*

Leon... *"Here it's much more fun cus you get to chat about stuff whereas at my old school, if you were to chat to anyone they'd probably tell you to F off."*

Overall, experiences of peer connection and peer support were significant to all young people. Feeling connected to peers was discussed as having a dynamic relationship with feelings of happiness and a sense of belonging or school satisfaction. Feeling comparatively more connected with peers at the learning centre post-reintegration was associated for Tom with feeling less happy about his transition to mainstream school.

4.6.2 Staff Connectedness

Participants talked about the quality of their relationships with staff as being significant in their experiences of reintegration. Having staff who were helpful, approachable and supportive was discussed as having a positive impact.

Fortnite God... *"Miss H helped. Mr C. If I've got any worries I ask them."*

Leon... *"Staff just really care. They are just really supportive and stuff. Like, um, there's this lady who's in the student hub and she like helps with people whose got problems in their lives."*

Tom and Ovuey reported significantly different experiences of staff relationships to Leon and Fortnite God. Tom and Ovuey felt more connected to learning centre staff. They discussed qualities such as humour, having conversations and feeling respected as being significant with learning centre staff and as missing from the staff interactions they experienced in their mainstream settings.

Ovuey... *“You could build up good relationships with teachers. They were always on your side.”*

Tom... *“Like, teachers but friends at the same time. They would have proper conversations with you and like, normal teachers don’t, they just, you know.”*

Ovuey... *“(Mainstream staff) treat us like kids or aliens. (Learning centre staff) treated you more like an adult, or alive. But at the same time you had that humour. That’s important... It connects you to them.”*

Tom... *“Like, they were good at teaching as well, cus like you go there for being naughty or something, but they were good at getting kids to do work. They didn’t like, keep going on about it...they start a conversation and then if it was a good conversation then I’d come and do some work.”*

The young people reported divergence in experiences with school staff interactions and relationships. Some enjoyed the perceived support from mainstream staff, others held perceptions that learning centre staff relationships were more positive. However, convergence existed across all experiential accounts regarding the significance of staff attitudes, relationships and interactions.

4.6.3 Perceived support for needs

Young people talked about the significance of the degree to which they felt supported with learning and SEMH needs. Again, there was some convergence and divergence across accounts of perceptions of inclusive practices that functioned to support needs. Leon and Fortnite God were more positive about the support that they received. They talked about valuing the nurture space, learning support and the expertise of an external professional. Fortnite God also talked about a foam room he valued and had benefited from at the learning centre which he felt the mainstream school should have.

Leon... *"I can show Miss and like go up to nurture with my bags and that and just stay up there and do some work."*

Fortnite God... *"The Teachers... they've given me more help with my work because last time I didn't really get much help."*

Leon... *"I've got a person called Mosaic who comes in. She comes in and speaks to me. She knows a lot about kids that like, lose a young person at a young age, so yeah."*

Fortnite God... *"I'm gonna write...you should have one at this school."*

Tom and Ovuey talked about their perceptions of not feeling that staff cared about or noticed them, not receiving enough support or practices that functioned to create a barrier to their inclusion. Both discussed their frustration at the amount of time they spent being educated out of the classroom or separated from their peers.

Tom... *"The teachers don't care."*

Ovuey... *"A little bit, barely anything. But maybe, they just put us in the SLC which makes us more frustrated and then we get excluded."*

Tom... *"I can literally sit there for half an hour and no-one even notice. What's the point in coming in?"*

Young people also commented on having a lack of knowledge of support structures that might be available or as perceiving a reduction in the support they received initially after reintegration.

Ovuey... *"I say it's the teachers you know. They are meant to be helping us."*

Fortnite God... *“I don’t really get much help now. I feel like I don’t anyway.”*

Ovuey... *“I don’t know what there is. No-one's ever said about it to me.”*

Support for different types of needs was interpreted by the researcher as meaningful in terms of either removing or creating barriers to inclusion. Support for inclusion and learning was also constructed as meaningfully related to the point of reintegration. Lack of knowledge of support or feeling that support had been reduced without participants being consulted was also noted, suggesting a relationship with participants conceptions of their locus of control. Overall, perceptions of support seemed to relate to participants’ beliefs about school connectedness.

4.7 Plain Language Chapter Summary

What themes were found in relation to young peoples’ experiences of reintegration?

- Meanings ascribed to reintegration – participants talked about was important to them about reintegrating to mainstream school. This information was grouped into three categories; valuing learning, how ready they felt to reintegrate and how being back in mainstream school would affect their future lives.
- Factors impacting on agency – participants talked about things that the researcher feels can have an impact on a young person’s agency. These included three things; their understanding of their own strengths and needs, how much control they felt they had during the process of reintegration and how much adults were able to make changes to support them in their new schools.
- Sense of self – participants talked about how they felt about themselves. This was grouped into three categories; how positively or negatively they talked about

themselves, how they discussed if and how they had changed since reintegrating and how other people and their school setting affected how they felt about themselves.

- School connectedness – participants talked about how connected they felt to their mainstream schools. This included three things; how they felt about relationships with peers, how they felt about relationships with adults in school and how much support they felt they got to help them in mainstream school.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings generated from thematic analysis of the data in relation to the research aims and questions of this study. Findings are considered in the context of what we know from existing research and in relation to psychological theoretical frameworks. The chapter structure is as follows: Aims and Research Questions (5.2); How do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream from a learning centre make sense of their experience? (5.3); How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream? (5.4); What role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive self-identities? (5.5); Issues to Consider in the Development of Professional Practice and Implications for Educational Psychologists (5.6); Plain Language Chapter Summary (5.7).

5.2 Aims and Research Questions

This study aimed to explore, through IPA, the experiences of young people who reintegrate from a learning centre (also known as a PRU) to a mainstream school. Findings from interview data will be discussed in relation to how themes relate to the three research questions;

1. How do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream from a learning centre make sense of their experience?
2. How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream?
3. What role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

The psychological concepts applicable to the reintegration experiences of young people are wide and varied. Due to the limited space within the study, the choice of psychological frameworks considered is guided by the researcher's inductive interpretations of some theoretical and conceptual frameworks that have particular saliency in relation to the experiences of these participants.

5.3 How do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream from a learning centre make sense of their experience?

IPA is concerned with exploring meaning; its aim is to elicit how individuals construct meaning in their experiences and highlight aspects of experiences that hold most significance. From the data, a theme emerged around the meanings participants ascribed to their reintegration.

Within this, three key meanings were communicated as significant to all and are interpreted as addressing the first research question of this study; how young people make sense of their reintegration. This line of inquiry felt important to explore, given that the meanings young people ascribe to experiences may be different from those adults ascribe and it is therefore important to ask young people how they make sense of that at which they are at the centre (Tellis-James and Fox, 2016).

5.3.1 Valuing Learning

Participants constructed being able to learn as representing the meaning of coming to mainstream school. They discussed a sense of feeling negative about their position in relation to learning and the curriculum. Their use of language such as 'being behind' suggested they had drawn negative comparisons of themselves to their peers and this was interpreted by the researcher as having a negative impact on competence beliefs and as representing a barrier to inclusion. These findings support previous research on concerns held by reintegrating pupils around learning and the impact of self-efficacy on motivation (Tootill and Spalding, 2000; Mainwaring and Hallam, 2010; Lawrence, 2011).

Theoretically, the implications of young people feeling negative about themselves as learners are well documented and framed in theories of self-efficacy and resilience; two vital constructs related to good social and emotional mental health. Self-efficacy theory concerns a person's belief in their capacity to accomplish a task or goal (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy and the belief in one's competence is related to motivation to attempt learning tasks and to persistence when faced with challenges (Bandura, 2001). The participants communicated low self-efficacy in relation to learning and catching up with peers. In terms of research question (3) regarding the role of professionals; recognizing that reintegrating pupils' have experienced educational exclusion, gaps in learning and perhaps academic failure resulting in low self-efficacy has important implications for reintegration processes that support inclusive practices. Addressing pupils' relationship with learning and supporting them to develop positive self-efficacy could help to support reintegration into mainstream classrooms where pupils can feel comfortable and able to achieve. Sutherland et al (2008) advise strategies that provide opportunities for pupils to achieve in class are vital for those considered to be at risk academically. Encouraging pupils to recognise their efforts and to link these to academic successes can also promote good self-efficacy (Martin et al, 2017).

Resiliency theories highlight the importance of feeling positively connected to learning and include suggestions for professional practice. Having high but well supported expectations and learning outcomes that take into account strengths, needs and potential can support resilience (Henderson and Milstein, 1996). This prompts reflection on the role of the EP and the application of their skills in strengths-based assessment approaches such as dynamic assessment (Tzuriel, 2000) applied when pupils reintegrate.

The DfE Green Paper on mental health and behaviour in schools recognises within-child risks factors of poor mental health include academic failure and low self-esteem, whilst experiencing academic success and achievements are protective factors (DfE, 2018). Cefai and Cooper's review found that most of the young people who were given a second chance at a new school

after exclusion reported developing a more positive view of education and that this impacted positively on their self-concept and belief in their own abilities. Drawing on his previous research, Cooper coins this phenomenon *positive resignification* (Cooper, 1993).

Recognising the value pupils place on learning and efforts to ensure that young people who reintegrate are supported to catch up and to feel positive about their ability to learn alongside their peers are therefore vital points of intervention in working towards Cooper's positive resignification; to mitigate the risks associated with educational disruption from periods of exclusion and transitions.

Pupils with SEMH needs are at risk of being labelled as disengaged from learning by virtue of the manifestation of some of their needs. Extant literature discusses how this group are at risk of exclusionary and marginalising practices (Jull, 2008) and perhaps constructed as less interested in learning than other groups. In light of the findings of this study that pupils with SEMH needs really value learning, perhaps this indicates the value in, and a need for adoption of strengths-based research approaches which construct a more holistic view of young people with particular labels who traverse challenging terrain (Boyden and De Berry 2004). Tellis James and Fox's (2016) research on the possible selves of pupils with SEMH needs stands out insofar encouraging participants to look for the positives in their experiences and how they had constructed these into qualities that they valued; rather than dwelling extensively on describing the negatives around what had happened to them. Further research that draws on positive psychology to unpick the values that this group holds could be useful in challenging negative constructions of the SEMH label and developing practices that are more holistic and inclusive.

5.3.2 Readiness

Participants discussed not feeling ready to reintegrate as being significant to the meaning of their transition. Two factors seemed salient here. Participants talked about not having enough time to prepare for their reintegration; wanting to have been told earlier than they had been and given more time to prepare. Participants also conceptualized readiness in terms of how

ready they felt to cope with factors associated with mainstream school, including behavioural expectations and lessons.

The term readiness is used to refer to a pupil's readiness to reintegrate into mainstream education after school exclusion. The term is illusive insofar as prescriptive definitions; these seem to be specific to particular settings and contexts. However, extant literature discusses some factors associated with the term in the context of reintegration. Jalali and Morgan (2018) discuss how within-child psychological factors such as poor coping strategies and maladaptive cognitions can impact a pupil with SEMH needs' readiness to reintegrate. They suggest that these need careful assessment followed by appropriate intervention before reintegration can be successful. Thomas (2015) also discusses this issue, proposing a reintegration readiness model. His model advocates that the onus should be on young people working to demonstrate that they are ready to reintegrate rather than on schools working to prove they can accommodate these pupils. As noted in the literature review, this is a controversial opinion when considered in reference to within-child versus systemic models of thinking around where problems should be located and where efforts to affect change should be focused. Gorlich (2014) cautions against this kind of thinking, where young people are pathologized or constructed as responsible for their issues and for making positive changes. Thomas views can also be criticised in relation to the findings of the current study where participants discussed that they weren't sure what it meant to be *ready*. The findings of this study would suggest that perhaps it is unrealistic to expect young people experiencing a time of flux to understand and provide proof of a concept that professionals still seem unsure how to define.

Lawrence (2011) found that reintegrations of pupils with SEMH needs was more likely to succeed when pupils expressed that they wanted to return to mainstream, believed in their ability to make the placement a success and when PRU and mainstream staff clearly explained processes to them. Perhaps these factors contribute to the development of readiness to reintegrate. If so, then the current study's findings lend support for the utility of techniques such as motivational interviewing woven into explanatory and planning conversations which

might have efficacy in developing readiness to reintegrate and supporting pupils to feel more prepared for this transition. McSherry's (1999) and Doyle's (2001) work on reintegration readiness led to the formation of a Readiness scale for reintegrating children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties into mainstream classrooms (Doyle, 2001). This quantitative scale can be used by adults to assess a pupil's competencies across five areas; Self-control and management of behaviour, Social skills, Self-awareness and confidence, Skills for learning and Approach to learning. The assessment includes a target setting section based on scores, where the degree of change aimed for can be scaled and the strategies to support and evidence of success of change are considered. The findings of this research lend support for the use of approaches such as Doyle's (2001) to assess and formulate individualized plans for reintegration support for young people with SEMH needs. Developing this idea further; Person-centered conversations where young people complete a readiness assessment collaboratively with adults who know them well could help to support young people to understand what readiness might mean and look like to settings in terms of expectations. This could also be used to support pupil reflection on what is most important to them as individuals to focus on in terms of making positive changes and feeling more prepared for mainstream school.

In thinking about what role professionals can play in supporting pupils to feel ready to reintegrate, the findings of this study lend support to others that advocate for enhanced, phased transitions practices, where pupils are supported to have time to prepare to move schools (Gorlich, 2014; Cole et al, 2003; Lawrence, 2011). The use of mentoring programmes has been found to be viewed as useful by pupils with SEMH needs (Gorlich, 2014) suggesting the utility in offering access to mentor support throughout reintegration planning. The use of person-centred approaches (PCA) in reintegration planning has also been found to have a positive impact on young people's sense of power within the process and to strengthen relationships between stakeholders (Corrigan, 2014; White and Rae, 2016). Using PCA to develop succinct documents that make clear a pupil's strengths and needs from their own perspective (known as one-page profiles) might help support young people to feel more ready

to cope with mainstream, increasing their sense of safety in knowing that mainstream staff have sought their voice on things they feel they need to help them succeed.

Theories of transition may have utility in understanding the anxieties around readiness communicated by the participants. Fisher's (2012) transition curve model suggests anxiety can occur when people feel they do not fully understand the course of events about to happen or do not have sufficient information to anticipate how they might behave differently in a new setting. Perhaps not feeling ready is related to being unsure of what might happen during and after reintegration or concerns about abilities to cope with behavioural expectations. This study's findings indicate that pupils need to be supported to move towards a stage which Fisher (2012) refers to as *gradual acceptance*; where people begin to make sense of their new setting and their place within the change process. This highlights the importance of the need to carefully monitor and support progress during reintegrations so as to safely guide young people through potential negative feeling states. Practices such as PCA, collaborative readiness assessments and target setting and phased transition plans including multiple visits and relationship building with mentors or key workers could work towards achieving this goal.

5.3.3 Possible Future Selves

Possible selves are conceptions of the self in a future state (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Individuals can hold multiple and conflicting possible selves that are framed by goals, aspirations and anxieties and these constructions serve to regulate behaviours and motivations (Markus and Nurius, 1986). For the participants in this study, reintegration was discussed as having meaning in terms of future life trajectories. Participants discussed how reintegration might impact their possible future selves. Key aspects of reintegrating that held significance in relation to the possibility of positive or negative futures included achieving certain grades or accessing certain subjects to facilitate particular career pathways.

Mainwaring and Hallum (2010) found that mainstream pupils held significantly more positive perceptions of future selves than pupils attending PRUs and that PRU pupils held more

divergent constructions. The current study supports the latter finding in that it found some divergence in participants' possible selves. There were reports of feeling that it was possible to achieve goals with access to mainstream curriculum, reports of positive possible selves despite feeling unsupported by their school, as well as perceptions that preferred futures were unlikely due to feeling grades wouldn't be achieved. Perhaps this mixed response is indicative of the context of these young people having recently undergone a transition in their lives, from PRU to mainstream and therefore a more balanced response of positive versus negative selves were discussed. Holding divergent possible selves is suggested to be a good thing by researchers of the concept. Osyerman (1995) suggests that having a balance of positive and negative enhances effort and persistence. Osyerman and Salz (1993) suggest that having both encourages individuals to strive for the positive selves in an effort to avoid the negative.

These findings relate to the first research question but also have implications for two and three. Participants made sense of their reintegration in terms of its potential to impact on future selves, both positively and negatively. Transitioning to mainstream school was associated with conceptions of different future selves at the interface between the setting and how the participants engaged with learning. Additionally, perceptions that reintegration may or may not open up possibilities to facilitate positive change in life trajectories and achieve desired goals seemed dependent on support to access aspects of the curriculum; this has significant implications for professionals. Resilience theories discuss how pupils need to be supported to believe they can improve where they need to in order to achieve their goals and aspirations for the future (Henderson and Milstein, 1996). If pupils perceive reintegration as meaningful in terms of realising future goals, then professionals need to understand this as an opportunity to engage in goal-planning conversations that draw out and develop positive future selves. The findings of this study indicate that pupils need to be supported to feel that their goals are understood by and important to mainstream staff and that responsive support is offered to help them realise these. This is important in light of research suggesting that possible selves can impact motivation (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Osyerman, 1995). Extant research suggests strengths-based approaches which focus on skills that need developing to achieve positive

possible selves can positively impact pupil working self-concept (Carey and Martin, 2007; Chaney, 2012). Chaney's (2012) research on working with pupils with SEMH needs undergoing transitions highlights the efficacy of transition programmes that include personal futures plans. Malloy (2010) advocates that personal future plans should aim to help pupils produce a meaningful and individualised plan through collaborative conversations that uncover their ideal futures. *In terms of implications for educational psychology; Tellis-James and Fox concluded that EPs are well-suited to the role of carrying out work utilising narrative approaches that can support children to develop a sense of coherence around their life experiences and to embrace more empowering narratives (Tellis-James and Fox, 2016). EPs working with PRUs and reintegrating schools may be able to use their psychological knowledge and relationship building skills to develop staff awareness of the importance of positive possible selves. Staff groups can then be encouraged to make these a focus of supportive reintegration interventions.*

5.3.4 Peer Connectedness

Having positive connections with peers held meaning for participants in this study in relation to their experiences of the learning centre and reintegration into mainstream. They made sense of their transition to mainstream in terms of making friends and sharing social experiences with peers. Getting to know people, having a wider peer group to socialize with and having friends who listened to them were all discussed as significant. Feeling connected to peers either at the learning centre or mainstream setting was interpreted as impacting on happiness and participants' sense of belonging. Bilmes (2012) conceives of belonging as on a spectrum polarised by being apart from a group versus feeling part of a group. Participants in this study were interpreted as making sense of their reintegration in part, by the extent to which they felt part of a peer group at mainstream school and so this has been interpreted as their experiences of a developing sense of belonging.

The benefits of belonging and positive connections with a peer group are well developed concepts within psychological theory and research. In his work on theories of human motivation, Maslow (1943) proposes that a need to feel love and belonging comes third on the

five-stage hierarchy of needs framework and is a prerequisite to self-esteem and self-actualisation. Maslow suggests that humans strive for a sense of belonging through the formation of strong and stable interpersonal bonds with others and that this is a necessary need to fulfil in contribution to social and emotional wellbeing. A lack of belonging, which could be conceived of as feeling socially excluded, has been linked to decreased self-regulation and antisocial behaviour (Baumeister et al, 2005). Developing prosocial bonds with peers is also known to be a factor contributing to resilience. Henderson and Milstein (1996) suggest that developing positive, healthy connections with people can support personal growth and a developing sense of community amongst young people.

