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*An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.*

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# Designated Teachers Experiences of Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within Secondary Schools: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.

*Ellen Murden.*

*August 2023.*

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

Word count: 44,496.

# Abstract.

This small-scale, qualitative research study aimed to explore the lived experiences of five Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. It is hoped that the findings of this study will aid current understandings regarding if, and how, Educational Psychologists could best support Designated Teachers in their role.

Semi-structured interviews were employed to flexibly guide discussions with participants regarding their lived experiences, with particular attention paid to what they found to be supportive and challenging in their role. The data gathered from these interviews were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which promotes an in-depth understanding of participants' unique lived experiences by exploring their thoughts, views, and feelings about these experiences (Smith, 2011).

Four Group Experiential Themes were identified: 'Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences', 'Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences', 'Support in Managing the Role' and 'Ways of Coping'. These Group Experiential Themes, and their respective sub-themes, are illustrated using participants' quotes and, later, discussed in relation to broad literature in order to allow for a critical engagement of the current study's findings.

Whilst participants each had unique stories, they tended to experience the role as a process of attempting to make sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, which was supported by their knowledge of 'trauma', whilst also appreciating Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's 'resilience'. With participants reportedly being exposed to trauma narratives, participants discussed how they perceived their role as impactful on their personal lives, emotions, and perceptions, in both positive and negative ways. To aid participants in managing the role, they also discussed the perceived support, or lack thereof, from their colleagues, external professionals, friends, and family. With participants reporting perceived limited emotional support received in their role, participants discussed how they subsequently employed a range of coping mechanisms in attempts to manage and/or minimise the impact of the role on the self. These findings help inform implications for Educational Psychology professional practice and future research.

# Acknowledgements.

Firstly, my deepest gratitude goes to the Designated Teachers who agreed to take part in this study. The experiences and stories that were shared so openly have been insightful and impactful. This research would not have been possible without your participation. My thanks also extends to the Headteachers of the participants for agreeing to allow my research to take place in their schools as well as those who supported with the recruitment for this research.

A further thank you goes to my thesis supervisors, Dr Jak Lee and Professor Pauline Heslop, for their continuous guidance and unwavering support throughout the research process. Thank you also to all the Bristol University tutor team for their support given over the three years as well as my placement supervisor, Dr Emily Clement, who has gone above and beyond, cheering me on throughout the course. Additionally, thank you to my fellow Trainee Educational Psychologist cohort, for the laughter, kindness, and containment you've all provided that has enabled me to keep on going when it has not always felt possible. There truly could not be a better group of people I'd have rather journeyed this course alongside

Finally, to my friends and family, 'thank you' does not quite feel adequate. Mum, all of the support you have provided me cannot be accurately reflected by merely words; I could not have got this far without you, so thank you for picking me up whenever I've needed it. Dad, thank you for your patience and showing me that I can achieve whatever I put my mind to. Josh and Kath, the laughter you have provided has been joy to my soul, and I'm very much looking forward to the next chapter of being an aunty. Last but not least, Peter, what a way to spend our first three years of marriage. Thank you for giving up all that you have for me to pursue this dream, for knowing just what to say in every moment, and for being beside me every step of the way – I could not have asked for a more genuinely supportive and loving husband. You are all my biggest supporters and have been so gracious to me. This is just as much your achievement as it is mine.

Philippians 4:13.

# 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: [redacted]

Date: 23.08.2023

# Table of Contents.

1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION. 11

1.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION. 11
1.2 PROFESSIONAL INFLUENCE ON THE THESIS TOPIC. 11
1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS. 12
1.3.1 DEFINING 'UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN', 'ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN', 'REFUGEE CHILDREN' AND 'MIGRANT CHILDREN'. 12
1.3.2 SUMMARY. 15
1.3.3 DEFINING 'SOCIAL SERVICES', 'DESIGNATED TEACHER', AND 'THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'. 16
1.3.4 SUMMARY. 17
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC. 17
1.4.1 GLOBAL CONTEXT. 17
1.4.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT. 18
1.4.3 LOCAL CONTEXT. 19
1.4.4 SUMMARY. 21
1.5 RELEVANCE TO EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY. 22
1.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS. 25

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW. 27

2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION. 27
2.2 LITERATURE SEARCH STRATEGY. 28
2.2.1 LITERATURE-SEARCH QUESTION. 28
2.2.2 LITERATURE SEARCH PROCESS. 29
2.2.3 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA RATIONALE. 30
2.2.4 APPLYING THE INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA. 32
2.2.5 SUMMARY 34
2.3 QUALITY OF LITERATURE FOUND. 34
2.4 THEME 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION - THE REQUIRED ROLES TO MEET NEWLY ARRIVED CHILDREN'S MULTI-FACETED NEEDS IN SCHOOLS. 36
2.4.1 SUMMARY. 38
2.5 THEME 2: PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE - SUPPORTING THE 'WHOLE CHILD'. 39
2.5.1 THEME 2, SUB-THEME 1: SCHOOL-LEVEL PRACTICES. 39
2.5.2 THEME 2, SUB-THEME 2: INTERPERSONAL PRACTICES. 43
2.5.3 THEME 2, SUB-THEME 3: ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. 45
2.5.4 SUMMARY. 46

2.6 THEME 3: POLICY: CONFLICTING AND COMPETING, RATHER THAN HARMONISING AND INTERLEAVING. 47
2.6.1 SUMMARY. 48
2.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS. 49

3 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY. 51

3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION. 51
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM. 52
3.3 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS. 52
3.3.1 ONTOLOGY. 53
3.3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY. 53
3.4 ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES. 54
3.5 INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS. 56
3.5.1 INTRODUCTION. 56
3.5.2 PHENOMENOLOGY. 56
3.5.3 HERMENEUTICS. 57
3.5.4 IDIOGRAPHY. 57
3.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF IPA. 58
3.6.1 BRACKETING. 58
3.6.2 REFLEXIVITY. 59
3.7 SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT. 59
3.7.1 SAMPLE. 59
3.7.2 RECRUITMENT PROCESS. 60
3.8 RESEARCH DESIGN. 61
3.8.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS. 61
3.8.2 INTERVIEW DESIGN AND PROCESS. 62
3.9 DATA ANALYSIS. 64
3.9.1 STEP 1: READING AND RE-READING. 65
3.9.2 STEP 2: EXPLORATORY NOTING. 65
3.9.3 STEP 3: CONSTRUCTING EXPERIENTIAL STATEMENTS. 66
3.9.4 STEP 4: SEARCHING FOR CONNECTIONS ACROSS EXPERIENTIAL STATEMENTS. 66
3.9.5 STEP 5: NAMING THE PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES AND CONSOLIDATING AND ORGANISING THEM IN A TABLE. 66
3.9.6 STEP 6: CONTINUING THE INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF OTHER CASES. 67
3.9.7 STEP 7: WORKING WITH PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES TO DEVELOP GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEMES ACROSS CASES. 67
3.10 ETHICS. 68
3.10.1 INFORMED CONSENT. 69
3.10.2 ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY. 69

3.10.3 PREVENTING HARM TO PARTICIPANTS. 70
3.10.4 RIGHT TO DECLINE OR WITHDRAW. 70
**3.11 CHAPTER CONCLUSION. 70**

**4 CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS. 72**

**4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION. 72**
**4.2 OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS. 72**
**4.3 OVERVIEW OF GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEMES. 74**
**4.4 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 1: MAKING SENSE OF UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES – "THE MOST INTENSE TRAUMA YOU CAN READ AND HEAR ABOUT, AND IT'S SO DIFFERENT" (JORDAN). 76**
4.4.1 SUMMARY. 80
**4.5 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 2: MANIFESTATION OF HEARING UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES – "I AM FEELING WHAT THAT YOUNG PERSON IS FEELING" (KIM). 81**
4.5.1 SUMMARY. 84
**4.6 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3: SUPPORT IN MANAGING THE ROLE – "IT NEVER REALLY FEELS LIKE THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE IN THE SAME BOAT" (JORDAN). 85**
4.6.1 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3, SUB-THEME 1: SIMULTANEOUSLY RECEIVING, YET LACKING, SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES - "IT DOES FEEL LIKE I'M ISOLATED IN A WAY, BUT I AM ALSO WORKING WITH EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL" (JORDAN). 86
4.6.2 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3, SUB-THEME 2: LIMITED COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT FROM EXTERNAL PROFESSIONALS - "I HAVE THOUGHT 'I WONDER WHAT THERE IS FOR ME', BUT THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYONE" (JESSIE). 89
4.6.3 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3, SUB-THEME 3: DISRUPTIONS TO SEEKING SUPPORT IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS – "WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT THIS STUFF WHEN I GET HOME, YOU KNOW? "(KIM). 93
4.6.4 SUMMARY. 95
**4.7 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 4: WAYS OF COPING – "I CAN'T SAVE EVERYONE, I CAN'T DO EVERYTHING" (JORDAN). 96**
4.7.1 SUMMARY. 99

**5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION. 101**

**5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION. 101**
**5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS. 101**
**5.3 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 1: MAKING SENSE OF UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES – "THE MOST INTENSE TRAUMA YOU CAN READ AND HEAR ABOUT, AND IT'S SO DIFFERENT" (JORDAN). 102**

5.3.1 SUMMARY. 105
**5.4 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 2: MANIFESTATION OF HEADING UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES – "I AM FEELING WHAT THAT YOUNG PERSON IS FEELING" (KIM). 106**
5.4.1 SUMMARY. 109
**5.5 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3: SUPPORT IN MANAGING THE ROLE – "IT NEVER REALLY FEELS LIKE THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE IN THE SAME BOAT" (JORDAN). 110**
5.5.1 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3, SUB-THEME 1: SIMULTANEOUSLY RECEIVING YET LACKING SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES - "IT DOES FEEL LIKE I'M ISOLATED IN A WAY, BUT I AM ALSO WORKING WITH EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL" (JORDAN). 110
5.5.2 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3, SUB-THEME 2: LIMITED COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT FROM EXTERNAL PROFESSIONALS - "I HAVE THOUGHT 'I WONDER WHAT THERE IS FOR ME', BUT THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYONE" (JESSIE). 112
5.5.3 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 3, SUB-THEME 3: DISRUPTIONS TO SEEKING SUPPORT IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS - "WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT THIS STUFF WHEN I GET HOME, YOU KNOW?" (KIM). 115
5.5.4 SUMMARY. 117
**5.6 GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME 4: WAYS OF COPING – "I CAN'T SAVE EVERYONE, I CAN'T DO EVERYTHING" (JORDAN). 118**
5.6.1 SUMMARY. 120
**5.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION. 121**

**6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION. 123**

**6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION. 123**
**6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS. 123**
6.2.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: WHAT ARE DESIGNATED TEACHERS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS WHEN SUPPORTING UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN? 123
6.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT IS HELPFUL FOR DESIGNATED TEACHERS' WELLBEING AND/OR DEVELOPING THEIR COMPETENCE WHEN SUPPORTING UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN? 126
6.2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT DESIGNATED TEACHERS PERCEIVE IN RELATION TO THEIR OWN WELLBEING AND COMPETENCE WHEN SUPPORTING UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN? 127
**6.3 IMPLICATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE. 130**
**6.4 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS. 133**
6.4.1 METHODOLOGY. 133
6.4.2 HOMOGENEITY. 134
6.4.3 GENERALISABILITY. 135
6.4.4 DATA COLLECTION. 136

6.5 ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH. 137
6.5.1 SENSITIVITY TO CONTEXT. 137
6.5.2 COMMITMENT AND RIGOR. 138
6.5.3 TRANSPARENCY AND COHERENCE. 139
6.5.4 IMPACT AND IMPORTANCE. 139
6.6 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND REFLEXIVITY. 140
6.7 DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FINDINGS. 141
6.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH. 143
6.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION. 144

7 REFERENCES. 146

8 APPENDIX. 183

8.1 APPENDIX 1: TEN-STEP PROCESS TO COMPLETING A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (BOLAND ET AL, 2017). 183
8.2 APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH PAPERS EXCLUDED AND REASONS FOR EXCLUSION. 184
8.3 APPENDIX 3: AN EXAMPLE OF CRITICAL APPRAISAL SKILLS PROGRAMME (CASP) CHECKLIST. 190
8.4 APPENDIX 4: EXAMPLES OF MIXED METHODS APPRAISAL TOOL (MMAT). 195
8.5 APPENDIX 5: SUMMARY DETAILS FOR EACH PAPER INCLUDED WITHIN THE LITERATURE REVIEW. 201
8.6 APPENDIX 6: EMAIL TO HEADTEACHERS. 217
8.7 APPENDIX 7: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS. 218
8.8 APPENDIX 8: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS. 221
8.9 APPENDIX 9: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS. 222
8.10 APPENDIX 10: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS. 224
8.11 APPENDIX 11: AN EXCERPT FROM JORDAN'S TRANSCRIPT, WITH EXPLORATORY NOTES AND EXPERIENTIAL STATEMENTS (STEPS 1-3 OF THE IPA PROCESS). 225
8.12 APPENDIX 12: TABLE OF JORDAN'S EXPERIENTIAL STATEMENTS. 229
8.13 APPENDIX 13: IMAGE OF SEARCHING FOR CONNECTIONS ACROSS JORDAN'S EXPERIENTIAL STATEMENTS (STEP 4 OF THE IPA PROCESS). 232
8.14 APPENDIX 14: NAMING JORDAN'S PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES AND CONSOLIDATING AND ORGANISING THEM IN A TABLE (STEP 5 OF THE IPA PROCESS). 233
8.15 APPENDIX 15: ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES ACROSS CASES. 239
8.16 APPENDIX 16: IMAGE OF WORKING WITH PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES TO DEVELOP GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEMES ACROSS CASES (STEP 7 OF THE IPA PROCESS). 241
8.17 APPENDIX 17: ETHICAL APPROVAL GRANTED BY THE SCHOOL FOR POLICY STUDIES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL IN FEBRUARY 2022. 242
8.18 APPENDIX 18: CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOL. 243
8.19 APPENDIX 19: DEBRIEFING EMAIL. 244

8.20 APPENDIX 20: SUMMARY OF GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEMES, THEIR SUB-THEMES, AND PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES.......... 245
8.21 APPENDIX 21: TABLE OF GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEMES AND CORRESPONDING QUOTES FROM ACROSS THE CASES TO DEMONSTRATE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH GROUP EXPERIENTIAL THEME. .......... 248
8.22 APPENDIX 22: REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT.......... 267

# 1 Chapter 1: Introduction.

## 1.1 Chapter Introduction.

The current study aimed to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. In turn, the findings of this study may inform potential implications in relation to the role of Educational Psychologists, including if, and how, Educational Psychologists could best support Designated Teachers in this role. This chapter begins by outlining my professional influence on the thesis topic. Thereafter, the terminology used within this thesis will be defined. This will lead to discussing the significance of the research topic, in which global, national, and local data and policy will be outlined, thereby identifying the rationale for the current study. Next, the relevance of the current study to the Educational Psychology profession will be explored, referring to specific theory that underpins the role of Educational Psychologists within the topic area. To end, a summary of the chapter and the structure of the thesis will be presented.

## 1.2 Professional Influence on the Thesis Topic.

Before defining important terminology in this thesis and discussing the significance of this research topic, it is necessary to highlight the motivation for choosing this area of study.

Prior to being a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I worked as a Designated Teacher and, in doing so, for the first time in my professional career, supported Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Throughout this experience, I developed an affinity for these children as I supported them in navigating their new life in England. As such, with my role came a new understanding regarding the lives of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, which often evoked a range of emotions. However, I regularly wondered how best to manage my experiences and feelings whilst supporting these children and if other Designated Teachers may also think the same. Furthermore, I also found myself in an influential position since colleagues often looked to me regarding how best to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Yet, I regularly felt as though I did not have all the answers, and I was unsure of where, or whom, I could approach in order to ensure school policies and practices were effective for these children. Therefore, this led me to complete the current study that explores the lived experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in schools to understand better the perceptions and views of those in this role.

Since working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I have noticed the importance of Educational Psychologists in facilitating effective support across multiple levels of school systems, including with groups of school staff. As I have embedded this within my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, many of the schools I work with subsequently request support for staff frequently. Yet, to date, I am not aware of Educational Psychologists in my service delivering support to Designated Teachers. This made me reflect on whether Educational Psychologists would have a role in supporting Designated Teachers and, if so, what this would entail. Therefore, drawing on this experience, the current study's findings will conclude tentative suggestions regarding if, and how, Educational Psychologists could best support Designated Teachers in their role.

## 1.3 Definition of Terms.

Throughout this thesis, terms including ‘Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’, ‘Asylum-Seeking Children’, ‘Refugee Children’, and ‘Migrant Children’ have been referred to. Across the literature, it is identified that there can be confusion between these concepts and terms are often misused, used interchangeably, or reduced to the term ‘forcibly displaced people’ (Peterson et al., 2017). As such, it is important to highlight the legal distinction between these terms to ensure clarity regarding the groups of children I have discussed in this thesis. Moreover, professional titles such as ‘Social Services’, ‘Designated Teacher’, and ‘The Virtual School’ have also been used and will be defined to ensure further transparency concerning the professions I refer to throughout the thesis.

### 1.3.1 Defining ‘Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’, ‘Asylum-Seeking Children’, ‘Refugee Children’ and ‘Migrant Children’.

#### *1.3.1.1 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.*

As defined by the UNHCR (1994), the term Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children refers to those under the age of 18 “who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has the responsibility to do so" (p.121). To date, there has been only one legal, thus safe, route into the UK via The Dubs Amendment (section 67) in the Immigration Act 2016, which aimed to provide sanctuary to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who were living in Refugee camps across Europe (Home Office, 2020). As a result, the UK Government relocated 480 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children before suspending this amendment in 2017 (Home Office, 2020). As such, the majority of other Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are deemed 'spontaneous arrivals' as they have been smuggled into the UK, often by lorry, ship, or small boat, unbeknown to the UK Government (Hopkins and Hill, 2008; Ellis et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2017; Sanchez-Clemente et al., 2023).

On arrival to the UK, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are subject to a range of interviews with the Home Office to determine whether their lives are at risk in their home country, thus can be deemed as seeking asylum, and to ensure that the individual is under the age of 18, thereby identifying them as a child. Once the aforementioned judgement has been made, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are granted temporary residence until aged 17 and become Children in Care in accordance with the Children Act (1989). Local Authorities in which these children present, or are referred to through the National Transfer Scheme[1], become responsible for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, as they would with any other child in care. However, at any point, the Home Office may decide that it is safe for an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child to return to their home country, and so their position in the UK is fragile. This fragility is furthered when an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child reaches the age of 17, as they are required to apply for 'Refugee Status', which means that the Home Office may decide to deport these individuals if their circumstances no longer meet the specific definition of 'Refugee', as outlined below. As a result, there are many processes in which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children must endure so to be recognised as requiring protection, with additional uncertainty regarding their safety in the UK as they transition to adulthood.

---

[1] As described above, the National Transfer Scheme refers to the process of referring Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children to another Local Authority if the Local Authority that these children present have reached 0.1% of their quota, as described below in the 'Local Context' section.

#### *1.3.1.2 Asylum-Seeking Children.*

Asylum-Seeking Children, as outlined by the UNHCR (2019), are also those that are under the age of 18 who, with a caregiver, "flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country…[in] fear of persecution in his or her home country" (p.1). As such, Asylum-Seeking Children have left their home country and are awaiting a decision regarding their asylum application to another country – whether that be the country to which they have fled, or one in which they seek to reside. Asylum-Seeking Children are distinct from Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in that they flee their home country with a caregiver, and therefore are not deemed Children in Care when they arrive in the UK. Yet, as with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children also seek legal protection to in turn be recognised as a Refugee so that their safety in the UK is certain. Similar to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, the Home Office may refuse requests to live in the UK, and therefore, if the child has already travelled to the UK, they can be deported back to their home country at any given time.

#### *1.3.1.3 Refugee Children.*

Unlike the labels of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Asylum-Seeking Children, the term Refugee is defined by international law under the '1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees' as:

> *"owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of [their] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail [themself] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of [their] former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it"* (UNHCR, p.14).

As such, Refugees are a universally recognised group of people, defined as those whose basic human rights are being violated in their home country, rendering them in need of specific protections. The UK, along with other countries, supports the resettlement of Refugees, and Refugees cannot be forced to return to the country from which they fled.

There are two ways in which individuals can be recognised as Refugees. Firstly, individuals may have a particular membership to a social or ethnic group that is being persecuted, and so subject to a resettlement scheme. The most recent large-scale example of this process relates to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, resulting in over 8 million Ukrainian Refugees across Europe, of which 230,800 have been resettled in the UK (Home Office, 2023). If individuals do not have access to resettlement schemes, they can apply for Refugee Status on an individual basis. This is the process that all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Asylum-Seeking Children will be required to go through in order to secure their protection in the UK. To be granted this legal protection, these individuals are subject to a range of interviews with the immigration office and the Home Office to determine whether their circumstances are in line with the definition of a Refugee above; this can take the authorities between one and three years to decide (Right to Remain, 2022). Therefore, the term Refugee refers to those granted legal protection and sanctuary within the UK, thereby rendering their safety in the UK certain.

#### *1.3.1.4 Migrant Children.*

Finally, whilst 'Migrant Children' is not a legally defined term, it commonly refers to those who have voluntarily left their home country. Migrant Children are understood as those who have moved with their caregiver from their home country, not because of threats of persecution, but to improve their livelihoods, such as their parents seeking employment opportunities or better living conditions. As Migrant Children have not been subject to persecution which has forced them to flee their country, they are subsequently not defined as Asylum-Seeking Children and would not be granted Refugee Status.

### 1.3.2 Summary.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are a distinct group of children who have been forced to flee their home country, escaping persecution, war and/or violence, without a caregiver, thereby rendering them Children in Care when they arrive in the UK. However, the term Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children is arguably flawed as these individuals should be understood as children first, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seekers second (UNCRC, 1990). Moreover, the term is reductive in that it fails to account for these children's unique characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences. As such, the term Unaccompanied Asylum-

Seeking Children will be utilised throughout this thesis to ensure clarity on the group of children to which I refer, yet in doing so, it should be recognised that the term is both flawed and reductive.

## 1.3.3 Defining 'Social Services', 'Designated Teacher', and 'The Virtual School'.

### *1.3.3.1 Social Services.*

Due to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arriving in the UK without a caregiver, these children become Children in Care, and so the Local Authority in which they present, or are referred to, becomes their 'corporate parent'. Children's Social Services identify a Social Worker who takes on this role on behalf of the Local Authority. In doing so, Social Services are responsible for the health, education, and appropriate accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, as they would with any child in care.

### *1.3.3.2 Designated Teacher.*

To support the Local Authority in ensuring the utmost care for Children in Care, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, all schools in England are required to have one member of staff whose responsibility it is to promote the educational outcomes of Children in Care across the school (Children and Families Act, 2008). This role became termed Designated Teacher (Children and Families Act, 2008).

As outlined by the DfE (2018a), the Designated Teacher is expected to ensure that appropriate, and effective, policies and procedures are in place for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within the school system. Additionally, Designated Teachers should work alongside school staff to ensure a good understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's individual strengths and needs, focusing on developing staff's knowledge of effective practices in order to meet the needs of each of these children at school. Designated Teachers should also work closely with, and be the central point of contact for, external professionals, including Social Workers, The Virtual School, and Foster Carers. In doing so, as described by the DfE (2018a), the Designated Teacher is the identified member of staff, or 'Key Adult', for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, who should be advocating for children's needs, utilising their in-depth knowledge of children’s experiences, and employing their expertise regarding effective educational support in order to coordinate and oversee Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s educational provision.

#### *1.3.3.3 The Virtual School.*

To further support the Local Authority in ensuring positive outcomes for children in care, the Children and Families Act (2014) stipulated that each Local Authority must have a virtual school. The Virtual School is not a physical school or institution, but rather a team of professionals, led by a Virtual School Headteacher, who is in regular contact with Designated Teachers to monitor the attendance, attainment, and progress of all Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within their Local Authority. The primary focus of The Virtual School is to hold schools accountable via their Designated Teacher in ensuring effective educational provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

### 1.3.4 Summary.

Each school in England will have a Designated Teacher, a specific member of staff, who is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the educational provision of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. In doing so, Designated Teachers should be skilled practitioners with knowledge of the needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who advocate for effective support and champion the voice of these children when working alongside Social Services, The Virtual School, and their colleagues. However, whilst policy and guidance stipulate the role and responsibilities of Designated Teachers, according to my search of the literature, little is known as to how Designated Teachers experience their role, particularly in relation to supporting the needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

## 1.4 Significance of the Topic.

### 1.4.1 Global Context.

The most recent United Nations Refugee Agency’s annual global trends study reported that, at the end of 2021, 7 million people fled their home country, bringing the total number of forcibly displaced people[2] to 89.3 million across the world since 1991 (UNHCR, 2022). This figure is more than double those forcibly displaced in 2012 and continues the decade-long rising trend of people fleeing their homes due to conflict, persecution, and/or violence (UNHCR, 2022). Of these 89.3 million forcibly displaced people, 41% were children, despite children accounting for 30% of the world's population (UNHCR, 2022). Therefore, children are disproportionately represented in the data of forcibly displaced people worldwide. Furthermore, of all forcibly displaced children worldwide, 27,000 are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children – an addition of 6,600 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in 2021 (UNHCR, 2022). Yet, the UNHCR has suggested that there are more Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who are not accounted for within these figures due to many countries not reporting such data (UNHCR, 2022). Nevertheless, the most recent global data indicates the significant number of forcibly displaced people worldwide, many of whom are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

### 1.4.2 National Context.

In accordance with the global increase of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, the UK has also experienced this rise. Specifically, at the close of December 2022, the most recent year in which data has been accumulated, 5806 children applied for asylum in the UK (Home Office, 2023). Of these 5806 children, 5183 applications for asylum were made by Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children - a 29% increase compared to the previous year (Home Office, 2023). This increase brings the total number to 35,508 children seeking asylum, of which 30,948 are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, between 2012 and 2022, as depicted in Figure 1 (Home Office, 2023). This data demonstrates the significant number of displaced children who have sought asylum in the UK over a ten-year period, with the majority being Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

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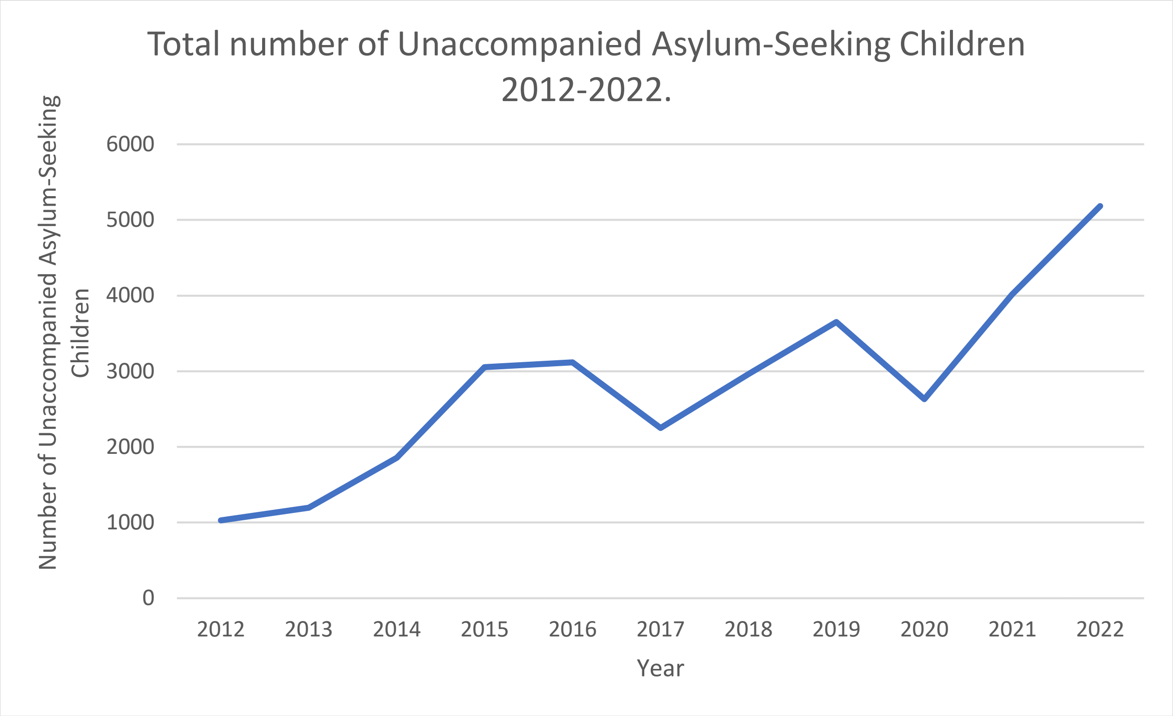
[2] The term 'forcibly displaced people' encompass Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, all Asylum-Seekers, and all Refugees.

Figure 1: Total number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, 2012-2022.



Although Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are united under their legal definition outlined above, it is important to recognise that these children are not a homogenous group. Of the 5183 applications made in the UK in 2022, over 95% of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children were male, whilst 5% were female (Home Office, 2023). Moreover, the Children came from 57 different counties, with the majority coming from Afghanistan (32%), Sudan (12%), Iran (11%), and Eritrea (6%) (Home Office, 2023). Furthermore, 70% of the children were aged 16 or 17 (Home Office, 2023). Therefore, with growing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in the UK, it is important to recognise that each child will have their own unique experiences.

### 1.4.3 Local Context.

When reviewing local data on where the growing number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children reside, there have been many changes regarding how many Local Authorities are responsible for these children (Local Government Association, 2022). Prior to 2016, particular Local Authorities, namely Kent and those in London, had the highest number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Children's Legal Centre, 2003). This is due to Unaccompanied

Asylum-Seeking Children often crossing the English Channel in small boats, thereby arriving on the south coast (Home Office 2022). As such, in 2016 (later updated in 2022), the Government established a National Transfer Scheme to encourage a "more equitable distribution of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children across Local Authorities" (Home Office 2022, p3). In practice, this means that when Local Authorities have 0.1% of their child population being Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, these Local Authorities would not be expected to place additional Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children under their care, and they can request that a child is placed in another Local Authority (Home Office 2022). As such, over time, there have been increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Local Authorities outside of Kent and London, including the three Local Authorities in which the current study took place (Local Government Association, 2022).

When reviewing data collected in 2022 concerning the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children across all three Local Authorities in which the current study took place, there were a total of 207 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Local Government Association, 2022). As depicted in Table 1, the combined numbers of newly arrived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children being placed in the Local Authorities in which the current study took place have increased from 2016 to 2022, in line with global and national data (Home Office, 2023).

Table 1: Total number of newly arrived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children during the period 2016-2022 within the three Local Authorities in which the current study took place (Local Government Association, 2022).

| **Year** | **2016-2017** | **2017-2018** | **2018-2019** | **2019-2020** | **2020-2021** | **2021-2022** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.** | 172 | 204 | 199 | 147 | 128 | 201 |

In respect to each of the three Local Authorities included in the current study, out of 131 Local Authorities of which data was available, one had the 9th highest number of Unaccompanied

Asylum-Seeking Children, another had the 17th highest, and the final area had the 95th highest number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children[3] (Local Government Association, 2022). Therefore, from the data that was available, although a slight decline between 2018-2021, the Local Authorities in which the current study took place have experienced significant numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children being placed under their care from 2016 to 2022, with some having more Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children than others.

However, such data should be viewed with caution as a number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children may be 'hidden' from these figures. Specifically, despite the Children Act (1989) deeming Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as Children in Care when they arrive in the UK, the Home Office has recently circumvented the activation of the Children Act (1989) by making an exemption in order to temporarily house these children in hotels, and not under the care of Local Authorities. As such, between July 2021-July 2022, 4600 of these children have been living in hotels (House of Commons, 2023). In doing so, it is estimated that approximately 200 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have subsequently gone missing and are yet to be accounted for (House of Commons, 2023). This considerable child protection issue (please refer to House of Commons Library, 2023 for further discussion) makes it challenging to establish accurate conclusions regarding where Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children reside.

### 1.4.4 Summary.

As depicted by data, although numbers have fluctuated, there is an overall, decade-long, rising trend of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children seeking sanctuary in the UK. At the close of December 2022, the UK experienced 5183 arriving in the UK, thereby bringing the total number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children to 30,948. Whilst historically, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children tended to be cared for by Kent and London Local Authorities, the Local Authorities in which the current study took place have seen growing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, potentially due to the National Transfer Scheme. Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children is no longer concentrated in a few geographical regions, but one in which many Local Authorities are likely to be experiencing.

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[3] Specific numbers regarding each Local Authority in which the study took place are not presented so to align with ethics and reduce the likelihood of identification.

This, therefore, represents a timely opportunity for research to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school.

## 1.5 Relevance to Educational Psychology.

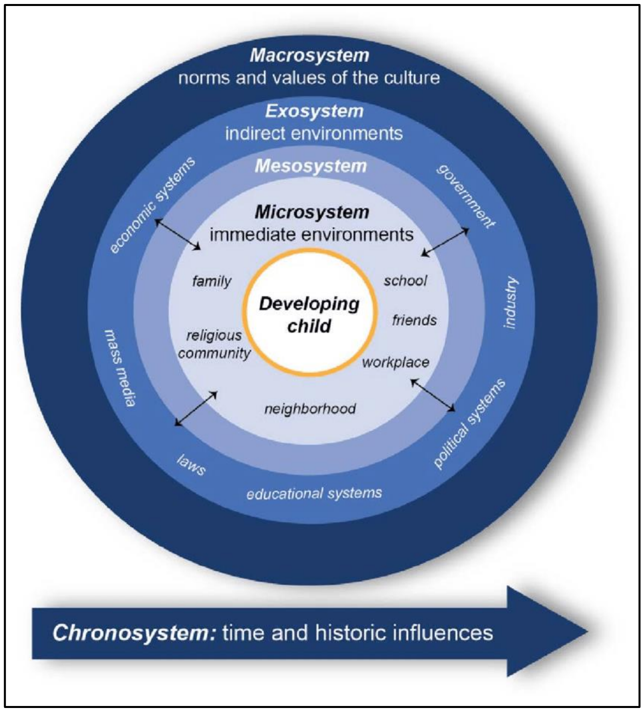
When Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arrive in the UK and are placed within a Local Authority as Children in Care, they have the right to access education and should be attending a school within 20 working days (DfE, 2018b). As such, given that there has been an overall increase of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children over time, concurrently, there have been growing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children attending school. The increase of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in schools is no longer exclusive to Kent and London Local Authorities, rather, in response to the National Transfer Scheme, schools within smaller Local Authorities are also now having to accommodate the needs of these children.

According to previous research, the needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are often indicative of them having endured challenging experiences, which can include fleeing persecution, being separated from their family, and often navigating perilous and arduous journeys to the UK, with exploitation and violence not uncommon (e.g., Hopkins and Hill, 2008; Ellis et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2017; Sanchez-Clemente et al., 2023). After which, when arriving in a new country, these children may experience challenges in acclimatising to the culture and language, as well as uncertain legal status rendering their time in the UK fragile. Both research (e.g., Fazel et al., 2016; O’Higgins et al., 2017; Ott & O’Higgins, 2019; McDiarmid et al., 2022) and policy have identified schools as being significant in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s social, cultural, emotional, and academic development. For instance, Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) emphasises the need for education to develop children’s strengths, thereby enabling Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children to reach their potential that extends beyond solely learning, and to include their personality, talents, mental and physical health. Therefore, with Designated Teachers being responsible for coordinating and overseeing the holistic education of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in order to meet their unique needs, it could be that increasing numbers of these children have rendered potentially distinctive lived experiences within the role of

Designated Teacher that are yet to be understood, both in terms of their wellbeing and competencies.

Identifying the lived experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children may elicit professional implications on the role of Educational Psychologists. This is because Educational Psychologists employ their knowledge in psychology, and child development, to work collaboratively with schools to ensure effective educational provision and practices for various children who present with a range of needs (MacKay et al., 2016). Given the increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children across Local Authorities, it is likely that many Educational Psychologists will be working with schools that have Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on roll, and so may be asked for their support in meeting these children's multi-faceted needs. However, the role of an Educational Psychologist does not always mean working directly with children. Rather, since the 1970s, it is argued that there have been significant shifts in paradigms and practices concerning the way in which Educational Psychologists fulfil their role and meet schools' requests for support (Gillham, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Boyle and MacKay, 2007). Specifically, as asserted in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979; 1994), the role of Educational Psychologists can go beyond working at the individual level and can include intervening within five interactive environmental systems that are theorised as being influential on the development of children. These are: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979; 1994) of individual development (Nicholson and Dominguez-Pareto, 2020).


Macrosystem
norms and values of the culture
Exosystem
indirect environments
Mesosystem
Microsystem
immediate environments
economic systems
government
industry
political systems
educational systems
laws
mass media
family
school
friends
workplace
neighborhood
religious community
Developing child
Chronosystem: time and historic influences

The microsystem depicts the relationships and experiences within children's immediate environments, such as with their parents/carers, siblings, friends, and teachers. The mesosystem reflects the interaction between children's microsystems, thereby identifying how a change within one environment, such as home, can influence children's experience within another setting, such as school. The exosystem refers to organisations or social environments that indirectly influence children's development, such as their family's economic circumstances. The macrosystem concerns the impact of politics, economics, values, and culture on children. Finally, the chronosystem highlights that each of the aforementioned systems influences children's development over time. As such, this theory indicates the importance of Educational Psychologists working across multiple levels, including the individual, group, and organisational level, facilitating positive change within the environments around the child to, in turn, promote effective outcomes for children's development (Fallon et al., 2010).

Reflecting on the progression within the Educational Psychology profession since the 1970s, alongside recognising the ecological, organisational, and systemic influences on child development, it seemed imperative within the current study to give voice to Designated Teachers. This is because they could be seen as key players within Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's microsystem – an area in which Educational Psychologists could intervene within their role. In turn, in understanding Designated Teacher's unique lived experiences, it is hoped that the findings of this research may go some way in aiding the Educational Psychology profession by highlighting if, and how, they could best support Designated Teachers in their role of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

## 1.6 Chapter Conclusion and Structure of the Thesis.

This chapter has introduced the research topic. My professional influence and motivation for completing the current study has been outlined, referring to my experiences as a Designated Teacher and supporting school staff in my current role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. Next, to ensure definitional clarity, the terminology used throughout this thesis has been outlined, thereby enabling transparency and a shared understanding regarding the research topic. Following this, the significance of the area of study was explored, highlighting the increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arriving in the UK, and therefore requiring support within schools across Local Authorities. Finally, the current study's relevance to Educational Psychologists' role was discussed. To bring this chapter to an end, the remaining chapters will now be outlined:

- Chapter 2: Literature Review - explores pertinent literature relevant to the current study's research topic.
- Chapter 3: Methodology - outlines the methodological foundation of the current study alongside the methods employed to address the research questions.
- Chapter 4: Findings – presents the findings and the key Group Experiential Themes from the current study following a process of IPA.
- Chapter 5: Discussion - engages in a critical discussion of the research findings.
- Chapter 6: Conclusion - summarises the key findings of the current study in relation to the research questions. In doing so, the potential implications for Educational Psychology professional practice are identified, the distinctive contribution of the current study discussed, and possible future research to develop our understanding within this topic

area is detailed. Additionally, the strengths and limitations of the current study are reviewed alongside assessing its quality.

# 2 Chapter 2: Literature Review.

## 2.1 Chapter Introduction.

This chapter explores and discusses the literature concerning Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children[4] within education from the perspectives of various stakeholders, including the children themselves. The initial examination of the literature indicated a dearth of research concerning Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within England. For this reason, the literature which is discussed also incorporates both Asylum-Seeking Children[5] and Refugee Children[6] within the Western World[7]. Therefore, a purposefully broad literature review is presented regarding these Newly Arrived Children[8] in order to facilitate a critical and reflective understanding of this topic.

To begin, this chapter outlines the systematic approach utilised in order to establish a clear and robust literature review, including discussing the measures employed that supported a comprehensive literature search across a range of databases. This will lead on to presenting the critical appraisal of the literature that is presented in this chapter, considering the quality of each paper. Afterwards, there will be a synthesis of the literature into three overarching themes, with one theme including a further three sub-themes:

- The Importance of Education: The Required Ranging Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children's Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools.
- Pedagogical Practice: Supporting the 'Whole Child'.

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[4] As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction, the term 'Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children refers to those under the age of 18 "who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has the responsibility to do so" (UNHCR, 1994, p.121).

[5] As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction, the term 'Asylum-Seeking Children refers to those under the age of 18 who, with a caregiver, "flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country…[in] fear of persecution in his or her home country" (UNHCR, 2019, p.1).

[6] As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction, the term 'Refugee Children' refers to those who have a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (UNHCR, p.14) rendering them in need of other countries to provide them with specific protections and sanctuary.

[7] As described in the 'Literature search strategy' section of this chapter, the Western World refers to countries in the European Union together with the UK, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, the United States, and New Zealand.

[8] The term 'Newly Arrived Children' encompasses Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children who have recently arrived to the UK.

    - School-Level Practices.
    - Interpersonal Practices.
    - Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills.
- Policy: Conflicting and Competing, Rather than Harmonising and Interleaving.

To end, a summary of the chapter will be provided, identifying areas of further exploration and, thus, how the current research aims to fill this gap in the literature.

## 2.2 Literature Search Strategy.

A systematically informed literature review approach[9], following the ten-step process outlined by Boland et al (2017) (Appendix 1), was utilised for the purpose of identifying and reviewing literature within this topic area. The literature search was carried out in January 2022, identifying eight research studies and, due to the potential of additional and recent publications, again in March 2023, whereby a further five research studies were ascertained.

### 2.2.1 Literature-Search Question.

To establish the most relevant literature, the process began by constructing a literature-search question:

- What is known about supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within the English education system?

However, an initial scoping review of the literature revealed limited articles exploring the topic of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in England, thereby indicating that this is an under-researched area. Subsequently, it was essential to widen the literature-search question further to:

- What is known about supporting Newly Arrived Children, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and/or Asylum-Seeking Children, within education systems across the Western World?

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[9] This literature review is considered to be informed by a systematic literature review approach due to the time constraints and as it did not include two (or more) independent literature reviewers.

## 2.2.2 Literature Search Process.

Using The University of Bristol's Library, the following databases were searched: Web of Science, PsychInfo, British Education Index, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, and Education Resources Information Centre. With the literature-search question as guidance, pre-defined search terms were consistently applied across the databases, as shown in Table 2. This yielded 41 research articles. Once the inclusion and exclusion criteria had been applied, as shown in Table 3, this reduced the number of relevant papers to eight during my initial search in January 2022. When repeating this process in March 2023, a further five research studies were identified as relevant.

Table 2: Key search terms applied to the literature search.

| **Key search terms:** |
|---|
| "Asylum Seek* Child*" |
| OR<br>"Unaccompanied Asylum Seek* Child*" |
| AND<br>Teach* OR School Staff OR Designated teach* OR Support Staff OR Pastoral Staff. |

Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the literature search.

| **Inclusion criteria:** | **Exclusion criteria:** |
|---|---|
| Publications in English language. | Publications not in the English language |
| Published in or after 2016. | Published before 2016. |
| The topic area or focus of research relates to supporting:<br>- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in education;<br>- Asylum-Seeking Children in education; | The topic area or focus of research relates to supporting Refugee and/or Migrant Children[10] exclusively. |

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[10] As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction, the term 'Migrant Children' refers to those who have voluntarily left their home country with a caregiver, not because of threats of persecution, but to improve their livelihood.

| | |
|---|---|
| - Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children in education;<br>- Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children in education. | |
| Studies exploring a range of stakeholders: children, teachers, support staff, headteachers, and virtual school advocates. | Studies that did not take place in the Western World. |
| Peer-reviewed journal articles. | Studies that are not peer-reviewed, including ‘grey’ literature. |
| Research based within the Western World. | Studies that did not collect primary data. |

## 2.2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Rationale.

When constructing the inclusion and exclusion criteria, important decisions were made in order to focus the literature review. These key decisions will be discussed in turn.

