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"We had nowhere to go"

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Exploring children's experiences of homelessness using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Leeya Roovis

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctorate of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) in the faculty of Policy Studies

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Abstract

The magnitude of the issue of child homelessness tends to be muted because homeless families rarely live on the streets; when living in temporary accommodation, families can be invisible to the public eye (Hallett, Miller & Skrla, 2015). In comparison to the vast quantitative research that has examined pathways to homelessness, and the impact of homelessness on health, social and educational outcomes, the experiences of homeless children have received little attention, especially in the UK. The aim of this thesis was to conduct sensitive child voice research with homeless children, to explore how they make sense of their experiences, and their education. This study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to allow for an in-depth exploration of children's lived experiences. Four participants, aged 12-13, living in temporary accommodation with their families each participated in one semi-structured interview; one interview took place virtually due to the outbreak of the global pandemic. Children were asked questions about the places they have lived and about school. Data was analysed according to the six stages recommended by Smith, Flower and Larkin (2009). Findings indicated that children made sense of their relationships *with* their families, and through comparisons to their lives in the past. Participants' experiences of school were polar, with factors relating to the distance they lived from their schools and experiences of feeling supported and cared about by adults impacting on their school experiences, and their sense of belonging. The research highlights several opportunities for developing Educational Psychology practice, and school support, to better meet the needs of homeless children. In light of the limited field of research this thesis contributes to, there are several directions for future research.

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To all my wonderful family and friends, thank you for believing in me and for always rooting for me. To my mum, my dad, and my brother Cameron, thank you for always being by my side. And to my Tiffany, this also belongs to you.

And finally, to the ones who have carried me over the line, Favill (my power tool), Steph (my person), and Hannah (my Sam), I just cannot thank you enough.

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[1] Pseudonyms

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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 specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ███████   DATE: 05.05.21

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BPS	British Psychological Society
CRAE	Children's Rights Alliance for England
CRC	(UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child
CYP	Children and young people
DECP	Division of Educational and Child Psychology
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EP	Educational Psychology/ Educational Psychologist
FOI	Freedom of Information
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological analysis
LA	Local Authority
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
RQ	Research Question
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SES	Socio-economic Status
TA	Temporary Accommodation
UN	United Nations
UNESCR	United Nations committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

1. Introduction

1.1. Chapter Overview

This thesis contributes to knowledge and understanding of children's experiences of family homelessness, by presenting the accounts of four children living in temporary accommodation. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to enable in-depth exploration of what homelessness was like for these children, how they made sense of this experience, and of their education alongside this.

This first chapter states my arguments for why this research is important and how it is relevant to educational psychology (EP). It introduces the threads that weave throughout the thesis, that shaped the research project from its beginnings.

I start this chapter by outlining the significance of the topic, emphasising children's rights and evidence for the impact of homelessness on children. I then reason why this topic is relevant for EP research and practice, and the personal and professional motivations that led me here. Next, I situate this thesis in the context of the global pandemic. I conclude by stating the aims of this research and outlining the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Significance of the topic

All children have the right to adequate housing, to support their physical, mental and social development: this is set out in article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (IESCR), and again in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Housing enables children to enjoy their other rights to education, health, protection, play and nutrition (Children's Rights Alliance for England, (CRAE), 2018b).

In 2016, the UN committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNESCR) considered the UK's implementation of the IESCR, and raised concerns about the lack of social housing and the significant rise in family homelessness. This rise continued, and in 2019 the Children's Commissioner sought to shine a light on the homelessness crisis in the UK, emphasising that there could be more than 210,000 homeless children in England at the time of writing. The magnitude of the issue of family homelessness tends to be muted because homeless families rarely live on the streets (Hallett, Miller & Skrla, 2015); when living in temporary accommodation, families can be invisible to the public eye.

In their report, the UNESCR emphasised that 'adequate housing' should not be interpreted as shelter alone, but "the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity", with adequate space, protection from cold and damp, and from threats to health and safety (UN, 2009, p.3). A number of reports have raised concerns about the suitability of temporary accommodation provided to homeless families in the UK, arguing that it falls short of 'adequate housing' (e.g., Rice, 2006; Pennington & Banks, 2015; CRAE, 2018b; Children's Commissioner, 2019). These reports have captured the voices of homeless children in the pursuit of political change. However, the experiences and perspectives of homeless children in the UK have not been well researched in academic literature, despite the UK homelessness crisis, and evidence for the impact of homelessness in childhood.

It is widely recognised that there is both an immediate and durable impact of homelessness: "homelessness has a detrimental effect on children's health and wellbeing that can persist beyond the period of homelessness" (Bland & Shallcross, 2015). Homelessness in childhood is associated with a range of short- and long-term adverse outcomes including anxiety and depression (Harker, 2006), wide ranging physical health problems, such as eczema and asthma (Barnes, Cullinane, Scott & Silvester, 2013), disrupted school attendance and academic achievement (Noble-Carr, 2006), as well as a greater risk of homelessness in adulthood (Flatau et al, 2013).

While homeless children experience risk factors common to children living in poor housing, such as poor conditions, financial difficulties, parental distress and poor nutrition (Rice, 2006), they can be seen to be at the extreme end of a continuum of risk associated with poverty (Masten, Milotis, Graham-Bermann, Ramirez & Neemann, 1993). They face additional risks and stresses that are unique to homelessness resulting from the loss of their home, such as social stigma relating to homelessness, as well as sudden changes to school. This means adjusting to a new setting, with new teachers and new peers, and new curriculum (Kirby, Rashmita & Melchor, 2015). The high mobility amongst homeless families also means that these stresses can occur repeatedly.

1.3. Relevance to Educational Psychology

Educational Psychologists (EPs) support the inclusion and well-being of all children, but have an important role as advocates for vulnerable, and hidden groups of children (Fox, 2015). EPs use qualitative research to hear the voices of hidden, marginalised and disadvantaged groups of children to guide school and EP practice and policy (Hardy & Hobbs, 2017). Examples of this type of EP research include (but are in no way limited to): research with children of imprisoned parents (Weidberg, 2017), with unaccompanied asylum seeker children (Morgan, 2018), with children missing education

(Billington, 2018) and with looked-after children (Sugden, 2013). To my knowledge, research with homeless children[2] is missing within the field of Educational Psychology.

EPs are well placed to conduct sensitive research, having developed rapport building and communicative skills during doctoral training based on Rogerian principles of empathy, congruence and compassion. Prominent researchers in the field of family homelessness have commented on the need for researchers with practitioner skills to conduct meaningful, ethical and sensitive research with homeless children (Moore, McArthur & Noble-Carr, 2008), making this an appropriate and relevant area for EP research.

Conducting research in this area also provides the opportunity to contribute to a different narrative about homeless children. Much of the existing literature, especially quantitative research, has focused on individual and family deficits, or the negative outcomes for children from homeless families, rather than acknowledging children's strengths, personal resources and resilience in times of adversity (Fairchild, McFerran & Thompson, 2017).

Research in this area is also directly relevant to EP practice. One of the key goals of policy and practice with homeless children is to support the continuity of school (Gibson & Johnstone, 2010). EPs have the relevant knowledge and skills to support children in the ways that they are affected by homelessness, at multiple levels, through holistic and systemic work, to support school continuity. EPs can contribute through assessment, consultation, intervention and training, helping schools to understand and support their students affected by homelessness. This research seeks to provide illustrative accounts of children's experiences, within their individual contexts, to inform school and EP policy.

1.4. Personal and Professional Motivation

My motivation to pursue this topic comes from a combination of professional and personal experiences; these experiences have shaped my core values as a practitioner.

In my first year of doctoral training, I met Zain[3], a young man in Year 5. Zain was referred for EP support due to concerns about his 'challenging behaviour'; Zain had become increasingly anxious when separating from his mum in the mornings and was finding it difficult to focus in class. Unbeknown to

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[2] At least accompanied homeless children
[3] Pseudonym

school at the time of referral, Zain and his mum had recently been evicted from their home and were staying with family friends, with only some of their belongings with them.

That piece of casework brought to the forefront the emotional turmoil families face when they lose their home, and the psychological impact homelessness can have on children. I started speaking to colleagues in schools and the stories echoed Zain's; schools were often unaware when families were experiencing homelessness.

I began considering how recruitment might be possible for research on this topic, and found that there were no specific services supporting homeless families, aside from housing teams within the Local Authority (LA). This echoed a prominent idea in the literature- that housing, or at least shelter, is seen as the 'answer' to the problem of homelessness for families. I started to consider how homeless families are 'out of sight and out of mind', a view shared by Gaubatz (2001), who commented on the impact of the Housing Acts, and how the provision of temporary accommodation has removed homeless families from the public eye (Chapter 2 provides greater detail of the housing legislation to help the reader understand the complex nature of this landscape). I thought about the role EPs have as advocates and wanted to advocate for homeless children, and their families, through my doctoral research.

When I explored the literature, I noted an absence of child voice. Much of the research focused on outcomes for children who had experienced homelessness in childhood, or when it did focus on the experiences of children, this was often from the perspective of parents, teachers or other professionals. It was important to me to conduct a piece of research that was child centred and elicited the voices of homeless children.

I also noticed research in this area documented the 'disorders' or 'deficits' amongst homeless children, which, to me, individualises and depoliticises their distress. The individualisation of distress amongst homeless children is evident form previous research showing higher rates of homeless children with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and higher rates of exclusion; in their survey, of which 68% (284) respondents were households with children, Mitchell Neuberger, Radebe and Rayne (2004) found that 11% of children from those households were shown to have a statement of SEN, while nationally 3% of pupils had a statement of SEN in 2003. Furthermore, 1/10 homeless children had been suspended, excluded or expelled from school.

When I reflect on why I chose this topic, I am reminded of the reasons I wanted to be an EP; I am passionate about social justice, and disabling the structural barriers working against vulnerable children and their families. Coming from a working-class, single-parent, mixed-race family, where we

experienced vulnerable housing situations, it is perhaps unsurprising that housing and poverty-related issues are close to my heart.

1.5.   Covid-19 pandemic

Data collection for this research took place prior to and during school closures and lockdown restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Three children shared their stories and were met in person at their home, while one child shared her story virtually; the impact of Covid-19 on data collection is discussed further in Chapter 7. Whilst the data collection took place during lockdown restrictions, the impact of Covid-19 on homelessness experiences was not a focus of this research. Still, it is useful to highlight here that as a result of the emphasis given to the immediate crisis response, and less prevention activity happening at many levels, a 'spike' in family homelessness is expected when evictions hiatus ended (currently scheduled for 31 May 2021); this will likely be compounded by the winding down of the COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme, and furlough schemes (Fitzpatrick, Watts & Sims, 2021). Research that contributes to understanding the experiences of homeless children is arguably especially pertinent in the current national context. The impact of writing this thesis in the context of the pandemic is considered in Chapter 7.

1.6.   Aims and Research Questions

The primary aim of this research was to explore children's experiences of being homeless with their families through child voice research. There has been limited research in this area to date, and even less within a UK context. Previous research has often relied on parent or professional perspectives. I sought to use a methodology that allowed for an in-depth exploration of the meaning children make of their experiences of being homeless, and of their education alongside. The research also aims to inform school and EP practice in relation to supporting homeless children. The research questions (RQ) are as follows:

1.   How do children and young people make sense of their experiences of homelessness and of living in temporary accommodation with their families?

2.   What are the school-based experiences of homeless children and young people?

1.7.   Summary and structure of the thesis

Within this introductory chapter I have reasoned why this is an important topic for research, its relevance within educational psychology and stated the aims of this research. In the next chapter I

outline the research setting, providing the reader an overview of family homelessness in the UK, before I present a critique of the international literature on children's experiences of homelessness in Chapter 3. An overview of the structure is provided in Table 1.

	Chapter	Content
2	An Overview of Family homelessness in the UK	Chapter 2 provides an overview of family homelessness in the UK, including definitions, relevant legislation and policy, and evidence for how long families stay in temporary accommodation, the demographics of homeless families, and the causes of family homelessness in the UK.
3	Literature Review	In Chapter 3 I describe the literature search and analysis, before summarising and critiquing the published research about children's experiences of homelessness. This is structured within the broad categories of 1) home and homelessness, 2) family, and 3) education.
4	Methodology	Chapter 4 begins with a discussion on reflexivity and the beliefs and philosophical assumptions that shaped this research. I then describe the methodological approach, the methods for data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.
5	Findings	In Chapter 5 I present the findings from interviews with young people achieved through IPA. Vignettes and diagrammatic maps are used to give insight to the individual accounts and are followed with a presentation of the five superordinate themes and associated sub-themes.
6	Discussion	In this chapter I discuss the findings of this study in relation to the existing literature and answer the two research questions. I also consider the findings in the context of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and reflect on how challenging misconceptions of the theory will be important in practice with educational professionals.
7	Conclusion	In the final chapter I consider the strengths and limitations of this research, and possible future directions for research. I consider the findings in the context of the global pandemic and then present a brief reflexive account of conducting this research.
8	References	Chapter 8 consists of references for this thesis
9	Appendices	Chapter 9 consists of appendices for this thesis

Table 1: Structure of the Thesis

2. An overview of family homelessness in the UK

Before describing the literature review undertaken for this thesis (chapter 3), this chapter provides a policy context of homelessness in the UK. This was deemed important because the research identified during the literature search are largely from international studies. While the literature review was guided by the question "*what do we understand about children's lived experiences of homelessness?*", this chapter was guided by the question "*what is the context of this research?*", focusing on the context of homelessness in the UK. This chapter draws directly upon legislation, but also grey literature produced by government bodies and charities. This approach of speaking to the political context of the study was taken by multiple authors in the journal articles reviewed and moved me to do the same.

In this chapter I define homelessness and describe the legislation relevant for homeless families. Next, I describe what temporary accommodation is, the evidence for how many families live in temporary accommodation and for how long, and demographic information about homeless families. Finally, I describe the causes of family homelessness in the UK.

2.1. What is homelessness?

Put most simply, the definition of 'homelessness' is not having a home. Homelessness is commonly taken to mean rough sleeping, or being 'roofless', but there are a range of situations affecting families that render them homeless, even when there is a roof over their heads. Homelessness can be best thought of as a continuum of insecure and difficult living conditions that exists for families, rather than a dichotomy between 'homeless' and 'not homeless' (Hulse & Sharam, 2013).

Fitzpatrick et al (2019) adopt a range of definitions or 'perspectives' on homelessness in their recent impact report on homelessness in the UK, and their distinction between 'core homelessness' and 'wider homelessness' is useful:

- Core homelessness includes those acute forms of homelessness, such as rough sleeping; sleeping in cars, tents and public transport, unlicensed squatting, or occupation of non-residential buildings; staying in hostels, refuges and shelters; living in "unsuitable" temporary accommodation, such as Bed and Breakfasts (B&B) or sofa-surfing.

- Wider homelessness is described as a type of 'hidden homelessness', where the living situation holds a risk which may lead to homelessness at a future date (such as a threat of violence or eviction), or where there are ongoing unmet housing needs e.g., overcrowding.

'Hidden homelessness' is a term used to describe those who would meet the legal definition for being homeless, if they were to make a formal application to the Local Authority (LA). While 'statutory homeless' households are those seeking or receiving housing assistance from the LA on the grounds of them being currently or imminently homeless[4].

These definitions highlight the wide-ranging circumstances for homeless families. This research aims to be relevant to families across the continuum of homelessness. However, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4 (where I discuss sample vs population), reaching families who experience the wider forms of homelessness is incredibly challenging, and so research on this topic is almost exclusively conducted with families who are statutorily homeless, and who live in, or have lived in, temporary accommodation. The legislation relevant to homeless families and implications for the provision of temporary accommodation is described in the next two sections.

2.2. Legislation and Homeless Families

A person with a dependent[5] child living with them, or who might be expected to live with them, is considered as having a 'priority need', under the Housing Act 1996. The LA must provide suitable temporary accommodation for those in priority need until the duty to rehouse is discharged, i.e., when the family have secured housing, usually through the offer of a settled home (MHCLG, 2018).

The Housing Act 1996 does not define dependent children, however, the Homelessness Code of guidance (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), 2018) encourages housing authorities to treat children under 16 as dependent, as well as children aged 16-18 in full-time education or training. Residence does not have to be full-time, and a child can be considered to reside with either or both parents. As a result of case law, an applicant can still be in priority need if their child is staying with relatives, or in foster care, *because* of the family's housing problems (Crawley Borough Council v B, [2000]).

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[4] The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 extended the housing duty to include those who are threatened with homelessness; a person is considered threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days.

[5] A 'dependent child' does not have to be the child of the applicant, they could be related to the applicant, adopted or in their foster care.

It is important to highlight that not all families are eligible for accommodation under the Housing Act. Families with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF)[6] because they are subject to immigration control are not eligible for housing (Children's Commissioner, 2019). Immigration status also impacts on whether an applicant with dependent children is considered as having a priority need.

2.3. What is temporary accommodation?

Temporary accommodation is housing provided by the LA to homeless households awaiting long-term accommodation. The types of temporary accommodation a family can be placed in vary greatly, from public sector and LA or housing association stock; private sector accommodation (which can include leased or nightly paid), and alternative accommodations such as hostels, refuges, and B&Bs (ONS, 2019). More recently, councils have begun using office blocks and shipping containers as temporary accommodation for families (Children's Commissioner, 2019).

Pennington and Banks (2015) distinguish 'emergency accommodation' from other types of temporary accommodation in the UK, to describe the places where families have to share facilities with other residents.

2.3.1. How many families are living in temporary accommodation?

The picture of family homelessness is different across UK nations. This research took place in England, and because the number of homeless families living in temporary accommodation is "substantially higher" in England, compared to the other home nations (ONS, 2019, p.16), this section focuses on statistics for England. This is problematic however, and the MHCLG & DWP (2019) have called for a better understanding of homelessness across the devolved nations, as the majority of UK-based research is only relevant to England.

The MHCLG measure statutory homelessness in England quarterly. The most recent live tables show that in quarter 3 July-September 2020, there were 59,360 households in England with children living in temporary accommodation, a total number of 120,570 children (MHCLG, 2021). Evidence shows that the number of children living in temporary accommodation in England has risen in recent years; between 2012 and 2018, the number of families living in temporary accommodation rose by approximately 60% (ONS, 2019, the latest release). Figure 1 shows the number of households in temporary accommodation in England between 2005 and 2018. Among these were 124,000 children,

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[6] NRPF is a legal restriction preventing access to public funds, such as welfare benefits and social housing.

indicating an 80% increase in the number of children living in temporary accommodation since 2010 (MHCLG, 2018).
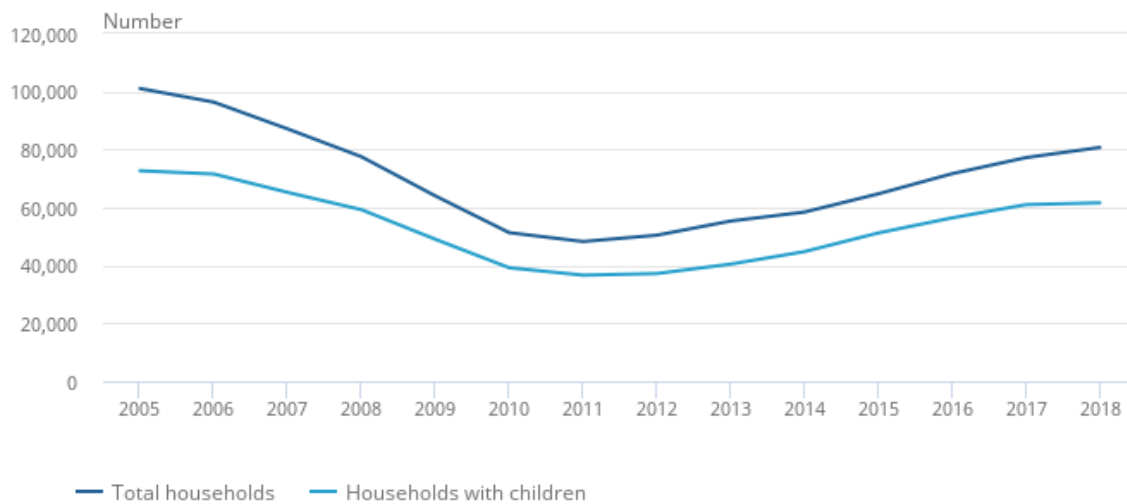
Figure 1: The number of households in temporary accommodation in England, 2005-2018 (Source: ONS, 2019. **Contains public sector information licensed under the** Open Government Licence v3.0

The Children's Commissioner (2019) highlighted official figures fail to include the vulnerable group of homeless children placed in temporary accommodation by children's services, and not by council housing teams. This includes families deemed to be 'intentionally homeless', and therefore not entitled to a permanent home, and those ineligible for a permanent home due to their immigration status.

Furthermore, these statistics do not represent the entirety of the child homelessness picture, and the 'wider homeless' populations (described above), who have not sought support from the LA. Using the English House Survey, an analysis by the Children's Commissioner's Office found that there were an estimated 92,000 children living in sofa surfing families between 2016 and 2017 (2019). In addition, analysis of the Wealth and Assets Survey (2014-2016) suggested that approximately 375,000 children were living in a household that had fallen behind on a rent or mortgage payment, placing them at risk of becoming homeless in the future (Children's Commissioner, 2019). Assuming that this figure had not changed significantly since 2014-2016, the Children's Commissioner (2019) predicted that there could be between 550,000 and 600,000 total children in England who are homeless, or at risk of being homeless, at the time of writing.

These statistics are a snapshot in time. In the next section I explore the evidence pertaining to how long families live in temporary accommodation.

2.3.2. *How long can families stay in temporary accommodation?*

There is no legal limit to how long a family can stay in temporary accommodation that is deemed 'suitable' (MHCLG, 2018). Length of stay therefore depends on the availability of housing within the LA area, and for families, can be affected by how many bedrooms are needed in a settled home. The Children's Commissioner Office offer some estimates for how long families stay in temporary accommodation using data from the Housing Benefit database. This tracked families living in temporary accommodation and their housing status over time. The analysis from between 20 and 25 LAs indicated that in 2017, approximately 2 in 5 of the children living in temporary accommodation had been there for at least six months, some 51,000 children. Around 1 in 20 (estimated as 6000 children) had been living there for a year (Children's Commissioner, 2019).

While there is no legal limit with regards to 'suitable' accommodation, the Homelessness Suitability of Accommodation Order (2003) states that B&B accommodation is not suitable for families and children, or pregnant woman, and so, if this accommodation is provided, because there are no alternatives, it should be for a maximum of six weeks. Despite this legislation, evidence consistently shows that families stay in B&Bs for longer than six weeks; the most recent government live tables showed a total number of 1,440 families living in bed and breakfast hotels, 500 had lived there for longer than six weeks (MHCLG Live Tables, 2021).

Furthermore, the six-week rule does not apply to council owned B&Bs; the reason for this is unknown (Children's Commissioner, 2019). Freedom of information (FOI) requests placed by the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) showed that 1,641 families with children were living in council owned B&B and hotel style accommodation in 2017, with almost of two thirds (1,056) of these families being there for more than six weeks (CRAE, 2018a). They note that the real figure is likely to be much higher as only 58% of councils replied to the request. Another report found that over 16,000 households with children were being accommodated in hostels and pay by the night accommodation, settings with no legal limit for how long children can be housed in them (CRAE, 2018b).

To summarise, homeless families can stay in 'suitable' temporary accommodation indefinitely, and despite the six-week rule set out in legislation for length of stay in B & B accommodation, the evidence indicates that families stay there for much longer.

2.4. The demographics of homeless families

Family homelessness disproportionately affects certain groups according to gender and ethnicity.

2.4.1. *Gender*

In their review of the existing evidence for the causes of homelessness in the UK, the MHCLG & DWP (2019) drew on a governmental research report by Pleace et al (2008) for evidence about gender differences amongst the parents of homeless families. Pleace et al (2008) found that:

- Family homelessness tended to be experienced primarily by younger women, who are socially and economically marginalised lone parents with young dependent children
- There was a strong association between male domestic abuse and violence and experience of family homelessness; this was reflected in the disproportionate number of female lone parents who experienced violence or abuse
- The largely female-headed lone parent households who sought assistance often tried to avoid the statutory system, and only sought help when they had exhausted informal options; women and children had often been homeless for some time before seeking formal help.

While this study is from 2008, this pattern remains consistent; of the number of households living in temporary accommodation at the end of Quarter 3 2020[7], there were 15,520 two parent households (26%), 2,970 single male parent families (5%) and 36,170 single female parent families (61%) (MHCLG, 2021). [8]

2.4.2. *Ethnicity*

The statutory homeless live tables produced by the MHCLG do not provide information about the ethnicities of families who are homeless. As previous evidence showed that homelessness disproportionately affects families from black and minority ethnic groups (BME) (Pleace et al, 2008) a FOI request was made for more recent information. The response from the MHCLG FOI Team can be found in Appendix 1. I have provided some of the key information in Table 2, alongside the latest statistics (granted National Statistic status) which are form the 2011 Census for ethnic groups within the general population in England[9].

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[7] The most recent data available at the time of writing
[8] Percentages are approximate and based on data available. The live tables report that totals may not be equal because of rounding. There a column labelled 'other', and is included as some LAs continue to use a dated method for data collection.
[9] Statistics are usually provided for England and Waled for Census 2011 but a previous FOI found here https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/ethnicitystatisti

Ethnicity	Families who were statutory homeless in 2019-2020	General population of England
White	66%	85.4%
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	13%	3.5%
Asian/Asian British	9%	7.8%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic group	3%	2.3%
'Other' Ethnic group	4%	1%
Unknown	5%	

Table 2: The ethnicities of statutory homeless families owed a prevention or relief duty compared to the ethnicities of the general population

The evidence shows that families from black and minority ethnic groups (BME) are overrepresented amongst homeless families, with the largest overrepresentation amongst black ethnic groups.

Further evidence indicates that families from a BME background experience being homeless for longer; Pleace et al (2008) found that amongst families who had been living in temporary accommodation for over a year, 59% had an ethnic minority background, and 33% had at some point sought asylum. [10]This brings me onto considering the evidence for the causes of family homelessness in the UK.

2.5. What are the causes of family homelessness in the UK?

The reasons why families become homeless are different to the reasons that individuals become homeless (Wilson & Barton, 2020). Up until the 1960s, homelessness was pathologized, explained by individual factors, such as ill-health, and or substance-abuse; the latter part of the decade saw a shift to the consideration of structural factors (Fitzpatrick, 2005); the impact of these is now well evidenced.

The review conducted by MHCLG & DWP (2019) described briefly above is the most recent robust review of the evidence available for the causes of homelessness in the UK, consisting of a review of

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cs, led to using the Nomis website to find statistics for England only to allow like for like comparison-https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/asv2htm.aspx

[10] A further FOI was requested to provide recent information about how long families stay in temporary accommodation according to ethnicity, as well as the type of accommodation families are placed in, however, this information is not held by the MHCLG.

58 studies, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research. Most of the research reviewed had divided the causes of homelessness into structural and individual factors, and this distinction was criticised. The more recent literature was found to take a hybrid approach, acknowledging that structural factors create the conditions in which homelessness occurs, and that certain individuals are more vulnerable to being affected by social and economic trends than others. Research was critiqued for failing to consider how causes of homelessness, such as affordability of housing, relationship breakdown and poverty might interact. Furthermore, analysis was impeded by terms such as 'eviction' being used as a reason for homelessness, as there are multiple reasons that can lead to eviction, such as employment issues, rent increases, inability to find money for a deposit on a new rental property etc. The lack of uniformity in administrative procedures makes it difficult to identify the changes in causes of homelessness over time.

Despite these problems with the research, the report draws conclusions about family homelessness in the UK. Figure 2 summarises the evidence, and uses a colour code to distinguish the strong, medium and weak evidence for the causal factors for family homelessness, including:

1) Individual personal factors
2) Individual financial related factors
3) Individual health related factors
4) Structural factors

The strongest evidence showed that families are more likely to be homeless because of structural factors, and a lack of affordable housing and poverty. Regarding a lack of affordable housing; the continual shortfall in levels of new house building, particularly affordable housing, relative to household formation has been attributed as the most important factors in the increase in statutory homelessness since 2009/2010 (Wilson & Barton, 2020). The decrease in affordability of properties in the private rented sector, of which welfare reforms, such as the capping of Local Housing Allowance are an element, have driven the increase in homelessness (National Audit Office, 2017). A report from the Ministry of Justice showed an increasing number of bailiff evictions in recent years, illuminating the increasing number of people being made homeless from the private rental sector (Pennington & Banks, 2015; CRAE, 2018a).
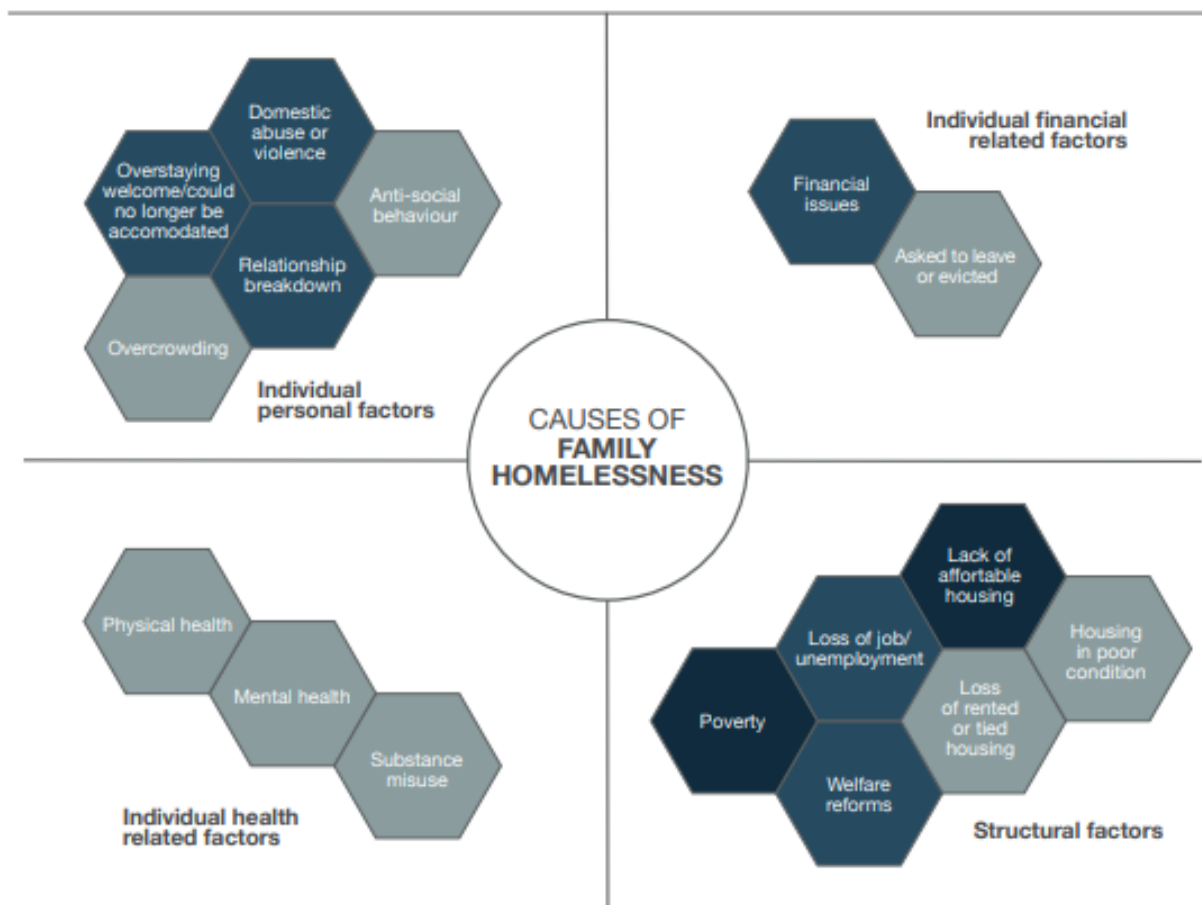
Figure 2: Causes of Family Homelessness in the UK (Source: MHCLG & DWP, 2019)

The impact of recession and austerity measures on homelessness has been recognised through research. Loopstra, Reeves, Barr, Taylor-Robinson, McKee and Stuckler (2016) analysed data from 323 UK LAs from between 2004-2012. Increasing rates in homelessness were strongly linked with government reductions in spending on social welfare, including funding for social care and housing services. Austerity has hit the poorest members of society the hardest, with families and children being the worst effected group (Pennington & Banks, 2015). A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) (2017) showed that poverty rates for families with children are rising due to reductions in the support offered by benefits and tax credits; it is noted that these reductions outweigh the benefits of reductions in tax and increases in minimum wage, as these mostly benefit families out of poverty (JRF, 2017). In areas of high housing demand, housing benefit reform has had an even bigger impact (Wilson & Barton, 2020), indicating how these factors interact.

Analysis by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found that recent reforms to taxes and transfer payments hit households with children the hardest; analysis showed that lone parents have lost an average of £5,250 (almost a fifth of their total net income), while couples with children have lost an average of £3,000 per year (EHRC, 2018). What's more, the situation appears to be getting worse. Another analysis by the EHRC predicts that overall public spending in England is expected to fall by 18% between 2010-11 and 2021-22 and that the impact of reduced income and cuts to schools, transport and housing will affect poorer households the most (2018b)[11].