Extant literature discusses the relationship between the development of positive peer relationships, school belonging and wellbeing during educational transitions, such as reintegrations and managed moves. Sebokova et al (2018) found that developing a sense of school belonging positively correlated with social and academic competence and overall adolescent wellbeing and should be a focus for transition support. Craggs and Kelly (2018) interviewed secondary school pupils who had undergone managed moves and found that making friends at their receiving school was the factor most strongly associated with a sense of school belonging. Gibb et al (2004) comment on the importance of social acceptance in young people who reintegrate into mainstream from alternative provisions. Rose and Shevlin's (2017) research on SEND pupils' experiences of inclusion in mainstream schools found that the extent to which pupils perceived they were accepted by their peers was associated with how much they felt they belonged in a mainstream school.

The DfE Green Paper on mental health in schools (2018) highlights that having positive friendships and a sense of belonging are protective factors for good mental health, making them an important goal for all pupils, but especially perhaps, for those with additional SEMH needs in order to mitigate the associated risk factors and alleviate associated social problems. Given the impact of positive peer relationships and a sense of belonging on social and academic wellbeing, self-esteem and resilience, perhaps it is unsurprising that making friends and feeling

part of a group held meaning for the participants of this study. The significance participants placed on peer connections is indicative of the need for reintegration practices which acknowledge the importance of pupils developing positive peer relationships and which support this, where possible, through offering strategies such as peer-mentoring or buddying systems. These kinds of programmes may have particular benefits for pupils who can find understanding social boundaries and making friends more difficult, such as pupils with SEMH needs and other groups of SEND, including children with Autistic Spectrum Condition.

In addition to the above factors, participants also seemed to make sense of their reintegration in terms of whether or not they experienced changes in their self-perception and whether they perceived there may be the potential for change as a result of transitioning to mainstream school. The next section discusses the findings around participants' sense of self in reference to the second research question; how does a young person's sense of self change throughout the process of transition?

5.4 How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream?

Dearden (2004) suggests that transitions in life represent moments of possibility where change experiences provide opportunities for people to develop in new ways. Sense of self is a term that embodies a plethora of psychological constructs and related theories including; identity, self-perception, self-concept, self-efficacy and so on. From the findings, aspects related to participants' sense of self that were interpreted as significant included reported self-perceptions and the degree to which participants felt they could change after their reintegration. Factors that they used to indicate or measure changes to their sense of self were also interpreted, some of which felt like internal attributions and some were in relation to more external sources. The next sections discuss these findings with a view to exploring how, but also, in relation to what aspects, does a young person's sense of self change in the context of transition to mainstream school from a learning centre.

5.4.1. Self-Perceptions

In exploring whether participants' sense of self changed throughout the process of transition to mainstream school, it feels important to firstly attend to how they described themselves more generally. During the interviews, the researcher interpreted some information as representing participants' self-perceptions. It was notable that 'I' statements about themselves tended to have a negative quality, constructing themselves as naughty, disruptive and as not very good. This feels like a significant issue to highlight in light of extant literature and my own practice experiences which have suggested that young people with SEMH needs can develop negative self-perceptions that impact on self-concept. Additionally, low self-concept may in itself be a primary SEMH need impacting on other aspects of social and emotional wellbeing (DfE, 2018; Jalali and Morgan, 2018).

Hearing participants' self-perceptions prompts reflection on where the language they used to describe themselves in this way has come from. It could be a result of the impact of educational exclusions, where pupils have attributed sole blame to themselves. It may also be where pupils have internalised labels such as 'naughty' or 'disruptive', having perhaps heard these descriptions in interactions with adults during educational experiences and carried these as labels through transitions to new school settings. Jalali and Morgan (2018) and Cooper and Stone (2000) discuss how SEMH pupils' labelling themselves as naughty can be the result of them feeling a lack of school connectedness. This construct is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, in reference to research question three. However, the findings of the current study indicate that experiencing a lack of school connectedness was a concept significant to participants who also described themselves negatively, and so could be argued to support the link between pupils who label themselves as naughty and those who have low school connectedness.

Martin (2007) suggests it is important to support adolescents to express their identities and to be encouraged to view aspects of the self positively to develop positive self-perceptions.

Lawrence (2011) found that reintegrations were most likely to succeed when young people have good or improved self-esteem and self-worth and feel they can make a success of a mainstream placement. Other research indicates that reintegration is most likely to fail with pupils with SEMH needs (Cole et al, 2003; Parsons, 2003; Lawrence, 2011). This could be indicative of a link between this group holding self-perceptions about their personal qualities or learning abilities and feeling these are incompatible or poorly matched with a mainstream environment. Jalali and Morgan (2018) found that reintegrating pupils with SEMH needs reported negative self-perceptions as well as a sense of learned helplessness (the belief that we have no influence over an outcome based on previous experiences and the generalisations of this belief to other contexts (Seligman, 1974) and an incapacity to change. The current study found some mixed results in terms of participants views on their capacity to change. Some felt that positive changes to their behaviours and educational trajectories were possible, saying such things as; *“I think I can change”*. Others reported feeling less hopeful about these outcomes, suggested by statements such as, *“Something needs to change. Me. But its not going to happen”*.

To mitigate the risks of Pillay’s et al (2013) *Revolving Door Effect* (where reintegration efforts fail and young people experience multiple educational transitions between specialist and mainstream provision) professionals who support reintegrations need to be mindful of the self-perceptions pupils may bring with them to a new school and what may have contributed to the development of these. Strengths-based approaches could then be applied with a view to challenging negative thoughts and developing perceptions that are likely to be more useful in promoting higher self-concept, self-belief that positive change is possible and the belief by pupils that they can succeed in a mainstream setting.

5.4.2 Changes to Sense of Self: Behavioural Indicators and the Influence of External Factors

Self-concept, impacted by one’s self-perceptions, is suggested by psychological theorists as having a powerfully mediating effect on behaviour (Bandura, 2001; Martin, 2017). Feeling

positive about one's self can promote acceptance and expression of individuality (Martin, 2007). It can serve as confirmation that our thoughts, feelings or actions are moving towards constructions of our ideal selves; the kinds of people we strive to be. Holding negative self-perceptions can, in contrast, be detrimental to mental health and wellbeing as well as social and emotional competence (Bandura, 2001; Martin et al, 2017). Personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955; Beaver, 2011) denotes that negative self-perceptions impact on identity construction and that they can be factors that bring about change by motivating us to strive for a more comfortable position between conceptions of our actual selves (how we feel about ourselves) and ideal selves (how we want to feel; our preferred identities).

In terms of changes to sense of self; this study found that participants discussed changes to their sense of self in terms of particular indicators. These related to their behaviour at school (for example, being more or less disruptive) as well as their view of themselves in relation to how others perceived them (for example, being more or less annoying). Where change was discussed in reference to improved behaviours, such as being less disruptive, it was constructed as a positive; with participants communicating a sense that they had healed, gotten better or become good enough to return to mainstream school. This could be interpreted as participants' perceiving change that moved them towards their ideal self in a mainstream context. In her article on transitions as times of reconstruction for school pupils, Ackesjo (2013) discusses the idea of border marking; where pupils use changes within particular aspects of their sense of self to reconstruct or reorient their identities as more fitting with a new context. Ackjesco (2013) talks about resistance and distancing; whereby pupils focus on changes they have made in attempts to construct themselves as former pupils of a previous environment. The current participants could be interpreted as marking borders between themselves as former learning centre pupils and current mainstream pupils by using behavioural indicators of change to reconstruct themselves as belonging more to a mainstream environment. Where pupils reported there had been no change, such as continuing to perceive themselves as disruptive, this was interpreted by the researcher as participants interpreting a potential barrier

to their ability to make a success of their reintegration, given that their self-perceptions continued to mismatch with the demands of their new context.

This study found that participants also constructed and perceived changes to their sense of self in reference to how others viewed them. They noted “*being less annoying*” to peers or being able to “*make other people laugh*” were amongst significant indicators of change. Ackjesco (2013) also comments on the use of this strategy by young people in transition; she suggests young people make sense of themselves in new contexts by looking at themselves in relation to others that are also there. Fisher (2012) highlights the possibility for individuals in transition to feel guilt as they recognise the impact that past behaviours may have had on others around them. Kellyian (1955) theories of personal construct psychology discuss the propensity for shame as individuals develop awareness of negative perceptions of them held by others and as this being a motivating factor to strive for and recognise positive changes.

Personal Construct theories suggest it is possible that pupils who feel their identities are mismatched to their environments can experience discomfort and a potentially confused sense of self (Beaver, 2011). This study's findings support this view, as participants who did report this mismatch also reported greater divergent possible selves. In Fisher's (2012) Transition Curve Model, the potential for experiencing depressive or disillusioned emotional states is suggested as individuals become aware that their past actions or current belief systems are no longer compatible with evolving constructs systems or that their core values do not fit cohesively with a new context. The risk of confused future selves, withdrawal or lack of motivation to engage increases during these stages. However, what can also happen, as discussed in personal construct theory, is that people strive to make personal changes to constructs that hold meaning and value, such as behavioural actions, that mean they feel more comfortable in a new context and they can move forward in the direction of gradual acceptance. This could suggest that a degree of discomfort from mismatches between identity constructions and new school settings could be useful to an extent, if it works to encourage pupils to make positive changes in the context of reintegrations. However, these experiences warrant the need for

significant emotional support from school professionals so that pupils may be guided through potentially more anxiety-provoking psychological stages of transition feeling held in mind, supported and reassured that they are working towards stages of gradual acceptance and realignment.

It is also interesting to note that the behavioural indicators used by participants to construct changes to their sense of self suggest some within-child thinking; where they have constructed change as located within themselves rather than within the systems around them. These findings are in contrast to Jalali and Morgan (2018), who found that young people who had spent time in PRUs attributed difficulties to external influences and often reported an external locus of control in terms of propensity to change. These authors suggested such external attributions led to limited understanding of participants' own behaviours as well as a lack of motivation to make positive changes. The internal attributions of change from the current study's participants is positive insofar as it does imply some internal locus of control and perhaps communicates a degree of ownership of positive change. Participants associating change with internal factors such as behavioural and attitudinal traits could also suggest a more internally located sense of control over the process of change. This is interesting to reflect on in reference to participant perceptions of an external locus of control around the logistics of the reintegration process. Perhaps work around ownership of positive change prior to, during and after reintegration may support pupils to feel more in control during reintegration. However, it is also important that pupils are supported to understand that the systems around them should take equal responsibility for recognising the need to make adaptations and reasonable adjustments to support reintegrations and the development of positive pupil identities alongside.

Theories of transition (Fisher, 2012) and identity (Kelly, 1955; Beaver, 2011) suggest it is integral that individuals understand the impact that changes, such as experiencing transitions, can have on their own construct systems and their identity constructions. It is suggested that individuals undergoing these experiences need support to be able to understand and navigate the impact

of transition in terms of the implications on self-perceptions. Fisher suggests it is the goal of those involved in change processes, such as setting staff supporting reintegrations, to make transitions as effective and comfortable as possible. Through developing understanding and supporting the transitioning individual to understand their own past, present and possible future selves, it is possible to facilitate the development of positive identities and acceptance of how individuals fit into their new context. The next sections draw on the findings of this study, extant literature and psychological theory to explore some of the potential roles for professionals in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities.

5.5 What role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive self-identities?

Some important implications in relation to this research question have already been addressed above such as the efficacy of person-centred approaches to reintegration and approaches that focus on developing positive possible selves. In addition to these, the researcher interpreted from the findings some other factors that had meaning in terms of impacting on participants sense of agency and their connectedness to school. Developing agency and school connectedness are considered by the researcher as important roles for professionals working with reintegrating pupils. The themes related to these findings are discussed below, in reference to extant literature, psychological theory and the third research question; what role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

5.5.1 Self-knowledge and Perceived Systemic Flexibility: The Impact on Agency

Agency can be broadly defined as holding beliefs that are key to achieving desirable outcomes for oneself (Smith et al, 2000). Having a sense of agency means that an individual knows that their thoughts, feelings and views have a meaningful impact on the world around them (Kellet, 2012). Personal agency factors include competence beliefs (self-esteem, self-efficacy, social

skills) and perceived control (Bandura, 2001). From the findings, two themes that emerged that were interpreted as having an impact on participants' personal agency included self-knowledge and perceived systemic flexibility/ inflexibility.

Self-knowledge is the term employed in this study to refer to the participants' sense of their own strengths and needs. It links with the concept of self-awareness, whereby individuals have confidence in knowing their strengths and limitations (Weissberg et al, 2015). A strong sense of self-knowledge of personal strengths, useful coping strategies and specific support needs came through in the voices of the participants. This is interpreted as a highly valuable resource for professionals aiming to support successful reintegrations which also encourage the development of agency alongside. Martin et al (2017) highlight that social and emotional competencies stemming from personal agency are a predictor of wellbeing outcomes in at risk children, such as those with SEMH needs and learning difficulties. These and other authors have found relationships between agency as a means of social and emotional competence and academic achievement, mental health and emotional wellbeing (Martin et al, 2017; Brock et al, 2008; Collie et al, 2016). This suggests that work to promote a sense of agency in young people is a worthy goal.

Self-knowledge is interpreted as having agency-promoting potential that is dependent on the interface at which the young person and the systems around a young person interact. If professionals make genuine efforts to elicit the voice of the pupil and use this information meaningfully to develop support plans that are responsive to that individual's perceived strengths and needs; then that pupil can experience agency insofar as seeing that their views and feelings are listened to, acted upon and have a meaningful impact on their world. The findings of this study support the view of Hardy and Majors (2017 p13) that children are important sources of information on matters that concern them. Drawing on educational psychology models of consultation (Wagner, 2000); pupils can be thought of as experts on their own situation and their self-knowledge thought of as the most valuable resource for designing responsive support that affects meaningful change. In turn, understanding that their self-

knowledge is valued by adults and sought to make meaningful change to their lives can promote agency.

Extant literature echoes the findings of this study in relation to self-knowledge in the following ways. Tellis-James and Fox (2016) found that young people with SEMH needs in their study had strong self-knowledge of their strengths and things they needed more support with. White and Rae's (2016) study on the efficacy of person-centred reviews for transition planning found that pupils had very clear views about what supported them in school. They also reported pupils were happy to be involved and appreciated having their opinion sought on their transition needs. The authors suggest this had implications for the role of EPs as professionals who can apply person-centred approaches at transition points to ensure that child voice is genuinely incorporated into assessment and planning procedures. And so, in relation to what role professionals can play in supporting positive self-identities during reintegration; educators need to recognise and respond to pupil self-knowledge to create opportunities for reintegrations to be agency-promoting experiences for young people.

Participants discussed a sense of perceived flexibility or inflexibility of school systems to be responsive to their needs. Learning centres were viewed as more flexible than mainstreams by some participants. Flexibility was constructed in relation to behavioural systems, teaching practices and access to learning support. This is interpreted as impacting on agency, given that agency depends upon individuals knowing their thoughts and feelings can affect meaningful change within the systems in which they interact. If agency reflects a pupil's belief that they can influence outcomes in their life then school systems that pupils perceive to be inflexible can therefore be thought of as detrimental to agency development and consequentially, to wellbeing.

Extant literature highlights the dangers of perceived inflexibility of school systems on higher risk groups of pupils, such as those with SEMH needs. Cefai and Cooper (2010) found perceptions of this group of feeling victimised by systems which they felt were inflexibly unfair. Clarke et al

(2005) caution that rigid mainstream school systems can encourage pupils to work to resist adopting the school's values. This feels particularly important to be aware of at reintegration, when the goal is to encourage pupils to successfully transition and maintain their place at the receiving school by aligning with that settings norms, values and codes of conduct. Blum's (2005) work on school connectedness (a concept to be discussed in further detail in section 5.2.3) warns that it is negatively affected by harsh school environments which over-emphasise strict rules and zero tolerance policies; perceptions of these were interpreted within the descriptive accounts of participants in this study. Instead, Blum (2005) suggests environments that encouraging pupils to develop autonomy and decision-making skills are important for pupil wellbeing and positive school connection.

Rudduck et al (1996) write about the significance of the relationship between pupils being consulted and their sense of personal agency. The researcher shares Rudduck's view that not authentically seeking and responding to the voices of those at the centre of educational transitions on what works for them increases the risk of promoting practices which may negatively impact agency and may exacerbate rather than support SEMH needs. Given participants' perceptions of greater flexibility within learning centre systems and their negative perceptions of mainstream systems, the findings of this study would suggest a need for greater flexibility on the part of mainstream school systems during reintegration processes. This may be facilitated by good communication between learning centres and receiving schools during reintegrative processes with a view to sharing practice-based evidence and pupil views around what works in supporting pupils with SEMH needs to learn and to experience a sense of agency.

5.5.2 Locus of Control

As one aspect of perceived control, locus of control is a factor contributing to agency, which also includes factors such as autonomy and self-directedness (Skinner, 1996, cited in Martin et al, 2017). It is a concept originally coined by Rotter (1966) and exists on a spectrum polarised by internal and external ends. An internal locus of control is held by people who believe they can control events in their own lives. A more external locus is held by those who believe they

have little or no influence in their lives and attribute events and outcomes to chance or outside factors. The degree to which participants communicated having a sense of control throughout the process of reintegration is interpreted as an indication of their locus of control and therefore, their experience of agency.

Referring back to Fisher's (2012) theory on transition; possible divergent states throughout the curve include hostility, denial and anger. Fisher suggests these experiences depend on the degree of control individuals feel they have over the change process and the degree of self-belief in one's ability to cope. Happiness is a state that Fisher asserts can be achieved when people experience enhanced control over change processes. This again, indicates the importance of designing reintegration processes which promote agency through developing internal locus of control in young people to mitigate the risk of negative feeling states.

The participants in this study largely reported feeling an external locus of control due to having little voice or say over the process of their reintegration and not feeling informed or involved in decision-making. Extant literature examined in chapter two reiterates this issue. Cefai and Cooper (2010) caution that children with SEMH needs are amongst the least heard of all pupils and that this particularly problematic given that their views can often be contrasting with school staff. The findings of this study concur with Cefai and Cooper's theme of pupils' perceptions of having no voice and no one asking their opinion (Magri, 2009) on significant matters; in this study's case, on their reintegration.

Having a voice and a meaningful impact on matters affecting one's life are essential for enhancing empowerment through a more internal locus of control; which in turn reduces feelings of helplessness (Cefai and Cooper, 2010) and promotes agency and emotional wellbeing (Martin et al, 2017). Norwich and Kelly (2006) assert that empowering young people with SEMH needs can have a positive impact in terms of prevention of further SEMH issues. They suggest that gaining their voice can encourage pupils to feel more in control of and take more responsibility for making positive behaviour changes. Agency, via a more internal locus of

control, is achieved only when people feel their voice and views translate into meaningful change and are not simply sought tokenistically (DfE, 2018). One theoretical framework that has efficacy in helping professionals to evaluate their practice in relation to this goal is presented by Hart (1992) and his Ladder of Participation (UNICEF, 1992) (See Appendix L).

This eight-stage model proposes that only in stages four to eight are children experiencing a true degree of participation in matters that concern them. It could be argued this model could be used by professionals to guide and evaluate their practice around reintegrative processes. Used purposefully, under the guidance of trained professionals such as EPs, this model can help setting staff in learning centres and mainstreams to understand and evaluate their efforts to ensure pupil voice is meaningfully sought in a way that facilitates true pupil participation and develops an increased sense of perceived control; thereby promoting agency in pupils at the centre of the transition.