### *2.2.3.1 Research Publication Date.*

It was decided to only include research published in, or after, 2016. The rationale for doing so is related to key policy, namely, The Dubs Amendment, section 67, to the Immigration Act, 2016. As outlined in Chapter 1: Introduction, this law gave an additional 480 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children a safe route to, and home within, the UK from the refugee camps in France, Greece, and Italy (Home Office, 2020). This meant that, as shown in Figure 1, the total number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children at the end of 2022 had risen to over 5000 compared to there being less than 3000 prior to 2016. Therefore, studies solely published in, or after, 2016 were included within this literature review due to this policy amendment which saw a rise in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arriving to the UK.

### *2.2.3.2 Research in the Western World.*

As outlined above, it was decided to include literature within the Western World due to the limited research studies available within the UK. It is widely accepted that the Western World refers to countries in the European Union, together with the UK, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, the United States, and New Zealand (Nair et al., 2021). During analysis of the literature, I remained mindful of the cultural differences, such as policies, legislation, and practices between education systems, to ensure the literature review remained relevant to the literature-search question as opposed to a comparison of the cross-country differences. Therefore, research within the Western World is included within this review to add breadth to the current understanding of this topic area.

#### 2.2.3.3 The Topic Area and Focus of Research Studies.

Although the current study is focused on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, the inclusion criteria for the literature review allowed for research focused on Asylum-Seeking Children, but excludes research focused solely on Refugee and/or Migrant Children.

The rationale to include Asylum-Seeking Children within this literature review was made following the initial scoping review of the literature, as it highlighted that research within the topic area of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children is still developing. In turn, it was decided that this literature review should be positioned more generally within the wider topic area of Asylum-Seeking Children, since Asylum-Seeking Children are only dissimilar to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, the topic of interest, due to arriving in a new country with a caregiver. During this decision-making process, it was maintained that research studies involving Refugee and/or Migrant Children exclusively should be excluded from this literature review. This is because the findings would be difficult to generalise to the topic area of the current study since Refugee and Migrant Children are further removed from the original topic of interest, as Refugee Children are a universally recognised group who are provided legal resettlement and Migrant Children are not forcefully displaced or fleeing from their home country.

Whilst exploring papers that were generated from the key search terms, some papers focused on both Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children, and a further two papers focused on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children. As a result, an additional decision was made to include these specific research studies within this literature review, as they referred to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and/or Asylum-Seeking Children, rendering these studies relevant in answering the literature-search question.

### 2.2.4 Applying the Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

As shown in Figure 3, applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria followed a coherent process in two literature searches, one in January 2022 and another in March 2023. Initially, throughout both searches, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied using search filters which featured on each database[11]. Combining both January 2022 and March 2023 literature searches, this reduced the amount of relevant literature to 73 research articles. The titles and abstracts of these research papers were screened using the inclusion and exclusion criteria, thereby further reducing the relevant literature to 24 articles across both January 2022 and March 2023 literature searches. To end the process, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to the whole text of the remaining 24 research articles, rendering 11 papers as relevant from both searches. Due to the limited research available, it was decided to acquire further appropriate research papers through a manual search of the reference lists of those articles deemed relevant. This resulted in a further two papers being identified as appropriate, subsequently equating to a total of 13 research papers included in this literature review. It is important to note that of these 13 research papers, four draw on data from two larger studies. Specifically, Wilkinson and Kaukko (2020) and Kaukko et al (2022) referred to data within a larger paper entitled ‘Educational Success through the Eyes of a Refugee Child’. Similarly, data within Prentice and Ott's (2021) and Prentice's (2022) articles draw on a doctoral thesis completed by Prentice (2022). Therefore, in total, the current literature review includes 13 research papers, which relate to 11 research studies.

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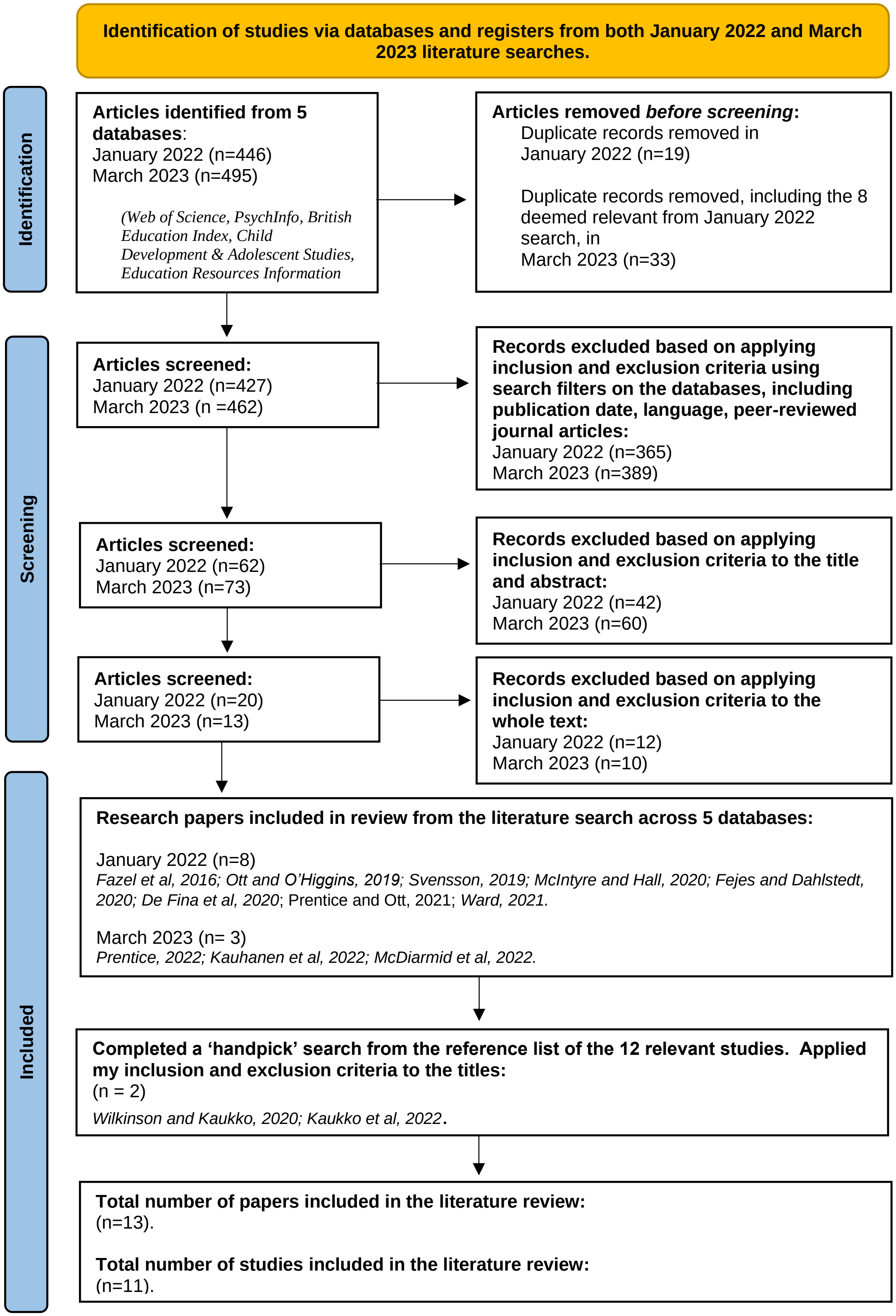
[11] Reasons for exclusions can be found in Appendix 2.

Figure 3: PRISMA flow chart.



**Identification of studies via databases and registers from both January 2022 and March 2023 literature searches.**

**Articles identified from 5 databases**:
January 2022 (n=446)
March 2023 (n=495)

*(Web of Science, PsychInfo, British Education Index, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, Education Resources Information*

**Articles removed *before screening***:
Duplicate records removed in January 2022 (n=19)

Duplicate records removed, including the 8 deemed relevant from January 2022 search, in
March 2023 (n=33)

**Articles screened:**
January 2022 (n=427)
March 2023 (n =462)

**Records excluded based on applying inclusion and exclusion criteria using search filters on the databases, including publication date, language, peer-reviewed journal articles:**
January 2022 (n=365)
March 2023 (n=389)

**Articles screened:**
January 2022 (n=62)
March 2023 (n=73)

**Records excluded based on applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to the title and abstract:**
January 2022 (n=42)
March 2023 (n=60)

**Articles screened:**
January 2022 (n=20)
March 2023 (n=13)

**Records excluded based on applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to the whole text:**
January 2022 (n=12)
March 2023 (n=10)

**Research papers included in review from the literature search across 5 databases:**

January 2022 (n=8)
*Fazel et al, 2016; Ott and O'Higgins, 2019; Svensson, 2019; McIntyre and Hall, 2020; Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; De Fina et al, 2020*; Prentice and Ott, 2021; *Ward, 2021.*

March 2023 (n= 3)
*Prentice, 2022; Kauhanen et al, 2022; McDiarmid et al, 2022.*

**Completed a 'handpick' search from the reference list of the 12 relevant studies. Applied my inclusion and exclusion criteria to the titles:**
(n = 2)
*Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Kaukko et al, 2022*.

**Total number of papers included in the literature review:**
(n=13).

**Total number of studies included in the literature review:**
(n=11).

### 2.2.5 Summary

Overall, following a systematic literature review search strategy conducted in January 2022 and March 2023, 13 research papers were identified as relevant to answering my literature-search question: what is known about supporting Newly Arrived Children, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and/or Asylum-Seeking Children, within education systems across the Western World? Of these 13 research papers, eight were identified in January 2022 and, when completing an updated search of the literature in March 2023, a further three papers were identified following the same process. Thereafter, an additional two research papers were acquired via a manual search of the reference lists of these 11 research papers. Therefore, these 13 papers form the remainder of this literature review.

## 2.3 Quality of Literature Found.

Once the relevant literature had been identified via the systematic literature search strategy, a Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative studies was applied in order to inform the critical review of qualitative papers, whilst the Mixed Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was utilised for those papers that employed a mixed method approach to their study.

The CASP Qualitative Checklist, which encompasses ten questions, was used to systematically appraise the aims, recruitment procedures, research design, methodology, data analysis, results, and value of each qualitative paper in turn (see Appendix 3). Similarly, the MMAT included seven questions to critically appraise both quantitative and qualitative components of mixed method studies, including its rationale, assessing its integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, and understanding how interpretation of data influenced the conclusions of the study (see Appendix 4). In both appraisal tools, it is disadvised to provide an overall score of individual research studies, rather, researchers are encouraged to provide detailed responses to each question to inform its quality (Hong et al., 2018). As such, when using these appraisal tools, I engaged in each criterion by providing detail to individual questions, which subsequently allowed for judgements to be made as to whether research studies adequately met each necessary criterion. All papers met eight or above of the ten CASP criteria and six or above of the seven MMAT criteria, thus were deemed to be of appropriate quality for this literature review.

The reason for choosing the CASP Qualitative Checklist to appraise qualitative research studies over other appraisal tools was threefold; its suitability toward qualitative research (Majid and Vanstone, 2018), providing an easy-to-access, coherent process for less experienced researchers (Majid and Vanstone, 2018), and consisting of both open and closed questions which enables a deep level of criticality and reflection of the literature papers (Buccheri and Sharifi, 2017). Moreover, the MMAT was chosen when appraising research studies using a mixed methods approach due to its user guide that supports novice researchers to make appropriate judgements regarding the quality of the papers and, with its focus on specific number of criteria, this renders it a time efficient tool (Hong et al., 2018). As such, when performed appropriately, such tools enable the researcher to identify and evidence quality literature (Haile, 2021). Therefore, both CASP and MMAT were judged appropriate tools for appraising the identified literature, and subsequently, I found them to be supportive throughout the appraisal process for the assessment of the quality and rigor of the available articles.

As detailed above, after using the CASP Qualitative Checklist and the MMAT, it was determined that all 13 research papers could be presented within this literature review. As such, this review includes research studies that have focused on the following:

- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Ott and O’Higgins, 2019; Ward, 2021; Kauhanen et al., 2022).
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children, and Refugee Children (Prentice and Ott, 2021; Prentice, 2022).
- Asylum-Seeking Children (Svensson, 2019; De Fina et al., 2020; Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020).
- Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children (Fazel et al., 2016; McIntryre and Hall, 2020; Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Kaukko et al., 2022; McDiarmid et al., 2022).

Of these research papers, six were conducted in England, three in Sweden, one in Italy, one in Finland, one in Australia and one in both Finland and Australia. These studies range from including three to 312 participants, involving Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children, Refugee Children, teachers, headteachers, teaching assistants, specialist teachers, and virtual school advocates. In doing so, this review offers a broad spectrum of ‘voices’ across the Western World within this topic area. A summary of the 13 research papers that were critically appraised can be found in Appendix 5.

To provide a succinct understanding of the current literature regarding what is known about supporting Newly Arrived Children, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and/or Asylum-Seeking Children, within education systems across the Western World, the literature review is organised thematically. To do so, I utilised Thomas and Harden’s (2008) thematic synthesis approach to identify, analyse, and interpret consistencies and differences across the literature. Thematic synthesis supported the aim of collating findings regarding supporting Newly Arrived Children in school by determining patterns across the identified data. Having engaged in this process, the literature can be synthesised into three themes, one of which is made up of three sub-themes:

- The Importance of Education - The Required Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children’s Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools.
- Pedagogical Practice - Supporting the ‘Whole Child’.
    - School-Level Practices.
    - Interpersonal Practices.
    - Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills.
- Policy - Conflicting and Competing, Rather than Harmonising and Interleaving.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss these themes and relevant literature in turn.

## 2.4 Theme 1: The Importance of Education - the Required Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children’s Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools.

Newly Arrived Children often experience a series of challenging early life experiences that may not necessarily end when they arrive in a new country (Prentice and Ott, 2021). For instance, these children most likely have to learn a new language, acclimatise to a new culture and customs, some will have to continue to navigate the asylum process, and for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, they may also be thrust into adulthood whilst still a child, often away from family and without knowledge of their family's safety (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). In turn, across the literature, research studies have found that schools and teachers must go beyond providing a curriculum-based education and, instead, fulfil a range of roles to support the multi-faceted needs of Newly Arrived Children (Fazel et al., 2016; Ott and O'Higgins, 2019; McDiarmid et al., 2022).

Fazel et al (2016) aimed to explore the role of schools in supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children's access to the necessary mental health support in England. This is because, in 2011, it was estimated that around 90% of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children in the UK who required input from mental health services were not in receipt of this support, due to both stigma and accessibility which needed to be addressed (Ellis, 2011). Fazel et al (2016) interviewed 40 Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children attending school. They found that two-thirds of these children identified school as being the environment in which they would like their mental health support to take place. They found that students felt safe in school due to the trusting relationships which they had developed with staff, and wanted these staff to support and mediate their contact with the mental health team because they felt uncomfortable discussing their personal worries with 'strangers'. In this way, Fazel et al (2016) concluded that schools had a role in promoting access to mental health support for Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children. Further, schools should work collaboratively with mental health professionals to deliver this support where necessary, so that the wellbeing of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children could be appropriately supported.

Following Fazel et al (2016), Ott and O'Higgins (2019) also acknowledged the range of roles that English schools had in supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children beyond that of solely academic progress. However, rather than focusing only on supporting the mental health needs of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children, Ott and O'Higgins (2019) added to the literature by considering the role of education more widely. Having interviewed 12 professionals involved in the education of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, alongside reviewing 18 local and national documents of policies, practices, and lesson plans specific to the teaching of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Ott and O'Higgins (2019) provide both conclusions and suggestions for future educational practice. Overall, the findings of this research indicated that schools in England had a range of significant roles in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, including promoting their integration into society, understanding their emotional needs, supporting their cultural needs, developing their social needs, and meeting their language needs. These findings complement Fazel et al's (2016) conclusions, thereby developing our understanding of the range of roles schools have in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, which is inclusive of, yet beyond supporting their mental health needs. Therefore, Ott and O'Higgins (2019) suggest that schools are unique environments that provide more than a curriculum-based education and so, practice should be developed both within school systems, and in broader policy, in order to acknowledge the multi-faceted needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children that schools support.

In recognising the literature insofar, McDiarmid et al (2022) argued that research studies have only considered the role of education in a general sense – "the school's physical buildings, the community of students and staff within the school, and the educational curriculum and policy held by the school institution" (p.9). In turn, they sought to understand how teachers perceived their individual role in supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children, and how this intersects with the wider role of schools. To do so, McDiarmid et al (2022) conducted four focus groups with 30 teachers across five schools in Sweden. Similar to Ott and O'Higgins (2019), McDiarmid et al's (2022) findings suggest that teachers viewed the schools' role as promoting a sense of belonging, creating a space of 'refuge' from outside responsibilities and worries, and supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children in becoming citizens within a democratic society. In contributing to this, teachers perceived their role as building positive, supportive, yet non-therapeutic relationships with Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children due to "the emotionally taxing nature of supporting students' mental wellbeing" (p.11). Therefore, this study adds to the literature by demonstrating how teachers perceived their responsibility in achieving the schools' role in supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children.

### 2.4.1 Summary.

In conclusion, research studies have reflected on the significance of education in supporting Newly Arrived Children. Specifically, studies have concluded that schools, including school staff, not only have an educational role, but should embed practices that meet the holistic needs of these children, such as ensuring their inclusion, developing their sense of belonging, and supporting their wellbeing.

## 2.5 Theme 2: Pedagogical Practice - Supporting the 'Whole Child'.

Acknowledging that research has identified the range of roles that schools and teachers have in supporting the multi-faceted needs of Newly Arrived Children, researchers have also explored the pedagogical practices necessary for schools to fulfil these roles (Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Ward, 2021; Prentice, 2022). The concept of 'pedagogical practice' is vague and broad, but in short, refers to the practicalities of 'how and what people do' (Prentice, 2022). In so doing, several research studies have focused on effective pedagogical practice necessary to ensure schools and teachers meet the holistic needs of Newly Arrived Children, both at the school-level (Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Ward, 2021; Prentice, 2022) and interpersonal level (De Fina et al., 2020; Kauhanen et al., 2022; Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Kaukko et al., 2022). Whilst such research is useful in understanding positive practices for supporting Newly Arrived Children, Prentice and Ott (2021) further our understanding by considering how school staff are to acquire and develop their knowledge in implementing these practices. Overall, this research considers the practical application of fulfilling the range of roles schools have in supporting the multi-faceted needs of Newly Arrived Children and how this knowledge is acquired.

### 2.5.1 Theme 2, Sub-theme 1: School-Level Practices.

Focusing on school-level provision, research studies have explored the specific practices schools could implement in order to fulfil their ranging roles and meet Newly Arrived Children's needs (Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Ward, 2021; Prentice, 2022).

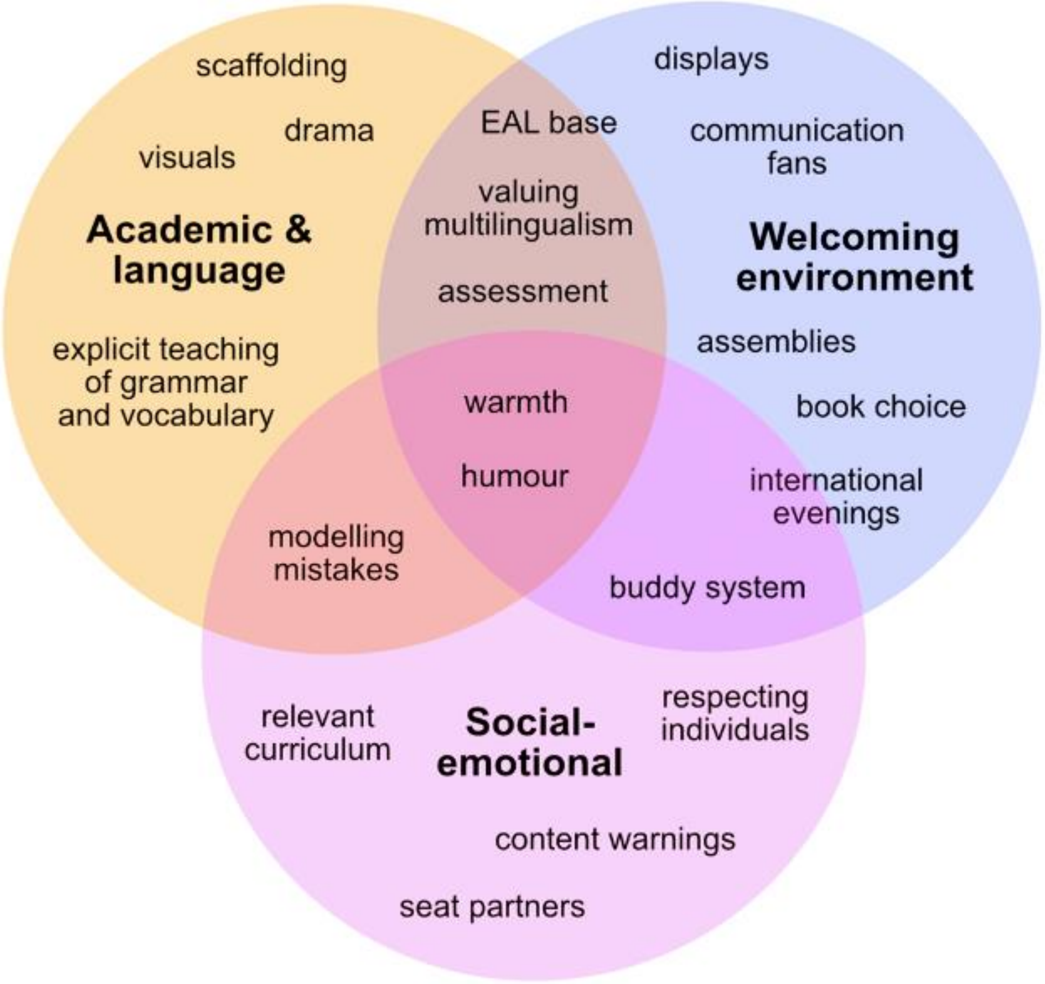
Fejes and Dahlstedt (2020) researched the educational practices for Asylum-Seeking Children in Sweden and explored the specific programme of 'Language Introduction' - a common practice within Swedish schools aimed at developing Asylum-Seeking Children's language, and therefore promoting a bespoke pathway towards supporting Asylum-Seeking Children's inclusion and access in mainstream classes. Having interviewed 74 Asylum-Seeking Children, 27 Teachers and six Principals, as well as completing classroom observations across five schools, Fejes and Dahlstedt's (2020) concluded that the practice of 'Language Introduction' programme results in both inclusion and exclusion experiences for Asylum-Seeking Children. They argue that the creation of a bespoke programme, unique to Asylum-Seeking Children, addresses these children's language needs and supports their wellbeing through promoting community amongst those attending the Language Introduction provision. Yet, findings indicate that this programme simultaneously created separate spaces and 'otherness' that positions Asylum-Seeking Children as excluded from the wider school community. In this way, Fejes and Dahlstedt's (2020) research suggests that schools' practices around the physical placement of Asylum-Seeking Children should be carefully planned in order to ensure that practices remain supportive, in accordance with research presented in the previous theme (Theme 1: The Importance of Education - the Required Ranging Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children's Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools), rather than exclusionary.

Ward's (2021) study adds to the understanding of effective practices, focusing specifically on how schools in England can promote a sense of belonging as the foundation to supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children having positive experiences within education. 'Belonging' can be understood as providing an "emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home' and... about feeling 'safe'" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197), which supports individuals' 'survival', their wellbeing, and their inclusion within society. Ward (2021) argues that promoting a sense of belonging for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children is of particular importance because they have limited, or no connections, within the new country they inhabit, thereby impeding both their emotional attachment and sense of safety (Wood and Black, 2018). In this way, Ward's (2021) study builds upon both Ott and O'Higgins's (2019) and McDiarmid et al's (2022) findings by recognising the importance of belonging, but expanding this by detailing how educators can establish conditions in which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children may feel they belong.

Ward (2021) interviewed six professionals working within schools, Local Authorities, and voluntary positions in order to adopt a multi-agency exploration on this topic area. Findings suggest that belonging can be predominantly facilitated in three ways: (1) by school staff being able to communicate with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children irrespective of language barriers; (2) by ensuring Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children inclusion within the wider school community; and (3) schools to develop their ‘trauma awareness’ and cultural understanding in order to ensure all staff can adapt their practices for children who had experienced challenging early life experiences. Therefore, through gaining multi-agency expertise, Ward (2021) concludes three practical ways schools can promote a sense of belonging for the purpose of ensuring positive educational experiences for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

Furthermore, Prentice (2022) adopted a strengths-focused approach to her research by studying educators’ positive practices when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children in English schools in order to understand effective educational provision for these children. In this way, Prentice (2022) adds to the literature by looking beyond specific educational programmes detailed in Fejes and Dahlstedt’s (2020) research, as well as going beyond ways of promoting a sense of belonging outlined by Ward (2021), and, in turn, provides a much wider understanding of positive practices in schools to fulfil their ranging roles discussed by research in the previous theme (Theme 1: The Importance of Education - the Required Ranging Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children’s Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools). To do so, Prentice (2022) carried out case studies of 17 mainstream Teachers across two English schools, one primary and one secondary school, which included participant observations alongside semi-structured interviews. Findings suggest a range of positive practices in order to create a welcoming environment, support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children’s social-emotional wellbeing, and develop these children’s language alongside supporting their academic progress. For instance, creating a ‘buddy system’, using visuals alongside verbal language, valuing multilingualism, and having a ‘base’ for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children as their safe space within the school building. Figure 4 reflects the entirety of the positive practices found in this research study.

Figure 4: Positive Practices employed by mainstream teachers (Prentice, 2022).


scaffolding
drama
visuals
Academic & language
explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary
displays
EAL base
communication fans
valuing multilingualism
assessment
Welcoming environment
assemblies
book choice
warmth
humour
international evenings
modelling mistakes
buddy system
relevant curriculum
Social-emotional
respecting individuals
content warnings
seat partners

However, during the interviews, teachers identified exam pressures as creating a barrier to ensuring positive practices as it placed ‘unrealistic expectations’ on both staff and Newly Arrived Children, and meant that academic, rather than children’s holistic needs, were the focus of their provision. Therefore, Prentice (2022) concludes that participants provided holistic, positive practices to meet the varying needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children. Yet, the national education context created somewhat of a barrier to providing these positive practices. This is further explored in Theme 3: Policy: Conflicting and Competing, Rather than Harmonising and Interleaving.

### 2.5.2 Theme 2, Sub-theme 2: Interpersonal Practices.

Alongside exploring school-level practices, research has also considered interpersonal practices of supporting the ‘whole’ child. Specifically, research studies have consistently demonstrated the importance of relationships when supporting the needs of Newly Arrived Children (De Fina et al., 2020; Kauhanen et al., 2022; Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Kaukko et al., 2022).

De Fina et al (2020) conducted a study in Italy to explore the discursive process of storytelling between Asylum-Seeking Children and Teachers as a means of overcoming their traumatic experiences. This study took an ethnographic approach which included observation, interviews, and the collection of artifacts from 24 Asylum-Seeking Children and their four Teachers. From the interviews with the Teachers, as discussed by Ward (2021), De Fina et al (2020) found that, initially, staff lacked the cultural knowledge of the Asylum-Seeking Children, and reported a feeling of ignorance concerning the children’s experiences and backgrounds. Teachers in this study discussed how this lack of knowledge rendered them reticent to speak with the children. Yet, as was touched upon by Fazel et al (2016), De Fina et al (2020) found that where trusting relationships were formed, the children began to confide in the Teachers, and it was this relationship which was deemed significant in supporting the emotional needs of Asylum-Seeking Children. Therefore, De Fina et al’s (2020) findings suggest that when implementing school-level supportive practices to meet the needs of Asylum-Seeking Children, the relationship between these children and their Teachers must be simultaneously considered, given its salience in enabling Asylum-Seeking Children to feel supported.

Building upon De Fina et al’s (2020) findings regarding the importance of relationships, Kauhanen et al (2022) carried out an ethnographic study of 13 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Finland in order to understand how these children perceived their relationships with their supporting adult in school. In doing so, Kauhanen et al (2022) adds to the literature by focusing specifically on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who, as outlined by Ward (2021), have limited or no connections within the new country they inhabit, thereby placing relationship-building within schools for these children at potentially greater importance. In Kauhanen et al’s (2022) study, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children described how they had built relationships with their Teachers, resulting in their school feeling like ‘loving environments'. Specifically, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children recalled how Teachers asked about their feelings and needs, and therefore had a space to share their worries. This resulted in two important outcomes for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children; firstly, these relationships made Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children feel valued, respected, and accepted members of their school community and, secondly, all participants shared how the relationships that they had built, supported them with lessening the stressors associated with the asylum process, since they had someone to talk to about this. Therefore, this research study demonstrates how 'loving relationships', built on respect and mutual caring, is important to, and for, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, in terms of their sense of belonging and wellbeing.

The findings of Kauhanen et al's (2022) study of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Finland somewhat contrasts with that found by McDiarmid et al's (2022) study conducted in Sweden, as discussed in the previous theme (Theme 1: The Importance of Education - the Required Ranging Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children's Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools). Specifically, whilst Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Kauhanen et al's (2022) study viewed relationships with Teachers as the medium through which their stressors could be supported, McDiarmid et al (2022) found that Teachers in their study wanted these relationships to take a non-therapeutic role. Moreover, although Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Kauhanen et al's (2022) study found these relationships to have supportive and positive implications, teachers in McDiarmid et al (2022) found that supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children's wellbeing was emotionally taxing and affected their own mental health.

Finally, drawing on empirical research from a study entitled 'Educational Success through the Eyes of a Refugee Child', Wilkinson and Kaukko (2020) and Kaukko et al (2022) explored effective pedagogical practices to support Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children in receiving positive experiences of education in their new country. This research took place across five schools in Finland, and two schools in Australia, whereby 25 Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children from Australia, and 20 Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children from Finland, were interviewed. In parallel, researchers conducted ethnographic observations in all six schools, and interviewed nine Teachers and three Senior Leaders from the Australian schools. and six Teachers from the Finnish schools.

Wilkinson and Kaukko (2020) drew exclusively on three individual interviews with the Leadership Team in one Australian school, whilst Kaukko et al (2022) referred to the interview and observation data from both Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children as well as their Teachers. Combined, their findings suggest that educators went beyond their typical professional duty of care, whereby they engaged in interpersonal relationships with each individual Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Child, thereby creating a sense of welcome and belonging, making reasonable adjustments to establish success for individual students, and ensuring each student felt valued and recognised within the school community. In so doing, educators opened “their minds and hearts to the students’ lived conditions, engaging with their histories, and constantly shaping their pedagogy accordingly” (Kaukko et al., 2022, p.731). These interpersonal endeavours were summarised by researchers as ‘pedagogy of love’. Therefore, Wilkinson and Kaukko (2020) and Kaukko et al (2022) suggest that “love in education is the breath of life and should be surfaced, explored and appreciated” (Kaukko et al., 2022, p.744) in order to meet the holistic needs of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children.

### 2.5.3 Theme 2, Sub-theme 3: Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills.

The literature insofar identifies the varying practices schools and school staff could implement so to fulfil their role in meeting the multi-faceted needs of Newly Arrived Children. Yet, Prentice and Ott (2021) suggest that little is known concerning how educators can acquire the knowledge and skills to implement these effective pedagogical practices; this was the focus of their study.

Prentice and Ott (2021) completed a survey with 295 Educators across 25 schools, including Teachers, Teaching Assistants, English as an Additional Language Teachers, and Senior Leaders, alongside a case study of 17 Teachers across two schools in England, one primary and one secondary school. The results of this study suggest that the knowledge required to fulfil the range of roles which educators have in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children seemed to be acquired on an ad-hoc, needs-led basis from colleague(s) with more experience in supporting these children as opposed to staff engaging in continued professional development opportunities via formal training. This raises the question of how this approach to acquiring and developing knowledge to effectively support supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children, and Refugee Children can be sustained if the school's experts who trickle-down their knowledge decided to leave the school or education career. Therefore, this study highlights how Educators in their research acquired knowledge regarding supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children and Refugee Children via ad-hoc, fragile means, as opposed to consistent, sustainable systems.

### 2.5.4 Summary.

In conclusion, research studies have explored the 'how and what people can do' to fulfil the range of roles necessary for supporting Newly Arrived Children's needs, detailed in the previous theme (Theme 1: The Importance of Education - the Required Ranging Roles to Meet Newly Arrived Children's Multi-Faceted Needs in Schools).

Specifically, research has identified a range of positive practices at the school-level, such as carefully planning the physical placement of Newly Arrived Children's learning in order to ensure inclusion within the wider school community, staff to communicate with the children irrespective of language differences, and staff to engage in training opportunities to develop 'trauma awareness' and a cultural understanding, (Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Ward, 2021; Prentice, 2022). Alongside school-level practices, research also highlights the importance of embedding interpersonal practices, specifically building relationships, so to ensure 'loving environments' and a 'pedagogy of love', that complements and enhances the positive impact of school-level practices (De Fina et al., 2020; Kauhanen et al., 2022; Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Kaukko et al., 2022). In order to implement such practices, research indicates that knowledge was often acquired on an ad-hoc, needs-led basis from colleague(s) with more experience in supporting Newly Arrived Children, rather than through sustainable, formal training routes (Prentice and Ott, 2021). Therefore, these research studies aid our understanding regarding the effective practices required in fulfilling schools' ranging roles, and how Educators acquired the knowledge and skills to implement these effective practices.

## 2.6 Theme 3: Policy: Conflicting and Competing, Rather than Harmonising and Interleaving.

As discussed above, research concludes that schools play a pivotal and multi-layered role in supporting the diverse needs of Newly Arrived Children that goes beyond solely academic support. Yet, as touched upon by Prentice (2022) in the previous theme (Theme 2, sub-theme 1: School-Level Practices), policies surrounding these Newly Arrived Children, and the education system more widely, can conflict, rather than harmonise this important role of education and Educators (McIntryre and Hall, 2020; Svensson, 2019).

McIntryre and Hall (2020) aimed to understand the barriers Headteachers experienced in ensuring the effective provision for Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children. To do so, McIntryre and Hall (2020) conducted interviews with four secondary school Headteachers in England, with findings from this study suggesting that participants experienced a ‘policy paradox’ in their practice.

Specifically, on the one hand, Headteachers in this study recognised how their varied roles in supporting the needs of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children is supported by policy that provides a legal basis to ensure these children access education that is child-centred and meets their holistic needs (e.g., the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; the Human Rights Act, 1998; Every Child Matters agenda, 2003). Yet, on the other hand, Headteachers noted that, post-2010, schools have had to simultaneously operate under a ‘marketisation’ of education, transitioning to an academisation model of schooling, and working within under-resourced environments, performance measured, and exam pressured systems, whereby the focus is on tracking and developing students’ academic progress which, in turn, establishes a results-driven focus, as opposed to meeting the varied needs of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children that go beyond solely academic achievements (e.g. the Academy Act, 2010; the National Curriculum). In turn, Headteachers were “caught within a multi-layered immigration–education performance nexus” (p. 597). Therefore, McIntryre and Hall’s (2020) findings suggest that educational policy in the post-2010 landscape being foregrounded in choice, markets, and autonomy that “equates to a relentless focus on academic achievement” (p.596), impacted upon Headteachers’ attempts in fulfilling their role in supporting the holistic needs of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children.

Although conducted in Sweden, Svensson's (2019) study furthers the findings of McIntryre and Hall (2020) in demonstrating how contrasting policy can impede effective provision and, in turn, impact upon Teachers personally. In this study, rather than researching Headteachers, Svensson (2019) aimed to explore Teachers' experiences of supporting Asylum-Seeking children. To do this, Svensson (2019) conducted ethnographic fieldwork, where she interviewed 16 Teachers, and completed two focus groups with seven of these Teachers.

Svensson (2019) found that Teachers recognised how educational policy within Sweden provided Asylum-Seeking Children the "right to an equivalent education, adapted to pupils' individual circumstances and needs" (p. 2) as part of supporting these children with a 'normal life' (e.g., The Swedish Education Act, 2010). Yet, in practice, Teachers explained that this contrasted with more recent immigration policies, whereby in 2016 Sweden passed a new law within their Aliens Act, that reduced and limited Asylum-Seeking Children's opportunity for permanent residency, dispelling a 'normal life', and creating a sense of unknown and 'legal limbo' for these children. Through exploring this contrast further, Teachers explained how this duality resulted in tensions within their work, whereby they were expected to provide care and meet the varying needs of Asylum-Seeking Children through the education system, but equally experienced a sense of powerlessness to support the issues which the children were facing regarding their asylum status. Overall, Teachers reported that this led to moral distress. Therefore, similar to McIntryre and Hall (2020), Svensson's (2019) findings suggest that educational and immigration policies must harmonise and interweave so that schools can fulfil their responsibility in supporting the ranging needs of Newly Arrived Children well documented in the literature.

### 2.6.1 Summary.

In conclusion, research studies have suggested that Educators experienced conflicting goals between educational and immigration policy, which subsequently impacted upon schools fulfilling their ranging roles in supporting Newly Arrived Children. Specifically, with policy developments placing greater emphasis on economistic measures in education, and attempts to control immigration, educators have found it increasingly challenging to employ effective practices and provision that supports the holistic needs of Newly Arrived Children. In other words, policy interferes with Educators developing the 'whole child' that research insofar has stressed (Fazel et al., 2016; Ott and O'Higgins, 2019; De Fina et al., 2020; Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Ward, 2021; McDiarmid et al., 2022; Prentice, 2022; Kauhanen et al., 2022; Kaukko et al, 2022). Therefore, it would seem that schools and Educators experience competing demands, and, in turn, moral distress, when attempting to fulfil their role in supporting Newly Arrived Children.

## 2.7 Chapter conclusion and research questions.

Overall, the literature illuminates the role of schools and Educators in supporting the holistic needs of Newly Arrived Children, including discussing the effective practices required, and the perceived barriers, in implementing supportive provision. In this way, current studies focus on *what* the role of education is, and *how* this role is fulfilled, in order to support the multi-faceted needs of Newly Arrived Children, without an in-depth exploration into the lived experiences of those who work within this role. Moreover, the literature tends to focus on all Newly Arrived Children irrespective of whether they are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Asylum-Seeking Children or Refugee Children, with only few studies referring exclusively to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Provided that Newly Arrived Children are not a homogenous group, as discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction, further research is required that is foreground in exploring Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children to ensure that supporting this group of children can be research evidence-based. Furthermore, whilst much of the research includes wide-ranging perspectives, research thus far has omitted the perspective of Designated Teachers[12] who have the day-to-day responsibility of supporting the multi-faceted needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, and simultaneously co-ordinating the ranging roles schools have in meeting these children's needs. As such, research focused on Designated Teachers supporting the growing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children may elucidate unique lived experiences that are yet to be understood. Therefore, these gaps in the literature should be filled, so that our current understanding of this topic area can be improved.

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[12] As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction, a Designated Teacher is the member of school staff whose responsibility is to promote the educational outcomes of all children in care across the school.

In light of the foregoing, the aim of the current study is to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are Designated Teachers' personal experiences and feelings concerning the responsibility of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

2. What is helpful for Designated Teachers' wellbeing and/or developing their competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

3. What are the challenges that Designated Teachers perceive in relation to their own wellbeing and competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

The following chapter will outline the methodological approach of the present study.

# 3 Chapter 3: Methodology.

## 3.1 Chapter Introduction.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the aim of the current study is to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. With this in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodological approach employed, in order to achieve the study aim, and answer the research questions below:

1. What are Designated Teachers' personal experiences and feelings concerning the responsibility of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?
2. What is helpful for Designated Teachers' wellbeing and/or developing their competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?
3. What are the challenges that Designated Teachers perceive in relation to their own wellbeing and competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

This chapter will begin by discussing the chosen research paradigm. This will lead on to considering my ontological and epistemological positions. Afterwards, there will be a brief discussion regarding alternative research approaches, which were considered before settling on IPA. Following this, the theoretical background of IPA will be outlined, including discussions of the three prominent areas of the philosophy of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2022). Having presented the methodological foundations to this study, next, the chapter will describe the methods employed in order to address the research questions, whereby the research design, procedures for data collection, and analysis will be detailed. To end, the chapter will consider ethical issues of this study.

## 3.2 Research Paradigm.

The two prevailing, yet distinct research paradigms, are that of qualitative and quantitative research, both of which have opposing philosophical assumptions regarding how to make sense of the social world, which subsequently influences the research process (Oliver 2014).

The quantitative paradigm understands there to be an objective reality, and this ‘truth’ can be measured through scientific methods (Bryman, 2012). This methodology has played a significant role in the development of health and medicine, whereby researchers have often drawn on randomised controlled trials to produce quantifiable and generalisable conclusions (Fox et al., 2007; Parker, 2013). Conversely, qualitative methodologies are concerned with gaining an in-depth insight of lived experiences and capturing the nuances of individuals’ perceptions, feelings, and thoughts (Willig, 2013). In doing so, researchers aim to “make sense of or interpret phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.3). Within the field of psychology, there has been a shift away from quantitative paradigms, and towards qualitative paradigms, so to reflect the multiple and complex experiences individuals construct that may not necessarily distil into causal, firm facts (Robson and McCartan, 2011).

Having explored the differences between quantitative and qualitative paradigms, I have chosen to conduct a qualitative study. This is because the current study is concerned with understanding people’s experiences and perspectives, as opposed to capturing firm facts, with generalisable conclusions. As such, in an attempt to ascertain the voices of individuals, a qualitative study will be most appropriate.

## 3.3 Philosophical Foundations.

There are a range of considerations researchers must explore when designing their study to ensure philosophical coherence (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). This includes researchers determining their ontological position, which thereby informs an epistemological position. In doing so, this can supportively shape methodological decisions, and, in turn, influence the process of data collection. As such, I will now present my ontological and epistemological positions in turn.

### 3.3.1 Ontology.

Ontology is concerned with how we understand the nature of reality and what can be known (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Those who adopt an objectivist or realist ontological view perceive reality as objective, measurable, and quantifiable, which exists outside of social actors (Bryman, 2012). As such, this viewpoint holds the principle that there is one 'truth', that is unchanging (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). In direct contrast, a social constructionist ontological position acknowledges the existence of multiple realities because individuals can experience and describe the same event differently, resulting in varied understandings and perceptions. Such realities are personal, subjective, and evolving, depending on an individual's social context and historical background (Creswell, 2014). As such, ascribing to the view that individuals can experience the same phenomena, yet can perceive and interpret this in many ways, and their descriptions of their experiences can equally change over time, I consider my ontological stance to fall within social constructionist position. I feel that social constructionist will support the current study's aims and research questions, whereby a focus is on understanding the multiple views of a range of Designated Teachers regarding how they experience their reality of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

### 3.3.2 Epistemology.

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and how something becomes known (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Those who adopt a positivist position have the view that 'truth' is an object to discover via deductivism (Willing 2013). To do so, researchers take an observer role, whereby they generate hypotheses to be tested, which are then subsequently accepted or rejected based on empirical results. In contrast, those adopting an interpretivist position reject this standpoint. Rather, they posit that researching people should reflect the unique, subjective, and personal experiences of each individual, and recognise how these are jointly constructed through interaction (Burr, 2003; Cohen et al, 2018). In doing so, research generates theory inductively, as opposed to proving, or disproving, hypotheses (Bryman, 2012).

Reflecting on the current study, I hold an interpretivist epistemological stance. This is because, I share the view that knowledge is co-constructed, and there is much to learn from interpreting how individuals make meaning of their experiences. Moreover, this epistemological position acknowledges how meaning is constructed through interaction, and so accounts for the relationship between myself and the participant, the influence I will have on the co-construction of meaning, and the inevitable impact of my own experiences and beliefs on the entirety of the research process (Snape and Spencer, 2003). In sum, I feel that interpretivism will support the current study's aims and research questions, whereby a focus is on understanding how Designated Teachers make meaning of their experiences when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

## 3.4 Alternative Research Approaches.

There is an array of possible methodological approaches for researchers to consider when conducting research. When exploring these, researchers must make judgements based on the appropriateness and purpose of methodologies in relation to the study being conducted (Denscombe, 2014). In doing so, the researcher should subsequently come to a justified decision as to why they are employing a particular methodological strategy (Denscombe, 2014). Throughout my decision-making process, I explored a number of research approaches which will now be discussed in turn.