2.6. Chapter Summary

Within this chapter I have outlined the research setting, providing the reader an overview of family homelessness in the UK. I have presented what is known about family homelessness and temporary accommodation at an organisational and statistical level, to contextualise this research and the children's stories that follow. In the next chapter I present a critique of the international literature on children's experiences of homelessness.

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[11] This prediction was made prior to the outbreak of Covid-19.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter details the review of the literature undertaken for this thesis. First, I explain the aim of the review and why a narrative review was conducted. Next, I describe the literature search and how I analysed and synthesised the literature. I then present the findings of the review within the three broad areas, or themes of lived experience identified. The chapter ends with an overall reflection on the literature and explain how research within this thesis contributes to gaps in knowledge identified within this review.

3.2. The Aim of the Review

The aim of the present study is to explore the experiences of homeless children; it is concerned with meaning making, and how children make sense of their experiences. The interpretivist stance I have taken within this research has implications for the aim and purpose of the literature review, as well as the approach taken.

The aim of a systematic review is to find *all* relevant studies, published and unpublished, that relate to a particular subject area (Cronin, Ryan & Coughlan, 2008) and to provide advice based on the available evidence (Bryman, 2012). The systematic review traditionally aligns with a positivist position, where objectivity is sought. Systematic reviews have been criticised for encouraging bureaucratisation of the review process by shifting focus to the technical aspects, rather than the analytical interpretations generated by them (Bryman, 2012).

On the other hand, the goal of the literature review for an interpretivist is to generate understanding, rather than to accumulate knowledge (Bryman, 2012). As a result, a narrative review was conducted. The main purpose of a narrative review is to provide the reader with a comprehensive background for understanding current knowledge and to provide justification as to why one's research questions are important (Cronin et al, 2008). A narrative review compliments the methodological orientation of this study, providing a good fit with IPA, where the goal of the literature review is to reference literature that orients the study (Eatough & Smith, 2016).

While there are strengths to the narrative review, there are also potential weaknesses. Narrative reviews have been criticised for lacking comprehensiveness, clarity and discrimination in terms of the

evidence used (Bryman, 2012). To help conduct a comprehensive and transparent review, some strategies typical of a systematic search were used and are detailed in Appendix 2.

3.3. The Literature Search

There is a vast international body of literature on the topic of family homelessness. In the past, scholars tended to utilise quantitative approaches to measure the statistical pervasiveness of homelessness as a social issue, as well as identify the negative impacts associated with homelessness (Hallett et al, 2015). More recently however, researchers have taken a qualitative approach to understand the lived experiences of homeless children. It is this literature that is focused on and reviewed here. This included research with children, but also with key adults in their lives, including parents, teachers, and other professionals, usually those working in or with temporary accommodations. Research from these perspectives was included because few studies were with children and young people only.

Reviewing the literature, I noticed a lack of research from the UK that focused on children's experiences of homelessness. I therefore drew on international research including American, Canadian, Australian, and Irish studies. During analysis, I remained mindful of cultural differences, such as legislation, welfare support for homeless families, availability and type of accommodation, geography, as well as education systems. There was some evidence to suggest that families from the UK typically spend longer periods in temporary accommodation than families do internationally (Bland & Shallcross, 2015) and so, when reviewing studies, thought was given to how long participants had spent in the accommodation. However, cross-country differences and comparisons were not the focus of this review.

The lack of UK research, as well as the political nature of this research topic, encouraged an exploration of the grey literature. The AACODS (Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date, Significance) checklist (Tyndall, 2010) supported evaluation and critical appraisal of grey literature, as well as decisions about inclusion.

A detailed explanation of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature search can be found in Appendix 2. One key criterion worth mentioning here, however, is that this review does not include research relating to young people who are homeless away from their families, often termed 'unaccompanied' homeless young people. This is because the social environment of unaccompanied youth accommodations is markedly different to those housing families. In addition, the presence of

family is likely to make their experience very different (Polillo et al, 2018). Information about the literature included in the review is provided in Appendix 3.

Specific details of each article, study or grey reference were recorded in a table as they were analysed, including purpose and methodology, findings and outcomes, as well as my key thoughts/ response to the paper. This table helped me to consider the research as a whole, and to note the emerging themes and patterns according to methodology and chronology of the research. I found that the research reviewed could be grouped into three broad areas, or themes, of lived experience- 1) 'home', or children's experiences of where they live, 2) family, and 3) education, which provide the structure for this review.

Oliver (2012) reflects that a literature review can open up a new world of meaning and understanding of the lives of the people under study. The aim of this review is to provide the reader with an understanding of what has been learnt about the lived experiences of homeless children, as well as a critique of the literature within this field. This literature review was guided by the question "*what do we understand about children's lived experiences of homelessness?".*

3.4. Home and homelessness

Naturally, research concerned with the experiences of homeless children has explored children's experiences of where they live. The studies included in this review often focused on the places where children lived *after* they became homeless, for example, Polillo et al (2018) sought to answer the research question- 'what are the positives and negatives of living in a family homeless shelter' (p.93). However, as might be expected, participants across the studies made comparisons with life in their previous homes, reflecting on what was different about life in temporary accommodation and often what they missed. Some researchers used this to consider children's concepts of 'home' and 'homelessness' (Kirkman et al, 2010) or what 'family homelessness' meant to children (Moore et al, 2008). Exploring children's views about where they live when they are homeless is necessary for understanding their homeless experiences, as Buckner (2008) argues that the conditions of the shelter, or accommodation, are particularly important when examining the impact of homelessness on children.

Within this section, I summarise and critically consider research findings regarding children's experiences of where they live, and how these relate to their concepts of home and homelessness. These have been sub-categorised as 1) sharing accommodation with others, 2) space, 3) food, 4) rules

and restrictions, 5) neighbourhood and 6) emotional well-being and physical health, although there is much overlap as these categories are not distinct.

3.4.1. *Sharing accommodation with others*

Living in temporary accommodation often means living in the same building as, and sharing facilities, with others. Pennington and Banks (2015) conducted research on behalf of Shelter, which aimed to explore the experiences of families living in shared 'emergency accommodation' in England. The study involved telephone interviews, as well as in-person interviews, with 20 'families' and 6 school workers. While the paper refers to families, seemingly the interviews were with parents only. Interviews included closed questions and open-ended discussion. While the research is not peer-reviewed and demographic information about the families is missing (including how many single or two parent families, ethnicity, or age of children), the research shines a light on the specific experiences of families living in shared homeless accommodation in England.

In their report, Pennington and Banks (2015) describe the day-to-day lives of the families that participated in the research. They found that some parents had concerns for safety due to the mental health needs of other residents in the building, as well as people being on the premises who did not live there. Parents also shared that their families were disturbed and woken by others. Regarding facilities, parents described difficulties sharing kitchens and bathrooms, including the location of bathrooms away from their rooms. Participants described poor conditions of facilities, all described bathrooms as poor or inadequate. In this way, there appeared to problems relating to 1) the other residents themselves, but also 2) relating to the facilities within shared accommodation.

Poor amenities and the problem of noise in shared accommodation were described by children themselves in another research project for Shelter, conducted by Mustafa (2004). In this study, participants were aged 4-16 and had either been rehoused in council or privately rented accommodation or were living in shared accommodation (B&Bs/ hostels) at the time of the interview. Children revealed that their accommodation had a lack of amenities for washing, cooking, and playing.

These two studies (Mustafa, 2004; Pennington & Banks, 2015) provide the accounts of parents and children living in shared accommodation in England, sharing voices that would otherwise not been heard. The papers mostly focus on the difficulties of living in shared accommodation, which is unsurprising given the purpose of the research and the organisation's agenda. One might question whether the negative experiences reported relate to issues of sample, in particular which families participated in the research (not all homeless families access support through Shelter), but also whether they relate to methodology, i.e., whether the methods used, or questions asked could have

captured positive experience. I turn now to international peer-reviewed research to examine children's experiences of living in shared accommodation with others.

Moore et al (2008) conducted research in Canberra, Australia, with 18 children (age 6-14 years) and 7 young people (aged 15-21 years), all who had been homeless with their families in the past. The researchers used semi-structured interviews, art activities and group discussions at an art activity day to collect data. The researchers found that some of the children recalled times when they had met new friends or felt connected to other families at the shelters because they were experiencing similar challenges to them. However, the participants overwhelmingly reported living with others as a stressful experience. This related to safety and to space, as one young man (21) commented- "it sucked because we weren't given any space and you were always scared of the other kids and parents there" (p.41). Kirkman et al (2010) found that children saw not living with other people as a feature of the concept of home.

However, in another study conducted in the US by Hinton and Cassell (2013), some parents reported their children liked that there were other children in the shelter and that they were happier compared to when they were living on the streets. Perhaps then, families' experiences of living with others are influenced by their previous housing situation, and that living with others was not as bad for those who had not previously had shelter. Still, overwhelmingly the research highlighted that living with others was perceived negatively by children and their families.

3.4.2. *Space*

Issues of space were described by children and their parents across all studies reviewed. This was both in terms of sharing with other families, but also as a result of living in such small spaces with their own families. The issue of space was more prominent for those living in shared accommodation, because this often meant living with their family in one room (Mustafa, 2004; Pennington & Banks, 2015). Children and their parents in two case studies from a larger study in the Republic of Ireland described how living in a small space put a strain on relationships with family and friends (Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan, 2006).

The review of the literature showed that issues of space were experienced differently depending on age. For younger children, not having space meant not being able to play (Moore et al, 2008), whereas for older children, and adolescents, not having space meant not having privacy. A number of girls in early and late adolescence from the study by Mustafa (2004) were very concerned by the lack of privacy when sharing a room with parents and siblings. In the same vein, parents in the study by Pennington & Banks (2015) described how their families had to change clothes in the same room as

each other, while teenage girls shared their embarrassment at having to share a bed with relatives (including brothers and fathers) when menstruating.

In the study by Moore et al (2008), participants reported that living in a small space meant not having their possessions with them and having their possessions with them was important in feeling at home. Kirkman et al (2010) found that the children thought that a good home was not being too cramped.

3.4.3. *Food*

Related to issues of space, and to facilities, difficulties relating to preparing and storing food were described by children and parents in a number of studies (Mustafa, 2004; Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan, 2006; Pennington & Banks, 2015; CRAE, 2018b; Cronley et al, 2019; Share, 2020). In their study, Cronley et al (2019) sought to explore homeless adolescents' perceptions of physical health and nature, with the purpose of informing a community garden intervention. Eight participants (aged 13-17) from two emergency shelters took part in two focus groups. The tenets of IPA were followed, and data was subject to content analysis. Cronley et al (2019) found that although participants believed food and diet were the most influential factors to an individual's health, healthy food was not always an option to them. Participants described how they missed their family's home cooking and that the shelter environment made it difficult to eat healthily.

This echoes the more recent findings of Share (2020), who explored the food worlds of ten homeless families living in emergency accommodation in Ireland through photo elicitation and semi-structured interviews with parents. Experiences varied according to the food provision and facilities of the accommodation but some of the key findings showed that:

- Families could not always access breakfast (when it was available) because of timing, location and pressure to prepare and transport children to school.
- Parents were concerned about the nutritional quality of food provided in the accommodation
- Some families had no control over food choice and couldn't choose when to eat.
- Food storage was an everyday pressure, especially in B&B and hotel type accommodation, impacting on what parents could buy. Parents used strategies such as storing food on the windowsill, to make sandwiches for children (see Figure 3).
- Almost all families resorted to convenience food, while daily fruit and vegetable consumption was low.

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Figure 3 Windowsill Refrigeration from Share (2020)[12]

Share (2020) emphasised that "the physical and social structuring of emergency accommodation spaces contribute to marginalisation, and diminishes families' every day food practices, such that they dine without dignity and experience food poverty in an intense and personal way" (p.137). As well as not being able to store or consume food in regular ways, there was also evidence to suggest that children felt pressure to assimilate to British culture and consume "British food", rather than the food from their family of origin, when living in shared accommodation (Mustafa, 2004).

3.4.4. *Living under rules and restrictions*

The literature revealed that families experienced living under rules and restrictions in most types of accommodation, but more so when the accommodation was shared. Polillo et al (2018) conducted semi-structured interviews with sixteen adolescents and young people (16-24) living with their families in two emergency shelters in Ontario, Canada. The participants described how shelter rules made it difficult to receive visitors, complete chores and responsibilities and create a daily routine that worked for them. One 16-year-old shared- "a *home is where you can go at any time, but there are rules so I can't come at any time I want".* Homelessness was associated with living under rules, while being able to come and go was seen as an important aspect of the concept of 'home' for adolescents.

The research reviewed also showed that rules and restrictions could lead to loss. Many of the children in the study by Moore et al (2008) recalled their sadness about having to leave pets behind when they became homeless and felt that they were not at 'home' until they had their pets living with them. For children in the studies by Mustafa (2004) and Moore et al (2008), pets represented stability, security

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[12] Permission to produce image granted by author

and staying somewhere permanently. As one child commented- "having a pet means that you're going to stay there for a while 'cos you can't have pets if it's only a short-term thing" (Moore et al, 2008, p.40). Pets were an example of the relationships and possessions that had to be left behind when someone became homeless (Kirby et al, 2015). This finding highlights the importance of research with children, as this was not a prominent theme spoken about by parents in the research reviewed here.

3.4.5. *Beyond home and into the neighbourhood*

The four factors discussed so far relate to experiences inside the buildings where homeless families were housed. Indeed, this was the focus for the majority of the studies reviewed, although two studies touched upon children's experiences beyond 'home' (the physical building), and of the neighbourhood. In the study by Mustafa (2004), children described that there was either a lack of outside play areas at the temporary accommodation, or, when there were play areas, children did not perceive them to be safe, fearing violence.

More recently, Cronley et al (2019) found that although homeless adolescents had the desire to lead healthy lives and to be physically active, this was difficult due to their living conditions. The authors related the adolescents' limited physical activity to their sense of nature and the outdoors. Participants talked about how they used to play, run, and be fast. None of the participants had been outside on the day of their interview, and for most, going to school was their only time outside. The authors found that the adolescents had abstract ideas about nature, and that nature did not exist in their lives. The study highlighted how adolescents were 'stymied' by the built environment of the family shelter (p.131).

While the research took place in a particularly high-density suburban environment in the southern US, and experiences of health and nature likely differ in urban environments, the study encourages a consideration of how the built environment impacts on the physical and mental health of homeless children and reflects the movement within the fields of geography and environmental psychology to do just that. This feels pertinent to consider in England, in light of the new types of accommodation being provided to families, in the form of shipping containers and office blocks. These are located on industrial estates, with limited amenities, heavy dust and fumes, as well as risks posed by lorries and machinery operating in close proximity (Children's Commissioner, 2019). As with findings from Cronley et al (2019), this reinforces the idea of shelters as nature-deprived venues and institutional environments that discourage physical activity and perpetuate mental health problems. Research in this area emphasises the nature of homelessness as a multidisciplinary subject, spanning health, geography and psychology, and further research in this area is required (Cronley et al, 2019).

3.4.6. *Emotional wellbeing and physical health*

The impact of living in temporary accommodation on emotional wellbeing and physical health was a recurring theme throughout the research. Adolescents from the Canadian emergency shelters described feeling overwhelmed, bored, tired, scared and frustrated, and attributed these feelings related to the physical environment of the shelter (Polillo et al, 2018). For children in the Australian study by Kirkman et al (2010), the insecurity and loss of homelessness brought about profound unhappiness, anger, and behavioural problems. Many children experienced physical ill-health, including anaemia, bedbug bites, fatigue, and eczema. Sometimes these were seen to be the direct result of homelessness, while others were exacerbated by instability and poor housing (Kirkman et al, 2010; Pennington & Banks, 2015).

So far, I have summarised the research findings from studies that explored children's experiences of where they lived, emphasising additional challenges associated with living in shared accommodation. In the next section, I summarise, and critique findings related to homeless children's experiences of family, which, as will be seen, are also closely connected to concepts of home and homelessness.

3.5. Family

It is useful to reflect again here that the causes of family homelessness are complex and interacting. In particular, evidence shows that for some families, there are family related factors, such as relationship breakdown and domestic abuse or violence, which are implicated in reasons for homelessness (MHCLG & DWP, 2019). This was reflected across the international studies reviewed as part of this literature review. The reasons why families were homeless included those family related experiences (including relationship breakdown and domestic abuse or violence), as well as poverty. As will be discussed throughout this section, the *reasons* why families were homeless impacted on children's experiences of homelessness, as well as perceptions of their family.

3.5.1. *Family relationships*

A common finding amongst the studies that asked children about their families, was that homeless families were close, for example, Mustafa (2004) found "without exception", all of the children participating expressed closeness with their parents (p.25). Based on their findings, Moore et al (2008) reasoned that it was parents' capacity to protect and care for their children that appeared to mitigate the effects of homelessness (p.39). Many of the children in that study saw that a house was a home if they were with their family. As a result, they did not always see themselves as homeless. The authors

surmised that homelessness was determined by children's level of connectedness to family and community, and the absence of fear, instability and insecurity, rather than by their housing status.

This positive aspect of homelessness, the 'strengthening of family relationships' is a move away from the predominantly negative experiences described in previous research. It was a shared finding of the study by Kirkman et al (2010), which was conducted in Victoria, Australia, using semi-structured interviews with 12 parents and 20 children (age 6-12 years). The researchers offered a range of creative activities, such as drawing, sentence-completion cards and work sheets about friends and themselves. Full details are provided in a final report (Kirkman et al, 2009). One child (age 12) commented- "I think we became closer as a family" (p.998). However, while the researchers found that children spoke of close and nurturing families, the authors note that this was typically children from families that had stayed intact. Other children had lost relationships with siblings, because they stayed with different parents, or because siblings had chosen to live independently, which left children feeling less close with their families.

Furthermore, Kirkman et al (2010) found that there could be poor relationships between children and parents, this was recounted by both children and their parents. Some relationships deteriorated because children wanted more attention from a parent that felt unable to give it, or where a child was angry with their parent for the family becoming homeless. Similarly, in Nettleton's (2001) exploration of the experiences of children made homeless by mortgage repossession, some participants were angry with their parents and blamed them for losing their home, and in some cases, for the breakdown of their parents' marriage.

This research highlights the complexity of relationships amongst homeless families, which were impacted by factors prior to, and as a result of, becoming homeless. It feels important to reflect here on the potential for a bias amongst the families who participate in research, as families experiencing more conflict are likely less able to participate.

3.5.2. *Children's responsibilities*

Another finding that resonated across multiple studies reviewed, was that some homeless children and young people were found to have additional responsibilities, both physical and emotional (Mustafa, 2004; Kirkman et al, 2010; Polillo et al, 2018). This was a key finding discussed in the paper by Polillo et al (2018), who found that participants were concerned about the well-being of their parents and therefore took on more adult responsibilities to help with shelter life. These included household chores, making phone calls and scheduling appointments for their parents. An important reflection made by the authors was that it was unclear whether these were new roles and

responsibilities, or whether they carried them out prior to entering the shelter. There were also gender differences relating to responsibilities; females reported taking on more household chores and adult responsibilities, compared to male participants.

Given that participants from that study were aged 16-24, there might be an expectation that young people at that age would take on more responsibilities within the family. However, Mustafa's (2004) research with children aged 4-16, also found that children had additional responsibilities. In particular, they were often present when families made decisions about arrangements and tenancies and could be asked to translate documents or conversations. One example given was from a 9-year-old girl- "…[I] help my mum clean up and not give her a hard time" (p.26.). Mustafa (2004) describes how children had a sense of responsibility for their siblings, and their family in general. This relates to the next section - children's knowledge about homelessness.

3.5.3. *Children's knowledge about homelessness*

Mustafa's (2004) findings showed that some homeless children had a role in supporting their families in matters relating to housing. Evidently, those children would have had some knowledge about their family's situation. Furthermore, in cases where children had a role in translating, they may have had more knowledge than their parents. For older young people, such as those that participated in the research by Polillo et al (2018), knowledge about housing status was related to their age.

Some researchers of the papers reviewed here had explicitly reflected on the ethical issues around what children understood about 'homelessness' and what they did to be sensitive to this issue. Moore et al (2008) describe that part of their methodology was to ask children to identify what it meant to be 'home' and 'homeless'. Participants in that study ranged from age 6-21 years, but it was unclear whether, or how, questions were differentiated according to age. This issue is explored slightly more by Kirkman et al (2010) who described that "most children did not tackle the topic of homelessness directly" (p.997). However, it is unclear if that was because the researchers did not use that word, or because children avoided it. Next, the researchers described that some children "did not accept that they had been homeless. For ethical reasons, the interviewer did not emphasise the concept with children, sometimes not even naming it" (p.997). Again, it is unclear whether the researchers had used the term 'homeless' with children who then rejected it, but the naming of ethical sensitivity around the issue was the only example found amongst the papers reviewed.

Children's knowledge about homelessness was discussed by parents in the study by Nettleton (2001). They described decisions about whether or not to tell their children about their upcoming mortgage

repossession. Nettleton found that most parents felt it was important to tell their children what was going on, and that less often, parents said they did not want to burden their children with worry. Interestingly though, Nettleton (2001) described that this was not related to age. This is different to the finding by Moore et al (2009), that only a few children had been told they were going to be homeless. This area warrants further exploration.

3.6.   Education

In this section, I summarise and critique the research reviewed that related to the educational experiences of homeless children, while also reflecting on UK policy. I start with mobility, as findings from the published research reviewed showed that mobility was a key factor in experiences of education.

3.6.1.   *Pupil Mobility*

Although mobility is discussed here, within the education section, mobility is also closely connected to home. Pupil mobility is a reflection of the mobility homeless family's experience when they have to leave their homes.

Pupil mobility refers to movement or changes of school, once or repeatedly, at times other than the normal age at which children start, finish or usually change schools (Strand & Demie, 2006). The literature revealed that homeless children experienced high levels of mobility, often moving homes, and changing schools' multiple times as a result. This was shown to be the case internationally: in Australia (Kirkman, et al, 2010; Moore & McArthur, 2011), the US (Morris & Butt, 2003; Begg, Levitt & Hayden, 2017; Jones, Bowen & Ball, 2018), the Republic of Ireland (Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan, 2006), and the UK (Mitchell, Neuberger, Radebe & Rayne, 2004; Mustafa, 2004; Pennington & Banks, 2015). Taking a whole view of the literature, and the time period over which studies were carried out, the evidence shows that mobility has remained a key issue for homeless children.

UK policy reflects attempts to reduce families being moved out of area. The homelessness code of guidance emphasises council duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, including minimising disruption to education, especially at critical times, such as during GCSEs (MHCLG, 2018). When families are placed out of area, the code of guidance encourages housing authorities to liaise with one another to make arrangements for supporting educational needs. This is in line with Every Child Matters (2006) agenda for working together to safeguard children. LAs have a duty to ensure that school places are available for children moving into

the area. For those children who are subject to safeguarding arrangements, LAs should ensure they are placed in a temporary accommodation in, or close to, the housing authority district. The Children's Commissioner (2019) expressed concern that often there is a lack of communication between councils, and vulnerable children fall through the gaps.

Mitchell, Neuberger, Radebe and Rayne (2004) conducted a postal survey across nine LAs in England on behalf of Shelter, about the experiences of those living in temporary accommodation. Of the total respondents, 68% (284) were households with children, and these parents answered questions about their children's education and wellbeing. 49% (139) of parents said that their children's education had suffered as a result of living in temporary accommodation, and of those, 24% (33) said 'having to change school' was the most common reason for this. While this was the most recent data found, it might be the case that this has changed since 2004 in light of the implementation of new homeless codes of guidance in that time. Furthermore, the data does not reveal how many children moved school, but that 24% families had children who had to change schools and this disrupted their education. In the next section I consider research that sought in-depth exploration of experiences of mobility, and how this impacted on learning.

3.6.2. *Missed or Repeated Learning*

Jones et al (2018) explored the retrospective accounts of twenty young people aged 18-24 years, who had been homeless with their families in childhood. Participants had been involved with welfare and homeless service systems in the US, and were a purposive sample, in that they had all experienced challenges in school, such as absenteeism, social-behavioural problems, mobility, discipline, low grades, etc. The authors argue for the importance of a cross-systems approach given the intersectionality of factors of child maltreatment, homelessness and educational difficulties. The study employed creative methods and participants were interviewed using a life course framework.

The participants felt that their experiences of mobility had been a barrier to successful education. Participants shared that being moved caused them to miss many days of school. They described feeling lost because they had missed learning, and did not have the knowledge needed for mastery of the academic material. As well as missing learning, they experienced repeating the same content they had learnt in previous schools, leaving them disengaged and disinterested in school.

Similar experiences were had by participants in another US study by Begg et al (2017), in which fifteen homeless children (aged 9-13) living in a temporary public housing facility, were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Findings from grounded theory analysis showed that "gaps and overlaps"

in learning was the most common obstacle children faced in education. Children experienced confusion due to a lack of exposure to material, and boredom when repeating topics.

Other research showed how missed learning led homeless children to compare themselves to peers. Moore and McArthur (2011) shared findings from a broader study on family homelessness conducted by the Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australia[13]. High mobility was experienced by the participants. Most had moved schools when they were homeless, while eleven of them had moved to a new school more than three times. Children described feeling frustrated on having to 'catch up' on work, feeling constantly behind their peers and sometimes never learning important skills. One child described that every time she moved, it was just before the school started Maths: *"I could do pluses and subtractions but I never learnt how to do times tables. I didn't learn 'til I was in Year 4 and the teachers tried to help me but I never really caught up [girl, age 12]" (p.153).* An impact of missed learning was that homeless children felt behind compared to their peers.

The literature review conducted for this research showed limited research with teachers; of the published research included in the review, five studies involved teachers, or other educational professionals. Other research with teachers was identified, (e.g., Kim 2013a, Kim 2013b) but focused on teacher's beliefs about homelessness, rather than children's experiences (this research is discussed in Chapter 6).

One key study with teachers was conducted by Kirby et al (2015), which took a phenomenological approach to explore experiences of teaching homeless children in California, US, an area of high mobility. A large sample of twenty-eight elementary school teachers took part in semi-structured interviews, and a prominent theme amongst the findings was the impact of mobility. Teachers described how homeless children had to spend time learning the new rules and routines of a school, taking time away from making progress and learning new material. Teachers were discouraged when students left after a short time following their efforts to ascertain the children's strengths and difficulties: "*they come in, you assess them, you try and catch them up, you get them on board and then they're gone" (*p.653). The challenge for teachers in setting work at the right level was also described by teachers who took part in research in Ireland; not being able to access records, particularly when children had changed schools' multiple times, left teachers with little knowledge about children's abilities, skills and difficulties (Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan, 2006).

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[13] Three papers included in this review present findings from the same research project: Moore, McArthur and Noble-Carr (2008), McArthur and Noble-Carr (2009) and Moore & McArthur (2011). They are based on findings from the same participant group.

3.6.3. *Motivation and missing out*

There was also evidence from the research that mobility had an impact on homeless children's motivation and therefore participation within school. Teachers from the study by Kirby et al (2015) felt that students were reluctant to participate through fear they would be moved again, and would therefore miss out on what the class were working towards- *"they don't want to buy into…what we're doing because they're afraid they might not be here when we do it"* (p.651). Homeless children's experiences of "missing out" was also noticed by learning mentors in the study by Pennington and Banks (2015); one mentor commented on a child not being able to keep their part in a school play, and another not receiving their certificate for Kung Fu, because they had left the school.

3.6.4. *Continuity and longer journeys to school*

While mobility was found to be a common experience for homeless children amongst the studies reviewed, there was evidence that continuity in school was important to children and so they chose to make longer journeys in order to remain at their schools. This was true for participants who participated in Nettleton's (2001) research; all young people interviewed wanted to stay at their same school, and most had done so despite longer journeys.

Longer journeys to school and difficulties with transportation was found across the studies (Nettleton, 2001; Morris & Butt, 2003; Mitchell et al, 2004; Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan, 2006; Rice; 2006; Kirkman et al, 2010; Pennington & Banks, 2015; Begg et al, 2017). In the postal survey conducted by Mitchell et al, (2004), 55% (156) of parents said at least one of their children had a daily school journey of more than 30 minutes, while 16% (45) said their children had a journey of more than an hour[14]. These longer journeys sometimes involved taking multiple buses, and meant arriving at school too late to participate in breakfast club (Pennington & Banks, 2015). This is concerning in light of the evidence on food insecurity amongst homeless children described above (Share, 2020). Longer journeys meant early starts and arriving home late, leaving children tired and frustrated (Rice, 2006).

3.6.5. *Attendance*

Findings from the published research highlighted that missing school was common amongst homeless children; half the children who participated in the UK study by Mustafa (2004) said there was a period of time when they could not attend school and many of these children had spent months without

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[14] At the time of writing, nationally, the average journey to school was 20 minutes for 5–10-year-olds, and 25-30 minutes for children aged 11-16 years (Mitchell et al 2004).

school places (twenty-nine children participated). Similarly, in the aforementioned survey, 43% of parents reported that their children had missed school due to their housing situation (Mitchell et al, 2004). On average, children had missed 55 days of school, equivalent to a quarter of the year[15]. 11% parents (31) said at least one of their children did not have a school place for the term.

There were multiple reasons for why homeless children missed school. Children at the centre of two case studies presented by Keogh, Halpenny and Gilligan (2006) struggled with attendance, and this was related to the distance from their school to the emergency accommodation, financial pressures resulting from the commute, the children's experiences of poor health and exhaustion from daily routines. Additionally, parents described that the lack of space in their (one room) emergency accommodation made it difficult to maintain routine and organise their children for the day. Similar reasons for missing school were given by parents in Mitchell et al's (2004) survey; 49 parents explained in an open question the reasons their children had missed school. These are summarised in Table 3.

Reason Given	%
Transport problems	33
No school places/ unable to get a school place	22
Unsettled/ having to move	20
Tiredness/lack of sleep/noisy neighbours	10
Mobility problems	8
Depression/health condition affecting parent	8
No money for transport to school	6
Problem with house/ no place to live	4
Other	6

Table 3: Reasons for missing school- 49 parental responses from survey, taken from Mitchell et al (2004)

The frequency with which homeless children missed school is concerning in light of the importance of attendance for pupils' emotional, social and academic development (Pellegrini, 2007; Kearney, 2008).

3.6.6. *Homeless children valued education*

Despite facing such barriers to attending school, several studies emphasised how homeless children valued learning. Mustafa (2004) found that children were keen to learn and progress, and wanted to

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[15] Compared to the national average of nine days of school days missed in a year (at that time) (Mitchell et al, 2004).

tell the researchers about their educational achievements. Mustafa (2004) found that they were aware of the importance of doing well in school in the long-term to progress in a job or career. This was also true for the participants from the study by Begg et al (2017) but for some, this came with associated fear that doing badly in education would result in lost career opportunities.

Begg et al (2017) sought to explore the manner in which homeless children constructed their own meaning of education, by exploring their past and present experiences of education, as well as their future aspirations. They found that children saw education as a way out of poverty, and a means to access higher education, job opportunities and a better life. Participants seemed to feel that this was unattainable, and most participants (14 of 15) described feelings of helplessness in their pursuit of academic achievement. Furthermore, around half (7 of 15) of the participants expressed the catastrophic prospect of living on the streets unless they did well on their report card, indicating that the prospect of not doing well in education was much more serious for these children. Findings also showed that children held unrealistic expectations about their future educational opportunities and career options, and held beliefs such as needing to be a famous performer or athlete to have enough money to succeed. Given that all of the participants were African-American, the authors recommend being mindful about generalising findings. However, within the paper they do not consider to what extent the participants' experiences were impacted by race, despite the title, "Understanding the school experience of African-American Homeless Children".

3.6.7. *Homework*

Several studies commented on the additional barriers faced by homeless children to completing homework, due to their home environments, and/or their adult responsibilities. This is self-evident, given that homework is a learning task set to be completed in the 'home'. Mustafa (2004) found that while most children described that they had a place to do homework, many felt unable to complete their work because of the lack of space and noise from younger siblings. Issues of space were described by families living in emergency accommodation or when the whole family was living in one room; children reported not being able to find a quiet space or a place to spread books out onto (Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan, 2006; Pennington & Banks, 2015).

The challenge of completing homework was also described in research with educational professionals. Teall (2018) conducted surveys and interviews with a range of educational professionals in New York, many of whom reported that homeless students inconsistently completed homework due to stress and distractions after school. One professional described that "when children are saddled with adult responsibilities at shelters or overcrowded apartments, they cannot focus on homework" (p.153).

While the research reviewed demonstrated barriers to children being able to complete homework, it was not clear how children felt about this. For example, whether homework was important to them, or how this impacted on their view of their own education. Given the evidence that children felt behind peers because of gaps and overlaps in learning, it is plausible that homework is another area in which homeless children might feel left behind in comparison to peers.

3.6.8. *Friendships*

This section focuses on findings from the literature relating to children's experiences of friendships, including fitting and making friends, keeping friends and what they told friends about their living situation.