5.5.3 School Connectedness

Definitions of inclusion explored in chapter 2 discuss the concept as related to genuine efforts of schools to achieve equality in learning opportunities (Thomas, 2015), remove barriers to learning (Dyson, 2004) and make reasonable adaptations to promote access for all (Gibb et al, 2007). Inclusion definitions however do not seem to explicitly acknowledge the significance of supporting and promoting school connectedness, which could be seen as an important factor to facilitate true inclusion when one considers the definition of the term. Blum (2005) discusses the work of the Wingspread Conference on drawing together research evidence to reach a definition and factors essential in the achievement of school connectedness. This work defines it as the belief by pupils that adults in the school care about their learning as well as them as individuals (Blum, 2005 p16). Three factors are proposed to be critical to pupils experiencing this: high academic expectations coupled with support for learning; positive adult-pupil relationships; and physical and emotional safety.

The participants in this study spoke about all three of these factors as significant to their experiences of reintegration. They discussed how supported they felt with learning, how well they could get on with staff and the extent to which teachers and other professionals noticed and cared about their learning and emotional needs. There was convergence and divergence across accounts; some participants felt that mainstream school staff did care and were supportive whilst others felt mainstream staff did not notice them, did not care and those pupils were much more positive about relationships with staff at the learning centres. Factors that were significant to participants in staff relationships included those who had a sense of humour, who took notice, who helped with problems, who made them feel safe emotionally and who could have a good conversation. Previous research has reported similar findings. McCluskey et al (2013) found pupils valued staff who were friendly, fair, attentive and had a sense of humour; these were seen as essential qualities for the development of trusting teacher-pupil relationships, one component of school connectedness (Blum, 2005). Tellis-James and Fox (2016) found pupils constructed positive staff relationships as including provision of academic and emotional support. Lawrence (2011) reported positive staff relationships and emotional safety were fostered when reintegrating pupils felt staff cared about and listened to them. Pupils who underwent managed moves reported feeling safe and settled when they received support from their receiving school for their SEMH needs (Craggs and Kelly, 2018).

Given the evidence that young people report the significance of factors related to school connectedness, it is a vital construct to encourage, particularly in light of research demonstrating the risk and protective factors associated with its absence or presence. The aforementioned DfE Green paper asserts good pupil-teacher relationships are a protective factor for positive mental health (DfE, 2018). Henderson and Milstein (1996) suggest that pupils who have a positive connection with at least one caring adult in school and are likely to be more connected to their learning and more resilient. Blum (2005) states that pupils who feel positively connected to school are more likely to achieve academic success and less likely to abscond, bully, engage in peer conflicts or substance misuse. Blum suggests strong scientific evidence indicates that school connectedness promotes learning motivation, classroom

engagement and attendance. Low levels of school connection have been associated with symptoms of depression in adolescence (Schochet et al, 2006). Arslan (2009) found a relationship between perceived social support from teachers and reduced trait anger in adolescence. Loukas et al (2009) found low school connectedness was not only a predictor of conduct problems in key stage three but also an effect of them; suggesting a feedback loop between school connectedness and SEMH problems. For all pupils, but particularly for those whose SEMH is already at risk, this indicates a need to make school connectedness a target for intervention which breaks cycles that have detrimental effects on pupil mental health and behaviour (Monahan, 2010).

This study finds that factors associated with school connectedness are significant to pupils' experiences of reintegration. Given research which demonstrates the impact of this construct, they have important implications for the role of professionals who support reintegrating pupils. Blum (2005) discusses some strategies existing research has suggested are useful in developing school connectedness. They include the implementation of high standards coupled with appropriate and differentiated academic support that is responsive to pupils' strengths and needs and ensuring pupils feel close to at least one supportive adult in school. This concurs with research promoting the efficacy of key worker and mentoring approaches with reintegrating pupils (Coles et al, 2003; Tootill and Spalding, 2000).

Blum also advocates for supporting pupils who have fallen behind to catch up. This may be particularly important for reintegrating pupils who are likely to have gaps in their learning and for whom, according to the findings of this study, being behind peers is a significant concern. Cooperative learning opportunities is suggested as a way to address the issue of pupils who may experience social isolation. This could also act in support of developing peer connections between existing and reintegrating pupils; another significant factor for participants in this study. Ensuring that disciplinary policies are fair and also collectively agreed on by the school community can promote school connectedness (Blum, 2005) whilst also working to promote agency in pupils through giving them a voice and sense of control in shaping the policies and

practices which affect them on a daily basis. Libbey's (2004) discusses different variants of school connectedness and associated outcome measures. One of these measures could be applied at a stage of the reintegration process, say, after one term, to help assess how connected pupils feel to their receiving school and to plan supportive actions in response. Resnick's (1997) School Connectedness Measure could be used; an 8-item scale including those which assess pupil sense of safety, rules, fairness, belonging and teacher support at school (Libbey, 2004).

5.6 Issues to consider in Professional Practice and Implications for Educational Psychology

The findings of this study suggest some important implications for professional practice around the process of reintegrating pupils with SEMH needs from PRUs to mainstream secondary schools. From consideration of participants' perspectives, a number of key areas emerged where focused professional involvement might be most useful. These include: reintegration readiness, developing positive identities, promoting agency, support for learning and developing school connectedness.

The researcher has collated these implications into the production of a Good Practice Guide for Practitioners. It is suggested that this guide could be used by setting staff in both PRUs and mainstream schools and external professionals such as EPs, to inform practice around how they support young people throughout reintegration. Potential roles for different professionals have been considered and indicated on the guide, including roles that could relate specifically to EPs.

A Good Practice Guide for Reintegration Practices

Intervention Area	Possible Intervention Strategies	By whom
<p>Readiness to Reintegrate</p>	<p>Solution-focused scaling around readiness with the aim of highlighting the skills and coping strategies young people have already and what steps need to be taken to develop further coping skills.</p> <p>Reflective conversations with trusted adult with the aim of increasing young person’s understanding of expectations of mainstream school environments.</p> <p>Collaborative readiness assessments using a framework such as Doyle’s (2001) Reintegration Readiness Scale to inform areas of need, target setting and phased transition plans.</p> <p>Phased transition plans, inclusive of clear timeframes, dates for introductory visits, relationship building meetings with key workers and preparatory warnings from 3 months prior to reintegration.</p> <p>Motivational interviewing approaches with the aim of increasing young person’s motivation to make positive changes including conversations around how they will know change has happened.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist or EP-trained PRU staff</p> <p>PRU Staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist and/or PRU staff</p> <p>PRU and mainstream staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist Or EP trained staff</p>
<p>Developing Positive Identities</p>	<p>Personal Construct Psychology approaches to highlighting young person’s values about school and life goals.</p> <p>Strengths-based approaches highlighting personal achievements, strengths and resources with the aim of developing positive possible selves in relation to life goals.</p> <p>Cognitive-behavioural approaches around identifying and challenging negative cognitions and self-perceptions and developing cognitions that are likely to be more useful in promoting higher self-concept and self-belief that positive change is possible.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>PRU and/ or mainstream staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist</p>

	<p>Personal Futures Planning, involving work around possible selves to produce individualised education plan through collaborative conversations which explore ideal futures.</p>	Mainstream staff
Promoting Agency	<p>Recognise and respond to pupil self-knowledge regarding their strengths and needs to create opportunities for reintegration to include agency-promoting experiences for young person.</p> <p>Person-centred approaches to transition planning to ensure the young person’s voice is genuinely incorporated into assessment and planning procedures utilising resources such as or similar to those suggested by Helen Sanderson Associates, such as PATHS.</p> <p>Person-centred reviews that include an evaluation of how the school system has responded in relation to the views and needs of young person.</p> <p>Evaluation of school’s approach to collaborating with young person using Hart’s Ladder of participation as framework to guide conversations.</p>	<p>PRU and mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologists (facilitator) and Mainstream staff</p>
Support for Learning	<p>Work around how young person feel about themselves as a learner; identifying their strengths and needs</p> <p>Person-centred meetings with the goal of developing responsive support for areas of need such as coping with homework expectations.</p>	<p>PRU and/ or mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>

	<p>Offering the option of cooperative learning opportunities with peers to address the issue of pupils who may experience social isolation and support the development of positive peer connections between existing and reintegrating pupils.</p> <p>Dynamic assessment approaches to highlight learning potential to young person and staff who support them in to challenge negative self-perceptions held by pupils who have missed learning and contribute to the development of learning support strategies that provide pupils with a sense of mastery and increase self-efficacy.</p> <p>Person-centred reviews of progress with learning to highlight positive progress and develop further goal setting.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>
<p>School Connectedness</p>	<p>Whole school training on the concept and importance of School Connectedness</p> <p>Having high academic expectations coupled with support for learning (see above strategies)</p> <p>Valuing the importance of positive adult-pupil relationships and efforts to ensure that young person feels close to at least one supportive adult in school using a key worker or mentor approach.</p> <p>Valuing the importance of positive peer relationships and efforts to support this, where possible, through offering interventions that promote new friendship building such as peer-mentoring, buddying systems, social skills groups, opportunities to engage in hobbies and interest clubs.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>

<p>Creation of One-Page Profiles with young person to increase their sense of safety in that staff care about and understand how to support their SEMH needs.</p>	<p>Whole-school approaches to unconditional positive regard for pupils including valuing qualities that research indicates young people with SEMH needs value such as having a sense of humour, being fair, being available and listening.</p>
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5.7 Plain Language Chapter Summary

What does this study suggest is important to young people about reintegrating into mainstream school from a PRU?

- Learning - Being able to learn in class with friends and worrying about being behind and not being able to catch up with learning
- Readiness – How ready they feel to cope with mainstream school and how prepared they felt to leave the learning centre
- Possible Future Selves – young people feel that how their reintegration goes can affect their ability to achieve their future life goals
- Peer connections – getting to know friends, having more people to talk to and having friends who listen to them is important when you start a new school

How does this study suggest a young person's sense of self changes when they move from PRU to mainstream school?

- Self-perceptions – young people with SEMH needs seem to have negative thoughts about themselves and their ability to learn. These might be caused by their previous experiences of school. Some young people feel they can make positive changes, but some young people feel less hopeful that they can change how they feel about themselves or change their behaviour in school.

- Indicators of change – young people refer to their own behaviour when thinking about whether or not they have changed. They also measure any changes to themselves by thinking about how other people see them

What does this study suggest professionals can do to support young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

- Self-knowledge and Systemic Flexibility – young people seem to have a good idea about their personal strengths and needs and this is important for adults to recognise. When adults ask young people about their views on what they need, changes can be made to the way school systems work so that young people feel their views matter, have been listened to and have made a difference to their lives.
- Locus of Control – young people can feel they have little control over what happens when they reintegrate. If adults can help young people to feel more involved and more in control over events that happen during reintegration they may help young people to feel they have more agency: that their thoughts and feeling impact their lives and the world around them.
- School connectedness – adults need to support young people to feel more connected to their schools after reintegration by working to ensure young people feel that adults and peers in their school care about them as individuals and about their learning and support them to feel safe and successful at school.

What does this mean for professionals who work with young people with SEMH needs who reintegrate?

- Adults should consider a number of key areas where they might be able to improve how they support young people who reintegrate. These have been made into a Good Practice Guide which includes suggestions on how to help young people in five different areas; Readiness, developing positive identities, promoting agency, support for learning and developing school connectedness.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will summaries the findings of this research (6.2). Limitations of the study and implications for further research are considered (6.3). Finally, the positives of study and its unique contribution to educational psychology research are noted (6.4).

6.2 Summary of Findings

This research aimed to explore what the experiences of reintegration from a PRU to a mainstream school were from the perspectives of young people with SEMH needs. Through interpretative phenomenological analysis of qualitative, semi-structured interviews; the study heard and compared the experiential accounts of four young people who discussed a variety of issues which were significant to their reintegration to mainstream school.

The study shed light on the meanings young people attached to their reintegration. It was found that common to all participants was the significance of being able to learn and to catch up with their peers. Being able to learn was constructed as the reason for reintegrating and being behind their peers was a communicated as a significant concern. The concept of readiness was discussed by all participants, in relation to how prepared they felt to leave the learning centre and how ready they felt to cope with the expectations of a mainstream environment. The impact of reintegration on constructions of possible future selves was significant; participants spoke of how reintegration to mainstream school presented both facilitators and barriers to achieving future life goals. Finally, reintegration held meaning in terms of peer connections. Some participants felt more of a sense of belonging to peers they had met in the learning centre, whereas others reported enjoying greater and more meaningful social interactions since returning to mainstream school.

The study highlighted ways in which reintegration to mainstream impacted young peoples' sense of self. Participants held commonly negative self-perceptions which were associated with their behaviours at school and their views of themselves as learners. Whilst there was convergence in negative self-perceptions, there was divergence in how hopeful young people were that positive change had or could happen as a result of reintegration. Some felt that they had or could make positive changes in their lives, whilst others felt that change was not possible. It was found that young people discussed changes to their sense of self in terms of personal behavioural qualities, such as how naughty they were. They also seemed to measure changes to their sense of self in relation to others' views about them. Being less annoying or more or less disruptive were amongst these constructions.

In terms of developing professional practice in this area; the research also highlighted some areas where focused professional involvement could be useful in supporting young people with SEMH needs to reintegrate and to develop positive identities in the process. It highlighted that this group of young people possess a strong knowledge of their own strengths and needs which, in the case of this study's participants, they can talk about openly and honestly. It is suggested that this knowledge can be recognised and responded to by professionals in a way that can promote agency in young people, if they are supported to recognise that their self-knowledge is listened to, valued and acted upon to facilitate responsive and individualised support plans around reintegration into mainstream school. The impact of school systems was also highlighted as a factor that can promote or demote agency, depending on young peoples' perceptions of how flexible or inflexible they are in recognising and responding to individual needs. Young people were found to hold external locus of control in relation to their reintegration experiences; another factor that can impact on agency. Supporting young people to feel they have more of a voice and more control over their own reintegration experiences is suggested as an important role for professionals. Finally, it was found that young people make sense of their reintegration in terms of factors that relate to how connected they feel to school. This includes factors such as how they feel about the quality of relationships with setting staff and how cared for and supported they feel in terms of their learning and their SEMH needs.

Recognition of the importance to young people of perceived school connectedness and efforts to develop positive school connectedness is suggested as of significant importance to professionals in supporting successful reintegration and the development of positive identities in young people who undergo this experience.

In summarising the findings in relation to psychological theory and knowledge from extant literature; this research has found five key areas where professional support may be most beneficial with regards to supporting young people with SEMH needs to reintegrate. This has been collated into a Good Practice Guide, intended for professionals including PRU and mainstream staff as well as educational psychologists. Roles for different professionals around specific areas for intervention are suggested across five areas; reintegration readiness, developing positive identities, promoting agency, support for learning and school connectedness.

Although this study did not set out to measure the success or otherwise of the reintegration process for the participants, it is acknowledged that at the time of involvement, all participants had successfully maintained their placement at mainstream school after reintegration. Given that the study does discuss the factors that can support positive reintegration experiences, it is therefore of interest to consider some of the possible factors which seemed to facilitate the reintegration for these participants. The researcher has interpreted that in summary, the following factors seemed to be significant in terms of facilitating successful reintegration;

Within-child factors: relevant literature discusses the importance of within-child factors in terms of facilitating reintegration. In this study, participants communicated a motivation to want to engage in learning and access a mainstream curriculum. They also constructed succeeding in mainstream school as related to achieving future life goals which could be interpreted as an intrinsic motivation to make a success of reintegration. Participants' self-knowledge of their own strengths and needs and the ability to use some coping strategies is

also suggested here to be a factor that promoted successful reintegration.

Systemic factors: the participants discussed varying degrees of the extent to which they felt their receiving schools adopted an inclusive ethos and of feeling supported academically and socially. However, all young people did discuss some systemic support strategies put in place by their mainstream schools that are interpreted as facilitating their reintegrations. These included access to nurture spaces and student support hubs within the mainstream schools, initial support around some aspects of learning such as homework, use of exit cards and access to some external professional support around specific needs such as bereavement support. Positive relationships with some key members of staff were also discussed by three out of four participants, lending support for the findings of extant literature (Lawrence, 2011; Tootill and Spalding, 2000, Cole et al, 2003) that positive pupil-staff relationships can facilitate supportive reintegrative practices.

6.3 Limitations of Findings and Implications for Further Research

This study produced some interesting findings and offered some new and original insights into the experiences of reintegration from the perspectives of young people with SEMH needs. The researcher has commented on quality criteria for evaluating qualitative research and how she endeavored to uphold these principles throughout her research design in Chapter Three (see section (3.6). However, the researcher still acknowledges this study has some limitations;

This study explored my interpretations of the participants' interpretations and could therefore be described as limited in terms of the validity of the findings. However, the double hermeneutic nature of the research has been acknowledged and attempts to make interpretations transparent have been included within the reflexive account (see Appendix N).

Semi-structured interviews have inherent limitations insofar as they are conversations about real life but are guided by the researcher's predefined line of inquiry and research questions and are therefore not truly representative of real life or an individual's overall experience

(Howitt, 2010). Additionally, my approach to interviews may have altered as I became more experienced and more confident as a researcher and I felt more comfortable following the participants' phenomenological accounts rather than adhering prescriptively to the interview schedule. This may mean a difference in the richness and quality of the data gained from the last interview in relation to the first. However, all data from all interviews was included as all contained valuable insights in contribution to the research aims.

Due to the small, homogenous sample of four participants with similar needs from one local authority, the findings are not generalisable to wider groups of young people with different types of needs from different local authority contexts. However, the strength of an IPA approach is in its idiographic nature and the findings are not intended to be generalised. They may however, be transferable to other young people with SEMH needs who transition from learning centres to mainstream schools within the local authority.

Due to the commitment to ensure anonymity as far as possible, I was unable to include detailed information about participants' backgrounds, values, interests and life experiences prior to reintegration and outside of school. This information could have expanded exploration of their perceptions and deepened analysis. I was unable to give details on the contexts, values and ethos of the mainstream schools where the research took place; consideration of which could also have deepened analysis of participants' experiences.

In terms of implications for further research, it would be interesting to repeat the study in different local authority contexts, such as urban contexts. Seeking the experiences of young people from a range of LAs could illuminate and draw together commonalities in experiences and highlight important implications for developing UK-wide practice in this area.

This study sought the perceptions of young people with SEMH needs. Seeking the experiences of young people with other types of needs, such as ASC, physical or intellectual disabilities who

reintegrate from alternative provisions to mainstream school would also be an interesting avenue for further exploration.

This study found that young people with SEMH needs place significant value on their ability to learn and access a curriculum that will facilitate them achieving their life goals. Valuing learning is considered by the researcher to be a positive quality given its propensity to facilitate positive life trajectories. As noted in the Chapters Two and Five; Tellis-James and Fox's (2106) study of the possible futures of young people with SEMH needs draws on positive psychology to highlight how this group frame some of the challenges they have experienced as positive experiences. Further research that draws on positive psychology to unpick the values that this group holds could be useful in challenging some of the negative constructions of the SEMH label and developing practices that are more holistic and inclusive.

The study produced a Good Practice Guide for Practitioners. A focus for further research could be to collect the views of young people and professionals who might refer to this guide in order to evaluate its utility and clarity and further inform areas for intervention.