Initially, I explored using reflexive thematic analysis. In brief, reflexive thematic analysis identifies and reports repeated patterns across the dataset for the purpose of understanding common experiences, thoughts, and behaviours (Willig, 2013). This analysis appealed to me as it can be used flexibly according to one's ontological and epistemological positions. In turn, its use is appropriate in various research contexts and across a range of methodological approaches (Bryman, 2012). However, with it negating a theoretical position, it is subsequently identified as a method of analysis, rather than a methodology (Bryman, 2012). As such, this flexibility arguably renders it "meaningless unless located within an epistemological and theoretical framework" (Willig, 2013, p.58). Therefore, with literature identifying uncertainty as to whether thematic analysis can be deemed a methodology, I subsequently explored other approaches which could offer methodological clarity so to supportively inform the current study's research process.

Next, I reflected on the possibility of using a narrative inquiry approach. There is no one way of doing a narrative inquiry, rather, researchers can employ a range of strategies to collect and analyse the data (Webster and Mertova, 2007). Yet, overall, this methodology suggests that individual's narratives are essential in making sense of phenomena through exploring the content and structure of participants constructed lived experiences, and how these constructions are weaved into meaningful stories (Willig, 2013). However, with narrative inquiry concerned with the linguistics within individual's narratives, and how individuals talk about their experiences (Reissman, 2008), this methodology did not feel appropriate for the current study's research questions and aims where the focus is on making sense of Designated Teachers' lived experiences.

Thereafter, I also explored the possibility of using grounded theory. There are various approaches to grounded theory, however, a common theme of this approach is that it adopts an inductive methodology, whereby researchers develop hypotheses based on data collection, as opposed to testing hypotheses according to prior knowledge (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Within this methodology, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, thereby allowing the researcher to continuously refine the methods of data collection, ensuring the researcher has reached the point of saturation where no further information can be gathered from participants, and providing an oversight of systematic comparisons between the data set (Cohen et al., 2018). Resulting from this, comprehensive theories are constructed to explain the phenomenon being studied, which is arguably 'grounded' in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Whilst I was originally interested in grounded theory, as it is understood to be advantageous for under-researched topics which are under-theorised given its in-depth methodology (Burck, 2005), the reasons for deciding against grounded theory were twofold. Firstly, due to the time-consuming process of data collection and analysis, which "requires work of a considerable scale" (Smith et al, 2022, p. 38), this rendered grounded theory unfeasible because of the limited time given to complete the current study. Secondly, I was primarily interested in understanding Designated Teachers' lived experiences, as opposed to social processes and theory development, as prioritised within ground theory. As such, this led me to look at alternative methodologies.

Finally, I explored the possibility of using IPA for the current study. IPA has been commended for its ability to 'give voice' to participants' lived experiences, offering in-depth and rich data (Smith et al., 2009). In doing so, this approach enables the researcher to interpret the dataset and, in turn, to make sense of participants' experiences (Smith et al., 2022). However, IPA can be viewed as being bound by three specific areas of the philosophy of knowledge, thereby negating other ways of knowing and, in turn, potentially restricting the researcher in their attempt to make sense of individuals' lived experiences (Noon, 2018). Whilst recognising this, I viewed the three philosophies of knowledge as aligning well with my research aims and questions, therefore supporting the overall research study. For instance, the current study is phenomenological as it aims to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school, it is hermeneutic in that it requires a level of interpretation in order to make meaning of participants' experiences, and it is idiographic as it aims to understand staff's unique and personal thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours (Willig, 2013; Noon, 2018). Therefore, I chose to apply IPA to the current study as I deemed it as being the most appropriate for representing and making sense of participants' lived experiences, thereby aligning with my research aims and questions.

## 3.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

### 3.5.1 Introduction.

IPA is a qualitative approach, established in the 1990s and growing in popularity within qualitative research (Smith and Osborn, 2015). As shared above, "IPA is concerned with examining how a participant makes sense of, or sees meaning in, their experience" (Smith et al, 2022, p.134). In turn, this approach has been informed by three philosophical underpinnings: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al, 2022). I will now discuss these positions, and their connection to IPA, in turn.

### 3.5.2 Phenomenology.

Developed by Husserl in 1927, phenomenology is concerned with studying the human experience so to illuminate the essential qualities of a given phenomenon (Smith et al., 2022). With this being the aim, researchers must turn their gaze away from objects in the world, and towards seeking access to internal worlds and grasping subjective experiences (Noon, 2018). In turn, research designs should encourage participants to tell their own stories of their experiences, whereby participants reflect on their memories, thoughts, and feelings (Smith et al., 2022). In developing phenomenology further, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre later added that individuals are simultaneously embedded and embodied in the world, thereby rendering their experiences as being ‘in-relation-to’ historical, social, and cultural contexts (Smith et al., 2022). As such, IPA researchers are required to move beyond a descriptive and isolated understanding of individuals’ experiences, and apply an interpretative lens, in order to make sense of participants’ stories and manifest that which is hidden (Moran, 2000).

### 3.5.3 Hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics constitutes the second theoretical underpinning of IPA. It is associated with the work of Schleiermacher, Heidegger, and Gadamer who stress the importance of interpretation in order to understand others’ experiences (Smith et al., 2022). Within IPA, this is referred to as a ‘double hermeneutic’, because interpretation is understood as a dual process between the participant and the researcher- “the participant is trying to make sense of their personal and social world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world” (Smith, 2004, p.40). In order to interpret individuals’ sense-making accounts, the researcher must acknowledge the embedded and embodied nature of individuals’ experiences, apply psychological theory to these experiences, and, finally, make connections between the data set (Smith et al., 2009). Moreover, the researcher’s individual experiences, assumptions, and thoughts will further influence this interpretive process (Smith et al., 2009). As such, throughout, the researcher must remain critical and reflexive to ensure that their interpretations always refers back to the phenomenological account (Finlay, 2008). In IPA research, phenomenology and hermeneutics supplement one another – “without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret; without the hermeneutics, the phenomenon would not be seen” (Smith et al., 2009, p.37).

### 3.5.4 Idiography.

The third theoretical underpinning of IPA is idiography, which focuses on an in-depth analysis of the particular (Shinebourne, 2011). IPA adopts an idiographic approach, in that it is equally concerned with the detail of experiential phenomena from the perspective of individuals, within their individual contexts (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). In turn, it seeks a small, purposively selected sample, and encompasses a systematic and thorough analysis (Smith et al., 2009). However, idiography should not be conflated with merely focusing on the individual because, as discussed previously, experience is both unique and, also, related to the world and context in which it is situated (Smith et al., 2022). As such, once researchers have completed a detailed examination of each case in isolation, they may move on to explore the patterns and connections across the data set (Cassidy et al., 2010). In following the detailed, individualised analysis required by an idiographic approach, it is argued that the IPA researchers gain an in-depth understanding of their participants' thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours (Noon, 2018).

## 3.6 Characteristics of IPA.

With IPA applying an inductive approach to data, there are two key characteristics researchers are encouraged to engage in throughout the research process: bracketing and reflexivity. These will be discussed in turn.

### 3.6.1 Bracketing.

Husserl argued that a successful phenomenological approach to research requires the act of 'bracketing' (Smith et al., 2022). In short, bracketing is a method by which the researcher must acknowledge and put aside any preconceptions about the research, so that the focus remains on individual participants' sense-making of their experiences (Smith et al., 2022). Without doing so, Husserl warns that researcher's understandings of participants' experiences can become distorted and obscured, thus is a defining characteristic of transcendental phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). Given that I previously worked in a similar role to the participants in this study, bracketing was an essential feature of my research practice.

However, existential phenomenologists Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre dispute whether one can truly put aside assumptions and preconceptions (Smith et al., 2022). Indeed, "our subjective worlds are not primarily mental, or 'hidden inside', because the very nature of our being is to 'be there' out in the world, located and observable in our relatedness to some meaningful context" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 109). This challenge is furthered when the researcher is required to adopt an interpretive lens to the data set. As Oxley (2016) posits, researcher's "views of the world are inextricably intertwined with the way in which they interpret the participants' experiences" (p.56). Therefore, whilst bracketing cannot ensure that researchers will practise freely from their preconceptions and beliefs, I engaged in bracketing as I view it to be a supportive practice to limit preconceptions or beliefs implicating the research process.

### 3.6.2 Reflexivity.

Alongside bracketing, reflexivity is considered a defining, thereby essential, feature of IPA research (Smith et al., 2009; Willig, 2013). In short, reflexivity is a continuous process of reflection whereby the researcher attempts to acknowledge and analyse how their subjective perspectives may be influencing and moulding their research practice (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Willig, 2013; Palaganas et al., 2017). This practice can complement bracketing in that it can allow the researcher to continuously re-examine their position, and engage in both personal and epistemological reflexivity, whereby the researcher can be mindful of how their preconceptions and assumptions may be impacting their role as researcher, and on the study collectively (Wall et al., 2004). In acknowledging the importance of reflexivity, I have kept a reflective diary (Appendix 22) so that I could critically consider how my personal and subjective perspectives potentially implicated the research process.

## 3.7 Sampling and Recruitment.

### 3.7.1 Sample.

Aligning with IPA methodology, I aimed to recruit a small, homogenous sample of four-six Designated Teachers so that I could capture the personal experiences of each participant, alongside ascertaining similarities and differences across individuals' sense-making (Smith et al., 2009). To do so, I employed a purposive sampling technique whereby I recruited a sample of participants whose experiences and perspectives aligned with the research aim and would inform the research questions (Bryman, 2012). This involved initially contacting eight secondary schools within one Local Authority in the South West of England who have Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on roll. However, over time, it proved difficult to gain more than two participants from these eight schools, which led me to contact an additional 11 secondary schools in two neighbouring Local Authorities that also have Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on roll. These schools were contacted as, firstly, they were in close geographical proximity to the first Local Authority and, secondly, within travelling distance to myself as the researcher, thereby allowing for participants to have a choice of in-person or online interviews.

### 3.7.2 Recruitment Process.

To access participants, I first liaised with The Virtual School[13] who were able to share the names of schools that had Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on roll. All of these were secondary schools, which is unsurprising given the data identifying that most Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are aged 16 or 17 (Home Office, 2023), as discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction. Gaining this information from The Virtual School ensured that I adhered to ethical guidelines by targeting only those schools to which this study would be relevant. Next, I emailed the Headteachers of these schools (Appendix 6), introducing myself and my research study, asking for them to share an information sheet (Appendix 7) and expression of interest form (Appendix 8) with the relevant members of staff who could email me if they were interested in participating. Once I received expression of interest forms, I then met with these Designated Teachers via Microsoft Teams, in order to discuss the research study and answer any of their questions. Following this, I asked for their consent via a consent from (Appendix 9) and subsequently organised an interview with them.

In total, five members of staff across three Local Authorities within the South West of England completed the expression of interest form, and subsequently gave informed consent. Although some may critique this study for having a small sample size, as IPA is an idiographic approach, five participants is appropriate when aiming to understand individuals' experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Participants had varying job role titles, yet were the named Designated Teacher in their school settings, therefore meeting the entirety of the inclusion criteria for participation:

1. Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on a day-to-day basis, and so are known within the school to be their key adult and main point of contact regarding any concerns.

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[13] As discussing in Chapter 1: Introduction, the Virtual School is not a physical school or institution, rather a team of professionals, led by a Virtual School Headteacher, who are in regular contact with Designated Teachers to monitor the attendance, attainment, and progress of all children in care within their Local Authority.

2. Managing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s Personal Education Plans.

3. The main point of contact and liaise with relevant professionals in order to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, e.g., the Virtual School, foster carers, health, CAMHs etc.,

4. Responsible for the oversight of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children education and wellbeing.

5. Supporting at least one Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who is on roll at the school.

In applying the inclusion criteria, I could obtain a homogenous sample so that the study’s aim and research questions were meaningful to the participants (Smith et al., 2009). However, as presented in Chapter 4: Findings, it is necessary to note that whilst participants are a homogenous group in terms of being Designated Teachers, all participants worked in different secondary schools across Local Authorities, and some also had other responsibilities within their role with varying years of experience working in education and as a Designated Teacher. *Further detail regarding participant demographic is presented in Chapter 4: Findings.*

## 3.8 Research Design.

### 3.8.1 Semi-Structured Interviews.

For the purpose of collecting data, I opted to use semi-structured interviews. To put participants at ease, I offered them the option of either in-person or online interviews. All participants requested for their interviews to be held online via Microsoft Teams.

As described by Willig (2008), semi-structured interviews are a widely used data collection method within qualitative psychology research. This may be due to the many perceived advantages of this method. For example, it offers a process so that researchers can ensure that their interview schedules remain guided by their research questions, yet simultaneously enables flexibility so that any unexpected topics can be discussed (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Similarly, its flexibility enables participants to guide the direction of the interview according to their experiences and perspectives, which the researcher can then explore in greater depth through prompt questions (Smith and Osborn, 2003). In doing so, this supported my practice of 'bracketing', whereby the interview gave permission to participants to lead the direction of the conversation, rather than it being shaped entirely by my preconceptions and assumptions. Therefore, semi-structured interviews offered both guidance and flexibility so that I could accommodate that which is not anticipated, clarify, confirm, and investigate information shared by participants in further depth, and give agency to the participant to guide the direction of the interview.

Other data collection methods were considered, such as focus groups, as I wondered whether a group of Designated Teachers would stimulate conversation and, therefore, encourage them to discuss their shared or contrasting experiences. However, I ultimately chose semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection, as I perceived it to be complementary with IPA methodology. This is because it can support examining the particular and generate rich and detailed data concerning individuals' experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Smith et al., 2022). Upon reflection, focus groups would not have afforded this opportunity as sufficiently as semi-structured interviews, particularly with the dominant critique of focus groups being the difficulty for an "in-depth follow up of individuals' views or experiences" (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.113). As such, for the current study, semi-structured interviews were used given the understanding that they are deemed most effective for collecting data within research employing IPA methodology (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

### 3.8.2 Interview Design and Process.

Prior to interviews, I held individual 'expression of interest' meetings with each potential participant, whereby they could ask any questions about the research study and gain a good understanding of what participating involved. This meeting supported building an initial rapport with participants, which arguably supports participant engagement throughout the interview and for them to feel more comfortable to engage in discussion around sensitive topics, thereby positively affecting the data gathered during semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012; Chan et al., 2013). To build this rapport, I spent time asking participants questions about themselves to learn about them as a person, such as their upcoming plans for a school holiday. However, it is warned that researchers should be cautious “not to abuse the informal ambience of the interview to encourage the interviewee to reveal more than they may feel comfortable with” (Willig, 2013, p. 30). As such, in developing a amiable relationship with participants, researchers must also remain ethical so that this relationship is not coercive.

Following the ‘expression of interest’ meeting, semi-structured interviews were completed. During these interviews, I followed a flexible interview schedule and, to structure this, I sought guidance from the writings of Smith et al (2022). As such, I created 17 open-ended questions, 12 of which were designed as follow-up questions, that aimed to correspond with the research aim and answer the research questions (Appendix 10). The first nine questions related to significant experiences of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, including exploring staff’s emotional responses to providing this support. The next four questions elicited staff’s perspectives around effective support received in their role. Lastly, I employed one ‘miracle question’, with three further follow-up questions, which was adopted from the Solution-Focused approach (de Shazer, 1985), in order to consider the desired support for these staff members.

Through preparing open-ended questions and planning prompting questions, this further adhered with my aims of bracketing within the current study. Specifically, the questions were phrased in a broad and neutral manner, to allow an element of interpretation from the participants. In this way, participants had agency in the direction of the interview. The information that participants shared from these initial questions subsequently guided prompt questions, such as ‘tell me more about…’. Smith et al (2009) argues that such questions ‘expose the obvious’ and enable the researcher to elicit more of an in-depth response through encouraging staff to offer further information regarding their experiences and perspectives. The relevancy and accessibility of the interview schedule was assessed through engaging in a pilot interview in May 2022 with a previous colleague who was also a Designated Teacher who supported Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children so that I not only developed interview questions, but understood potential changes required from the perspective of the participant. Whilst together we did not feel changes were required to the interview questions, we reflected on the entirety of the interview process so that I understood the research experience from the perspective of the participant. This highlighted to me the need to give participants adequate space for them to respond to questions and check-in with participants at the end of the process regarding anything further they deemed as being important to share about their experiences.

All interviews were carried out between May-November 2022. I left 24 hours between my initial ‘expression of interest’ meeting with potential participants and subsequently carrying out the individual interviews. The rationale for doing so was to provide balance between giving Designated Teachers sufficient time to reflect on whether they would like to participate, and equally ensure that the information that I provided them about the study remained fresh in their minds. Participants were interviewed once, and the interviews lasted between 38- 52 minutes. With participants’ permission via the informed consent form, interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams.

## 3.9 Data Analysis.

For ease and time efficiency, the interviews were initially transcribed via the ‘transcribe’ function in Microsoft Word. I then reviewed each transcription, comparing that recorded to what had been transcribed, in order to address inaccuracies. In doing so, this afforded the opportunity to become familiar with the dataset prior to completing an in-depth analysis of it. Transcription included only the spoken word, omitting non-verbal features, as data analysis was concerned solely with evoking the rich details of individuals’ unique perceptions, feelings, and thoughts regarding their experiences (Smith et al., 2022).

Once transcription was complete, I applied a specific framework to data analysis as outlined by Smith et al (2022) in their second edition of ‘Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Theory, Method and Research’. As an IPA novice, this structure was valuable in that it supported and directed me through the data analysis process. Whilst the structure is broken down into seven steps, the process remains “fluid, iterative and multi-directional” (Noon, 2018, p. 77), enabling researchers to move between “the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretative” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 78). Smith et al’s (2022) seven steps are detailed in turn:

### 3.9.1 Step 1: Reading and Re-Reading.

IPA first involves the researcher reading and re-reading transcripts in order to become immersed in the data. As such, the researcher is advised to read the transcripts in their entirety, whilst simultaneously listening to the audio recording of the interview (Smith et al., 2022). In doing so, this allows the researcher to imagine the participant's voice, thereby facilitating a more complete analysis. This stage also encourages the researcher to reflect on, make note of, and subsequently 'bracket' initial thoughts and interpretations, so that immersing oneself in the data remains the sole focus (Smith et al., 2022).

### 3.9.2 Step 2: Exploratory Noting.

Following step one, the researcher is encouraged to note exploratory comments regarding the semantic content and language use within participant's talk. These comments can include:

- Descriptive comments – describing content that seems significant to the participant, such as experiences, key events, objects, relationships (Smith et al., 2022).
- Linguistic comments – describing language use, such as metaphors, repetition, tone alongside other elements within talk, such as pauses or laughs in order to consider what these features may contribute to the understanding of participant's experiences (Smith et al., 2022).
- Conceptual comments – applying an interpretive lens to the transcript to focus on "participant's overarching understanding of the matters that they are discussing" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 84). Alongside this, researchers should note personal reflections and draw on these perceptions and knowledge when attempting to make sense of participant's experiences.

Exploratory noting enables the researcher to examine beyond what was said, and engage with the way in which it was said in detail, considering multiple avenues of meaning, so to enable an interpretative level of analysis (Smith et al., 2022). In doing so, the researcher can begin to make judgements about participant's experiences (Noon, 2018). An example of this step of analysis can be found in Appendix 11.

### 3.9.3 Step 3: Constructing Experiential Statements.

Next, the researcher is required to convert exploratory notes into experiential statements. To generate experiential statements, the researcher now moves beyond the transcript itself, and looks to exploratory notes to produce a "concise and pithy summary" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 87) that captures participant's experiences and their sense-making of these experiences. Here, the volume of detail is reduced, yet the complexity remains to reflect the most important features throughout the transcript. This step involves researcher's interpretations of participant's experiences to develop a preliminary analytic understanding of what has been talked about. When completing this step of analysis, I had a range between 45-61 experiential statements for each individual transcript. An example of this step of analysis can be found in Appendix 11.

### 3.9.4 Step 4: Searching for Connections Across Experiential Statements.

Next, the researcher searches for connections between the experiential statements that were generated in the previous step. Throughout, the researcher should explore and innovate various ways of how the experiential statements can be drawn together to produce a structure that reflects the most important aspects of each participant's account. To support this process, mapping can be utilised to determine, and thus demonstrate the ways in which experiential statements can be understood as interrelated. I used the traditional method of having a paper copy of the experiential statements so that I could physically move them around in order to continuously search for, and construct patterns of, interconnections between experiential statements. I then transcribed this to ensure accurate record-keeping. When completing this step of analysis, I constructed a range between 22-28 groupings of experiential statements for each individual transcript. An example of this step of analysis can be found in Appendix 13.

### 3.9.5 Step 5: Naming the Personal Experiential Themes and Consolidating and Organising Them in a Table.

This step involves naming each individual group of experiential statements to reflect its characteristics, thereby establishing Personal Experiential Themes (Smith et al., 2022). To add further distinct detail, Personal Experiential Themes can be divided into sub-themes, where appropriate. This step is a "representation of the analytic dialogue which has gone on between participant and researcher, manifested in the language particular to each" (Smith et al., 2022, p.95). When completing this step of analysis, I had a range between five-seven Personal Experiential Themes, comprising of eight-eleven sub-themes for each individual transcript. For instance, for one participant, I grouped four experiential statements to construct a Personal Experiential Theme named ‘Comprehending Children’s Lived Experiences’, which was made up of two sub-themes labelled ‘Grappling with Comprehending the Unfamiliar’ and ‘Balancing Own Emotions Versus Children’s Performance of Emotions’. An example of this step of analysis can be found in Appendix 14.

### 3.9.6 Step 6: Continuing the Individual Analysis of Other Cases.

This step involves the researcher repeating steps 1- 5 on the remaining transcripts. In doing so, it is important that the researcher adheres to IPA’s idiographic aim by engaging in ‘bracketing’. This means that notions formed from analysing earlier transcriptions should be set aside, and not influence the analysis of the current transcript (Smith et al., 2022). The aim of this is to recognise each transcription as being an individual case in its own right. Whilst I made efforts to abide by this commitment, as I immersed myself further into the dataset, it gradually became more challenging to do so. In turn, as suggested by Heidegger (1996), I chose to be aware of my preconceptions and note these reflections in my reflection diary.

### 3.9.7 Step 7: Working with Personal Experiential Themes to Develop Group Experiential Themes Across Cases.

To end analysis, researchers explore potential patterns and differences across all participants’ Personal Experiential Themes to generate Group Experiential Themes. The aim of this step is not to present a ‘group norm’, instead, it is to highlight the unique instantiations and shared features of participants’ experiences. In doing so, it is important to recognise both convergence and divergence across participants’ accounts. When re-organising the dataset in this way, it should become a dynamic process, whereby the researcher can ‘zoom in’ to look at individual sub-themes, experiential statements, exploratory notes, and the transcript, to avoid losing meaning or context from the original dataset.

When completing this step, I did so manually where I had colour coded paper copies of each of the participant’s Personal Experiential Themes (Appendix 15) to physically move them around in order to continuously search for, and construct patterns across the data set. Throughout, as suggested by Smith et al (2022), I reflected and asked "Are [the]… analytic entities reflecting participants' experiences? [Am I] doing justice to their data and [my]… analytic work?" (p. 101). Once I had developed Group Experiential Themes, I labelled these to tell the story of how I understood experiences at the group level (Appendix 16). Overall, I constructed four Group Experiential Themes, one of which was made up of a further three sub-themes, across the dataset:

- Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan).
- Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim).
- Group Experiential Theme 3: Support in Managing the Role – "It Never Really Feels Like There's Someone Else in the Same Boat" (Jordan):
    - Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving, Yet Lacking, Support from Colleagues – "It Does Feel Like I'm Isolated in a Way, but I am also Working with Everyone in the School" (Jordan).
    - Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals – "I Have Thought 'I Wonder what There is for Me', But There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie).
    - Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 3: Disruptions to Seeking Support in Personal Relationships – "Who Can I Talk to About This Stuff When I Get Home, You Know?" (Kim).
- Group Experiential Theme 4: Ways of Coping – "I Can't Save Everyone, I Can't do Everything" (Jordan).

## 3.10 Ethics.

Ethical approval was granted by the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bristol in February 2022 (Appendix 17). The current study was planned and delivered in accordance with the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) and Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2018). These were followed as they are specific to the practice of Educational Psychologists, and useful in supporting participants to have a positive experience in research. I will now present some key ethical considerations within the current study.

### 3.10.1 Informed Consent.

Initially, the Headteacher of each school was contacted as gatekeeper to participants. As described above, if Headteachers were happy to assist with the current study, they were asked to share both an information sheet and expression of interest form with potential participants. In doing so, participants were made aware of the aims and research questions of the study, as well as how the data will be collected and stored. The expression of interest form offered potential participants the opportunity to arrange a meeting where we could discuss the research study, including topics that would be covered in the interview, and they could ask any remaining questions. This process ensured that participants were adequately informed, thus, I could confidently ensure that participants could provide informed consent. Once informed consent was received, interviews were arranged.

### 3.10.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality.

As specified in the information sheet, discussed in the expression of interest meeting, and stipulated in the consent form, participants must anonymise the information shared during the interview. For example, participants were asked to not share children's names or identifiable features, and not to share their name or the name of their school. In instances where anonymity was breached, I later redacted this from the transcription. Moreover, I also gave each participant a pseudonym to further limit the likelihood of them being identified. In removing identifiable features from the data, I made efforts to ensure participants, and those they work with, remained anonymous.

Participants were made aware that their signed consent forms and transcriptions would be stored on the University of Bristol server, yet in different locations and under unique numbers for identification purposes. The audio recordings of participants' interviews would be deleted. Due to the small sample within a small and identifiable population, the risk that participants could be reidentified was too great. Therefore, it was decided that the data would have closed access. However, as shared with participants via the information sheet, expression of interest meeting, informed consent form and confidentiality protocol (Appendix 18), there are limits to confidentiality, for example, if a person is at risk of harm (BPS, 2014).

### 3.10.3 Preventing Harm to Participants.

Researchers are required to ensure that “the risk of harm should be no greater than that encountered in ordinary life” (BPS, 2014, p. 11). Given that I am asking participants to share their memories, thoughts, and feelings regarding potentially sensitive experiences, I took preventative measures in order to prevent harm to participants. For example, information shared prior to the interview stipulated the research aims and questions, including the topics which would be discussed, and their right to end the interview at any point. My aim in doing so was to reduce any potential distress.

Despite these preventative measures, I was mindful that participants may still experience a range of emotions during the interviews. As such, throughout, I aimed to monitor the effect of the interview on participants in order to avoid the risk of harm. If participants experienced any emotion, such as anger, shame or upset, I would pause the interview, so that I could check-in with the participant and gain verbal consent as to whether to continue or end the interview. After the interview, participants were sent a debriefing email (Appendix 19) which detailed next steps and where they could access further support if required.

### 3.10.4 Right to Decline or Withdraw.

Participants were given the right to withdraw at any point during the research study and were not required to provide a reason for doing so. However, participants were made aware in the debriefing form that if their request was made after the data had been anonymised, I may not be able to comply with their request.

## 3.11 Chapter Conclusion.

This chapter presents the rationale for selecting the methodology and methods in order to answer my research questions. Specifically, having explored the differences between quantitative and qualitative paradigms, a qualitative research design was chosen because the current study attempts to ascertain the voices of individuals. To ensure philosophical coherence, my social constructionism ontological position and interpretivist epistemological position were also presented. In navigating these, it led to supportively shaping the methodological decision of applying IPA to the current study. IPA's theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, as well as its key characteristics, were discussed. In line with IPA, the chapter next detailed the sampling and recruitment, research design, and process of data analysis for the current study. To end, the chapter explored prominent ethical considerations. The next chapter will outline and discuss the findings of this study.

# 4 Chapter 4: Findings.

## 4.1 Chapter Introduction.

This chapter explores the findings from five semi-structured interviews of the current study. As discussed by Smith et al (2022), findings are presented in a narrative account to demonstrate participants' experiences of their role and to tell their stories. In this way, I hoped to achieve what Smith et al (2022) describe as 'looking up', to demonstrate the connection between participants' experiences whilst simultaneously, 'looking down', to exemplify the way in which individuals reportedly perceived their experiences as Designated Teachers. As suggested by Smith et al (2022), throughout this narrative, there will be an interweaving of specific extracts from participants, as a way of representing 'phenomenology', and my analytic comments of these extracts, to form the 'interpretation'. These extracts are presented verbatim of participants' talk, whilst omitting interview noise, including stutters and fillers (i.e., 'uhm', 'like' etc.), and replacing these with ellipsis. This is so that the meaning and experiences which participants convey in their talk becomes the focus (Oliver et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2022).

## 4.2 Overview of Participants.

Prior to discussing the findings of this research study, it is useful to specify key information about the participants in order to provide context to what follows. For instance, the individual demographics of participants may influence how they experienced their role when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, such as how long they have been doing the role, and therefore possibly provide useful context when exploring some of the divergence across participants' perceived experiences.

Due to the importance of anonymity, some detail regarding participants' characteristics has been omitted so that the individuals are not identifiable, such as the name and location of their school. However, to reflect the similarities and differences between participants regarding where they carry out their role, I have referred to 'areas' in which participants work. To continue to adhere to ethical principles of anonymity, all participants have been referred to as they/them, as their gender was considered as an identifiable feature, given the few Designated Teachers who worked with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within the areas in which I recruited.

Table 4: An overview of participant demographic.

| | Alex. | Robin. | Jessie. | Jordan. | Kim. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Location of School. | Area 1. | Area 1. | Area 2. | Area 2. | Area 3. *But also working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, and therefore, social workers and the virtual school within area 2.* |
| Years of experience as a Designated Teacher. | 6 years. | 3 years. | 3 years. | 2 years. | 13 years. |
| Additional responsibilities within school. | Yes. | Yes. | Yes. | No. | No. |
| Years of experience working in schools. | 16 years. | 15 years. | 12 years. | 3 years. | 22 years. |

As depicted in Table 4, some participants in this study carried out their role in different Local Authorities, had varied years of experience practicing as Designated Teachers, had various roles within the education sector prior to being a Designated Teacher, and some had additional responsibilities alongside their current role as Designated Teacher.

When directly comparing participants, Kim had been working within the education sector and practicing the role of Designated Teacher for significantly longer than other participants. Conversely, Jordan had the least amount of time working in education and in the role of Designated Teacher. During Kim's interview, they referred to this length of time as being beneficial in limiting the perceived emotional impact of the role on them personally, whilst Jordan spoke about their reported experience of 'heartbreak' in the role. As such, participants' time in the role may be useful to consider when reflecting on the divergence between some of their reported experiences of the Designated Teacher role.

Moreover, Alex and Robin worked in the same ‘area’, Jordan and Jessie worked in ‘area 2’, and Kim was the only participant to work in ‘area 3’, but with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, and therefore, Social Services and The Virtual School, from ‘area 2’. This is important to keep in mind, particularly when participants mentioned the perceived support they received from Social Services and The Virtual School in their role, as Alex and Robin were referring to the same systems, but different service providers compared to Jessie, Jordan, and Kim. Overall, whilst elements of participant demographics may differ, IPA allows for individual instantiations as a means to add a rich picture to this topic area (Smith et al., 2022).

## 4.3 Overview of Group Experiential Themes.

Following a process of IPA, as described in Chapter 3: Methodology, four Group Experiential Themes[14] were identified, with one leading to three sub-themes. This is depicted below in Figure 5. For a summary of the Group Experiential Themes, their sub-themes and Personal Experiential Themes[15] discussed within this chapter, refer to Appendix 20, where this has been reflected in a table. For further detail regarding the significance of each Group Experiential Theme across the dataset, see Appendix 21, where all relevant extracts have been presented from participants’ interviews that were not possible to include in this chapter.

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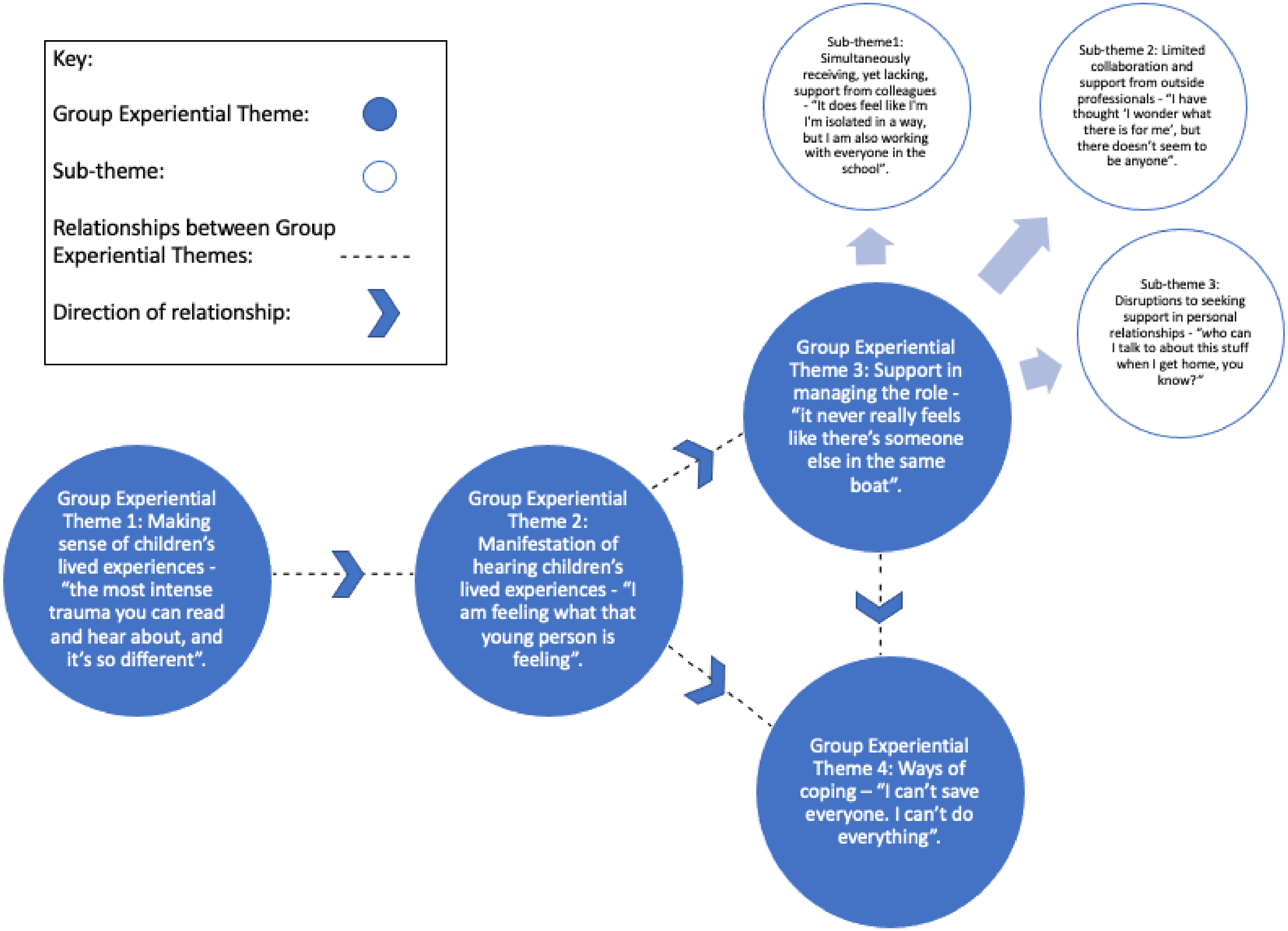
[14] As described in the Chapter 3: Methodology, Group Experiential Themes are groupings of Personal Experiential Themes across all participants to reflect the patterns of their experiences.

[15] As described in Chapter 3: Methodology Personal Experiential Themes are the names of each individual group of experiential statements within one account.

Figure 5: An overview of Group Experiential Themes and their sub-themes.


Key:
Group Experiential Theme: ●
Sub-theme: ○
Relationships between Group Experiential Themes: - - - - - -
Direction of relationship: ❯
Group Experiential Theme 1: Making sense of children's lived experiences - "the most intense trauma you can read and hear about, and it's so different".
Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of hearing children's lived experiences - "I am feeling what that young person is feeling".
Group Experiential Theme 3: Support in managing the role - "it never really feels like there's someone else in the same boat".
Group Experiential Theme 4: Ways of coping – "I can't save everyone. I can't do everything".
Sub-theme1: Simultaneously receiving, yet lacking, support from colleagues - "It does feel like I'm I'm isolated in a way, but I am also working with everyone in the school".
Sub-theme 2: Limited collaboration and support from outside professionals - "I have thought 'I wonder what there is for me', but there doesn't seem to be anyone".
Sub-theme 3: Disruptions to seeking support in personal relationships - "who can I talk to about this stuff when I get home, you know?"

## 4.4 Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and It's So Different" (Jordan).

An important feature of the participants' descriptions of their role in working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, was their reported experience of becoming aware, understanding, and processing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. In doing so, participants seemed to make sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences through drawing on their own feelings and views, often interpreting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences as complex, challenging, and unfamiliar. This understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences seemed to elicit feelings of sympathy and compassion towards the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. For example, in the extracts below, both Jessie and Robin used the word 'harrowing' to describe their recollection of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences:

> *Jessie: I mean, these students have gone through so much trauma and so, such difficult starts to their life, there's been some really harrowing cases.*
>
> *Robin: The past trauma that you know we've…*[16]*heard about, yeah, they're from…areas of conflict, so there are some quite harrowing things…there's immediately, you know, naturally I'm human that, you know, you feel sorry for these young people.*

These extracts highlight how Jessie and Robin reportedly interpreted Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, whereby they referred to the perceived significance of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences and, as such, seemed to make sense of them through the lens of 'trauma' and distress. In doing so, both Jessie and Robin demonstrated their sympathy and compassion towards Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, having understood the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences as '*difficult starts to their life,*' and subsequently feeling '*sorry*' for the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Similarly, Jordan described their understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences:

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[16] Interview noise, such as stutters and fillers (i.e. 'uhm', 'like' etc.,) are replaced with ellipsis so that the meaning and experiences participants convey in their talk becomes the focus (Oliver et al, 2005; Smith et al, 2022).

> *Jordan: It's… you know, it's some of the, I mean all traumas trauma but some of the most intense trauma you can read and hear about, and it's so different to what I know about or what I'm used to children having experienced.*

As with Jessie and Robin, Jordan also labelled Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences as 'trauma', but furthered this by reportedly viewing their experiences as '*the most intense trauma*'. In doing so, Jordan communicated how extreme and significant they perceived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences to be. Simultaneously, Jordan explained how they viewed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences as '*so different'*, which may suggest that Jordan interpreted Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences as unfamiliar to that which Jordan typically manages within their role, and/or what they may had experienced themselves. As such, I wondered whether making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's '*trauma*' as '*so different'* influenced Jordan's perspective of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences as '*the most intense'*, because it may not be something they are acquainted with, would expect to be hearing and supporting when working in UK schools, or possibly have had any experiences of prior to meeting these Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Moreover, later, Jordan went on to say:

> Jordan: *With our unaccompanied asylum seeking children, it's… such a… almost alien level of trauma, it's…things that you… can't even fathom and is…very different largely to maybe life here… so that, and it just seems so, I don't know, I feel for these students, they…go through that trauma and then they come here and then life is just so different and… it seems it's almost like left behind, but then just with the scars of it there, there's no continuity there, they've got a whole new life here and that's it, they don't have, you know, any contact with parents, I think, you know, that's one of the biggest ones is that contact with family and the… ability to assimilate over here if there are family members still in another country, then it…that ongoing, ongoing pain and suffering, you know, missing your family and knowing they're not coming. I really feel for them.*

Here, Jordan furthered their perspective of how '*different*' Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences can be through constructing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's '*trauma*' as '*almost alien', 'that you can't even fathom'*. This reinforced Jordan's reported perception that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences were challenging, complex, and unfamiliar to Jordan due to how far-removed these experiences are to life in the UK. Having reflected on this, Jordan seemed to perceive Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's difficult lived experiences as not something of the past, but being added to over time, due to the reported perception that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children face new challenges on their arrival to the UK, which results in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's '*ongoing pain and suffering'*. This made me wonder whether Jordan's sense-making of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences means understanding their '*trauma*' as not simply ending when met with physical safety, but something that is ongoing during the subsequent process of assimilation when arriving in the UK. Kim shared this perception, and further acknowledged the ongoing challenging lived experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children:

> *Kim: To hear some of the experiences that they had gone through and you know, the, sort of, just the trauma that they had in their home country to then have the journey to then come to a country that couldn't speak their language to then be in a home where they don't have people speaking their language either and then coming to a school which a lot of them haven't experienced before, I just can't imagine what it would have been like, it's hard for me to hear so what would it have been like to experience?*

Kim detailed the different steps in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's journeys when coming to the UK, whereby Kim also discussed their perception of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's '*trauma*' and extreme life changes that these children have had to independently experience at each stage. These reported disruptions included the perceived understanding that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had to leave their home country, their family, their friends, whereby they then arrived in a country where they did not speak the language and were placed in an unfamiliar home, with unfamiliar adults. In this way, Kim perceived there to be multiple, challenging environments that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children must adapt to, which ultimately resulted in, what Kim viewed as, the children's difficult experiences continuing even when in physical safety. As such, similar to Jordan, Kim reflected on how each step in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's journey to the UK contributed to their understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's '*trauma*' experiences. Kim ended with explaining their perceived personal difficulty in hearing and imagining Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences, which therefore led to Kim reflecting on, and sympathising with, how much more challenging this must have been for the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who had experienced these '*trauma*' events.

However, some participants simultaneously discussed a perceived dichotomy between how they personally understood the gravity of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences, and how the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children themselves were able to seemingly enact their resilience and not be defined by their difficult experiences. For example, Jordan said:

> *Jordan: I'm basing it on the students I have, they come in, they get on with their work, they are happy, they are smiling, they're engaged in every bit of learning you offer…anything that's available they will take up, and so what you're seeing around the Academy does not reflect, so it's quite, you're having a conversation with these children and in the back of my mind, I'm like, how are you even sat here? How are you having fun? How are you focusing in any lessons? And they try their…absolute best. My…cohort is just, yeah, they are brilliant.*

Here, Jordan seemed to be in disbelief as to how Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children were perceived as continuing to function, and also progress, within the education system, despite Jordan having viewed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as experiencing 'trauma'. This suggests that Jordan may have held preconceived ideas about how these Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children would appear, which were subsequently challenged by the way in which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children were perceived to act in school. In this way, Jordan acknowledged the perceived pain and vulnerability of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children related to their '*trauma*' experiences, and simultaneously reportedly viewed the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as enacting resilience and taking opportunities to overcome their challenging experiences. In seemingly holding both these perceptions when making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, it could be suggested that Jordan moved beyond simply pathologising Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences and, instead, Jordan added depth to their personal understanding by reportedly viewing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences as a reorientation towards opportunity to heal and overcome. Robin reported a similar perceived experience, seemingly admiring Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's resilience:

> Robin: *The majority of the students that we've got coming in, if you didn't know those things, you wouldn't have put any of those things in there because they're humble, you know, the resilience that they've shown to get to these places is impressive...It's...almost shameful that, you know you're not getting out of bed because you're...tired or whatever it is, it's like, well, actually, you know, you need to be here if...these guys can make it.*

Robin seemed to position Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as enacting ways of overcoming through perceived resilience and humility, thereby being viewed as putting others to 'shame' in how they may have managed their difficult lived experiences. As was spoken about by Jordan, Robin explained that due to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's perceived humility and resilience, one would not know, or guess, what Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had experienced. This signifies how Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children were perceived to appear in school as being in significant contrast to how participants viewed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, and therefore some participants came to recognise the resilience of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, which seemed to extend participants' understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences as more than solely 'trauma', and including overcoming.