Several studies described how high mobility meant frequently needing to fit in and make new friends in new schools, described by Kirkman et al (2010) as a constant making and breaking of friendships. Moore and McArthur (2011) describe how their participants found it difficult to develop close relationships with peers when their stays at school were short; they also reported feeling alone for extended periods. Similarly, Begg et al (2017) found that having to "make friends all over again" decreased children's receptiveness to new schools (p.242). Furthermore, wanting to make a good first impression and to establish friendships in a new school meant a shift away from focusing on learning (Begg et al, 2017).

Moore and McArthur (2011) surmised that 'fitting in' was experienced differently across ages; they found that younger children reported that this didn't take long, although it still felt like a long time to them (e.g., "like a whole week" (p.156). However, for children over 12, it took markedly longer to feel comfortable in the new environment, sometimes up to a year. Fitting in was found to be supported by the school's culture and by how welcoming teachers were. Some of the children described very negative experiences of joining a new school, and felt that teachers looked down on them, leaving them feeling that they did not belong at the school.

Teachers from the study by Kirby et al (2015) described how cautious homeless children were about making social ties. Teachers felt that this was due to fear they would be "ripped away from their friends again", but also because of embarrassment and fear of being teased (p.650). Four teachers in that study had witnessed or heard other students teasing, or making unkind remarks, such as calling students "hobos" or commenting on them smelling (p.650). Similarly, educational professionals in the study by Teall (2019) noticed how homeless children were often isolated in school and saw that this was because of mobility, hygiene, stigma, and/or emotional issues. This was shared by children themselves in the study by Kirkman et al (2010), where children experienced feeling different to their

peers. For example, Angela (11) found that other children were "snotty and mean... sort of like greedy" (p.999). The authors described that Angela saw her peers as materialistic and confident and this made her feel left out.

In addition to fear of being teased by peers, teachers from the study by Kirby et al (2015) felt that homeless children faced difficulties when making friends due to a lack of social skills. Some teachers characterized students as quiet, shy, introverted, withdrawn, or lacking confidence and thus struggled with making friends.

Several studies described how children did not tell their friends that they were homeless. This was because they feared being bullied (CRAE, 2018b), because they were ashamed about their living conditions (Pennington & Banks (2015), and because they found it embarrassing to keep telling friends the reason they kept moving (Nettleton, 2001). In a study of parents' perspectives of their children's education, several mothers described the measures their adolescent sons took to keep their "home" a secret from their classmates, such as not letting classmates ever see them enter or leave the shelter {Morris & Butt, 2003). However, there was evidence to show that some children saw benefits to telling friends; in one of the case studies presented by Keogh, Halpenny and Gilligan (2006), Catherine (13) told her best friend she lived in emergency accommodation and was able to stay with her friend when her mum went into hospital.

3.6.9. *Identification and support*

Findings from the published research reviewed showed that homeless children and their families held varying views about whether school professionals should know about their living situation, termed 'identification' by Moore and McArthur (2011). The young people looking back on their homeless experiences in the study by Jones et al (2018) described feeling a lack of privacy about their home lives. Some of the participants felt that teachers needed to know about their experiences of homelessness or 'maltreatment', but participants could also feel that too many people knowing perpetuated feelings of stigma. The authors commented, "participants felt a lack of control over who got to know their story", and they felt frustration when everyone at school knew their business (p.91). Other studies presented similar findings.

Moore and McArthur (2011) described that participants had often not wanted schools to know about their homelessness through concern they would be treated differently, given unwanted attention, or looked down on. Findings showed that children felt embarrassed about their situation or how their homes looked. Some of the children had been told explicitly by their parents not to tell their school,

because parents were embarrassed or feared their children would get taken into care. While children felt reluctant to seek assistance, some of the children thought schools should identify and support homeless families. The children participating thought that it would be quite easy to do this, for example, teachers could tell if they didn't have "a school bag or a lunch box or a hat" [boy aged 6], "if they were sitting in the corner and have got no friends" [girl, age 14] or "by the way they're looking at other kids" [boy, aged 7] (p.155). However, even though some thought it would be a good thing for school to know about their situation, most children said that they did not tell their school they were homeless. Ultimately, children felt that it was important that children and their families had the choice about telling their stories and with whom.

The support a school can provide arguably relates to their knowledge of the family's situation. In the study by Moore and McArthur (2011), children whose teachers were aware of their situation had had a positive experience, and felt their teacher understood, suggesting that schools are better able to support homeless families when they aware of their situation. Indeed, teachers in the study by Kirby et al (2018) voiced a need for earlier identification of homeless students as a primary step to ensure their needs are met, as one teacher articulated, "forewarned is fore-armed" (p.655).

The research reviewed highlighted many ways that schools provided support to homeless families, through both practical and emotional support. In terms of practical support for children, the UK study conducted by Pennington and Banks (2015) reported that schools provided hot meals, warm clothes and a space to nap for their children, supporting their basic needs. In the same study, learning mentors described how they supported families by providing supervision for children before and after school so that parents could make calls to the council. On some occasions, learning mentors were asked for support with housing applications and letters from the council, and worried that they lacked appropriate knowledge to help.

Teachers could also be a great emotional support to children. Reflecting on their experiences, the youths who participated in the study by Jones et al (2018) felt that staff at school had a role in regulating their emotions and helping them to stay in school. In exploring and analysing teachers' experiences, Kirby et al (2015) found that teachers employed strategies to foster peer relationships and worked at developing their own supportive relationships with students. Children from the study by Begg et al (2017) described times when teachers and school staff went above and beyond in their help; one participant shared how his teacher gave him their phone number and offered to help them at any time, whatever grade he was in.

Begg et al (2017) found that teachers' words and actions had the power to lead homeless children to sink or swim in a new school. While most experiences were positive, and teachers inspired hope among many, some children felt that they were being held to unfair standard compared to classmates. Those participants from the study by Jones et al (2018) who had experienced school challenges, described a lack of opportunities due to low expectations of them; they felt adults in school could have advocated for them by having higher expectations about their academic and professional futures, and providing them opportunities to meet them.

Overall, the research included in this review showed that schools were a source of stability and normality. Schools were seen as a safe space and children felt their schools worked hard to keep them safe (Moore & McArthur, 2011). Some children drew comparisons to how safe they were in school compared to in their accommodation; one participant (age 8) commented that there were no dangerous things in the playground at her school, "not even syringes" (Moore & McArthur, 2011; p.154). It is perhaps not surprising then that overwhelmingly children reported wanting to stay at the same school when they became homeless (e.g., Nettleton, 2001; Pennington & Banks, 2015).

3.7. Chapter summary and Research Questions

Using a narrative review, I have reviewed literature pertaining to children's experiences of homelessness. I found several key findings, related to home, family and education.

Taken together, studies showed that homeless children and their families experience many challenges when living in temporary accommodation, especially shared accommodation. These challenges connected to safety, privacy, poor amenities, difficulties with preparing and storing food, and with living under rules and regulations, which was especially challenging for adolescents and young adults. In some instances, evidence showed that there could be positives to living with others, such as making new friends. The more recent research emphasised the need to consider beyond home, and how the physical environment of temporary accommodation can impact on physical health and access to nature. Largely, research focused on children's experiences of where they lived after they were homeless, however, relatively little is known about children's experiences of leaving their home, or how they make sense of that experience. This was my rational for RQ 1, which is concerned with meaning making relating to homelessness.

The evidence reviewed here showed that family relationships are complex. Although several studies supported the existence of close relationships amongst homeless families, this seemed to depend on the reasons for homelessness and on subsequent living conditions. There was evidence that homeless

children have increased responsibilities but varied in how much they knew and understood. This raised pertinent ethical issues relating to methodology that were important to consider for this research. The findings in this area also encouraged a reflection on the potential bias in recruitment for the families who are able to participate in research.

All of the studies reviewed here showed that homeless children experience high levels of mobility and that this is a critical factor in disruption to their education. Children experienced missing and repeating learning, missing out on other activities in school, as well as the frequent making and breaking of friendships. Evidence showed that children experienced difficulties fitting in, and that time spent on this diverted attention away from learning time. For those children who did not change schools, research found they often had long journeys to school. Attendance was impacted by homelessness. This was due to mobility, but also factors relating to where children were housed. Nonetheless, the evidence suggested that children value education, and saw education as a means to escape poverty and have a successful career. Collectively, research showed that there were varied beliefs held by children and their parents about whether schools should know about their homelessness. Evidence suggested that teachers want to know, in order to better support them. The evidence reviewed here suggests a critical role for schools in providing safety, stability and a range of practical and emotional supports for homeless children and their families.

The current study has been designed to further contribute to knowledge about children's school-based experiences (RQ2), in a UK context, with the aim of informing EP practice. As with the research presented here, value was placed in seeking child's voice, in a meaningful and sensitive way.

 The RQs for this study are:

1. How do children and young people make sense of their experiences of homelessness and of living in temporary accommodation with their families?

2. What are the school-based experiences of homeless children and young people?

4. Methodology

This chapter focuses on how the beliefs, values, and philosophical assumptions I hold as a researcher influenced the research approach and design. It also describes how the research was implemented. The structure of this chapter is influenced by Creswell and Poth's (2018) model of how philosophical assumptions and interpretative frameworks are situated within and influence the research process. I have adapted this model to depict the structure of this chapter (figure 4).
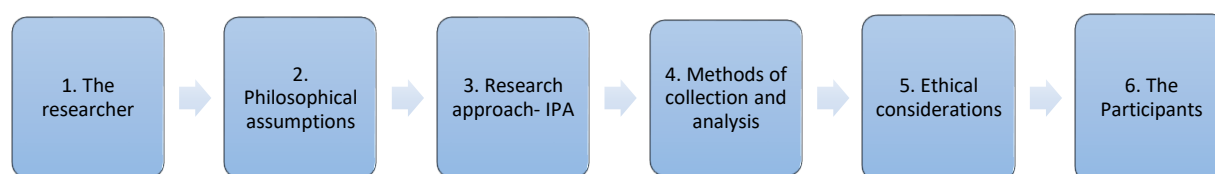
Figure 4: Structure of Methodology Chapter

First, I will discuss reflexivity, and how my values, knowledge and experiences shape this research. Next, I will describe the philosophical assumptions brought to the inquiry, including views about the nature of reality (ontology), how reality can be known (epistemology) and the procedures used in the study (methodology). I will then discuss the research approach; here I will describe the theoretical underpinnings of IPA, explain why it was chosen and why other approaches were not. I will then outline the research design, including recruitment, the sample, procedure and methods for data collection and analysis. Next, I present my deliberation of ethical issues relating to this research. This chapter ends with vignettes of the four participants who participated in this research.

4.1. Reflexivity and the researcher

Reflexivity is essential in research and practice. Indeed, most qualitative researchers "attempt to be aware of their role in the (co)-construction of knowledge", making explicit how intersubjectivity shapes the research process (Finlay, 2002, p.211). Edge (2011) distinguishes between prospective and retrospective reflexivity; prospective reflexivity considers the effect of the whole-person researcher on the research, while retrospective reflexivity explores the effect of the research on the researcher. By considering both we see how research shapes, and is shaped by, the researcher (Attia & Edge, 2017).

Attia and Edge (2017) draw on Dewey's (1916) cyclical model to illuminate the bidirectionality that exists in reflexivity; "we do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return (and

then, changed as we are, we return to take our next action)" (p.36). I kept a reflective journal to help stay in touch with the ways in which I was being changed by, and subsequently changed the research and will consider reflexivity again in the discussion (Chapter 6).

Berger (2015) describes that there are multiple researcher personal characteristics that can impact research, "such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances, and emotional responses to participant" (p.220). Berger (2015) argues that these influence the research in three ways:

1. Access to the field
2. The researcher- researched relationship (and consequently the stories shared)
3. How the researcher constructs the world, uses language, and the lens through which meaning is made

Personal characteristics of the researcher are arguably influential even before accessing the field and are commonly related to the choice of research topic. Cloke et al (2000) describe the related employment and volunteer positions they held prior to conducting research with homeless individuals; these positions were inextricably linked to how they came to know about homelessness, and why they pursued the research. Similarly, it was through my professional practice that I was encouraged to consider the importance of family homelessness within educational psychology and how homeless children make sense of their experiences. My ideological view of homelessness as an urgent injustice is also central in the choice of research topic, but also positions me as an ally, and will likely influence the research in the three ways outlined above by Berger (2016).

My experiences of housing in childhood are also implicated in the choice of topic and undoubtedly influence my relationship with the research. This will likely influence my positionality in the insider/outsider relationship, as might my mixed-race identity and experience of having an immigrant father. To remain transparent, I consider the implications of these identities (as well as others) within the research journal, which was especially important during analysis. However, I remain cautious in this reflexivity and deeper consideration of myself in relation to the research, as a preoccupation with the self can mean "that other voices and windows on the world are not seen or heard" (Cloke et al, p.137).

The beliefs I hold about children are also implicated in all aspects of this research, including the methods used and how data was interpreted (Morrow & Richards, 1996). James (1995) argues that there are different ways of 'seeing' children, with regards to their competencies and how they

experience the world. I hold what James (1995) termed a 'social child' view, and see children as research subjects, similar to adults, but possessing different competencies. In this model, researchers draw upon the methods children are competent and confident in, including creative methods.

Within this section I have introduced reflexivity and discussed some of the ways I shape the research. This positionality, or telling where I am coming from, is discussed with the goal to provide context for the decisions, and interpretations that follow. Next, I consider the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research.

4.2. Philosophical Assumptions

4.2.1. *Ontology*

Ontological and epistemological positions are related (to one another) but are concerned with different questions about knowledge and reality. Ontology is the study of "beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it" (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p.1). Ontology is concerned with claims about whether a social reality exists, independent of human conceptions and interpretations, and whether social entities are the result of the perceptions and actions of social actors, or whether they can be considered as objective to those social actors (Bryman, 2016).

Ontological positions have been debated and modified over the years but can broadly be described as *realist* or *relativist*. In the realist view, an external objective reality exists, independent of people's beliefs or understanding about it (Snape & Spencer, 2003). From this perspective, the world consists of structures and objects that have cause-effect relationships (Willig, 2013). Relativism, however, rejects the concept of objective truth, and holds that there is a diversity of interpretations that can be applied to reality (Willig, 2013), influenced by context, culture, and language. This perspective is compatible with a qualitative approach to research, where the idea that there are multiple realities, is embraced.

The ontological position for this research is social constructionism. This position holds that "human experience, including perception, is mediated historically, culturally and linguistically", and that our perceptions and experiences are not a direct reflection of the environment conditions, but an interpretation of those conditions (Willig, 2013, p.7). Language plays an important role in the construction of social knowledge, as the same phenomenon can be described in multiple ways, leading to multiple ways of perceiving, or understanding it (Willig, 2013). In this way, there can be multiple knowledges and realities. In the context of this research, it is assumed that family homelessness and living in temporary accommodation will be perceived, experienced, and described differently by

children. A social constructionist position allows for the exploration of the subjective experiences of these children and allows for multiple ways of understanding the phenomenon.

4.2.2. *Epistemology*

Where ontology relates to questions about the nature of social reality, epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge, and how we can know about the world (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Broadly speaking there are three epistemological positions: *positivism, realism* and *interpretivism.*

In a positivist position, the relationship between the world (objects, events, phenomena) and our perception and understanding of it, is straightforward (Willig, 2013, p.4). It considers that there is an external social reality, and that knowledge about it is observable and measurable, and known via the senses. A positivist approach applies the methods of natural sciences in the study of social reality, and therefore suggests that the purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested (deductivism), using an inductive method (Bryman, 2012). In a positivist approach, it is believed that research can produce objective knowledge, that is unbiased and impartial, and unaffected by the researcher (Willig, 2013, p.4).

Realism has commonalities with positivism, as the realist researcher also contends that an external social reality exists. In critical realism, however, it is seen that the researcher's conceptualisation is a *way* of knowing that reality, recognising that there is a distinction between the objects under enquiry, and the terms used to describe, understand, and account for them (Bryman, 2012). It assumes that any knowledge about the objective reality is subject to error because it is socially constructed (Pawson & Tilley, 1997).

In the third position, interpretivism, it is considered that objective analysis of the world is impossible; the world is socially constructed, and therefore social phenomena do not exist independently of our interpretation of them (Furlong & Marsh, 2010). This position argues that interpretation and meanings can only be understood within discourses and traditions, and it is by identifying these that we can establish the "interpretations and meanings they attach to social phenomena" (Furlong & Marsh, 2010, pp.26). In accepting that there is no objective reality, this position also recognises the role of the researcher and the double hermeneutic, that is, the researcher is integrating not only the meaning and sense the participant has made of their lived experience, but also the researcher's attempts to interpret and understand how the participant made sense of their experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Qualitative methods are utilised within this approach, to explore how people understand their world.

The questions I have sought to answer through this research assume an interpretivist epistemology in the type of knowledge valued and sought.

4.2.3. *Methodology*

It is useful to note here that the terms method and methodology are often used interchangeably despite referring to different features of research (Oliver, 2014). Silverman (2004) clarifies that methodology is the general approach to studying research topics, whereas method refers to a specific research technique, such as an interview or focus group. Traditionally, method has been taken to mean the way to the goal (Kvale, 1996).

There are three types of methodology- qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. Elliott, Fisher and Rennie (1999) describe that "the aim of qualitative research is to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage, and live through situations" (pp.216). The aim in qualitative research is to understand participants' perspectives; it has become a popular approach within educational psychology, offering a means for EPs to engage with "the richness of human experience" (Billington & Williams, 2017). In contrast, quantitative research seeks to test hypothesised relationships or causal explanations, focusing on reliability, validity and seeking generalisability across samples (Elliott et al, 1999). A mixed methodology combines qualitative and quantitative approaches.

A quantitative or mixed methodology could have yielded useful information about the experiences of homeless children, for example, the aim might have been to measure the relationship between family homelessness and attainment. What seemed most pertinent as a result of the literature review, however, was to explore experience. As the aim of this research was to seek authentic participation by hearing from children and young people directly, a qualitative approach provided the best fit for the aim and the research questions.

Different qualitative approaches differ in their aims, focus and, resultingly, the procedures they favour. Within the next section, I move into phase three of Creswell and Poth's (2018) model and describe why IPA was chosen as the approach for this research.

4.3. Research approach- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Researchers who use an IPA approach are often interested in how people make sense of their major life experiences and are concerned with exploring experience in its own terms (Smith et al, 2009, p.1). This begs the question, what is 'experience', and how can it be conceptualised? For Dilthey (1976) the smallest unit of experience is that that presents itself "in the flow of time" and therefore has unitary

meaning. Dilthey describes that a more comprehensive unit "made up of parts of a life, linked by a common meaning" is also an experience, "…even when the parts are separated by interrupting events" (p.210).

The IPA researcher is interested in multiple types of experiences, the positive and the negative, the short or bounded and the lengthy, the experiences that result from decisions, as well as those related to major transitions (Smith et al, 2009). What the experiences have in common is the major significance they have for the person.

As described in Chapter 2, family homelessness is best thought of as a continuum of insecure and difficult living conditions. It is likely that multiple parts of a child's life will be linked by a common meaning and therefore form part of a comprehensive unit of experience of 'family homelessness'. These parts might include the insecure living conditions prior to leaving a home, staying with family and friends, and living in temporary accommodation. IPA is well suited to researching a complex phenomenon such as family homelessness.

IPA is underpinned by theory from phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography; these will be discussed in turn.

4.3.1. *Phenomenology*

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience and is concerned with the world "as it is experienced by human beings within particular contexts and at particular times" (Willig, 2013, p.84). IPA is phenomenological; it enquires as to how participants are making sense of their personal and social world (Smith & Eatough, 2016). Smith et al (2009) explain how IPA principles derive from the work of four philosophers.

Husserl introduced several key concepts within phenomenology that are important for IPA. He argued that we should 'go back to the things themselves', the 'thing' being the experiential content of consciousness, rather than our pre-existing categorisation of them (cited in Smith et al, 2009). Husserl advocated for adopting a phenomenological attitude, whereby we focus on our perception of an object or event (for example), rather than the object or event itself. This requires intentionality; "meaning is not something that is added on to perception as an afterthought; instead, perception is always intentional and therefore constitutive of experience itself" (Willig, 2013, p.84). Husserl also described the phenomenological method, which first involves bracketing, or setting aside, what we think we already know, or take for granted, about the world, to focus on our perceptions of that world (cited in Smith et al, 2009). Husserl brought to focus the importance of experience and perception.

Heidegger, Husserl's student, also contributed to key ideas in phenomenology, and questioned whether knowledge is possible outside of an interpretative stance; a stance grounded in a lived and social world (cited in Smith et al, 2009). Heidegger contributed key ideas relating to intersubjectivity, that is, the shared and relational nature of ourselves in the world.

Merleau-Ponty gifts IPA with his thoughts on the embodied nature of our relationship to the world; the body is our means of communicating and knowing about the world (cited in Smith et al, 2009).

Finally, Sartre extends Heidegger's focus on worldliness, and draws attention to the context of our experiences in the presence or absence of our relationships to other people (cited in Smith et al, 2009).

Together, these ideas illustrate the complexity of 'experience', as a lived process, resulting in an unfolding of perspectives and meaning unique to a person's "embodied and situated relationship to the world" (Smith et al, 2009, p.21).

4.3.2. *Hermeneutics*

While phenomenology is concerned with experience, hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation, an older set of philosophical ideas. Schleirmacher saw interpretation as grammatical and psychological, and proposed that while there is something unique about the intentions a writer informs on text, the meaning is available for interpretation by the reader within a wider context (Smith et al, 2009). We take this position in IPA and view our analysis as adding meaningful insights to what is offered explicitly in the text alone. We therefore offer a perspective on the text that an author is not able to give (Smith et al, 2009). Within IPA, a double hermeneutic exists; "the participants are trying to make sense of their world" and "the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p.53)

Heidegger viewed phenomenology as an interpretative activity and proposed that our fore conception (prior experiences, assumptions, preconceptions) influences how we look at a new stimulus. (cited in Smith et al, 2009). This helps us to consider bracketing as a cyclical process, and while bracketing can help allow a critical examination of the perception of our world, we can see that it is not possible to suspend (or bracket) all presuppositions and biases in contemplation of a phenomenon (Willig, 2013).

This thinking was extended by Gadamer, who considered that preconceptions can only be realised once we are immersed in interpretations. When we engage in this process, the phenomenon influences our interpretation, which can then influence our fore structure, which then influences our interpretation, and so on (cited in Smith et al, 2009).

Most integral to hermeneutics is the hermeneutic circle, which encourages us to reflect on the relationship between a part and the whole; to understand a part, you need to look at the whole, and vice versa (Smith et al, 2009). This idea is integral to analysis in IPA, which is iterative; the researcher moves back and forward, through different ways of thinking about the data, and so our relationship shifts according to the hermeneutic circle (Smith et al, 2009).

IPA combines empathic hermeneutics with critical hermeneutics, thus, in IPA the researcher attempts to understand what it is like from the point of view of the person, an insider perspective, but also stands back and asks curious and critical questions of the account, such as "do I have a sense of something going on here that maybe the person themselves is less aware of?" (Smith & Eatough, 2016, p.51). By taking on these two stances, the IPA researcher seeks to gain *understanding* (Smith et al, 2009).

4.3.3. *Idiography*

The IPA researcher is committed to the in-depth exploration of a particular case, and asks how a particular experiential phenomenon has been understood from the perspectives of particular people in a particular context; it asks, 'what is the experience like for this person' and 'what sense is this person making of what happened to them?' (Smith et al, 2009). In this way, IPA takes an idiographic approach rather than nomothetic, which seeks to make probabilistic claims and works at the level of groups and populations. Idiography is interested in small cases, often at an individual level, seeking to demonstrate existence, not incidence (Yin, 1989). In considering the particular and the individual, we delve deep to consider what is universal, as we focus on what it is to be human at its most essential (Warnock, in Smith et al, 2009, p.38).

To summarise, IPA is an inductive approach that is grounded in phenomenology (experience), hermeneutics (interpretation) and idiography (the particular). IPA was chosen as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of how individual children make sense of their homeless experiences.

4.3.4. *Alternative approaches considered*

Before deciding to use IPA, I considered using alternative qualitative approaches. In this section, I describe why IPA was chosen over grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and thematic analysis.

Grounded theory is a systematic methodology that emphasises theory development and has an explicit mandate to strive towards verifying resulting hypotheses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Fundamentally, grounded theory methods explicitly unite the research process with theoretical

development, and these methods enable the researcher to make conceptual sense of large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006). It was apparent from the literature, and from the early stages of recruitment, that homeless children and young people are a hard-to-reach group, and so I acknowledged that I would not be able to gather the data needed for a grounded theory approach. Also, as I was interested in understanding lived experience, rather than social processes and theory development (Willig, 2001), IPA provided a better fit with my aim.

Early on when designing my research, I considered using a narrative inquiry, as narrative research can be used to promote empathy, particularly for marginalised groups, where voices haven't been heard (e.g., Billington, 2018). A narrative inquiry approach seeks to produce knowledge about "how people weave their experience into meaningful stories", how they construct the past, what is included and what is not (Willig, 2013, p.152). Webster and Mertova (2007) argue that there is no right way of doing a narrative inquiry; different strategies can be used for analysis, including thematic, structural, dialogic or visually (Reissman, 2008). I thought that this flexibility could have been advantageous. However, the researcher takes more of a removed role from the research (Reissman, 2008), and I favoured the position taken in IPA where the role and influence of the researcher is acknowledged and accounted for through iterative analysis.

Finally, I also considered using thematic analysis in this research. There are several clusters of thematic analysis approaches with different philosophical assumptions and procedural practices that reflect those assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Braun and Clark have written extensively since their 2006 paper, to clarify the assumptions underpinning their approach to thematic analysis, now termed reflexive thematic analysis (RTA). RTA was considered to be an appropriate method for this research for multiple reasons.

A hallmark of the RTA approach is that it offers a theoretically flexible method that can be applied to a wide range of research questions and can be used inductively and deductively (Clarke & Braun, 2016). RTA can be used with phenomenological research, and therefore appropriate here. Furthermore, the role of the researcher in knowledge production is explicit, and the emphasis on reflective and thoughtful engagement with the data and the analytic process was appealing (Braun & Clarke, 2019). While RTA could have been used in this research, it was the nature of IPA as a methodology (as opposed to a method, like RTA) that informed my decision to use IPA; IPA provided a theoretically informed framework for conducting this research, including ontological and epistemological underpinnings, as well as guidance for data collection and sampling strategy. Additionally, IPA procedures allow the researcher to stay close to the data, focusing on both unique

aspects of individual experience (idiography), as well as the patterns of meaning across participants, whereas RTA usually focuses on patterns of meaning across participants.

4.4. Methods of Collection and Analysis

Within this section I will discuss sampling and recruitment, procedure, data collection and data analysis.

4.4.1. *Sampling and recruitment*

The difference between population and sample is often overlooked (Oliver, 2014). A research population is the total number of individuals to whom it is intended the research will apply to. Given the numbers of CYP affected by family homelessness, this is a large research population. In phenomenological research, the sample comprises of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in question and are therefore a criterion sample (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

As the focus in IPA is on gaining an in-depth understanding of an individual's experience, quality not quantity is required. Smith (2004) champions the use of IPA with small samples, calling for the use of single case studies to get to the very detail of the individual, and bring "us closer to significant aspects of a shared humanity" (pp. 42–43). As such, the sample size sought for this study was small (3-8 participants).

As described in Chapter 2, homelessness is best thought of as a continuum of insecure and difficult living conditions that exists for families. As such, there are multiple ways in which family homelessness can be experienced. This makes it impossible to recruit any sample that would be representative of the population of homeless children as a whole. I had to consider which homeless families I would realistically be able to reach while remaining ethically sensitive. This approach is compatible with IPA, where participants "represent a perspective rather than a population" (Smith et al 2009, p.49).

Sampling was purposive and the decision was made to include children from families currently living in temporary accommodation, and those who had done within the last twelve months. This second part was included for practical reasons, as during my early discussions with professionals, I learnt that families can be moved at very short notice. This inclusion criteria meant that any families with whom I had already made contact could participate, even if they moved into stable housing. Due consideration was given to how recently the family had moved into temporary accommodation, and the children's well-being related to this; this was discussed with parents.

When designing this study, an important area for consideration was CYP's understanding of their living situation. I was concerned that taking part in the research had the potential to alert and/or distress CYP who might not have previously considered themselves 'homeless', or in an unfavourable or temporary living situation. It was for this reason the age range 11-16 was selected; it was considered that CYP at this age would have a better understanding of their living situation. Additional steps were taken to remain sensitive to this issue and are discussed further below. Originally, I sought ethical approval to conduct the research with CYP aged 11-15 but got permission to extend this to age 16. This was because I met families with children aged 16 who had been moved out of area, during what the homelessness code of guidance considers a critical time. I wanted these young people to have the opportunity to participate should they choose to.

Recruitment for this research was challenging. Recruitment began when I was granted ethical approval in November 2019 and is summarised below in Table 4. The decision was made not to recruit through schools, as experiences within my professional practice, as well as evidence from the literature indicated that the associated stigma of homelessness can prevent parents communicating their housing situation with their children's schools. I also considered that recruiting through schools could result in the 'outing' of families to anyone who knew the nature of the research.

I contacted a wide range of services during the recruitment period, which are summarised in a table in Appendix 9.5. These included voluntary organisations, national and local charities, various teams within the council, independent housing support services and support teams based in temporary accommodation. Services became known to me through online searches (e.g., google searches, social media searches and through Homeless link, a site with details of services supporting homeless people), as well as through networking with professionals and researchers. Due to difficulties recruiting within one LA, contact was made with organisations across five LAs. As can be seen from the table in Appendix 9.5, I found a great many more services that support individual homeless people compared to those supporting families.

Several organisations agreed to pass on the study information to families they knew, or to distribute information sheets within their teams, and some advertised the study on their social media (see Appendix 9.12 for social media advert). The families of the four participants who took part in this study were reached via support teams working in two temporary accommodations. I was put into contact with one support worker at a temporary accommodation by a professional at the team meeting I attended at a children's centre. The second accommodation team was reached via information provided within a housing register online.

Considering the role of gatekeepers in this research was critical to conducting ethical and safe research with children and their families. Gatekeepers often have a role in supporting researchers reach participants, but this comes with risks. Where there is a power relationship between a gatekeeper and a potential participant, the researcher has a duty to protect against coercion, or a participant feeling that they should participate, or that participation may have additional benefits.

Given the relationship between families and those professionals working in and with temporary accommodation, several measures were taken to reduce the risks to families resulting from the use of gatekeepers. The role of gatekeepers was a common topic in supervision and was an explicit consideration in the ethics application:

> *Parents may feel pressure to participate in research, perhaps even thinking that participation may lead to more support for them. Reassurance will be given in information sheets, as well as to gatekeepers and participants that participation is voluntary. It will be outlined in the information sheet and information for gatekeepers that choosing to participate in the project (or not) will not affect the services they receive in any way. (*From ethics application).

The voluntary nature of the research was stressed in the information sheet for gatekeepers (see Appendix 9.6), as well as during conversations with them. Similarly, with parents and with children, I emphasised that participation was voluntary a number of times in person, and within the information and consent forms.

Gaining informed consent was made even more important given the role gatekeepers played in reaching families and is discussed in greater detail later. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the risks associated with the use of gatekeepers, their use can facilitate research with hard-to-reach populations, such as this, and allow individuals to participate in research and to do so in safe spaces.

The participants who took part in this study were four children living in temporary accommodation in the south-west of England, all age 12 or 13. Three were female- 'Amira', 'Haya' and 'Olivia' and one was male- 'Jahmil'. Haya and Jahmil were siblings. The families of all participants became homeless due to eviction from a privately rented property. More information about the participants is provided at the end of this chapter.

4.4.2. *Procedure*

As noted above, recruitment was facilitated by two gatekeepers but how each was involved was quite different. My first contact was with Mary [16], a support worker from a shared temporary

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[16] Pseudonym

accommodation. I spoke with Mary on the phone and then emailed her information sheets to pass onto parents of CYP aged 11-16 living in the temporary accommodation. I gave families the option of contacting me directly or passing on their details through the gatekeeper (this was detailed in information sheets for gatekeepers and parents), so to be mindful as to preferences and needs of the families. The mother of Amira, 'Samiah'[17], requested to meet with me in person and Mary organised for that to happen. On my first visit to the accommodation, Mary made introductions and then I met with Samiah alone in her flat to explain the research and to gather information about her children's understanding of their housing situation/ what language they used. Similarly, the mother of Haya and Jahmil, Krysia[18], preferred to meet in person, and this was organised by Mary, but Krysia had organised for Samiah to join us (as they were friends). I explained the research to Krysia, and again, asked those questions about her children's understanding of their housing situation. While young people can consent for themselves at the age of 13, due to the sensitive nature of this research, parental support and written consent was obtained. After that, Samiah and Krysia brought their children to meet me. Amira, Haya and Jahmil said they would like to take part, but Amira's older brother (16) preferred not to. I arranged to come back to meet each young person on separate days that worked best for them. Each participant was interviewed once.