6.4 Positives of Study and the Unique Contribution to Educational Psychology Research

This study sought to hear the voices of young people regarding their real-life experiences and on reflection, it is felt that this aim was achieved. Given the views of the participants about the importance of having a voice during the process of reintegration, it is hoped that the participants experienced a sense of being heard and a sense that their views were genuinely valued by and important to the researcher. Positively, this was communicated by all participants to the researcher during member checking meetings. This is commented on further in the reflexive account (Appendix N).

On reflection, the researcher feels that some of the findings of this research present a challenge to some of the more negative constructions of young people with SEMH needs that have been communicated in relevant discourses. It was positive to be able to highlight that this group value their education and the opportunity to learn, a stance that is not reflected in literature suggesting this group are disengaged with education. Furthermore, to be able to report that young people with SEMH needs have strong self-understanding and self-knowledge is an empowering narrative and one that lends support for practices that champion the value of young person participation and voice in educational psychology research and practice.

Finally, in terms of a unique contribution to educational psychology research; this study has produced a Good Practice Guide for Practitioners working with young people with SEMH needs who reintegrate from a PRU to a mainstream school. It is based on the findings of this research and further informed by the researcher's knowledge of evidence-based practice within educational psychology. It is hoped that this could be used to guide professional involvement to continue to develop effective practice around reintegration.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Systematic Literature Review

Database Searched	Search Terms	Results Found	Refinement	Relevant Number
Psychinfo	1 Reintegration OR re-integration OR transition OR return to school OR reinclusion OR re-inclusion	171886	By date (2000-2018)	150940
	2 young people OR young person OR secondary child* OR adolescen* OR secondary education OR secondary pupil* OR secondary student*	962358	By adding term	
	3 special education provision OR special school OR pupil referral unit OR learning centre OR social emotional mental health	426	By adding term	
	4 mainstream education OR mainstream school*	1580	By adding term	
	5 Search terms 1 AND 2	72232	By combing terms	
	6 Search terms 3 AND 4 AND 5	2	By abstract	2

	7 pupil views OR young people* experience* OR views OR pupil voice OR student experience	159880	By adding term	
	8 Search terms 1 AND 4 AND 7	97	By title	6
	9 experiences OR views OR voices OR stories	648722	By adding term	
	10 permanent exclusion or fixed-term exclusion or school exclusion or fixed-period exclusion	542	By adding term	
	11 Search terms 1 AND 2 AND 9 AND 10	62	By title and abstract	3
	12 School Belonging OR Peer Group Belonging	348	By adding term	
	13 Search terms 2 AND 12	216	By adding term	
	14 Search terms 13 and 1	15	By title and abstract	4
	15 self-concept or self-esteem or self-perception or belonging	132184	By adding term	
	15 low achievement OR under achievement OR falling behind in learning)	901	By adding term	
	17 Search terms 15 AND 16	92	By title and abstract	1
British Education Index	1 Reintegration OR re-integration	3, 612		

	OR transition OR return to school OR reinclusion OR re-inclusion			
	2 young people OR young person OR secondary child* OR adolescen* OR secondary education OR secondary pupil* OR secondary student*	50, 328	By adding term	
	3 Search terms 1 AND 2	1, 171		
	4 pupil views OR young people* experience* OR views OR pupil voice OR student experience	13, 203	By adding term	
	5 Search terms 3 AND 4	169	By title and abstract	6 (9 -3 duplicates)
	6 special education provision OR special school OR pupil referral unit OR learning centre OR social emotional mental health	3, 421	By adding terms	
	7 Search terms 1 AND 2 AND 6	58	By title and abstract	3 (8-4 duplicates)
	8 mainstream education OR mainstream school*	707		
	9 permanent exclusion or fixed-term	206		

	exclusion or school exclusion or fixed-period exclusion			
	10 Search terms 1 AND 8 AND 9	2	By title and abstract	1 duplicate
	11 experiences OR views OR voices OR stories	34, 742		
	12 Search terms 3 AND 6 AND 11	21	By title and abstract	(7 duplicates)
	13 Identity OR self-concept OR Self	20, 379	By adding term	
	14 Search terms 3 AND 13	174	By title and abstract	1
	15 self-concept or self-esteem OR self-perception OR belonging			4, 063
	16 low achievement OR under achievement OR falling behind in learning)			183
	17 Search terms 15 AND 16		By adding term	5
	18 Search terms 15 AND behind in learning			
ERIC	1 Reintegration OR re-integration OR transition OR return to school OR reinclusion OR re-inclusion	16, 087		
	2 young people OR young person OR secondary child* OR adolescen* OR	164, 530		

	secondary education OR secondary pupil* OR secondary student*			
	3 Search terms 1 AND 2	5, 881		
	4 special education provision OR special school OR pupil referral unit OR learning centre OR social emotional mental health	8, 820	By adding term	
	5 search terms 3 AND 4	205	By title and abstract	1
	6 pupil views OR young people* experience* OR views OR pupil voice OR student experience	62, 957		
	7 Search terms 5 AND 6	35	By title and abstract	1 (4-3 dupliactes)
	8 permanent exclusion or fixed-term exclusion or school exclusion or fixed-period exclusion	326	By adding term	
	9 Search terms 3 AND 6 AND 8	3	By title and abstract	1
	10 Search terms 3 AND 8 AND mainstream education OR mainstream school*	3	By title and abstract	Duplicates

Web of Science	1 young people OR young person OR secondary child* OR adolescen* OR secondary education OR secondary pupil* OR secondary student*	453, 772		
	2 Reintegration OR re-integration OR transition OR return to school OR reinclusion OR re-inclusion	1, 057, 574		
	3 3 Search terms 1 AND 2	15, 940	By adding term	
	3 3 Search terms 1 AND mainstream education OR mainstream school*	95	By title and abstract	5 (10 – 5 duplicates)
	4 Search terms 2 AND permanent exclusion or fixed-term exclusion or school exclusion or fixed-period exclusion	238		
	5 Search terms 4 AND pupil views OR young people* experience* OR views OR pupil voice OR student experience	51	By title and abstract	2
	6 special education provision OR	97, 182	By adding term	

	special school OR pupil referral unit OR learning centre OR social emotional			
	7 Search terms 3 AND 4 AND 6	31	By title and abstract	4 duplicates

Journal Searches

Relevant educational psychology journals were searched independently. These were 2000-2018 editions of; Educational and Child Psychology and Educational Psychology in Practice.

Snowballing

Further literature was also found through consideration of the reference list from relevant articles found through database searches.

Grey Literature (Oliver, 2013)

Unpublished literature include Doctoral Theses have been included in the systematic literature review, where relevant. Non-academic literature including policy and documents published by independent and government bodies have also been considered.

Managed Move literature

One paper relating to pupils who have undergone managed moves has also been considered in this literature search (Craggs and Kelly, 2018). Whilst the managed move process is distinct from the process of reintegration after a fixed term or permanent school exclusion; parallels exist in terms of young peoples’ experiences of undergoing a transition to a new school environment after a breakdown of a relationship with their original secondary school. The paper was included as its content was deemed relevant in contributing to the purposes of the literature review.

Appendix B: Example of analysis using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme Framework (CASP)

Paper for appraisal and reference: Jalali and Morgan (2018) 'They won't let me back.'
Comparing student perceptions across primary and secondary PRUs.

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? **Y** N Unsure
Clear that the study sought to address gap in primary cyp perspectives around inclusion of SEMH needs and to find out if their views differ from secondary pupils with SEMH needs. Initial research question could have been slightly clearer, i.e.; Do student perceptions...of what?... change over the course of primary to secondary. However, this is made clearer by the inclusion of the three additional research questions.

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? **Y** N Unsure
Yes, for the aim of collecting and comparing perspectives and experiences

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research? **Y** N Unsure
Good use of pilot study. Researchers value and take time to build rapport with participants and consider locations of interviews etc. Use of life grids/ timelines helpful to scaffold participants narratives and identify key moments for them. Researchers asking cyps to start with their early life school experiences and move through their whole school careers could be interpreted as asking a lot of information and perhaps excessive data for the purpose of the research questions? However, seems justifiable as all the data collected are used purposively in the findings.

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? **Y** N Unsure
Purposive sampling is appropriate in this context.

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? **Y** N Unsure
Timelines/ life grids and semi-structured interview scripts all combined to help scaffold an idiographic narrative whilst also providing some consistency in terms of researcher inquiry and data collected.

6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? **Y**
N **Unsure**

Interesting that the researchers immersed themselves in the schools and build therapeutic relationships with cyps before recruiting participants; this feels more like an ethnographic

approach? Can see how this promotes rapport building which is likely to be beneficial to both parties given the sensitive nature of topics discussed such as participants' perceptions of the nature of their difficulties. But also may mean researchers start to build knowledge and preconceptions of cyps that impact their interpretations of findings and conclusions drawn and could lead to researcher bias? IPA does have space for this double hermeneutic and the researchers also acknowledge the impact of a relationship with participants on the trustworthiness of responses as a potential limitation. They also kept a reflective journal with the goal of trying to avoid interpretation bias, suggesting an awareness of the potential limitations of their research design.

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? Y N Unsure
Informed consent/ rapport building/ taking into account sensitive nature of topic under investigation/ interview location considered

8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? Y N Unsure
Rigorous analysis, referencing and explaining processes used, e.g.; Moustakas (1994) horizontalization. Like the inclusion of models/ thematic maps to demonstrate thematic thinking. Interesting use of qualitative data analysis software to collect initial codes. Could argue that to do this manually allows the researcher to become more familiar with the data but perhaps more systematic when using ICT?

9. Is there a clear statement of findings? Y N Unsure
Could be more detailed but this may be due to word limit of article. Themes clearly summarised using descriptive quotes. Discussion draws together the findings in relation to psychological theory and does so in a way that answers the research questions.

10. How valuable is the research? Y N Unsure
Original contribution, easy to follow and provides some interesting things to think about in terms of PRU placement and the role of cognition impacting on reintegration and mental health. Realistic and robust suggestions in implications sections about the role for Eps at individual child level and role of policy makers at systemic school and LA level.

Appendix C: Head Teacher Information Sheet and Consent Form



8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ

T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755

F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756

W: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/SPS>

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank-you for taking the time to read this letter. My name is Kerry Gibson, and I am in my second year of training on the Doctorate for Educational Psychology at Bristol University.

I am currently on placement with The Educational Psychology Service, and as part of this placement I am completing research looking at young people and transitions. The research aim is to explore the perceptions of young people regarding what it means to them to transition to a mainstream school from a learning centre.

I understand that your school has some young people on roll who have recently transitioned from an alternative learning provider. I would like to seek permission for your school to be involved. If you agree to participate, this would mean that I as a researcher would interview one or two young people from your school. The interviews would focus on gaining the young people's views on their experiences of reintegrating, in relation to what they found helpful.

Each interview is expected to last maximum one hour and will be recorded with a digital voice recorder. They will then be transcribed, analysed and the results will be written up. Any identifying information will be removed and all schools and participants will remain anonymous.

It is hoped that this research will allow me to understand directly from young people how they feel about reintegration, what they feel is important to them and how they identify support throughout the process. Crucially, it gives pupils a chance to voice their feelings about an important part of their time at school. It is also hoped that it will identify things that could be helpful to education settings and the local authority in supporting young people to successfully transition.

If you are happy for your school to participate, to fulfil my ethical obligations I will be seeking fully informed consent from yourselves, parents of young people and the young people themselves.

Enclosed is the consent form requesting permission for me to contact you, to discuss potential participants. I would then seek parental consent, before approaching the young person. I hope to commence data collection during March 2018.

I would like to reiterate that participation is voluntary and any data collected will be confidential and anonymised. Anyone involved in the research will have the right to withdraw at any point.

Please read and sign if you are happy to participate. If you would like to discuss the project further, please feel free to contact myself, Carmel Hand, Senior Teaching Fellow and Research supervisor at the University of Bristol.

Thank-you in anticipation, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,

Kerry Gibson

Appendix D: Parent/ Carer Information Sheet and Consent Form



8 Priory Road, Bristol, BS8 1TZ

T: +44 (0) 117 954 6755

F: +44 (0) 117 954 6756

W: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/Depts/SPS>

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Your child's school has agreed to support the University of Bristol and the local authority in a research study looking at young peoples' feeling about experiencing a school transition.

A research student, and trainee educational psychologist Kerry Gibson, has asked to interview a selection of young people, to ask them to share their thoughts about how what it was like to transition to a new mainstream school from a learning centre. Kerry is a Doctoral student at the University of Bristol, studying the Doctorate in Educational Psychology and is currently on placement in the Educational Psychology Service.

The interviews are likely to last around one hour. Topics to explore will include, but are not limited to, 'transition', 'sense of self', 'relationships', and 'support'. Other topics related to transitioning to a new school may be raised by young people of their own accord.

Kerry will ask child-friendly questions which have been planned in advance but will be flexible enough for young people to talk through their experience in any way they want to.

The interviews will be recorded using a Dictaphone and Kerry will write up the conversations afterwards. All information from the interviews will be confidential; wherever possible, any information that could identify your child or their school will not be included.

Kerry will store the information in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Bristol and store the recording of interviews on a secure computer. Your child's school's safeguarding procedures will be followed, which includes the data protection act. If you would like any further information about this or any part of the study, please feel free to contact Kerry or the school.

This letter is to seek permission to talk to your child about their willingness to participate in the research. They have the right to say no and so by signing this form you are consenting to them being told more about the study only.

Kerry will aim to complete the research at a time that has the least disruption on your child's learning. If you agree for your child to be spoken to about the study, Kerry will then seek permission from your child before working with them. Participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw your child from the study at any point.

Please sign and return this form to the school.

Thank-you for your cooperation.

Kerry Gibson

Declaration Statement:

I have read and understood the above information.

I.....(parent/carer) am happy for my child

(Child's name) to be contacted about the above study.

Signed (Parent/ Carer): Date:

Appendix E: Pupil Information Sheet and Consent Form



Dear Young Person,

My name is Kerry Gibson.

I am training to be an Educational Psychologist. This means I am training to work with young people to find out how they feel about their education. I am doing some research as part of my training. This means I would like to ask young people questions and find out about their experiences of school.

The research project I am working on at the moment is called; Exploring young people's experiences of transition.

I want to talk to young people in Year 9, 10 and 11 who have spent time in an alternative learning setting or a learning centre. I want to find out about what it was like to come back to your school after spending time in the learning centre. I also want to find out how young people feel about the support they had from adults when they moved to a new school.

I am writing to you because you have recently spent some time at the learning centre and I'd like to ask you questions about this experience.

I would like to interview you. This means I would like to ask you questions. Your Headteacher and your parent/ carer has said it is ok for me to write to you. But this does not mean you have to talk to me.

You can say yes. This means I would come to visit you at school to introduce myself and tell you a bit more about my research. Then you can decide if you are happy for me to come back at another time to interview you. We can also decide where you want the interview to happen. This could be at school, at home or at the office I work in.

This interview should take up to an hour. I will record our conversation on a digital recorder and then I will write up everything we say to each other. I will keep this information safe and

it will be stored on a password protected computer. The things you say will be written up into a research report. I will not use your name or the name of your school when I write up what we say. When the report is finished I will send it to you so you can read it if you want to. Other people who are interested in this topic will also read it.

If you are happy for me to come and visit you, I need to get your written consent. This means you need to sign this form with your name and the date you signed it. Your Teacher will let me know if you sign it and then I can come and visit you at a time that works for you and me.

You can say no. This means I won't come to visit you at school.

You can say yes now, but you can change your mind at any time and that means I won't come to interview you. You can also change your mind up to one month after I have interviewed you. If you do, this means I will not write up what you've said into my research.

Have a think about if you feel happy to give consent for me to visit you and if you are, please sign this consent form and give it to your parent, carer or teacher to give to me.

Thank-you for taking the time to read this letter.

Kind regards,

Kerry Gibson

Consent Form

I have read and understood the above information.

I am happy for Kerry Gibson to come and visit me at school to tell me about her research.

I... ..(young person's name) am happy for Kerry Gibson to come and talk to me about her research project. Date:.....

Dear Young Person,

Thank-you again for meeting with me.

As we have talked about, I am doing some research as part of my training to become an educational psychologist. This means I would like to ask young people questions and find out about their experiences of school.

The research project I am working on at the moment is called; Exploring young people's experiences of Transition.

This letter is to confirm that you are still happy for me to interview you.

You can say yes. This means I will come to visit you at school and talk to you for up to an hour. I will record our conversation on an audio recorder and then I will write up everything we say to each other. I will keep this information safe and it will be stored on a password protected computer. The things you say will be written up into a research report. I will not use your name or the name of your school when I write up what we say. When the report is finished I will send it to you so you can read it if you want to. Other people who are interested in this topic will also read it.

If you are happy for me to interview you, I need to get your written consent. This means you need to sign this form with your name and the date you signed it. Your Teacher will let me know if you sign it and then I can come and visit you at a time that works for you and me.

You can say no. This means I won't come to visit you at school.

You can also change your mind up to 2 weeks after I have interviewed you. If you do, this means I will not write up what you've said into my research.

Have a think about if you feel happy to give consent for me to interview you and if you are, please sign this consent form and give it to your parent or teacher to give to me.

Thank-you for taking the time to read this letter.

Kind regards,

Kerry Gibson

Consent Form

I have read and understood the above information.

I am happy for Kerry Gibson to come to my school to interview me.

I.....(young person's name) am happy for Kerry Gibson to come and

interview me about her research project. Date:

Appendix F: Initial Interview Schedule

Research Questions

1. How do young people who have reintegrated into mainstream schools from a pupil referral unit make sense of their experience?
2. How does a young person's sense of self change in the context of the transition to mainstream?
3. What role can professionals play in supporting young people who reintegrate to develop positive identities?

Interview Questions – Supported by the option to make a visual timeline

1. **Can you tell me about your experience of leaving the learning centre and starting this school?**
 - How did you feel about leaving the learning centre?
 - How ready did you feel to come to this school?
 - How did you feel about coming back to mainstream? (Did they want to return to mainstream?)
 - Describe what it was like starting this school?
 - Did you have any fears? worries? hopes?
 - Did you know anyone before you started?
 - Did you come to visit the school before you started? What was that like?
2. **What does/ did it mean to you to come back to mainstream school?**
 - What does it mean to you to start a new school/ to leave the learning centre?
 - A Fresh start? A trial?
 - What is most important to you about being at this school?
 - How are the learning centre and this school different / what they do differently?
3. **Tell me about things that helped you to feel more like part of your year/ your form/ the school?**
 - Was the process of moving explained to you?
 - Did school write to you before meeting them?
 - Key worker?
 - Buddy system?
 - Tell me about 2/3 things that were helpful along the way?
 - Tell me about 2/3 things that were not helpful along the way?
 - Things people did? Things people said?
 - Is there anyone who helps you at this school/ makes you feel safe?

- Who did you see or talk to the most when you were moving or moved?
- Do you feel you belong to this school?

4. What does making this placement a success mean to you? What would successful look like to you?

- Do you have/ what are your goals for here?
- Have they changed since coming back to mainstream?
- Can you tell me about what you feel you are expected to do at this school?
- How able do you feel to meet those expectations? On a scale of... (explore)
- What did/ do you want to achieve by coming here?

5. Let's now have a think about how you might describe yourself at different points during this experience?

- Are there any differences in you at different stages?
- How do you know you are different?
- How do you feel about this?
- How might others describe you at different points during this experience? (Adults who work with you? Family? Peers? - Others?)