### 4.4.1 Summary.

This Group Experiential Theme indicates that an important feature of participants' perceived experiences within their role was one of making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. Although participants reported challenge in being able to comprehend Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, potentially due to participants perceived significant unfamiliarity with what these children had endured, primarily, participants seemingly viewed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences through a 'trauma' lens. When recalling their understanding of that which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had experienced, participants constructed these children's 'trauma' as not only including that which they had endured within their home country, but also the reported distress these children faced during their journey to the UK, and when settling into the UK. Whilst participants reportedly recognised the pain in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences, over time, some participants seemed to report that they added to their understanding of these children's lived experiences through the repositioning of their understanding that included resilience and overcoming.

## 4.5 Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I Am Feeling What That Young Person is Feeling" (Kim).

With participants reportedly having come to understand Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences within their role, participants went on to explain how they perceived hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences as having impacted upon them personally. Specifically, all participants discussed the perceived effect of the role on their personal lives. For example, when I asked Alex whether their role impacts them when they go home in an evening, weekend, or school holiday, Alex spoke about how they thought about the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children 'a lot':

> *Alex: Yeah, I do think about them a lot, I think that's quite natural.*

Here, Alex positioned their response to thinking about these Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children outside of work as '*quite natural*'. In this way, Alex seemingly suggested that their reaction was *normal*, thereby possibly indicating that this is something they were not personally concerned about, potentially something unavoidable due to how impactful hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's 'traumatic' lived experiences were perceived, or a consequence of the connections they had built with the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Regardless, Alex indicated that they perceived there to be an impact of the role on their personal life, whereby they thought about the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children '*a lot*'. Other participants also spoke about the interrelatedness of work and home, thereby furthering the view that the role can reportedly impact participants' personal lives. For instance, Jessie said:

> *Jessie: I do…take things home, and I think about them a lot…I wouldn't say it's day-to-day, but certainly week to week…kind of dealing with…and being aware of new things that have come up that those young people are processing and kind of just working out how it's best to manage it.*

As with Alex, Jessie reported the perception that the role isn't simply time-bound, ending at the end of a school day, where Jessie could disconnect from hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. Rather, Jessie reported that they continued to '*work out'* a plan of support for the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, even when at home. In turn, as with Alex, Jessie indicated that they perceived the role as having permeated aspects of Jessie's personal life and also seemed to present this as unproblematic or normal to their perceived experience of the role. Therefore, some participants explained how they perceived their professional role as often infused with aspects of their personal life, where they reported that they felt reminded of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children that they support whenever participants went home.

Alongside the perceived impact the role on participants' personal lives, other participants also reflected on how hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences implicated their own emotions. For example, Jordan explained how they perceived the role as not becoming less emotionally impactful over time:

> *Jordan: It's just…shock every time, you know, you get similar stories, and although you may be expecting what you hear, it doesn't…take away from how you feel each time.*

Here, Jordan explained how they felt '*shock*' each time they would hear about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. Despite Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences being '*similar*', Jordan went on to say that they remained emotionally impacted, regardless of how many times they heard these Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences. This suggests that there is a perceived emotional impact of the role on Jordan, which elicited difficult feelings, such as shock, that they had to manage and work through. For other participants, they also reflected on the perceived emotional impact having heard Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, explaining how they viewed their feelings as being closely tied to the emotions of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. For example, Kim explained:

> *Kim: I am feeling what that young person is feeling, I am mirroring their emotions and I think I do…that quite a lot which means when…we're having difficulty with a social worker and I could see the young person how they were feeling and I was*

> *feeling, you know, it was the let downs they were getting, I was getting, if you see what I mean.*

Kim discussed how they perceived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's emotions as having transferred onto them, which, in their words, meant that they '*mirror*' Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's feelings. As such, any '*let downs'* that Kim viewed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as experiencing, Kim perceived themselves as also having personally experienced these feelings. This may suggest that Kim had built a strong connection with these Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, and, as a result, having heard about these children's experiences, this had a perceived emotional toll on Kim. As exemplified in Kim's account, these emotions were viewed as not solely linked to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's previous lived experiences, but the difficulties Kim perceived these children as having to continue to experience when they arrived in the UK, as discussed in the previous Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences - "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan)).

However, one participant explained that they perceived themselves as remaining steadfast in their role, negating any personal impact of having heard about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. For example, Robin shared:

> *Robin: Nah, personally, I'm I feel pretty, pretty strong and pretty alright about it I, you know, I now know that shocking things happen in the world, my eyes are a bit more open to it now, but yeah, I don't take it home, I don't take it personally.*

Robin positioned themselves as '*pretty strong'*, suggesting that they perceived themselves as having developed the emotional capacity to remain '*pretty alright'* whenever they heard about the '*shocking*' things that '*happen in the world'* as part of their role when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. In this way, Robin reinforced that they did not feel that the role impacted them personally or their emotions, which is in direct contrast to the other participants' experiences. Yet, it could be suggested that Robin has experienced the emotional impact of the role, but in different ways to that of other participants. Specifically, as reported by Robin, there is a perceived need to develop and enact their strength when hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, so that their personal life is not impacted. Moreover, with Robin explaining how they perceived their ‘*eyes a bit more open*’ due to their role, it may be suggested that Robin has also experienced a shift in beliefs of others and the world. As such, although Robin told me that they did not perceive the role as having had an impact upon themselves, it could be suggested that it has impacted their emotions through the need to be ‘*strong*’, as well as their wider belief systems, and raised their awareness of world issues.

Whilst all but one participant explained how they perceived hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s lived experiences as having impacted upon them personally, this is not to say that this is always a negative emotion. Participants also spoke about a perceived sense of gratification in being in a role where Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children entrusted them with sensitive information about their lives. For example, Kim goes on to say:

> *Kim: When you're working with them and they…share things with you, it's like you feel…it's a gift that they are giving. You feel that actually you're in a really privileged position that they would trust you enough with that.*

Here, Kim explained that they experienced Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children having shared their lived experiences with them as a ‘*gift*’. This suggests that Kim received something positive within their role, particularly when Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children shared their lived experiences with Kim. In other words, whilst we may interpret participants as feeling a sense of burden or an emotional toll when having heard about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s lived experiences within their role, Kim reported how they simultaneously experienced this aspect of their role as a ‘*privilege*’. As such, hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s experiences were also perceived by some participants as having elicited positive feelings within the role.

### 4.5.1 Summary.

This Group Experiential Theme explores how the role of Designated Teacher, whereby individuals are exposed to hearing and supporting ‘traumatic’ lived experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, is perceived to impact upon participants’ personal lives, emotional responses, and view of the world. Specifically, some participants reportedly experienced this aspect of the role as having evoked challenge in extracting work from their personal lives, recognising how they take elements of the role home with them. Simultaneously, other participants explained that they perceived hearing about

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s lived experiences as having elicited a range of emotions in themselves, both positive and negative. Finally, another participant reported that they perceived the role as having impacted the way in which they viewed the world, with their ‘*eyes a bit more open*’ as a result of their experiences in the role. Therefore, within the current study, participants discussed a range of ways they perceived the role had impacted upon themselves.

## 4.6 Group Experiential Theme 3: Support in Managing the Role – “It Never Really Feels Like There’s Someone Else in the Same Boat” (Jordan).

During discussions about managing their role, participants went on to describe how they perceived the support that they received when managing their role. Specifically, participants referred to their reported experiences of support from colleagues, both Social Workers and The Virtual School, and family and friends. As such, this Group Experiential Theme is split into three sub-themes:

- Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving, Yet Lacking, Support from Colleagues – “It Does Feel Like I’m Isolated in a Way, but I am also Working with Everyone in the School” (Jordan). This addresses the participants’ experiences of accessing operational support from trusted colleagues, yet feeling a sense of dissatisfaction in the limited emotional support when managing challenging aspects of the role.
- Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals – “I Have Thought ‘I Wonder what There is for Me’, But There Doesn’t Seem to be Anyone” (Jessie). This relates to participants experiencing other professionals as providing limited support in establishing effective provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as they transition into education, as well as identifying a need for external professionals to provide support in processing challenging aspects of the role.
- Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 3: Disruptions to Seeking Support in Personal Relationships – “Who Can I Talk to About This Stuff When I Get Home, You Know?” (Kim). This reflects the majority of participants’ experiences of being limited in what they are able to share with others and the challenge in enabling others

to comprehend their unique role, which therefore means that family and friends are not able to provide the support participants may need from them.

These will now be discussed in turn.

### 4.6.1 Group Experiential Theme 3, Sub-Theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving, Yet Lacking, Support from Colleagues - "It Does Feel Like I'm Isolated in a Way, but I Am Also Working with Everyone in the School" (Jordan).

When speaking about their perceived experiences of support within the role of Designated Teacher, most participants explained that they felt supported in a practical and operational sense by colleagues, such as talking through a plan of support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children with a trusted co-worker, or delivering educational support with a team of colleagues. For example, Alex explained:

> *Alex: I work with my colleagues because you do, you need a wide amount of people, you know the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children these days we're dealing with have some level of trauma…and, you…need more than just one person to be able to manage that kind of caseload.*

Here, Alex suggested that there is a perceived necessity to take a team approach when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. Alex linked the need for a '*wide amount of people*' to the perceived significant and complex lived experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, as discussed in the first Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan)). In this way, Alex discussed how they viewed that one person alone would not be able to manage in providing the necessary education and support which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children were viewed as requiring. Alex indicated that they felt supported by having had a team of colleagues that they could rely upon to deliver educational provision to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, as this was too big a job for one person alone. As such, it would seem that Alex appreciated the reported experience of receiving practical and operational support from their colleagues. Similarly, Robin discussed the perceived importance of having '*a really good team'* around them when

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children disclosed sensitive information regarding their past or current lives:

> *Robin: I've got a really good team around me so, whenever there's a…disclosure or whatever it is, especially if it's quite high level, we would just take a pragmatic approach and we'll take…the emotion out of it to make sure actually we're doing the right thing. So…I lean on the experience of my colleagues.*

Robin explained that they '*lean'* on their '*team*' of colleagues for support. The use of the word '*lean*' indicates that Robin felt that they were able to rely on their colleagues to support them when required, particularly in navigating disclosures. When utilising this support, Robin outlined that they reportedly '*take the emotion out of it'* for the purpose of ensuring that they were '*doing the right thing'*. This made me wonder whether much of the support Robin received was functional and served a purpose of establishing next steps in challenging situations. In turn, this may negate any potential emotional support required when managing difficult aspects of the role. Similarly, other participants spoke about talking to a trusted colleague in a more senior position to offer guidance in establishing an effective plan of support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. For example, when I asked Jessie whether there was anyone who helped them in their role of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Jessie explained:

> *Jessie: I…will quite often just go and have a chat with my principal...if I've got a concern or a worry or I've just found out some information which I kind of just need to process and put into some sort of context, which actually I'm not familiar with at all, that that's…probably the place that I would tend to go the most just to go and have a…sit down and say 'did you know anything about this?' and… just talk it through, and then work out our next steps to support the young person.*

Jessie mentioned that they had a key person in school who they went to where they could discuss new information about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and plan the child's provision. In this way, Jessie seemed to have a perceived trusted colleague with whom to share and consider plans of support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, rather than having navigated the operational aspects of the role independently. This suggests that Jessie accessed practical support within school from one individual, which they reportedly found useful in their role. Additionally, I wondered whether this practical support offered Jessie an element of emotional containment and relieved some of the emotional impact of the '*concern or worry'* Jessie reportedly held within the role, as the support Jessie described afforded them space to '*process*' what they had heard and establish '*next steps'* to address this.

Despite the perceived experience of co-worker support, participants also explained that they often felt alone, reporting that colleagues did not understand their day-day-to experiences of the role, due to its uniqueness. For example, Jordan spoke about feeling remote from their colleagues in school:

> Jordan: *Because this role is so individual I…don't…even know of other people really, I don't know the DT's [Designated Teachers] from other schools, and so it never really feels like there's someone else in the same boat…so that…can be a little bit isolating, you know.*

Here, Jordan said '*it never really feels like there's someone else in the same boat'*. The use of this metaphor exemplifies and depicts how alone Jordan felt within the role, thereby holding the view that there was no one else in the same situation. In this way, Jordan indicated that they perceived there to be limited understanding of the role from their colleagues, as can be seen from Jordan feeling as though they were the only one in the '*boat'*, thereby eliciting Jordan's reported feelings of isolation in their role. When I asked Jordan to tell me more about their feeling of isolation, Jordan described a dissonance between working with everyone, yet being alone:

> Jordan: *It does feel like I'm…isolated in a way, but I am also working with everyone in the school, so I'm on my own for that student to a degree but then I'm going down to the science department and saying 'Do you know what they need?' 'They're not understanding that lesson', 'they're…struggling in their double lessons so what I'm going to do is in second lesson, we're going to do an intervention there'. So I'm…going to speak to other people, which is nice, but no-one's doing the job with me.*

Jordan reflected on their perception that they worked alongside, and in collaboration with, a range of school staff throughout the working day, for the purpose of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, such as ensuring educational progress. Yet, irrespective of this, Jordan remained feeling '*isolated*' as '*no-one's doing the job'* with them. This indicates that the isolation Jordan referred to is not physical isolation, but in regard to emotionally feeling alone in managing the challenging aspects of the role. As such, similar to Alex, Robin, and Jessie, Jordan recognised the operational support that they reported to receive from colleagues, but also identified how they felt that there was not sufficient emotional support, thereby rendering a sense of '*isolation*' in the role.

Furthermore, some participants also discussed that they often felt unable to share the extent of the emotional impact of the role with colleagues, resulting in perceived limited access to emotional support within a school setting. For example, Kim said:

> *Kim: I'm a person who doesn't want to disturb people, I don't want to take their time up, I don't wanna kind of burden other people with my feelings.*

Here, Kim talked about not wanting to encumber others with their feelings as they predicted it would be a *'burden'*. This suggests that the emotional impact of the role is significant, and Kim is somewhat protecting their colleagues from the emotions they experienced within the role. In this way, Kim viewed accessing emotional support from colleagues as negatively impacting others, rather than having viewed it as something that would be of benefit to them. Kim was seemingly prioritising colleagues' time and wellbeing over their own, resulting in Kim receiving perceived limited emotional support within their role from colleagues. As such, it would seem that most participants reportedly experienced operational support from colleagues within their role, yet simultaneously perceived there to be a lack of emotional support in managing their reported feelings associated in the role.

### 4.6.2 Group Experiential Theme 3, Sub-Theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals - "I Have Thought 'I Wonder What There is for Me', but There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie).

Participants discussed how they experienced a perceived need for increased support from external professionals, including Social Services and The Virtual School, both in terms of operational and emotional support. For example, some participants spoke about how they perceived there to be a lack of opportunity to engage in necessary professional development in order to extend their understanding regarding how best to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children:

> *Robin: Ultimately a lot of these young people have come from… very difficult backgrounds and experience things that, you know, we are not overly well trained in…or, you know, we're…working towards being a trauma informed school…but some of the trauma these students…have witnessed, and so on is…you know very different to the trauma that…we're trained in so…yeah…difficult.*

Robin spoke about how they '*rarely get any information from Social Service or The Virtual School*' and subsequently went on to identify one specific area, namely training in 'trauma', in which they felt they required further support to develop their knowledge and competencies within the role, specific to supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Whilst Robin discussed how the school is '*working towards being a trauma informed school*', Robin indicated that they did not perceive this to be sufficient for their role. This links with the first Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan)), whereby Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences are understood as '*different*' and '*alien'*, indicating that Robin recognised the unique aspects of their role and the need for specific training around supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's needs. Yet, with this reported need not currently being met, this implies that there are further developments to be made by external professionals in order to support Robin in their knowledge and competency of best practice within the role.

Alongside lacking general information regarding how to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, most participants also spoke at length about the perceived unmet expectations they had of Social Services and The Virtual School in navigating best practice provision and support that was specific to those Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on their school roll. For example, Alex said:

> *Alex: We were asking before they arrived for any information about them, anything anyone knew at all in terms of their educational background…what their experiences had been in terms of any traumatic events…what their age was, what…you know, what subjects they learned at school, or anything, and it was just "you'll have to find out for yourself"… "off you go, enjoy yourself, see what you can possibly do with that".*

This extract suggests that when Alex planned educational placements and provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, they perceived there to be a deficiency in information being shared that was specific to these children from Social Services and The Virtual School, such as these children's age. Alex recalled being told '*you'll have to find out for yourself*', which indicates that Alex may have experienced a sense of independence in retrieving useful information about the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children on their school roll, as opposed to a multi-agency approach to working. Moreover, whilst not naming a specific service, Alex described experiences where external professionals have said '*see what you can possibly do with that'*, which also indicates a potential sense of hopelessness and challenge when having to independently establish what best practice support should look like for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children without perceived sufficient information. As such, this extract indicates that Alex experienced a perceived dissatisfaction in the way they were supported by Social Services and The Virtual School when transitioning Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children into school.

Alongside participants reportedly experiencing limited operational support from external professionals when trying to provide best practice support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, most also experienced a perceived lack of emotional support. For example, Jessie said:

> *Jessie: When there's been really…quite, really…harrowing cases…I have thought 'I wonder what there is for me', but there doesn't seem to be anyone, so, you know, you're really busy and you do just crack on... but, yeah, I guess there is support from the virtual school, but that…I can phone them if it's…support about a particular student or wanting to talk through something, but it's not really support for me…they do offer training, but that's really more about my role as a Designated Teacher, it's not…emotional, wellbeing support.*

Here, Jessie reflected on times where they had required emotional wellbeing support with processing '*harrowing cases'*, yet they reported that they felt that they did not have anyone that they could contact. Whilst Jessie referred to the support which The Virtual School can offer, Jessie perceived this support as being for individual children, rather than for Jessie personally. In turn, due to the reported busyness of the role, Jessie felt that they subsequently had to '*just crack on'* despite the absence of this identified emotional support. The perceived importance of support was also spoken about by Kim, who reported their view of the necessity of '*outside*' supervision delivered by an external professional in their role:

> *Kim: I have once a term I have sort of outside supervision and that's really helpful in terms of just being able to share and…process it and…allow you to kind of where you feel I'm not making a difference or I'm you know, it's…good to reflect on that and be able to see…some of the…things that are making a difference I suppose.*

Here, Kim discussed their experience of accessing this supervision, and detailed the perceived multiple helpful functions of having this time and space. Although Kim was unsure of the job title of the individual delivering the supervision, it was someone '*outside*' of the school staff body. For Kim, supervision was viewed as beneficial in processing the perceived challenging aspects of the role, but also helped them to reflect on the potential impact which their practices were having in the role by seeing '*some of the things that are making a difference*'. In other words, it seemed that supervision had allowed Kim to feel empowered, and do more of what works in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. In this way, it could be suggested that supervision was meeting the perceived emotional needs of Kim, as well as having enabled Kim to develop their operational practice.

Interestingly, all participants shared the need or desire to receive supervision as part of their role, despite the fact that it was only Kim in receipt of this support. When I asked these participants to tell me what this support would look like and how it would be helpful, participants reflected on the perceived barriers to receiving this support. For example, Jordan explained:

> *Jordan: It's hard because I do find wellbeing support, we moan when we don't get it, but when we get it we don't take it up because it's impacting our, you know, oh no, I've got stuff to do I've…got a meeting to do, I've got this to do, that to do, so, again, it probably comes down to protected time and that…yeah, protected time and then space then to have those conversations.*

Here, Jordan outlined a perceived incompatibility between the demands of the role and time for support. All participants who were not accessing the emotional support of the like which Kim received, shared this reflection, and expressed the need for any type of support to be '*protected time*'. In other words, time that cannot be taken away or impacted upon, so that participants are able to consistently access, and not have to worry about potential interruptions to this support.

Therefore, participants unanimously shared the perceived experience of receiving limited support from professionals outside of their school staff body, such as Social Services and The Virtual School, in terms of both operational and emotional support so to develop their competencies and manage the reported personal impact of their role.

### 4.6.3 Group Experiential Theme 3, Sub-Theme 3: Disruptions to Seeking Support in Personal Relationships – "Who Can I Talk to About This Stuff When I Get Home, You Know?" (Kim).

Finally, participants discussed how they experienced perceived barriers to receiving emotional support in managing the reported personal impact of the role from their family and friends. Specifically, participants spoke about how they needed to uphold boundaries of confidentiality and respect for the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children who they work with, which means they could not share what they had experienced in their role:

> *Jessie: I probably do hold back because…of the like confidentiality aspect of it…so, you know, when people, my family or my friends or have asked about work, I'll give them snippets, but that's not enough for me.*

Here, Jessie talked about '*holding back'*, which suggests that whilst they may want to seek support in their personal life, they reported that they had to actively avoid sharing the details of their professional experiences due to confidentiality. I wondered whether this meant that Jessie is excluding parts of their life and emotions from their family and friends, and whether this is detrimental to their feeling of being understood. Jessie went on to say that they had been able to share '*snippets*', which suggests talking about small amounts of information regarding their role. Despite this, Jessie explained how they perceived this as '*not enough'* for them, which indicates that they required support where they were able to be open and honest about all aspects of their role for the benefit of their wellbeing. Other participants also shared a sense of perceived uncertainty regarding who they were able to speak to about their role in their personal lives:

> *Kim: I would say, it does impact my personal or home life a lot, but it's more because, so I would say in the earlier days the children would stay with me a lot and I would be*

> *like who can I talk to about this stuff when I get home, you know? But, I think I have got better in kind of it sitting better in me.*

Kim discussed how they perceived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as '*staying with'* them a lot, which refers to an emotional presence, when at home. Despite this, the participant seemed to infer that they felt that they did not have someone within their personal life to manage and process the reported emotional impact of the role. Kim asked the question '*who can I talk to about this stuff?*' indicating a perceived need to speak to someone, but also suggesting that there is an element of not knowing who they were able to talk to. Without this support, and as Kim has become more experienced within the role, Kim explained that they perceived the emotional impact as '*sitting better'* in them. This may mean that they had learned to manage the reported emotional impact of the role in isolation from family and friend support.

Alongside confidentiality, participants talked about not sharing their professional lives with family or friends, as a means of protecting those closest to them from the 'traumatic' stories. For example, Robin said:

> *Robin: I don't talk to my partner about it, uhm, just because they would take it all personally and then would be adopting every kid in the school. And so I, yeah, I don't talk about any…of these situations and stories.*

Here, Robin explained that they did not speak about any of the '*situations or stories'* that they had experienced within their role, as a means of reportedly protecting those they care about. This demonstrates that Robin is aware of how emotionally impactful Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences can be on those who hear their stories. In light of this, Robin seemed to prioritise protecting those they are closest to, over seeking support for themselves from their family and friends. This may go some way in explaining why Robin reported that they had to enact '*strength*' within their role, as outlined in the previous Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim)), as they reported that they did not access emotional support from their family.

However, participants also mentioned that irrespective of whether they would have been able to offload sensitive information with family and friends, there was a perceived challenge in explaining their role, and day-to-day experiences, to those they are closest to, due to difficulty in making sense of the incomprehensible experiences Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had endured, as discussed in the first Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan)). As such, this added a further perceived barrier to participants being able to receive support from family and friends. For example, Jordan said:

> *Jordan: People don't know what I do, no (participant laughs) absolutely not, you know, I sometimes just I find myself thinking If I had to explain what has happened from the start of my day to the end of my day it just, it just doesn't make sense, even to me.*

Jordan explained that they felt that people did not know what they do in their role, partly because much of it seemed unexplainable and challenging to comprehend, as discussed in the first Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan)). In this way, not only does the reported confidentiality aspect of the role mean that participants did not seek support, but equally the perceived ability to have others understand this unique role seemed unattainable, and therefore, family and friends were viewed as not able to provide the support participants may have needed from them. This made me think about the importance of feeling understood in order to feel emotionally supported within the role. Therefore, it would seem that most participants experienced perceived barriers to receiving support from family and friends, thereby potentially furthering the feeling that they were alone in managing and processing the reported emotional impact of the role.

### 4.6.4 Summary.

This Group Experiential Theme encompasses participants' perceived experiences of managing the role, both in terms of processing the reported emotional impact, and delivering the operational duties. It would seem that an important feature of participants' perceived experiences was a sense of isolation in managing the emotional impact of the role. As a result, participants reported a need for a confidential space, where they could feel understood, so that they can articulate and process their reported emotions experienced in the role. Simultaneously, participants reflected on the importance of operational support within their role. Specifically, participants outlined co-worker support as essential in planning effective provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Yet, participants also discussed how they experienced perceived limited multi-agency working and professional development opportunities from Social Services and The Virtual School in order to support their competencies within the role. Therefore, although co-worker support was positively perceived by participants, overall, there seemed to be a sense of dissatisfaction in the support participants received within their role, with participants identifying different ways in which they would subsequently like to be supported.

## 4.7 Group Experiential Theme 4: Ways of Coping – "I Can't Save Everyone, I Can't Do Everything" (Jordan).

With most participants having reported a perceived limited emotional support in their role, participants spoke about how they subsequently enacted coping mechanisms to overcome any challenging feelings in the role. For example, Alex said:

> *Alex: We're used to working with lots of children who have had traumatic experiences. You learn to not be surprised.*

Here, Alex discussed the reported experience of how they diminished their emotional response when addressing the perceived challenging aspects of the role. Alex suggested that they have *'learned'* to do this, and indicated that there was a need to do so, however, did not expand on this further. As such, it could be that Alex was referring to the need of protecting their own emotions and feelings, by reducing or negating, their emotional response in the role. Similarly, this could serve a purpose of guarding those who share the information about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's 'traumatic experiences', by not escalating the situation further through adding participants' own emotions to these children's experiences and, instead, as Robin previously reported, responding to the information about children's lived experiences *'pragmatically'*. Robin agreed with Alex's means of coping within the role:

> *Robin: I can't let it, well, because if I emotionally invested in everyone then I, yeah, well, I wouldn't be able to come to work every day. I'd be a wreck, yeah [participant laughs].*

Similar to Alex, Robin suggested a perceived need to establish emotional boundaries within the role. Without doing so, Robin explained that they would have been a '*wreck*', unable to go to work. Apart from actively attempting to limit emotional investment in the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children they worked with, Robin did not provide further detail regarding what putting in place emotional boundaries looked like in the role. Despite this, Robin reflected on how the coping mechanism they reportedly enacted had supported their emotional wellbeing, and subsequently, their ability to do the role.

However, other participants did not share the same experiences as Alex or Robin. For example, Jordan explained:

> *Jordan: The worry I think…working in school you see people who have been in it for so long and they're just desensitised and you never…want to get to that point where it doesn't affect you, I…don't ever want to get to that point, and I think if I got to the point where I'm not affected or, you know, it doesn't give me a feeling in my heart then I'm, I know I need to need to step back 'cause I think you can only do the best when you're empathizing and you've got that empathy for the children…but as well as protecting my own mental health.*

Whilst Alex and Robin positioned reducing emotional responsiveness and limiting emotional investment as a means of managing the perceived challenging aspects within the role, Jordan reflected on how they viewed this strategy as a disadvantage to professional practice. Jordan explained that they reportedly sought to embrace the emotions that come with practicing in this role for the purpose of ensuring '*empathy*', as they perceived that this would subsequently provide the best support to the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Yet, Jordan recognised that becoming '*affected*' in the role, or by having the '*feeling in their heart',* meant that attention must also be paid to their '*own mental health'*, so that this could simultaneously be '*protected*'. Despite this, Jordan did not outline how they did this, which may speak to the previous Group Experiential Theme where Jordan voiced a need for supervision as '*protected time'*. Similarly, Kim talked about how they recognised and became aware of the emotions which they were feeling in the role, as a means of protecting their wellbeing - a skill reportedly developed as a result of the supervision they had received:

> *Kim: And I think that I suppose self-awareness, being aware of the fact that all of the children's experiences are contributing to you and how you feel is it's really important and so, I think that's all been been helpful.*

As outlined in the second Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim)), Kim recognised and reflected on their perceived experience of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's emotions transferring on to them, thereby reportedly having had an impact on how Kim felt. In turn, Kim identified the need to be '*aware*' of this, presumably for the purpose of processing what they were feeling in the role. In this way, rather than blocking emotional responses, Kim reported that they became aware of their feelings and reasons as to why they may be experiencing these emotions. In coming to accept and expect the emotional impact of the role, Kim seemed to be limiting their own vulnerability and acknowledge that this is inevitable within the role.

Alongside emotional coping mechanisms, some participants also spoke about practical responses when overcoming perceived challenging experiences within the role. For example, Jordan said:

> *Jordan: It's heartbreaking. It really is… it, I think you, the longer you're in the role, you come to rationalize, and you think, I can't save everyone, I can't do everything, but I do feel I will try and go above and beyond in ways in other ways, so, for instance, getting funding for equipment so that the student can engage in activities they love and go onto further education with the right resources. So…it isn't…their family, but it's doing whatever you can.*

Here, Jordan spoke about what they termed, '*one of the worst parts'* of the role – not being able to reunite Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children with their families. Jordan referred to this perceived experience as '*heartbreaking*'. This reported emotional response not only referred to the individual child, but also extended toward these children's families. Yet, with time, Jordan explained that they had reportedly come to '*rationalise*' in their role, developing a perceived acceptance that they '*can't save everyone'*. As such, it could be suggested that entering this state of acceptance is therefore one way in which Jordan managed the challenging emotional experiences in the role. Moreover, Jordan reported how they subsequently '*go above and beyond'* and '*do whatever they can'* when they do have control in the support that they can offer the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, such as buying them equipment for activities they enjoy. Jordan recognised that these practical items did not replace Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's families, but I wondered whether it served a purpose for Jordan's emotional wellbeing through allowing Jordan to spend their time, and therefore remain focused, on what they can change, rather than what they cannot change.

Finally, one participant seemed to experience a sense of avoiding aspects of the perceived emotional impact of the role through leaning into the reported advantage of not fully knowing the extent of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences:

> Jessie: *My life, my upbringing was so very different to so many students that I teach, and certainly miles and miles and miles away from…the kind of experience of our Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers that I wonder if ignorance is a little bit bliss as well…because there's so much information that you can be told, but I think a lot of it, it would be you know, you'd be hard pressed to actually imagine those experiences.*

Jessie explained that they perceived their upbringing to be vastly different to that of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. In turn, Jessie used the metaphor '*ignorance is a little bit bliss'*, thereby suggesting that the perceived unfamiliarity keeps them from fully understanding what Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had experienced. As such, remaining in a state of perceived '*ignorance*' was one coping mechanism Jessie employed as a means of protecting their wellbeing in the role.

### 4.7.1 Summary.

This Group Experiential Theme reflects the different ways participants reportedly employed coping mechanisms to manage the perceived emotional impact of the role. Specifically, the majority of participants referred to emotional coping strategies. For instance, two participants spoke about the perceived need to remain emotionally distant so to limit the emotional toll of the role. However, other participants spoke about their reported experience of being self-aware of the emotional impact of the role as a means to then process these feelings, and another referred to their perceived experience of embracing the emotions in the role to, in their view, improve their practice as Designated Teacher. As well as emotional coping strategies, some participants reportedly utilised practical strategies, such as focusing on, and subsequently enacting, change within their control. Finally, one participant discussed their perception of remaining in a position of '*ignorance*' as a means of diminishing the emotional toll involved when making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. Therefore, it seems that all participants reportedly experienced multiple ways of coping that they personally found advantageous. Yet, I wondered whether many of these coping strategies are temporary 'fixes' employed due to the perceived absence of support, as discussed in the previous Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3: Support in Managing the Role – "It Never Really Feels Like There's Someone Else in the Same Boat" (Jordan)).

# 5 Chapter 5: Discussion.

## 5.1 Chapter Introduction.

The aim of this research study was to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. As such, this chapter engages in a critical discussion of the current study's findings in connection with this aim and in-keeping with the subsequent research questions. As part of the discussion of the current study's Group Experiential Themes, existing theory and research will be presented to allow for a critical engagement of the current study's findings. The chapter will end with a summary of this critical discussion and provide concluding comments.

## 5.2 Discussion of the Research Findings.

Discussion of the research findings is presented in terms of the Group Experiential Themes and sub-themes identified following the process of IPA:

- Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan).
- Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim).
- Group Experiential Theme 3: Support in Managing the Role – "It Never Really Feels Like There's Someone Else in the Same Boat" (Jordan):
    - Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving, Yet Lacking, Support from Colleagues – "It Does Feel Like I'm Isolated in a Way, but I am also Working with Everyone in the School" (Jordan).
    - Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals – "I Have Thought 'I Wonder what There is for Me', But There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie).
    - Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 3: Disruptions to Seeking Support in Personal Relationships – "Who Can I Talk to About This Stuff When I Get Home, You Know?" (Kim).

- Group Experiential Theme 4: Ways of Coping – "I Can't Save Everyone, I Can't do Everything" (Jordan).

These will now be discussed in turn.

## 5.3 Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and It's So Different" (Jordan).

One purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of Designated Teachers' personal experiences of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. When speaking with Designated Teachers who participated in the current study, a consistent experience associated with the role was one of becoming aware, understanding, and processing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences.

Designated Teachers in the current study discussed their experience of becoming aware of the severity of what Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have had to endure which, previous to working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, participants were seemingly unfamiliar with. The difficult experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have been reflected in research (e.g., Lynch and Cuninghame 2000; Gracey 2003; Thomas et al., 2004; Denov and Maclure, 2007; Hopkins and Hill, 2008; Hodes et al., 2008; Jensen et al., 2015; Scharpf et al., 2021). Specifically, one research study indicated that the primary reason for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children coming to the UK was due to their family being persecuted or killed, with the second most frequent reported reason being due to the persecution of the young person themselves (Thomas et al., 2004). When fleeing their country, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children travel long distances, over significant periods of time, often unaware of where they are travelling to, resulting in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences being summarised as "complex, traumatic and filled with uncertainty" (Hopkins and Hill, 2008, p.39). On arrival to the UK, it is suggested that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's experiences add to their 'trauma', due to the significant ambiguity regarding their asylum status, the need to learn a new language in a new country, and the unknown in relation to their family's safety (e.g. Rousseau, 1995; Sack, 1998; Silove et al., 2000; Bean et al, 2007; Groark et al., 2010;

Jakobsen et al., 2017; Kohli and Kaukko, 2017; Brook and Ottemöller, 2020). Therefore, although Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children each have their unique stories, through exploring previous literature that highlights these children's pre- and post-migration experiences, it can give context to the content that the Designated Teachers in the current study may have been referring to when explaining their experiences of becoming aware of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's '*most intense'* lived experiences.

Having become aware of what Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have had to endure, participants in the current study went on to explain their experience of attempting to make sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's stories. They seemed to employ a 'trauma' lens to support their understanding of these children's painful experiences, both within their home country and post-migration. The term 'trauma' refers to a lasting emotional and/or psychological impact because of a particularly difficult, painful, and/or disruptive experience, which is often beyond the individual's control (Papadopoulos, 2018). This finding is unsurprising, with literature outlining that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are predominantly viewed in terms of trauma discourses (Papadopoulos, 2018). This is because, that which has led Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children to flee their home country, alongside the challenges experienced on their journeys and arrival to the UK, as described above, can disrupt core adaptive systems, including a sense of safety, attachment, and identity (e.g. Murray et al., 2008; Phillimore, 2011; Li et al., 2016; Kartal and Kiropoulos, 2016; Li et al., 2016; Silove et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2021). In turn, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children may present with multi-faceted needs, which schools are required to meet, as discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review (e.g., Ott and O'Higgins, 2019; Fazel et al., 2016; Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020). Therefore, as with previous literature, Designated Teachers in the current study also reported that they experienced a process of making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences and did so from a 'trauma' perspective.

Furthermore, as stressed within the literature, some Designated Teachers in the current study seemed to also come to understand Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences in terms of 'resilience'.  Resilience refers to the process of overcoming the effects of adverse life experiences by employing sufficient protective factors, in order to guard against hardship (Rutter, 1987; Fazel et al., 2012). Research studies have recognised

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's resilience, identifying potential protective factors including their religion, appreciating positive experiences, adopting a hopeful outlook on their future, and building relationships with other Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (e.g., Goodman, 2004; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Raghallaigh, 2011; Sleijpen et al., 2016; Behrendt et al., 2023). As such, in accordance with Honneth's (1996) Theory of Recognition, it is important to understand Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children beyond 'trauma' discourses (Kline and Mone, 2003; Groark et al, 2010; Korkiamäki and Gilligan, 2020) because misrecognition can develop "confining or demeaning or contemptible picture" which may distort the way individuals are viewed (Taylor, 1992, p. 25). Therefore, some Designated Teachers in the current study reported that when making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, their understanding was seemingly furthered through the lens of resilience.

Despite some participants in the current study positioning their understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's stories within a 'trauma' perspective, participants also discussed their challenge in comprehending the reality of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences. According to the Cambridge dictionary, to understand refers to recognising or knowing the outcome of a particular phenomenon, whilst to comprehend means to grasp the complex processes of the phenomenon in its entirety. For instance, participants recalled '*feeling sorry*' for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, thereby showing an understanding by recognising that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had experienced difficult life events, but being unable to '*fathom*' what these children had endured, thus demonstrating challenge in comprehending the complexity of all that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had experienced.

Drawing on the work of humanistic psychologist, Carl Rogers, one possible way we could understand participants' reported difficulties in comprehending Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's stories, is potentially due to not being able to enact empathy. Empathy is understood as the ability "to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings…as if one were the other person" (Rogers, 1959, p. 210). Yet, the ability to feel empathy can be restricted when there is a perceived paucity of similarities and common experiences, in this case, between Designated Teachers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Rogers 1958; Shapiro, 1974; Clark, 2010). In turn, it could be that participants in the current study experienced feelings of sympathy rather than empathy– "the heightened awareness of the suffering of another person as something to be alleviated" (Wispé, 1986, p.318). In this way, it could be suggested that participants' sympathy supported them in being able to understand Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences through a 'trauma' lens, yet, due to the barriers of enacting empathy, participants subsequently experienced challenges in being able to fully comprehend Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, thereby viewing what these children had endured as '*almost alien'* (Rogers, 1959; Wispé, 1986). Although Roger's work can be critiqued for only referencing the cognitive processes rather than somatic experiences of empathy, viewing participants reported experiences through this lens was helpful in order to potentially understand the cognitive aspects of perspective-taking that participants referred to when they explained the perceived difficulty of understanding, but not comprehending, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's life stories (Tudor, 2011). Therefore, drawing on the work of Rogers may elucidate our understanding regarding the conveyed duality of participants' reported experiences between understanding, yet not comprehending, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences.

### 5.3.1 Summary.

Overall, supported by previous research and theory, the current study highlights that Designated Teachers reported that they had experienced a significant element of their role as becoming aware, understanding, and processing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, which was supported by their knowledge of 'trauma', yet simultaneously developed by some through seemingly appreciating Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's 'resilience'. However, with a paucity of common experiences between Designated Teachers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, it could be suggested that this resulted in difficulties to invoke empathy, and, in turn, could go some way to explaining the challenge participants experienced when attempting to fully comprehend Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's painful stories. As such, it could be that Designated Teachers may benefit from being supported by Educational Psychologists in making sense of the 'trauma' narratives they have been exposed to and come to accept the challenges of comprehending all that these children had experienced.

## 5.4 Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I Am Feeling What That Young Person is Feeling" (Kim).

With participants coming to understand Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, participants went on to explain their feelings and perceptions in response to hearing these children's painful stories. Namely, participants reflected on their perception of how the role had permeated their personal lives, affected their personal emotions, and shaped their view of the world.

The finding that Designated Teachers in the current study had experienced a perceived impact when hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences on their own feelings and perceptions, is in accordance with much research that has explored the effect of those working in supporting roles with Asylum-Seekers and Refugees, such as counsellors, therapists, and social care professionals (e.g Guhan and Liebling-Kalifani, 2011; Kjellenberg et al., 2014; Kinderman et al., 2017; Chatzea et al., 2018; Posselt et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2021). Specifically, in Century et al's (2007) study, counsellors explained that they experienced hearing about Refugees' lived experiences as 'harrowing' and 'shocking' - words also used by the participants in the current study when recalling their reported feelings related to hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's stories. Likewise, Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch (2014) found that participants in their study experienced 'shock' and 'struggle' when processing painful experiences of their Asylum-Seeking and Refugee clients, and, as a result, this produced increasingly negative beliefs regarding themselves, others, and the world. Apostolidou (2016) study concurs with that found by Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch (2014), yet furthers this finding, suggesting that when Refugee clients' traumatic lived experiences permeate practitioners' views of themselves and the world, this can lead to professionals experiencing a negative impact upon their own emotional and psychological wellbeing. As such, previous research suggests that those in helping roles can experience negative implications when hearing about challenging life experiences of their clients, which also relates to the reported experience of Designated Teachers within the current study when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

However, the aforementioned research negates the educational context and the personal experiences of Designated Teachers supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. When reflecting on additional literature that explores the experiences of educationalists, it could be suggested that those who work in schools are not exempt from the challenging emotional experiences that has been found in the above research studies (e.g., Hargreaves, 1998; Day and Leitch, 2001; Zembylas, 2005; Yin et al., 2019). For instance, when exploring the teaching profession more widely, O'Conner (2008) found that teachers experienced the profession as emotionally exhausting and demanding, as it required providing a level of care that went beyond their professional duty. Similarly, when focusing on research that is specific to teaching Asylum-Seeking and Refugee children, it has also been found that educators go beyond traditional teaching duties and practise a 'pedagogy of love', as discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review (e.g., Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020; Kaukko et al., 2022). Writing from an attachment theory perspective, Bomber (2007) normalises such experiences, suggesting that "we are often told in schools to be professionals and to not get too involved emotionally… We would not be human if we weren't moved in some way by children who have experienced trauma and loss" (p.74). Therefore, with the role of Designated Teachers located within education, such literature exemplifies how individuals working in school settings are not exempt from their work impacting their personal emotions and perceptions, as depicted by the participants in the current study.

One possible theory that could provide some explanation as to how and why Designated Teachers in the current study reported a perceived impact of the role upon themselves is the Constructivist Self-Development Theory (McCann and Pearlman, 1992). This theory synthesises object relations and self-psychology theories[17] with social cognition theories[18] (McCann and Pearlman, 1992), thereby acknowledging the many possible influences on the development of self. Over time, this theory has frequently been applied to a range of professions in order to understand individuals' responses to being exposed to stress and trauma (e.g., Cukor and McGinn, 2006; McCormack et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2020; Tiwari et al., 2023) and, in turn, also influenced therapeutic intervention (Shalev et al., 1996; Shapiro,

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[17] These "are psychoanalytic perspectives that are…concerned with interpersonal relations and their mental representations" (Schermer, 2000, p. 199) whereby the importance of relationships with others on the self are stressed.

[18] The view that environmental factors, individual experiences, and interactions with others can influence individuals' development (Moskowitz and Oken, 2017).

1999). As such, this theory was rendered a useful framework in aiding our understanding of the perceived experiences of participants in the current study due to it acknowledging the combined psychological influences on how and why Designated Teachers may have reported that the role impacted upon the self.

The Constructivist Self-Development Theory argues that individuals "construct their own personal realities as they interact with the environment" (McCann and Pearlman, 1990, p. 6), thereby "positioning the impact of trauma work within the individual's development of self" (Lee, 2017). As such, in the interactional process, whereby Designated Teachers reported that they experienced '*shock every time'* when exposed to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's traumatic narratives, this theory posits that such experiences may disrupt their view of self, shape their beliefs, and restructure their cognitive schemas that, in turn, alters practitioner's understanding and perceptions of the world (McCann and Pearlman, 1992), hence one participant outlined that they '*now know that shocking things happen in the world'*. These responses are suggested to be pervasive, in that it has the potential to affect every area of practitioners' lives, hence many participants in the current study reported that they '*do take things home'*, and simultaneously cumulative, due to the repeated exposure of hearing trauma experiences that reinforces these changes in self, beliefs and cognitive schemas (Trippany et al., 2004; Finklestein et al., 2015; Roberts et al., 2021). Therefore, the Constructivist Self-Development Theory may offer one way of understanding why, and how, participants in the current study reportedly experienced the role as impacting elements of their emotional responses, view of the world, and personal lives.