Decisions regarding the location of the interviews required ethical and practical deliberations; it was important that participants felt comfortable and relaxed to share what might be emotive stories (Smith & Eatough, 2016). Following my attendance at the team meeting at the children's centre, support was offered in terms of recruitment, but also, in terms of space; children's centres across the locality were offered as locations for the interviews. This initially seemed a preferable option. However, the parents of the three children interviewed in person shared their preference for all of our meetings to be at their home. It was a priority to not place any financial burden on the families, for example, through travel costs, and so I gained additional ethical approval to enable that.

A private and quiet space was made available for the interviews. Although both parents had offered for the interviews to take place within their individual family flats, this felt intrusive given the size of the flat. Additionally, the interviews would be taking place at a time when all family members would be home, and it was felt that privacy would have been difficult to achieve. It was advantageous to conduct the interviews within the temporary accommodation as the setting was familiar to the participants, and their families were close by, which might have helped them to feel safe and comfortable. An amendment was approved by the Ethics Committee, with measures outlined to

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[17] Pseudonym
[18] Pseudonym

ensure researcher safety for lone working and home visits. Due consideration was given to whether the location might have impacted on whether CYP felt they could dissent.

The second gatekeeper was also a support worker but at another temporary accommodation. Similarly, we spoke on the phone, and she agreed to pass on information sheets to relevant families. Olivia's mother opted for her details to be passed to me, and during our telephone conversation I explained the research, asked about Olivia's understanding of the family's housing situation, but also discussed the appropriateness of interviewing as this was after the national lockdown, i.e., regarding Olivia's well-being, but also logistics, and whether there was a private room where the interview could take place. We then arranged a date for the virtual interview. During the first part of the virtual meeting, I read through the parent consent form and Olivia's mum verbally agreed, she then passed over her laptop, I explained the research to Olivia, and obtained verbal assent while reading the child consent form and then proceeded with the interview. In line with University of Bristol policy, Blue Jeans software was used to video call for this interview. This software allows for calls to be recorded. Creative tools could not be offered due to difficulties regarding the delivery of equipment. I read additional resources to consider how best to conduct interviews virtually, as well as conducting research in a pandemic (e.g., Lupton, 2020). Guidelines from the BPS stated that ongoing research would need to take account the impact of Covid-19 and consider all ethical and legal issues arising (BPS, 2020).

A summary of the recruitment timeline is provided in the table below:

Month	Summary of activity
September 2019	• Ethics application submitted • Ethics returned with amendments
October 2019	• Working on amendments to ethics application
November 2019	• Ethical approval obtained • Telephone and email contact with a range of services began and continued until April 2020
February 2020	• Attended children's centre team meeting • Additional ethical approval granted to conduct interviews in the families' temporary accommodation • 1st visit to temporary accommodation- information session with Amira's mother
March 2020	• 2nd visit to temporary accommodation- met with Haya and Jahmil's mother (and Amira's mother), and then with their children • 3rd visit- interview with Amira • 4th visit- interview with Haya • 5th visit- interview with Jahmil
April 2020	• Additional ethical approval granted to conduct virtual video interviews and for extending age range to 16 • Telephone call with Olivia's mum • Virtual interview with Olivia

Table 4: Research Timeline

4.4.3. *Data collection Semi-structured interviews*

IPA is best suited to methods that allow participants to provide a rich and detailed account of their experiences and are therefore suited to in-depth interviews that elicit participants' stories, as well as their thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon (Smith et al, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provide flexibility; while an interviewer may have a set of questions, these are used as a guide and not a script. Furthermore, the researcher does not have to adhere to an order of questions but are guided by the interviewee's responses. The interviewer can ask questions to understand, modify questions in response to what participants share and enquire into interesting areas that arise (Smith et al, 2009). Unstructured interviews were not used because there were areas that were deemed important to cover, and structured interviews would not have allowed for deeper exploration of responses or interpretation of meanings, or for a reflection of the interaction between

the interviewer and interviewee. In line with a social constructionist ontology, semi-structured interviews allow a relationship to develop between the interviewer and interview and recognises this interaction in the pursuit of knowledge.

A topic guide, rather than an interview schedule, was developed, drawing upon knowledge gained from the literature review, and from guidance regarding suitable questions in an IPA interview (Smith et al, 2009, p.60). The guide was not intended to be used rigidly, but rather to respond to the interviewee, therefore allowing the researcher to follow participants' interests and concerns. The guide focused on the broad areas of family, places of residence now and in the past, school, friends, and future, with prompts for each section (see Appendix 9.11). The decision was taken not to frame this research as about homelessness, or to use that word in the interviews with CYP. This was guided by the approach taken by other researchers in the field, e.g., Kirkman et al (2010), discuss not emphasising the concept with children, and often not naming it, but also to remain sensitive to the language that families used, and not to impose a label they might not use. I come back to reflect on this decision in the Conclusion chapter.

After each interview, I audio-recorded my own reflections about the interview and my interaction with the interviewee. These were an additional resource that provided contextualisation and helped develop the analysis (Smith et al, 2009).

The interviews were transcribed using the software f4transkript, and as the focus was on creating a semantic record, they did not detail the exact length of pauses, or all non-verbal utterances. Notes were made regarding notable non-verbal utterances, such as laughter, or significant pauses (Smith et al, 2009).

4.4.4. *Creative methods*

During the interviews, participants were invited to create a timeline of places they had lived and schools they had attended. Qualitative methods utilise multiple ways of collecting information, and research has shown that CYP often respond well to activities that support dialogue and communication, such as drawings and the creation of timelines (Hardy & Majors, 2017). The use of visual or creative methods can give participants' additional time to reflect on their experiences (Gauntlett, 2007) and provide a "creative way of interviewing that is responsive to participants' own meanings and associations" (Bagnoli, 2009, pp.547). Furthermore, the use of a creative method was intended to be a way for participants to convey their experiences without feeling the pressure which can be associated with traditional interviews. This is especially important when researching sensitive

topics, and it is therefore unsurprising that other studies in this field have employed creative methods (Kirkman et al, 2010).

Interestingly, however, when offered the choice of using the creative tools to create a timeline, all three participants who were interviewed in person said that they would rather just talk.

4.4.5. *Data Analysis*

There is no single method for analysis in IPA, and, although it is imperative that focus remains on the participants experiences and their attempt to make sense of these, a flexible approach can be taken (Smith et al, 2009). Data analysis was influenced by the following six steps for analysis presented by Smith, et al, 2009; a more detailed description of each step is provided in Appendix 9.13.

Stage 1: Reading and re-reading

Stage 2: Initial noting

Stage 3: Developing emergent themes

Stage 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Stage 5: Moving to the next case

Stage 6: Looking for patterns across cases

While the steps might appear unidirectional, IPA is an iterative and inductive cycle, and in reality, analysis was multi-directional. At stage 3 in particular, themes had to be 'tried out' and tested, and to ensure themes and interpretations were coming from the data itself questions such as "*but is it in the data"* and "*where does it say that in the transcript*" needed to be asked (Storey, 2016, pp.73). Analysis started with the first interview, as this was considered the most complex, engaging, and detailed.

During the analysis I reflected on the interpretative frameworks- the "personal lenses" through which I was viewing the data, including my understandings, emotions, and experiences (Storey, 2016).

4.4.6. *Limitations*

A key critique of IPA relates to the conceptualisation of language. Willig (2013) describes that language is the means by which participants communicate their experiences to the researcher, and data collection methods therefore presuppose that language provides the necessary tools to capture their experience; phenomenological research relies on the "representational validity of language" (p.94).

Willig (2013) argues that language constructs, rather than describes reality, and therefore adds meaning, inhibiting direct access to someone's experience. Willig (2013) supposes that language might precede and therefore shape experience if language is required to categorise or interpret an experience. Willig (2013) argues that this has not been engaged with sufficiently in IPA literature.

Relatedly, Willig (2013) questions whether participants are able to communicate the subtleties and nuances of their physical and emotional experiences that are required in phenomenological analysis within their descriptions; this might be especially difficult for individuals not used to expressing their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in words.

While important to consider, these limitations are not unique to IPA, and other approaches come with their limitations. IPA provided the best fit for this research, allowing an in-depth exploration of individual experience.

4.5. Ethical considerations

Within this section I will discuss the steps taken to ensure that all individuals were treated with care, sensitivity, and respect. In research ethics, discussions usually focus on two key preoccupations, informed consent, and the protection of participants from harm, both during and after the research. These issues are problematic in research involving CYP (Morrow & Richards, 1996), and moreover, in light of the power relations between the researcher, and the researched, when working with vulnerable groups, such as homeless families (Cloke et al, 2000).

Several guidelines have been developed that can be usefully applied in both EP professional practice and research with CYP, including those set out by the British Psychological Society (BPS): the professional practice guidelines (2017), the code of human research ethics (2014), and the code of ethics and conduct (2018). While these provide useful frameworks to guide ethical practice, there needs to be space for personal ethical choices by the researcher, that take into account situational and context specific factors (see Morrow & Richards, 1996 on situational relativist vs ethical absolutist). It is not possible to consider all the ethical issues that may arise before engaging in research (Cloke et al, 2000), and so ethical approval from the research committee was not considered an end point. Ethical dilemmas arose at different stages, and sometimes required amendments to the ethics application, for example, requesting permission for the research to take place within the homes of the participants. The ethical approach for this study required what Woodgate, Tennent and Zurba (2017) describe as "sustaining mindful presence"; they emphasise the importance of working through the relational, *everyday ethics*, raised in research with CYP. To support a mindful approach to ethical practice, ethical issues were regularly discussed with my research supervisor, as well as with peers

and other academic researchers in the field (see reflective journal for ethical reflections throughout the process).

4.5.1. *Protection from harm*

Qualitative methods can be intrusive in nature, and an important ethical consideration for this study was the potential that the interviews might be distressing for the CYP participating. The NSPCC (2012) discuss in their guidance that while research can cause distress, distress is not necessarily harmful. They go on to describe that challenging situations are not exclusive to research and may not involve greater stress than would usually occur in day-to-day life. Nevertheless, several steps were taken to reduce the risk that CYP experienced harm. Regarding how the data was collected, creative methods were offered as a means to explore CYP's views in a non-invasive and non-confrontational manner. However, due respect was given to the participants' competencies when they all preferred to speak freely rather than draw. As described above, due consideration was given to the location of the interviews, and the impact this might have on the CYP's experience of the interview. A sensitive and responsive approach was adopted during the interviews, drawing upon professional practice skills to gauge participant wellbeing. A protocol was developed for the event that a participant became distressed during the interview. It was important also to respect individual differences, such as shyness, and willingness to talk. Another important means of reducing potential harm to participants, is by obtaining informed consent, so that participants are aware of what they are agreeing to. This is discussed further below.

It is important to mention that ethical considerations also focused on protecting the researcher, and it was considered early on in the research process that the interviews had the potential to be emotionally challenging for me. Supervision was available and sought from the research supervisor when needed.

4.5.2. *Anonymity and Confidentiality*

It is important that researchers also take action to protect participants form harm following research, and Morrow and Richards (1996) argue that CYP should be provided with the same degree of confidentiality and privacy as adult participants. Oliver (2014) makes an important distinction between anonymity and confidentiality in research, explaining that anonymity refers to a person not being identifiable, while confidentiality, refers to the range of people who might have access to the data provided, for example, examiners, academic supervisors, other researchers within the university, and potentially even the public, if the thesis were to enter a public library domain. Oliver (2014) states that

for there to be informed consent, participants should be told who will have access to their data, and whether it could be traced back to them.

This was made clear to parents and children in this study within the consent forms and information sheets and explained further in person, prior to the interviews. The consent forms explained that data would be anonymised, real names would not be used, and that data was confidential. When completing the consent forms, parents were told that confidentiality extended to them. i.e., the information shared by their children, would not be shared directly with parents; this was also explained to the CYP participating. In addition, the two participants who were siblings were assured that their data would not be shared with their sibling. The exception to this, relating to safeguarding and the disclosure of harm to the participant or someone else, was also explained to CYP and their parent; I read from a confidentiality script at the beginning of each interview.

Participants and their parents were informed that the interviews were part of a thesis and would therefore be seen by examiners and supervisors. As part of the University of Bristol policy, it was also explained that anonymised data could be used at a later date by other researchers.

4.5.3. *Pseudonyms*

The use of fictional names, or pseudonyms, is commonplace ethical practice for maintaining anonymity within research (Brear, 2017). Originally, participants were going to be asked to choose a pseudonym for themselves, however, the ethics committee advised that CYP often choose nicknames which could make them identifiable; it was therefore agreed that pseudonyms would be chosen for the participants. Given the cultural diversity of the participants in this study, choosing pseudonyms became a complex task, requiring reflective practice.

Creswell and Poth (2018) state that it is the responsibility of the researcher to protect the identities of participants, which is achieved by "*assigning* fictitious names or aliases" (p.97). However, choosing a name for a participant bears a risk of being insulting in relation to the participants' background, as names have socio-cultural meanings (Allen & Wiles, 2016). Assumptions might be drawn from a name, including age, gender, SES etc., and research has shown that there are individual differences relating to why certain pseudonyms are chosen, and the information relating to identity that might be what a participant wants to present.

In one study, Brear (2017) analysed participant deliberations about their pseudonyms and reflected having been "subtly racist" by initially choosing English-language pseudonyms for the Swazi co-researchers. As this was participatory action research, participant choice of pseudonym is arguably

more important compared to other types of research, however Brear (2017) raises important issues relating to the inherent racism and privilege in the practice of White (or otherwise powerful) researchers. She discusses that a researcher might attempt to make 'virtue' by giving participants pseudonyms from their own language in order to give an authentic feel, but this would be based on the assumption that it is important for the individual to be "represented with a name that identifies them as a member of a specific cultural group", as opposed to a name that identified their gender, for example. (p.734).

This study sought to include the voices of a vulnerable, and often unrepresented group. As such, this study should have planned opportunities for participants to carefully deliberate the use and choice of pseudonyms (Brear, 2017). It felt inappropriate to attempt this over the phone and was not possible in person due to Covid-19. The use of numbers was considered, in line with other research (e.g. with asylum-seeker children, Morgan, 2018) but I was concerned this might depersonalise the accounts. Effort was made to assign names that were similar regarding popularity within home country and religious and cultural origins, however, I acknowledge this remains problematic.

4.5.4. *Informed Consent*

Informed consent refers to a researcher's responsibility to ensure that participants understand the nature of the research and their role within it (Oliver, 2014). As mentioned above, obtaining informed consent is a means of reducing the potential for causing harm. As the participants in this research were under the age of 16, consent needed to be sought from the persons legally responsible (BPS, 2014). In order for parents to provide informed consent, details about the research were made clear from the beginning including the nature, purpose, and anticipated consequences of participation; these were made clear within the information sheets. The information sheets also included details about audio recording, confidentiality and storage of data.

Some research has shown that parents whose first language is not English can be disempowered in the research process, and some of the challenges they face pose a threat to the notion of informed consent. One study, conducted by Franck, Winter and Oulton (2007) demonstrated that parents for whom English was not their first language reported feeling less certain they understood the nature of their child's involvement in research, less frequently knew who to contact, and reported feeling less satisfied with the information they were given about the study, compared to parents whose first language was English. As English was not the first language for two of the parents of children participating in this study, due consideration was given to how to ensure they gave informed consent.

The BPS code of human research ethics (2014) code emphasises the need to respect individual language differences, and to use clear and accessible language when communicating. Simple language was used wherever possible within the information sheets and when the consent forms were completed with parents, I explained certain words in detail, such as 'anonymous' and 'confidential'.

The BPS (2017) has guidance regarding the use of interpreters, and while this option was considered, the sensitivity of this research caused concerns regarding confidentiality and anonymity of the families. Moreover, I was concerned that the parents' English was at such a standard that offering interpreters would have been disrespectful, especially given that they told me they understood and had no further questions. I gauged from my conversations with the parents, and from the questions they asked that they gave informed consent.

4.5.5. *Participant's assent and dissent*

In addition to obtaining informed consent from parents, it was deemed essential to seek assent from the CYP participating and offer the opportunity for them to dissent. Research aims can be difficult to communicate with CYP, raising ethical concerns as to whether they can give informed consent (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). However, Hardy and Majors (2017) argue that EPs bring key skills to their role as a researcher, are able to build rapport with the CYP they work with and have expertise in communicating with vulnerable groups of CYP.

Perhaps the most important issue considered in the assent of the CYP, was their understanding of their living situation. This research focussed on homelessness and living in temporary accommodation, but there was a concern that some CYP might not understand or be aware of this, and a concern that participating might lead to a realisation about the vulnerability of the family living situation. This was a complex issue in the design of the research, and influenced the criteria regarding the CYP's age, and that the CYP needed to have an understanding of their living situation. This understanding was gauged in discussion with the parents. The information sheets explained that the nature of the research, and while there was no direct mention of 'homelessness' or 'temporary accommodation', they explained that the purpose of the interview was to find out about places lived, now and in the past, and about school.

The importance of consent, or assent, were considered an on-going process throughout the research, rather than a one-off event at the beginning. Furthermore, CYP were enabled to give *informed dissent*, that is, to understand the nature and purpose of the interview, and decide to refuse to participate if they wished. I am confident that this was made clear to CYP in this study as there was one YP who, after meeting with me, executed his right not to participate.

Ethical dilemmas are not easily resolved, and there are usually no perfect answers. This study required continuous reflection on ethical practice, and the actions described above reflect the efforts made to treat the CYP participating, and their families, with respect and sensitivity.

4.6.   The Participants

The final section of this chapter provides information about the four children who participated in this research. This is to provide context to the findings that follow in the next chapter. Four vignettes are presented, which include key information about each child, and their family, where they have lived, their homeless experience, their school experience as well as their interests and hobbies. The majority of this information was provided by the children themselves, and where possible the language they used is presented. Where information was provided by parents it is highlighted as such in the footer, as is specific information about the temporary accommodation gleaned during the recruitment meetings with the support workers.

To help explore and understand the children's experiences, diagrammatic maps have been created detailing key information about where the children lived in the past, where they live now, where they go to school, and in Olivia's case, where she is moving to. The purpose of this is to give the reader a sense of the displacement the children experienced when becoming homeless, and this is reflected in the complexity of the maps (particularly Olivia's). The maps are not to scale but the distances between the areas/ houses are indicative of the physical distances between them. For this reason, some maps and distances are smaller than others, highlighting the difference in displacement the children experienced. Maps have been rotated to ensure location anonymity. Maps do not contain complete information as they are based on what was shared by the children. It should be noted that references to different areas within the diagrams (e.g., Area 1, Area 2) are not the same across participants i.e., Area 1 for Amira is not Area 1 for Olivia, but instead, is the first place that Amira lived.

Three of the participants lived in the same shared temporary accommodation for families only (Amira, Haya and Jahmil). The accommodation has shared access through a main door and the building has CCTV. There are shared social areas within the building, including a lounge and a kitchen for families occupying the flats without kitchens.

4.6.1.   *Amira*

Amira is 13 years old and lives with her mum, dad, sister (age 19) and three brothers (ages 16, 6 and 4). Amira travelled to the UK with her mum and brothers from the Sudan at the age of 10, to join her

father and older sister who were already here. The family have the right to remain in the UK[19]. Amira's father and older sister were living in a two-bedroom flat, in an inner-city area, when the rest of the family joined them from the Sudan. The family were evicted from that property because there were too many people living there. Figure 5 provides Amira's housing journey, and this first home is shown in Area 1. After being evicted from that flat, Amira and her family stayed with family friends in Area 1 for three days. Amira and her family then moved into a flat in Area 2, which as is shown on the map, was some distance from Area 1, and is where her school is located. Amira and her family were evicted from that property too[20]. As can be seen from the map, Amira and her family then moved to area 3, where she and her family were living in a four-bedroom flat within a shared temporary accommodation at the time of the interview. Amira and her family have been in the accommodation for 18 months[21]. The family intend on staying in temporary accommodation until they are offered a council property; they did not want to move to another private rental in case they are evicted again.[22]

Amira shares a bedroom with her older sister, who is studying at university; her two younger brothers share a room, and her oldest brother has his own room. The flat has two toilets and has its own kitchen. The flat is located on the ground floor and there are risks associated with this, including living with mice, and an attempted break-in.

Moving into temporary accommodation meant moving out of area for Amira, and she now has a long bus journey to her school, which is located in Area 2. Amira and her brother did not want to change schools when they moved into temporary accommodation, which was at the start of Year 8 for Amira. Amira wants to go to university and then set up a design business.

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[19] Information provided by parent
[20] Information provided by parent
[21] Information provided by parent
[22] Information provided by parent

Map Key	
🏠	Residence (other than Temporary Accommodation)
🏢	Temporary Accommodation
🏫	School
🛋️	Staying with family friends
→	House move
🚌 ⟷	Existing journey to school
·······►	Upcoming house move
⟵ - ►	Potential new school route
🛝	Playground
⭕	"Area" (this could mean a distinct town, district or suburb within a city)

Figure 5: Amira's Map and Key

Area 3

Current residence

Area 1

First residence

Area 2

Second residence

Duration: 1 hour

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4.6.2. *Haya*

Haya is 13 years old and lives with her mum, dad, brother (17), sister (15), and her twin brother (Jahmil). Haya and her family are from Syria and have lived in different countries; Haya said that they moved because of her dad's job. The family have the right to remain in the UK[23]. Haya and her family lived in an emergency accommodation when they came to the UK. This is shown as 'first residence' on Haya and Jahmil's map, figure 6; I have referred to homes in Haya and Jahmil's map rather than areas because all three residences were located in the same area.

Haya and her family moved out of the emergency accommodation and into a privately rented property in the same area- this is labelled 'second residence'[24]. Haya and her family were evicted from that property[25] and are now living in the same multi- residential building as Amira. They have been living there for a month.

Haya is in Year 7 and was very nervous to start secondary school. All of her friends from primary school went to a different secondary school, one that was closer to where she used to live. Haya and her twin brother Jahmil take the bus to school, which takes 15-20 minutes.

Haya hopes to become a fashion designer, a teacher, or a translator. Haya can already speak English, Arabic and Kurdish (her main language) and is learning French in school; she also hopes to learn Turkish. Haya has translated for new students who joined her school who do not speak English; helping others is really important to Haya.

4.6.3. *Jahmil*

Jahmil is 13 years old and is the twin brother of Haya. Details about his family and background have been described above, and his journey is also outlined in figure 6. Jahmil shares a bedroom with his older brother (17).

Jahmil enjoys eating and making delicious foods with his family, especially kebabs. Jahmil also likes to play Fortnite, an online game, with his friends. As with Haya, Jahmil preferred his primary school as he had a lot of friends there; only one of his friends went to the same secondary school. Jahmil wants to be an engineer and a businessman.

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[23] Information provided by parent
[24] Information provided by parent
[25] Information provided by parent

Map Key	
	Residence (other than Temporary Accommodation)
	Temporary Accommodation
	School
	Staying with family friends
→	House move
	Existing journey to school
·······►	Upcoming house move
◄- - -►	Potential new school route
	Playground
◌	"Area" (this could mean a distinct town, district or suburb within a city)

First residence

Current residence

Second residence

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Figure 6: Haya and Jahmil's Map and Key

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4.6.4.   *Olivia*

Olivia is 12 years old and lives with her mum and two brothers (ages 14 and 7). Olivia and her family previously lived in a privately rented house in a large city suburb, this is shown in Area 1 in Figure 7. Olivia and her family were made homeless when the landlady sold the house. As can be seen from the map, after they were evicted from their home in Area 1, Olivia's family then moved to emergency accommodation in Area 2, where the stayed for three days (second residence); Olivia stayed with other family during this time (Area unknown). Olivia and her family then moved to where she lives now, temporary accommodation, shown in Area 3 on the map. Olivia's flat is different to the shared residential building that the other three participants live in; the flat is its own unit and the family have private access to it. It is a two-bedroom flat; Olivia's brothers share a bedroom; Olivia has her own bedroom and her mum sleeps in the living room/kitchen. The family have been living there for 22 months but have been offered a house through Home Choice, a website where families can bid for houses on the housing register. They were due to move a week after the interview, to a house in Area 2. Their new home is located in one of the areas the family were hoping for.

Olivia and her brother are currently deciding whether or not to change schools. Olivia is worried about moving schools and losing her friends but also thinks that changing schools might give her a "fresh start". As can be seen from her map, there is a secondary school a 7-minute walk away from Olivia's new home in Area 2, but if she wishes to stay at her current school closer to Area 3, she will need to take two buses, which would mean her bus journey to school would be over an hour.

Olivia enjoys sleeping and reading. Olivia usually plays football at an afterschool club[26] and also likes going to the park with her friends after school. Olivia wants to be a journalist.

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[26] Olivia was interviewed in March 2020, just after the pandemic lockdown had begun; she attended clubs before the pandemic.

Map Key	
🏠	Residence (other than Temporary Accommodation)
🏢	Temporary Accommodation
🏫	School
🛋️	Staying with family friends
→	House move
🚌 ←·—·→	Existing journey to school
·····►	Upcoming house move
◄----►	Potential new school route
🛝	Playground
◌	"Area" (this could mean a distinct town, district or suburb within a city)

Figure 7: Olivia's Map and Key

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4.6.5. *Summary*

Information about the participants is summarised in Table 4.

	Amira	Haya	Jahmil	Olivia
Age	*13*	*13*	*13*	*12*
Year Group	*8*	*7*	*7*	*7*
Gender	*Female*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Place of birth	*Sudan*	*Syria*	*Syria*	*UK*
Lives with	*Mum and dad Sister (19) Brother (16) Brother (6) Brother (4)*	*Mum and dad Brother (17) Sister (16) Twin brother- Jahmil (13)*	*Mum and dad Brother (17) Sister (16) Twin sister- Haya (13)*	*Mum Brother (14) Brother (7)*
Shares Bedroom	*Yes- with older sister (19)*	*Yes- with older sister (16)*	*Yes- with older brother (17)*	*No*
Current accommodation	*4-bedroom flat within a multi-residential building for families only*	*3 bedroom- flat within a multi-residential building for families only*	*Flat within a multi-residential building for families only*	*2-bedroom flat*
Reason for leaving last home	*Evicted from private rental*	*Evicted from private rental*	*Evicted from private rental*	*Evicted from private rental*
Length of time in TA at time of interview	*18 months*	*1 month*	*1 month*	*22 months*

Table 5: Demographic summary of participants

As can be seen from these accounts, even though all of the children were living in temporary accommodation at the time of the interview, the participants' circumstances around their homelessness were varied, and for some, they had been homeless at multiple times according to the definition given in Chapter 2 (Fitzpatrick et al, 2019). Children shared the experience of having to leave their homes and living in temporary accommodation with their families.

Perhaps important to consider here, is the diverse backgrounds of the participants. Issues relating to the sample are discussed in greater depth in the discussion, but it is worth holding in mind throughout

the findings chapter that the focus during analysis was on the experience of homelessness, and not the experiences of being a refugee. While three of the children were refugees, the experience of being evicted and homeless is not unique to refugees (this is recognisable from Olivia's story as well as the statistics and information described in Chapter 2).

The next chapter describes the research findings.

5. Findings

This chapter presents findings from semi-structured interviews with the four participants. Whilst the interviews provided very rich data, it is not possible to discuss all themes within this chapter. As a result, the themes discussed below are those that best address the RQs, which were:

1. How do children and young people make sense of their experiences of homelessness and of living in temporary accommodation with their families?

2. What are the school-based experiences of homeless children and young people?

In this chapter I describe each superordinate theme and accompanying themes in turn. Throughout the findings I report on the connection between participants and the theme, highlighting where the stories converge and diverge.

5.1. Overview of themes

A structured approach to analysis (described in chapter 4) led to four superordinate themes. While all superordinate themes were present within each child's account, not all sub-themes were. Themes were seen to have face validity when they were consistent or similar to themes found in research. A summary of the superordinate and subthemes is presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Within this chapter many quotes from the interviews with participants are presented. These provide a verbatim depiction of speech while removing interview noise, such as fillers (e.g., "like"), stutters; these have been replaced with ellipsis to help keep focus on the meaning the participants were conveying (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005).

RQ 1. How do children and young people make sense of their experiences of homelessness and of living in temporary accommodation with their families?

Superordinate Theme	Theme	Amira	Haya	Jahmil	Olivia
Making sense of homelessness as a family	Experiencing homelessness together	X	X	X	X
	The physical and emotional closeness of homeless families	X	X		X
Making sense through comparison: considering losses and gains	We had nowhere to go	X	X	X	X
	The losses to family life resulting from living in temporary accommodation	X	X	X	X
	Finding the positives and looking on the bright side- the imagined and actual gains of moving into temporary accommodation	X	X	X	

Table 6: Summary of superordinate themes and sub-themes relating to RQ 1

RQ 2. What are the school-based experiences of homeless children and young people?

Superordinate Theme	Theme	Amira	Haya	Jahmil	Olivia
Disruptions to Education	Mobility vs Continuity	X	X		X
	Barriers to participation and the ways and the ways homeless children overcame them	X	X		
	Being in school with the burden of homelessness	X	X	X	X
Experiences of school support: feeling cared about, understood and helped	Feeling Cared About	X	X	X	X
	Teachers understanding of the children's homelessness	X		X	
	The help needed to cope with homelessness now and the help needed for a better future	X	X	X	

Table 7: Summary of superordinate themes and sub-themes relating to RQ 1

5.2. Making sense of homelessness as a family

The participants' experiences of homelessness and living in temporary accommodation were presented as shared experiences, which led to the interpretation that participants' made sense of their experiences through a collective lens. This is described in the first subtheme, 'experiencing homelessness together', and relates to the second subtheme, which connects the ways in which children described their families as close.

5.2.1. *Experiencing homelessness together*

When children described their experiences of having to leave their homes, they all did so by using "we" and "us". In this way, children presented a shared family experience, giving a sense that children saw their families as in it together, but also highlighting the knowledge and awareness the children had about what was happening. The following extract where Jahmil described leaving his home illustrates this:

> *…a black guy said, "you have to go...you have to go now". But we said no, and the black man said, "I have to go to the police... to... get you off". So, we packed everything in one day, and we just go.*

Jahmil includes himself in the- "we said no", giving a sense that he felt part of his family's position in resisting leaving their home. There were blurred lines in the children's' accounts between what the children experienced first-hand and what they later found out from their parents or older siblings. This impacted how they told their stories and meant that they moved between different locations and times:

> *So, we were at school and then they sent us a letter we gonna have to leave our home, and then the next day mum and dad went to the owner of the house and say stuff about that. So, they call my mum and dad and saying, "two hours you gonna have to leave or we gonna call the police to come kick your stuff out". So, at the last minute they found this house for us, and we have to be here... (Haya)*

The children did not need to make a distinction between what was directly experienced or later learnt from their parents as both became part of their experience: they saw themselves as part of those events whether they were physically present or not. This was seen Olivia's account, where she initially describes going to the council and living in emergency accommodation, but later clarifies that she was not actually there:

> *Well, it wasn't even more me, it was more my mum and that lot cos I spent a couple days down my dad's and then I spent a couple of days at my nan's, so, we, we had nowhere to go, and then the council sorted us out a place in (area 2) for a couple of days and then they moved us here (Olivia)*

Olivia was the only participant to use 'I' when describing the events, but she was also the only one who spent time apart from her family (the family she lived with) when evicted. Olivia returned to using "we", after describing what happened specifically for her, strengthening the notion that she viewed her experience as a shared one.

The notion that children saw their experiences as shared with their family was also inferred from the ways that two children described their experiences before the point of eviction. Haya and Amira both referred to receiving letters and the language they used implies that the letters were addressed to the whole family ("we got a letter"- Amira, and "they sent us a letter"- Haya). These references to letters implied that they had knowledge about their family's vulnerable housing situation prior to eviction, indicating that these children had an awareness of their family situation before they had to leave their home:

> *Yeh it was, they got, we got a letter, they told us to move so we didn't have anywhere to go to...we already kind of knew…*

In this extract, Amira changes "they got" to "we got", and there is a sense that she sees that that letter was not to her parents, but to her whole family. The "we already kind of knew", suggests that Amira and her family knew they would be evicted even before the letter arrived (perhaps knowing about overcrowding rules). Amira had an awareness then of her family's homelessness before they had to leave their home, sharing in their worry. This was slightly different for Haya, who described that her family did not know it was going to happen, which results in a feeling that she and her family had been wronged:

> *Because… the last one… they took us out of our home without telling us (Haya)*

This extract, as with others, showed how children saw a 'them' and 'us', with 'them' referring to the people evicting them or to the council. It might be that Haya's parents did not know they were going to be evicted, but there is also a possibility here that Haya's parents did not share knowledge about this with Haya.