6. Can you tell me about how you see yourself in the future? Could you describe your ideal future self?

- What will you be doing? What will make you happy? What job will you be doing?
- What are your goals? Hopes?
- What would you least like to happen in the future? (Feared future selves?)
- Has moving here affected how you see your future in anyway?

7. Is there anything you get or that you would like from others to help you to continue to make your placement a success? - Mainstream staff – Peers - PRU staff – EP - Others

Appendix G: Revised Interview Schedule: Post-pilot Interview

Interview Questions – Supported by the option to make a visual timeline

1. Can you tell me about what it was like to leave the learning centre and start this school?

- How did you feel about leaving the learning centre?
- How ready did you feel to come to this school?
- Did you feel it was the right time?
- How did you feel about coming back to mainstream?
- Describe what it was like starting this school?
- Can you tell me a bit more about that.?
- I am wondering how come that was important to you?

2. Could you tell me about anything that helped you to feel more like part of your year/ your form/ the school?

- Was the process of coming here explained to you?
- Did school write to you before you visited?
- Key worker?
- Buddy system?
- Tell me about 2/3 things that were helpful along the way?
- Tell me about 2/3 things that were not helpful along the way?
- Is there anyone who helps you at this school or who makes you feel safe?
- Who did you see or talk to the most when you were moving or moved?
- Did you know anyone before you started?
- Did you come to visit the school before you started? What was that like?

3. What is most important to you about being at this school?

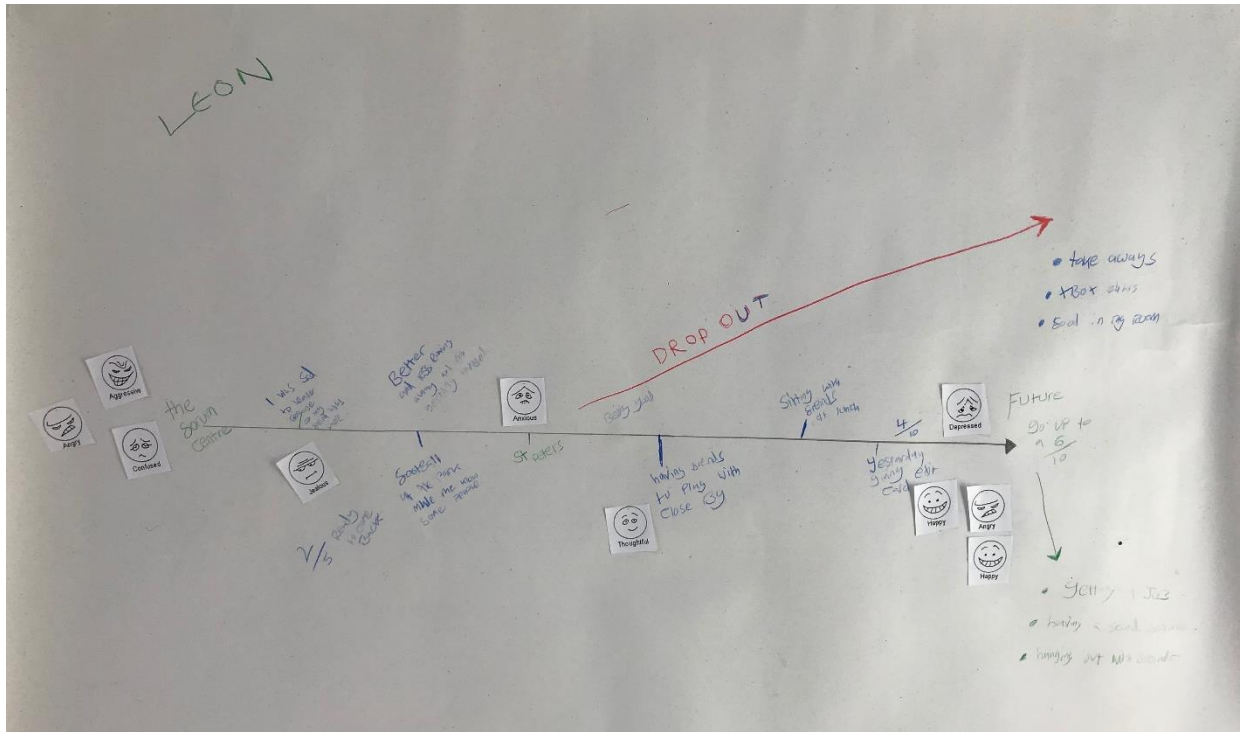
- What did/ do you want to achieve here?
- What are your goals?
- Do you/ how come you believe you can be successful in the new school?
- I am wondering how come that was important to you?

4. Can you tell me about how you see yourself in the future? Could you describe your ideal future self?

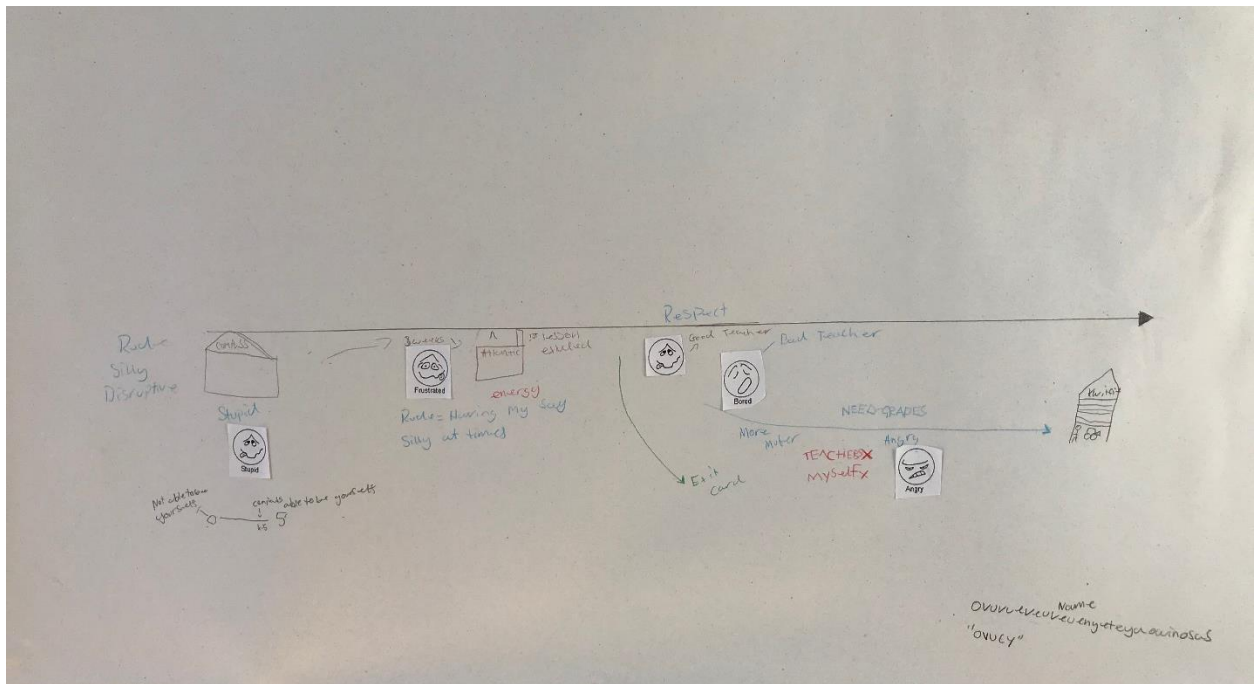
- What would you be doing?
- What would make you happy?
- What job will you have?
- What are your goals? Hopes?
- What would you least like to happen in the future? (Feared future selves?)
- Has moving here changed how you see your future in anyway?

- 5. Let's now have a think about how you might describe yourself at different points during this experience?** (Words or drawings on timeline)
- What words would you use to describe yourself at different points?
 - How might others describe you at different points during this experience?
 - Adults who work with you? - Family? - Friends? - Others?
 - Do you feel you have changed in any way?
 - Are there any differences in you at different points?
 - How do you know you are different?
- 6. Would you change anything about the process if you could go back and do it again?**
- What would you say to another young person who was doing the same as you've done?
 - What would you say to school staff who were going to support that young person?
- 7. Is there anything you get or that you would like from others to help you to continue to make your placement a success?**
- Mainstream staff – Peers - PRU staff – EP - Others

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Appendix I: 15-Point Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis Process (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Transcription	1.	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	2.	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3.	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach) but, instead, the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4.	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5.	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
	6.	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
Analysis	7.	Data have been analysed rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8.	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
	9.	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic.
	10.	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
Overall	11.	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12.	The assumptions about themes are clearly explicated.
	13.	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14.	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15.	The researcher is positioned as <i>active</i> in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'.

(Braun and Clark, 2006, p37)

<p>O: It's not the same as the centre</p> <p>K: No, okay. Okay, so you were there for 6 months. Did you know, like, tell me about how you found out you were coming here. Like, what, what happened in this bit? So did you have a meeting, or?</p> <p>O: No, I just got told</p> <p>K: Okay, who came and told you?</p> <p>O: My key worker for compass</p> <p>K: Right</p> <p>O: And the Head, the second head</p> <p>K: Okay. So they kind of came one day, in class?</p> <p>O: No. Well, the head was messing around cus he knew I didn't wanna come here so from like, around where I joined he was always teasing my about it saying I'm gunna be coming here and stuff. And then, I was always saying no I'm going to this other school. But then, I actually came here</p> <p>K: Okay, so you knew you didn't want to come here. How come you didn't want to come here?</p> <p>O: Cus it's far away</p> <p>K: Ah, yeah. So how far away to do live?</p> <p>O: So, like, 9 miles away</p>	<p>'Told', Done to rather than done with?</p>	<p>External locus of control? Lack of involvement in process</p>
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<p>K: 9 miles away. Gosh. So how long does it take you to get here then?</p> <p>O: 45 minutes</p> <p>K: 45 minutes! That's a long time</p> <p>O: In a taxi</p> <p>K: Okay, okay. In a taxi on your own?</p> <p>O: (nods)</p> <p>K: And how do you feel about that?</p> <p>O: I just sit on my phone, unless, if i know the taxi driver I speak to him</p> <p>K: Yeah, oh, so do you have different ones is it?</p> <p>O: Yeah</p> <p>K: Okay, that is quite a long way</p> <p>O: Mmm</p> <p>K: So that was the main reason, sort of, why you didn't want to come here?</p> <p>O: Yeah [5s]</p> <p>K: Okay, so you were here and you felt like the teachers were on your side. You were here for about 6 months. Then you were just</p>	<p>Feeling isolated or alone on the journey to school?</p>	<p>Isolation, lack of connection?</p>
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<p>K: Frustrated. Do you know what you were frustrated about?</p> <p>O: That I didn't get into the school I wanted</p> <p>K: Yeah. Cus I guess you'd, you know, you talked about the fact that people had said you were going back to mainstream and you had asked to go to a school. How come, what was good about that school?</p> <p>O: I knew loads of people there</p> <p>K: Yeah</p> <p>O: Well, that's probably the reason I got kicked out of my last school. Cus all my friends were there</p> <p>K: Yeah, do you know anyone here?</p> <p>O: Yeah, I know loads of people here</p> <p>K: Yeah, but your good friends were at the other school or your first school?</p> <p>O: Mmhmm</p> <p>K: Okay [7s] Alright, so at the learning centre for 6 months where you liked it cus you didn't have to wear uniform and the teachers were on your side</p> <p>O: Mmhmm</p> <p>K: And then you were told you wanted to come back to mainstream and you wanted to go to another mainstream school</p>	<p>Importance of familiarity and peer connection for a positive school experience</p> <p>Impact of peers on behaviour and decisions in school?</p>	<p>Peer connection</p> <p>Attribution of responsibility</p>
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<p>but you were told you didn't get a place and that was really frustrating and then you were sent here, where you didn't want to come?</p> <p>O: Mmhmm</p> <p>K: Right, and now you get here via taxi and it's 45 minutes</p> <p>O: Yeah</p> <p>K: Okay. Alright, um, so [5s] So when you were like, on the taxi on the way, then what happened on your first day here?</p> <p>O: I got excluded</p> <p>K: Oh, did you? Oh no!</p> <p>O: (smiles)</p> <p>K: Do you want to tell me about that?</p> <p>O: Um the Head Teacher, whose leaving now, it was I think, last lesson. From SLC I went to last lesson. It was my first lesson ever. And um, he came in the class and I stared at him a bit, for like 5 seconds and he told me what are you looking at? And I didn't know how to react so I just told him to F off.</p> <p>K: Okay. And you got excluded, on your first lesson</p> <p>O: (Smiles)</p> <p>K: Gosh, okay. Alright, maybe we should put that somewhere?</p>	<p>Experiencing exclusion on first day. What is the impact of this on his view of his reintegration? His ability to cope?</p> <p>Describes perceiving HT as confrontational and as using known coping strategies of verbal aggression as a defensive mechanism?</p>	<p>Inflexibility of school systems to respond to his new start?</p> <p>Staff understanding of SEMH needs?</p> <p>Feeling threatened? Vulnerable?</p> <p>Miscommunication</p> <p>Coping strategies</p>
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<p>O: Mmm</p> <p>K: Okay so you know that first day, you said you weren't in lessons all day, you were in SLC?</p> <p>O: Yeah, where I am now</p> <p>K: Okay, what's SLC?</p> <p>O: Um, it's like, when you get excluded. Um, so you don't have to go straight back into lessons so you like reintegrate. It's like a reintegration</p> <p>K: Okay, so it's like a little version of, kind of, what you've done</p> <p>O: So you go on a 10-day, um programme. So for 10 days you just go but yeah, out of lessons and the rest you just stay in SLC</p> <p>K: So if it's for, if you go there when you're excluded? But you were put in there on your first day</p> <p>O: Yeah, because I didn't know anything about school</p> <p>K: Okay</p> <p>O: My teacher brought me here, cus he's from the learning centre</p> <p>K: Okay, right</p> <p>O: And he like said, you were gunna be here</p> <p>K: How did you feel about being in the SLC on the first day, before all of the rest of it happened?</p>	<p>Describes a micro-process of reintegration</p> <p>How did not knowing affect his anxiety levels?</p> <p>Lack of choice and voice?</p>	<p>Different scales of reintegration perceived</p> <p>Feeling excluded from school community</p> <p>Isolating him on first day</p> <p>Not knowing, feeling unprepared</p> <p>Readiness?</p> <p>Locus of control? Voice?</p>
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<p>O: Yeah it was alright.</p> <p>K: Yeah, cus I guess, if it was me I would probably be a bit scared to go into lessons as I wouldn't know anybody either. So you got excluded for staring and sort of not really knowing how to respond. What did you think happened there? When the teacher reacted and you reacted, what do you think happened there?</p> <p>O: They probably just thought, well i dunno, I didn't know how to react, so</p> <p>K: Mmm. It's a difficult thing isn't it when someone says what you looking at</p> <p>O: Mmm. And I was, I kissed my teeth then at him</p> <p>K: Mmm. Okay</p> <p>O: It's just stupid</p> <p>K: What's stupid?</p> <p>[9s]</p> <p>K: Okay. So you did know some, so you knew some people before you started?</p> <p>O: Yeah I knew a few</p> <p>K: And after your first day when you'd be excluded what happened after that?</p>	<p>What does this suggest about how ready he felt to cope with mainstream? Is he talking about a need in terms of coping strategies?</p> <p>Long silence ...Unsure how to respond? Worried about saying what he really thinks? Contemplative?</p>	<p>Knowledge of strengths and needs</p> <p>Coping strategies</p> <p>Negative staff attitudes</p>
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<p>O: I came back. I had a 3 day exclusion and then I came back, and stayed in the SLC. Stayed in the SLC for a bit, can't really remember. And then I started going back into lessons, and it was alright I guess</p> <p>K: It was alright</p> <p>O: Yeah</p> <p>K: Okay, what lessons did you have?</p> <p>O: Stuff like Maths, English and um french, which is useless</p> <p>K: Is it? It's a tricky one isn't it, languages. So in terms of lessons that you liked to do and wanted to do, did anyone have those discussions with you?</p> <p>O: No</p> <p>K: So you were kind of, given a timetable and sort of said, this is what you're gonna do?</p> <p>O: Mmm. Ah, no. My teacher in SLC, he asked what lessons and I did and what lessons I didn't like. And I don't like English, it's mainly because of the teachers. That's all it is</p> <p>K: Okay, tell me about that</p> <p>O: Sometimes, some teachers are more stricter than others. And it's just stupid</p> <p>K: Yeah [6s] Tell me about the strict ones</p> <p>O: Don't like em.</p>	<p>Set up to fail or Attempts by setting to put in place boundaries and make expectations clear?</p> <p>Perceives a lack of relevance of his curriculum to his life goals</p> <p>Not asked for his voice or included in planning around learning</p> <p>Attributes poor experiences in lessons to attitudes of staff and staff perceptions of him</p> <p>What does he mean by stupid?</p>	<p>Boundaries and expectations</p> <p>Flexibility of systems?</p> <p>Life goals</p> <p>Learning - what is valuable and useful</p> <p>Locus of control / lack of voice?</p> <p>(Not) Feeling supported in learning</p> <p>Staff attitudes</p> <p>Staff relationships as significant barrier to positive school experience</p> <p>Feeling victimised</p>
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<p>K: No, how come?</p> <p>O: Because you have less limitations, when you get in with a decent teacher</p> <p>K: Yeah, okay. Talk to me about a decent teacher then. You said some things like, they're on your side. So if you could describe for me a decent teacher?</p> <p>O: Well, they're not as like, rough on you. They're a bit more laid back. Like Mr X. I mean, if you had Mr B maybe, and you spoke, he'd probably give you a warning. But Mr X you could probably have a whole conversation and not get a warning</p> <p>K: Yeah, a whole conversation with him or with your friends?</p> <p>O: With a friend. He'll probably turn around and tell you to be quiet but with him he'll probably just issue you a warning.</p> <p>K: Okay, it's difficult isn't it, because schools have rules and that's understandable, but you're also still humans</p> <p>O: Yeah, they treat us like kids or aliens.</p> <p>K: Kids or aliens</p> <p>O: Mmm</p> <p>K: Yeah, okay. How would you prefer to be treated?</p> <p>O: Dunno [6s]</p> <p>K: How did they treat you at the learning centre?</p>	<p>More relaxed attitudes of staff as important</p> <p>Sense of not feeling respected and treated as an individual?</p>	<p>Staff understanding and flexibility</p> <p>Struggles adjusting to higher expectations and different behaviour policy?</p> <p>Importance of mutual respect between staff and students</p>
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<p>O: Yeah, good</p> <p>K: Tell me about that</p> <p>O: They treated you more like adult, or alive. But at the same time you had that humour, that's important</p> <p>K: Yeah, other people have said that to me. That, kind of banter or like...</p> <p>O: Yeah, there was a lot of banter at the learning centre</p> <p>K: Yeah, is that something that you think is important?</p>	<p>Perceives a difference in staff attitudes from LC to Mainstream which impacts on his experience</p>	<p>Humour</p> <p>Staff connectedness</p>
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Appendix K: Presentation of Thematic Analysis