Furthermore, developed in line with the Constructivist Self-Development Theory, theoretical terms such as 'compassion fatigue', and, in some cases, 'vicarious trauma', may exemplify the reported emotional experiences of some of the Designated Teachers in the current study. Compassion fatigue refers to practitioners' specific behaviours and emotions, such as exhaustion, anger, frustration, and hopelessness, in response to hearing about a client's trauma experiences (Figley, 1995). In other words, "in our effort to view the world from the perspective of the suffering, we suffer" (Figley, 2002, p. 1434). One participant in the current study encapsulates this term through their explanation of '*mirroring*' the feelings of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children whom they support. Whereas, vicarious trauma is the result of repeated exposure to hearing about traumatic experiences and defined as "the negative transformation of the therapist's inner experience as a result of his or her empathic engagement with, and responsibility for, a traumatised client" (Saakvitne, 2002 p. 446). Therefore, both terms may go some way to support the conceptualisation of a number of the participants' emotional experiences in the current study when hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's trauma narratives.

However, both concepts of 'compassion fatigue' and 'vicarious trauma' have been critiqued for negating the potential positive changes in practitioners' sense of self and the world when working with those who have experienced 'trauma' (Steed and Downing, 1998). This appraisal is synonymous with findings in the current study, whereby some participants reported feelings of '*privilege*' and viewing their role as a '*gift*', when working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. This finding has consistently emerged across research studies, whereby it is suggested that, despite its challenges, working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees is simultaneously experienced as meaningful, resulting in individuals feelings valued, with increased job satisfaction (e.g. Griffiths et al., 2003; Deighton et al., 2007; Barrington and Shakespeare-Finch, 2013; Puvimanasinghe et al., 2015; Apostolidou, 2016; Kindermann et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2018; Posselt et al., 2019; Rizkalla and Segal, 2020). As a result, this experience has been termed 'vicarious posttraumatic growth' or 'compassion satisfaction' (Arnold et al., 2005; Stamm, 2005). Therefore, as supported by research, theoretical concepts, such as 'vicarious posttraumatic growth' or 'compassion satisfaction', may go some way in further developing our understanding regarding the positive feelings explained by some of the Designated Teachers in the current study when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

### 5.4.1 Summary.

Overall, as found by research and suggested in theory, findings from the current study indicated that Designated Teachers reportedly experienced being exposed to trauma narratives as impactful on their personal lives, emotions, and perceptions, in both positive and negative ways. For some participants, their perceived responses to supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children could be exemplified by terms such as 'compassion fatigue' and 'vicarious trauma', but also 'vicarious posttraumatic growth' or 'compassion satisfaction'. As such, it could be that Designated Teachers may benefit from being supported by Educational Psychologists to manage exposure to trauma narratives, so to limit its negative disruption on their view of self, their emotions, and their perceptions of the world, thereby enhancing their wellbeing in the role.

## 5.5 Group Experiential Theme 3: Support in Managing the Role – "It Never Really Feels Like There's Someone Else in the Same Boat" (Jordan).

### 5.5.1 Group Experiential Theme 3, Sub-Theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving Yet Lacking Support from Colleagues - "It Does Feel Like I'm Isolated in a Way, but I am Also Working With Everyone in the School" (Jordan).

When exploring the support that Designated Teachers received in their role, most participants explained that they felt supported in a practical and operational sense by colleagues, yet some participants also reported a lack of emotional support within their school settings.

In the current study, some participants spoke about '*needing*' and '*leaning*' on their colleagues when establishing effective provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, thereby suggesting a perceived importance of co-worker support in the role of Designated Teacher. Co-worker support has been defined as "the extent to which employees believe their co-workers are willing to provide them with work-related assistance to aid in the execution of their service-based duties" (Susskind et al., 2003, p. 183). This finding is unsurprising given that research has identified a range of positive effects of co-worker support, including its influence on motivation, positive wellbeing, work satisfaction, reduced levels of 'compassion fatigue', and providing effective ways of coping (e.g., Deci and Ryan, 2008; Gillet et al.. 2013; Van den Broeck et al., 2013; Jungert et al., 2018; Mette et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2022; Gurowiec et al., 2022). Therefore, previous research indicates that co-worker support is imperative, which also relates to the reported experience of Designated Teachers in the current study who positioned practical and operational support as a necessity to aid their competencies within their role.

However, some participants also reflected on feelings of '*isolation*' in managing the emotional impact, as described in the previous Group Experiential Theme, of the role. Individuals explained that this was because they felt that there was no one else in their settings doing the job alongside them, they didn't want to '*burden*' colleagues with their emotional needs, and they did not have contact with Designated Teachers from other schools.

The sense of isolation has been identified in research studies exploring Designated Teachers' experiences of supporting Children in Care, a category into which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children fall, thereby suggesting that the experience of isolation is not unique to supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, has persisted over time, and is yet to be addressed (Goodall, 2014; De La Fosse et al., 2023). One way of understanding this finding is through drawing on the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). This theory stresses how individual's sense of social identities are constructed based on membership to a particular group (Brown, 2000). In turn, as many participants in the current study reported that '*no one's doing the job with me*', thereby identifying group membership as impacting their role, the social identity theory was relevant when viewing participants' perceived experiences.

Specifically, social identity theory stipulates that individuals have a range of group memberships that develop and maintain individuals' identities through socio-cognitive processes, including categorisation, stereotyping, and depersonalisation (Brown, 2022). In doing so, the process of engaging in intergroup relations, where individuals experience a shared sense of identity, promotes individuals' self-esteem, resilience, wellbeing, and sense of belonging (e.g., Greenaway et al., 2015; Jetten et al., 2015; Drury et al., 2016; Kyprianides et al., 2019). As such, "group memberships and the social identities they confer can provide an effective 'Social Cure' for many ailments" (Brown, 2020, p.17). However, given that the role of Designated Teacher was fulfilled by one person in each setting, and participants reportedly did not have contact with other Designated Teachers, it could be argued that participants in the current study did not ascribe to a particular group within their roles. Without belonging to a particular group within their school settings, it is unsurprising that participants reported a sense of isolation, with one participant exemplifying this experience using the metaphor '*it never really feels like there's someone else in the same boat*'. Therefore, previous research suggests that Designated Teachers can experience isolation in their role (Goodall, 2014; De La Fosse et al., 2023), which also relates to the perceived experience of the participants in the current study when working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, and one way this finding may be understood is through drawing on the social identity theory which stipulates the social value of group memberships and shared identities.

For some participants in the current study, both these experiences were felt to occur simultaneously. In other words, Designated Teachers explained how they worked collaboratively with a range of staff across the school to support the educational needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, yet also felt a sense of '*isolation*' in their day-to-day role where they lacked a group identity within their school system. Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance may be one way of elucidating the impact of Designated Teachers experiencing this discord. Here, it is suggested that when an individual's feelings, in this case working in '*isolation*', is contradictory with their actions, such as '*working with everyone'*, an unpleasant mental conflict or tension occurs, resulting in negative emotions such as stress or angst (Harmon-Jones and Mills, 1999). This theory suggests that when cognitive dissonance is experienced, individuals sense a need to align their feelings and actions, thereby establishing cognitive consistency (Festinger, 1957). However, critics of this theory stipulate that Festinger (1957) fails to account for the ways in which individuals engage in dissonance reduction strategies in their day-to-day lives (McGrath, 2017). Despite this, within the current study, most Designated Teachers identified the need for additional emotional support, as discussed in the below sub-theme, which I viewed as being one possible way of alleviating their perceived isolation in managing the emotional impact of the role and, in turn, overcome any possible mental conflict experienced. Therefore, the potential impact of participants' perceived contradictory support that they received from their school settings could be understood as creating dissonance for participants and, in turn, this furthers our understanding regarding the potential role of Educational Psychologists as one of reducing feelings of isolation for Designated Teachers.

### 5.5.2 Group Experiential Theme 3, Sub-Theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals - "I Have Thought 'I Wonder What There is For Me', but There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie).

Participants in the current study also explained how they experienced a need for increased support from external professionals, including Social Services and The Virtual School, both in terms of operational and emotional support.

Specifically, participants reported a perceived lack of training, information, and multi-agency working when planning effective provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. This finding is consistent with previous research. For instance, research has suggested that

Designated Teachers should be provided with additional training specific to their role (e.g. Drew and Banerjee, 2019; Boesley, 2021; De La Fosse et al., 2023) yet, in the absence of such training, studies have found that school staff have acquired their knowledge of supporting Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children on an ad-hoc, needs-led basis, as opposed to engaging in continued professional development opportunities via formal training (Prentice and Ott, 2021). Moreover, studies have suggested that Designated Teachers can experience problematic communication and information sharing with Social Services, resulting in them having to independently navigate how best to enact their role, thereby leading to a sense of uncertainty and limited collaboration (e.g., Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003; Connelly et al., 2008; De La Fosse et al., 2023). Finally, Simpson (2012) suggested that Designated Teachers' confidence in fulfilling their role can be influenced by the extent to which they are supported by The Virtual School, thereby further highlighting the importance of collaborative working. Therefore, as suggested in previous research studies, most participants in the current study perceived a lack of practical and operational support from Social Services and The Virtual School, yet identified the importance of this support to develop their competence in the role.

Some participants in the current study also reported a perceived lack of emotional support from Social Services and The Virtual School. This finding also concurs with previous research, in which it has been suggested that Designated Teachers received insufficient emotional support to manage the emotional impact of supporting Children in Care (Waterman, 2020). Indeed, one possible way the need for emotional support may be understood is through Bion's (1985) container-contained model. The term 'containment' denotes the experience of feeling physically and emotionally protected or held (Bion, 1985). This model suggests that those who are in supporting roles, such as Designated Teachers, whereby they act as the container, simultaneously need to experience a sense of containment. It is proposed that without adequate containment, individuals will subsequently not be able to effectively offer containment to those they are supporting, may reduce reflective, thus, effective practice, and negatively impact practitioners' resilience which, in turn, may increase the potential of 'compassion fatigue' and 'vicarious trauma' (Ruch, 2007; Finch and Schaub, 2014; Hulusi and Maggs, 2015; Eloquin, 2016; Cronin et al., 2023). As maintained by Simmonds (2015), practitioners' emotional needs must first be met to ensure they have the capacity in meeting the emotional needs of those they are supporting. Therefore, as shown in previous research, Designated Teachers in the current study felt that they had limited emotional support, which, as outlined in some theoretical models, is suggested as being imperative in helping roles.

To address the aforementioned, participants in the current study spoke about the possibility of receiving supervision. Research suggests that supervision is a necessity for those working with Asylum-Seekers and Refugees, so that practitioners have the opportunity to talk about work in order to manage its impact on the self and view of the world, as discussed in the second Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim)) (e.g. Sexton, 1999; Sabin-Farrell and Turpin, 2003; Guhan and Liebling-Kalifani, 2011; Wirth et al., 2019). Research has indicated that practitioners who engaged in supervision reported reduced feelings of anxiety and isolation, had their experiences normalised and, in turn, was associated with fewer incidents of 'compassion fatigue' and 'vicarious trauma' (e.g., Sexton, 1999; Baird and Kracen 2006; Harrison and Westwood, 2009; Robinson, 2013; Apostolidou, 2016; Apostolidou and Schweitzer, 2017; Mette et al., 2020). Moreover, research has suggested that providing a supervisory reflective space can also support practitioners in developing their competence and effective practices within their role, for instance, through adopting a Solution-Focused approach (e.g., de Shazer, 1985; Hanko, 1999; Youell, 2006; Jackson, 2008; Hulusi and Maggs, 2015; Simon and Swerdlik, 2022). It could be suggested that Educational Psychologists are well positioned to deliver this support given that supervision models are underpinned by psychological theory and requires the facilitator to employ a range of psychological skills (Wood, 2016). Therefore, many participants in the current study perceived supervision as one way to support them in their role, which is unsurprising given that previous research identifies the many benefits of receiving supervision, both in terms of supporting emotional needs through offering a containing function, whilst also ensuring practitioners have space to reflect on effective practices.

Despite supervision being viewed by participants as a way of supporting their wellbeing and competency within the role, only one participant in the current study was accessing 1:1 supervision. When exploring this further, findings of the current study seemed to suggest that even if the remaining participants were offered supervision, they viewed accessing supervision challenging due to a perceived lack of time within the role. The experience of time pressures within the role is supported by previous research, which has concluded that

Designated Teachers have limited time to complete necessary duties within their role (e.g., Fletcher-Campbell et al., 2003; Hayden, 2005; De La Fosse et al., 2023). As such, it is unsurprising that participants in the current study perceived time as a barrier to accessing identified emotional and operational support via supervision. Therefore, despite Designated Teachers in the current study identifying supervision as a potentially useful tool, all but one did not access supervision, and most perceived such support as being unrealistic and not conducive to their role due to time pressures.

### 5.5.3 Group Experiential Theme 3, Sub-Theme 3: Disruptions to Seeking Support in Personal Relationships - "Who Can I Talk to About This Stuff When I Get Home, You Know?" (Kim).

With the majority of participants in the current study having reported a perceived absence of emotional support within their school settings and from external professionals, participants also discussed how they experienced barriers to receiving emotional support from their family and friends when attempting to manage the personal impact of the role.

Although most participants in the current study reported that they '*take things home'* from their work experiences, as discussed in the previous Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim)), many participants spoke about not feeling able to talk to family and friends about these emotional experiences due to the need to remain confidential. Similar findings have been documented in research within the field of therapy, whereby it is suggested that practitioners can find explaining the realities of what they have experienced in their role challenging due to the obligation for confidentiality, thereby resulting in practitioners feeling alienated, misunderstood, and isolated by those closest to them (e.g., McCann and Pearlman, 1990; Saakvitne, 2002; Morran, 2008; Lovseth and Aasland, 2010; Lovseth, 2017). One possible way participants may have enacted the need to be confidential in their personal relationships, could be explained by the Freudian concept of compartmentalisation (1964) – the ability to redirect one's focus by putting one experience aside to manage or engage with another. As such, it could be that, although the role permeates participants' personal lives, due to issues of confidentiality, some participants in the current study have had to develop a capacity to engage in parallel realities, shifting from one context to another, whereby they did not discuss their work experiences when at home (Dreier, 2011; Rabu et al., 2016). Therefore, as suggested by previous research, some Designated Teachers in the current study perceived the need to remain confidential as a barrier to accessing support from family and friends, thereby resulting in these participants potentially engaging in compartmentalisation within their social relationships.

Other participants in the current study explained that they did not seek support from family or friends, yet reported that this was due to the perception that those closest to them would not be able to understand their experiences. A wealth of research over time, and across contexts, has highlighted the importance of needing to feel understood by others when disclosing difficult experiences, and the positive impact this has on one’s self and their relationships, including increased sense of relatedness and decreased isolation (e.g. Johnson and Indvik, 1999; Weger, 2005; Street et al., 2009; Elliott et al., 2011; Verschueren, 2015; Reis et al., 2017; Itzchakov et al., 2022a; Itzchakov et al., 2022b; Rave et al., 2022). Yet, as suggested in the self-disclosure theory (Altman and Taylor, 1973), in the absence of understanding, this could result in the individual who is sharing this information feeling ‘invisible’ and impact their sense of connection. As such, this theory may be one way of exemplifying that the absence of understanding within social relationships may act as a barrier to seeking social support, as reported by participants in the current study. Therefore, when reflecting on both the findings of the current study and previous literature, it could be suggested that it is essential to provide Designated Teachers a sense of feeling understood to ensure effective support networks.

Finally, one participant explained the importance of not sharing the reality of their role with family members in an effort to protect their family from being exposed to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s challenging life stories. Similar has been found in previous research studies within professional contexts other than education. For instance, Doody et al (2022) found that when military staff returned home, they often avoided talking about, or significantly censored, their work experiences to protect their family from feeling any worry or concern. When individuals did share their work stressors with family, such as frontline medical staff, first responders, or fire fighters, research has found that family members report feelings of stress and worry on behalf of their loved ones (e.g., Duarte et al., 2006; Menendez et al., 2006; Alrutz et al., 2020; Freise, 2020; Tekin et al., 2022). Whilst such research is dissimilar to the current study since they explore professions in which individuals are often placing themselves in harm’s way, it does indicate that families can experience adverse impacts of hearing about loved-one's occupations. Therefore, as found in previous research, one participant in the current study explained that they avoid seeking emotional support from family, in order to protect their family from the emotional impact they had experienced within the role.

Regardless of participants unique experiences, all seemed to report perceived barriers to receiving support from family and friends in relation to managing their role when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. However, literature has consistently demonstrated the importance of social support, suggesting that although talking about emotionally challenging experiences can be difficult, with some individuals being hesitant to do so, it is simultaneously beneficial on the individual's wellbeing (e.g. Pennebaker et al., 1997; Pennebaker and Chung, 2007; Dittmann and Jensen, 2014; Tong et al., 2019; Truss et al., 2022) and has been found to reduce the likelihood of individuals experiencing 'vicarious trauma' (e.g. Lerias and Byrne, 2003; Harrison and Westwood 2009; Michalopoulos and Aparicio, 2012; Ludick and Figley, 2017; Gurowiec et al., 2022). Therefore, drawing on findings from previous research, it could be suggested that Designated Teachers in the current study may not receive the associated benefits of social support, which further aids our understanding of how Educational Psychologists may guide any potential support for Designated Teachers.

### 5.5.4 Summary.

Overall, findings from the current study indicated that participants categorised support within their role as either operational or emotional. In terms of operational support, participants reported to have experienced the well-studied benefits of co-worker support when planning provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within their school settings. Yet, participants also perceived a lack of collaborative working with external professionals, such as Social Services and The Virtual School, thereby identifying a need to develop information-sharing between professionals and offer desired training opportunities so to develop participants' competency of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within the role. Additionally, when discussing emotional support, drawing on Bion's (1985) container-contained model, the current study suggests that Designated Teachers experienced a misalignment in terms of the emotional support which they received across multiple contexts, versus the emotional support which they provided. This could be addressed through providing supervision, within which, Designated Teachers' social identities could be promoted if this support is delivered to a group of Designated Teachers. Therefore, such findings identify a range of ways Educational Psychologists could support Designated Teachers within their role so to develop their competency and promote their wellbeing.

## 5.6 Group Experiential Theme 4: Ways of Coping – "I Can't Save Everyone, I Can't Do Everything" (Jordan).

With most participants experiencing perceived limited emotional support in their role, participants spoke about how they subsequently enacted coping mechanisms in order to overcome any challenging feelings that they experienced when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The term coping mechanisms denotes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural methods employed in order to manage and/or minimise the impact of a difficult situation, in this case, hearing 'trauma' stories, on the self (Endler and Parker, 1994; Bober et al., 2006).

Over time, there have been many suggested models to conceptualise individuals' coping mechanisms (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Carver et al., 1999). In comparing these, Parker and Endler (1992) provide one possible framework to understand the multiple ways of coping that participants in the current study discussed. Although criticised for summarising ways of coping into merely three categories - task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented - thereby not accounting for all possible coping strategies (Schwarzer and Schwarzer, 1996), these were the strategies reportedly employed by Designated Teachers in the current study, and so the framework was deemed relevant in elucidating their perceived experiences of coping.

According to Parker and Endler (1992), task-oriented coping refers to individuals employing a problem-focused approach in order to establish alternative solutions and change the situation. Emotion-oriented coping involves individuals employing emotional responses to limit the impact of the challenging stimuli, such as blaming others, self-blame, or passivity. Avoidance-oriented coping reflects cognitive and behavioural efforts that enable individuals to deny, minimise, distract, or avoid the stressful stimuli in order to distance oneself from its impact. There is no right or wrong way of coping, rather, according to the 'goodness of fit' hypothesis (Folkman 1991), effective coping is when perceived control over a situation and one's coping response is 'matched' (Lavoie, 2013). Therefore, although a simplified representation of coping, Parker and Endler (1992) offer a useful blueprint in considering the range of methods participants in the current study seemed to utilise when coping with challenging experiences in their role.

Drawing on Parker and Endler's (1992) conceptualisation of coping, it would seem that Designated Teachers in the current study reportedly experienced multiple emotion-oriented coping strategies, implemented in unique ways. This is unsurprising since it is recognised in research that continuously bearing witness to 'trauma' narratives can result in a magnitude of emotion-oriented responses, ranging from avoidant and detachment reactions to an enmeshment and over-commitment with those whom practitioners are supporting (e.g., Arnold et al., 2005; Tabor, 2011; Mette et al., 2020; Foxwell et al., 2022). For instance, in accordance with this previous research, some participants referred to creating emotional boundaries, and limiting their emotional responsiveness, when coming to understand the 'trauma' experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children that they work with, so to manage within their role. Without doing so, one participant explained that they would be a '*wreck*'. Yet, unlike that detailed in previous research, another participant spoke about wanting to engage in their emotions when working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, so that they can continue to emotionally relate to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Therefore, as recognised in research, Designated Teachers in the current study reported that they implemented a range of emotion-oriented coping strategies, each in their unique ways, so to manage the impact of the role.

Alongside emotion-oriented coping mechanisms, some participants also reflected on their use of task-oriented ways of coping. For instance, one participant spoke about the realisation that they lacked control to '*save everyone*' and so, in turn, some participants explained how they attempted to focus on establishing change within the areas in which they can have an impact. Through focusing on what can be changed, it could be suggested that this increases individuals' self-efficacy – the perceived ability to enact change and positive outcomes in a given situation (Bandura 1982). Research has found that self-efficacy is related to lower levels of 'vicarious trauma' and increased levels of 'compassion satisfaction' (e.g., Cherniss, 1993; Ortlepp and Friedman, 2002; Bozgeyikli, 2012; Caringi et al., 2015; Christian-Brandt et al., 2020). In other words, how practitioners perceive their skills and effectiveness to impact change directly correlates to fewer incidents of adverse effects on their emotional and psychological wellbeing (Ortlepp and Friedman, 2002; Lent, 2006; Mette et al, 2020). Therefore, it could be understood that, together with emotion-oriented coping, participants in the current study also reported that they employed task-oriented ways of coping, which is theorised as potentially having a further reaching impact on individual's self-efficacy, and, in turn, their overall wellbeing.

Finally, one participant in the current study explained how they reportedly engaged in avoidance-oriented coping. Specifically, this participant explained how they recognised their '*ignorance*' due to how far removed their lived experiences were compared to that which Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had to endure. In doing so, this participant related their ignorance to the perceived experience of '*bliss*'. In turn, this participant subsequently remained in this position, which reportedly relieved some of the emotional toll of the role. Similar cognitive and behavioural detachment efforts have been detailed in previous literature, with research demonstrating that many school staff employ this way of coping to manage the emotional labour of the role (e.g., Kinman et al., 2011; Edwards, 2016; Salecl, 2022). Therefore, it could be suggested that one Designated Teacher in the current study also reported to employ avoidance-oriented coping through enacting cognitive efforts in order to remain 'ignorant' of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences.

### 5.6.1 Summary.

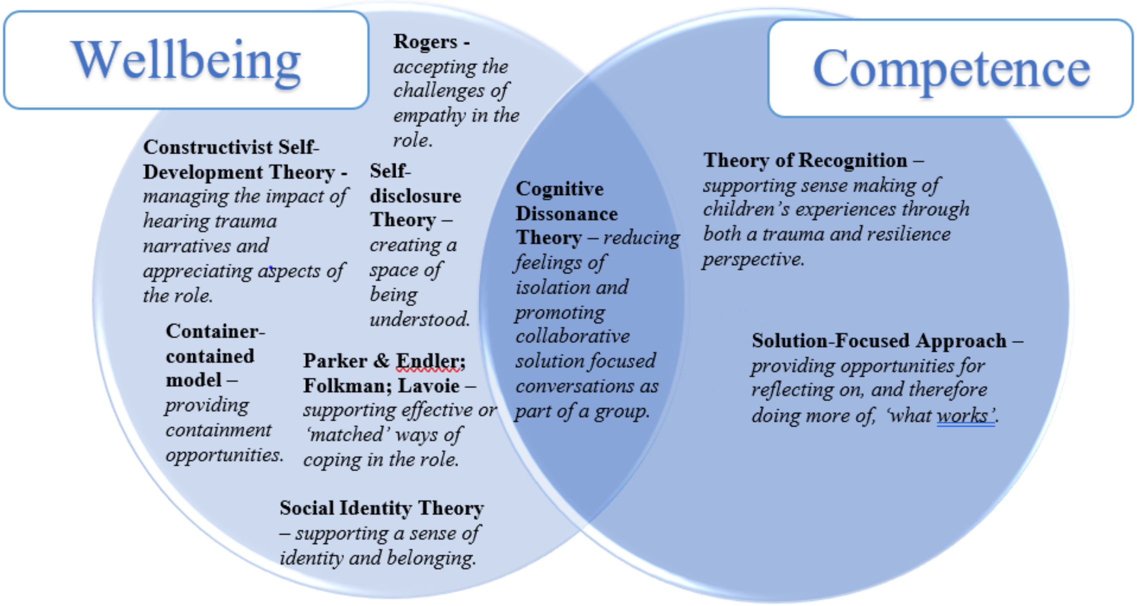
Overall, through employing Parker and Endler's (1992) conceptualisation of coping, findings from the current study indicate that, with perceived limited emotional support received in their role, Designated Teachers reportedly employed a range of all three coping mechanisms, each in unique ways, in attempts to manage and/or minimise the impact of the role on the self. Yet, as discussed in the previous Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling" (Kim)), these ways of coping do not always seem effective in guarding participants from the negative implications of being exposed to trauma narratives, including disruption on their view of self, their emotions, and their perceptions of the world. In turn, as discussed in the third Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals – "I Have Thought 'I Wonder what There is for Me', But There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie)), this furthers the view that it could be beneficial to support

Designated Teachers by providing an alignment between the emotional support they receive and that which they provide, thereby developing effective ways of coping.

## 5.7 Chapter Conclusion.

This chapter presented a critical discussion of the findings from the current study through engaging in existing research and theory. In doing so, this supplemented an understanding regarding the experiences of Designated Teachers in relation to the study's aim and research questions, alongside the potential role Educational Psychologists could have in supporting Designated Teachers so to develop their competency and promote their wellbeing, as depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6: A summary of psychological theories discussed in relation to the current study's findings.


Wellbeing
Competence
Rogers - accepting the challenges of empathy in the role.
Constructivist Self-Development Theory - managing the impact of hearing trauma narratives and appreciating aspects of the role.
Self-disclosure Theory – creating a space of being understood.
Container-contained model – providing containment opportunities.
Parker & Endler; Folkman; Lavoie – supporting effective or 'matched' ways of coping in the role.
Social Identity Theory – supporting a sense of identity and belonging.
Cognitive Dissonance Theory – reducing feelings of isolation and promoting collaborative solution focused conversations as part of a group.
Theory of Recognition – supporting sense making of children's experiences through both a trauma and resilience perspective.
Solution-Focused Approach – providing opportunities for reflecting on, and therefore doing more of, 'what works'.

This figure labels each theory explored within the chapter and how Educational Psychologists could use these theories in order to guide their potential role of supporting Designated Teachers wellbeing and/or competency when working with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, based on the current study's findings. In order to further explore and expand upon the potential role of Educational Psychologists in supporting Designated Teachers according to these theories, the following chapter will provide direct conclusions in line with the study's research questions and, reflecting on this, detail the implications on Educational Psychology professional practice. Thereafter, the below chapter will present an evaluation of the current study.

# 6 Chapter 6: Conclusion.

## 6.1 Chapter Introduction.

To conclude this thesis, the key findings of the current study will be summarised in accordance with the research questions. In doing so, this will elucidate the reported personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. When considering these findings, potential implications in relation to the role of Educational Psychologists, including if, and how, Educational Psychologists could best support Designated Teachers in this role, will be presented. Thereafter, the strengths and limitations of the current study will be reviewed, alongside assessing its quality. Next, the distinctive contribution of the current study's key findings will be presented, as well as detailing possible future research to develop our understanding within this topic area. Finally, this chapter will provide concluding comments, thereby bringing a close to this thesis.

## 6.2 Summary of the Findings.

Having situated the findings of the current study within existing literature (see Chapter 5: Discussion), I will now summarise the findings in terms of my three research questions, addressing each in turn:

1. What are Designated Teachers' personal experiences and feelings when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?
2. What is helpful for Designated Teachers' wellbeing and/or developing their competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?
3. What are the challenges that Designated Teachers perceive in relation to their own wellbeing and competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

### 6.2.1 Research Question One: What are Designated Teachers' Personal Experiences and Feelings When Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

The findings of the current study indicated that participants reported a range of experiences and feelings when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in their role.

#### 6.2.1.1 A Process of Becoming Aware, Understanding, and Attempting to Comprehend Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences.

As depicted in the first Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 1: Making Sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's Lived Experiences – "The Most Intense Trauma You Can Read and Hear About, and it's So Different" (Jordan)), all participants reported the experience of making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's complex life stories. Participants explained their perceived experience of becoming aware, understanding, and processing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, both within their home country and post-migration. In doing so, participants seemed to primarily draw on their knowledge of 'trauma' to summarise Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's life stories, which, according to existing literature, is a common lens, employed in an attempt to make sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences (Murray et al., 2008; Phillimore, 2011; Li et al., 2016; Kartal and Kiropoulos, 2016; Li et al., 2016; Silove et al., 2017; Papadopoulos, 2018; Wu et al., 2021). Moreover, some participants reported that their understanding was furthered through the concept of 'resilience' (Rutter, 1987) - the process of overcoming the effects of adverse life experiences - which is also a common finding in previous research (e.g., Goodman, 2004; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Raghallaigh, 2011; Sleijpen et al., 2016; Behrendt et al., 2023).

Although the concepts of 'trauma' and 'resilience' seemed to aid Designated Teachers in their reported experience of understanding Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences, participants simultaneously experienced a perceived barrier to comprehending all that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had endured. Specifically, some participants recalled '*feeling sorry*' for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, but being unable to '*fathom*' their experiences - one possible way this could be understood is through employing Rogers (1959) work that distinguishes empathy and sympathy.

Therefore, one reported experience of the Designated Teachers in the current study could be viewed as attempting to make sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children lived experiences, which firstly involved becoming aware of these children's experiences within their home country and post-migration, next included understanding these children's lives from a ‘trauma’ and, for some, ‘resilience’ perspective and, finally, invoked perceived barriers in comprehending all that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had endured.

#### *6.2.1.2 Implications on Personal Lives, Emotions, and Perceptions.*

As illustrated in the second Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 2: Manifestation of Hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s Lived Experiences – “I am Feeling What that Young Person is Feeling” (Kim)), participants also reported how becoming aware and understanding these children’s painful stories impacted upon them personally as they came to process what Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children had experienced. This finding is in accordance with much of the existing literature concerning those who are in supporting roles working with Asylum-Seeking and Refugee individuals (e.g., Guhan and Liebling-Kalifani, 2011; Kjellenberg et al., 2014; Kinderman et al., 2017; Chatzea et al., 2018; Posselt et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2021). In the current study, participants explained that this element of the role elicited perceived negative, as well as positive emotions within themselves, and that the role had shaped their view of the world. When exploring the literature, the Constructivist Self-Development Theory (McCann and Pearlman, 1992) may be one possible way to understand this perceived impact, which could be further exemplified by concepts such as ‘compassion fatigue’, ‘vicarious trauma’, vicarious posttraumatic growth’ or ‘compassion satisfaction’. Therefore, it could be suggested that Designated Teachers in the current study reportedly experienced being exposed to trauma narratives when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as impactful on their personal lives, emotions, and perceptions of the world, thereby influencing both positive and negative feelings as a result of the role.

#### *6.2.1.3 Enacting Coping Mechanisms to Manage the Implications of the Role.*

As presented in the final Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 4: Ways of Coping – “I Can’t Save Everyone, I Can’t do Everything” (Jordan)), when managing the reported emotional impact associated with the role, participants seemingly experienced a perceived need to enact various coping mechanisms in order to guard themselves from their challenging feelings when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Each participant seemed to employ a range of coping mechanisms in unique ways, which speaks to the view that there isn’t one way of managing difficult experiences, rather, effective coping is when perceived control over a situation and one’s coping response is ‘matched’ (Lavoie, 2013). Drawing on Parker and Endler’s (1992) conceptualisation of coping, which is one possible way participants' coping mechanisms could be understood, it may be suggested that the coping strategies of the Designated Teachers in the current study can be summarised as emotion-oriented, task-oriented and/or avoidance-oriented ways of coping. Therefore, another experience of the Designated Teachers in the current study could be viewed as reportedly enacting coping mechanisms, so to minimise the perceived impact of the role on the self.

### 6.2.2 Research Question 2: What is Helpful for Designated Teachers' Wellbeing and/or Developing Their Competence When Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

In order to manage the reported experiences and feelings associated with the role when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, participants identified what they perceived to be helpful in terms of developing their competence in the role and promoting their wellbeing.

#### *6.2.2.1 Perceived Operational Support from Colleagues.*

As depicted in the third Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving, Yet Lacking, Support from Colleagues – "It Does Feel Like I'm Isolated in a Way, but I am also Working with Everyone in the School" (Jordan)), participants discussed how they were supported practically and operationally by their colleagues. The importance of co-worker support has been well-documented within literature and across professions (e.g., Deci and Ryan, 2008; Gillet et al., 2013; Van den Broeck et al., 2013; Jungert et al., 2018; Mette et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2022; Gurowiec et al., 2022). The significance of such support was also found in the current study, with participants reportedly '*needing*' and '*leaning*' on their colleagues when establishing effective provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. In this way, such support may be viewed as developing participants' competencies, since they seemingly relied upon their colleagues to fulfil the operational and practical duties of the role. Therefore, it could be suggested that Designated Teachers in the current study perceived practical and operational co-worker support as helpful in order to develop their competency in the responsibility of ensuring effective provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and, in turn, should be encouraged within school settings.

#### *6.2.2.2 Perceived Desired Emotional Support from External Professionals.*

As illustrated in the third Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals – "I Have Thought 'I Wonder what There is for Me', But There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie)), supervision was reportedly experienced by one participant, and perceived by most participants, as being one way to support Designated Teachers in their role. When discussing this support, most participants reported how invaluable this is/could be for both processing the impact of the role and also reflecting on effective practices to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. This finding concurs with that documented within the literature, which signifies how such support is associated with fewer incidents of 'compassion fatigue' and 'vicarious trauma' (e.g. Sexton, 1999; Baird and Kracen 2006; Harrison and Westwood, 2009; Robinson, 2013; Apostolidou, 2016; Apostolidou and Schweitzer, 2017; Mette et al., 2020), alongside developing competences and effective practices (e.g. Hanko, 1999; Youell, 2006; Jackson, 2008; Hulusi and Maggs, 2015; Simon and Swerdlik, 2022). One possible way some of these benefits could be understood is through drawing on Bion's (1985) container-contained model, which suggests that when practitioners are contained, they can then offer effective containment to those they are supporting in their roles. Therefore, it would seem that Designated Teachers in the current study viewed receiving supervision as one way of supporting both their wellbeing and competency in the role, thus could be offered by Educational Psychologists when supporting Designated Teachers.

### 6.2.3 Research Question Three: What Are the Challenges That Designated Teachers Perceive in Relation to Their Own Wellbeing and Competence When Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

Alongside identifying that which is helpful within the role of Designated Teacher, participants in the current study simultaneously discussed perceived challenges in managing the emotional implications of the role and ensuring effective provision that meets the needs of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

#### *6.2.3.1 Perceived Isolation in the Role.*

As depicted in the third Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 1: Simultaneously Receiving, Yet Lacking, Support from Colleagues – "It Does Feel Like I'm Isolated in a Way, but I am also Working with Everyone in the School" (Jordan)), participants discussed how they felt supported practically and operationally by their colleagues, but also perceived a lack of emotional support within their roles. In turn, some participants reported a potentially conflicting experience of '*working with everyone',* when establishing education provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, but working '*alone*' in managing the emotional impact of the role, outlined in research question one (Festinger, 1957). Specifically, participants' perceived isolation was reportedly linked to being the one person with this role in their settings, thereby requiring them to independently process being exposed to trauma narratives and establish ways of coping, as detailed above. This experience was reportedly magnified due to the perception that participants also did not have connections with Designated Teachers in other schools who may be able to relate to participants' experiences and feelings in the role. In this way, drawing on the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) as one possible way of understanding this experience, it could be that participants lacked membership to groups within their role and so did not experience the benefits of having a shared identity, such as promoting resilience, wellbeing, and sense of belonging (e.g. Greenaway et al., 2015; Jetten et al., 2015; Drury et al., 2016; Kyprianides et al., 2019). Therefore, it could be suggested that Designated Teachers in the current study experienced a reported challenge in managing the emotional impact of their role, and so further support is required to help them reflect and manage their perceived experiences and feelings associated with the role.

#### *6.2.3.2 Limited Operational and Emotional Support from External Professionals.*

As presented in the third Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 2: Limited Collaboration and Support from External Professionals – "I Have Thought 'I Wonder what There is for Me', But There Doesn't Seem to be Anyone" (Jessie)), participants perceived the need for additional operational and emotional support from external professionals, including Social Services and The Virtual School. Unlike the perceived operational support participants reportedly received from colleagues, when discussing working alongside external professionals, participants reportedly felt that they were given little information regarding Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children during the on-rolling process and had not yet received training to support them in their role. As such, participants perceived this lack of support as impacting their ability to enact the operational duties of the role. Furthermore, most participants explained that they felt that they were not being effectively supported to manage the emotional impact of the role from external professionals. In turn, most participants identified the desire to receive supervision from external professionals, as detailed in research question two. Nevertheless, when discussing what participants meant by supervision and what it would entail, participants who were not in receipt of this support went on to explain that the perceived time pressures experienced as a Designated Teacher rendered supervision unrealistic and not conducive to their role. One participant explained that for this support to be effective and accessible, it would need to be '*protected time*'. Therefore, it would seem that Designated Teachers in the current study reportedly experienced an additional challenge in their role associated with working collaboratively with external professionals in order to develop their understanding of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children alongside managing the emotional impact of the role.

#### 6.2.3.3 Limited Emotional Support from Friends and Family.

As shown in the third Group Experiential Theme (Group Experiential Theme 3, sub-theme 3: Disruptions to Seeking Support in Personal Relationships – "Who Can I Talk to About This Stuff When I Get Home, You Know?" (Kim)), participants explained how they experienced perceived barriers to receiving emotional support from their family and friends when attempting to manage the emotional impact of the role. Existing research has identified the importance of receiving social support (e.g., Pennebaker et al., 1997; Lerias and Byrne, 2003; Pennebaker and Chung, 2007; Harrison and Westwood, 2009; Michalopoulos and Aparicio, 2012; Dittmann and Jensen, 2014; Ludick and Figley, 2017; Tong et al., 2019; Gurowiec et al., 2022; Truss et al., 2022), yet, within the role of Designated Teacher, social support seemed challenging to receive.

Specifically, many participants spoke about feeling that they were unable to talk to family and friends about their experiences in the role, due to the need to remain confidential, which is in accordance with previous research within the field of therapy (e.g., McCann and Pearlman, 1990; Saakvitne, 2002; Morran, 2008; Lovseth and Aasland, 2010; Lovseth, 2017). For other participants, they explained that they did not seek support from family or friends, yet shared that this was due to the perception that those closest to them would not be able to understand their experiences. The self-disclosure theory (Altman and Taylor, 1973) could be one possible way of understanding this finding, as it highlights the importance of feeling understood within social relationships when sharing vulnerable information about the self. Finally, another participant explained the importance of not sharing the reality of their role with family members in an effort to protect their family from being exposed to

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's challenging life stories, as found in previous research studies in a range of professional contexts (e.g., Duarte et al., 2006; Menendez et al., 2006; Alrutz et al., 2020; Freise, 2020; Doody et al., 2022; Tekin et al., 2022). Therefore, a further reported challenge experienced by Designated Teachers in the current study was the perceived barriers to accessing valuable social support in order to manage the emotional impact of the role.

## 6.3 Implications on Educational Psychologist Professional Practice.

Reflecting on the aforementioned, alongside knowledge of the Educational Psychologist role, tentative suggestions could be offered regarding how Educational Psychologists may support Designated Teachers in their role.

#### *6.3.1.1 Supervision.*

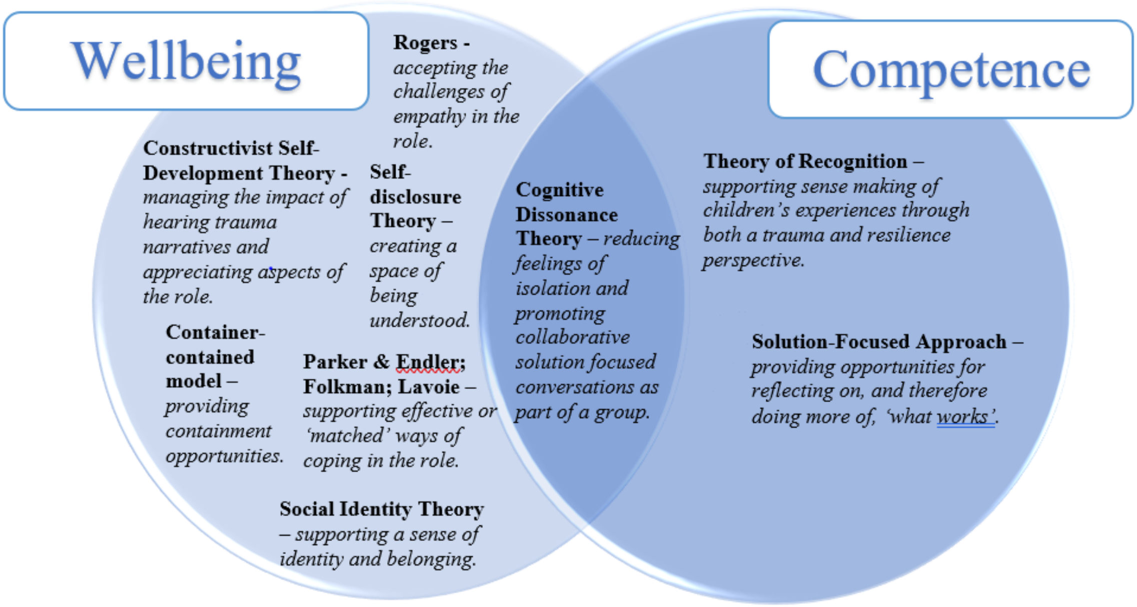
Whilst all participants had unique experiences, most identified the need for supervision. Supervision could be defined as:

> "a joint endeavour, in which a practitioner, with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession" (Hawkins and Shohet, 2007, p60).

Educational Psychologists are arguably well positioned to deliver this support due to supervision models being underpinned by psychological theory, which, requires the facilitator to employ a range of psychological skills (Wood, 2016), as well as Educational Psychologists' having sound knowledge of education and school systems (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010).

Drawing specifically on the current study's findings, supervision could support Designated Teachers in multiple ways, as summarised in Figure 6, presented in Chapter 5: Discussion.

Figure 6: A summary of psychological theories discussed in relation to the current study's findings.


Wellbeing
Competence
Rogers - accepting the challenges of empathy in the role.
Constructivist Self-Development Theory - managing the impact of hearing trauma narratives and appreciating aspects of the role.
Self-disclosure Theory – creating a space of being understood.
Container-contained model – providing containment opportunities.
Parker & Endler; Folkman; Lavoie – supporting effective or 'matched' ways of coping in the role.
Social Identity Theory – supporting a sense of identity and belonging.
Cognitive Dissonance Theory – reducing feelings of isolation and promoting collaborative solution focused conversations as part of a group.
Theory of Recognition – supporting sense making of children's experiences through both a trauma and resilience perspective.
Solution-Focused Approach – providing opportunities for reflecting on, and therefore doing more of, 'what works'.

Firstly, as shown in Figure 6, supervision could support Designated Teachers to make sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children that, as depicted in Honneth's (1996) Theory of Recognition, is beyond 'trauma' discourses. Additionally, through developing Designated Teachers' sense-making, supervision may also support these practitioners with appreciating the challenges of enacting empathy, as outlined by Rogers (1959) and, in turn, accepting the potential difficulty of comprehending all that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children have endured.