Children also talked about their current experiences of living in temporary accommodation as though they were shared with their family. After being asked a question about where they lived, children responded with how their family find living there, giving a sense that these children were always thinking about their experience as a family. The following extract from Jahmil demonstrates this:

> It's small... and... we said we needed the Virgin Media internet, but they said... there is no good internet in here. It is low. So, we got a Huawei internet, and that one's low too, so we have to just wait. (Jahmil)

For Jahmil, it is not just him that finds the internet too slow, it is the view of his whole family. For Amira, living in temporary accommodation comes with fears about disease and safety, which are shared by her family:

> With all the diseases going around and I try not to catch one. (Amira)

> Is that something you are worried about? (Leeya)

> We're all kind of worried about that. Specially, we got two younger brothers, they're pretty small, they are 4 years old, pretty small. When he first saw one [mouse] running around the house, he just kind of stood there, he wasn't like scared or anything which scared us cos we don't want him to go near them. He wasn't scared of it. We all kind of all jumped on the couch except him (laughing) (Amira)

Amira's family worry together, but also laughs together, and Amira's closeness with her family was also inferred through humour. Talking about the mice in the house, Amira said:

> We have one right now to be honest... we can open a pet store (Amira)

I wondered if this extract reflects a shared joke Amira has with her family, and a way of helping them cope in a difficult living situation. Indeed, Amira sees that her family hold shared thoughts and feelings about living in temporary accommodation. Amira's story was the most characterised by fear and threat, and this relates to events that took place in previous homes, but also relate to the temporary accommodation she lives in now:

> "...I was in school. My mum and my dad went to get my brother and my younger brother. When they came back, they saw someone trying to go into the house by that window. We called the police, we tried to check the cameras, we couldn't see anything, but yeh my dad came and saw someone trying to break into it but then they jumped through the trees and... ran (Amira)

Amira sees that she is alongside her family during these incidents ("we called the police"), even though she says twice during the interview that she was in school when this incident happened, as if she is both in school and with her family. This connects to the theme around disruption in education, discussed later.

Finally, for Haya, the togetherness of her experience was seen when describing how she and her family wanted their living situation to change:

> We don't want to stay here that much longer, so hopefully we can go out… faster to a different house (Haya)

Here, Haya presents that it is all her family who do not want to stay in the temporary accommodation for much longer, not just her. Haya wanted a house without any stairs and not on a hill because of her mum's health needs, suggesting how her experience was impacted by her beliefs and perceptions about the needs of her family.

5.2.2.   *The physical and emotional closeness of homeless families*

Related to the previous theme is this second sub-theme pertaining to the ways children saw that their families were close. Three of the children (Amira, Haya, and Olivia), often described ways in which they saw that their family was close:

> We're always there for each other. I know they've got my back and I've got theirs (Olivia)

Most often, this closeness was talked about in relation to sibling relationships, and this closeness extended into a school context. While Olivia felt that her brothers could be annoying, she also felt that her older brother was always there for her. When describing a time when she had a physical altercation with a girl in school:

> …my brother wasn't that far behind to help me (Olivia)

Olivia was not the only participant to value their sibling relationships in terms of physical proximity:

> [If] I'm feeling a bit worried, I will go to my sister and say what is wrong with me and she will make it up for me and I will feel a little bit happy. If my sister is by my side, I will feel happy... (Haya)

Haya's sister provided emotional support to Haya in school, and therefore it was vital for Haya that they attend the same educational setting:

> *The college my sister goes to, I will follow her. She decided to go with my brother to sixth form because we all want to be together, and I choose this secondary school just because I want to be with my sister, and I want to go to the same college as she goes (Haya)*

Haya's desire to attend the same school as her sister outweighed other factors, such as location (there was a closer secondary school to her current abode) and the school her friends attended. Similarly, Olivia's brother's decision seemed to be factoring into her decision about whether to change schools when they move to their new home. There was a strong sense of belonging with family, especially with siblings. The consistency and safety of being with siblings was important.

Family closeness could be seen in the ways that children talked about their experiences, but also in their values, which they said they shared with their families, including values about education, and helping others. When asked about hobbies, Amira described what she and her siblings liked (e.g., she and her sister liked dancing) and when describing her siblings, she talked about their interests (e.g., her brothers both liked football). Whatever the question, Amira made connections with and between her family members, including when talking about her ambitions. This extract follows Amira explaining that she would like to be a designer:

> *Wow it sounds like you've got a really good plan for how this [her future company] is going to work… (Leeya)*

> *(smiling, laughing) and my sister wants to be a …dentist… my brother wants to be [in the] police, so all we all kind of know what we want to be when we're older. (Amira)*

There was a sense that Amira felt pride for her own ambitions and accomplishments, but also those of her siblings.

5.2.3.   *Summary*

Children responded to questions about their experiences by telling me about how their family experienced the world. They saw that their families had shared understandings and feelings about their lives, including about their homeless experiences. I considered that cultural backgrounds may also impact on this, but the codes and themes were prevalent across all four accounts. The subthemes are related, and it is likely that they influence each other, i.e., family closeness meant that families shared more with each other, meaning that the children knew about what was happening relating to becoming homeless. But also, that the shared life experiences meant that the families became closer, and the family relationships became strengthened through the collective adversity. Additionally, it is likely that the requirement for physical proximity as a result of living in temporary accommodation

(discussed further below) is connected to this sense of a shared experience, togetherness, and closeness.

5.3.   Making sense through comparison: considering losses and gains

The second superordinate theme describes how children made sense of their experiences of homelessness through comparisons of their lives before they lived in temporary accommodation, which also led to comparisons with others and what they considered 'normal' and 'ordinary'. The first subtheme, 'we had nowhere to go' describes the participants' experience of having to leave their home without knowing where they would go. It captures a critical time, after which, life really changed for the participants. When making sense of these experiences, participants made comparisons with their lives before and after living in temporary accommodation and the next two subthemes illustrate their experiences of losses and gains.

5.3.1.   *We had nowhere to go*

This theme captures the experiences described by the participants of a time when they saw that their family had nowhere to go. This was how participants described feeling when they had been told to leave their home, and before they moved into temporary accommodation. Amira experienced this more than once however, as she also experienced this after being evicted from her first home, before going to stay with family and friends:

> *"We had nowhere else to go so we kind of had no choice…we lived with them for three days or so and then we got moved to (area 2) ...   (Amira)."*

This extract highlights the powerlessness felt by Amira, a feeling that she and her family had no choice or control about where to go. This was apparent throughout Amira's housing journey; Amira and her family had 'nowhere to go' for some time, and so were homeless long before they moved into temporary accommodation. This relates to the idea of homelessness as a continuum, emphasising the wide-ranging circumstances for homeless families, as well as hidden homelessness.

A lack of control was also seen in the other participant accounts when describing this time, as well as urgency:

> *"So, at the last minute they found this house for us, and we have to be here... (Haya)"*

Haya indicates that during this time when she and her family did not know where they would go, the council were trying to find a place for them. Haya saw a real possibility that her family would have to

be on the streets (this is explored further below). There was urgency within all of the participants' accounts when describing this moment in their lives:

> *"…a black guy said, "you have to go...you have to go now". But we said no, and the black man said, "I have to go to the police... to... get you off". So, we packed everything in one day, and we just go" (Jahmil)*

Jahmil described these events quickly, echoing the speed at which his family had to get out of their home. For all of the children, there was a sense that very quickly, they no longer belonged in their homes, and were being hurried to leave while at the same time not having somewhere to go.

For Amira and Haya, the feeling of having nowhere to go related to their whole family, whereas for Olivia, her family had nowhere to be together. This was because Olivia stayed with her nan and then her dad after leaving her home, while her mum and siblings stayed in emergency accommodation. The loss for Olivia then was also a place for the family to be together.

This theme captures the participants' critical experiences of homelessness: the time when they urgently had to leave their homes. This is the key experience that sets their experiences apart from other groups of children (e.g., children living in poverty/ poor neighbourhoods) who have not been forced to leave a home. It is this experience that is a point of change, from which the participants made comparisons of their lives before and after, and how they made sense of their experiences. The changes brought about by this event are described in the following themes, including the losses and gains relating to living in temporary accommodation.

5.3.2. *The losses to family life resulting from living in temporary accommodation*

This theme captures the losses that participants experienced while living in temporary accommodation. These were evident from the comparisons children made of living in temporary accommodation with their previous homes: it was through these comparisons that children made sense of their homelessness. These comparisons showed that children saw their lives as different to their own lives in the past, as well as different to others and therefore, different to what they considered to be "normal", and "ordinary". Loss was experienced differently by the participants, relating to what was valued by each individual but also depending on the type of accommodation they lived in (i.e., Olivia's experiences were often different to the others as she did not live in shared accommodation). Losses were seen to relate to 1) the rules and restrictions associated with living in temporary accommodation, and 2) living in a smaller home. I will discuss each in turn.

Living in temporary accommodation meant living under new rules and restrictions. This was true not only for the children living in shared accommodation, but also for Olivia, who lived in an individual family flat. The rule impacting Olivia the most was that she could not live with her dog in temporary accommodation:

> *Does it feel like home where you live? (Leeya)*

> *Kind of... yeh (Olivia)*

> *Can you tell me more about that? (Leeya)*

> *We had a dog in our old house and when we moved, she went to my nan's and now she's not alive anymore... so it just feels weird without her. (Olivia)*

The interview questions are included in this extract to give context to Olivia's response, and to demonstrate that for Olivia, her dog made her feel at home. This appeared to be the greatest loss for Olivia regarding her experience of homelessness. Olivia experienced the loss of her dog twice: once when she moved, and then again when her dog died. The "it just feels weird without her" is a current feeling for Olivia, despite not having lived with her dog for 22 months. Olivia had been living in temporary accommodation for longer than the maximum time set out in legislation (18 months), and so I wondered whether Olivia believed she would be able to live with her dog again. However, now that her dog has died, she seems to still be coming to terms with that not happening.

While Olivia was impacted by this rule relating to pets, there were many more examples of being impacted by rules and restrictions for the three children living in shared accommodation. Amira and Haya both spoke about a support worker at the temporary accommodation, who seemed to be perceived as an authority figure. Amira and Haya often described this support worker when describing the impact of rules and restrictions:

> *"Oh, it's really hot because the heaters, we don't control them, (support worker) does I think, well I think she does. So, she turns them on, and she leaves, so then we can't control the levels of it so it just has to be that high. So, I have to open all the windows". (Amira)*

While Amira is tentative about whether the support worker is in control of their heating, what is clear is that Amira is physically uncomfortable in the flat because of the heat. Amira's family have lost control over the physical environment of their home. The idea that "it just has to be that high" gives a notion that Amira has accepted living this way and is powerless in the situation. Her response to open the windows is also can also be seen as leaving her and her family vulnerable, as there was a time when someone tried to climb into the flat through the window.

Jahmil also indicated a lack of control in his physical environment, but in relation to the internet:

> "…we said we needed the Virgin Media internet, but they said... there is no good internet in here. It is low. So, we got a Huawei internet, and that one's low too, so we have to just wait". (Jahmil)

Again, there is a sense that Jahmil has accepted that the internet is bad. The internet was very important to Jahmil, when asked about what he liked about his old house, he said:

> "It had...bigger living room, it had bigger um... and good internet, and like that".

Taking a view of both of these extracts, we can see how Jahmil had good internet in his old home, where his family likely had control over choice of their internet provider. When trying to source that same good internet connection again in temporary accommodation (Virgin Media), they are met with resistance, and despite their own efforts to have better internet, it is still slow. Jahmil's focus on the internet within his descriptions of his homes points to what matters most to him; the internet allowed Jahmil to connect to his friends and play Fortnite, but this was something he had lost. This relates to the final example of loss as a result of rules and restrictions: losses within the children's play experiences.

Amira, Haya and Jahmil faced additional barriers to playing and connecting with friends in the ways they wanted, and in ways they considered normal. As well as feeling unsafe in the neighbourhood, Amira commented on the lack of designated places to play outside. Amira said, "they are making new things" and was hopeful there might be playgrounds nearby in the future. Outside space to play was important to Amira, who most preferred living in her first home, the overcrowded small flat, because she was able to play outside:

> So, can I ask you what's your favourite place you've ever lived? (Leeya)

> Here... because (Area 2) we didn't really know anyone. Actually, thinking about it, no it's (Area 1) cos it had like playgrounds, we used to go there every single day, we just wake up and just go there straight away.

From this extract, there is a sense that Amira appreciated being able to play outside when she wanted to, and this was of great value to her. Not being able to play outside anymore is one way in which Amira saw change as a result of homelessness, and a loss of doing what was normal for her, but also normal for all children.

For Haya, barriers to play were experienced through rules and restrictions:

> *"It's not that bad, I made friends here… but… if we play in the corridor, we make noise and the next day (name of support worker) say[s] to us the neighbour came down and said we make too [much] noises… we say what we gonna do… we get bored at home, so what we gonna do if we don't make any noises… it's not our fault… we're trying to have some fun…."* (Haya).

Here, Haya describes the challenges associated with playing in the place she lives. While all of the residents in the shared accommodation were families, many were single mothers with younger children and babies, likely with earlier bedtimes to Amira, Haya and Jahmil. While grateful for the presence of other children in the temporary accommodation, including younger children (described further below), there is a negative consequence of this for Haya in that there are rules and restrictions placed on her play. Haya perceives that these rules are enforced by the support worker, who she later refers to as the "owner" of the building. Living in shared accommodation means that Haya cannot play as she wants to, or how she thinks is normal. Haya makes a social comparison when talking about play and friendship and this seemed to be both a comparison towards other people, but also a comparison to herself in the past, as she used to be allowed to have her friends over:

> *"I can't have my friends over any more like I used to… if we make noise, it's in my house and I feel like my neighbour, her right next door is gonna tell (support worker) we made noise. And my mum and my dad say, "stop making noises". It's not like normal when you can have friends over, like once in the week you can have friends over…"* (Haya)

Haya sees that being able to have friends over is normal, and she has lost being able to do this as a result of where she lives.

So far within this theme, I have described the losses experienced by the children as a result of rules and restrictions. Next, I will discuss the losses children perceived as a result of living in a smaller home than they used to. All of the children described that they lived in a small home, and for Jahmil, this meant that it did not feel like home. Describing his flat, Jahmil said:

> *It's got two toilets, three rooms, kitchen, and that's it.*

The tone Jahmil used for "that's it" emphasised Jahmil's belief that the flat was too small for his family.

All of the children shared a bedroom with an older sibling apart from Olivia, who had her own bedroom, while her mum slept in the front room/ kitchen. Living in small and cramped conditions

meant not being able to do ordinary things that the children had done in the past or things that they valued doing, for example, Amira was unable to follow YouTube dance videos or do Yoga because there was no space (and also because the flat had mice).

> *"I haven't done it in ages, because of the space and stuff, especially that now there is like a lot of mouse in our house" (Amira).*

The smallness of their homes was felt most in the kitchen and at meal times, and both Haya and Olivia talked about their family's not being able to all get in the kitchen together:

> *"It's connected to the front room, it's quite small. And not all of us can fit in there at once". (Olivia)*

Olivia later said that she and her brothers were not allowed in the kitchen when her mum was cooking, and like Haya and Jahmil, there was a sense of disappointment about not being able to be together during that time. Cooking time was especially valued by Jahmil who said that "making food…delicious foods" was his favourite thing to do with his family. There was a sense that the children were not able to engage in this ordinary family time because of their small homes. Olivia explicitly talked about wanting an ordinary house, therefore perceiving that what she has was less than ordinary:

> *If you had three wishes, what would you wish for? (Leeya)*

> *I'd wish that my mum would never die, my whole family would be healthy and everything, and I wish I was rich, and I have a good house and everything. (Olivia)*

> *What's a good house like? (Leeya)*

> *… a good house...not small, not big, just ordinary. (Olivia)*

For Amira though, her smallest home, a two-bedroom flat in Area 1, was her favourite place that she lived and that was because there were playgrounds nearby. A small home was not problematic then for Amira when there were opportunities to play outside safely.

Within this theme I have considered the losses relating to home and family life, however, there were also changes brought about by homelessness that meant to losses relating to school life (e.g., not

being able to attend clubs, not having time to do homework), however, these are discussed below (barriers to participation).

5.3.3. *Finding the positives and looking on the bright side- the imagined and actual gains of moving into temporary accommodation*

When comparing their lives before and after leaving their homes, three of the participants reflected on gains, or positive consequences resulting from living in temporary accommodation. This included both actual gains (examples where life was now better in some way) and imagined gains (examples where participants had expected life would be better in temporary accommodation). These gains were seen in three ways: improved living conditions, gaining safety and making friends as a result of living in shared accommodation. I will discuss each in turn, including the participant(s) who experienced them.

The first gain, improved living conditions, came from Haya's account. Haya spoke fondly of her previous home (second residence on her map, Figure 6), describing it as "one of my best houses" because her friends lived close by, and she felt safe. However, the location of that house was not good for her mum. This was because the house was located on a hill and her mum suffers from a degenerative condition. As such, Haya seemed to view that leaving that home would be better for her mum:

> *"I'd much rather go back to (second residence) but… with the hill we came for my mum with her leg…."*

In this extract Haya implies that the location of that house (on a hill) was part of the reason she and her family moved out of the property. However, earlier in the interview Haya had explained that the house owner had told her family they had to leave. These conflicting explanations seemed to reflect Haya's sense-making during the interview, and although the location of the previous home may not have been the main reason the family moved, seeing it as positive outcome of having to leave their home, perhaps helped Haya cope with her experience, and gave a sense of agency or control about what happened. However, while there was this anticipated gain for Haya's family moving, in reality, their temporary accommodation presented similar difficulties for Haya's mum, as their flat was located upstairs. When describing why her family hoped to leave temporary accommodation soon, Haya explained:

> *"…we care for my mum because my mum is like… when she goes in the stairway, her leg hurts to get up". (Haya)*

It seemed then that there was no real gain for Haya's mum regarding accessibility as a result of leaving their home.

Similarly, Amira anticipated that her family would gain safety as a result of leaving their last home (second residence on Figure 5, Amira's map). Amira described the threatening events that occurred prior to her leaving her last home:

> "Because I used to live in (Area 2) but then a lot of people attacked us. We were inside the house, our door was glass, so they broke that door and cos, next to our house is… an ATM machine, they thought the house is not really a house but part of the ATM machine. So, they broke into the house, we were all in the house, all we heard is glass, breaking of the glass. The door was open the whole night and police came…and also we had to move."

Amira saw this attack as part of the reason she and her family moved out of the flat. As with Haya, I wondered whether this potential gain of leaving that dangerous residence became part of Amira's reasoning of why they moved, giving the family agency and control. Again, however, this did not appear to be an actual gain, as Amira described multiple experiences of not feeling safe living in the temporary accommodation as a result of drunk people in the area, a break-in at the accommodation, and an incident where she was chased home by a man. Tones of threat and violence were prevalent in Amira's account throughout her descriptions of the places she had lived.

The idea of gaining safety was also present in Haya's account, but rather than this being a comparison with her previous residence, this was a comparison with the possible alternative of not getting the temporary accommodation:

> The kitchen is small, don't fit all of us (laugh), try to get like stuff in the table, we can't all fit in and it's not that bad, I guess. I guess it's better than being on the street... (Haya)
>
> Better than being on the street?... (Leeya)
>
> Yeh because like the last one they took us out of our home without telling us... (Haya)
>
> Can you tell me more about that? (Leeya)
>
> So, we were at school and then they sent us a letter we gonna have to leave our home, and then the next day mum and dad went to the owner of the house and say stuff like about that. So, my mum and dad come back home, and they say, they call my mum and dad and saying, "two hours you gonna have to leave or we gonna call the police to come kick your stuff out". So, at the last minute they found this house for us, and we have to be here... (Haya)

In this extract, Haya is making sense of her experience by comparing with what could have been. There is a sense here that Haya saw a very real possibility that her family could have ended up on the streets, and so she wants to be grateful for the shelter she has.

During the participants' comparisons of life before and after living in temporary accommodation, there was one very real gain for the three participants living in shared accommodation; opportunities to make friends and play with other children. These friendships were facilitated by the shared spaces; all three children went to the communal lounge in the evenings to play with other children. This was a positive aspect of their experience, and something that they liked about living in "shared houses".

> *"I go to the lounge almost every single day" (Amira).*

Amira seemed to use the phrase "every single day" to emphasise the things she valued (e.g., at another time she used this to describe the playgrounds). There is a sense that she appreciated the opportunity to go to the lounge, and the regularity of that. Similarly, Amira, Haya and Jahmil seemed grateful for the other children, and for the spaces where they could play:

> *"You have some friends to play with here... you can make some friends, you can play in here and be, as well in here [pointing in the direction of the lounge"] (Jahmil).*

Jahmil sees that the lounge is somewhere he can "be", somewhere he is allowed. This is stark given Jahmil's experiences of not being allowed to be somewhere, for example, when he describes the man saying to his family "get you off". Jahmil's repetition of "you can" gives a sense that Jahmil sees these as opportunities, as something he gets to do. Because the children more often used "we can't" or "we have to" when talking about life in the accommodation, their positive experiences and feelings toward the other children stood out. Amira and Haya especially valued their relationship with a little girl (approximately 2 years old) living in the accommodation. Haya spoke about the little girl during the interview, and then later, the little girl came looking for Haya and knocked on the door:

> *[Little girl knocked and then walked away with her mum]*

> *Do you spend much time in the lounge here? (Leeya)*

> *Yeh, I do. I play with her [pointing to door and indicating little girl], I talk with her, we play with each other, we eat. (Haya)*

[Little girl knocking]

I'll be out in a minute, bye (girls name). Oh, look at her! She is so special to me (Haya)

This occurrence during the interview was really telling about the relationships between the children in the accommodation, and indicative that being together was part of a daily routine. There was a familial aspect to the relationships with the other children. Moreover, for Jahmil, there was a sense that he connected with the other children because he thought that they were the "same" as him. As well as being grateful for the other children, Amira and Jahmil were grateful for the toys provided in the building:

> *"…And there's a lot of toys as well. They even gave more toys for all people to play with"* *(Amira).*

Amira's use of 'even' suggests that the toys are beyond what she expects.

5.3.4. *Summary*

When making sense of their homeless experiences, participants compared life before and after a critical time in their lives when they felt their family had nowhere to go. Participants saw their lives as different to their lives in the past, as well as to others, and therefore what was 'normal' or 'ordinary'. The comparisons highlighted the losses and gains they experienced as a result of living in temporary accommodation. The losses were experienced in different ways, but related to rules and restrictions, and to living in a smaller home. Living in such small and cramped conditions meant that the children could not engage in activities that mattered to them, or in ordinary family routines and ways of spending time together. These losses to their usual family life highlights how their homelessness continued even when they had shelter: they continued to not have a place that was theirs. This was seen to be central to a homeless experience, and different to experiences of other children, such as those living in poverty/ in poor conditions. Participants had experienced the loss of a home and significant changes to their family lives. While there were several losses, the participants also saw gains: some of these were gains they had been hopeful about before moving (imagined), while there was a real gain for the three participants living in shared accommodation, as they connected and made new friends.

5.4. Disruptions to Education

This superordinate theme describes the ways in which the participants' education was disrupted by being homeless and moving into temporary accommodation. When participants moved into temporary accommodation, they all moved further away from their schools. The first subtheme, mobility vs continuity, describes the participants' experiences of negotiating between changing schools or continuing at the same school, and the factors relating to that, including friendships and journeys to school. The second subtheme, barriers to participation, addresses the participant's experiences of being able to participate in their school community in the ways that mattered to them, and how this was impacted by living in temporary accommodation. It highlights the ways barriers to participation were overcome and how participants acted with agency. The third subtheme, being in school with the burden of homelessness, relates to the children's emotional presence in school. It connects to the first super-ordinate theme around making sense of homelessness as a family, and the impact of this in school.

5.4.1. *Mobility vs continuity*

This theme describes the participants' experiences of a negotiation between mobility and continuity in their schools when they moved into temporary accommodation. It is specific to the experience of being homeless, as participants had to make decisions about where to attend school as a result of leaving their homes, and sometimes, being moved out of area. These decisions were not only being made at the point of leaving a home but were found to continue when moving into stable housing.

As can be seen from the participant maps presented in Chapter 4, when participants moved into temporary accommodation, they all moved further away from their schools. Some participants experienced being moved 'out of area' (Amira and Olivia). For Haya, Jahmil and Olivia, this meant a 15–20-minute bus journey to school, which was not perceived negatively; Olivia did not mind getting the bus and Haya described it as "*fine*". For Amira, however, this now meant a much longer journey to school:

> "*School starts at 8.30, so I go, I wake up at 6, have to, at 7 I have to go to the bus stop at (name) and then, it'7s like a 10-minute walk from here. So then, I take from the bus an hour and I get there at 8, actually 8.10 yeh. I get there usually 8.10*"

When describing being on the bus, Amira said:

> *"(It's) really bad…Sometimes there are like some drunk people, and like sometimes people are like so ill, they cough a lot, so it comes to me and then I get ill…" (Amira)*

Amira saw that being on the bus everyday affected her health, which then impacted on her attendance in school. Continuing at her school was very important to Amira, and key to this decision was her friendships: "*all my friends are there*". Having friends in school was important to Amira as they provided protection:

> *"There's a lot of… gang stuff, you know what I'm saying, like people acting up, and it's really important in our school to have friends... there's one girl who doesn't have any friends and everyone treats her different, she's human still, but everyone is treating her different. So, it's really important in our secondary school to have friends" (Amira)*

There was a distinct tone to "*you know what I'm saying*" and a push to consider what was not being said here. Considered in context alongside the other times Amira uses the phrase, there was a sense that Amira was alluding to race. There is a common theme of danger in Amira's experiences, and so her sense that her friends provide safety seemed to underpin her desire to continue at her school. Amira described that her friends were "*always*" with her, and she saw that *"they have my back"*. Perhaps Amira worried that she would not have this same protection in another school. Now that Amira lived so far away from friends, she could not see them outside of school, however, maintaining these friendships in school was seen to outweigh this loss, as well as the more difficult and longer journey to school.

Haya and Jahmil were also not able to see their friends outside of school because they lived "*too far*" away from them. Both described losing friendships when they went to a different secondary school to their peers; they both missed their friends and described their efforts to stay in contact with them. It seemed then that continuing at their same school became more important to them, so that they could maintain the new friendships they had made.

While Olivia lived a similar distance from her school as Haya and Jahmil did to theirs, she was regularly able to meet with friends in the park after school and take the bus home later:

> *"… normally after school I go out until like 5 or 6 and then I come home, cos school finishes at 3 and then I go to the park by my school... "(Olivia)*

Being able to continue this normality appeared to be enabled by the safer neighbourhood that Olivia's temporary accommodation was located in:

> "The people aren't really bad. They are quite nice. They don't cause trouble. They smile at you in the streets…" (Olivia)

Olivia's perception of safety in her neighbourhood was markedly different to that experienced by Amira and Haya living in shared accommodation. As described above, both Amira and Haya did not feel safe where they lived, and the unsafety of the neighbourhood deterred them from spending time with friends after school; the location of their temporary accommodation had changed how they connected with friends. Both Amira and Haya wanted to live near their schools:

> "I would love to pick my own house, I would like to pick right next to my school because so many of my friends are right there, so right next to my school and the houses there are amazing, and my friends are there" (Haya)

Living next to her school would give Haya more opportunities to be with her friends and support her belonging and connection to her school and community.

While Olivia had not changed school when she moved into temporary accommodation, she was now considering changing schools. This was because she was due to move into stable housing shortly after the interview, and this would be another move out of area. Olivia shared her concerns about this move:

> How do you feel about that (moving)? (Leeya)
>
> I think it's more I'm worried…(Olivia)
>
> What are you worried about? (Leeya)
>
> Moving school… (Olivia)

Olivia appeared to be engaged in a negotiation of whether to change schools or continue at her same school and weighing up travel and friendship factors. This negotiation played out during the interview:

> "Well in my school I have some friends and I really like them... and I'm just thinking about them, if I was to have them or not..." (Olivia)

As can be seen from Olivia's map, staying at her school would mean a 1-hour bus journey to school, while a new school would be within walking distance (see figure 7). Over the course of the interview, she became clearer about what she wanted to do:

> "I'm going to keep my little group… and then just like get new friends at the new school" (Olivia)

Olivia had experienced problems with other children in her school and saw that there was a potential for a "*fresh start*" at a new school. Olivia thought that maintaining her friendships with old friends would be possible and felt confident about being able to make friends at her new school. As such, she saw a benefit to changing schools, and a means of avoiding a long commute into school.

Olivia's experience highlights that issues of mobility and continuity can continue for homeless children over time, and not just at the point of moving to temporary accommodation. There was some evidence from Haya's interview that she was pre-empting losing friends again in the future, highlighting the uncertainty of where the participants could move to next, and when. Perhaps the knowledge that they would be moving again encouraged all of the participants to continue at their same school after moving into temporary accommodation.

5.4.2. *Barriers to participation and the ways homeless children overcame them*

Amira experienced barriers to participating in school in ways that mattered to her, as a result of living in temporary accommodation. While Amira and Olivia both valued and enjoyed attending after school clubs but their ability to do so was affected by where they lived. Olivia continued to play football at an afterschool club after moving into temporary accommodation, and this was facilitated by Olivia feeling safe enough to travel and arrive in her neighbourhood later. In contrast, Amira was no longer able to attend afterschool clubs as a result of living in a neighbourhood she felt was unsafe:

> "I like to be active… I try to go to clubs but… sometimes it's hard to stay… after school and then have to get here, because it's like an hour away so sometimes it gets really dark, so…I just stopped going to clubs. I used to go to basketball club, and… football… I went to netball club as well". (Amira)

In moving further away from her school, Amira has lost the ability to engage in activities that mattered to her, and that allowed her to participate in school-life in a meaningful way by fitting with her identity as an "*active*" person.

While unable to participate in afterschool clubs, Amira found ways to engage positively in the school community during regular school hours. The following extract follows on from Amira describing having to miss tutor time for the *"attendance count"*:

> *Ok so you have to go there instead of tutor time but you're not sure what you have to do there? (Leeya)*
>
> *Mmhmm (Amira)*
>
> *Ok. (Leeya)*
>
> *I'm also student leader there (smiles) (Amira)*
>
> *You're a student leader, oh wow (Leeya)*
>
> *And I put myself up for that… (Amira)*
>
> *So, what kind of things do you have to do as a student leader? (Leeya)*
>
> *I do anti-bullying stuff. I see bullying a lot and I don't think it's very cool so I… put myself into that and I got accepted so... (smile, laugh) (Amira).*

There is a sense of agency when Amira talks about herself as a student leader. She re-positions herself both within the conversation, and within her school life; she moves herself out of the position her school puts her in, that as someone who breaks the rules and therefore has to attend a punitive group about attendance, and 'puts' herself in the positive position of a student leader. Amira's smile (here, and at another time when she talks about her grades), emphasises how important it is for Amira to be viewed positively as a student and as someone who is doing well. The 'accepted' is also poignant, it gives a sense that this is an area in which her school has accepted her, and a way in which she belonged in the school.

Haya also found ways to participate within school hours that aligned with her values around helping others:

> *"So, a new girl came to my school, and I show her around and I translated for her, and I help her, and I let her do what I do. And I help her translate this word to this word. In our community we make sure all our children are fine and they all be happy..." (Haya)*

Haya helped two new students in her school by translating and by taking them around the school to their classes. Haya found that this sometimes made her late for her own classes- *"then I have to give them a reason why I'm late"* but making sure that other children were happy outweighed this cost to

her. Haya repeated how much she was "*trying*" to help these students, illuminating how empathetic Haya is towards them, which was seen to connect to her own experiences of not knowing anyone in school. Haya tries "*to make her happy and not make her sad*", paralleling Haya's own pursuit of happiness.

5.4.3. *Being in school with the burden of homelessness*

The first super-ordinate theme (making sense of homelessness as a family) captured the ways children talked about their experiences as shared with their families. In their accounts, they did not distinguish between being physically or metaphorically with their families, and this gave a sense that they saw themselves as always *with* their families, even when they were in school. The children described critical events that were happening for their families, such as when the family went to the council (Olivia) or when their parents were speaking to their landlords (Haya and Jahmil), as happening while they were in school. This led to the interpretation that this would have impacted the participants' presence and engagement in school. This is best demonstrated by Amira's story.

All of the participants experienced suddenly having nowhere to go, but Amira was explicit that she knew this was going to happen for her family before it actually did, highlighting that there may have been anxiety about homelessness for Amira prior to having to leaving her home. Additionally, Amira continued to be closely involved and knowledgeable about her family's housing situation when living in temporary accommodation, including knowing what position they were on the housing bidding website, which her family looked at "*every week*". This knowledge and involvement came with an impact on her well-being in school. Amira recalled her excitement during those times when her family were told they were "*finally*" getting a house and then the shattering disappointment when this did not happen. This turbulence strongly impacted her mood, and she blamed the council ("*them*")- for her and her family's experience of this, seeing their actions as purposeful:

> "*Sometimes we get news, like "oh yes we're getting a house" then we get a call… it's a mistake and we're not getting a house. It just affects me cos then the whole time in the day I'm… really happy… oh we've finally got a house, but… then the next day it's… "oh you don't have a house". The whole day I'm in a mood… why are they doing this to us, you know what I'm saying?" (Amira)*

The phrase "*you know what I'm saying*", which is also explored elsewhere, was taken to mean Amira is alluding to race. There is a sense that she is referring to discrimination by the council, which she might be seeing as part of the reason her family have not yet been moved out of temporary

accommodation. Amira's interpretation of the council's actions has a negative impact on her well-being.

5.4.4. *Summary*

This super-ordinate theme drew together the different ways in which the participants lives were disrupted by homelessness. Living in temporary accommodation was seen to make getting to school more difficult for some and also impacted being able to see school friends outside of school. Homelessness also disrupted the participants experiences of being in school with regards to their participation, but also being in school with knowledge and worries associated with homelessness. Still, participants found ways to participate and connect to their school communities in ways that mattered to them.