Table 4.1: Emergent Themes for Individual Participants

Participant	Coding of Emergent Themes
Fortnite God	Staff Support, Support Seeking, Support Reduction, Belonging, Non-identification with LC Peers, Social Anxiety, Peer support, Readiness, Change, Construction of Self in ref to Others, Self-concept, Threats to Self-concept, SEMH Needs, Coping Strategies, Self-knowledge of Strengths and Needs, Expectation, Learning as Valued, Being Behind, Interest in Future Self, Voice/ Views, Feeling listened to, Choice/ Done to, Inclusion, Isolation, Size of Classes, Distance from Home, Preparation/ Warning
Tom	Teacher Responsibility, Acceptance of Responsibility, Lack of Support, Staff Relationships, Peer Group Identification, Belonging, (No) Change to sense of self, Readiness, Models of Self in Different Contexts, Neg View of Self as Learner, Self-concept, Construction of Self in ref to Others, Motivation, Investment, Self-motivation, Need for Systemic Change, Self-knowledge of Strengths and Needs, Expectations, Learning as Valued, Being Behind, Mismatched Learning Expectations, Reintegration as a Threat to Sense of Self, Interest in Future Self, Choice/ Done to, Inclusion/ Connectedness, Isolation, Size of School, Preparation/ Warning
Leon	Ownership of problems, Exclusion Regrets, Staff Support, Lack of Support for Learning, Needs Met, Valuing External Professional Support, Peer Support, Social Connection, Trust in Systems, Non-Identification with LC Peers, Belonging, Readiness to Leave (LC), Behavioural Change, Loss of Identity through SEMH Needs, Identifying with Mainstream, Negative Self-concept, Coping Strategies, Challenges of too much Freedom, Self-knowledge of Strengths and Needs, Resilience, Expectations, Behind Behind, Valuing Learning, Potential Negative Possible Selves, Positive Future Thinking, Meaning of Reintegration linked to Positive Future, Reintegration as Increased Freedom, Lack of Choice, Having Voice Heard, Inclusion, Size of Classes, Distance/ Proximity to Home
Ovuey	Responsibility, Regret, Support structures, Feeling unsupported, Valuing External Support, Staff relationships, Staff attitudes, Belonging, Peer Support, Readiness, Mainstream Systemic Flexibility/Inflexibility, Self-concept, Change, Identity/ Ability to be Self, Coping Strategies, Motivation, Understanding of Strengths and Needs, Systemic Change,

	Clear expectations, High expectations, Curriculum, Negative Possible Selves, Positive Possible Selves, Meaning of Reintegration, Voice, Done to, Inclusion, Distance/ Proximity to Home, Preparation Time
Cross-Participant Integration of Emergent Themes	Staff Support, Support Reduction, Support structures, Lack of Support, Valuing External Professional Support, Needs Met, Staff Relationships, Staff attitudes, Belonging, Connectedness, Isolation, Inclusion, Non-identification with LC Peers, Social Connection, Social Anxiety, Peer support, Peer Group Identification, Teacher Responsibility, Acceptance of Responsibility, Ownership of problems, Exclusion Regrets, Readiness, Behavioural Change, Change, (No) Change to sense of self, Construction of Self in ref to Others, Models of Self in Different Contexts, Self-concept, Reintegration as a Threat to Sense of Self?, Threats to Self-concept, Negative Self-concept, Identity/ Ability to be Self, Identifying with Mainstream, Loss of Identity through SEMH Needs, SEMH Needs, Coping Strategies, Self-knowledge of Strengths and Needs, Resilience, Negative View of Self as Learner, Challenges of too much Freedom, Expectations, Mismatched Learning Expectations, High Expectations, Clear Expectations, Systemic Flexibility/Inflexibility, Need for Systemic Change, Trust in Systems, Curriculum, Valuing Learning, Being Behind, Motivation, Investment, Self-motivation, Interest in Future Self, Negative Possible Selves, Positive Possible Selves, Positive Future Thinking, Meaning of Reintegration linked to Positive Future, Reintegration as Increased Freedom, Meaning of Reintegration, Voice/ Views, Feeling Listened to, Choice, Lack of Choice, Done to, Size of Classes, Size of School, Proximity/ Distance from Home, Preparation/ Warning

Table 4.2: Generation of Subordinate Themes from Emergent Themes

No.	Subordinate Theme	Emergent Themes
1	Support	Support Reduction, Support structures, Lack of support, Valuing external professional support, Needs met
2	Staff	Staff relationships, Staff attitudes, Staff support
3	Inclusion /Connectedness	Belonging, Connectedness, Isolation, Inclusion, Social connection, Systemic flexibility/ Inflexibility
4	Peers	Peer support, Peer group identification, Non-identification with LC peers, Social connection, Social anxiety
5	Attribution of Responsibility	Teacher responsibility, Acceptance of responsibility, Ownership of problems, Exclusion regrets

6	Readiness	Feeling ready to leave LC, Not feeling/ being ready, Preparation/ Warning
7	Change markers/ indicators	Behavioural change, Change, No change to sense of self
8	External influences on sense of self	Construction of self in ref to others, Models of self in different contexts, Reintegration as a threat to sense of self, Identifying with mainstream
10	Identity Construction/ Self-Concept	Identity/ Ability to be self, Loss of identity through SEMH Needs, Identifying with mainstream, Threats to self-concept, Negative self-concept, Negative view of self as learner
11	Strengths and Needs	SEMH Needs, Coping strategies, Self-knowledge of strengths and needs, Resilience, Challenges of too much freedom,
12	Expectations	Expectations, Mismatched learning expectations, High expectations, Clear expectations
13	Systems	Systemic flexibility/Inflexibility, Need for systemic change, Trust in systems, Curriculum, Preparation/ Warning
14	Learning	Valuing learning, Being behind, Curriculum, Negative view of self as learner, motivation
15	Motivation	Motivation, Investment, Self-motivation
16	Possible Selves	Interest in future self, Negative possible selves, Positive possible selves, Positive future thinking, Meaning of reintegration linked to positive future
17	Meaning of Reintegration	Meaning of reintegration linked to positive future, Reintegration as increased freedom, Meaning of reintegration
18	Voice	Voice/ Views, Feeling listened to
19	Locus of Control	Choice, Lack of choice, Done to, Voice/ Views
20	Logistical/ Physical Features	Size of classes, Size of school, Proximity/ Distance from home, Social anxiety

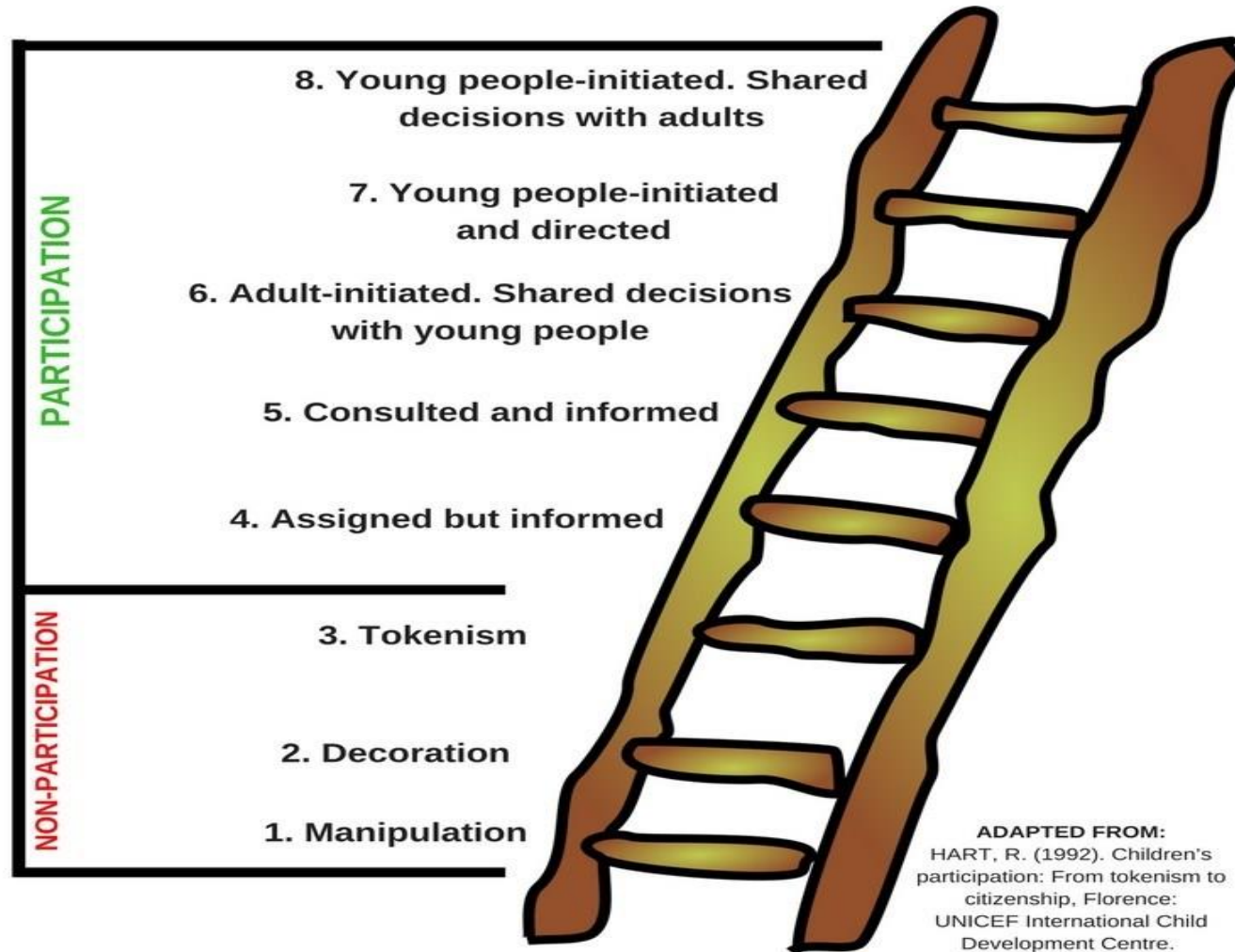
***Emergent Themes discarded:** Logistical/ physical features, Expectations, Motivation, Acceptance of responsibility.

Table 4.3: Generation of Superordinate Themes from Subordinate Themes

SuperOrdinate Theme	Subordinate Theme	Emergent Themes
School Connectedness	Support for Needs	Support reduction, Support structures, Lack of support, Valuing external professional support, Needs met
School Connectedness	Staff Connectedness	Staff support, Staff relationships, Staff attitudes
School Connectedness	Peer Connectedness	Belonging, Connectedness, Isolation, Inclusion, Social Connection, Peer support, Peer group Identification, Non-identification with LC Peers
Sense of Self	Change Markers/ Indicators	Behavioural change, Change, (No) Change to sense of self, using coping strategies
Sense of Self	External influences on sense of self	Construction of Self in ref to Others, Models of Self in different contexts, Reintegration as a threat to sense of self, Identifying with Mainstream
Sense of Self	Identity/ Self-perception	Identity, Ability to be self, Loss of identity through SEMH Needs, Negative self-concept, Neg view of self as learner, Threats to identity
Factors Impacting Agency	Strengths and Needs	SEMH Needs, Coping Strategies, Self-knowledge of Strengths and Needs, Resilience, Challenges of too much Freedom,
Factors Impacting Agency	Systems	Systemic Flexibility/Inflexibility, Need for Systemic Change, Trust in Systems, Curriculum
	Locus of Control	Voice/ Views, Feeling listened to

Factors Impacting Agency		Choice, Lack of Choice, Done to
Meaning of Reintegration	Valuing Learning	Valuing Learning, Being behind, Curriculum, Negative view of self as learner
Meaning of Reintegration	Possible Future Selves	Interest in future Self, Negative possible selves, Positive possible selves, Positive future thinking, Meaning of reintegration linked to positive future
Meaning of Reintegration	Readiness	Reintegration as increased freedom, Meaning of reintegration, Readiness, Not ready

Appendix L: Hart's Ladder of Participation



Appendix M: Good Practice Guide for practitioners working around reintegrating pupils with SEMH
Needs

Intervention Area	Possible Intervention Strategies	By whom
Readiness to Reintegrate	<p>Solution-focused scaling around readiness with the aim of highlighting the skills and coping strategies young people have already and what steps need to be taken to develop further coping skills.</p> <p>Reflective conversations with trusted adult with the aim of increasing young person’s understanding of expectations of mainstream school environments.</p> <p>Collaborative readiness assessments using a framework such as Doyle’s (2001) Reintegration Readiness Scale to inform areas of need, target setting and phased transition plans.</p> <p>Phased transition plans, inclusive of clear timeframes, dates for introductory visits, relationship building meetings with key workers and preparatory warnings from 3 months prior to reintegration.</p> <p>Motivational interviewing approaches to planning conversations with the aim of increasing young person’s motivation to make positive changes including conversations around how will they know change has happened?</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist or EP-trained PRU staff</p> <p>PRU Staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist and/or PRU staff</p> <p>PRU and mainstream staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist</p>
Developing Positive Identities	<p>Personal Construct Psychology approaches to highlighting young person’s values about school and life goals.</p> <p>Strengths-based approaches highlighting personal achievements, strengths and resources with the aim of developing positive possible selves in relation to life goals.</p> <p>Cognitive-behavioural approaches around identifying and challenging negative cognitions and self-perceptions and developing cognitions that are likely to be more useful in promoting higher self-concept and self-belief that positive change is possible.</p> <p>Personal Futures Planning, involving work around possible selves to produce meaningful and individualised plan through collaborative conversations which explore ideal futures.</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>PRU and/ or mainstream staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>
Developing Agency	<p>Recognise and respond to pupil self-knowledge regarding their strengths and needs to create opportunities for reintegrations to be agency-promoting experiences for young person.</p> <p>Person-centred approaches to transition planning to ensure the young person’s voice is genuinely incorporated into assessment and planning procedures utilising resources such as or similar to those suggested by Helen Sanderson Associates.</p> <p>Person-centred reviews that include an evaluation of how the school system has responded in relation to the views and needs of young person.</p>	<p>PRU and mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>

	Evaluation of school's approach to collaborating with young person using Hart's Ladder of participation as framework to guide conversations.	Educational Psychologists (facilitator) and Mainstream staff
Support for Learning	<p>Work around how young person feel about themselves as a learner; identifying their strengths and needs</p> <p>Person-centred meetings with the goal of developing responsive support for areas of need such as coping with homework expectations.</p> <p>Offering the option of cooperative learning opportunities with peers to address the issue of pupils who may experience social isolation and support the development of positive peer connections between existing and reintegrating pupils.</p> <p>Dynamic assessment approaches to highlight learning potential to young person and staff who support them in order to challenge negative self-perceptions held by pupils who have missed learning and contribute to the development of learning support strategies that provide pupils with a sense of mastery and increase self-efficacy.</p> <p>Person-centred reviews of progress with learning to highlight positive progress and develop further goal setting.</p>	<p>PRU and/ or mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>
School Connectedness	<p>Whole school training on the concept and importance of School Connectedness</p> <p>Having high academic expectations coupled with support for learning (see above strategies)</p> <p>Valuing the importance of positive adult-pupil relationships and efforts to ensure that young person feels close to at least one supportive adult in school using a key worker or mentor approach.</p> <p>Valuing the importance of positive peer relationships and efforts to support this, where possible, through offering interventions that promote new friendship building such as peer-mentoring, buddying systems, social skills groups, opportunities to engage in hobbies and interest clubs.</p> <p>Creation of One-Page Profiles with young person to increase their sense that staff care about and understand how to support their SEMH needs</p>	<p>Educational Psychologist</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p> <p>Mainstream staff</p>

	Whole-school approaches to unconditional positive regard for pupils including valuing qualities that research indicates young people with SEMH needs value such as having a sense of humour, being fair, being available and listening.	Mainstream staff
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Appendix N: Reflexive Account

“Without reflexivity, our prejudices can dominate the research”

Holloway and Jefferson, 2018.

This diary is intended to make transparent my reflexive thinking throughout the design, implementation and analysis phases of my research. It was an important way to maintain awareness of how I felt about and related to the data as I was making decisions about what to collect, how to collect it and how to interpret it. Notes from a diary I carried around in my bag during taught university days, placement days and thesis days, as well as structured reflective time after particular events (such as interviews, lectures, supervisions) have all contributed to this document. It is intended to track my developing relationship with the data, reflect on conclusions drawn and document the impact that carrying out the research had on my professional development and evolving values. It contains a reflexive diary, detailing key reflections from the start of the process; August 2017 to August 2019 (N:1). It also contains responses to some key reflexive questions asked of myself after each interview (N.2). It concludes with some overall reflections on the experience of conducting this research (N.3). It is hoped that this document communicates some circularity regarding my journey through the process; moving through cycles of curious to informed and back around again. The document is in landscape form to accommodate the tables.

*CYP: Children and Young People

*TEP: Trainee Educational Psychologist

*PRU: Pupil Referral Unit

*SEMH: Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Table 8:1 Reflexive Diary

Date	Activity	Key Reflections	Position/ Relationship to Research	The Psychology
08/17	Thinking about the topics that interest and mean	I have a specialist personal and professional interest in working with CYPs with SEMH needs, excluded CYPs	Open to developing ideas.	SEMH needs Young offending

	<p>something to me for thesis</p>	<p>and young offenders, due to past experiences of previous roles as TA/ Assistant Forensic Psychologist and reflections on what I really enjoy about the TEP role so far.</p> <p>My most significant school experience was around moving to a new school half way through Year 9 and finding this quite difficult.</p> <p>I value child voice and seeking the views of children on matters that concern them. I want to be able to conduct research with CYP participants on their views on their school experiences.</p>	<p>Eager to choose something that I care about and am genuinely interested in but also something where I can demonstrate a gap in research and the potential for a unique contribution.</p> <p>Excited at the prospect of being able to undertake a piece of research about a topic of my own choosing. Anxious about choosing the right thing for me as well as something that will be useful for EP research and practice.</p>	<p>School transitions</p> <p>Child voice</p>
09/17	<p>Reading articles on exclusions/ PRUs/ reintegration</p>	<p>Interesting to read about definitions of PRUs being short-term with the goal of reintegration back to mainstream. Prompts reflections on my experiences of working in the education system and finding that this is often not the case. The CYPs I have worked with in PRUs have often not reintegrated or have done but then experienced further exclusions. Very interested in the term 'Revolving Door Effect' (Pillay); I can relate to professional experiences of working as a TA in PRUs and visiting PRUs as a TEP.</p>	<p>Inquisitorial and able to relate to professional experience. Interested in finding out more about reintegration as a systemic issue</p> <p>Curious, interested in working with and researching the area of SEMH and exclusion due to my previous experiences with young offenders/ SEMH yps. Concerned about the prevalence of long-term PRU placements and exclusion of SEMH</p>	<p>Transition</p> <p>Exclusion</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>SEMH</p> <p>Revolving Door Effect</p>