Moreover, with Designated Teachers having reported that they had often been exposed to trauma narratives, in accordance with the Constructivist Self-Development Theory (McCann and Pearlman, 1992), supervision could also serve the function of reducing any negative implications, as well as promoting the potential positive impact of the role. Similarly, with participants having expressed multiple ways of coping, supervision may also serve to support Designated Teachers with effective or 'matched' ways of managing any challenging experiences of the role (Parker and Endler, 1992; Folkman 1991; Lavoie, 2013).

Furthermore, due to many participants having reported a sense of isolation in the role, Educational Psychologists may consider delivering group supervision with a number of

Designated Teachers, so that an additional function of this support is to provide these practitioners with a shared identity and, in turn, promote their sense of belonging. In doing so, this may also support Designated Teachers with alleviating any potential cognitive dissonance of '*working with everyone'* but being '*alone*' through providing a reflective space to work collaboratively to develop competencies with others, whilst also enabling a space for a shared understanding regarding their role and experiences. Finally, in line with Bion's (1985) container-contained model, supervision could support Designated Teachers with the opportunity to be contained, particularly considering that many participants perceived challenges in seeking such support from their colleagues and/or those closest to them.

Therefore, aligning the findings of the current study within a supervision model, Educational Psychologists are well positioned to develop and address the perceived challenges and needs of Designated Teachers, supporting them to engage in a psychological process that addresses both their wellbeing and professional development needs within a reflective and confidential space (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010).

Yet, participants in the current study who were not receiving supervision within their role discussed the concern that they would not be able to access this support due to the perceived time pressures within the role. This suggests that, if Educational Psychologists are to offer Designated Teachers supervision, there must first be an increased understanding as to how Designated Teachers could be provided the time necessary to engage in such support. This may include speaking with Designated Teachers themselves and/or their line managers when planning this work. Alternatively, this could be a topic for further study so to develop our understanding regarding effective supervision for Designated Teachers. Therefore, if Educational Psychologists were to deliver supervision to Designated Teachers, the findings of the current study suggest that it may be important to understand how Designated Teachers could engage in this support in light of their perceived lack of time to complete the necessary duties of the role.

#### *6.3.1.2 Training.*

Participants within the current study reportedly experienced limited training opportunities within their role. Given that participants viewed Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences as unique, training was identified as an additional need within the role to improve participants' competency. Due to participants in the current study explaining that their colleagues also support with the practical and operational duties of the role, it could be that this training is not solely delivered to Designated Teachers but to staff groups so that participants' reported co-worker support can persist. In doing so, this may further support Designated Teachers in developing a sense of identity and feeling a sense of belonging with their colleagues, as this training may promote an increased shared understanding amongst all staff concerning supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's holistic needs.

However, research suggests that when Educational Psychologists deliver training, staff do not always apply learned principles and quickly forget content that was shared (Patel, 2013). In turn, it is suggested that where training is delivered, Educational Psychologists must also support its implementation (Chidley and Stringer, 2020). One way this could be achieved is through the supervision model mentioned above. Therefore, reflecting on the findings of the current study, training could be another way Educational Psychologists could best support Designated Teachers in the role, yet further consideration should be given regarding the implementation of acquired knowledge.

## 6.4 Strengths and limitations.

In the following section, the current study will be critiqued in terms of its strengths and limitations related to the chosen methodology, sample selection and data collection.

### 6.4.1 Methodology.

There are many advantages to using IPA, including enabling researchers to complete an in-depth study of the individual's accounts so to "tell us something about people's involvement in and orientation towards the world, and/or about how they make sense of this" (Smith et al., 2022, p. 41). However, IPA is notwithstanding limitations that should be considered.

Specifically, IPA depends upon the validity of language to accurately describe participants' experiences. Discourse or conversation analysts would question this assumption, arguing that language does not describe, but constructs reality (Willig, 2013). In turn, it may be argued that IPA is an inhibited methodology because you cannot access participants' experiences, only how experiences are constructed by participants (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, with IPA's focus on language as the medium for communicating experiences, this places significant expectation upon participants to first reflect on their experiences and then, crucially, shape the subtleties and nuances of these experiences into language, so that meaning can be accurately conveyed to the researcher (Willig, 2013). As such, it could be suggested that IPA's sole focus on language could restrict participants in accurately sharing their lived experiences. Finally, due to focusing on language as a description tool to elicit an understanding of individuals' experiences, IPA therefore negates *why* individuals experience particular phenomena. In doing so, it could be argued that the lack of explanation explored within IPA means that IPA only offers a descriptive, thereby restricted, understanding of individuals' experiences (Willig, 2013).

In engaging in these methodological debates, I carefully considered the critiques of IPA and adapted my practice accordingly. For instance, to provide participants adequate time to reflect on their experiences, when I completed 'expression of interest' discussions with participants, I explained to individuals the topics that would be discussed during their interview (described in Chapter 3: Methodology). Moreover, during the interviews, to ensure that I did not assume a shared understanding, and to provide participants the opportunity to convey their thoughts as intended, I used probing questions throughout my interview "to encourage the participant to elaborate on the details to achieve clarity and to stay close to the lived experience" (Starks and Trinidad, 2007, p. 1375). Finally, as in line with IPA's idiographic approach, whereby it is recommended to have between four-six participants, the current study involved a total of five Designated Teachers (Smith et al., 2009). This allowed for a considerable amount of time to be immersed within the data, whereby an in-depth exploration of participants' perceptions and experiences could be completed, whilst maintaining the individuality of their unique stories, which may not have been possible with a larger sample size (Smith et al., 2009). In doing so, this arguably circumvented a descriptive level of analysis. Therefore, whilst I recognise that the critiques of IPA may not be overcome, I hoped to somewhat address some limitations via these considerations. I felt that IPA as a methodology strengthened the current study, as participants were able to tell their individual and personal stories in meaningful ways without distortion (Alase, 2017), thereby offering an insight into the lived experiences of Designated Teachers (Smith, 2011).

### 6.4.2 Homogeneity.

Aligning with IPA methodology, this study included a small, homogenous sample of five Designated Teachers. Homogeneity was achieved through employing a purposive sampling technique, so to recruit a sample of participants who have shared experiences and perspectives (Smith et al., 2009; Langdridge, 2007). In this study, the shared experience of being the named Designated Teacher within their secondary school settings, responsible for the oversight of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's education, and identified as the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's key adult. This can be viewed as a strength of this study, as previous research has not considered this particular group of participants, and instead, grouped those working within educational settings, regardless of specific roles (e.g., Svensson, 2019; Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020; Ward, 2021; Prentice and Ott, 2021; Prentice 2022; Kaukko et al., 2022).

However, I recognise how homogeneity could have been supported further. For instance, whilst I attempted to recruit participants from one Local Authority, I experienced challenges in doing so, and therefore widened my search to include Designated Teachers from an additional two neighbouring Local Authorities. Moreover, on reflection, I should have accounted for the additional responsibilities' participants held alongside their Designated Teacher role as this furthered the difference between participants in the current study (*further descriptions of participant demographic can be found in Chapter 4: Findings*). Therefore, efforts were made to ensure a homogenous sample, yet it is recognised that additional considerations could have been made.

### 6.4.3 Generalisability.

As previously stated, the current study included five participants, which, although a suitable number for IPA methodology, arguably raises issues of generalisability. In other words, with only five participants, this study may be critiqued in terms of its statistical-probabilistic generalisability due to potential challenges related to the findings accurately reflecting the wider Designated Teacher population (Charlick et al., 2016; Smith, 2018). However, in employing IPA methodology, and adhering to qualitative ontological and epistemological positions, the current study does not aim to represent the perceptions and experiences of all Designated Teachers who support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Noon, 2018). Rather, it presents detailed descriptions of participants' experiences and establishes connections between these Designated Teachers' lived experiences and relevant literature, thereby increasing the likelihood of naturalistic generalisability, sometimes known as transferability (Smith and Osborn, 2003; Smith et al., 2009). In doing so, it could be argued that Designated Teachers who were not part of the current study may recognise for themselves any shared experiences and, in turn, judge the relevance of implications for their own practice (Tracy, 2010; Smith, 2018). Therefore, in engaging with the term ‘generalisability’ beyond statistical-probabilistic generalisability, the current study could be seen as achieving naturalistic generalisability.

### 6.4.4 Data Collection.

Data was collected through conducting semi-structured interviews, due to the many perceived advantages of this method and in-keeping with the aims of the research, as described in Chapter 3: Methodology. Adhering to my ethical responsibility, during the recruitment and interview process, it was fundamental that participants felt at ease to confidently tell their stories, and also be afforded the option to withdraw at any point. To do so, I gave participants agency throughout the process, including when, and where, they would like the interview to take place. Interestingly, all participants opted for these interviews to be completed online via Microsoft Teams.

According to the literature, there can be advantages to online interviews, including participants feeling more at ease in their personal and chosen spaces which, by extension, supports individuals in feeling comfortable to tell their personal stories and allowing rich data to be collected (Jenner and Myers, 2019; Deakin and Wakefield, 2014). Moreover, in terms of my experience in collecting data online, I wondered whether this provided participants additional assurance of remaining anonymous, particularly within their own school settings and amongst their colleagues, and also meant that participants could enact their right to withdraw more easily compared to a face-to-face interview – ending an online meeting is much simpler, with fewer repercussions, and limited discussion, in comparison to ending an in-person interview. Due to the perceived advantages, it has been suggested that online interviews will persist in qualitative research studies (Oliffe et al., 2021). As such, conducting interviews online could be seen as a strength of the current study.

However, completing online interviews are not without its challenges. For instance, it can be more difficult for the researcher to recognise and, in turn, act upon subtle nuances in interactions, such as body language (Dodds and Hess, 2020). In being aware of this prior to completing online interviews, I ensured that I regularly checked-in with participants and actively employed principles of attunement (Kennedy et al., 2011), including ‘developing attuned interactions’, ‘receiving initiatives’, ‘encouraging initiatives’ and ‘being attentive’.

After the interviews, participants all shared with me that they found it to be a positive experience, with Robin explaining: '*it's been like a supervision session, I'll leave here feeling good again now*'. Therefore, I hoped that my practice enhanced the advantages of online interviews and limited the potential disadvantages.

## 6.5 Assessment of the Quality of Qualitative Research.

Having detailed the strengths and limitations of the current study, the next section will consider the quality of the research.

Across disciplines, there has been significant increases in the use of qualitative research methodologies, and, in turn, developments have been made concerning the most appropriate approach to evaluate such studies (Mays and Pope, 2000). This development has been necessary as traditional measures used to assess quantitative research studies, such as criteria based on representative samples, reliable measures, and appropriate statistical analysis, are rendered inappropriate, due to qualitative psychological research underpinned by contrasting ontological and epistemological positions (Yardley, 2017). This clear difference has yielded a set of accessible guidelines to assess and strengthen qualitative research studies, particularly that within the psychology field, based on four principles: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance (Yardley, 2000). These will now be discussed in turn so to assess the quality of the current research study.

### 6.5.1 Sensitivity to Context.

Throughout the research process, I made efforts to ensure sensitivity to context. In attempts to do so, I gave careful consideration to the existing literature. This is demonstrated through embarking on a systematic literature review completed in January 2022, with an updated search in March 2023, to limit the possibility of critical sources being overlooked (see Chapter 2: Literature review), alongside including additional literature in Chapter 5: Discussion to provide connections between the findings and relevant research and theory.

Moreover, I reflected on the social context and relationship between myself and participants, in order to assist participants in feeling comfortable when sharing their personal experiences during both the recruitment and data collection phase of the research study. To do so, I conducted 'expression of interest' meetings with all participants prior to interviews. The aim of this was twofold: firstly, it enabled rapport building, and secondly, allowed questions to be addressed and information to be shared regarding the research to ensure transparency and support a balance of power. Additionally, through utilising interpersonal skills that I have developed as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, such as appropriately acknowledging and responding to participants verbal and non-verbal communication by applying principles of attunement (Kennedy et al., 2011), this supported ongoing rapport with participants. Overall, these considerations supported the current study to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and the meanings they attach to them (Leudar and Antaki, 1996) thereby enabling good quality data to be captured (Chan et al., 2013). *Please see Chapter 3: Methodology for additional detail.*

Sensitivity to context was also considered when analysing participants' interviews. In accordance with IPA, I immersed myself in the data and remained aware of the importance of viewing each participant's story as unique to their individual contexts as well as reflecting on how these specific contexts may influence participants' responses to interview questions (Yardley, 2017). This included acknowledging individuals' experience in the role, and the 'areas' in which participants practiced their role, as detailed in Chapter 4: Findings. Additionally, when discussing my interpretations of participants' accounts in Chapter 4: Findings, I remained transparent in my analysis by presenting participants quotes verbatim. *Please see Chapter 4: Findings for additional detail.*

Overall, efforts were made to ensure sensitivity to context throughout the research process, including during the exploration of existing literature, recruitment and data collection, and the analysis phase of the research study.

### 6.5.2 Commitment and Rigor.

When completing this research study, commitment with the topic area was demonstrated by a "prolonged engagement" (Yardley, 2000, p. 221), both in my personal and professional experiences. For example, one way this was achieved was through engaging with a substantial amount of literature, peer supervision, and research supervision to ensure that I was competent in the methods and skills required in order to complete this research study. Moreover, I demonstrated rigor by ensuring I recruited an appropriate sample of participants whose experiences and perspectives would be relevant to the research aims and questions (Bryman, 2012). This was achieved through employing an inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 3). Additionally, I purposefully spent an extended period of time immersed in a “prolonged contemplative and empathic exploration” (Yardley, 2000, p. 222) of the data, so to go beyond ‘commonsense’ understandings and present a detailed, thorough analysis. Therefore, throughout the research process, it could be suggested that I demonstrated both commitment and rigor.

### 6.5.3 Transparency and Coherence.

During the entirety of the research process, I endeavoured to apply transparency, attempting to provide clear detail regarding each step and decision that I undertook. This includes how the systematic literature review was completed, how methodological decisions were made, presenting the resources that were used to recruit participants, and supporting Group Experiential Themes with verbatim quotes from participants’ accounts. Additionally, I kept a reflective journal to offer readers an insight into my thoughts and experiences throughout the research journey (Appendix 22).

I also sought to ensure coherence through harmonising the research aim, its questions, and philosophical perspective, with the method of data collection and analysis (Yardley, 2000). This was achieved through applying IPA as the method of data collection and analysis, as this supported a consistent and complete description of participants’ personal experiences, thereby upholding the research aim: to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school.

Overall, it could be suggested that the current study adheres to both transparency and coherence by providing clear detail and ensuring an appropriate qualitative methodology was employed.

### 6.5.4 Impact and Importance.

Yardley (2000) posits qualitative research studies must go beyond a thorough and detailed analysis of its data and ensure that it provides value. In other words, “however well a piece of research is conducted, a test of its real validity lies in whether it tells the reader something interesting, important or useful” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 183). I view the current study as achieving this by adding to the dearth of research. According to my search of the literature, a research study is yet to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers in their role of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. As such, I believe that the findings of this study can have wider implications in terms of giving voice to Designated Teachers within this topic area, and offering insights regarding how to support Designated Teachers in their role.

## 6.6 Role of the Researcher and Reflexivity.

When completing qualitative research, engaging in reflexivity is deemed an essential method for demonstrating the reliability of the study in terms of its rigor, quality, and trustworthiness (Teh and Lek, 2018). This is because, the researcher is unequivocally involved throughout the research process, and so the researcher must recognise, and be transparent, regarding their potential impact on the research findings (Horsburgh, 2003). As such, it is suggested that researchers should make known both contextual intersecting relationships and any similarities or differences between themselves and participants (Berger, 2015). *Please see Chapter 3: Methodology for further description regarding reflexivity.*

Considering the importance of reflexivity, I aimed to be cognizant of my biases, beliefs, and experiences in relation to the research study. In doing so, I was aware of my personal connection to the topic area, given that I previously worked in a similar role to the participants in this study, and what assumptions I would therefore be bringing. In an attempt to limit my previous experiences, and, in turn, the biases and beliefs I held from implicating the current study, I engaged in research supervision and peer supervision, as well as keeping a reflective diary to 'bracket' any preconceptions. *Please see Chapter 3: Methodology for further description regarding 'bracketing'.*

During discussions in peer supervision, I reflected on participants seemingly at ease when I shared with them my previous role. Given the findings that some participants experienced 'isolation' in their role, in hindsight, I wondered whether talking about their experiences with someone who previously did a similar role helped them to feel understood, thereby enabling them to be open in sharing their thoughts, views, and feelings. However, I also wondered whether our mutual experiences may elicit a perceived shared understanding, and so it was important that I used probing questions, as described previously. In doing so, this ensured that I did not put my beliefs onto participants' personal experiences, and allowed them to tell their stories from their unique perspectives. This continued into the data analysis phase, where I continuously reflected on my interpretations to ensure that the Group Experiential Themes were grounded in the data. As such, data analysis became an iterative process, whereby I often came back to the original dataset throughout each data analysis step and then presented verbatim quotes from participants' accounts in order to be transparent in my analysis.

Overall, throughout the research process, I was mindful of my position as the researcher and aimed to be cognizant of my biases, beliefs, and experiences in relation to the research study so not to negatively impact the current study.

## 6.7 Distinctive Contribution of the Findings.

Having reflected on the findings of the current study in accordance with the research questions, alongside the study's strengths, weaknesses, and quality, it is maintained that the current study has a distinctive contribution to be made.

The current study aimed to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. As such, although a relatively small sample, this study has elucidated the experiences of some Designated Teachers specific to supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, which, according to my literature search, is an under researched area. Specifically, the majority of research in this topic area has focused on the effective practices required in fulfilling school's ranging roles when supporting Newly Arrived Children, and how educators acquired the knowledge and skills to implement these effective practices (see Chapter 2: Literature Review), thereby negating the lived experiences of those who are providing this support. Therefore, one distinctive contribution of the current study is that it adds to the dearth of literature in this topic area by exploring the lived experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

Furthermore, through employing a qualitative methodology within the current study, this provided a space for the participants to discuss their experiences, thereby demonstrating a range of in-depth views, feelings, and perceptions. In doing so, this provided unique insights into how individuals reportedly experienced the role of Designated Teacher, what support is deemed effective within the role, and the perceived challenges of the role. When analysing the views of all five participants, this offered a rich understanding of individual experiences, as well as the connection between each participant's experiences. In turn, the findings of the current study may be the beginning of coming to understand how Designated Teachers experience their role, so that these professionals can be supported effectively in their work. Therefore, having applied IPA to the current study, this enabled Designated Teachers' unique and personal thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours to be represented, thereby offering a foundational knowledge base to this under researched topic area that can be built upon through further research (Willig, 2013; Noon, 2018).

Finally, through exploring the lived experiences of Designated Teachers in the current study, the findings may subsequently implicate the role of Educational Psychologists. When reflecting on participants' perceived challenges of the Designated Teacher role, alongside effective or desired support that participants discussed, I concluded two ways in which Educational Psychologists could support Designated Teachers in terms of both their wellbeing and competencies. As such, it could be suggested that the current study may offer some direction to Educational Psychologists who are either currently, or wanting to, support Designated Teachers in their role. Drawing on the work of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), if Educational Psychologists were to support Designated Teachers in their role, it is likely that this will have a further reaching impact on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children themselves. Therefore, the current study is beneficial to the field of Educational Psychology, as it has highlighted potential ways Educational Psychologists could support Designated Teachers in their role.

Overall, it could be suggested that the current study is distinctive in that it addresses a gap in the literature by researching the role of Designated Teachers in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children that otherwise may not have been understood. Additionally, in employing a qualitative methodology to do so, it may be argued that this has enabled a rich, in-depth insight into these professionals' reported experiences, identifying individuals' views and feelings within the role. It may be suggested that this has highlighted possible ways in which Educational Psychologists could support Designated Teachers in their role, which is likely to have a further reaching positive impact on the educational experiences of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children themselves.

## 6.8 Suggestions for Future Research.

Having considered the distinctive contribution of the current study, it is recognised that this study only addresses a small aspect of this topic area. As such, additional research would be advantageous in order to develop that found within the current study.

According to my literature search, there are limited research studies exploring the experiences of Designated Teachers supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The current study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the experiences of five participants across three Local Authorities within one region of England. As such, whilst the current study adds to the dearth of literature, it is likely that there is more to be known about this topic area. Therefore, it could be suggested that additional research would be beneficial to further develop our understanding of the role of Designated Teachers supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within other regions of England.

When exploring the findings of the current study, tentative suggestions have been made regarding the role of Educational Psychologists in supporting Designated Teachers in their work. In doing so, delivering supervision and training seemed to be a useful approach in order to meet participants' perceived needs, and in line with their desired support. As such, it may be beneficial for future research to review the impact of Educational Psychologists delivering support to Designated Teachers. This will ensure its effectiveness and identify any potential further considerations Educational Psychologists should make when supporting Designated Teachers in their role. However, as discussed above, within the current study, participants did explain concerns regarding perceived barriers to accessing this support, such as having the time to engage in supervision. As such, it may be beneficial for future research to also understand how to overcome any barriers to implementing support for Designated Teachers, so to further ensure support is effective. Therefore, another possible future direction for research may be solely focused upon the support Educational Psychologists could offer Designated Teachers in order to help the profession understand how to ensure this support is effective.

Furthermore, some participants in the current study explained how they perceived there to be limited opportunity for multi-agency working with Social Services and The Virtual School. As such, it could be useful for future research to consider the views of both Social Workers and The Virtual School regarding their experiences of working with Designated Teachers in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and, from their perspective, whether there are further developments to be made in multi-agency working. To supplement this area of research, it may also be helpful to understand how to create the optimal conditions for multi-agency working between these three professions, keeping Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children at the heart of this work, so to ensure each professional feels supported, and has appropriate information in order to provide effective support for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Therefore, an additional focus of future research could be exploring promoting multi-agency working across professions when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in education.

Overall future research should continue to explore this topic area in order to add to the findings of this current study. In doing so, it could be that such research replicates the current study, but within a different area so to expand what is already known. Alternatively, future research could also develop some of that which was found in the current study. For instance, it may be useful to explore the effectiveness of the Educational Psychologist role in supporting Designated Teachers, as well as how to promote multi-agency working across professions when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. This will allow for increased knowledge of Designated Teachers in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and how to ensure they are appropriately supported in implementing their role.

## 6.9 Chapter Conclusion.

In conclusion, the current study aimed to explore the personal experiences of Designated Teachers when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in school. Through employing IPA, the current study offers a rich, in-depth exploration regarding the lived experiences of five Designated Teachers, thereby adding to the dearth of literature within this topic area. It is hoped that the findings can improve knowledge and understanding of the role of Designated Teacher in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, through demonstrating the range of feelings and emotions individuals may experience, which could potentially impact upon their view of themselves and the world around them. In managing this aspect of the role, this study also hopes to highlight potentially supportive factors as well as possible challenges that Designated Teachers experience when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The research also aspires to positively influence Educational

Psychologist practice by providing tentative suggestions regarding how Educational Psychologists may support Designated Teachers in terms of both their wellbeing and competencies. It is hoped that this current study is only the beginning of the journey in understanding how best Designated Teachers could be supported in their role, and so further research is recommended.

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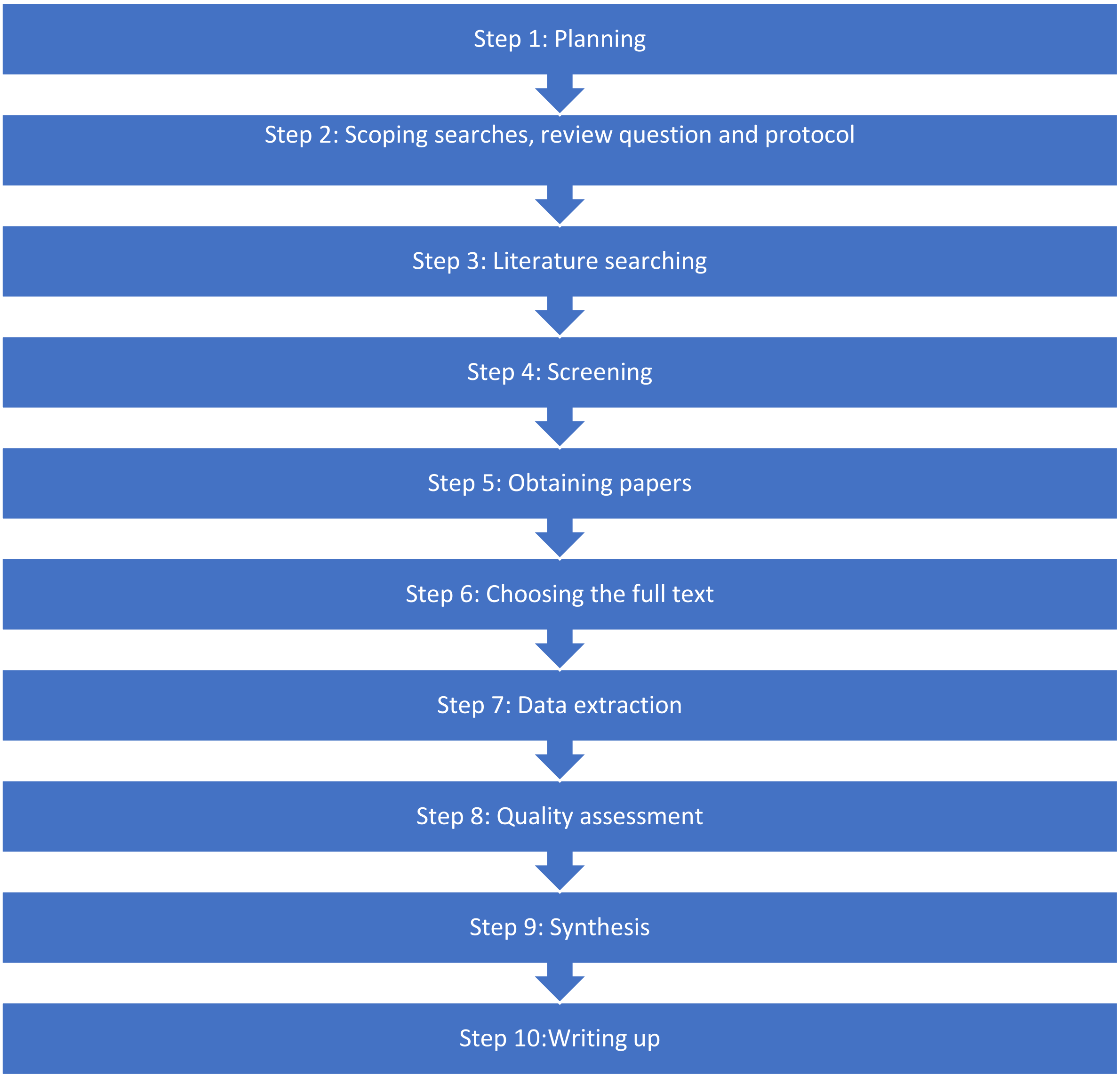
# 8 Appendix.

## 8.1 Appendix 1: Ten-step process to completing a systematic literature review (Boland et al, 2017).


Step 1: Planning
Step 2: Scoping searches, review question and protocol
Step 3: Literature searching
Step 4: Screening
Step 5: Obtaining papers
Step 6: Choosing the full text
Step 7: Data extraction
Step 8: Quality assessment
Step 9: Synthesis
Step 10:Writing up

## 8.2 Appendix 2: Research papers excluded and reasons for exclusion.

| **Reason for exclusion.** | **Papers excluded.** |
|---|---|
| Studies that did not take place in the Western World. | 1. Fansa, M., & Ersoy, A. (2022). The Life of Syrian Asylum-Seeking Children in a Temporary Shelter Centre in Turkey: An Ethnographic Study on Primary School Education. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, *14*(5), 679-691.<br>2. Duran, M. A. V. I. (2021). Disadvantages and solutions of a model in asylum seeker education: Temporary education centers (TECs). *Participatory Educational Research*, *9*(3), 428-444.<br>3. Kagan, M., Pinson, H., & Schler, L. (2022). No policies and no politics: Israeli teachers, asylum seeker pupils, and remobilized strategies of avoidance and depoliticization. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *25*(1), 73-91.<br>4. Amitay, G. (2021). From Helpless Rage to Loving Resistance: Resistance to Othering and Practices of Agency in Mentoring Children of Asylum Seekers in Israel. In *Child & Youth Care Forum* (pp. 1-23). Springer US.<br>5. Choy, W. C., & Shi, X. (2021). A comprehensive review of refugee and asylum studies in contemporary Hong Kong: Law, policies, and lived experiences. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, *49*(1), 38-48. |
| The topic area or focus of research relates to supporting migrant and/or refugee children exclusively. | 6. Hodes, M. (2023). Thinking about young refugees' mental health following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *28*(1), 3-14.<br>7. Curtis, P., Thompson, J., & Fairbrother, H. (2018). Migrant children within Europe: a systematic review of children's perspectives on their health experiences. *Public health*, *158*, 71-85. |
| Studies that did not collect primary data. | 8. Larran, J., Schuster, I., & Hein, S. (2021). The feasibility of implementing autism intervention methods in formal education settings welcoming refugee and asylum-seeking children: A systematic review of the literature. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *2021*(179), 7-28.<br>9. Nilsson, J., & Bunar, N. (2016). Educational responses to newly arrived students in Sweden: Understanding the structure and influence of post-migration ecology. *Scandinavian journal of educational research*, *60*(4), 399-416.<br>10. Due, C., & Currie, E. (2022). Practitioner competencies for working with refugee children and young people: A scoping review. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *59*(2), 116-129.<br>11. Cowling, M. M., & Anderson, J. R. (2023). The effectiveness of therapeutic interventions on psychological distress in refugee children: A systematic review. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. |
| Does not answer the literature-search question: | - Focuses on conceptualisations of asylum-seeking and refugee children as opposed to the support that teachers offer these children within education.<br>12. Yurdakal, I. H. (2022). Pre-Service Teachers' Opinions on the Problems of Refugee-Asylum-Seeking Children. *Online Submission*, *7*(1), 97-113.<br>13. Tezcan, G. (2019). The Pre-Service Teachers' Metaphorical Perceptions about Syrian Asylum Seekers' Children. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, *15*(2), 9-29.<br>14. Migliarini, V. (2018). 'Colour-evasiveness' and racism without race: the disablement of asylum-seeking children at the edge of fortress Europe. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *21*(4), 438-457.<br>15. Rigby, P., Fotopoulou, M., Rogers, A., Manta, A., & Dikaiou, M. (2021). Problematising |

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| | | separated children: a policy analysis of the UK 'Safeguarding Strategy: Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *47*(3), 501-518.<br>16. Migliarini, V. (2017). Subjectivation, agency and the schooling of raced and dis/abled asylum-seeking children in the Italian context. *Intercultural Education*, *28*(2), 182-195. |
| | - Focuses on support networks outside of the school system. | 17. Langat, K., Major, J., & Wilkinson, J. (2019). Refugee Young People (Re) forming Identities: The Role of Social Networks. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, *18*(3), 74-87. |
| | - Focuses on children's lived experiences of the asylum-seeking process. | 18. Wolter, S., Tatzber, R., & Sauer, B. (2022). Waiting in the Austrian asylum system: The well-being of asylum-seeking children in a phase of liminality. *Children & Society*.<br>19. Bonhage-Talsma, G. T., Post, W. J., & Kalverboer, M. E. (2022). Forced Return of Embedded Asylum-Seeking Families with Children to Armenia from a Children's Rights Perspective. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, *30*, 577-603.<br>20. Kauhanen, I., & Kaukko, M. (2020). Recognition in the lives of unaccompanied children and youth: A review of the key European literature. *Child & Family Social Work*, *25*(4), 875-883.<br>21. Josefsson, J. (2017). 'We beg you, let them stay!': Right claims of asylum-seeking children as a socio-political practice. *Childhood*, *24*(3), 316-332.<br>22. Ottosson, L., Eastmond, M., & Cederborg, A. C. (2017). Assertions and aspirations: Agency among accompanied asylum-seeking children in Sweden. *Children's Geographies*, *15*(4), 426-438.<br>23. Hasson III, R. G., Crea, T. M., McRoy, R. G., & Lê, Â. H. (2019). Patchwork of promises: A critical analysis of immigration policies for unaccompanied undocumented children in the United States. *Child & Family Social Work*, *24*(2), 275-282.<br>24. Brittle, R., & Desmet, E. (2020). Thirty years of research on children's rights in the context of migration: towards increased visibility and recognition of some children, but not all?. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, *28*(1), 36-65.<br>25. Given-Wilson, Z., Hodes, M., & Herlihy, J. (2018). A review of adolescent autobiographical memory and the implications |

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| | | for assessment of unaccompanied minors' refugee determinations. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *23*(2), 209-222.<br>26. Kronick, R., Rousseau, C., & Cleveland, J. (2018). Refugee children's sandplay narratives in immigration detention in Canada. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, *27*, 423-437.<br>27. Ehntholt, K. A., Trickey, D., Harris Hendriks, J., Chambers, H., Scott, M., & Yule, W. (2018). Mental health of unaccompanied asylum-seeking adolescents previously held in British detention centres. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *23*(2), 238-257.<br>28. Kaukko, M. (2017). The CRC of unaccompanied asylum seekers in Finland. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, *25*(1), 140-164.<br>29. Zevulun, D., Zijlstra, A. E., Post, W. J., & Knorth, E. J. (2021). A qualitative study into the reintegration of vulnerable migrant children and families after return to Kosovo: Findings from a follow-up. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *125*, 105991.<br>30. Gornik, B. (2022). Transcending non-citizenship? Looking at asylum policy through the lens of a child-centred approach and the procedural justice perspective. *Citizenship Studies*, 1-17.<br>31. Heidbrink, L. (2021). Anatomy of a crisis: Governing youth mobility through vulnerability. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *47*(5), 988-1005.<br>32. Van Os, E. C. C., Kalverboer, M. E., Zijlstra, A. E., Post, W. J., & Knorth, E. J. (2016). Knowledge of the unknown child: A systematic review of the elements of the best interests of the child assessment for recently arrived refugee children. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, *19*, 185-203.<br>33. Karlsson, S. (2019). 'They Cry, Cry, They Want to go to School': the Micro-Politics of Asylum-Seeking Children's Articulated Emotions and Belonging in Relation to the Swedish School. *Children & society*, *33*(5), 429-442. |
| | - Focuses on how UASC utilise their literacy skills to enact agency. | 34. Wedin, Å. (2020). Literacy and agency: The case of young adults who came to Sweden as unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *64*(4), 522-534. |
| | - Focuses on a particular research approaches when studying UASC. | 35. Kaukko, M. (2016). The P, A and R of participatory action research with unaccompanied girls. *Educational Action Research*, *24*(2), 177-193. |

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| | | 36. Potts, M. (2017). Responding creatively to Bone and Blaise (2015) through packaging, drawing and assembling. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *18*(3), 346-350. |
| | - Focuses on children’s lived experiences of foster care. | 37. Crea, T. M., Evans, K., Lopez, A., Hasson III, R. G., Palleschi, C., & Sittley, L. (2022). Unaccompanied immigrant children in long-term foster care: Identifying and operationalizing child welfare outcomes. *Child & Family Social Work*, *27*(3), 500-512.<br>38. Rogers, J., Carr, S., & Hickman, C. (2018). Mutual benefits: The lessons learned from a community based participatory research project with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and foster carers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *92*, 105-113.<br>39. Söderqvist, Å., Sjöblom, Y., & Bülow, P. (2016). Home sweet home? Professionals' understanding of ‘home’within residential care for unaccompanied youths in S weden. *Child & Family Social Work*, *21*(4), 591-599.<br>40. Zijlstra, A. E., Menninga, M. C., Van Os, E. C. C., & Kalverboer, M. E. (2020). They ask for protection: An exploratory study into experiences with violence among unaccompanied refugee children in Dutch reception facilities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *103*, 104442.<br>41. Humphris, R., & Sigona, N. (2019). Outsourcing the ‘best interests’ of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the era of austerity. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, *45*(2), 312-330.<br>42. Van Holen, F., Trogh, L., Carlier, E., Gypen, L., & Vanderfaeillie, J. (2020). Unaccompanied refugee minors and foster care: A narrative literature review. *Child & Family Social Work*, *25*(3), 506-514. |
| | - Focuses on the mental health and psychosocial needs of children within health care settings. | 43. Portnoy, S., & Ward, A. (2020). Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people–Understanding their journeys towards improved physical and emotional health. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *25*(3), 636-647.<br>44. Rodriguez, I. M., & Dobler, V. (2021). Survivors of hell: resilience amongst unaccompanied minor refugees and implications for treatment-a narrative review. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, *14*, 559-569.<br>45. Von Knorring, A. L., & Hultcrantz, E. (2020). Asylum-seeking children with resignation syndrome: catatonia or traumatic withdrawal |

syndrome?. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, *29*, 1103-1109.

46. De Freitas Girardi, J., Miconi, D., Lyke, C., & Rousseau, C. (2020). Creative expression workshops as psychological first aid (Pfa) for asylum-seeking children: an exploratory study in temporary shelters in Montreal. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *25*(2), 483-493.
47. Otasowie, J., Paraiso, A., & Bates, G. (2021). Pervasive refusal syndrome: systematic review of case reports. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *30*, 41-53.
48. Warshaw, S. C. (2019). Historical Roots and Contemporary Perspectives: Mental Health Considerations with Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children, Youth and their Families. *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, *18*(4), 307-312.
49. Cohen, A., & Yadlin, Y. (2018). Time and memory in the therapeutic journey with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, *44*(3), 348-367.
50. Daniel-Calveras, A., Baldaquí, N., & Baeza, I. (2022). Mental health of unaccompanied refugee minors in Europe: A systematic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *133*, 105865.
51. Blackmore, R., Gray, K. M., Boyle, J. A., Fazel, M., Ranasinha, S., Fitzgerald, G., ... & Gibson-Helm, M. (2020). Systematic review and meta-analysis: the prevalence of mental illness in child and adolescent refugees and asylum seekers. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *59*(6), 705-714.
52. Norredam, M., Nellums, L., Nielsen, R. S., Byberg, S., & Petersen, J. H. (2018). Incidence of psychiatric disorders among accompanied and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Denmark: a nation-wide register-based cohort study. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, *27*, 439-446.
53. Gadeberg, A. K., & Norredam, M. (2016). Urgent need for validated trauma and mental health screening tools for refugee children and youth. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, *25*, 929-931.
54. Sanchez Clemente, N., Cinardo, P., Ward, A., Longley, N., Harkensee, C., & Eisen, S. (2022). A Whole-child, whole-family approach to health assessments for asylum-seeking children. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, *6*(1).
55. Hutchinson, R., King, N., & Majumder, P. (2022). How effective is group intervention in

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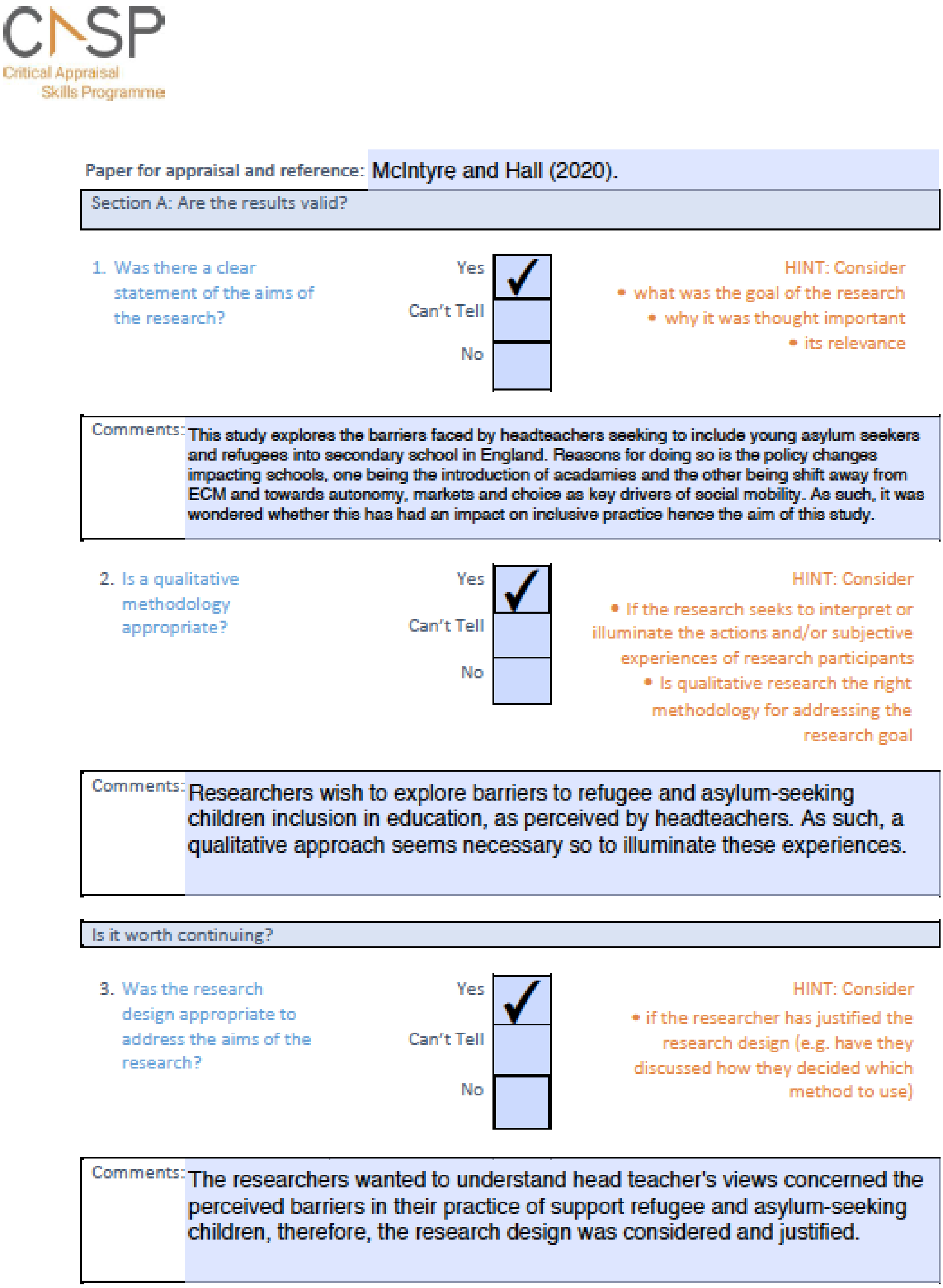
| | | the treatment for unaccompanied and accompanied refugee minors with mental health difficulties: A systematic review. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *68*(3), 484-499. |
| | - Focuses on pre and post migration experiences in relation to wellbeing. | 56. Sanchez-Clemente, N., Eisen, S., Harkensee, C., Longley, N., O'Grady, R., & Ward, A. (2023). Beyond arrival: safeguarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, *108*(3), 160-165.<br>57. Garcia, M. F., & Birman, D. (2022). Understanding the migration experience of unaccompanied youth: A review of the literature. *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, *92*(1), 79.<br>58. Van Os, E. C. C., Zijlstra, A. E., Knorth, E. J., Post, W. J., & Kalverboer, M. E. (2020). Finding keys: A systematic review of barriers and facilitators for refugee children's disclosure of their life stories. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *21*(2), 242-260.<br>59. Gladwell, C. (2021). The impact of educational achievement on the integration and wellbeing of Afghan refugee youth in the UK. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *47*(21), 4914-4936.<br>60. Ratnamohan, L., Mares, S., & Silove, D. (2018). Ghosts, tigers and landmines in the nursery: Attachment narratives of loss in Tamil refugee children with dead or missing fathers. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, *23*(2), 294-310. |

## 8.3 Appendix 3: An example of Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist.



CASP
Critical Appraisal
Skills Programme

**Paper for appraisal and reference:** McIntyre and Hall (2020).

Section A: Are the results valid?