5.5. Experiences of school support: feeling cared about, understood and helped

This theme captures the children's experiences of support from adults in their school and this relates to 1) their sense about whether their teachers care about them, 2) to what extent their teachers knew about or understood their homeless circumstances and 3) the help needed to cope with homelessness now, and the help needed for a better future.

5.5.1. *Feeling cared about*

Most of the children felt that their teachers cared about them. For Haya, this was related to her experience of her school as a community:

> *"…all the teachers care about all (of) us, they think we are all a family, and we work as a community… with each other... "(Haya)*

Haya felt especially cared about by her English teacher. This teacher helped reassure Haya and her peers when stressed about their exams, but also cared generally about Haya's and her peer's happiness. Haya said, "*she really likes us and tries to make us happy*", and felt that in return, "*we be happy if she's there with us"*.

Jahmil shared this experience of a mutual liking between him and his teachers, and went so far as to say, "I love them". Jahmil said this immediately after being asked "*what are your teachers like*" and this speed, as well as his use of "I", as opposed to "you", the personal pronoun more often in the interview, emphasised the strength of his feelings towards his teachers.

For Olivia, the sense that adults in her school cared about her came from feeling known by the adults in her school and being asked how she is:

> *"Everyone knows my name... and all the teachers ask how am I when I walk through the corridors.2 (Olivia)*

Amira and Haya experienced having a special relationship with one particular adult in their school. Haya described that this one teacher had to "*know everything*" about her, including how she was feeling and whether she was eating, which Haya took to mean she cared. Amira had one adult in her school who she could talk to about the difficulties she experienced as a result of living in temporary accommodation and so far away from her school:

> *"She really listens, she calls me out of tutor and listens to what I have to say... "(Amira)*

This experience of being pulled out of tutor time was a positive one, helping Amira feel heard and listened to. This is very different to the times when she is called out of tutor time for the *"attendance count"* where an adult monitored and talked to her about her attendance. That adult who listened to Amira had recently left the school, leaving Amira feeling uncared for by the adults in her school; this is illuminated in the following extract where Amira starts by describing her bus journey:

> *"Really bad (laugh). Sometimes there are drunk people, and sometimes people are so ill, they cough a lot, so it comes to me and then I get ill and I don't go to school and then the school are just like "why are you not in". They don't understand the fact that...what I'm going through is really hard. All they care about is coming to school"(Amira)*

In this extract, Amira sees that her school prioritise attendance, caring about that, rather than caring about her. There is a relationship between caring and understanding; they do not care and therefore they cannot understand what this is like. This connects to the next sub-theme about teacher and school understanding about homelessness.

5.5.2. *Teachers understanding of the children's homelessness*

Some of the children shared what their schools knew about their homelessness, and some what they wanted schools to know and understand; there were very different views about this.

Amira thought that adults in her school did not know *when* she became homeless, or about the break-in that happened in her last home (which Amira saw as one of the reasons she left that home). She believed that this was because her school did not communicate with her parents:

> *"I don't think they [parents] didn't want to tell them [school], they didn't really ask. They don't talk to my parents at all". (Amira)*

Living in temporary accommodation presented barriers to Amira's parents being able to communicate with the school in normal ways:

> *"There is parent's evening, but we usually don't go there because most of my parents evening are like, my dad has work, my mum has work, and the fact you have to drive an hour just to get there. But they get …a letter that [tells them] how am I doing (smile)" (Amira)*

Amira's smile signalled how important it was to Amira that the school told her parents how well she was doing, which was "*very well*". There was a sense that it was important for Amira that her parents knew she was doing well, and she wanted the communication between them. Despite doing academically well in school, Amira felt that teachers held a negative view about her because of her attendance:

> *"I feel like if they knew me then they wouldn't be like "oh like why you absent" they should already know why, cos I like going to school, it's kind of boring in the house but it's like they keep on thinking like "oh she doesn't want to come to school"…it's not that. It's because I have to go through a lot of things just to get to school and a lot of things to just get back to my house..." (Amira)*

Amira experienced a lack of understanding, or empathy, from her school despite them knowing about her living situation and as a result, felt that they did not know her character, and that she is someone who likes coming to school.

While Amira wanted her teachers to listen and understand her experience, Jahmil felt the opposite. He felt that his teachers knew him in school, or who he was as a pupil, and he did not want them to know where he lives or what had happened in the past. Jahmil still felt cared about by his teachers despite them not knowing much about his life outside of school.

The absence of this theme in Olivia's account is noteworthy. It might be that this is because Olivia is no longer attending the same school that she was at when she and her family became homeless. Additionally, Olivia and her family were made homeless during the school holidays, and although they were moved out of area when they went into emergency accommodation, they moved back closer to her primary school before the academic year started again (see Olivia's map). Lastly, Olivia did not feel that where she lived impacted on her school life, therefore, she might not have needed adults in her current school to know about when she became homeless in the past.

5.5.3.   *The help needed to cope with homelessness now and the help needed for a better future*

The participants had varied experiences of feeling helped or supported by their schools, which related to whether they felt understood and cared about, and their experiences of school. This connected to what they thought school could do to help them; for those who felt supported and cared about, the ways they thought school could help them related to helping them attain their aspirations (Haya and Jahmil). For Amira, who saw that where she lived impacted her school life in many ways, especially the length of her journey to school, she wanted her school to help her now. Amira's school supported her in one practical way now, by letting her sleep in the First Aid room, but she wanted more form them:

> *"…sometimes…the bus doesn't come early, and I get there late and, in our school, if you're late you have to have detention after school for a whole hour. So, I'd like them to not make me come early, it's super early. I have to be up at 6...I think it should be, cos we have tutor first lesson and then last lesson as well, so I was thinking… what if I don't have tutor? Cos a lot of people come… half way, the school allows them to come like half way through school, so they come second lesson. So, I would like for them to let me skip like tutor cos we don't do anything in the morning anyways" (Amira)*

It was important for Amira that she arrived at school on time to avoid getting a detention; a detention would be problematic as she needed to get home before it gets dark (she talks about this when describing that she can no longer attend clubs). It was also at odds with Amira's identity as a student. Amira saw that her school made allowances or adjustments for other pupils' start times and wanted them to do the same for her. She seems to make a social comparison between the way her school makes adjustments for others, but not for her. There is an irony in Amira needing to arrive at school on time for tutor, when she is taken out of tutor time weekly to discuss her attendance, which she sees as being directly impacted by her journey to school and subsequent exhaustion.

Amira also wanted her school to make adjustments to the uniform to help on her journey:

> *"I'm used to wearing boots just because it gets really cold, and sometimes it gets really muddy, so I want to wear boots cos it helps me to get to school.... But they're not allowed, I wore them before, and they told me…"no can't wear that" (Amira)*

Amira had to wear open strappy shoes to school meaning she was cold on her school journey. There is a sense that Amira's experiences are made worse by school systems and policies around uniform and attendance, and these impact on her basic need for warmth being met.

Meanwhile, Haya had a positive experience in school; she felt cared about by her teachers and did not believe that where she lived impacted on her school life. When thinking about how school might help her further, Haya said:

> *"I want them to help me…to speak more languages (laugh) because I really want to know more, [speak] other languages cos if I become a translator I gotta know a few languages, so I'll be prepared (laugh)" (Haya)*

Haya was excited as in Year 8 she would be able to pick up Turkish. Haya wanted more help from her school to give her the skills needed for her aspiration. This was similar for Jahmil, who thought that helping with his learning was the most helpful thing his school did. Learning was connected to getting a good job, and for Haya and Jahmil, they saw that school could help them reach their aspirations. Haya felt supported by teachers, and that they were trying "*to make our dreams come true*". This was seen to connect to their hopes for a future with financial security and a bigger home.

5.5.4. *Summary*

This theme connected the ways the children talked about how their school supported them in relation to being homeless. There were remarkable individual differences in the children's experiences with regards to these themes but there were links between the themes for each participant, for example, for Amira, not feeling cared about or that adults understood her experience left her wanting much greater support, while Jahmil felt cared about, did not want his school to know more about his experience and therefore did not need his school to provide any other individual support. Whether children wanted more help now, or later, varied according to their school experiences, and the impact being homeless and living in temporary accommodation was having on their lives.

6. Discussion

6.1. Chapter Overview

The primary aim of this research was to explore the experiences of homeless children through child voice research. An additional aim of the research was to inform school and EP practice. IPA allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings according to the research questions and in relation to the existing literature. I will then draw on psychological theory to consider the findings, before outlining the implications of this research for school and EP practice.

6.2. Answering RQ1 - How do children and young people make sense of their experiences of homelessness and of living in temporary accommodation with their families?

The first RQ was concerned with children's experiences of homelessness and how they made sense of this. It is aligned with the first aim of this study, to hear children's voices directly. One of my reflections from the literature review was that previous research had mostly focused on children's experiences of the places they lived after leaving their home. This revealed little understanding of children's perceptions or experiences of leaving their home, or what happened prior to leaving their home. RQ1 spoke to the wider definition of homelessness, which sees homelessness as a continuum, that families are homeless from when it is expected that they will have to leave their home (Fitzpatrick, et al, 2019).

I will address the findings relating to RQ 1 within two sections and explain how 1) children made sense of their experiences with their families, and 2) they made sense of their experiences through comparisons with their lives in the past.
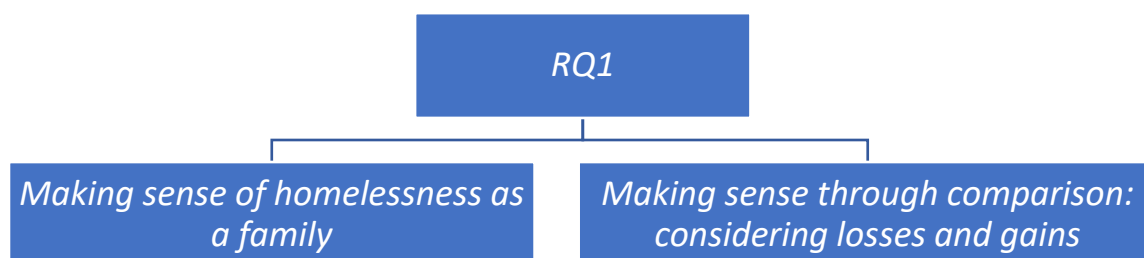
Figure 8: Answering RQ1

6.2.1. *Making sense of homelessness as a family*

The findings from the current study showed that children presented their experiences as shared with their family. There was a notion of *this happened to us* and *this is what life is like for us*. This may have seemed obvious, in that the very nature of family homelessness is that children are accompanied. However, the blurred lines and lack of distinction between the times when the children were physically present and not present at key moments (e.g., at the council, talking to landlords) was an unanticipated finding, and gave family homelessness a different meaning. There was a sense that the children were always *with* their families. This finding was not found to be discussed so explicitly within the literature reviewed for this study, but it is connected to findings about family relationships.

The participants in this study described close and caring relationships with their families, and this is consistent with findings elsewhere (e.g., in Mustafa, 2004 & Kirkman et al, 2010). While other research has found evidence for family tensions and some poor relationships between family members (e.g., Nettleton, 2001; Kirkman et al, 2010), the differences in these relationships were influenced by family disruption, for example, when parental separation or domestic violence had led to homelessness. This kind of disruption was not described by children who participated in this research. This relates to issues of sample to be discussed further below.

As highlighted by Kirkman et al (2010), the impact of homelessness on sibling relationships is not a well-researched topic. Although this was not a central focus in the present study, the findings showed that closeness was especially felt in sibling relationships. Siblings provided emotional support and the presence of siblings in the same school was important. The children in this study spent a lot of time with their siblings, travelling to school with them, and three participants shared bedrooms with their siblings; this likely impacted their feeling of a shared experience.

The close proximity in which the children were living with their families evokes a notion of physical, as well as emotional closeness. In these small spaces, there was evidence that children were close to conversations about housing and became part of them. For example, Amira described how her family checked the housing register every week. Similarly, Mustafa (2004) found that CYP were often present for discussions about tenancies and housing. This adds to the picture of experiencing homelessness together, and also talks to the additional responsibilities of homeless children. Polillo et al (2018) found that young people had to take on adult responsibilities such as household chores, but also be an emotional support for their parents and siblings. This was considered in light of what Jurkovic (1998) termed emotional and instrumental parentification. Emotional parentification refers to a child taking on emotional needs and responsibilities of the family, while instrumental parentification is when a child takes on process responsibilities, such as household chores.

Children in this study did not describe additional responsibilities that indicated instrumental parentification, which might have been because all had older siblings. However, knowledge about their housing situation, and concerns for their family's health and well-being might be indicative of emotional parentification. For example, Haya had concerns about her mum's health needs due to the stairs in the accommodation, while Amira worried about potential break-ins and the exposure of her family to disease. Burton (2007) says that parentification is contingent on what is expected depending on a child's age, and also on cultural norms. It could be considered that in experiencing homelessness as a family, some of the children held knowledge and concerns not typical for their age. However, it is likely that the age of the participants in this study was the reason they held knowledge about their homeless situation. While other research has shown that parents can hide their homeless situation from young children, for example, by suggesting the family are on a camping trip (Kirkman et al, 2009), it is unlikely that parents of children at this age could have hidden this from their children. The children in this study knew that they had 'nowhere to go', and this knowledge, as well as experience of having to leave their home, is an essential part of their homeless experience, making theirs a different experience to other groups of children, such as children living in poverty or in poor housing conditions.

Children in this study talked about a time when they had "nowhere to go". As described in the findings, this was not just about shelter, but was connected to no having a place to go that was theirs and where they could be as a family. This can be conceptualised as 'displacement', defined as "the state that results from the loss of a familiar physical or social environment" (Vandemark, 2007, p.242). Vandemark (2007) states that the displacement resulting from homelessness, affects a person's sense of self, of place and of belonging, as homelessness is not only the loss of a physical domicile, but a diminished sense of connectedness. Belonging is a complex concept. It is experienced through meaningful places in our lives (Fullilove, 1996) but also through social networks (Hill, 2006). The findings here suggest that in not having a sense of belonging through place, relationships became more important. Children experienced stronger belonging through their relationships with their families, at a time when there was a lack of belonging to a physical place. Belonging is returned to later in relation to school belonging.

In this shared experience there was a notion of 'them' and 'us', and children described the actions of others that impacted on their family. 'Them' included landlords or the council and were perceived differently by the participants, either as a source of help, like for Olivia, or a source of anger and feelings of mistreatment, as for Amira. These perceptions of the council, reflect the ways the children's lives are impacted by interacting systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1973). Several studies have focused on how children and their families want to be supported by services, (e.g., Moore et al, (2009); Anderson,

Stuttaford & Vosatanis (2006) and Lorelle & Grothaus, 2015), but to my knowledge, homeless children's perceptions about wider systems, and how they relate to their homelessness have not yet been explored explicitly. This is despite evidence showing that homeless CYP emphasise the impact of the council in their lives, e.g., CRAE (2018b). Distrust and disillusion in the services that serve to protect us likely impacts on homeless children's sense of safety and belonging within their communities.

6.2.2. *Making sense through comparison: considering losses and gains*

The findings from this this study showed that children made sense of homelessness by comparing their lives before and after being homeless, but also through comparisons with others. In this way they considered what was "ordinary" or "normal", and how their experiences differed from that. They considered what they had lost from living in a home that was not theirs.

The participants' experiences of loss often resulted from living under rules and restrictions, which led to no longer feeling at home. Consistent with the findings from Moore et al (2008), pets were found to be a key feature of the concept of home for Olivia. It is commonplace that temporary accommodations do not accept pets, and so families must rehome their pets when they are homeless. Given that pets can be a protective factor for resilience and well-being, there are calls for more pet-friendly accommodations for the homeless to prevent this loss (e.g., see Scanlon et al, 2020).

The impact of living under rules and restrictions was seen to be greater for the children in this study who lived in shared accommodation. This supports other research that has shown that families living in shared accommodation have a worse experience (Pennington & Banks, 2015). The participants in this study reported having little control over their physical environment, specifically, in relation to heating and internet services. As well as indicating a lack of control over services, the loss of good internet connection meant that Jahmil lost being able to connect with his friends in normal ways, e.g., by playing Fortnite. Limited access to the internet in temporary accommodation is consistent with findings from other research (e.g., Polillo et al, 2018) and is important to consider in light of the global pandemic, when poor internet would have been a barrier to CYP accessing remote learning, as well as connecting with friends when in person contact was limited.

The difficulties of living under rules and restrictions and the impact on CYP's social lives was found in this research, as well as in the literature reviewed. For the older participants in the study by Polillo et al (2018), (aged 16-24), autonomy within daily routines and their social lives was impacted by living in rules, and not feeling at home was related to not being able to come and go as they please. The younger participants in this study (12-13) however, wanted to be social with their peers living in the same accommodation as them. This was because they no longer lived close to their peers from school

and did not want to travel to the temporary accommodation any later because of the dangers associated with location. This meant that interacting and connecting with peers in the temporary accommodation became more important to them but there were barriers this due to rules. These rules were to support the varying needs of the families living together.

Play is a process or activity that is freely chosen and enjoyable; it provides opportunities for early learning, and to develop social and emotional competencies, such as trust, empathy, agency, and resilience (Erikson, 1963; Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978). Schlembach (2017) reflects on the lack of opportunities for play for young children experiencing homelessness, and while her commentary focuses on the literature pertaining to shelters serving children aged 0- 5 years, she raises that shelters vary in their resources and their capacities to meet the complex needs of families with young children, which is a relevant point for consideration here. The capacity for a temporary accommodation to meet a family's needs is made difficult when there are a range of families living together with children of different ages. There exists a friction between the needs of the younger children and the older children. Not being able to play freely or to have friends over to play, were restrictions that affected the participants' normal experiences of play. This resulted in the children's experiences of not wanting to live with other people, which is a prominent finding in the literature (Mustafa, 2004; Pennington & Banks, 2015; Kirkman et al, 2010).

Consistent with the research, this study found that living in temporary accommodation meant living in small spaces. Participants in this study felt the impact of living in a small space on the ways they wanted to be with their families, and that was in the kitchen. The previous research by Cronley et al (2019) and Share (2020) showed that homeless families experienced challenges to being able to prepare and consume food, but this was as a result of living in shared accommodation and sharing facilities. The children in this study all lived in flats with their own kitchens, and so the problem felt by the participants, was that the kitchen was not big enough for them to be together while food was being prepared. This was a valued time for the children, and a way they experienced loss as a result of becoming homeless and living in temporary accommodation. This ordinary aspect of family life was missed.

The comparisons that children made to make sense of living in temporary accommodation were not all bad, and there was evidence that children looked to the positive consequences resulting from losing their previous home. These were considered to be imagined gains (things they thought would be better) and real gains (things that were actually better). Amira saw that moving into temporary accommodation would provide safety for her family, and other research has found that moving into temporary accommodation can provide a safer place for families. However, this seems to be more

specific to families escaping domestic violence (Moore, McArthur & Noble-Carr, 2008), and for Amira, who frequently described the dangers of living in temporary accommodation, there was no actual improved sense of safety and mirrors a common finding regarding experiences of feeling unsafe when living in temporary accommodation in the literature (e.g., Mustafa, 2004; CARE, 2018). Similarly, Haya had hoped that moving into temporary accommodation would be positive for her mum with regards to accessibility, but there was no actual benefit of this. Considering the possible positive consequences became part of the reason Amira and Haya saw that they moved, which was seen to help them cope with the loss of their home, and to give a sense of control and agency. There was one very real gain for the children living in shared accommodation, and this was the friendships and connections they made with other children. Close friendships existed between the children and a familial routine of playing together in the evenings. The positives of living with other families have also been highlighted in other research (Moore et al, 2008).

6.3. Answering RQ2- What are the school-based experiences of homeless children and young people?

This second RQ was concerned with learning more about the school-based experiences of homeless children in the UK. It connects to the second aim of this study which was to inform and have implications for school and EP practice and policy. Within this section, I discuss the findings relating to two superordinate themes: 1) disruptions to education, and 2) experiences of school support.

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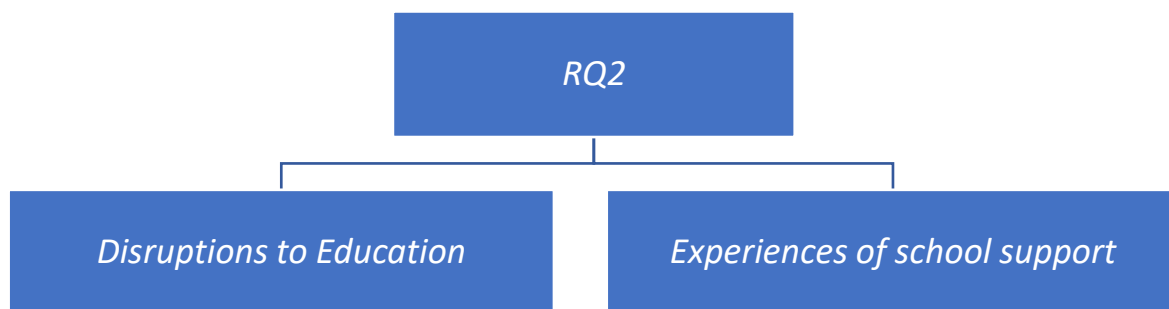
Figure 9: Answering RQ2

6.3.1. *Disruptions to Education*

The findings from this research showed that homeless children experienced multiple disruptions within their education as a result of moving into temporary accommodation. In the first instance, homelessness meant moving further away from their schools. Still, all children in this study were able to continue at their same school and had not experienced the multiple changes of school that have

been shown elsewhere, for example, Moore & McArthur (2011) found that 11 out of 29 children from that study had moved more than three times. However, as shown within Olivia's account, moving into stable housing can mean another move out of 'area' or community, and it seemed likely that Olivia would change schools when she moved into stable housing. As such mobility, or the challenges associated with continuity, continue when children stop being homeless. It was considered from the findings in this study, that the uncertainty of where a next housing placement would be, might have influenced the participants' (particularly Amira's) decision to continue at their same school.

The findings demonstrated the negotiations that participants made between maintaining school friendships and having longer journeys to school or changing schools and needing to fit in and make new friends. This was happening at the time of Olivia's interview. Participants based their decisions on their current experiences of school. For Amira, this meant staying in her school to keep the protection of friendships. For Olivia, a new school was seen as an opportunity for a new start following difficult relationships with peers. In this way, there were positives seen to changing school, and this was different to the more common findings relating to fears about fitting in and making friends (e.g., Moore & McArthur, 2011 and Begg et al, 2017). However, this could relate to there being a sense of choice for Olivia about what she could do. Indeed, choice between mobility and continuity is not always available to children, especially when children are moved 'out of area' and journeys to school become too long. We might also consider that younger children, or children who depend on their parents for transport to school (e.g., children with SEND), likely experience less choice about mobility.

As mentioned in the literature review, continuity in school can lead to longer journeys for children living in temporary accommodation, and this was evident here. The average national trip time to school between 2015-2019 in the UK was 19 minutes (Department of Transport, 2020). Amira had a one-hour bus journey to school, as would Olivia if she continues at her current school after moving into stable housing. Amira saw her journey to school as risky and detrimental to her health. This is also a shared finding; hazardous bus journeys were described by participants in the study by Nettleton (2001). A difficult journey to school was seen to impact on opportunities for sleep and study, and an area in which Amira drew comparisons with her peers and felt the impact of homelessness.

Supporting homeless children to travel to their existing schools was an issue raised by Nettleton (2001), who found that a withdrawn agreement from the council regarding transport had resulted in a homeless child having to change school. A brief exploration of current LA policies for supporting the travel needs of homeless children showed variation between councils. One council was found to offer

free travel for pupils living in temporary accommodation for up to two terms, to enable continuity "while arrangements are made for transition to the nearest suitable school" (Bristol City Council, 2021) [27]. This policy sets the expectation then that a child will change schools when they move into temporary accommodation. There were also stipulations to receiving the travel support; the temporary local authority accommodation address must be beyond two miles from school, and the child must have been attending their nearest suitable school before they moved into temporary local authority accommodation. These stipulations would have meant the families in this study would not have received financial support for their children to continue at their schools, exemplifying how policies at the wider systems levels can impact on children's experiences of school whilst homeless (Bronfenbrenner, 1973).

The results from this study also found that homelessness disrupted children participating in the ways they wanted to, for example, Amira was no longer able to attend after-school clubs. This further supports the evidence that homeless children experience 'missing out' on activities within the wider environment of school (e.g., Kirby et al, 2015; Pennington & Banks, 2015). It was evident here that children found ways to overcome barriers to participation and took on roles within their school community that fit with their values. For Haya, this was supporting new pupils to her school through translation, and for Amira, it was taking on a role as a student leader. Amira describes putting herself forward for that and being accepted in that role. Linking to Goodenow's definition of belonging (explored further below) which includes the notion of acceptance, we see here that children found ways to be accepted, and participate within their school communities, and acted with agency.

The ability to participate in the school environment was shown to be disrupted by the location of the participants' accommodations. Living in a safer neighbourhood enabled participation in after-school clubs, while the location of shared temporary accommodation in an area of threat and risk, acted as a barrier to children participating in after-school-clubs, or meeting with friends after school. This echoes the more recent prompts to consider the impact of the built environment on CYP's experiences of homelessness (Cronley et al, 2019). Participants in this study wanted to live closer to their schools, and this was related to being able to connect with friends and to participate in their school in regular ways.

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[27] There is an exception for children in Key Stage 4 (at the time of being moved) who can be supported in their current school until the end of Key Stage 4, as long as the school remains beyond 2 miles from the child's temporary local authority accommodation address.

Finally, an important finding for educators and practitioners to consider, is that education was seen to be disrupted by emotional impact of homelessness and having to be in school with the burden of homelessness. This relates to findings that children experience homelessness as a family, and therefore see themselves *with* their families, even when they are in school. There was evidence that children's well-being was affected in school, in response to housing information. This is in accordance with other research with school professionals, who describe the impact of homelessness on the emotional well-being of children when they are in school (Teall, 2019; Kirby et al, 2015).

6.4.   Experiences of school support: feeling cared about, understood and helped

The children in this study had varying views and experiences of feeling both cared about and helped by adults in their school. However, this was not found to be contingent on whether adults knew about their experiences of homelessness. Indeed, Jahmil felt cared about by his teachers, but preferred that they did not know about where he lived. On the other hand, Amira's school knew she was homeless and about her long journey to school, but she felt that adults in her school did not care about her, and instead prioritised her attendance, as opposed to her wellbeing. Existing research has also found this variation amongst children's' feelings about *identification*, and the consequences of that (e.g., Jones et al, 2018; Moore & McArthur, 2011). Findings here support the notion that children and their families should have a choice about telling their stories and with whom (Moore & McArthur, 2011), and highlights the need for individualised approaches for supporting homeless children and their families.

The findings from Amira's account indicated a lack of understanding amongst adults in school relating to her experiences of homelessness. While there is a scarcity of research about teacher's experiences of teaching homeless children, there is evidence pertaining to teacher's beliefs about homelessness. Wright, Nankin, Boonstra and Blair (2018) found that pre-service teachers held misconceptions about homeless children, including what constitutes homelessness. Research has also shown that teachers can hold deficit perspectives about homeless children (Kim, 2013a), and views that mirror a public discourse that homeless children and their families are abnormal (Kim, 2013b). Kirby et al (2015) found that the negative views held by teachers led to more punitive punishments. Taken together, it is likely that the beliefs teachers have about homeless children affect children's' experiences of school, including their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Belonging is a basic need that motivates human behaviour (Maslow, 1943). It is a "subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship" (Mahar et al., 2013). Belonging in school

has been defined as the "extent to which they (pupils) feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others- especially teachers and other adults in school social environment" (Goodenow, 1993, p.61). The themes identified in this research of feeling cared about and supported in school are implicated in the concept of belonging.

As described in Goodenow's definition, teachers play a key role in supporting children's sense of belonging, and this has been evidenced in empirical research (e.g., Uslu & Gizir, 2017). Teachers are key figures for all children, but caring and supportive relationships from an adult in school foster resilience for children experiencing homelessness (Masten, 2001). Teachers can also foster positive interactions in school with peers and adults, building a greater sense of belonging within the school community (Anooshian, 2003). Findings from Haya and Jahmil's account support the importance of teachers in helping homeless children feel cared about in their school community. Findings here also suggest that teachers' ability to show they care might be prevented by school policies relating to uniform and attendance, as shown in Amira's account.

Another key aspect of the definition of belonging given by Goodenow (1993) is feeling supported by others. Findings in this study showed variation in the type of support participants wanted from their schools, and this related to the ways that their schools were currently supporting them. Haya and Jahmil, who described very positive experiences of school, felt supported in their learning, and the development of skills needed for their aspirations: their schools were viewed positively because they gave them an education. Haya felt her teachers tried "to make our dreams come true" and wanted school to help them develop skills needed for the jobs they wanted. This relates to findings by Begg et al (2013), where homeless children believed education was a means of getting out of poverty and having a successful career. For Amira, who had a negative experience of school, she wanted her school to help her now, and in tangible ways. Schools' ability to provide targeted support for homeless children hinges on their knowledge that homelessness is happening. One way that Amira saw her school were helping her was by letting her sleep in the First Aid room, therefore supporting a physiological need. The additional support Amira also wanted was related to her physiological needs, for warmth and rest- being allowed to wear boots to keep her warm on her journey to school, and to arrive in school slightly later so that she did not have to wake up so early. Again, these findings reinforce that to help homeless children feel supported in their school, and nourish a sense of belonging, support should be consistent with values and individual experiences of the CYP.

Another important finding in this study was evidence of diminished communication between family and school; Amira described that her school do not talk to her parents, but that this was something she wanted, especially with regards to achievements in learning. Previous research has shown evidence for poor relationships between homeless parents and their children's schools; Morris and Butt (2003) found that parents could feel alienated and judged by their children's schools, which led to disengagement. In considering the concept of belonging, research shows that family involvement at home and at school are predictors of a sense of school belonging among adolescents (Uslu & Gizir, 2017). It can therefore be suggested that developing positive family-school relationships for homeless families will support children's sense of belonging.

Findings from this study showed that feeling a sense of belonging to the school community supported homeless children to have a positive experience of school. Haya described a culture of caring for and helping one another in her school, and she shared these values. Existing research has shown evidence for schools adopting philosophies that emphasise community to support the needs of their homeless pupils. These include general inclusive practices but also some specific to homelessness. For example, Teall (2019) describes that some schools facilitated discussions of poverty and homelessness in social studies lessons. However, other research has found teacher's confidence in broaching homelessness as a pedagogical topic to be low (Kim, 2020). While schools were found to want to support homelessness through practical ways, such as by collecting toys, canned foods and clothes, teachers expressed concerns about discussing homelessness with children (Kim, 2020). Talking about homelessness in schools might be one way to increase homeless children's sense of belonging the community, by building empathy and challenging negative views within the school community. However, given the experiences highlighted here and in the literature regarding identification, a sensitive approach that reflects the wishes of homeless pupils would need to be adopted.

6.5. Consideration of Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation

In light of the previous discussions around belonging, and the common utilisation of Maslow's theory within the homelessness literature, but also within psychology more widely, I will now consider the findings of this study in relation to Maslow's Theory of Motivation (1943). However, I do so with a view of considering how misconceptions of the theory might lead to deficit or deterministic views of homeless children and highlighting the importance of challenging beliefs relating to the model in educational practice.

Maslow's (1943) theory is one of human motivation; he proposed that five needs, that could be arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency from lower-order to higher-order needs, are important for human existence. These needs range from range from basic physiological needs to self-actualisation, that is, a person being all that they can be. An example of a traditional representation of the hierarchy of needs is shown in Figure 10.