10/17	Reading on transition	<p>Interesting to find out about different theories of transition (Fisher, 2012 etc) and the idea of reintegration anxiety and transition fear. Came across the link between transition/ schooling and identity. Reflecting that part of my interest in this subject stems from my personal experiences of transitioning to a new school in the middle of year 9 (from secondary LA maintained to private school). Made me start to think about how it felt for me, what was difficult, what went well etc. Making friends and worrying about how to fit in and how hard the work would be was significant for me. I started to question who I was and what I would do as a job</p>	<p>Reflective on personal experiences, linking my personal and professional life/ interests.</p> <p>Developing more questions about what I want to know about the potential impacts of transition</p> <p>Curious to know; how CYPs who reintegrate feel about it? Has anyone asked them? Does it affect how they feel about themselves? What do they worry about? What can adults do to help?</p> <p>Motivated to research this area</p>	<p>Identity and transition</p> <p>Friendships</p> <p>Belonging</p> <p>Transition theories</p>
11/17	Reading on methodological options	<p>Certain I want to seek CYP views on reintegration from PRU to mainstream.</p> <p>Do I want to do IPA or narrative analysis? Both have strengths and limitations in terms of research methodologies and both have utility and purpose in the context of my study. Is it about my views on the nature and purpose of knowledge? I believe in seeking knowledge for the purposes of affecting positive change and for this reason, making tentative links between PPs accounts to produce themes might be more useful? But</p>	<p>What are my values regarding the purpose of knowledge and research?</p> <p>What are my research questions? These will inform my methodological choices</p> <p>Developing initial, early research questions based on my initial reading and personal and professional interests</p> <p>Philosophical and aware of the significance of my values as a researcher and how they will inform my choices of how to collect and interpret knowledge</p>	<p>Ontology</p> <p>Epistemology</p> <p>Axiology</p> <p>Phenomenology</p> <p>Hermeneutics</p> <p>Idiography</p>

		narrative feels like a useful way to hear voice and to empower CYPs with SEMH to tell their stories, valuing them in and of themselves.	Motivated by the formation of initial research questions	
12/17	Supervision And Peer Supervision	Discussed my values as a researcher in supervision and also how IPA can ensure anonymity more so than narrative approaches sometimes. Asked to think about approaches to data collection that are child-friendly; will I use interviews and if so reflect on language and possible visual aides. Discussed ethical considerations around working with CYP participants. Asked to think about gatekeepers to participants and potential barriers to gain access Additional peer supervision conversation with TEPs where we talked about power relationship between researcher and participants and thinking about how to make data collection a useful experience for CYPs	Reflective about the ethical considerations of working with child participants who have had disrupted school experiences. I think I am championing the voice of the child and hopefully promoting agency by communicating that I believe CYPs views can and should make a meaningful difference to their lived experiences of their world. Anxious to construct child-friendly and fruitful data collection methods. Need to research options. Worried about whether I will be able to access participant group; will they want to talk to me? What might their views of external professionals be and how will I reassure them and make clear what my role is in this context?	Ethics of psychological research. Power relations between myself and participants. Agency
01/18	Ethics Application	Consideration of all the ethical issues involved in researching this topic with child participants. Thinking about the significance of giving choice of where to be interviewed so CYPs feel safe and ensuring we have identified a trusted	Awareness of my responsibility to act with respect and integrity and to do no harm. Clarity about what my role is in this context and how it is different from my role as a TEP in some ways.	Ethics of psychological research Roles and purpose of EPs

		<p>adult to hand over to after interview. Thinking about the importance of initial meetings with CYPs to build rapport and to make clear my intentions and role in this context. Also thinking about timelines for interview processes given that I would like to include member checking as a way to co-construct findings and give pps opportunity to correct anything I might have misinterpreted.</p>	<p>Reflective in reference to the BPS code of ethics Responsibility to make my role clear to CYPs and to let them know that I am seeking their views but will not be able to make any immediate changes to their situation.</p> <p>This makes me feel disheartened and maybe less useful than in my usual role where I seek information to implement change at school level as soon as possible. How will I manage this?</p>	<p>The EP unique contribution</p>
02/18	Systematic Literature Review	<p>Pleased that my searches revealed that a lot of the literature I had already found and read through non systematic searches. Snowballing was really useful in finding relevant articles. Surprised at the lack of research on my exact topic in terms of pupil views, given Inclusion agenda of government and SEND Code emphasis on pupil voice. This demonstrates a gap in research which justifies my line of inquiry.</p>	<p>Knowledgeable about issues of exclusion of SEMH pupils, PRU context, purpose of reintegration and other stakeholder views on facilitators and barriers</p> <p>Surprised at lack of pupil views on reintegration</p> <p>Unsure about how wide to cast the net in terms of relevancy of literature. Do I include managed moves literature?</p>	<p>Transition</p> <p>Reintegration</p> <p>Pupil views</p> <p>SEMH needs</p> <p>Inclusion facilitators and barriers</p> <p>School connectedness</p> <p>Belonging</p>
03/18	Supervision	<p>Reflection on research questions; I want to know what is meaningful to CYPs about their reintegration to mainstream school because I feel it is</p>	<p>Development of research questions that have utility in addressing the gap but also have meaning for me in terms of what I am interested to find out about in terms</p>	<p>Purpose and utility</p> <p>Values</p>

		<p>important to hear what CYPs feel is most significant and I am aware that this might differ from what adults think is important. This is a difference that I value and want to illuminate. I am also interested in if CYPs perceive any changes to their sense of self and want to explore this but I am aware that this is quite an abstract concept and the need to be careful about how to approach this subject. Discussed the importance of beneficence and of offering some things to think about for EP practice from research.</p>	<p>of what is important to CYPs and if they perceive any changes to sense of self.</p> <p>Development of a question around what professionals can do to support reintegration</p> <p>Feeling like I have a tangible and useful line of inquiry to explore with solid research questions.</p> <p>Feeling hopeful that I can elicit data from which meaningful things to think about can come</p>	
04/18	Reading on reintegration and sense of self	<p>I read something about distancing and re-aligning, expectations of CYPs during transitions and locus of control. Prompted me to think about asking about CYPs expectations of their mainstream placement; do expectations relate to feelings of self-efficacy in terms of ability to meet expectations. Could this contribute conversely to low self-efficacy/ investment from CYPs if they perceive they cannot meet expectations? Ask them...?</p> <p>Curious about impact of reintegration on self-concept</p> <p>Is this what I meant to changes to sense of self? The more I think about exactly what I mean by my research questions the more I question myself</p>	<p>Curious about impact of reintegration on self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy.</p> <p>Awareness of the power of a double hermeneutic and the power of participants to co-construct the findings of this research as they interpret my line of inquiry and respond in a way that is meaningful to them.</p> <p>Excited to learn from participants about what sense of self or 'personal' change might mean or look like to them.</p> <p>Genuinely curious to understand what is important about reintegration to CYPs and becoming aware that I cannot predict what might come up in interviews</p>	<p>Double hermeneutic</p> <p>Sense-making</p> <p>Phenomenology</p> <p>Sense of self</p> <p>Self-concept</p> <p>Self-efficacy</p> <p>Expectations</p> <p>co-construction</p>

		and understand the need to be clear about my own line of inquiry before asking CYPs. But also aware that CYPs will interpret my inquiry in a way that is meaningful to them and I will find meaning in their sense making.		
05/18	Reading around CYP experience of school transition	<p>Snowball reading around pupil experiences of transitions and reintegration (Achesjo, 2013) prompted reflection on asking YPs about meaning they ascribe to transitions. I started thinking about what the transition meant to Year 9 me. It meant that I wasn't doing well in my old school and needed a new one to help me do better, but also meant that I was worth someone thinking about what was best for my education and that I was clever enough to pass entry exams. What does the transition to mainstream mean to my participants? I need to ask. But is this too abstract? How did I distance myself from my old school and realign at my new school?</p> <p>Found a gap in lack of perspectives of CYPs with SEMH needs views on reintegration</p>	<p>Awareness of existing research and the gap in public state of knowledge and that CYP voice seems under represented in research on reintegration.</p> <p>Excited to realise a gap in knowledge which fits with my values about researching CYP views and gaining child voice</p> <p>Understand the importance of being aware of how my own experience might influence how I interpret those of the CYPs</p> <p>Feel comfortable with topic choice to seek CYP with SEMH needs views on reintegrating from PRU to mainstream because i think it has purpose and utility in informing practice developments</p>	<p>Re-aligning</p> <p>Distancing from old school</p> <p>Double hermeneutic and my historical context</p>
06/18	Supervision around developing interview schedule	Discussed how to develop an interview schedule for qualitative semi-structured interviews. Signposted to	Awareness of the ethical issues of power in interviewing and how I can mitigate these through careful consideration of the	<p>Effective helping skills</p> <p>Rapport building</p>

		<p>guidance by Smith et al and Parker. Reflected on the amount of questions that would be appropriate to address the research questions whilst also allowing the CYP to take the conversation in the direction that was meaningful to them. Reflected on the benefit and utility of offering the option for cyps to make a timeline of their experience of reintegration. The purpose of this would be to support thinking about events and the order of events as well as take the pressure off the conversation and make the interview a more interactive experience for CYPs.</p>	<p>number and style of questions as well as offering the option for a more interactive and visual way to record information.</p> <p>Developing interview schedule with open questions that facilitate exploration in the direction that the CYP wants to go.</p> <p>Understanding of the importance of a pilot interview in increasing the validity of my study and my skills as a researcher</p>	<p>Visual methods of data collection</p> <p>Ethical considerations</p>
07/18	Contacting participants via gatekeepers and initial meetings	<p>Reflecting on how useful it was to have clearly thought about the process involved in this and potential barriers to accessing participants and starting this process before the summer holidays was a good way to cue schools in to the research. Reflecting on the positivity of schools in their interest in the research and their willingness to support access to participants. SENCos were very positive about the aims of the research and all parents consented to asking cyps for an initial meeting.</p> <p>Wondering whether it would have been better to conduct initial meetings with first two participants after the</p>	<p>Feeling positive about the response from stakeholders in the LA about the importance of the topic and their willingness to support gaining access to participants.</p> <p>Feeling motivated and responsible to do the study justice given the support from others.</p> <p>Careful and considerate of the ethical responsibilities of gaining informed consent and conducting initial meeting appropriately and ensuring I am clear about expectations to cyps</p>	<p>Consent</p> <p>School systems</p> <p>Gatekeeping</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Rapport building</p>

		summer holidays as it would be fresher in their minds in preparation for the interview. However, I have learned about the difficulties in sticking to timelines in research involving CYP participants and schools where communication goes through multiple gatekeepers.		
08/18	Pilot/ first interview	<p>I felt nervous about the first interview which prompted awareness of how the CYP might be feeling and I was mindful to be attuned to this and ensure as far as possible I make it a comfortable experience for him. I spent 15 minutes just cueing in to how his day had gone and engaging in problem free talk until it felt like we had coregulated and were ready to engage more meaningfully with each other. Issues to explore further in N.2 includer reflections on timing issues, on managing and exploring negative self-descriptions and reflections on the wording of the interview questions (see below).</p> <p>Really encouraged by the power of scaling to facilitate exploration of topics within the interview, ie.: degree of change to sense of self. On reflection, though I am in a researcher role I must remember that some tools I use in individual work with CYPs as a TEP will still have utility and be</p>	<p>Increased ownership now I feel more connected to research having started collecting data.</p> <p>Reflective after interview experience in light of some significant things to consider</p> <p>Appreciative of the benefits of a pilot interview for developing my skills, reflecting on participant experience and developing more effective interview schedule.</p> <p>Felt sad about how the cyp described himself and felt uncomfortable that in my role as a researcher it seemed inappropriate to gently challenge these self-perceptions or to do anything in response to them other than listen.</p>	<p>Rapport Building</p> <p>Emotional Literacy</p> <p>Problem-free talk</p> <p>Scaling</p> <p>Child Voice</p> <p>Issues around role</p> <p>Helplessness</p>

		appropriate and I feel confident in using these, e.g. scaling.		
09/18	Supervision around Interview schedule development	<p>I took my interview schedule with added notes to supervision and we discussed the idea of language and power. On reflection, did the language I used impact the power balance between us? Did it function to construct me as the expert or adult and him as a child / less powerful in the situation? There will be an element of professional judgement as to the individual needs of each participant and adapting my approach accordingly.</p> <p>Change meaning to what was important?</p> <p>Change 'what was?' to 'tell me 2 or 3 things that were...' to make this more concrete?</p> <p>Add a question about expectations? Do expectations of MS relate to CYPs feeling around their capability to meet expectations? How prepared do they feel?</p>	<p>More grounded in the psychology of this experience.</p> <p>It reaffirmed commitment to making these interviews purposeful and person-centred.</p> <p>More aware of approaching each interview as an individual experience even though the aims at the start are the same.</p>	<p>Idiography</p> <p>Sensitivity to personal context of each participant</p> <p>Language and power constructions</p>
10/18	Further reading on identity and interview schedule development	<p>I have come across the construct of Possible Selves. This is not a term I have heard before, although I think it has links with the 'ideal self' concept. I am interested to know about how CYPs who reintegrate discuss their possible selves and whether they perceive a</p>	<p>Awareness of how my initial thinking relates to psychological constructs that could be researched.</p> <p>Awareness of how the interview schedule evolves as the researcher immerses</p>	<p>Child voice</p> <p>Possible selves</p> <p>Ideal self</p> <p>Identity and transition</p>

		<p>change in them over their transitional journeys. Perhaps this is what I meant by the idea of researching Identity and Identity changes?</p> <p>Add a question around possible futures into interview schedule</p>	<p>herself in the topic and reflects on the purpose and utility of her approach</p>	<p>SEMH needs</p>
11/18	<p>EPS day training on Video Feed Forward and EHCP advice writing</p>	<p>Prompting thoughts on recommendations and next steps from study on how to develop positive identities. Could Video Feed Forward or Video Interactive Guidance be used to highlight with CYPs where they have made positive changes with a view to recognising change and celebrating it?</p> <p>How will I communicate the implications of my findings? I could make a timeline with intervention points? I could make a good practice guide if findings lend themselves to this?</p>	<p>Wanting this to have utility and to make a unique contribution to EP research and practice, but not in a way that is tokenistic or simply part of the process.</p> <p>Awareness of the responsibility of doing research and using the time participants give to you to make a meaningful difference in a realistic way given the scope of the project</p>	<p>VIG</p> <p>Effective practice</p> <p>Evidence-based practice</p> <p>Ethics of responsibility</p>
12/18	<p>Supervision on data collection</p>	<p>Discussed how I am getting on with data collection and the merits of transcribing either straight away after interview or leaving some time for space to reflect? Decided to transcribe the first interview given that I want to maintain an idiographic approach and treat each interview in and of itself. Contributes to mentally putting aside as part of the validity of each analysis.</p>	<p>Feeling connected to participants and feeling committed to the aims of the research to hear the voices of young people.</p> <p>Starting to feel stressed about time constraints given the difficulties in setting interview dates for further participants. Worried about timelines and the need to move towards analysis but aware that I</p>	<p>Ethics of responsibility and respect for individual's views</p> <p>Child voice</p> <p>Approach to analysis</p> <p>Idiography</p>

		Also discussed whether to keep the pilot interview within the final data and write up. I feel strongly that it is important to do so given the utility of the data and relevance to the aims but also because of the ethical and moral implications of recognising Fortnite God's contribution and time given to the research and valuing his views and opinions and ensuring his voice is heard.	must be guided by what works for participants.	
01/19	Interview with Participant 2 - Tom	<p>Reflection on new interview schedule - I feel comfortable with the changes I have made and feel the schedule will elicit interesting and useful information. I feel more confident this time than last time due to developing experience and supervision around schedule etc.</p> <p>I am worried about what not noticing something important he says? As I become more familiar with and committed to the aims of the research; how led am I by my own agenda and how open am I to the development of the interview on the CYPs terms? This is something to remain mindful of.</p>	<p>Needing to accept that what I notice will be influenced by what i hoped to find, my values and what i ask etc. It will also be influenced by what the participants wants me to notice.</p> <p>Accepting that i cannot notice all aspects of everything they say and label them as significant. Subjectively some things won't flag as significant to me whereas they would to other researchers or to other participants and this is part of an IPA approach. Important to acknowledge in limitations section.</p>	<p>IPA approach limitations</p> <p>Subjectivity</p>
02/19	Transcribing interview with Participant 3 - Leon	<p>Re: <i>K: So how ready did you feel to come back to mainstream school? You'd be told you were coming back? Had you been given a choice or were</i></p>	<p>Reflective on my strengths and limitations as a researcher even after 3 interviews.; I feel this comes from my own anxiety to make myself clear and to assist</p>	<p>Subconscious preconceptions, prejudices or agendas and how these</p>

		<p><i>you just sort of told?</i> ... Transcribing and seeing the words on a page made me reflect on how I've asked a question then talked, then asked another question immediately after the first. Could be confusing for participants and does it give time to answer the first question?</p> <p>I can remember I was trying to be clear and more specific in questioning by using related prompts, but could have asked the initial question, given time and space for him to think and respond, before using more specific prompts as/ when necessary? But I feel I need to be more aware of my own anxieties and give space and the opportunity to answer the initial question I asked.</p>	<p>participants in their understanding, so good intentions.</p> <p>Did I assume he wouldn't understand the first question about how ready he was? What does this suggest about my own prejudices about his capacity to reflect and share his experience? Should I have asked a questions/ used that wording if I didn't think he would understand?</p> <p>Deepening awareness of the real influence of the researchers own values and beliefs being impactful in IPA research</p>	<p>impact our social interactions with others</p> <p>Assumptions and communicative tools to manage them: What do we reveal about what we assume about others when we communicate with them?</p>
03/19	Transcription of interview 4 - Ovuey	<p>Reading through transcripts, thinking of many further questions I wish I had asked as a result of things they said. I feel I missed multiple opportunities to explore further meaning, that perhaps I didn't recognise at the time, in the moment. Can I remedy this during member checking? Or would this be more of a second interview? Ask in supervision? For example, I wish I had asked CYPs to tell me about things they said to peers when they met them after reintegration. How did they describe/ construct their transition. I</p>	<p>Reflective about my skills as a researcher; opportunities I missed and processes that I might use to clarify and check out some of my thoughts on developing themes. Feeling frustrated with myself</p> <p>Curious and interested in the idea that peer support is so important and annoyed that I didn't explore how CYPs went about this process in greater detail but pleased that I did inquire to some extent.</p>	<p>Self-concept as structured by the views of peers</p> <p>Peer connectedness</p> <p>Identity construction</p> <p>Resistance and Distancing</p>

		think this question would have been really useful to gaining insight into above.		
04/19	Emergent theme coding and thematic analysis	<p>Reflecting on what I am interpreting in terms of commonalities with my own previous experience. I picked up on a sense of wanting to be included by and to belong with peers. I also interpreted the significance of positive relationships with staff. Both of these were things I suspected might come up so just checking in with my own interpretations and making sure my perceptions are truly reflected in the data. For example, belonging... when I interpreted this how did this unfold? Motivated by my previous experiences of wanting to fit in? Or things that I value now in my life? How did I work out if it is belonging or connectedness and why have I labeled it peer connection if it's belonging? Do I feel these are interrelated concepts? The significance of connections and relationships feels like it could be brought together under the theme of school connectedness? I need to do some more reading around this concept and what the term means/ previous research on the impacts of good/ poor school connectedness as this could lead to important implications from study.</p>	<p>Analytical in relation to my own experiences but aware of the need to not let these guide theme formation excessively</p> <p>Reflective and surprised at my response so some themes emerging e.g. value of learning and the idea of readiness. Did I have an understanding of what that actually meant when I asked CYPs what they felt about it? If not, was that a good thing? I think maybe my lack of clarity around what it might mean to be ready positioned me as next to rather than in a different mindset to the participants which enabled me to be led totally by their views rather than interpret them within my own schemas of this concept.</p> <p>Curious about how my views about the participant group has been impacted by my findings.</p> <p>Becoming more aware of the power of asking CYPs about issues and noticing I have similar, different or no fully formed opinions on them. Is it acceptable to interpret concepts that I don't seem to have strong knowledge on? E.g. readiness?</p>	<p>Value of learning</p> <p>Support for learning</p> <p>School connectedness</p> <p>Belonging</p> <p>Peer and staff support</p> <p>Locus of control</p> <p>Agency</p> <p>Systemic flexibility</p> <p>Researcher's prejudice and values</p> <p>Readiness</p>