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider
- what was the goal of the research
- why it was thought important
- its relevance

Comments: This study explores the barriers faced by headteachers seeking to include young asylum seekers and refugees into secondary school in England. Reasons for doing so is the policy changes impacting schools, one being the introduction of acadamies and the other being shift away from ECM and towards autonomy, markets and choice as key drivers of social mobility. As such, it was wondered whether this has had an impact on inclusive practice hence the aim of this study.

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider
- If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants
- Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal

Comments: Researchers wish to explore barriers to refugee and asylum-seeking children inclusion in education, as perceived by headteachers. As such, a qualitative approach seems necessary so to illuminate these experiences.

Is it worth continuing?

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider
- if the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)

Comments: The researchers wanted to understand head teacher's views concerned the perceived barriers in their practice of support refugee and asylum-seeking children, therefore, the research design was considered and justified.

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider
- If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected
- If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study
- If there are any discussions around recruitment (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)

Comments: Researchers recruited headteachers within one LA of England. Studying participants in one LA seemed appropriate so to understand both local level practices and national policies. However, researchers handpicked headteachers who they had a professional relationship with in the hope that the headteachers would feel more comfortable to share openly and honestly throughout the interview. Whilst it is a strength that this was mentioned, this study would have benefited from McIntryre and Hall (2020) discussing how they practised reflexivity in order to address any potential issues that this prior relationship may have had on the interview and subsequent analysis

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider
- If the setting for the data collection was justified
- If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview etc.)
- If the researcher has justified the methods chosen
- If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews are conducted, or did they use a topic guide)
- If methods were modified during the study. If so, has the researcher explained how and why
- If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc.)
- If the researcher has discussed saturation of data

Comments: Headteachers were interviewed whereby responses could be unpicked and clarified to understand their experiences in depth.

6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Yes ☐
Can't Tell ☑
No ☐

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location
- How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implications of any changes in the research design

Comments: Researchers did disclose that they had a pre-existing relationship with the headteachers they interviewed. However, researchers did not explain how they knew these headteachers (e.g. are they colleagues?) and the potential impact of the type of relationship they have with the headteachers on the overall study.

## Section B: What are the results?

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider

- If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained
- If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study)
- If approval has been sought from the ethics committee

Comments: The research study was granted ethical approval and researchers adhered to ethical considerations, e.g. the researchers provided pseudonyms to participants, their schools and did not disclose the LA where the schools are based for ethical purposes.

8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider
- If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process
- If thematic analysis is used. If so, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data
- Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process
- If sufficient data are presented to support the findings
- To what extent contradictory data are taken into account
- Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation

Comments: Researchers applied thematic analysis in order to analyse the data collected from interviews. There is sufficient data presented to support the themes presented within the 'findings' section on the journal article.

9. Is there a clear statement of findings?

Yes ☑
Can't Tell ☐
No ☐

HINT: Consider whether
- If the findings are explicit
- If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments
- If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)
- If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question

Comments: The article includes a findings section, a discussion section and a conclusion whereby the findings are discussed in relation to their research questions and existing literature. However, the researchers did not discuss the credibility of their findings and potential limitations to their study.

Section C: Will the results help locally?

10. How valuable is the research?

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research-based literature
- If they identify new areas where research is necessary
- If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

Comments: Findings suggest that educational policies conflicts with the aims of educators wanting to support the needs of refugee and asylum-seeking children within school. Specifically, policy in the post-2010 landscape being foregrounded in choice, markets and autonomy that "equates to a relentless focus on academic achievement" (p.596), impacted upon headteachers attempts in fulfilling their role in supporting the holistic needs of refugee and asylum-seeking children. As such, policy developments are required for educating refugee and asylum-seeking children.

## 8.4 Appendix 4: Examples of Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT).

| Paper for appraisal and reference: Ott, & O'Higgins, 2019. | | | | | |
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| **Methodological quality criteria** | | **Responses** | | | |
| | | Yes | No | Can't tell | Comments |
| Screening questions (for all types) | S1. Are there clear research questions? | X | | | 1) What educational provisions are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in England currently accessing?<br>2) How does provision interact with the needs of UASC in England? |
| | S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions? | X | | | • Mixed methods:<br>○ 12 Semi-structured interviews across 8 Local Authorities with virtual school heads, social workers, teachers, third sector providers.<br>○ Document analysis, including 18 local and national policies, practices, and lesson plan document for UASC education.<br>○ National statistics from DfE, including National Pupil Database (NPD) and the Local Authority Returns (LAR) regarding the educational provision for UASC. |
| | *Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.* | | | | |

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| 5. Mixed methods | 5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question? | X | | | Yes. Researchers wanted to understand what educational services UASC receive in England and, thereafter, conceptualises this provision in terms of underlying goals and how the provision seeks to meet UASC’s learning needs. As such, a mixed methods approach was deemed necessary to explore these aspects of UASC provision. |
| | 5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question? | X | | | The findings of this research indicate that schools had a range of significant roles for supporting UASC, including promoting their integration into society, understanding their emotional needs, supporting their cultural needs, developing their social needs, and meeting their language needs. Therefore, Ott and O’Higgins (2019) suggest that schools are unique environments that provide more than a curriculum-based education, and so practice should be developed both within school systems, and in wider policy, to acknowledge the multi-faceted needs that schools are poised to support. |
| | 5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted? | X | | | Yes. Both quantitative and qualitative data were clearly presented and interpreted. Researchers brought together findings across the dataset and completed a visual to depict the integration of their findings in line with the research questions and aims. |

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| | 5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed? | X | | | Yes, divergence was presented and subsequently added to their conclusion that UASC can receive a range of educational provisions. |
| | 5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved? | X | | | A strength of this research is that Ott and O'Higgins (2019) provide a useful insight into the significant role of education on developing UASC's potential. However, the research does not go beyond identifying the roles that the education system can play. In other words, although researchers list the needs schools are positioned to meet, there lacks guidance for schools on how to specifically support the wide-ranging needs of UASC and thereby limits the practical implications of their research. |

| Paper for appraisal and reference: Prentice & Ott, 2021. | | | | | |
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| **Methodological quality criteria** | | **Responses** | | | |
| | | Yes | No | Can't tell | Comments |
| Screening questions (for all types) | S1. Are there clear research questions? | X | | | 1) What is educators' knowledge about refugee pupils and how is this knowledge acquired? |
| | S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions? | X | | | • Mixed methods:<br>o A questionnaire completed by 295 primary and secondary teachers where individuals |

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| | | | | | were asked where they got information that helped them in educating UASC, asylum-seeking children and refugee children.<br>○ Case studies of 17 teachers across two schools. This included school document analysis, observations, and teacher and pupil interviews to further understand their knowledge regarding teaching UASC, asylum-seeking children and refugee children. |
| | *Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.* | | | | |
| 5. Mixed methods | 5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question? | X | | | The survey aimed to explore *what* knowledge teaching staff had acquired on a large scale and across a variety of schools. Through the case studies, this allowed researchers to explore *how* knowledge was applied in practice. |
| | 5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question? | X | | | Yes. Findings from the different components of the study added to the researchers conclusions whereby it is suggested that this study found that teachers often acquired knowledge to support UASC, refugee children, and asylum-seeking children through informal means, such as speaking to more experienced colleagues rather than receiving formal training. As such, these findings indicate the need to provide formal training, particularly for schools who do not have an 'in- |

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| | | | | | house expert’ who staff can rely on to develop their practice |
| | 5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted? | X | | | Yes. Findings from both the survey and case studies were clearly presented and interpretations of these findings were supported through the presented data. |
| | 5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed? | | | X | No divergences were presented, but this may be due to divergence not occurring. |
| | 5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved? | X | | | In comparison to other studies in this literature review, this study gathered the views of a large sample size which can significantly add to our understanding regarding how educators develop their practices. However, this study is notwithstanding critique. For example, with the finding that teachers engaged in ad-hoc support over formal training, the study was not clear whether there were barriers to accessing formal training, if formal training was not memorable or relevant, or if it simply was not a favoured approach to |

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| | | | | | acquire and develop knowledge. Moreover, this study reports on educators views on current practices and, in turn, does not take into account whether educators perceived there to be a need for developments in how their practices are shaped. In this way, there is more to be known regarding how educators could be supported to develop their current practices |

## 8.5 Appendix 5: Summary details for each paper included within the literature review.

| | **Author, date.** | **Title.** | **Country.** | **Critical Appraisal tool used.** | **Methodology.** | **Participants/data collection.** | **Analysis.** | **Findings.** | **Critical analysis.** | **Number of criterion in which quality appeared to have been met.** |
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| **1** | Fazel, Garcia, & Stein, 2016. | The right location? Experiences of refugee adolescents seen by school-based mental health services. | England. | CASP. | Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews. | 40 refugees who have experienced mental health services across the UK. | Frame-work Analysis. | Two-thirds of children preferred to receive mental health support within school, as they perceived school as their safe space and could receive support from adults they trust when accessing the mental health support from professionals that they do not know. researchers conclude that educational practitioners should facilitate accessing mental health support in schools when this is a preference for a child, and therefore work in | The rigor of Fazel et al's (2016) findings could have been strengthened through more than one data collection method, such as focus groups, in order to triangulate the data. Moreover, the implications of their research aim could have been further explored through including views from teachers and mental health service practitioners, which could have provided practical guidance on how schools could implement supporting the wellbeing of refugee and | 8/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | collaboration with mental health teams. | asylum-seeking children. their study also negates the consideration of the potential differences between those children who arrived with their parents, compared to those who were unaccompanied; refugee and asylum-seeking children are not a homogenous group, and so their views may be distinct. Despite these critiques, this study adds to the dearth of literature and, in turn, encourages schools to explore working collaboratively with mental health services so that refugee and asylum-seeking children's wellbeing can be appropriately supported. | |
| **2** | Ott, & O'Higgins, 2019. | Conceptualising educational provision for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking | England. | MMAT. | Mixed methods: Semi-structured interviews. Document analysis. | 12 interviews across 8 Local Authorities with social workers. virtual school | Thematic Analysis. | The findings of this research indicate that schools had a range of significant roles for supporting | A strength of this research is that Ott and O'Higgins (2019) provide a useful insight into | 7/7 |

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| | | Children in England. | | | National statistics from DfE. | heads, teachers, and third sector providers.<br>18 local and national policies, practices, and lesson plan document for UASC education.<br>National Pupil Database (NPD) and the Local Authority Returns (LAR) regarding the educational provision for UASC. | | UASC, including promoting their integration into society, understanding their emotional needs, supporting their cultural needs, developing their social needs, and meeting their language needs. Therefore, Ott and O'Higgins (2019) suggest that schools are unique environments that provide more than a curriculum-based education, and so practice should be developed both within school systems, and in wider policy, to acknowledge the multi-faceted needs that schools are poised to support. | the significant role of education on developing UASC's potential. However, the research does not go beyond identifying the roles that the education system can play. In other words, although researchers list the needs schools are positioned to meet, there lacks guidance for schools on how to specifically support the wide-ranging needs of UASC and thereby limits the practical implications of their research. | |
| **3** | De Fina, Paternostro, & Amoruso, 2020. | Learning how to tell, learning how to ask: Reciprocity and storytelling as a community process. | Italy. | CASP. | Qualitative:<br>Participant observation<br>Semi-structured interviews<br>Collection of artifacts. | 24 asylum-seeking children.<br>4 teachers. | Narrative Inquiry. | Researchers found that where trusting relationships were formed, the children began to confide in the teachers, and it was this relationship which was deemed significant in | The findings of this study are supported by presenting a clear and explicit analysis process, whereby De Fina et al (2020) include selected transcripts and draw on participants' own | 8/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | supporting the emotional needs of asylum-seeking children. | words to support their findings. However, the data analysed in this article is only concerned with that collected via interviews. It would be interesting to explore whether their other data collection methods, such as their observations and the collection of artifacts, triangulate with that found in the interviews and how it can add to the conclusions in this article. Despite this, this study provides a valuable insight into the importance of schools investing in the building of trusting relationships with asylum-seeking children. | |
| **4** | Svensson, 2019. | Compensating for conflicting policy goals: Dilemmas of teachers’ work with Asylum- | Sweden. | CASP. | Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews, including photographs and drawings. | This article was part of a wider ethnographic study. The findings that are reported in this paper come from: | Thematic Analysis. | Educational policy contrasted with more recent immigration policies within Sweden, and this | The findings of this study are supported by a clear and detailed account of Svensson’s (2019) analytical | 8/10 |

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| | | seeking pupils in Sweden. | | | Participant observations. | 16 interviews with class teachers.<br>2 focus groups with 7 class teachers. | | duality resulted in tensions within teachers work whereby they were expected to provide care and meet the varying needs of asylum-seeking children through the education system but equally experienced sense of powerlessness to support the issues which the children were facing regarding their asylum status. | procedure, which adequately detailed how analysis was completed alongside offering participant quotes to support their themes. However, as was the critique for Fejes and Dahlstedt’s (2020) study, Svensson’s (2019) research was carried out in Sweden and so its generalisability to the UK can be questioned. Despite this, overall, Svensson’s (2019) research offers a valuable insight into how teachers may experience policies as competing and conflicting when supporting asylum-seeking children. | |
| **5** | McIntyre & Hall, 2020. | Barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in schools in England. | England. | CASP. | Qualitative:<br>4 semi-structured interviews. | Four headteachers of secondary schools within a city in England. | Thematic Analysis. | Headteacher’s experienced a ‘policy paradox’ whereby educational policy in the post-2010 landscape being foregrounded in choice, markets and autonomy that | In this study, McIntryre and Hall (2020) interviewed headteachers with whom they had a professional relationship, in the hope that the headteachers would feel more | 9/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | “equates to a relentless focus on academic achievement” (p.596) impacted upon headteachers attempts in fulfilling their role in supporting the holistic needs of refugee and asylum-seeking children. | comfortable to share openly and honestly throughout the interview. Whilst it is a strength that this was mentioned, this study would have benefited from McIntryre and Hall (2020) discussing how they practised reflexivity in order to address any potential issues that this prior relationship may have had on the interview and subsequent analysis. Despite this, when considering the quality of McIntryre and Hall’s (2020) research, their purpose and information about their participants, including characteristics of the schools in which their participants worked, was made explicit, and thus a particular strength. | |

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| | | | | | | | | | Therefore, the research provides a useful insight into the extent to which some headteachers experienced Government wide initiatives and policies as negatively impacting on their role of supporting the holistic needs of refugee and asylum-seeking children. | |
| **6** | Fejes, & Dahlstedt, 2020. | Language introduction as a space for the inclusion and exclusion of young asylum seekers in Sweden. | Sweden. | CASP. | Qualitative:<br>107 semi-structured interviews.<br>Classroom observations. | 6 principals, 27 teachers, 74 students, within five schools in Sweden. | Thematic Analysis. | When establishing educational provision for asylum-seeking children, school must consider the physical placement of where asylum-seeking children are educated so to ensure their academic needs are being met whilst also ensuring inclusion within the wider school community. | The findings of this study are strengthened by the large sample size and the triangulation of evidence from the range of participants who were included in the research. However, this study was conducted in Sweden and, although in the Western World, Sweden's education practices are different from those within England, bringing into question | 8/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | | whether their findings can be generalised to the UK education system. Despite this, I would argue that this study offers a valuable insight into supporting the ranging needs of asylum-seeking children, and specifically, can be used by educators to reflect on how to develop inclusive, rather than exclusive practices for these students. | |
| **7** | Ward, 2021. | Practitioners' perspectives and needs: Developing skills to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASCs) in experiencing 'belonging' in English educational spaces. | England. | CASP. | Qualitative:<br>Six semi-structured interviews. | Six participants, including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher, a volunteer English teacher and mental health specialist who volunteered in refugee camps, a social worker, a charity worker, a UASC legal specialist, and a Child in Care specialist for UASC within a local authority. | Thematic Content Analysis. | Through gathering multi-agency perspectives, Ward concludes ways in which schools can promote a sense of belonging for UASC:(1) by school staff being able to communicate with UASC irrespective of language barriers; (2) ensuring UASC inclusion within the wider school community; and (3) schools to develop | Ward's (2021) findings could be supported by a larger sample size to include a wider selection of schools so to extend to the evidence. Despite this, the findings are sufficiently supported by quotes from participants, thereby increasing transparency and depth of analysis. A key strength of this research is that is provides | 10/10 |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | their 'trauma awareness' and cultural understanding in order to ensure all staff can adapt their practices for children who have experienced challenging early life experiences. | practical guidance that schools, and those working with UASC, should implement to ensure that they can effectively assist with promoting a sense of belonging. In other words, this research is a supportive document for schools in their journey of improving their practices in supporting the needs of UASC. |  |
| **8** | Prentice & Ott, 2021. | Previous experience, trickle-down training and systemic ad hoc-ery: educators' knowledge acquisition when teaching refugee pupils in one local authority in England. | England. | MMAT. | Mixed methods: Questionnaire of 295 participants.<br>17 case studies. | A questionnaire completed by 295 primary and secondary teachers. Case studies of 17 teachers across two schools. This included school document analysis, observations, and teacher and pupil interviews. | Thematic Analysis. | This study found that teachers often acquired knowledge to support refugee children through informal means, such as speaking to more experienced colleagues rather than receiving formal training. As such, these findings indicate the need to provide formal training, particularly for schools who do not have an 'in-house expert' who staff | In comparison to other studies in this literature review, this study gathered the views of a large sample size which can significantly add to our understanding regarding how educators develop their practices. However, this study is notwithstanding critique. For example, with the finding that teachers engaged in ad-hoc support | 6/7 |

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| | | | | | | | | can rely on to develop their practice. | over formal training, the study was not clear whether there were barriers to accessing formal training, if formal training was not memorable or relevant, or if it simply was not a favoured approach to acquire and develop knowledge. Moreover, this study reports on educators views on current practices and, in turn, does not take into account whether educators perceived there to be a need for developments in how their practices are shaped. In this way, there is more to be known regarding how educators could be supported to develop their current practices. | |
| **9** | McDiarmid, Durbeej, Sarkadi, & Osman,2022. | Schools' and teachers' roles and challenges in supporting the mental | Sweden. | CASP. | Qualitative study using focus groups. | 30 teachers across five schools engaged in four focus groups comprising of | Thematic Analysis. | This study found that Teachers recognise their role in achieving the schools | With McDiarmid et al (2022) using focus groups to collect their data, it could be argued | 10/10 |

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| | | wellbeing of refugee youths: a qualitative study with Swedish teachers. | | | | semi-structured interview questions. | | responsibility for supporting the needs of refugee children. However, simultaneously, they experience barriers and limited resources in meeting this role. | that this enabled rich data to be collected that allows a recognition regarding how teachers talk about and understand the topic area among themselves. Yet, this group context could have simultaneously limited some participants in sharing their views due to potential privacy and confidentiality concerns. Moreover, within focus groups, there can be dominant voices causing others to be less represented thereby furthering the potential that all views may not be represented via focus groups. As such, to further develop our understanding around teacher’s perceptions regarding their role in supporting refugee students, it | |

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| | | | | | | | | | may be beneficial for future research to complete interviews in order to explore ‘private’ rather than ‘public’ views in this topic area (Radley and Billig 1996; Temple 1998). | |
| **10** | Prentice, 2022. | Educators' positive practices with refugee pupils at two schools in England. | England. | CASP. | Qualitative study, including semi-structured interviews and observations. | 17 teachers, teaching assistants, specialist teachers at two schools participate in semi-structured interviews and participant observations. | Thematic Analysis. | This study identifies ‘positive practices’ employed by school staff to support refugee children, such as creating welcoming environments, promoting social–emotional wellbeing, and supporting children’s development of the English language. | With this research study utilising a case study approach, this arguable enabled a detailed, contextualised exploration regarding teachers’ positive practices in supporting refugee pupils in mainstream schools. However, Prentice (2022) recognised that a quasi-experimental design may have been advantageous in establishing causality between positive practices and how these were shaped. Regardless, the study provides an insight into a large sample of 17 teachers’ perceptions | 10/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | | regarding positive practices. Yet, these teachers were selected from schools that were identified as experienced in supporting refugee pupils so to unpick positive practice. As such, little remains known about schools who do not have this experience and how they shape their positive practices. Therefore, this research study effectively answers its research questions but raises further questions to be addressed by future research. | |
| **11** | Kaukko, Wilkinson, and Kohl, 2022. | Pedagogical love in Finland and Australia: a study of refugee children and their teachers. | Finland and Australia. | CASP. | Qualitative study, including semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations. | Interviews with 25 refugee and asylum-seeking children from Australia and 20 refugee and asylum-seeking children from Finland. Ethnographic observation and interviews with nine teachers and | Thematic Analysis. | Pedagogical practices should be founded in ‘love’ whereby practitioners provide a nurturing environment, build students sense of belonging, make reasonable adjustments to establish success for individual | This study is strengthened through its range of participants, including children, teachers, and school leaders, thereby triangulating the data to offer robust conclusions regarding supportive | 9/10 |

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| | | | | | | three senior leaders from the Australian schools and six teachers from the Finish schools. | | students, and make each student feel valued and recognised within the school community. | pedagogical practices. Due to the qualitative nature of the studies, they offer an in-depth analysis of educators and children across seven schools in two countries thereby adding to our understanding regarding effective provision. | |
| **12** | Wilkinson and Kaukko, 2020. | Educational leading as pedagogical love: the case for refugee education. | Australia. | CASP. | Qualitative study, including semi-structured interviews. | Interviews with three senior leaders at one primary school in Australia. | Thematic Analysis. | School leaders identified how they actively resisted the educational pressures around attainment and focused on supporting the 'whole child'. As such, they could orchestrate an educational environment that enables 'success' for students across multiple areas of their life, not just academic achievements. | This study may be criticised for drawing on data of three participants, thereby a small sample size. As such, some may argue that the findings are not generalisable or representative. However, this was not the aim of Wilkinson and Kaukko's (2020) research, and instead, they have provided an in-depth analysis of three headteacher's views in order to aid our current understanding of 'pedagogical love' | 9/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | | from the viewpoint of school leaders. | |
| **13** | Kauhanen, Kaukko, & Lanas, 2022. | Pockets of love. Unaccompanied children in institutional care in Finland. | Finland. | CASP. | Qualitative ethnographic study. | Over a 10-month period, researchers completed an ethnographic study with 13 unaccompanied children which included:<br>Visiting the children’s homes, schools, and other important locations identified by the children.<br>Semi-structured interviews. | Thematic Analysis. | This study identifies the importance of ‘loving relationships’, characterised by choice, trust, responsibility and respect, to support UASC. UASC identified that teachers could provide this level of care which ultimately supported participants to develop connections and alleviate some of their stressors related to the asylum process. | Through employing an ethnographic approach, this study emphasises the perspective of the participant, UASC, through understanding their meaning-making in their own contexts. In this way, this study draws on a relational and reflexive approach to research, and, as such, Kauhanen et al’s (2022) detail how they critically assessed their impact both on the lives of the participants and on the data itself. In turn, the common critique of ethnography producing bias interpretations was addressed by the researchers. Therefore, this ethnographic study of UASC provides a unique understanding to | 9/10 |

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| | | | | | | | | | this literature review. | |

## 8.6 Appendix 6: Email to Headteachers.

Dear [Headteacher],

I am a University of Bristol trainee Educational Psychologist, about to embark on my doctoral research. My research seeks to understand the personal experiences and feelings of those who have day to day responsibility for supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, as well as exploring how Educational Psychologists could support them in their role. Therefore, I am looking to conduct a face to face 45 minute interview in your school with a member of staff whose role it is to support the day to day needs of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (e.g. those who complete their Personal Education Plans). These members of staff may be known as the designated teacher but may have a different job title within your setting.

I wanted to research something that I am passionate about, but not only that, something that will look at the needs of schools here in our area. Having liaised with the Virtual School, I am emailing you, as the Headteacher/Principal, to inform you about my study and to see whether it is a project which you and your school would like to be involved in. This research has been approved by the University of Bristol School for Policy Studies ethics committee and so meets ethical standards.

I intend to use these findings to inform yourself, the Virtual School and Educational Psychologists on how to best support members of staff who are responsible for the day to day support of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. It is hoped that the research will also have a further-reaching impact by improving outcomes for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children through understanding and implementing effective support for Designated Teachers.

If this is an area of research that you may be interested in supporting, please could you forward the attached Information Sheet and Expression of Interest form onto the relevant member of staff.

I would be very happy to answer any questions you may have by email or phone. It would be helpful if you could let me know whether or not you are able to support the research so that I do not make further unnecessary calls on your time.

*NB. If I do not hear back from you within two weeks of sending you this letter, I may send you a reminder. If I do not hear back from you within two weeks of the reminder, I will assume that you do not wish for your school to participate in this research.*

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kind regards,

Ellen Murden

## 8.7 Appendix 7: Information sheet for participants.

**School for Policy Studies**

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6755
**bristol.ac.uk/sps**

### Exploring the experiences of Designated Teachers who support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

### Participant information sheet

Thank you for taking an interest in my research. My research seeks to understand the personal experiences and feelings of those who have day to day responsibility for supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, as well as exploring how Educational Psychologists could support you in this role. Therefore, I am looking to conduct a face to face 45-minute interview in your school with you.

Having previously worked in a similar role to you, this research topic is something that I am passionate about, but not only that, something that will look at the needs of schools here in our area. This research has been approved by the University of Bristol School of Policy Studies ethics committee and so meets ethical standards.

Before you decide whether you would like to take part in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

**Who am I?**

I am Ellen, a year 2 trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Bristol. As part of my training, I am conducting a doctoral research thesis that aims to understand the experiences of those who have day to day responsibility of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). During these interviews, I hope to answer the research questions below:

1. What are Designated Teachers' personal experiences and feelings concerning the responsibility of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?
2. What is helpful for Designated Teachers' wellbeing and/or developing their competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

3. What are the challenges that Designated Teachers perceive in relation to their own wellbeing and competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?

**What will you be asked to do if you agree to participate?**

- I will ask you to confirm that you are responsible for the day-to-day support of UASC, as indicated by you being their key adult who runs their Personal Education Plan (PEPs) meetings, liaises with the professionals involved (e.g. social worker, Virtual School, foster parent etc.,) and has knowledge of the child overtime.
- I will ask that you complete and return the Expression of Interest form (also attached to the email) to confirm you would be interested in taking part.
- Once you have completed the Expression of Interest form, I will contact you via email to arrange a convenient time to discuss the research and to answer any questions you have. I will seek your formal consent at this time. If you agree to a research interview we will arrange a convenient time and place for this to take place.
- We will then have a face to face 45-minute interview held in your school between February and July 2022.
- During the interview, you will reflect on your experiences within your role related to supporting UASC.

**Confidentiality and Data protection: How your information will be stored and used if you decide to take part in the study**

With your consent, the interviews will be audio recorded. I will then transcribe the interviews verbatim, after which the audio recordings will be deleted. This transcript will be made anonymous and will not include any of your personal or identifying details. Where specific names, places, or other identifying features are used, these will be removed or replaced with pseudonyms during the transcription process. In discussions I would ask that you do not use the names of your school, the staff or the pupils. I would suggest that you use non-identifying language such as 'a colleague', 'the school' or 'young person'. The purpose of this is to maintain confidentiality as far as is possible in a small study.

The transcript will be analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis which aims to understand individual's personal experiences and also common experiences between participants from the data. The findings will be presented as a doctoral thesis, and I will produce an executive summary for yourself, schools, the Hope Virtual School and Educational Psychologists so to guide best practice of support for your role.

I ask that during face-to-face interviews that we would have access to a quiet, personal space in your place of work. If Covid-19 Government guidance restricts face to face work, interviews will take place virtually which I'd equally ask that you have access to a quiet, personal space and use headphones to ensure our conversation cannot be overheard and confidentiality is maintained.

Your name will only be recorded on the consent form and the information that you provide during the interview will be made anonymous. I will store all data securely on the University of Bristol server and/or locked filing cabinet at the University of Bristol. The data will be archived and will not be accessible to others. I will ensure we work within the requirement of the Data Protection Act (2018) throughout. However, I will need to report safeguarding issues that come to my attention (more information regarding this is in the 'Confidentiality Protocol').

**If you take part, you have a right to withdraw**

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your information at any time. However, if I have already anonymised the data, I may not be able to comply with your request (further detail in the confidentiality protocol).

**Next step**

If you are interested in participating in this research, please check that you meet the criteria. This form is attached to the email. Following this, please sign and return the Expression of Interest form to me via email.

**Who can I contact if I would like more information about the research?**

If you have any further questions about the research, please do contact me at:
Py20258@bristol.ac.uk

You can also contact my research supervisors if you have any further queries:
Dr Jak Lee (supervisor): jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk
Professor Pauline Heslop (second supervisor): pauline.heslop@bristol.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information,

Best wishes,

Ellen

## 8.8 Appendix 8: Expression of Interest form for participants.

**School for Policy Studies**

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6755
**bristol.ac.uk/sps**

### Exploring the experiences of Designated Teachers who support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

### Expression of Interest form

My name is ______________________________

I work at ______________________________

The title of my role is______________________________
and I confirm that I am responsible for the day-to-day support of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, whereby I am the main contact for foster carer, social worker, the Virtual School and complete their termly Personal Education Plans (PEPs).

**Please tick the appropriate boxes:**

| | **Yes** |
|---|---|
| I would be interested in talking about my experience of my role. | ☐ |
| I would be interested to learn more about the research. | ☐ |

My number is______________________________

My email address is ______________________________

Preferred date and/or time to contact me is ______________________________

Preferred way to contact me is ______________________________

Please return this form to Ellen Murden on py20258@bristol.ac.uk

**Thank you**

Study contact details for further information:
Ellen Murden (trainee Educational Psychologist/researcher): py20258@bristol.ac.uk
Dr Jak Lee (supervisor): jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk
Professor Pauline Heslop (second supervisor): pauline.heslop@bristol.ac.uk

## 8.9 Appendix 9: Informed consent form for participants.

**Consent form**

**Please tick the appropriate boxes**

### 1. Criteria for participation

As part of my job as directed to me by the Head Teacher/Principal:

| | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| I support UASC on a day-to-day basis, and so are known within the school to be their key adult and main point of contact regarding any concerns. | ☐ | ☐ |
| I manage UASC Personal Education Plans (PEPs) | ☐ | ☐ |
| I am the main point of contact and liaise with relevant professionals in order to support UASC, e.g., the virtual school, foster carers, health, CAMHs etc., | ☐ | ☐ |
| I have responsibility for the oversight of UASC education and wellbeing. | ☐ | ☐ |
| I currently support at least one UASC who is on roll at the school | ☐ | ☐ |

### 2. Taking part in this study

| | **Yes** | **No** |
|---|---|---|
| I have read and understood the participant information sheet and confidentiality protocol, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction | ☐ | ☐ |
| I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without have to give a reason. I understand that it may not be possible for my data to be removed once it has been anonymised | ☐ | ☐ |
| I understand that taking part in the study involves a 45-minute interview. This interview will be audio recorded, or if we choose to conduct the interview via Microsoft teams, then the interview will be video recorded on this platform. | ☐ | ☐ |

### 3. Use of information in the study

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| I understand that information I provide will be used for publication as a thesis. It will also be used to create an executive summary for relevant professionals so to guide best practice support for those in my role | ☐ | ☐ |
| I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name, will not be shared beyond the researcher | ☐ | ☐ |
| I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs using pseudonyms so that I cannot be identified | ☐ | ☐ |
| I understand that the data will be anonymised and stored on the university server | ☐ | ☐ |

**I would like to be contacted by Ellen, the researcher, via:**

**Phone** ☐ ______________________________

**Email** ☐ ______________________________

**Don't mind** ☐

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ______________________________ | ____________________ | ____________________ |
| Name of participant [IN CAPITALS] | Signature | Date |

Study contact details for further information:
Ellen Murden (trainee Educational Psychologist/researcher): py20258@bristol.ac.uk
Dr Jak Lee (supervisor): jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk
Professor Pauline Heslop (second supervisor): pauline.heslop@bristol.ac.uk

## 8.10 Appendix 10: Interview guide for semi-structured interviews.

**Initial questions will be identifying the member of staff's emotional experiences and responses to their role.**
The questions below form a guide to a range of questions that may, or may not, be used during the interview.

- With regards to supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, how would you describe your experience of the role?
    - Tell me more about X
- How do you experience hearing about Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children past lives and current worries?
    - Thinking about a specific child and them telling you about their history and current worries, what do you remember thinking and feeling at that point?
    - How did you feel when the child shared X?
    - When you go home from work, whether that's of an evening, weekend or holiday, do you think about these experiences or information?
    - How does this make you experience your personal life?
- How do you experience being the main point of contact for emotionally holding Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?
    - Tell me more about X

**The next questions will explore what, if any, support has been useful to their role and what, if any, needs do they identify.**
The questions below form a guide to a range of questions that may, or may not, be used during the interview.

- When you spoke about X, was there any support available for you?

If there was support:

- In what ways was this helpful?
- How could this support be improved upon?

If there was no support:

- If you did have support, in what ways do you think this would have helped you?

- If you had a magic wand with no school budgets, can you identify any ways you could be better supported in your role?
    - Tell me more about X
    - In what ways would this support you in your role and maybe even your personal life?
    - Do you feel such support is a necessity in your role?

## 8.11 Appendix 11: An excerpt from Jordan’s transcript, with exploratory notes and experiential statements (steps 1-3 of the IPA process).

Key:

- **Descriptive comments – describing the content of what has been said (i.e., face value).**
- *Linguistic comments – exploring specific language used.*
- Conceptual comments – an interrogative and conceptual analysis of the text.

(Smith et al, 2022).

| Experiential statements | Original transcript - Jordan | Exploratory notes |
|---|---|---|
| | Ellen: So my first question is, uhm, well, just tell me about your role, how do you experience supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children? | |
| Responsibility throughout children’s education. | Jordan: So, uhm, I'm I'm there from the the initial process so, uhm, it includes our policy and protocols so if an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child, if there's an application and admission, uhm, rather than going to to the year team, it comes to me. So we have for, uhm, safety and safeguarding, we have a set of questions just to gain a little bit of understanding about past experiences and any educational background etc. So we can kind of get get a picture of what support is needed, uhm, and then we will invite social worker in for, uhm, a meeting, an admissions meeting, and we'll talk through it with them and then we'll have the student join and we try and get that process as quick as possible. Uhm, | *“I’m there” indicates availability, opening oneself up, having someone’s back.*<br>**Responsible for a different process of admissions. “it comes to me” indicates her responsibility from the beginning. Participant doesn’t refer to any other member of staff being involved** – level of independence? Isolation? Sole responsibility is with her? Are other staff passive in their support for UASC – someone else’s responsbility?<br>**Process of gaining information which influences support. The need to gain a “picture” of how best to support the children.** Seems a thorough process – need to get things ‘right’ for the student? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Unexpected aspects to the role. | and then from there on they get the same support as, you know, any child in care so and that involves weekly mentoring, or however often they need, check-ins, they get English and Maths tuition funded by pupil premium and they also, where poss-, they get EAL support as well, so we've got, uhm, it's based on the banding, but normally about 3 sessions a week and and then we also have an EAL reading group, uhm, and so my particular role is that go to uh, what I found, a lot of mine isn't as much of the emotional support, it's more the check-ins, the logistics, and just being that friendly face that they can go to. Uhm, I've largely found that there's less of the, uhm, emotional side of it, the emotional support, uhm, which is interesting, uhm, yeah. | *"as quick as possible" indicates a need to do things in timely manner* – pressure in the role?<br>**Educational support.**<br>**Being a consistent adult.**<br>**"logistics" requiring a level of organisation** – support is complex? Difficult to navigate?<br>*"which is interesting" suggests a surprise, unexpected, previous assumptions made regarding what the child may need.* |
| | Ellen: Yeah, OK. You said about, uhm, how your role kind of fits into the whole logistics of the situation, and you said you know you, you do, you're there for them, but you they don't often share things with you, it's not really the emotional side, can you kind of tell me a little bit more about that? | |
| Understanding and compassion for children's lived experiences.<br>Inhibiting nature of different languages on providing support. | Jordan: So I think, I mean there's there's different elements to it, isn't it? I think a lot of the trauma a lot of these students don't want to talk about, aren't ready to talk about, uhm, because it's it, you know, maybe happened a couple of months ago and they're still living in that trauma. Uhm, I think obviously language barrier is a massive thing, | **Supporting UASC. Awareness of emotional need**s – just because they are out of the conflict doesn't mean the trauma disappears. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Realization of cultural differences and the need to adapt practice.<br>Apprehension of not knowing information and its potential impact on support.<br>Perceived lack of support from outside professionals in managing disclosures. | uhm, cultural differences, uh, a lot of our students, say ‘I don't need support, I’m fine, I don’t need any help’ they don’t feel comfortable getting support.<br>Ellen: Yeah. And you kind of mentioned that, you know, you, you find that a lot of these students have maybe had some traumatic experiences, uhm, and yeah, how do you know that? Where do you get that information from?<br>Jordan: So a lot of the time the social worker will try and give us as much information as possible. Sometimes we get a wealth of, you know, information and we can work with that, sometimes, and I think it's been a bit more often, there's been, the child has not disclosed anything and is not ready to talk. That’s no ones fault, but it does mean it falls on me when the child does share something to unpick that and liaise with other professionals, and that’s ok, I just want support from the social worker in doing that.<br>Ellen: Mmm, ok. And I suppose when you do hear about their past lives or their current worries, whatever that might be, uhm, how do you personally understand what the child has experienced?<br>Jordan: It's, uh, yeah, many a tear has been shed, many a tear has been shed. It's uhm, you know, it's some of the, I mean all traumas trauma but | *Viewing lack of language as a “barrier” indicates stopping, inhibiting or preventing her from supporting the emotions of the child.*<br>**Impact of cultural differences on role.** Unexpected? Not typical to other students they work with? Need to adapt practice?<br>**Lack of information. Social worker’s information comes from what the child has disclosed. Participants hints that the lack of information may be indicative of the child not wanting to talk about what they have experienced, a coping mechanism to not talk about it, and/or a desire to ‘start over’.** I sensed compassion from this participant rather than frustration as to not having all of the information. *“As much information as possible” suggests everyone is trying their best.*<br>*“We can work with that” suggests having information improves practice.*<br>*“Ready” indicates allowing the children to make their decision of when/if they want to disclose information.* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Internalising children’s trauma and experiencing personal sadness.<br>Challenge in processing and comprehending children’s lived experience – far removed from her experience.<br>Struck by the dichotomy between children’s positive nature and their perceived negative experiences.<br>Emotionally demanding role. | some of the most intense trauma you can read and hear about, and it’s so different to what I know about or what I’m used to children having experienced, and It's hard when, you know, I, I, I'm basing it on the students I have, they come in, they get on with their work, they are happy, they are smiling, they're engaged in every bit of learning you offer, anything that, anything that's available they will take up, and so what you're seeing around the Academy does not reflect, so it's quite, you’re having a conversation with these children and in the back of my mind, I'm like, how are you even sat here? How are you having fun? How are you focusing in any lessons? And they try their, they try their absolute best. My my cohort is just, yeah, they are brilliant, but it's it is really taxing definitely taxing reading about and hearing about what they've gone through. | **Emotional response. “many a tear has been shed, many a tear has been shed”** Participant talks about the outcome of her feelings rather than her feelings – difficult to put into words?<br>*“Most intense trauma”* - *awareness of children’s lived experiences. “Intense”* - *of extreme force, degree, or strength* – sense of feeling overwhelmed? Being impacted by their stories?<br>*“It’s so different”* - lack of knowledge? Far removed from her experiences growing up? Not what was expected – surprise?<br>**Children’s responses are unexpected.**<br>**“happy” “smiling” “engaged” “does not reflect”**<br>**“they’re brilliant” - conflicts with what participant expected the children to behave**<br>**“In the back of my mind, I'm like, how are you even sat here? How are you having fun? How are you focusing in any lessons?”**<br>Admiration? Confusion? Waiting for things to take a turn? Element of disbelief? Holding onto children’s experiences?<br>*“Really taxing definitely taxing”* - physically and mentally demanding? |

## 8.12 Appendix 12: Table of Jordan’s experiential statements.

| |
|---|
| 1.Responsibility throughout children’s education. |
| 2.Unexpected aspects to the role. |
| 3.Understanding and compassion for children’s lived experiences. |
| 4.Inhibiting nature of different languages on providing support. |
| 5.Realization of cultural differences and the need to adapt practice. |
| 6.Apprehension of not knowing information and its potential impact on support. |
| 7.Perceived lack of support from outside professionals in managing disclosures. |
| 8.Internalising children’s trauma and experiencing personal sadness. |
| 9.Challenge in processing and comprehending children’s lived experience – far removed from her experience. |
| 10.Struck by the dichotomy between children’s positive nature and their perceived negative experiences. |
| 11.Emotionally demanding role. |
| 12.Internalising children’s trauma and experiencing it as emotional pain. |
| 13.Regular exposure to children’s difficult lived experiences. |
| 14.Challenge in processing and comprehending children’s lived experience – far removed from her experience. |
| 15.Struck by children’s positive nature in the face of their experiences. |
| 16.Limited desensitisation over time. |
| 17.Limited emotional detachment between work and home. |
| 18.Strong connection with children – worrying about them in the community. |
| 19.Frustration when other professionals do not provide the same level of support – responsibility back on her? |
| 20.High level of responsibility – the ‘one’. |
| 21.Strong connection with children – children come to see her every day, show care towards her. |

22.Stepping into other professional’s roles.

23.Sense of change in self.

24.Restricted in confiding in family and friends.

25.Best support is marked by using expertise within the school – supporting one another in professional decisions.

26.Limited awareness or understanding of her role from family and friends - The impossibility of comprehending the role.

27.The tension between empathy and limited understanding of children’s lived experiences.

28.Understanding and compassion for children’s lived experiences – from previous experiences to current day.

29.Transference of emotions from child to adult.

30.Challenge in limited control to impact change - not able to fix children’s pain.

31.Internalising children’s trauma and experiencing it as emotional pain.

32.Focus on what she can change.

33.Relying on close relationships with colleagues to support with challenging situations.

34.Relying on close relationships with colleagues for support with challenging situations.

35.Needing regular emotional support.

36.Feeling remote from others.

37.Sense of not wanting to burden colleagues with her emotions/challenges of the role.

38.Avoiding the feeling of isolation by increasing time spent with children.

39.Challenge on emotional wellbeing without support or feeling understood.

40.Dissonance between actions and feelings – working with everyone but also no one.

41.Interconnectedness of child and adult emotions.

42.Inaccessibility of support due to demand of the role.

43.Unique and isolated role – limited understanding from people offering support.

44.Networking support groups – increase feeling of being understood and reduce isolation.

45.The importance of feeling physically comfortable when accessing necessary support.

46.Wanting to feel safe / be confident in sharing information.

47.Actively avoiding desensitisation – improves their empathy, compassion and therefore professional self.

48.The role impacting personal life.

49.Restricted in confiding in others – not being understood.

50.Lack of understanding from family and friends regarding the significance of the role.

51.Unique and isolated role – limiting professional development and personal wellbeing.

52.Dissatisfaction in limited collaborative and supportive relationships across professionals – puts her in a sense of personal unease.

53.Wanting to give children a voice.

54.Holding onto emotions.

55.Unique and isolated role – limiting professional development.

56.Difficulty and persistence to gather information.

57.Dissatisfaction in limited collaborative and supportive relationships across professionals – puts her in a sense of personal unease.