While one of the most prevalent theories used in psychology, there are common misconceptions, and the theory has been widely misrepresented (Wininger & Norman, 2010). Maslow (1987) sought to rectify "the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges" (p. 53), but it remains a common misconception that satisfaction of needs is "all or none". Wininger and Norman (2010) reviewed Maslow's work between 1943-1987, and summarised his five key ideas:

- Human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs
- Preconditions and cognitive needs exist that affect human motivation
- Needs are organized in a hierarchy of propensity in which more basic needs must be more or less met (rather than all or none) prior to higher needs
- The order of needs is not rigid but instead may be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences
- Most behaviour is multi-motivated, that is, simultaneously determined by more than one basic need
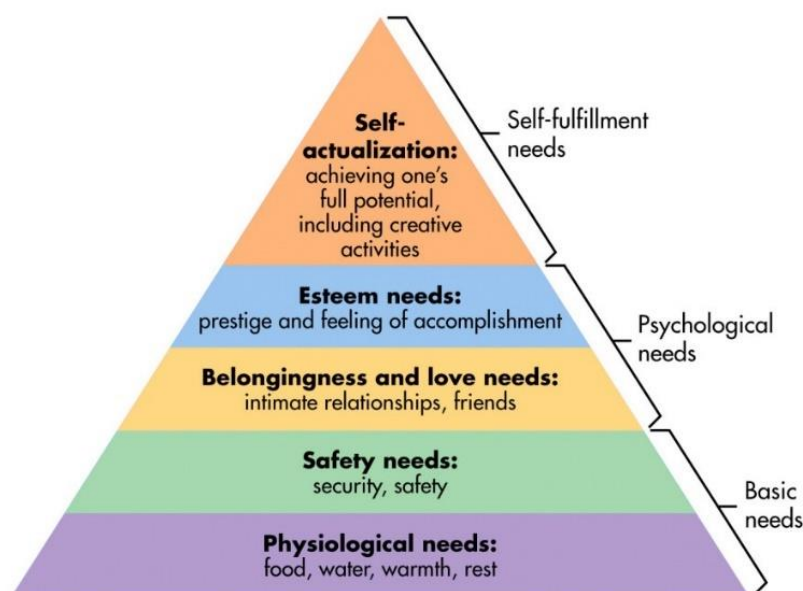
Figure 10: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory has been applied within research with homeless adults (e.g., Patterson & Tweed, 2009), but was also applied within the research reviewed as part of the literature review for this research. Cronley et al (2019) drew on Maslow's theory to consider that a disconnection with health behaviours might be because those experiencing homelessness are consumed with meeting their basic needs. This conclusion hints to an 'all or nothing' interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy, i.e., that young people could not consider other needs when their basic needs were not met. However, the findings from this study suggested that children could have higher level needs met, even when lower-level needs were not being fully met.

There was evidence in this study that children's basic needs were not being met while living in temporary accommodation, including needs for security and safety. This was most apparent for Amira, and as a result, it was support for her physiological needs (warmth and rest) that she wanted from her school. Yet, the children were seen to be fulfilling their psychological, and self-fulfilment needs. For example, Amira described doing very well in school academically, had very close friendships, and found ways to participate in her school in line with her core values, for example, by putting herself forward to be a student leader. This fits with Maslow's guide that needs can be flexible, relevant to external circumstances, and that individuals might have needs met to different degrees (or percentages) while moving towards the higher-level needs. This individuality was an important aspect of Maslow's theory and is a helpful framework to consider that homeless children will need and want different types of support.

Still, Amira considered that she would be doing better in school if she did not live in temporary accommodation. This was because of the impact of the long bus journey on her physical health and wellbeing. This leads us to consider a more useful understanding of the relationships between the needs, that lower-level needs can enable the conditions that maximise learning. Indeed, Noltemajor Bush, Patton and Bergen (2012) found a positive relationship between deficiency needs and growth needs, and that the factor most significantly related to achievement outcomes was access to health and dental care. This encourages us to consider that while homeless children can and will strive towards higher-level needs, this can still be impacted by homelessness.

Maslow stated that for children, physiological needs include order and stability. Meeting these needs is made difficult for homeless children due to issues relating to mobility at home and at school. Children in this study were motivated to have stability and continuity in school, but this also related to their psychological needs, and the belonging they experienced through friendships. Research has shown that friends are important to students' sense of belonging in school (Osterman, 2000) and that within a community of friends, adolescents experience psychological belonging that can energise their

school engagement and create an affective tie to the school (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005,). One of the key findings from this research was that friendships were a key part of the negotiations the participants made between mobility and continuity. Children in this study were motivated by needs for belonging though friendships, wanting to live closer to their friends and connect with them in normal ways. The extent to which this was found to be important for children in this study has implications for how the social needs of homeless children are supported (see below).

Given the common misconceptions regarding Maslow's theory held by educational professionals (see Wininger & Norman, 2010), there is a risk that the false interpretation of "all or nothing" will lead to a deficit view of homeless children. That is, professionals might consider that children cannot reach the higher-level needs, including academic achievement. Indeed, CYP in the study by Jones et al (2018) reported teachers having low expectations of what they could achieve. The findings of this study demonstrate that homeless children are motivated to meet higher level needs and can self-actualise despite lower level needs not being met. While supporting the physiological needs of homeless children is vital, professionals will also need to target support to other areas of need that matter to children, such as connecting with friends, to support their belonging needs.

Because Maslow's theory has been widely used within educational psychology and is commonly introduced in teacher education (Patrick et al, 2011), in advocating for increased consideration of the needs of homeless children, it might also be important to consider the need to challenge extreme interpretations of Maslow's theory that might be keenly applied.

6.6.   Implications for schools and for EP practice

One of the aims of this research was that insight gained from the findings would have implications for schools, and for EP practice. In this section, I will first discuss what has been learnt in this study that can be used to consider the ways in which schools can support the needs of homeless children. I will then consider how EPs can support schools to do this, as well as other implications for EP practice, including the influence EPs could have in their role as LA officers.

6.6.1.   *Implications for school support*

As discussed in the previous chapter, the ways in which schools can provide meaningful support that targets the individual needs of homeless children is dependent on their knowledge that it is happening, including specific knowledge about the pupil's individual experiences of homelessness. This research showed how varied children's experiences can be, of 'home' and of school, relating to factors about the type of temporary accommodation they live in, and its location. The findings from

this study have also emphasised the need for children to be kept at the centre of support planning, as some children prefer not to be identified as homeless in their schools, and this has implications for how they might feel about receiving additional support. Still, there was evidence in this study that schools could still be seen as supportive, even when there was not an open dialogue between student and school regarding their experiences. As such, homeless children can still be supported in their schools through provision considered to be ordinary, and beneficial for all children.

Within table 7, I summarise some of the key learning points from this study regarding ways to support homeless children, structured according to Maslow's hierarchy, as this is a useful way to reflect on the different aspects of children's lives, and school experiences that are impacted by homelessness. To emphasise the discussion points raised in the previous section, it is not intended that this be interpreted that the order of needs is rigid; schools should target provision across the areas that homeless CYP require support in.

	Implications for support based on study findings
Basic Needs • Physiological Needs • Safety Needs	• Spaces to rest in school were helpful • Further support for rest is possible through modified start time/ timetable. This could replace the use of punitive measures regarding attendance • Uniform policies that support need for warmth on long bus journeys
Psychological Needs • Belonging • Self-Esteem	• Philosophies of community • Implications for holistic, whole-family approaches, including increased home-school communication to support pupil's belonging • The importance of friendships, and barriers to connecting with friends outside of school highlights the importance of pupils having time to connect with friends. Punitive policies regarding attendance and lateness will affect already limited opportunities to be with friends • The importance of relationships with adults in school that promote pupil's sense of feeling loved and care for. Key adults were seen to support this.
Self-Fulfilment Needs	• Supporting pupil's participation within school hours in ways that are important to them • Individualised support around career planning, person- centred work around aspirations

6.6.2. *Implications for EP practice*

The findings of this study provide insights for how EP practice can be developed to support the needs of homeless children. Issues of mobility, and the challenges to continuity presented by living in temporary accommodation, mean that homeless children experience many barriers to accessing education. This can continue after a child is homeless, as a move into stable housing can mean another move out of area. I would argue that EPs should have knowledge of the factors affecting homeless children, to effect change at an individual, group and systemic level. For EPs working in high areas of homelessness, this knowledge and awareness will be even more important.

EPs are scientist-practitioners, and use psychological skills, knowledge and understanding for the benefit of CYP through research, consultation, assessment, intervention and training, at organisational, group or individual levels, across settings (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010). Based on the findings of this study, and my learning as a researcher, I will consider how EP practice within these five domains could be developed for working with homeless children.

Research- The literature review undertaken for this thesis highlighted that research that has elicited children's voice is scarce in comparison to that concerned with pathways into homelessness, or the impact of homelessness. This is particularly lacking within a UK context. There were many gaps in knowledge identified in the literature review, and possible future directions for research are discussed below. EPs are well placed to conduct sensitive research of this kind, providing a good fit to the call for researchers with practitioner skills to conduct research with homeless children (Moore et al, 2008). However, gaining access and engagement with this hidden group was found to be incredibly challenging. Developing relationships within the LA with housing teams might facilitate research opportunities, as well as systemic change (considered further below). EPs might also do well to apply knowledge learnt from other educational psychology research with other mobile groups, such as military children (Hayllar, 2018), while staying mindful to differences that might be experienced due to a sense of belonging within a military community and the stigma associated with homelessness.

Training- Within this domain of EP work, it is useful to reflect on both EPs receiving training and delivering training. Undertaking research in this area exposed my lack of knowledge regarding housing legislation, terminology, and a general sense of 'what happens' to homeless families. Since engaging in this research, I have worked with several homeless children. Knowledge of systems and processes, as well as knowledge gained from the findings of this study, has served me well in practice. This might also be beneficial to other EPs.

In terms of delivering training, EPs could share knowledge regarding psychological concepts, such as belonging and parentification, to support other professionals working with homeless children. Homelessness is discussed within an Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs) framework (e.g., Ellis & Dietz, 2017), and might already be an aspect of training on ACES and trauma informed practice. Although, some ACES research excludes family homelessness, due to negative relationships with poor outcomes (e.g., Lewer et al, 2019), and so its presence in an ACE framework might not be appropriate. A key reflection within this research was the possibility of a misapplication of Maslow's theory within educational practice with regards to the needs of homeless children. Wherever homelessness does form part of training, EPs would do well to challenge misconceptions, and emphasise that pupils can self-actualise despite other needs not being fully met.

Intervention- Findings from this study indicated that having a close relationship with an adult in school helped two of the children feel cared about and connected to the school community. This highlights a potential role for EPs in providing supervision or coaching for key adults working with homeless children. Another potential area for intervention is using person centred approaches with homeless pupils to support them in reaching their aspirations. Approaches such as Planning Alternative Tomorrow's with Hope (PATH), are commonly used in EP practice and offer pupils the opportunity to plan the next practical steps to reaching their dreams (Newton, Wilson & Darwin, 2016). Finally, this study highlights the importance of intervention at a systemic level, where EPs could have a role in developing more inclusive school policies, for example, regarding uniform and attendance.

Assessment –There is a shared understanding amongst psychologists that to fully understand a problem, it is necessary to ask the person most concerned (see Kelly, 1955, personal construct psychology). This philosophy guides EP assessment, or direct work with children, and enables a holistic view of a problem situation. At the core of this study is the importance of listening to and speaking to homeless children, in doing so, the complexity and unique experiences of homeless children were explored. Through assessment, EPs can use methodologies that enable meaningful participation of homeless children and use their views to affect changes they want to see.

Consultation- Consultation allows EPs to work at the individual, group, and systemic level. In light of the findings of this research regarding family-school relationships, consultation is a means in which EPs could support schools to develop their relationships with parents. At a systemic level, EPs could raise the profile of homeless children with their link schools at planning meetings, where the needs of vulnerable children in the school are discussed, and when EP work is planned out.

As has been presented here, there are a great many opportunities for EPs to develop practice with regards to supporting homeless children. Critically, I would also argue that there is scope for EPs to work in multi-agency ways within the LA to affect change a policy level. This includes transport policies, as well as safeguarding policies for the mobility of children between areas. Through joined up working and sharing knowledge of the psychological impact of homelessness on children, I believe EPs can have a role in improving the statutory support homeless families receive.

6.7. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I drew on existing research to discuss the findings of this study in relation to the two research questions. I then considered the findings in light of Maslow's theory, demonstrating that while the children in this research had unmet basic needs, they acted with agency and found ways to participate in school in ways that mattered to them, indicating that they were self-actualising. Maslow's theory was also presented with a view of considering how misconceptions of the commonly used theory might evoke deficit notions of homeless children; in seeking to raise awareness of the experiences of homeless children, EPs should be mindful to challenge these misconceptions. The findings presented several opportunities for developing EP practice, and these were discussed. The next chapter concludes this thesis.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter I will consider the strengths and limitations of this research, including the contribution of this study to educational psychology. I will then situate this research in the current climate and briefly consider the findings in light of the global pandemic. Finally, I present a reflexive account of my journey as a researcher, as well as some concluding remarks.

7.1. Strengths and Limitations

I argue that the greatest strength of this research is that it has allowed for the stories and experiences of a hidden group of children to be heard. It contributes to a field of scarce literature, in which research was from the UK was particularly lacking. The literature search undertaken for this research found one published study from the UK, outside of the grey literature, that had explored children's experiences of homelessness. This research contributes to a body of EP literature that has sought to use qualitative research to hear the voices of children, especially the voices of hidden, marginalised, and disadvantaged groups of children. Children have the capacity to competently reflect and interpret their social worlds and should be afforded the opportunity to participate in processes that affect their lives (Moore, McArthur & Noble-Carr, 2008). Both Amira and Haya shared positive experiences of the interview:

> … this has made me happy because I wished I can say to someone my feelings and say what is happening in my heart. Sometimes I feel…sad, I don't have anyone to talk with and I want to say what I say in my heart …. make me now happy (smiles) (Haya)

Because homeless children are a hidden and potentially vulnerable group, there were associated challenges to recruitment. As a result, a sensitive and nuanced approach to conducting this research ethically was essential. A limitation of this research is that each participant was only interviewed once. This approach was taken with a view of minimising disruption to the families' lives, and so that I was not perceived to be a source of ongoing support. However, meeting participants more than once enables for a checking in about interpretation and can give participants more time to think about their experiences (Smith et al, 2009).

As described in the methodology chapter, the use of gatekeepers in this study, and in research more widely, is not without risk. Future research would do well to further consider how best to reach homeless children and their families to enable them to participate in research about their lives.

The outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020 brought recruitment for this study to an end. While participants from this study were living in different types of temporary accommodation, and this provided insight into different experiences of shared and non-shared accommodation, CYP living in other types of accommodation, such as B&Bs were not reached. Furthermore, all of the children from this study had the same pathway into homelessness, and therefore the views of children who are homeless for other reasons, including those pathways characterised by family disruption are not represented here. It might be that those children experience homelessness markedly differently, and not necessarily as a family. However, the consideration of homelessness as a continuum reflects that it would be impossible to recruit a sample that reflects the homeless population of children as a whole. Regarding sample, Smith et al (2009) stipulate that IPA should use a "fairly homogenous sample, for whom the research question will be meaningful", and so this criterion was met. Further reflections regarding ethnicity and sample are considered in the next section.

A final reflection on a possible weakness of this research is that it was not framed as being about homelessness with the CYP who participated. The word 'homeless' was used with the CYP's parents, in person and in the information sheets (see Appendix 9.8), however, the decision was made to be guided by the language parents used with their children, and the language that children used themselves in the interviews, i.e., if they had used 'homeless', I would have too. I was concerned that using 'homeless', when they had not, could upset and distress the CYP, making them feel more worried about their previous and/ or current living situation than they might have been otherwise. While this decision was made with the participants well-being in mind, I am encouraged to consider the possible deception, or disingenuous nature of not framing the research as about homelessness with the participants themselves. There is a difficult balance to strike here, and further discussion from researchers in the field about their approach would be very welcome. I only noted one reference to this ethical consideration in the literature reviewed, and that was by Kirkman et al, (2010), who described not emphasising the concept with children, and often not naming it.

The absence of the word 'homeless' in the CYP's accounts in this research is an interesting point of reflection and provokes a consideration of how CYP perceive their experiences in relation to 'homelessness'. Throughout this research I have pointed to homelessness being best thought of as a continuum, to include living in temporary accommodation: at least, this definition is used by policy makers and researchers. But do CYP, and their families, view homelessness in the same way? Do they agree that homelessness extends beyond that moment of leaving their home, to include living in temporary accommodation? While CYP's definitions and perceptions of homelessness was not the focus of my research, this might be a useful research question for future research, perhaps best

sensitively and ethically achieved by asking young people to look back on their experiences. Additional directions for future research are described next.

7.2. Future directions

Due to lack of research in this field, and especially in the UK, there are multiple areas where further knowledge is required. Educational psychology research would do well to consider what works for supporting homeless children and their families in schools, for example, using an appreciative inquiry. This would help identify the factors supporting both children and their families, which findings from this study suggest is important for children's sense of belonging. Research with teachers would also be beneficial, and a useful starting point would be to explore teacher's beliefs and perceptions of homelessness, as well as their experiences of teaching homeless children.

A pertinent area for research raised by this study is the intersectionality between ethnicity and homelessness. Themes around racial discrimination were present in Amira's account in subtle ways, and although this was not an anticipated finding, it is also not surprising given the evidence that BME families are overrepresented amongst homeless families and stay in temporary accommodation for longer. An overrepresentation of BME populations was evident in several studies reviewed, but authors did not consider the intersectionality of the experiences of their participants. This was the case even in studies with 100% African American samples (for example, Cronley et al, 2019 & Begg et al 2017). This gap in research provides an opportunity for EPs to utilise research skills and contribute to knowledge and the anti-racism movement.

7.3. Findings in light of Covid-19

While this research did not focus on how children experienced homelessness during the global pandemic, data collection, analysis and the write-up of this thesis has taken place throughout the series of national lockdowns in the UK since March 2020. Throughout this time, I have found myself reflecting on the findings of this study in light of the global pandemic, and it feels important to include a brief reflection on these here.

For all of us the pandemic has brought about increased amounts of time spent at home; for homeless children, this will have meant increased time spent in accommodation that is usually crowded and in poor condition and located away from friends. Poor internet access will have brought about challenges for children's remote learning, as well as being able to connect with friends virtually. However, remote learning has led to new ways of schools connecting with parents, some of which could benefit homeless families, for example, continued opportunities for virtual parents' evenings might be

beneficial for those families living out of area from their children's schools, and for whom travel is difficult.

This research has highlighted the importance of school for homeless children, and the common finding that children and young people value time in school, and out of their accommodation (e.g., Polillo et al, 2018). It is my understanding that whether homeless children were eligible to attend school as 'vulnerable children' was at the discretion of the individual school. Of course, this would have relied on schools being aware of who their homeless families are. For those homeless children able to attend school, travel to school on public transport (the case for all the children in this study) poses additional threats to safety. In the same vein, those living in shared accommodation have been at higher risk of exposure to Covid-19 due to the high risk of transmission in shared accommodation (Lewer et al, 2020). Bidding on houses and house moves were stopped for periods during the first national lockdown, leaving families with even more uncertainty about when they might be able to leave. A report published by the Children's Commissioner (2020) concluded that "living in a B&B has never been appropriate for a child, but the problems have been amplified during Covid-19".

7.4. Personal reflections on conducting this research

Over the course of this research, I have attempted to stay in touch with the ways I have shaped and been shaped by the research. This reflexivity was supported through supervision with my research supervisor, but also my placement supervisor, and by the keeping of a research diary. The majority of diary entries detail my experiences as a practitioner-researcher, and the dissonance I experienced between my roles. In practice, EPs can be agents of change, bringing hope to problem situations. As a researcher, I felt powerless at not being able to help the families I met. Similar experiences were shared by Cloke et al (2000), in their research with homeless individuals. They described a pressure that their research needed to make a difference, and I did too. There can be a responsibility in this type of research to 'get it right', but also doubt that the research can actually contribute to change. Perhaps different for me though when compared to Cloke et al (2000) is that I am also a practitioner. Conducting this research has developed my skills and knowledge and I have been able to draw on knowledge within casework with homeless families. I have also begun thinking about, and making first steps to take knowledge to the systems I work in- both schools and the LA, to affect change at a wider level. As such, I am changed by the research. I have also developed a better understanding of the political environment of my practice, and its impact on the lives of so many of the children I have worked with and will work with. Understanding the political economy is required for ethical EP practice (Mills, 2016).

Moreover, my most important reflection is the privilege to have conducted this research, and to have met Amira, Haya, Jahmil and Olivia. I am inspired by the resilience of these young people and hope that I have done their stories justice.

8.   References

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9. Appendices

9.1. Freedom of Information Request

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 030 3444 0000

www.gov.uk/mhclg

Leeya Roovis

Via email

Date: **27 April 2021**

Dear Leeya Roovis,

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - **10874990**

Thank you for your request for information, which we received on 31 March 2021 and processed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested:

> *"What are the ethnicities of the families/ households with children who seek LA support for statutory homelessness? I.e. how many are white, black, asian, mixed etc.? How many are single parent households, and how many are women or men?*
>
> *Please can you provide this information for the most recent data you have available according to the homelessness live tables e.g. Q3 2020?*
>
> *Please also provide this information in a yearly format, e.g. 2019-2020."*

We can confirm that this information is held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). However, we are not obliged to provide this information under Section 21 of

the Freedom of Information Act, as it has now been published online. This information is accessible via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/979443/Households_with_children_by_ethnicity.ods

The table in the spreadsheet in the above link shows the number of households with children owed a homelessness duty, split by ethnicity for 2019-20 and 2020 Q3.

We recognise that Black, Mixed and Other ethnic households are overrepresented in households owed a prevention duty and there are discrepancies in outcomes between different ethnic groups. The Government is committed to tackling homelessness in all its forms for all groups.

That is why this year (2021/22) Government will be investing more than £750 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This includes £310 million through the Homelessness Prevention Grant. This underlines the government's commitment to fully enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act by ensuring councils have the funding they need to prevent homelessness and help more people sooner. This funding represents a £47 million increase on the previous year and can be used to offer financial support for people to find a new home, to work with landlords to prevent evictions, or to provide temporary accommodation to ensure families have a roof over their head.

Complaints procedure

If you are unhappy with this response, we will review it and report back to you. (This is called an internal review.) If you want us to do this, let us know by return email within two months of receiving this response. You can also ask by letter addressed to:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Knowledge and Information Access Team

4th Floor SE, Fry Building

2 Marsham Street

London, SW1P 4DF

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this internal review, you can ask the independent Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at email address casework@ico.org.uk or use their online form at ico.org.uk/concerns or call them on 0303 123 1113.

Kind regards,

MHCLG FOI Team

9.2. Literature Review Strategy

An initial literature search was conducted between September and December 2019 to explore what was already known about family homelessness and to identify gaps in the literature. I noticed that research from children's perspectives was very limited, as was research from the UK.

In February 2020 I sought help from the Education librarian, worried that my search terms or approach to the literature review was leading to a lack of results. I was reassured at her surprise at finding limited academic literature from the UK. Still, the consultation was helpful and gave me new search terms to explore, as well as databases, and further ideas for finding more evidence (detailed in the table below).

9.2.1. *Systematic search*

The systematic search focused on three areas that were deemed most relevant to my research questions:

1. Homelessness- this included the terms "homeless"
2. Sample- this included the terms "child", "young people" and "family"
3. Perspectives- this included the terms "experience", "voice", "thought", "story", "stories", "views", "perspectives", "attitudes"

Notes about the search:

- I explored using "youth" in the search terms but this led to large number of American studies about unaccompanied homeless young people. One paper explained- as federally defined in the United States, a *homeless youth* is any "individual who is less than 21 years of age, for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement"
- Other terms explored- emergency accommodation (added 0), houseless (added 0), temporary accommodation (added 1).
- When "child*" or "family" were not in title only- many of the results related to single homeless people
- Including Home*gave too many hits (1000+), as did including "mobility"

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were considered and decided prior to the literature search. These are described in the table 8:

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Study focuses on the experiences of children who are homeless with their families	Study focuses on young people who are homeless alone, or 'unaccompanied'
Children and young people were over 5 years old. No upper age limit was given, so long as young people were/ or had been homeless with their family	Study focuses on parents' own experiences of being homeless, not their child's experiences
Considers experiences, views and perceptions of pupil, parents, teachers or other professionals in relation to the child's experience of homelessness	Sample is homeless adults and their adverse child experiences, which did not include homelessness
The sample includes children and young people who were homeless at the time of the research, or who were young adults looking back at their experiences of homelessness in childhood	Not written in English
Peer reviewed literature and book chapters	A review of a book or article
Grey Literature and theses	Pre-2000, unless seminal
Since 2000- unless seminal	
Written in English	

Table 8: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The search terms outlined above were run through the following databases in February 2020, and again in March 2021. Results are summarised in Table 9

Database	Search Terms	Results	Comments	Relevant number
PsycINFO	1. "homeless*"	6179	All title searches only Additional limits applied: After year 2000 Peer reviewed English only Abstract search of the 78	7
	2. "child*" or "young people" or "family"	412579		
	3. Combine 1 AND 2	682		
	4. "experience*" or "voice*" or "views" or "perspective*" or "attitudes"	236792		
	5. Combine 3 AND 4	78		
ERIC	1. "homeless*"	1100	1 AND 2 are a title search with 3 as an abstract search Additional limits applied: After year 2000 Peer reviewed English only Abstract search of the 58	9
	2. "child*" or "young people" or "family"	131419		
	3. Combine 1 AND 2	591		
	4. "experience*" or "voice*" or "views" or "perspective*" or "attitudes"	89436		
	5. Combine 3 AND 4	58		
British Education Index	1. "homeless*"	100	Abstract search of the 39	4
	2. "child*" or "young people" or "family"	22044		
	3. Combine 1 AND 2	39		
Child Development and Adolescent Studies	1. "homeless*"	729	1 and 2 title searches, 3 abstract searches Additional limits applied: After year 2000 Peer reviewed English only Abstract search of the 72	10
	1 "child*" or "young people" or "family"	226639		
	2 Combine 1 AND 2	188		
	3 "experience*" or "voice*" or "views" or "perspective*" or "attitudes"	68550		
	4 Combine 3 AND 4	72		

Table 9: Search Terms

Literature was excluded during these searches for the following reasons:

- Sample were unaccompanied homeless youth, and therefore the research was not about family homelessness
- Sample is homeless adults reflecting on their adverse child experiences

- Sample is preschool children
- The focus is on the parent-child relationship/ attachment
- Focus is on perspectives of an intervention, too specific
- A study of how homelessness is represented in children's stories
- Book review
- Policy reports for other countries
- About interventions
- Pre 2000

9.2.2. *Additional Search strategies*

The database searches seemed to be missing key pieces of evidence. Additional steps were taken to identify research relevant to this thesis and are outlined in Table 8:

Literature search methods	Details
Google scholar search	Using combinations of terms outlined above
Snowballing	I looked at the references of key papers, but also searched through google scholar for articles that had cited those key papers
Hand search selected journals	Journal of social distress and homelessness Educational Psychology in Practice
Contacting authors	I reached out to various authors of key papers, as well as researchers within the Bristol Poverty Institute at the University of Bristol
Grey Literature Search	Government documents Searching the Web Sources for Authorities, e.g.: - Shelter - Crisis - NSPCC - Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) - Young Minds - Mind

Table 10: Additional Search Strategies

[Note: The literature search identified a number of papers that were useful in other parts of the thesis but were not included in the literature review, e.g., those that guided methodology (Kirkman, Keys, Turner & Bodzak (2009) "Does camping count"; Moore, McArthur, Noble-Carr (2008) Little Voices and Big Ideas: Lessons Learned from children about research]

Grey literature has been increasingly used in systematic reviews, helping minimise publication bias and helping provide policy context and implications not found in published literature. A grey literature search was vital for this research to help understand homelessness in the UK, given the lack of

academic and peer reviewed literature. The AACODS checklist was used to support evaluation and critical appraisal of grey literature.

9.2.3. *Search results*

The search strategy and results are summarised in the figure below. The quality of studies was assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2013).
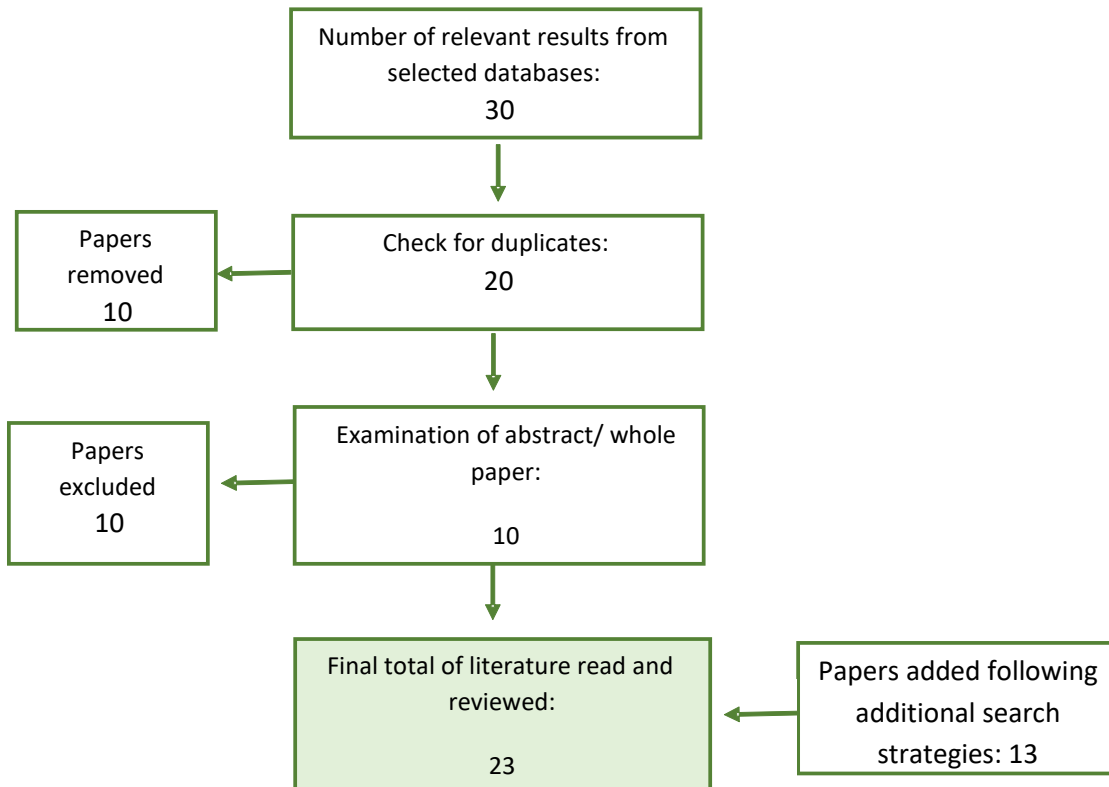
Figure 11: Search Strategy for Literature Review

9.3.   Table of Literature

Name	Authors	Year	Country	Method	Participants	Topic	Code [28]
Losing a home through mortgage repossession: the views of children	Nettleton	2001	U.K	Semi structured interviews	30 families: 44 adults 17 children, age 7-18	The experiences of children made homeless through mortgage repossession	E, F & H
Parents' Perspectives on Homelessness and Effects on the educational development of their children	Morris & Butt	2003	USA	Semi structured interviews	34 parents (29 single parents, 5 from couples)	Parent's perspectives of how homelessness affected the development and academic achievement of their children	E
Living in Limbo: Survey of homeless households living in temporary accommodation	Mitchell, Neuberger, Radebe & Rayne	2004	UK	Qualitative survey	417 households in total, 284 (68%) were households with children	Experiences of living in temporary accommodation. The section for families focused on children's education and wellbeing	E
Listen up	Mustafa	2004	UK	Qual creative methods: writing and drawing in activity books, completing a questionnaire and participating in drama exercises.	29 children, age 4-16	Experiences of living in temporary accommodation and education	H, E & F

---

[28] Broad categories- Education (E), Home (H), Family (F)

"Educational Issues for Children and Young People in Families Living in Emergency Accommodation—An Irish Perspective"	Keogh, Halpenny & Gilligan	2006	Republic of Ireland	Two case studies [Results are from a larger study, Halpenny et al 2002, with children, parents and teachers]	Family 1- 2 parents, 3 children aged 14, 9 and 5) Family 2-1 parent, 4 children aged 16, 14, 11 and 10) Teachers[29]	Educational experiences of homeless children	E
Against the Odds	Rice	2006	UK	Mixed methods -Family and Children Study (FACS) data 2004 -Semi structured interviews with children -Qualitative survey for teachers	Interviews- 20 children, age 7-15 Teacher survey- 133 respondents	Experiences of bad housing and impact on health and education	H & E
Stuff you'd never think of: Children talk about homelessness and how they'd like to be supported	Moore, McArthur & Noble-Carr	2008	Australia	Semi structured interviews, art activities and group discussions at an activity day	18 children, age 6-14years & 7 young people, aged 15-21 years	Experiences of homeless children, focusing on what home and homelessness mean to children	H & F
Lessons learned from children who have experienced homelessness: what services need to know	Moore, McArthur and Noble-Carr	2009	Australia	Interviews and group discussions	As above 25 CYP, 17 were under 14, 8 aged 15- 21	Perspectives of homeless children regarding support from services	E & F

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[29] References to findings from 'teachers' appeared to be from all teachers in the study (Halpenny et al 2002) rather than the teachers of the particular children in the case studies

"Are we moving again this week?" Children's experiences of homelessness in Victoria, Australia"[30]	Kirkman, Keys, Bodzak & Turner	2010	Australia	Semi-structured interviews with parents and with children (separate). Interviews with children used activities from the Mosaic approach	20 children, age 6-12 years 12 parents	Homelessness experiences of children accommodated in transitional support services	E, F & H
'Good for kids': Children who have been homeless talk about school	Moore & McArthur	2011	Australia	Semi structured interviews, art activities and group discussions at an activity day	25 CYP and 25 professionals [only CYP views presented in paper]	Educational experiences of homeless children	E
Exploring the lived experiences of homeless families with young children	Hinton & Cassel	2012	USA	Weekly interviews with parents and children Observations within the shelter	8 parents with young children aged between 4-8 years	Exploring reasons for homelessness, what resources were available within shelters and the effect of shelter life on young children	F & E
"This is no place for a child"- the experiences of homeless families in emergency accommodation	Pennington & Banks	2015	UK	Interviews with parents and with educational professionals Government statistics	20 families Interviews 6 school workers (teachers and learning mentors)	Parent and professional perspectives of children's experiences of living in non-self-contained accommodation and education	H & E
Homelessness in the elementary school	Kirby, Rashita & Melchor	2015	USA	Semi-structured interviews	28 teachers	Teachers' perceptions of supporting homeless children	E

[30] *Study information is also presented in doc- 'Does Camping Count', which shows materials used*

classroom: social and emotional consequences							
Children who are homeless with their family: A literature review	Bland and Shalcross	2015		Literature Review		Section on child voice	E, F & H
Homeless and highly mobile students: equity, access and institutional response	Hallett, Miller & Skrla	2015	USA			Commentary paper- introduction to a special issue on supporting educational access of homeless youth in US	E
Understanding the School Experience of African American Homeless Children	Begg, Levitt & Hayden	2017	USA	Semi-structured interviews	15 children aged 9-13 years	Explored children's experiences at school, as well as future educational and career aspirations	E
The experiences of adolescents and young adults residing with their families in emergency shelters in Canada	Polillo, Sylvestre, Kermna, Lee, Aubry & Czechowski	2018	Canada	Multi-methods, 3 stages: 1) Focus groups 2) Individual semi-structured interviews 3) Focus group	16 adolescents and young adults (age 16-24 years)	The positive and negative experiences of living in a homeless shelter and how do they cope with the challenges of living in a shelter	H & F
'It's like being in prison' Children Speak out on homelessness'	CRAE	2018	UK	'In depth interviews'	6 children's stories presented	Experiences of homelessness	H & F
"School definitely failed me, the system failed me": Identifying opportunities to impact educational outcomes	Jones, Bowen & Ball	2018	USA	Semi-structured interviews and life course framework	20 participants aged 18-24 years	Retrospective accounts of young people who had experienced challenges in education- what would have been helpful to educational outcomes?	E

for homeless and child welfare-involved youth							
"I run inside the buildings" adolescents' perceptions of physical health and nature in family homeless shelters	Cronley, Keaton, Hopman & Nelson	2019	USA	Focus groups	8 adolescents, age 13-17	Experiences of health and nature- to inform a community garden intervention	H
Mental and emotional health: impediments to the education of New York City's homeless children,	Teall	2019	USA	Qualitative survey (63 responses) and follow up semi-structured interviews (11)	Educational professionals- 4 principals, 1 assistant principal, 1 survey coordinator, 2 social workers, 2 teachers, 1 unspecified administrator	Educational professionals' perspectives of barriers faced by homeless students, efforts to support them and influence on achievement	E
Bleak Houses: Tackling the crisis of family homelessness in England	Children's Commissioner	2019	UK			Commentary piece, presenting stories and government and FOI descriptive statistics	
Housing, food and dignity: the food worlds of homeless families in emergency accommodation in Ireland	Share	2020	Republic of Ireland	Mixed methods Interview 1- quantitative questionnaire Interview 2= in depth using photo elicitation method	10 parents	How families living in emergency accommodation accessed, stored and cooked, and consumed food	H

Table 11: Table of Literature

9.4.   Ethical Approval

Beth Tarleton
Fri 29/11/2019 09:57
To: Leeya Roovis; SPS Ethics Applications Mailbox

Dear Leeya
Thank you for submitting your application to the SPS REC regarding the following study:

An exploration of the experiences of children who are made homeless with their families (paper ref. SPSREC/19-20/063)

Thank you for responding so fully to the SPS REC comments regarding the project above. Please take this email as confirmation of ethical approval from the SPS REC.