		<p>It is interesting to note my feelings of surprise around the emergent theme of the value of learning by participants. What does this say about the preconceptions I might have held about this group of CYPs' relationship to learning? Perhaps I have uncovered a prejudice insofar as assuming they don't care much about learning due to their disruptive behaviour in lessons. My own findings are highlighting the prejudices I was aware of in the literature but perhaps not aware had influenced my beliefs?</p> <p>Finding the process of which e.themes to include helped by being systematic and using suggested techniques such as numeration and polarisation. Finding it much harder to think about how to collapse themes in on each other as some themes seem like such big concepts in themselves such as locus of control. Supervision has been really useful in thinking about what looking at the <i>bigger picture</i> and how L.O.C and systemic flexibility for example could relate to CYPs sense of Agency</p>	<p>Feeling vulnerable about my own values and beliefs. I felt I was a strong advocate of the social model of disability and was weary of pathologising CYPs based on external behaviours. However, interesting to think about how perhaps my views of SEMH needs children's attitude towards learning held pathologising constructs? I want to be aware of these feelings as I move forward as a newly qualified EP. I feel I may have to check in with them again in the future and re-examine.</p>	
05/19	Member checking	Approaching these experiences with an awareness of the need to be prepared to let go of some of the initial findings/ themes if participants disagree or give	Reflective about my ownership of the data and willingness to let go or change my perspectives	Reflection

		<p>information that suggests I have misinterpreted. I need to ask myself whether or not the interpretations that are being elaborated in the report lie within the terms of the commitment that was made to the participants? Have I achieved this? I think I have interpreted what was important to them about reintegration and their feedback suggests I have got this right. But I also think I have translated these into roles for professionals based on their interpretations of what might have been missing from adult support. I asked their opinion on early thoughts about the implications and the feedback from all 4 was that more support around readiness and more support for learning was really important. I wonder about how effective these meetings were though? How powerful would they have felt to challenge me if they felt I had got something wrong I wonder? Would this process be more effective if it was completed without the researcher? Could a trusted adult go through key themes/ findings and ask cyp views on them?</p>	<p>Confidence boost that the cyps seem to agree with my interpretations</p> <p>Aware of the relative ease of member checking meeting in relation to the interviews which felt more formal and slightly less comfortable</p>	<p>Power relations of CYPs feeling confident to challenge researcher?</p> <p>Double hermeneutic</p> <p>Efficacy of member checking</p>
06/19	Analysis and Superordinate theme generation	Further reading needed to clarify my understanding of how findings relate to psychological theory but on reflection I feel my literature review relates to	Awareness of circularity of the research process as I come back around to literature review and draw on	<p>Circularity</p> <p>Belonging</p>

		<p>what I have found and I can support and challenge some findings of previous research with themes.</p> <p>Difficult to settle on labels and concepts of superordinate themes as they seem to encompass so much and some subordinates feel like superordinates in themselves.</p> <p>I am aware that the way I have interpreted themes and the superordinate concepts I have settled on this time is a reflection on my own values at this time in my life. Another researcher might not for example have connected the three subordinate categories as agency promoting factors? I may not have perceived the significance of behaviour indicators of change if I hadn't been aware of social and systemic models of thinking. Perhaps the fact that CYPs attribute change solely to their behaviours felt disappointing given the importance I place on the need for schools to take responsibility for change?</p>	<p>psychological theory and my practice experience to date</p> <p>Can start to feel the study coming together a whole rather than separate chapters...awareness of the threads running through and starting to feel some coherence developing from start to finish</p>	<p>Locus of control</p> <p>Academic failure/ low achievement and self concept (being behind)</p> <p>School Readiness</p> <p>Systemic/ social models of support and change</p>
07/19	Discussion writing	<p>Further reflections on circularity and the feeling of the importance of drawing together findings with psychological theory to produce a coherent study. I am enjoying relating my own findings to psychological</p>	<p>Awareness of circularity of my study</p> <p>Reflective of my commitment to the pursuit of knowledge to affect positive change and using the discussion as a basis</p>	<p>Epistemology</p> <p>Ontology</p> <p>Effective practice</p>

		<p>theory. It feels satisfying to embed findings from my own data collection and analysis and locate these within the context of the current education system as well as established psychological principles. Interesting to be able to revisit the literature to develop my own and reader understanding of the psychology involved in reintegration, eg; the impact on self-concept and the location of experiences of personal change.</p> <p>Reflecting on the utility of Fisher's model of transition and how these states can be mapped out in some of the journeys of the participants. I am aware that this model is not a well known psychological model and that other theories of transition might present a different view of things or bathe findings in a different light. Perhaps I was influenced by Fisher's transition curve in my interpretation of how findings should be discussed. However either way using this model has led to interesting and useful implications and brings me around to upholding my epistemological position.</p>	<p>to develop a good practice guide for practitioners with this overall aim.</p> <p>Feeling more informed about some of the psychology involved in reintegration than I was at the start of this study. Some of my preconceptions and early thoughts have been confirmed and others have been challenged or new ideas have emerged. Did my participants have this experience? Will readers have this experience? Will be interesting to find out when I present research to placement LA or get feedback</p>	<p>Fisher's model of transition</p> <p>Self-concept</p> <p>Professional development</p>
08/19	Good practice guide production	Reflecting on the importance of a product and of beneficence. Who benefits from this study? I do. Because	Reflective of my own personal and professional development	Personal and professional development

		<p>I have developed my thinking and how I might consult, advise and practice in this area in the future. But what can I offer to the EP world in terms of things to think about? I could formulate a timeline for effective practice around reintegration experiences with recommendations for different interventions at different points from PRU placement to reintegration? But this will depend significantly on the individual contexts of different yps and may be too prescriptive/ my findings might not be robust enough to suggest timescales as I did not consider the timescales of different participants necessarily? A good practice guide highlighting some of the key areas that were significant to CYPs and some suggestions based on EP evidence-based, theory and the findings of this research on strategies that will be useful in supporting these areas.</p>	<p>Satisfied with the product of my thesis but feel anxious about making recommendations on such an important area of practice.</p> <p>Awareness of the need to be tentative and to base recommendations in evidence-based EP literature.</p> <p>Reflective on the story I have told. What is my overall thesis? And why have I given the account that I have? To be addressed in the overall reflective account.</p>	<p>Implications for practice - utility</p> <p>Readiness</p> <p>Self-concept</p> <p>Possible selves</p> <p>Support for learning</p> <p>School connectedness</p>
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N. 2 Post- Interview Reflexive Questions

1. *How did I feel during the interview/ at X point/ after the interview?*
2. *What did I feel the participant might be feeling?*
3. *How did I manage the above?*
4. *How did this affect my position to the research?*
5. *What did they try to convey to me by producing this particular account on this occasion?*

Interview 1 / Pilot - Fortnight God

1. I felt nervous at first and was aware that I did not want to project this onto him and needed to attune to his feelings as well. At points I felt worried about being patronising. I became aware of the balance between wanting to be warm and responsive to his negative self-perceptions. It was difficult to resist gently challenging these and exploring them in and of themselves as I would have done in a TEP role. However, I also knew my role was to listen to his views on how his reintegration had impacted those thoughts and feelings and wanting to empower him as the expert of his life rather than attempt to reframe his thinking too much.
2. I became aware that his emotional literacy might be affecting his ability to explore and articulate his thoughts and feelings; this could also have been nerves or the context of a new situation that he had not previously experienced. I felt that his confidence seemed to build as he explored deeper meanings and made some realisations about positive things that had happened, such as becoming less annoying and less reliant on his exit card. On reflection, this reminded me of the potential for the interview process to facilitate his own reframing of aspects of his experience in his own time, and that he would get there if and when he wanted to without me leading this too much. I also became aware that some of the language I had used in the questions may be too abstract, such as the phrase; *what does it mean to you?* He asked me to repeat this question a few times and said that he didn't know the answer. I need to relook at my phrasing and language for the next interview.
3. I managed my feelings by using problem-free talk to regulate myself and him until it felt like we had reached a comfortable place to start exploring interview topics. I am pleased about my decision to offer to make a visual timeline and to provide some emotion faces could be cut out and stuck on. These worked to give natural breaks in the conversation and time for both of us to process what had been said and think about where to go next in the conversation. I managed issues of understanding and language by using the prompts I had prepared but also making notes to refer to later on my interview schedule about different phrases that seemed to be more effective, such as; *what is important to you about being at this school?*
4. Drawing on my skills as a TEP and my strengths in relationship building I feel it affected my position to the research in facilitating a comfortable and useful conversation for both of us. Hearing his negative self-perceptions affected my position in terms of an increased realisation of the sensitivity of the research question around changes to sense of self. Perhaps I had preconceptions that these would be positive thoughts and had not fully appreciated that this line of inquiry could elicit sad or unhelpful reflections in participants. This prompts reflection on how I can make this line of inquiry a purposeful experience for cyps. His reframing of some negatives into positives shifted my position back to feeling more comfortable and more useful in my role in this context. But this was not a linear process, it had circularity within the interview context and felt like quite a significant journey to go on with him.
5. I feel he tried to convey a narrative of personal challenge and significant growth. This was not linear, but ebbed and flowed as we moved through different stages of the interview. Overall, though it started as a fairly negative and self-doubting

account, it became more positive and more hopeful as we moved through his experience. A particularly salient moment was when at the end he decided to change his pseudonym from Fortnite Noob (a lowly character in the game) to Fortnite God (the highest status character). Perhaps this represents a degree of change in self-perception within the context of the interview itself? Perhaps the experience led to a degree of pride that he was able to recount and reframe his experiences of reintegration. This left me feeling positive and happy to have been part of his experience.

Interview 2 - Tom

1. I felt sad when he talked about feeling unnoticed. I felt helpless at times when he was talking about not getting enough time from teachers. I also felt aware of my own prejudices at times. I thought that I had entered the interview with non-judgmental and open attitude. Whilst I felt warmth and no judgement towards him, I was still surprised to realise how much falling behind in his work meant to him. On reflection, this is perhaps a reflection of my unconscious prejudice that this young person wouldn't see work as important. Perhaps he saw being the same as peers or being able to around peers as important and that's why falling behind meant so much?
2. I felt the participant was anxious at first, some worries about being vulnerable and exposed? I felt he became more open after 5 minutes and started to talk candidly about feelings. I was surprised by this. I felt he was unsure how to describe himself, but after some exploration about what this meant, started to find it interesting and seemed to enjoy working himself out.
3. I wanted to switch roles to a TEP with a view to passing on information to affect change. I felt a responsibility to do something with this information that was hard to fight. Questioned the ethics of my study in terms of eliciting information about negative self-perceptions of struggles with learning but not necessarily doing anything with it other than hearing voice. Is this enough?
4. I wanted to empathise more than I felt my role as a researcher permitted. I also wanted to make some sort of action plan for moving forward. I am wondering whether it is within my remit in this context to ask young people if they want anything passed on to teachers about their views and wishes? Perhaps I could note these down with young people in the form of a One Page profile if yp consent? This makes me feel less helpless, but I think I would have to have a discussion with SENCos and link EPs as this was not the intention I originally expressed when requesting to conduct research in these schools. This prompts reflection around Cohen's Cost-Benefit balance.
5. I feel like he told me a version of his story where he was a victim of things being done to him, not with him. I also felt he told me a version where he constructed his identity and his hopes as being aligned with the learning centre, not his current school. I feel like the story took this form due to his most recent experiences of his school day in comparison to a more enjoyed past experience which clearly had a significant meaning. A sense of having belonged in the past was communicated and he seemed to use this experience as a base to compare subsequent school experiences. He seemed to communicate a

sense of hopelessness, but there was also a narrative about hope and potential. Overall though, hope and potential was constructed as coming from himself, intrinsically and did not seem to be viewed as bolstered by support from mainstream teachers.

Interview 3 - Leon

1. I am still wondering whether the first question is too open? I became aware of the balance between open questions providing opportunity for him to lead the conversation versus helping scaffold his thinking with more concrete inquiry. This is difficult to balance at times. Again, at times I found it a challenge to leave aside certain qualities that I would normally include in therapeutic work with young people; for example, empathy and the drive to encourage problem-solving. I felt a real sense of warmth to him when he was talking about his perceived reasons for his SEMH needs developing. This was related to a significant trauma he had experienced and felt privileged that he was happy to share his experience openly and honestly with me. I felt a growing sense of this young person's resilience in coping with what he had been through but was also very aware of the sensitivity of this information and the potential for him to feel strong emotions during and after the interview and the need to ensure I passed him on to a safe adult and a debrief was conducted.
2. I felt that he needed little prompting and was confident in taking the conversation where he wanted it to go. He was more forthcoming and chatty than previous participants. I think he felt that it was a positive experience to complete the interview and to share his views on what helped. I knew this because he told me during the feedback afterwards that he felt it was a great idea. He seemed to enjoy using scaling to structure his thoughts about how he had changed and find this useful. I felt this because I offered the use of a scale at one point and then at a later point in the conversation he introduced a scale himself. I felt he attempted to distance himself from the learning centre peers at points and align himself with the mainstream environment. He seemed to do this by commenting on the needs of the learning centre pupils as more significant than his and also talked about how he got on better with and enjoyed spending time with mainstream peers.
3. I managed the thoughts about the openness of the first question by noting some other possibilities on the interview schedule to use next time, such as; ... how long have you been at this school? Where did you come from? What was that like? The sharing of his personal trauma led me to want to acknowledge this by sharing some of my personal experiences. I think I felt this way because I wanted to locate myself next to him and to match his honesty in some ways. I reflected on the appropriateness of this though, even with good intentions and the need to balance sharing personal experiences versus maintaining professional boundaries and staying within the remit of my role as a researcher and adhering to the expectations we had set before the interview. This helped me to hold back on oversharing. I managed the feeling of wanting to comfort and reassure by using non-verbal skills such as eye contact and open body language and facial expressions to communicate that I heard and felt his trauma while also keeping my language neutral and not probing further so as not to lead him to think he had to elaborate on this topic any more than he felt he wanted to. I managed his disclosure of personal information by

asking him how he was feeling after the interview and ensuring that I passed him on to his identified safe adult and also passing on that we had talked about his trauma and to be aware of this. I felt reassured that he felt safe and held with this adult and that they would check in with him throughout the day.

4. Again, I was acutely aware of my position as a researcher and how it differs from a dailyTEP role. I felt a sense of responsibility to value the information he had chosen to share with me and to ensure I translated this into a useful analysis where interpretations of his positive reframing of events in his life was clear.
5. I felt he tried to communicate a sense of hopefulness and of positives coming out of challenging personal circumstances. I felt he communicated a sense that his reintegration represented a process of healing or getting better. Overall, his account was very powerful and left me with interesting reflections on the way young people can reframe negatives into positives and how reintegration can be a vehicle to facilitate this process.

Interview 4 - Ovuey

1. I felt that Ovuey was calm and confident and that he had strong feelings about how his reintegration had been managed by the mainstream school which he was keen to share. I felt he was articulate and clear about some systemic issues that needed to change in his school around reintegration and also more generally. At points I became aware that the language I used at times is very value laden and may lead to him thinking things he has said were good or bad and this may impact his views on his own words. I need to be careful about using reassurances and overly positive statements so that I don't influence thoughts on what to say. I am wondering if I sometimes I go off topic for too long? Do I need to be more structured and scaffold more to the point? There is a balance between allowing the interviewee to take the conversation where they want but also trying to elicit the information relevant to the study and it can be tricky to do this sensitively. My own priorities as a research need to be balanced with the views of participants about what is important to them.
2. I felt he was happy to have the opportunity to share his views and that he did not hold back on commenting on the things that he felt should have been done differently during his reintegration. Once or twice I felt some strong emotions from him, such as anger or disappointment. I felt that he trusted me to hold these feelings and to give him the space to share and reflect on them. I felt he appreciated the support from a few key adults whom he felt had treated him with respect and this seemed to counter some of the strong emotions around being angry and disappointed.
3. I feel like I managed his strong views and my own anxieties about what I could have done differently from previous interviews by remaining mindful to approach the interview like a 1:1 session and not to become more formal when recording started. As the interview progressed, I checked in with the language I was using to ensure I made it more neutral and less leading. I also used non-verbal communication and verbal nods to try to communicate that this was a safe space for him to say what he wanted and that I was able to hold these thoughts and feelings.

4. I felt purposeful in terms of my position to the research. This interview particularly felt useful in terms of informing recommendations for systemic change. This was also the last interview I had planned and I felt a sense that the study was coming together in terms of a dataset that was going to answer the research questions meaningfully and usefully. This sense of saturation of information was motivating in terms of looking forward to the next stages of data analysis.
5. I felt he communicated a story that held strong views about his experience and a sense that he was pleased to be able to share these thoughts. I feel like this opportunity in itself may have had a therapeutic quality to it. I felt that he had been waiting to tell his story and to be heard and I felt positive that we had been able to do this together with a purpose.

N.3 - Overall Reflective Account

Have I achieved the aims and answered the questions? I feel like overall I have achieved what I set out to achieve in terms of hearing the voices of young people with SEMH needs about their reintegration. I also feel that I have collected data and interpreted in a way that has answered the research questions and achieved the overall aim of the study. I am pleased about having produced a good practice guide which I feel is informed by the experts of having lived through the process and can be used meaningfully and inform further research around evaluating effective practice in this area. I am aware that I have located myself within the study in terms of how my values and experiences have shaped the direction of inquiry and the issues that were opened or closed as a result of these. I understand that the findings are influenced by my personal and professional values and that a different researcher may have interpreted different things. However I do feel that what has been interpreted, discussed and recommended is representative of the participants' views and feelings and through careful planning and reflection throughout, have kept these at the centre of the study.

What was most difficult? I found it difficult to settle into the role of the researcher during interviews and just listen without attempting to comfort or effect change, particularly in participants' expressions of negative self-perceptions. I also found it difficult to hear some of the perceptions of feeling let down by school systems. Reaching a decision about superordinate themes was tricky; it was difficult at times to let certain ideas go and open myself up to the possibility of new ideas or to change my direction of thought. Supervision and peer supervision helped me to acknowledge this and to be more reflective about why I was reaching certain conclusions, what values and preconceptions might be guiding these and did I have evidence from within the data itself to justify these.

What was most enjoyable? Even though settling on superordinate themes was anxiety provoking, I enjoyed the analysis stage. I enjoyed finding patterns and commonalities within the experiences of participants and piecing these together to create an overall

picture about what things were significant about experiences of reintegration. I enjoyed reflecting on my findings in light of extant literature and finding some consistencies. I felt like this added to the validity of my study and its utility. I also enjoyed member checking, because I felt that this helped to settle my anxieties that my interpretations were valid and representative of the participants' views. Most of all, I enjoyed hearing and telling the stories of these young people. It was fascinating and sad and hopeful at the same time and I'm pleased I chose this topic and had the opportunity to learn more about it.

What would I have done differently? On reflection, after finishing the interviews and completing the analysis there are questions I wished I had asked and line of inquiry I wish I had explored in more detail. This includes asking participants about what they said to peers when they reintegrated. I think it would have been useful to explore the language they used to frame and explain their reintegration to others and I did not explore this in much detail.

How will this experience change my practice? Reflecting on the findings has changed my perceptions of this group of young people. I am more aware of valuing their own self-knowledge and I am also very aware of the value they place on learning and to be mindful of any prejudices or preconceptions I might hold that contrast with this view. I feel I have gained some valuable insights that will inform the kinds of questions that I ask in consultations with adults and young people around the process of reintegration or when working with young people who have or are going to reintegrate from PRUs to mainstream school.