If you require a formal letter of approval, please contact Hannah Blackman.

I hope your research goes really well. Please do let me know if your project changes, you may need an amendment to your ethical approval.

With very best wishes.

Beth Tarleton

...

9.5. Organisations contacted during recruitment

Contacted	How Many	Outcome
Children's Charity providing support to families, such as with housing applications, emotional support, and others who provided physical items, such as furniture, support with uniform	3	1 felt able to help with recruitment 1 had no direct contact with families- referrals were made through other services 1 supporting YP 16+ with employability, no homeless families known to service at the time
Voluntary Organisations	2	1 distributed information within team and advertised research on their FB page 1 not typically working with families but passed information on to project leaders
National charities supporting homeless - **Shelter** - **Big Issue**	2	I contacted national and local Shelter services- study information distributed through 1 local team to pass on to families 1 not supporting families (Big Issue)
Homeless charity (local)	1	No response
Foodbanks or services providing meals	3	No response
Council services, e.g., housing advice service/ homeless prevention team	Across 4 LA's, multiple teams within	1 response- emailed information sheets
Independent housing advice service	2	1 distributed information within team of advisors and passed on to families who fit criteria The other- I met with the team to discuss the research- they had 1 family they were supporting

		but they were in a point of crisis so it was not an appropriate time for the research to go ahead
Children's Centre	1	I attended a team meeting with a range of professionals working with families, and distributed study information. One professional from there put me in contact with the support team at a temporary accommodation
Facebook group supporting homeless	2	1 agreed to share FB post but to my knowledge it was not shared
Support teams working within temporary accommodation	5	2 were for families with children were under 5 years old

1 no response

1 invited me to a coffee morning but due to staff illness and then covid this didn't happen. Staff distributed information to families, and Olivia's mum contacted me as a result.

Women's refuge- emailed information sheets following telephone conversation

1 passed on information to 4 families but this was end of February 2020 (the service was restructuring at the time so they were in a state of flux) |
| **Voluntary organisations/ charities/ housing teams/ health services** | 27 | These were organisations found who were supporting unaccompanied homeless young people or individuals (which was not clear before contact) |

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road

Bristol BS8 1TZ

Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6755

bristol.ac.uk/sps

Information Sheet

Re: University of Bristol Research

I am writing to introduce myself, and to ask for your help and support. My name is Leeya Roovis, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol. As part of my training course, I am completing a dissertation, and wondered if I could request your support to help with recruiting participants for this research.

<u>Purpose of study</u>

I am interested in understanding the experiences of children who are made homeless with their families and who are living, or have lived in temporary accommodation in the last 12 months. I am especially interested in how children experience and manage their school lives alongside this. There is currently a significant gap in the literature around children's experiences of homelessness and I believe this work will contribute to this area.

With your permission, I would like to interview children from families who are supported by your service and have had this experience of being made homeless. I want to find out about their experiences of living in different places and about their school lives. I am also interested in finding out what helps them in school.

This is a very sensitive subject and therefore, in order to take part, children must know that they have experienced homelessness or temporary accommodation. I will be asking parents/ carers beforehand, what language they use to talk to them about this experience. I would like to take the opportunity to assure you that this work will be conducted with the utmost sensitivity.

<u>Your involvement</u>

I am very aware that this is a challenging and sensitive piece of research, but I feel it is an important opportunity to give these children a voice, and to identify how schools can better support their emotional, social, and academic needs.

If you are interested in supporting this research, I will be asking you to send out information letters to families with children between the ages of 11-16 who you are currently supporting, or have supported in the last year, who have been made homeless with their families and who are living, or have lived in temporary accommodation in the last 12 months. Temporary accommodation will include Bed and Breakfasts, Hotels or any other form of temporary housing that has been organised by the Local Authority, as a result of the family being made homeless (i.e. from rental accommodation, or loss of privately-owned property).

This letter to parents would detail the purpose of the study and their child's involvement, touch on issues of anonymity, confidentiality, and data protection. Parents will then have the option to make contact with me directly, or via yourselves. If the parent prefers to make contact for you as a service, I would ask that you set up a meeting between yourselves, the parent and myself to discuss the research, at the service base, or at another convenient location.

I cannot promise the study will help you or the children involved, but the information I get from the study will help to increase the understanding of the homelessness experiences of children, and design better support systems for these children within schools.

<u>Further information</u>

These interviews will be completely voluntary, and no child would have to take part, nor even your organisation, if they do not want to. Both parents and their children will be asked to sign a consent form. Children or their families will be free to withdraw at any time, however, it may not be possible to withdraw data once this has been anonymised.

Details of your organisation, and any children and families who chose to participant will be kept completely anonymous. Furthermore, what children say during the interviews will be kept confidential, as well as any identifying features of their families, themselves or your service. The only exception to this confidentiality rule during interviews will be if there is a safeguarding issue. If this is the case, the information will be written down, and reported to the local safeguarding team, as well as to your designated safeguarding officer, if appropriate.

This study has gained ethical approval from the University of Bristol, School for Policy Sciences, Research Ethics Committee as of [INSERT DATE]. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, I will do my best to answer your questions, however if you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally you can do this through my supervisor at the University of Bristol, Dr Dan O'Hare (dan.ohare@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0) 117 33 10559).

Thank you for your time, and I hope to hear from you soon

Yours,

Leeya Roovis

Trainee Education Psychologist,

University of Bristol

Lr17892@bristol.ac.uk

9.7. Participant information sheet- child version

Children's Information Sheet

My name is Leeya Roovis and I am doing some research on the different places' children have lived with their families. I will be doing interviews (one-to-one discussions/chats) with children who have had to leave their home and move with their families. I would like to talk to you about where you live now and where you have lived before, if that is ok with you. I would also like to find out about what you think of school and what has helped you.

Important things for you to know:

We will meet once or twice, depending on how comfortable you feel talking to me. We will spend between 45 minutes and an hour together, and we will be talking and completing some activities together.	
I will record our conversation to make sure I remember it right!	
It is completely up to you if you want to take part. It is ok if you do not want to take part in this project. Nothing will happen if you say no and you can change your mind at any time.	
I promise to listen carefully to anything you say and to keep your information private and safe as much as I can. I would only break this if you told me something that made me worry about you or someone else getting hurt, then I would have to tell someone. We would talk about that first.	
When I write up what you tell me, I will use a pretend name so that no one will know it was you. This is called anonymity.	
If you decide you would like to join in this project, we will arrange a meeting, for you, your parent or carer and myself. I will tell you a bit more about the project and you will be asked to sign a consent form, which is a bit like a permission slip, telling me you are happy to take part. We can then start the interview straight away or arrange another time to meet.	

Participant information sheet for parents

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road

Bristol BS8 1TZ

Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6755

bristol.ac.uk/sps

Information Sheet

Re: University of Bristol Research

Dear Parent and Carers,

I am writing to introduce myself, and to ask for your help. My name is Leeya Roovis, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol. As part of my training, I am conducting some research, and am interested in understanding the experiences of children who are made homeless with their families and who are living or have lived in temporary accommodation in the last 12 months. I am especially interested in how children experience and manage their school lives alongside this.

If your child meets these criteria, and is aged between 11-16 years old, please read on.

Currently, we do not know much about children's experiences of homelessness and I believe this research will contribute to this area. With your permission, I would like to interview your child about their experiences of living in different places and about their school lives. I am also interested in finding out what helps them in school.

This is a very sensitive subject, and therefore, in order to take part, children must know that they have experienced homelessness or temporary accommodation. If you are happy for your child to take part, I will be asking you beforehand, what language you use to talk to them about this experience. I would like to take the opportunity to assure you that this work will be conducted with the utmost sensitivity.

<u>You and your child's involvement</u>

I am very aware that this is a challenging and sensitive piece of research, but I feel it is an important opportunity to give your child a voice, and to identify how schools can better support their emotional, social, and academic needs. I am hoping to interview the children in a way that feels most comfortable to them, as well as breaking the interview up over two sessions if they prefer. Your involvement would include an initial brief phone call with myself, to confirm that your child meets the criteria to participate, and so that I can find out about their understanding of their living situation. Following this, we can arrange an initial meeting with you, your child and myself in a location that is most convenient for you all, for example at the

[INSERT support group] offices or within a community space. I will explain the study and the type of activities we will do together, as well as how I will ensure your anonymity, protect yours and your child's information, and how information will be stored.

If your child wants to be involved, both they and yourselves would sign a consent form, and we could either start the interview then, or book a later date. There will typically be only one interview needed, although this could be split over two sessions, depending on how your child feels. In total, the sessions will amount to between one and two hours, with no session lasting longer than an hour.

Further information

These interviews will be completely voluntary, and no child would have to take part if they do not want to. Both you and your child will be asked to sign a consent form that will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

You may withdraw your child from the study at any time, however, it may not be possible to withdraw your child's data once this has been anonymised. Please also note, that once anonymised, data from the interview will be archived, and will be available to be used by other researchers.

If you choose to participate, details of your family and children will be kept completely anonymous. Furthermore, what your child says during the interviews will be kept confidential, as well as any identifying features of your family. The only exception to this confidentiality rule during interviews will be if they share something that suggests they or someone else is at risk of harm. If this is the case, the information will be written down, reported to the safeguarding team for the local area, and to the designated safeguarding officer at [INSERT SUPPORT GROUP AS APROPRIATE].

This study has gained ethical approval from the University of Bristol, School for Policy Sciences, Research Ethics Committee as of [INSERT DATE]. If you have additional questions about any aspect of this study, I will do my best to answer your questions, or you can contact my supervisor at the University of Bristol, Dr Dan O'Hare (dan.ohare@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0) 117 33 10559).

How can I take part?

If you are interested in taking part or finding out more information, please email me at Lr17892@bristol.ac.uk, or call [INSERT NUMBER ASSIGNED FOR THIS RESEARCH]. Alternatively, you can contact [INSERT NAME OF PROFESSIONAL CONTACT], who will then pass on your details to me.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to hear from you soon

Yours,

Leeya Roovis

Trainee Education Psychologist,

University of Bristol

Lr17892@bristol.ac.uk

9.9. Consent form- parent version

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road

Bristol BS8 1TZ

Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6755

bristol.ac.uk/sps

Research Project Parent Consent Form

Please tick to confirm:

I confirm that I have read and understood the project information letter, had the chance to ask questions, and discussed it with my child.	
I understand that mine and my child's participation is entirely voluntary and that we can change our minds at any time without giving a reason.	
I understand that the information I/my child shares with Leeya is confidential (unless I/they discuss information that indicates a risk of harm to themselves or others).	
I am happy for my child to participate in an interview with Leeya and for the interview to be recorded.	
I confirm that my child is aware that our family were made homeless and therefore had to leave our previous home (although, other language may have been used to describe the family situation).	
I understand that the anonymised interviews will be saved on a secure server, according to the Data Protection Act, at the University of Bristol, and that the data could be used at a later date by other researchers.	
I understand that I can request to withdraw my data but also that it may be impossible to delete information once data have been anonymised.	

Child's name: _____

Parent name: _____

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____

9.10. Children's Consent Form

	Please Tick if you agree
I want to take part in this project and share my views on the places I have lived.	
I have read and understood the information letter and discussed it with my parent.	
I understand that it is completely my choice to take part and that I can change my mind at any time without giving a reason. If I change my mind after talking to Leeya, I can ask her to destroy my information. However, I also understand that it may be impossible to delete information once data have been anonymised.	
I understand that everything I say to Leeya is private (unless I talk about something that could cause harm to myself or others).	
I am happy to talk with Leeya and to be recorded.	
I understand that Leeya will keep my information safe and will not use my name in her reports.	
I understand that information I share will be anonymised, and saved on a secure server, according to the Data Protection Act, at the University of Bristol, and that the data could be used at a later date by other researchers.	

Your name: _____

Your signature: _____

Date: _____

9.11. Topic guide/ interview schedule

Semi-structured Interview Guide

The following information will be gained over 1-2 sessions depending on how quickly I form a good rapport with the young person and how used to talking with an adult they may be. If rapport can be built swiftly, the information could be gathered in one interview. The option of additional interviews allows for flexibility with the schedule.

Reminders for the start of the interview (5 minutes)

- Provide a context for the interview with a briefing beforehand.
- Remind the young person of the focus and purpose of the research ('I am trying to find about the different places children live, how children feel about moving home and what they think about school. I would like to ask you a few questions about that; is that ok?')
- Go through the consent form again with the young person, check understanding of anonymity (not real names, nobody will know apart from me who said what, nobody apart from myself and parent will know they took part) and confidentiality (the information will be kept safe and private)
- Reminder of limits to confidentiality
- Remind the young person about audio recording and ask if this is still ok.
- Remind the young person that they do not have to ask all questions and that they can stop the interview at any point
- Tell the young person that interview will take approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour
- Ask the young person if they have any questions before the interview starts and ask if they feel ok to go ahead with the interview

Icebreaker/getting to know you task- might use the Fink conversation cards, little box of big questions, or an about me work sheet to include information such as favourite foods, colour, sport, TV show, game etc.

- I would like to find out a bit more about you.
- How old are you?
- Tell me how you would describe yourself as a person?
- What 3 words would you use to describe yourself?
- Who knows you best? What 3 words would they use to describe you?
- What are you good at? What are you most proud of?
- Do you belong to any club or groups? What do you like about these?
- What do you do when not at school? Why?

Family

- Who do you live with? (Could draw them e.g. the kinetic family drawing, Beaver)
- Can you tell me about them? E.g. age, what they like doing
- What do you like most about your family?

Home- the place you are currently living

- Can you tell me about where you live?

- How long have you been living there?
- What is it like? (Might want to draw)
- What do you like about it?
- What don't you like about it?
- Does it feel like home?
- Does it feel safe?
- How long do you think you will live there?
- Who lives nearby?

Where you have lived in the past

- Where else have you lived?
- Did you want to move?
- What is it like to move house?
- Did you know you were going to move?

Option to create a visual timeline of the places they had lived and schools they attended, possible prompts for activity-

- What was it like living there?
- What was that like?
- What's your favourite place you've ever lived?
- Why was it your favourite?

School

- Tell me about your school
- What do you like about school? (Could use a scale to rate different lessons)
- What don't you like?
- Have you moved to new schools?
- What is it like for kids when they start a new school?
- Do you think your teachers know you very well?
- How do adults in your school help you?
- What has been most helpful/unhelpful about how school help you?
- Do you have any ideas about how school could help you more?
- Does where you live effect you in school?
- Who is your favourite grown-up in school who you can talk with? What do you like about him/her? If you are in trouble to whom would you go for advice?

Friends

- Tell me about the children in your school
- Some people have lots of friends, others have only one best friend, some don't have any friends. What about you? Same school? What do you do with them? What is your favourite thing about a friend?
- Do you see children from school outside of school? If so, where do you see them and what do you do?
- Do your friends know you very well? Do they know what you are like outside of school?

- Do you have friends where you live?
- Did your friends change when you moved house?

Future

- Where would you like to live if you could choose? Who would live with you? (Could ask to draw)
- If you had 3 wishes what would you wish for?
- What would you like to do for a job when you grow up?
- Could use the You Choose book- this asks the reader where they would like to live, with who, what they would wear, eat etc

To end the interview

Provide a debriefing at the end

- Mention some of the main points learned from the interview

Conclude last interview by saying – 'I have no more questions. Do you have anything more that you want to tell me, or ask about before we finish our conversation? Is there anything that we haven't talked about that is important for me to know?'

9.12. Advert for Social Media

The following can to be posted by the service:

** Research with families who have experienced homelessness**

If you were made homeless with your family, and moved into temporary accommodation, you may be interested in participating in some research currently being conducted at the University of Bristol.

This research is interested in hearing directly from young people, to understand their experiences, and to explore how schools can better support their emotional, social and academic needs.

Interviews will take place with young people aged between 11-15 years, who are currently living in temporary accommodation, or have done in the last 12 months.

If your child fits these criteria, and is interested in taking part in this study, please contact us, and we can give you more information about the project and arrange for you to meet with ourselves and the researcher.

Please be assured that every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of anyone taking part.

9.13. Stages of IPA

Stage 1: Reading and re-reading

This stage involves immersion in data; transcripts were listened to multiple times after original transcription and this helped keep the participants' voice in mind during later readings of the transcript. To help 'bracket' my initial experience of the interview, notes were audio recorded after each interview (and typed up within the reflective journal), as were initial responses to the transcripts; this supported staying with the data itself.

Stage 2: Initial noting

The aim of this stage is to provide a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data. An open mind was kept during this stage, and anything of interest was noted, including free association. In line with Smith et al, (2009), codes included descriptive comments (which capture the participant's subjective experience), linguistic comments (which are concerned with the use of language by the participant and its potential significance) and conceptual comments (focus on the context of the participant's experience). These are recorded on the right of the transcript.

Stage 3: Developing emergent themes

In this stage the focus is on working with the exploratory notes in the previous stage, to find connections and patterns. The aim of this stage is to summarise the importance of various comments, and within that summary capture the psychological essence; themes should reflect the participant's words but also the analyst's interpretation. Emergent themes were noted in the left-hand margin.

Stage 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

This stage involves exploring how themes fit together. This is not to be prescriptive; not all themes can be incorporated and single utterances may be powerful. Smith et al (2009) provide advice for how to look for connections between emergent themes, including through abstraction (putting like with like), subsumption (realising that an emergent theme can subsume other emerging themes), polarisation (identifying emerging themes which constitute opposite ends of other emergent themes), numeration (noting frequency in which emergent themes appear) and function (identifying function of emerging themes).

Stage 5: Moving to the next case

This stage involved repeating the process (stages 1-4) with the remaining three interviews. Smith et al, (2009) stress the importance of treating each case individually, and attempting to bracket those ideas and themes that emerged during the first interview. To help me treat each case individually, I analysed the interviews in an order that supported this i.e. after analysing the first interview, I chose to analyse to next interview the one that seemed most different.

Stage 6: Looking for patterns across cases

The final stage involves looking for patterns across cases, asking questions such as what connections are there across cases? How does a theme in one case illuminate a different case? Which themes are the most potent? It is in this stage where I considered which themes from a particular case, represented higher-order concepts shared across the accounts.

9.14. Stage 2 and 3 Example- Transcript extract- Amira
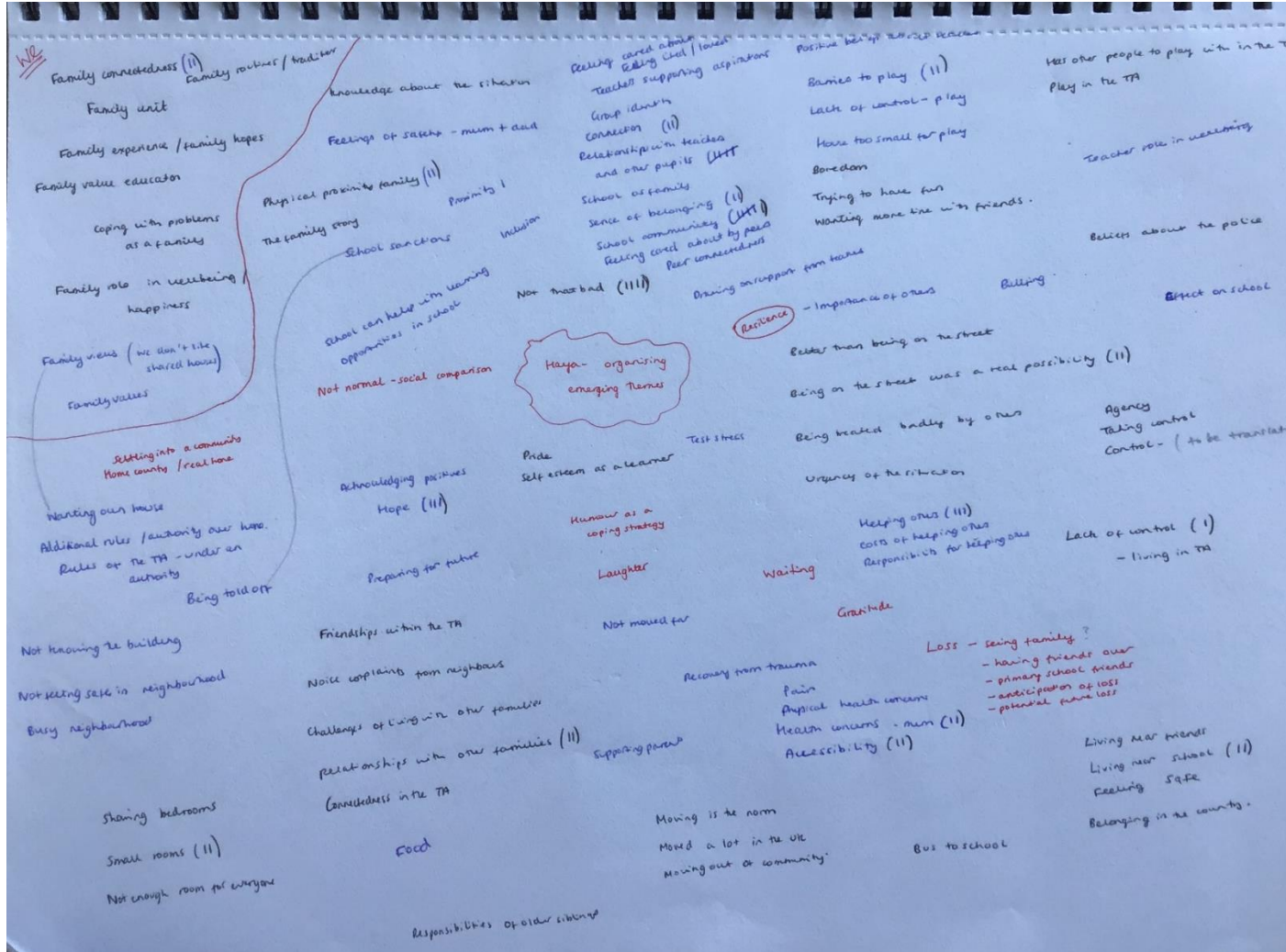
Identity as active person Location as barrier to pursuing hobbies Dissonance between active person/ someone who goes to clubs and reality Safety regarding travel and darkness	I: Ok so then, so you've spoken there a bit about school, can you tell me a bit more about school? AMIRA: Yeh so I'm a very, I like to be active and stuff, so I try to go to clubs but it's like sometimes it's hard to stay like after school and then have to get here, because it's like an hour away so sometimes it gets really dark, so I can't, so I just stopped going to clubs. I used to go to basketball club, and stuff like that... football, um I went to netball club as well.	Likes to be active *Tries/ I can't - barrier to going to clubs* Unable to stay after school and then travel back to the TA because of distance and it gets really dark- <u>not safe to attend clubs</u> Stopped going to clubs- <u>unable to participate in school activities because of living too far away from the school</u> *Used to*
	I: So you said it takes about an hour to get to school, so what time do you leave here? AMIRA: 7. School starts at 8.30, so I go, I wake up at 6, have to, at 7 I have to go to the bus stop at (name) and then, it's like a 10-minute walk from here. So then, I take from the bus an hour and I get there at 8, actually 8.10 yeh. I get there usually 8.10	Morning routine- up at 6am She is on the bus for an hour-<u>the journey to school is long</u>
Humour as a coping strategy?	I: So that's quite a long time on the bus... AMIRA: Yeh (laughing) I: What's the bus journey like?	*Laughing- she laughs at the things that are difficult (see mice) but not scary Is it an exacerbated laugh?*
The bus journey is risky Health concerns from the bus Bus journey impacts attendance School do not care School do not understand	AMIRA: Really bad (laugh). Sometimes there are like some drunks people, and like sometimes people are like so ill, they cough a lot, so it comes to me and then I get ill and I don't go to school and then the school are just like "why are you not in". They don't understand the fact that...what I'm going through is really hard, all they care about is coming to school.	*Laugh (as above)* The bus journey is *really bad, a lot- emphasis* There are drunk people on the bus There are ill people on the bus and she gets their illness- <u>which impacts on her attendance</u> <u>School do not understand the impact of her bus journey</u>

	I: Do they know about your travel to school?	
Attendance Punishment for attendance Pressure to attend	AMIRA: Yeh they know that, they put me in this like thing today, um which is called attendance count. It's basically, group of people with the teacher and then it kind of just like tracks your like attendance and you have to meet every week on Monday, so then you talk to him and stuff, like tutor times, we don't go to where we're supposed to go, we go there. And like, we just, I don't know what to do because that's the first day I been there, they didn't tell us much but it's like to do with attendance.	All school care about is her coming to school- impacting on her feeling cared about by the school – she does not feel that they care about her wellbeing or experience? School know about her bus journey Been placed in attendance count- meet every Monday *Have to- no choice* Not going to where she is *supposed to*- not feeling that she belongs in there? Missing tutor time because of attendance count- punishment for having to take the bus to school
	I: Ok so you have to go there instead of tutor time but you're not sure what you have to do there?	Does not know what attendance count will involve
	AMIRA: Mmmhmm	
	I: Ok.	
Having a positive student identity	AMIRA: I'm also student leader there (smiles)	Student leader *Smiles- pride*
	I: You're a student leader, oh wow	*She quickly said this and it was offered freely- is she trying to counter out the negative regarding the attendance- not wanting to be seen as someone who gets in trouble*
Participation Belonging and contribution in school	AMIRA: And I put myself up for that...	She put herself forward for student leader- it is important to her to take action. Belonging/ participation
	I: So what kind of things do you have to do as a student leader?	
Anti-bullying	AMIRA: I do anti-bullying stuff. I see bullying a lot and I don't think it's very cool so I just put myself into that and I got accepted so... (smile, soft laugh)	Anti-bullying *Put myself- repeated- emphasis about her doing it* *Accepted- see other uses of this word*

	I: Oh that's great, that sounds like an important job. Can you tell me what you like about the school?	
Friends have her back	AMIRA: ...Friends. Um I got like 2-3. So, these girls are like always with me, they like have my back and stuff. It felt really cool cos I never had that in primary school. I came in Year 6, like half way through Year 6 so it's like half the year I just, had to just go like that (gesture) so mum was like "it's fine, in secondary school you'll get new friends, you'll get better friends" and now I finally get that.	Friends are always with her and have her back- important because of other kids making fun of her? Felt really cool to have friends Not had the same sort of friendships in primary school because she arrived half way through Year 6 Mum said she would get better friends at secondary school Finally- emphasis on waiting for those friendships
Waiting for friendships		
	I: You've finally got that, that's great. When you said they have your back, what does that mean?	
Friendships as protection	AMIRA: There's a lot of like, I would say like gang stuff, you know what I'm saying, like people just like acting up and stuff, and it's really important in our school to have friends cos if you don't then ...a lot of people just gonna.. like there's this one girl who doesn't have any friends and everyone treats her different, she's human still, but it's like everyone is treating her different. So it's really important in our secondary school to have friends.	Gang stuff in school You know what I'm saying- see other uses of phrase- what's not being said- is she alluding to race? Danger? Important to have friends in her school- is this why she does not want to change schools? Is she fearful about joining a new school and not having friends? Our school- belonging A girl who doesn't have friends gets treated differently
You know what I'm saying		
	I: Do your friends ever come over?	
	AMIRA: No (laugh) it's really far for them... they live in (area 3). One lives in (area 2).	Laughing- because it's sad? Really far – look at other uses of this phrase – (dance class, school) Friends live too far away to come over

9.15. Stage 5 Example- Haya

Mind mapping of emerging themes noted in left hand side margins:

Haya – organising emerging Themes

Family connectedness (II) — Family routines / traditions
Family unit
Family experience / family hopes
Family value education
Coping with problems as a family
Family role in wellbeing / happiness
Family views (we don't like shared house)
Family values
Settling into a community — Home country / real home
Wanting own house
Additional rules / authority over home. Rules of the TA – under an authority
Being told off
Not knowing the building
Not seeing self in neighbourhood
Busy neighbourhood
Sharing bedrooms
Small rooms (II)
Not enough room for everyone

Knowledge about the situation
Feelings of safety – mum + dad
Physical proximity family (II) — Proximity I
The family story
School sanctions — Inclusion
School can help with wanting opportunities in school
Not normal – social comparison
Acknowledging positives
Hope (II)
Preparing for future
Friendships within the TA
Noise complaints from neighbours
Challenges of living in other families
Relationships with other families (II)
Connectedness in the TA
Food
Responsibilities of older siblings

Feeling cared about / Feeling liked / loved
Teachers supporting aspirations
Group identity
Connection (II)
Relationship with teachers and other pupils (HTT)
School as family
Sense of belonging (I)
School community (HTT)
School cared about by peers
Feeling cared about by peers — Peer connectedness
Not that bad (IIII)
Resilience — Importance of others
Test stress
Pride — Self esteem as a learner
Humour as a coping strategy
Laughter
Not moved far
Supporting parents
Moving is the norm
Moved a lot in the UK
Moving out of community

Positive beliefs
Barriers to play (II)
Lack of control – play
House too small for play
Boredom
Trying to have fun
Wanting more time with friends.
Drawing on support from teachers
Better than being on the street
Being on the street was a real possibility (II)
Being treated badly by others
Urgency of the situation
Helping others (III)
Costs of helping others
Responsibility for helping others
Waiting
Gratitude
Recovery from trauma
Pain
Physical health concerns
Health concerns – mum (II)
Accessibility (II)
Bus to school

Has other people to play with in the TA
Play in the TA
Teacher role in wellbeing
Beliefs about the police
Affect on school
Agency — Taking control — Control – (to be translated)
Lack of control (I) — Living in TA
Loss – seeing family?
  – having friends over
  – primary school friends
  – anticipation of loss
  – potential future loss
Living near friends
Living near school (II)
Feeling safe
Belonging in the country.

9.16. Stage 6 Example- Abstraction