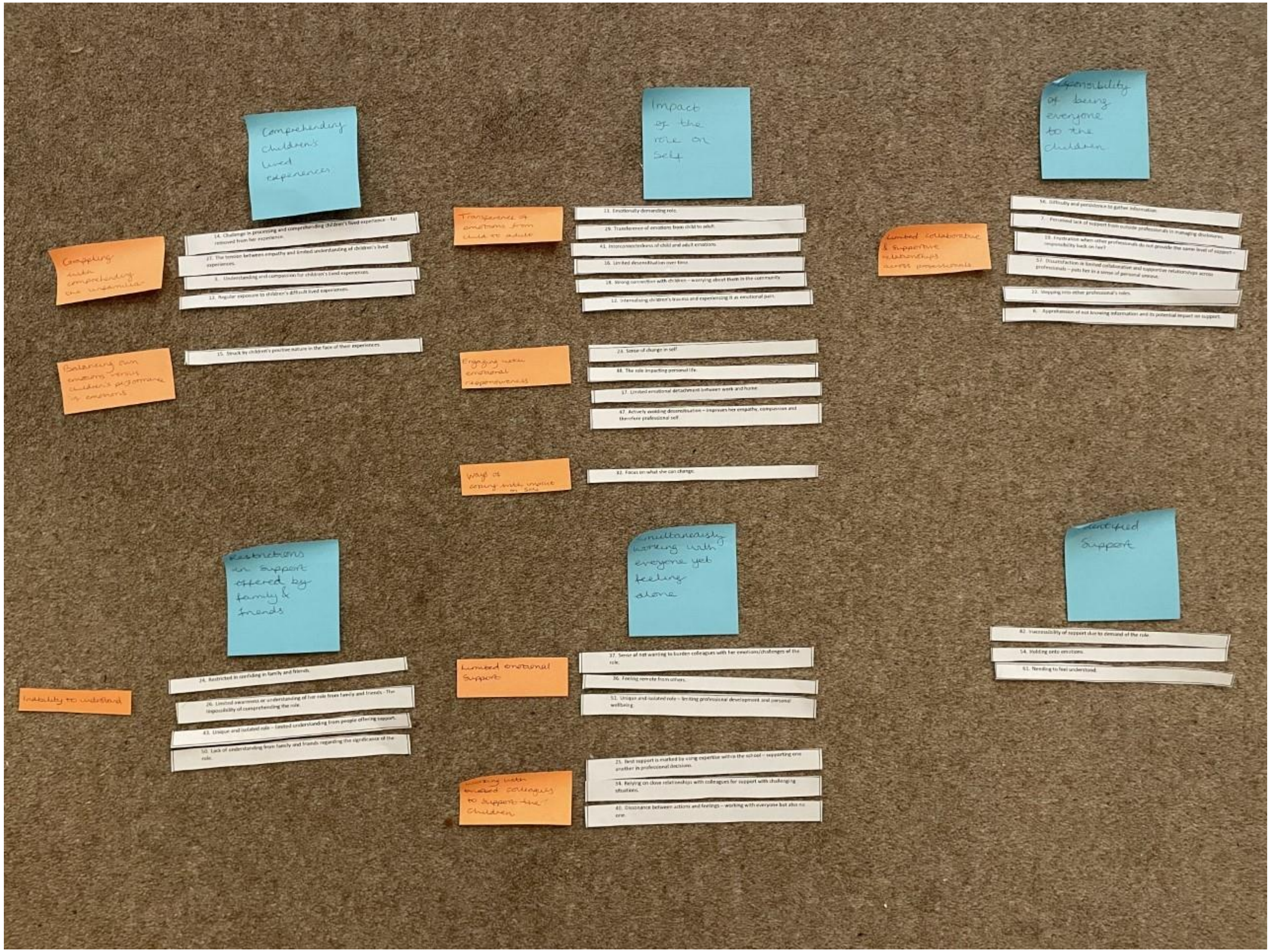
58.Inhibiting nature of different languages on providing support.

59.Wanting to give the child their voice.

60.When appropriately supported, this will overcome her experienced challenges with processing information and limit the emotional impact of the role.

61.Needing to feel understood.

## 8.13 Appendix 13: Image of searching for connections across Jordan's experiential statements (step 4 of the IPA process).


Comprehending children's lived experiences
Grappling with comprehending the unfamiliar
14. Challenge in processing and comprehending children's lived experience – far removed from her experience.
27. The tension between empathy and limited understanding of children's lived experiences.
9. Understanding and compassion for children's lived experiences.
12. Regular exposure to children's difficult lived experiences.
Balancing own emotions versus children's performance of emotions
15. Struck by children's positive nature in the face of their experiences.
Impact of the role on self
Transference of emotions from child to adult
11. Emotionally demanding role.
49. Transference of emotions from child to adult.
41. Interconnectedness of child and adult emotions.
16. Limited desensitisation over time.
18. Strong connection with children – worrying about them in the community.
12. Internalising children's trauma and experiencing it as emotional pain.
Engaging with emotional responsiveness
24. Sense of change in self.
48. The role impacting personal life.
17. Limited emotional detachment between work and home.
47. Actively avoiding desensitisation – improves her empathy, compassion and therefore professional self.
Ways of coping with impact on self
42. Focus on what she can change.
Responsibility of being everyone to the children
Limited collaborative & supportive relationships across professionals
56. Difficulty and persistence to gather information.
7. Perceived lack of support from outside professionals in managing disclosures.
19. Frustration when other professionals do not provide the same level of support – responsibility back on her?
57. Dissatisfaction in limited collaboration and supportive relationships across professionals – puts her in a sense of personal unease.
22. Stepping into other professional's roles.
6. Apprehension of not knowing information and its potential impact on support.
Restrictions in support offered by family & friends
Inability to understand
24. Restricted in confiding in family and friends.
26. Limited awareness or understanding of her role from family and friends - The impossibility of comprehending the role.
43. Unique and isolated role – limited understanding from people offering support.
50. Lack of understanding from family and friends regarding the significance of the role.
Simultaneously working with everyone yet feeling alone
Limited emotional support
37. Sense of not wanting to burden colleagues with her emotions/challenges of the role.
36. Feeling remote from others.
51. Unique and isolated role – limiting professional development and personal wellbeing.
Working with trusted colleagues to support the children
25. Best support is marked by using expertise within the school – supporting one another in professional decisions.
34. Relying on close relationships with colleagues for support with challenging situations.
40. Dissonance between actions and feelings – working with everyone but also no one.
Identified Support
82. Inaccessibility of support due to demand of the role.
54. Holding onto emotions.
61. Needing to feel understood.

## 8.14 Appendix 14: Naming Jordan’s Personal Experiential Themes and consolidating and organising them in a table (step 5 of the IPA process).

Key:

- **Experiential statements.**
- **PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEME.**
- **Sub-themes.**

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Personal experiential statements.</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">COMPREHENDING CHILDREN’S LIVED EXPERIENCES.</th></tr>
<tr><td>**Grappling with comprehending the unfamiliar.**</td><td>The tension between empathy and limited understanding of children’s lived experiences.<br>With our unaccompanied asylum seeking children, it's, it's such a, uhm, almost alien level of trauma, it's it's things that you you can't even fathom and is is very different largely to maybe life here, uhm, so that, and it just seems so, I don't know, I feel for these students, they they go through that trauma and then they come here and then life is just so different and and it seems it's almost like left behind, but then just with the scars of it there, there's no continuity there, they've got a whole new life here and that's it, they don't have, you know, any contact with parents, I think, you know, that's one of the biggest ones is that contact with family and the the ability to assimilate over here if there are family members still in another country, then it it that's that ongoing, ongoing pain and suffering, you know, missing your family and knowing they're not coming. I really feel for them.<br>Internalising children’s trauma and experiencing it as emotional pain.<br>Heartbreak, really. It's like intense, intense sadness. Uhm, you know it, it doesn't, it doesn't seem real when you hear that, and I think when you're hearing very similar stories over and over again, uhm, and you, you understand the gravity of the situation<br>Understanding and compassion for children’s lived experiences – from previous experiences to current day.<br>I feel for these students, they they go through that trauma and then they come here and then life is just so different and and it seems it's almost like left behind, but then just with the scars of it there, there's no continuity there, they've got a whole new life here and that's it, they don't have, you know, any contact with parents, I think, you know, that's one of the biggest ones is that contact with family and the the ability to assimilate over here if there are family members still in another country, then it it that's that ongoing, ongoing pain and suffering, you know, missing your family and knowing they're not coming. I really feel for them.</td></tr>
</table>

| | |
|---|---|
| **Balancing own emotions versus children's performance of emotions.** | Struck by the dichotomy between children’s positive nature and their perceived negative experiences.<br>I just think the dichotomy between what you're reading and, you know, what you're seeing shocks me a lot, uh, the resilience, really.<br><br>I, I, I'm basing it on the students I have, they come in, they get on with their work, they are happy, they are smiling, they're engaged in every bit of learning you offer, anything that, anything that's available they will take up, and so what you're seeing around the Academy does not reflect, so it's quite, you’re having a conversation with these children and in the back of my mind, I'm like, how are you even sat here? How are you having fun? How are you focusing in any lessons? And they try their, they try their absolute best. My my cohort is just, yeah, they are brilliant. |
| **IMPACT OF THE ROLE ON SELF.** | |
| **Transference of emotions from child to adult.** | Internalising children’s trauma and experiencing personal sadness.<br>It's, uh, yeah, many a tear has been shed, many a tear has been shed. It's uhm, you know, it's some of the, I mean all traumas trauma but some of the most intense trauma you can read and hear about, and it’s so different to what I know about or what I’m used to children having experienced... it's it is really taxing definitely taxing reading about and hearing about what they've gone through.<br><br>It's heartbreaking. It really is.<br><br>It's just it's just shock every time, you know, you get similar stories, and although you may be expecting what you hear, it doesn't it doesn't take away from how you feel each time.<br><br>Interconnectedness of emotions between child and adult<br>A lot of my stress comes from the thought that they're not talking about this and then that's gonna be unresolved trauma that's gonna stay with them for life that's impacting their progress |
| **Redefining personal idiosyncrasies.** | Sense of change in self.<br>The role has massively, massively, shaped me, changed my attitude, I think, I mean, not that I was some, you know, awful person before, but like when you're with someone face to face, it's very easy to you know, you see things on the news and media just loves to hate, doesn't it, and not saying I ever agreed with it, but you know when you have face to face interactions, human interactions with anyone, understand on a personal basis what someone has gone through it, you build those relationships and you kind of understand more, understanding the process more of what happens when a student comes over here, what they've been through and what what the next steps would be and what options are available to them. Uhm, so yeah, definitely, I’m more understanding, yeah. |
| **Engaging with emotional responsiveness as a means to** | Actively avoiding desensitisation – improves their empathy, compassion and therefore professional self.<br>The worry I think you, working in school you see people who have been in it for so long and they’re just desensitized |

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| **supplement professional expertise.** | and you never you never want to get to that point where it doesn't affect you, I I I don't ever want to get to that point, and I think if I got to the point where I'm not affected or, you know, it doesn't give me a feeling in my heart then I'm, I know I need to need to step back 'cause I think you can only do the best when you're empathizing and you've got that empathy for the children, uhm, but as well as protecting my own mental health.<br>Limited emotional detachment between work and home.<br>You don't, I don't think in this role you switch off, you don't, you know, you are constantly concerned, you know, there's always that thought in the back of your mind, like where are they now? Are they you know, are they on their own? Have they made friends in the community? |
| **Focusing on what can be changed.** | Challenge in limited control to impact change.<br>One of the worst parts I found especially, so when students have family and it was it would be talking to me and asking me as that adult 'I need a lawyer, I need to, I need support with that' and I I can manage a lot of other stuff, but that, seeing someone in like pure desperation begging for help that really, really, I've struggled with a lot, uh, because my hands are, you know, I can pick up the phone and call carer and, you know, get your bus pass and do whatever, but I can't bring your family here.<br>Focus on what she can change.<br>It's heartbreaking. It really is, uhm, it, I think you, the longer you're in the role, you come to rationalize, and you think, I can't save everyone, I can't do everything, but I do feel I will try and go above and beyond in ways in other ways, so, for instance, getting funding for equipment so that the student can engage in activities they love and go onto further education with the right resources. So it's, you know, it isn't, you know, it's not their family, but it's doing whatever you can. |
| **RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING EVERYONE TO THE CHILDREN.** | |
| **Limited collaborative and supportive relationships across professionals.** | Difficulty and persistence to gather information.<br>A lot of the time I'm trying to chase up information about family it's or it's bitty information and so having an ongoing communication, tighter communication, puts my mind at ease because I'm if I'm relying on a student who has limited English to give me information, we're going nowhere.<br>Perceived lack of support from outside professionals in managing disclosures.<br>So a lot of the time the social worker will try and give us as much information as possible. Sometimes we get a wealth of, you know, information and we can work with that, sometimes, and I think it's been a bit more often, there's been, the child has not disclosed anything and is not ready to talk. That's no ones fault, but it does mean it falls on me when the child does share something to unpick that and liaise with other professionals, and that's ok, I just want support from the social worker in doing that. |

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| | Frustration when other professionals do not provide the same level of support – responsibility back on her?<br>With residential homes, there’s a changeover of staff and, uhm, that is is tough and I never really feel like I am able to get a full picture, or, uh, a consistent picture. Also when students, uhm, struggle massively, with their mental health and just don’t want any support, a lot of referrals were put in and they don't want any support, and you'd call up home just to see how they are and they say like, ‘oh, you know, well, I wasn't there then and I wasn't there then’. It's fine, it’s no fault of their own, but it's hard that a consistent adult isn't with them all the time for a child who really does need it.<br>Dissatisfaction in limited collaborative and supportive relationships across professionals – puts her in a sense of personal unease.<br>I think there needs to be a lot more crossover between social services, uhm, you know, we have our PEP, we have two a year, but I find myself constantly trying to get in touch 'cause every day trying to get in touch with the social worker and they’re run so thin that it's it's impossible so and, you know, they've got however many students so it’s it's hard for those students have someone championing for them, they've got me in school but I'm limited and then not having someone directly and sometimes, you know, going to carers and stuff they, I don’t know, they’re new to their placement or whatever it is, they're not fully there for that child they can't be fully there for that child, uhm, so yeah, I think a triangulation approach, you know, of the virtual school, of social care and of us, we could get a lot more done<br>Stepping into other professional’s roles.<br>'Cause they'll come to me about anything and everything, they're like, ‘oh, I I need a bus pass for the weekend’, which is not my responsibility, however, they know that they've got that person there in school that can go, ‘OK, I'll call social worker’, or ‘OK, I'll call carer’, I'll be that that in between. |
| **RESTRICTIONS OF SUPPORT FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS.** | |
| **Inability to understand.** | Limited awareness or understanding of her role from family and friends - The impossibility of comprehending the role.<br>People don’t know what I do, no (participant laughs) absolutely not, you know, I sometimes just I find myself thinking If I had to explain what has happened from the start of my day to the end of my day it just, it just doesn't make sense, even to me.<br>Restricted in confiding in family and friends.<br>I think it's it's it's hard because there's limits you can talk to people about things when they're not in school.<br>You can't talk about your students, you can’t talk about the ins and outs of things but also people don't get it or they go, ‘Oh yeah, that's sad’ they they’re not experiencing it first hand, it’s like when you open the news and you see things it's like it's desperately sad and you're like ‘Aw, yeah’, and then you put it down, you go away, it's not your responsibility, |

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| | whereas I've got these, these children, and they are my responsibility and if they're in a residential home, they've got no one else there, it's the the pressure is high, definitely.<br>Unique and isolated role – limited understanding from people offering support.<br>Uhm, but even then I find because, you know, you're having conversations with people who don't know your role, who don't, yeah, don't really get it, so they can sit there and they can say, 'oh yeah, OK, how's that?' You know, 'I understand' and but realistically you can't, you get more value, don't you, from someone who's going through the same thing. |
| **SIMULTANEOUSLY WORKING WITH EVERYONE YET FEELING ALONE.** | |
| **Limited emotional support from colleagues.** | Feeling remote from others.<br>Because this role is so individual I I don't I don't even know of other people really, I don't know the DT's [Designated Teachers] from other schools, and so it never really feels like there's someone else in the same boat, uhm, so that that can be a little bit isolating, you know.<br>Sense of not wanting to burden colleagues with emotions/challenges of the role.<br>You know, there's only so much that people wanna listen to, you know, what's going on and there's only so much I can say to certain people, you know, I can't go into the ins and outs and start sharing what I've heard so it's, you know, there are, luckily there are people I get on well with in school who I can have some of those conversations with, uhm, which is good, but as a whole, this job I do find quite isolating sometimes.<br>Unique and isolated role – limiting professional development and personal wellbeing.<br>I mean the ideal, it would be another me another person working on the same thing, uhm, just someone in that day to day that you can say, 'yeah I've had...' you know, you can turn around to at any point really or 'can I have support with this?' 'That made me feel like this' that's that's something that I find difficult because I'm on my own, so even the admin side of it, the paperwork and that kind of thing, I can't just go, 'oh, what's this? 'Cause you can't hunt anyone down, so it's it's a lot, it's just pressure, it is pressure, uhm, so yeah, I'd have another me with me. |
| Working with trusted colleagues to support the children. | Best support is marked by using expertise within the school – supporting one another in professional decisions.<br>You know we're quite, we're a tight team, so I can say, you know, go to whoever and be like 'that was, that's intense to read, that's intense to hear about, I need 10 minutes, I need a bit of time just to, yeah, reflect on that, what do to next'.<br>Relying on close relationships with colleagues for support in challenging situations.<br>I think there's, there is lots of sort of obviously line manager meetings each week, however it's, it's more the informal relationship you make in school it's not necessarily, I personally wouldn't go to a wellbeing drop in center or you |

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| | know, it’s more those, you know, smaller interpersonal relationships you make around the school, uhm, and I think they're the ones that are most important to me, uh, personally, because I can go to them throughout the day, take 10 minutes, and think what to do next.<br><br>Dissonance between actions and feelings – working with everyone but also no one.<br>It does feel like I'm I'm isolated in a way, but I am also working with everyone in the school, so I'm on my own for that student to a degree but then I'm going down to the science department and saying ‘Do you know what they need?’ ‘They’re not understanding that lesson’, ‘they’re they’re struggling in their double lessons so what I'm going to do is in second lesson, we're going to do an intervention there’. So I'm, I'm going to speak to other people, which is nice, but no ones doing the job with me. |
| **IDENTIFIED SUPPORT.** | |
| **The need for opportunities to be listened to and understood.** | Inaccessibility of support due to demand of the role.<br>We moan when we don't get it, but when we get it we don't take it up because it's impacting our, you know, oh no, I've got stuff to do I've, I've got a meeting to do, I’ve got this to do, that to do, so, again, it probably comes down to protected time and that, uhm, yeah, protected time and then space then to have those conversations on a one to one basis,<br><br>Holding onto emotions.<br>It would give me the opportunity to support my wellbeing by you know, sharing rather than having to like bottle up what's going on or just crack on because maybe no ones around or you don’t have the time to stop, so yeah, the ability to share and discuss with someone who understands, uhm, that will have a massive impact. I think the the pressure element would be eased.<br><br>Needing to feel understood.<br>Yeah, just, I think the main thing is having someone to talk to who understands. |

## 8.15 Appendix 15: Alphabetical list of Personal Experiential Themes across cases.

Key:

- Alex’s Personal Experiential Themes.
- Robin’s Personal Experiential Themes.
- Jessie’s Personal Experiential Themes.
- Jordan’s Personal Experiential Themes.
- Kim’s Personal Experiential Themes.

1.Admiring children overcoming their challenging experiences - Positioning children as artifacts of overcoming.
2.Becoming aware of own vulnerability.
3.Best support is marking by collaborating with colleagues – ‘Leaning’ on colleagues.
4.Comprehending children’s lived experiences - Balancing own emotions versus children's performance of emotions.
5.Comprehending children’s lived experiences - Grappling with comprehending the unfamiliar.
6.Creating emotional boundaries.
7.Evoking emotional loneliness from colleagues.
8.Focusing on what can be changed.
9.Gratification in being the one to have the special bond with the children.
10.Guarding others from the challenges of the role.
11.Identified support – Inaccessibility of support due to demands of the role.
12.Impact of the role on self - Engaging with emotional responsiveness as a means to supplement professional expertise.
13.Impact of the role on self - Transference of emotions from child to adult.
14.Impact of the role on self – Redefining personal idiosyncrasies.
15.Impact on home life - Taking work home.
16.Impact on own emotions – Mirroring children’s feelings.
17.Impact on personal life - Interrelatedness of work and home.
18.Inhibited from engaging in professional development.
19.Journey of not knowing - Limited expertise in knowing how to support the needs of these children.

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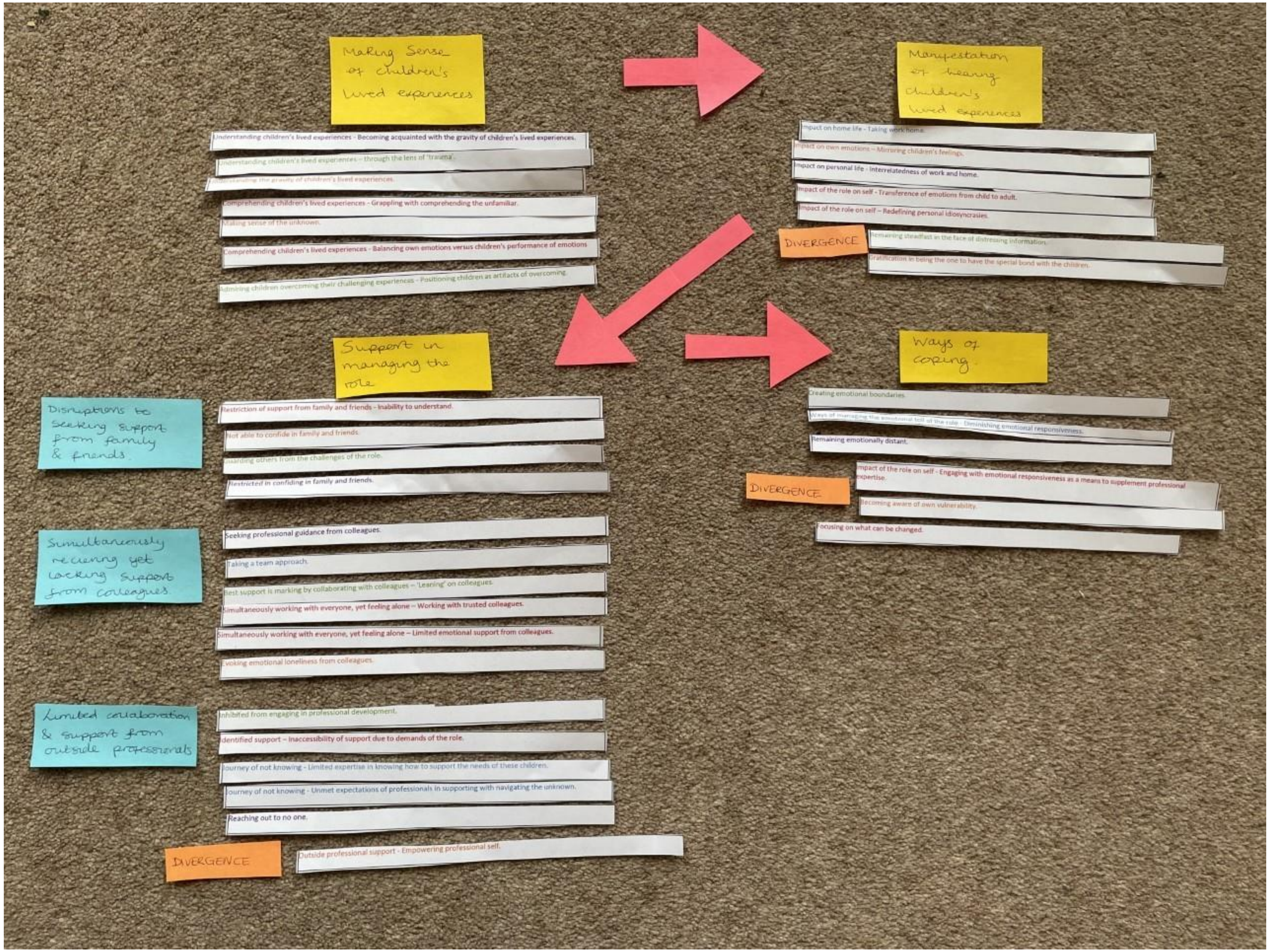
| 20.Journey of not knowing - Unmet expectations of professionals in supporting with navigating the unknown. |
| 21.Making sense of the unknown. |
| 22.Not able to confide in family and friends. |
| 23.Outside professional support - Empowering professional self. |
| 24.Reaching out to no one. |
| 25.Remaining emotionally distant. |
| 26.Remaining steadfast in the face of distressing information. |
| 27.Restricted in confiding in family and friends. |
| 28.Restriction of support from family and friends - Inability to understand. |
| 29.Seeking professional guidance from colleagues. |
| 30.Simultaneously working with everyone, yet feeling alone – Limited emotional support from colleagues. |
| 31.Simultaneously working with everyone, yet feeling alone – Working with trusted colleagues. |
| 32.Taking a team approach. |
| 33.Understanding children’s lived experiences - Becoming acquainted with the gravity of children’s lived experiences. |
| 34.Understanding children’s lived experiences – through the lens of ‘trauma’. |
| 35.Understanding the gravity of children’s lived experiences. |
| 36.Ways of managing the emotional toll of the role - Diminishing emotional responsiveness. |

## 8.16 Appendix 16: Image of working with Personal Experiential Themes to develop Group Experiential Themes across cases (step 7 of the IPA process).



Making Sense of children's lived experiences

Understanding children's lived experiences - Becoming acquainted with the gravity of children's lived experiences.

Understanding children's lived experiences – through the lens of 'trauma'.

Understanding the gravity of children's lived experiences.

Comprehending children's lived experiences - Grappling with comprehending the unfamiliar.

Making sense of the unknown.

Comprehending children's lived experiences - Balancing own emotions versus children's performance of emotions

Admiring children overcoming their challenging experiences - Positioning children as artifacts of overcoming

Manifestation of hearing children's lived experiences

Impact on home life - Taking work home.

Impact on own emotions – Mirroring children's feelings.

Impact on personal life - Interrelatedness of work and home.

Impact of the role on self - Transference of emotions from child to adult.

Impact of the role on self – Redefining personal idiosyncrasies.

DIVERGENCE

Remaining steadfast in the face of distressing information.

Gratification in being the one to have the special bond with the children.

Support in managing the role

Disruptions to seeking support from family & friends.

Restriction of support from family and friends - Inability to understand.

Not able to confide in family and friends.

uarding others from the challenges of the role.

Restricted in confiding in family and friends.

Simultaneously recieving yet lacking support from colleagues.

Seeking professional guidance from colleagues.

Taking a team approach.

Best support is marking by collaborating with colleagues – 'Leaning' on colleagues.

Simultaneously working with everyone, yet feeling alone – Working with trusted colleagues.

Simultaneously working with everyone, yet feeling alone – Limited emotional support from colleagues.

Evoking emotional loneliness from colleagues.

Limited collaboration & support from outside professionals

Inhibited from engaging in professional development.

dentified support – Inaccessibility of support due to demands of the role.

Journey of not knowing - Limited expertise in knowing how to support the needs of these children.

Journey of not knowing - Unmet expectations of professionals in supporting with navigating the unknown.

Reaching out to no one.

DIVERGENCE

Outside professional support - Empowering professional self.

Ways of coping.

Creating emotional boundaries.

Ways of managing the emotional toll of the role - Diminishing emotional responsiveness.

Remaining emotionally distant.

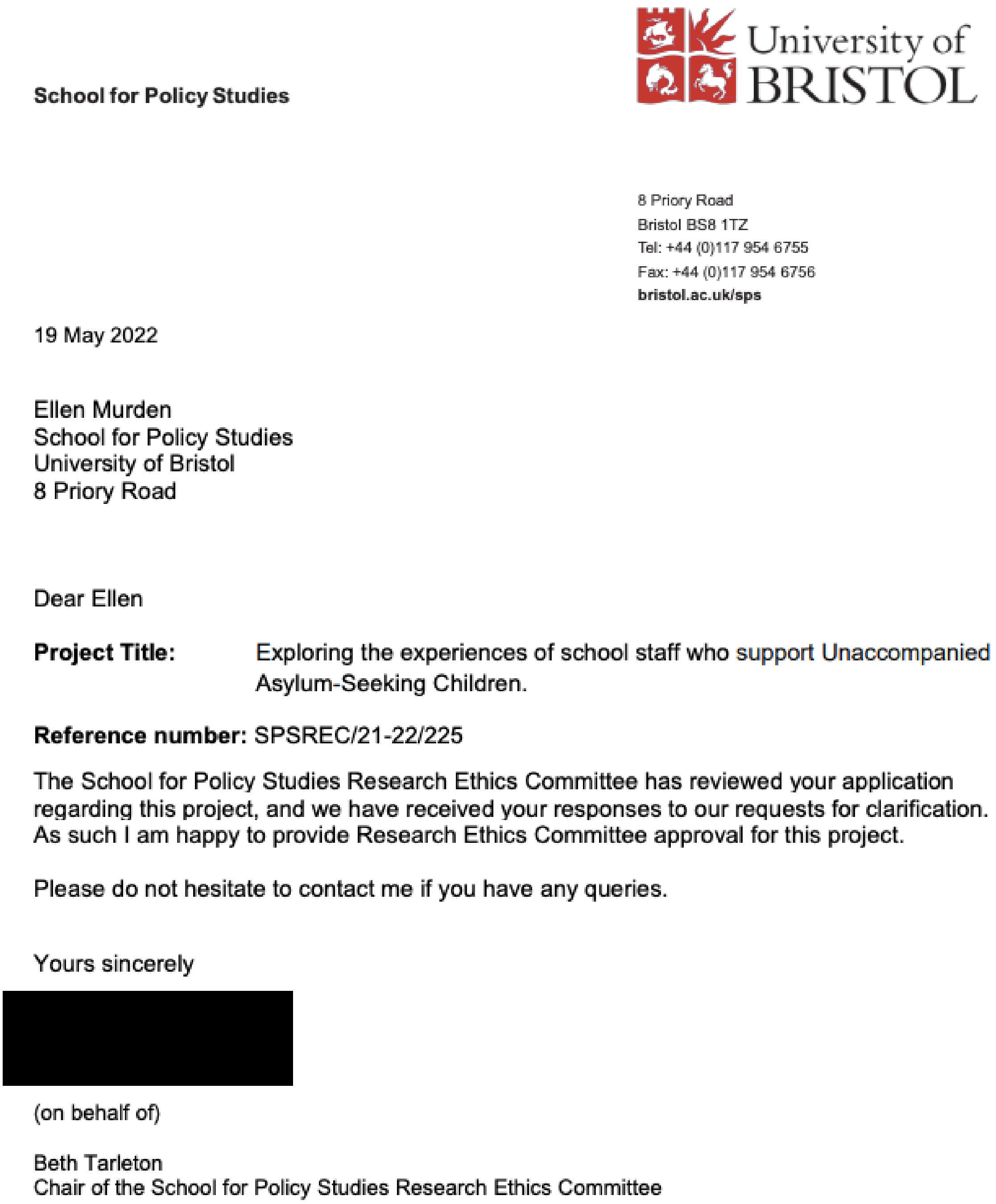
DIVERGENCE

Impact of the role on self - Engaging with emotional responsiveness as a means to supplement professional expertise.

Becoming aware of own vulnerability.

Focusing on what can be changed.

## 8.17 Appendix 17: Ethical approval granted by the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bristol in February 2022.



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19 May 2022

Ellen Murden
School for Policy Studies
University of Bristol
8 Priory Road

Dear Ellen

**Project Title:** Exploring the experiences of school staff who support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

**Reference number:** SPSREC/21-22/225

The School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application regarding this project, and we have received your responses to our requests for clarification. As such I am happy to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for this project.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

(on behalf of)

Beth Tarleton
Chair of the School for Policy Studies Research Ethics Committee

## 8.18 Appendix 18: Confidentiality protocol.

**Confidentiality protocol**

This research project is designed to capture the experiences of staff who are responsible for the day to day support of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and what best practice support for their role could be.

All data obtained through this study will be anonymised, confidential and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). Where specific names, places, or other identifying features are used, these will be removed or replaced with pseudonyms during the transcription process. However, due to the small-scale nature of this research project, anonymity cannot be guaranteed despite the procedure and protocols that we put in place.

Moreover, there are limits to confidentiality. In the event that information is shared that related to an illegal activity or to an individual(s) being harmed, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Therefore, if you disclose information that suggests that you, or others, are at risk of harm, the follow procedure will be followed:

- If there is a concern, such as a child protection issue, you will be made aware that the information disclosed will be shared with the child protection officer within your school
- I will consult with my research supervisors, if appropriate, as soon as possible to make a decision about whether confidentiality needs to be broken
- If a child protection issue arises, I will complete a written account and follow the school's child protection procedure

You have the right to withdraw your participation and information shared at any point throughout the research project (January 2022 – May 2023). However, it could be that when you request to withdraw from the study, I have already anonymised all data and cannot identify which information you have given. In this instance, it may not be possible for me to comply with your request.

## 8.19 Appendix 19: Debriefing email.

Dear [name of participant]

Thank you for your participation in this research study.

**Right to withdraw data**

We would like to remind you that you may choose to withdraw the data you provided at any time up until May 2023.

**If you have any questions**

If you have any questions or concerns about this research or your rights as a research participant, please contact me on py20258@bristol.ac.uk

Alternatively, if you would feel more comfortable, please contact my research supervisors:
Dr Jak Lee (supervisor): jak.lee@bristol.ac.uk
Professor Pauline Heslop (second supervisor): pauline.heslop@bristol.ac.uk

**Support**

If you feel that you require support following the interview, below is a website with information on how this can be accessed:
https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling

Alternatively, please seek support via your employee assistance program and/or line manager.

Best wishes,

Ellen

## 8.20 Appendix 20: Summary of Group Experiential Themes, their sub-themes, and Personal Experiential Themes.

| **Group Experiential Themes.** | | **Sub-themes.** | **Personal Experiential Themes.** | **Alex.** | **Robin.** | **Jessie.** | **Jordan.** | **Kim.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s lived experiences - “the most intense trauma you can read and hear about, and it’s so different”. | | Understanding children’s lived experiences - Becoming acquainted with the gravity of children’s lived experiences. | | X | X | | |
| | | | Comprehending children’s lived experiences - Grappling with comprehending the unfamiliar. | | | | X | X |
| | | | Comprehending children’s lived experiences - Balancing own emotions versus children's performance of emotions | | | | X | |
| | | | Admiring children overcoming their challenging experiences - Positioning children as artifacts of overcoming. | | X | | | |
| 2. | Manifestation of hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children’s lived experiences - “I do take, take things home, and I think about them a lot”. | | Impact on home life - Taking work home. | X | | | | |
| | | | Impact on personal life - Interrelatedness of work and home. | | | X | | |
| | | | Impact of the role on self - Transference of emotions from child to adult. | | | | X | |
| | | | Impact on own emotions – Mirroring children’s feelings. | | | | | X |

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| | | | Remaining steadfast in the face of distressing information. | | X | | | |
| | | | Gratification in being the one to have the special bond with the children. | | | | | X |
| 3a. | Support in managing the role - “it never really feels like there’s someone else in the same boat”. | Simultaneously receiving, yet lacking, support from colleagues - “It does feel like I'm I'm isolated in a way, but I am also working with everyone in the school”. | Taking a team approach. | X | | | | |
| | | | Best support is marked by collaborating with colleagues - Seeking professional guidance from colleagues. | | X | X | | |
| | | | Simultaneously working with everyone, yet feeling alone – Limited emotional support from colleagues. | | | | X | |
| | | | Evoking emotional loneliness from colleagues. | | | | | X |
| 3b. | Support in managing the role - “it never really feels like there’s someone else in the same boat”. | Limited collaboration and support from outside professionals - “I have thought ‘I wonder what there is for me’, but there doesn’t seem to be anyone”. | Inhibited from engaging in professional development. | | X | | | |
| | | | Journey of not knowing - Unmet expectations of professionals in supporting with navigating the unknown. | X | | | | |
| | | | Reaching out to no one. | | | X | | |
| | | | Outside professional support - Empowering professional self. | | | | | X |
| | | | Identified support – Inaccessibility of support due to demands of the role. | | | | X | |
| 3c. | Support in managing the role - “it never really feels like there’s someone else in the same boat”. | Disruptions to seeking support in personal relationships - | Restricted in confiding in family and friends. | | | **X** | | **X** |
| | | | Guarding others from the challenges of the role. | | **X** | | | |

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| | | “who can I talk to about this stuff when I get home, you know?” | Restriction of support from family and friends - Inability to understand. | | | | **X** | |
| 4. | Ways of coping – “I can’t save everyone. I can’t do everything.” | | Ways of managing the emotional toll of the role - Diminishing emotional responsiveness. | X | | | | |
| | | | Engaging with emotional responsiveness as a means to supplement professional expertise. | | | | X | |
| | | | Creating emotional boundaries. | | X | | | |
| | | | Becoming aware of own vulnerability. | | | | | X |
| | | | Focusing on what can be changed. | | | | X | |
| | | | Remaining emotionally distant. | | | X | | |

## 8.21 Appendix 21: Table of Group Experiential Themes and corresponding quotes from across the cases to demonstrate significance of each Group Experiential Theme.

| Group Experiential Themes 1 | Sub-themes | Alex | Robin | Jessie | Jordan | Kim |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Making sense of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences.** | | You know, because these children have been through a lot, things we may never understand or know about, they will have some level of trauma. | The past trauma that you know we've we've heard about, yeah, they're from from areas of conflict, so there are some quite harrowing things...there's immediately, you know, naturally I'm human that you know you feel sorry for these young people. | I mean, these students have gone through so much trauma and so, such difficult starts to their life, there's been some really harrowing cases. | With our unaccompanied asylum seeking children, it's, it's such a, uhm, almost alien level of trauma, it's it's things that you you can't even fathom and is is very different largely to maybe life here, uhm, so that, and it just seems so, I don't know, I feel for these students, they they go through that trauma and then they come here and then life is just so different and and it seems it's almost like left behind, but then just with the scars of it there, there's no continuity there, they've got a whole new life here and that's it, they don't have, you know, any contact with parents, I think, you know, that's one of the biggest ones is that contact with family and the the ability to assimilate over here if there are family members still in another country, then it it that's that ongoing, ongoing pain and suffering, you know, missing your family and | To hear some of the experiences that they had gone through and you know, the, sort of, just the trauma that they had in their home country to then have the journey to then come to a country they couldn't speak their language to then be in a home where they don't have people speaking their language either and then coming to a school which a lot of them haven't experienced before, I just can't imagine what it would have been like, it's hard for me to hear so what would it have been like to experience? |

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| | | | | | knowing they're not coming. I really feel for them. | |
| | | | The majority of the students that we've got coming in, if you didn't know those things, you wouldn't have put any of those things in there because they're humble, you know, the resilience that they've shown to get to these places is impressive...It's it's almost shameful that, you know you're not getting out of bed | The the the trauma and where they've come from being so challenging | I, I, I'm basing it on the students I have, they come in, they get on with their work, they are happy, they are smiling, they're engaged in every bit of learning you offer, anything that, anything that's available they will take up, and so what you're seeing around the Academy does not reflect, so it's quite, you're | I find it really hard to hear their experiences and I because it was just unimaginable... It's shock, I was surprised by some of it because for me, well, I think it's horrendous. |

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| | | | because you're you're tired or whatever it is, it's like, well, actually, you know, you need to be here if if these guys can make it so, uhm. | | having a conversation with these children and in the back of my mind, I'm like, how are you even sat here? How are you having fun? How are you focusing in any lessons? And they try their, they try their absolute best. My my cohort is just, yeah, they are brilliant. | |
| | | | They've seen conflict, uhm I've heard many things about, you know, the actual travel element of it, which is obviously horrible, awful to hear and, almost like, acknowledge that it’s happened | | I feel for these students, they they go through that trauma and then they come here and then life is just so different and and it seems it's almost like left behind, but then just with the scars of it there, there's no continuity there, they've got a whole new life here and that's it, they don't have, you know, any contact with parents, I think, you know, that's one of the biggest ones is that contact with family and the the ability to assimilate over here if there are family members still in another country, then it it that's that ongoing, ongoing pain and suffering, you know, missing your family and knowing they're not coming. I really feel for them. | |

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| | | | | | I just think the dichotomy between what you're reading and, you know, what you're seeing shocks me a lot, uh, the resilience, really. | |
| | | | | | Heartbreak, really. It's like intense, intense sadness. Uhm, you know it, it doesn't, it doesn't seem real when you hear that, and I think when you're hearing very similar stories over and over again, uhm, and you, you understand the gravity of the situation. | |

| **Group Experiential Theme 2** | **Sub-themes** | **Alex** | **Robin** | **Jessie** | **Jordan** | **Kim** |
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| **Manifestation of hearing Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's lived experiences.** | | I do think about them a lot, I think that's quite natural, but I've always been, I think I'm really lucky in the fact that I can switch it off. | Nah, personally, I'm I feel pretty, pretty strong and pretty alright about it I, you know, I know that shocking things happen in the world, my eyes are a bit more open to it now, but yeah, I don't take it home, I don't take it personally. | Yeah, so yes, I do take, take things home, and I think about them a lot, uhm, yes, I wouldn't say it's day-to-day, but certainly week to week, uhm, kind of dealing with, uhm, and being aware of new things that have come up that those young people are processing and kind of just working out how it's best for us to manage it | The role has massively, massively, shaped me, changed my attitude, I think, I mean, not that I was some, you know, awful person before, but like when you're with someone face to face, it's very easy to you know, you see things on the news and media just loves to hate, doesn't it, and not saying I ever agreed with it, but you know when you have face to face interactions, human interactions with anyone, understand on a personal basis what someone has gone through it, you build those relationships and you kind of understand more, understanding the process more of what happens when a student comes over here, what they've been through and what what the next steps would be and what options are available to them. Uhm, so yeah, definitely, I'm more understanding, yeah. | I see them as my children. They always say you know, like I'm school mum. |
| | | I do think about them and worry kind of what they've been through | I personally I I'm I'm fairly strong mentally, | I certainly think that having had a child, uhm, my sensitivity to the experiences of the young people that I work with is far, far greater... I'm much more in tune with that being someones child | It's, uh, yeah, many a tear has been shed, many a tear has been shed. It's uhm, you know, it's some of the, I mean all traumas trauma but some of the most intense trauma you can read and hear about, and | I know fosters carers said, you know, "the children have said they'd never, they wouldn't be coming to school if they didn't have your support", and you know, when you're working with them and they, they, they |

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| | | | | and what that feels like and what that means they've lost and what they've gone through. | it’s so different to what I know about or what I’m used to children having experienced… it's it is really taxing definitely taxing reading about and hearing about what they've gone through. | share things with you, it's like you feel like it's a gift that they are giving. You feel that actually you're in a really privileged position that they would trust you enough with that. |
| | | | I feel mentally pretty strong, I don't take it home with me, | I think it's always there, you're always thinking about the children after work. | It's heartbreaking. It really is. | I am feeling what that young person is feeling, I am mirroring their emotions and I think I do do that quite a lot which meant when say, uh, we’re having difficulty with a social worker and I could see the young person how they were feeling and I was feeling, you know, it was the let downs they were getting, I was getting, if you see what I mean. |
| | | | I guess I guess, it doesn't affect me personally because I'm not, I I I'm not the one doing anything wrong to his children. Their backgrounds are very difficult and I think it's it's just the case that, yeah, no, I'm alright with it. | | A lot of my stress comes from the thought that they're not talking about this and then that's gonna be unresolved trauma that's gonna stay with them for life that's impacting their progress. | I just remember initially my first reaction was like, “oh my goodness me, like what this young person has been through!?” “Where, where do you start with it?”… so I had to learn very quickly. |
| | | | | | It's just it's just shock every time, you know, you get similar stories, and although you may be expecting what you hear, it doesn't it doesn't take away from how you feel each time. | It’s, doing intense work this role but also just being with children, I come home feeling wonderful. |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  | There was one situation where it was felt that it was my views that I was sharing, not the young persons, whereas it was absolutely nothing and none of my views, it was totally their voice coming out in my voice, uhm, and so, you know, you do feel what they are feeling and I do think I still do that, absolutely. |
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| Group Experiential Theme 3 | Sub-themes | Alex | Robin | Jessie | Jordan | Kim |
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| **Support in managing the role.** | **Simultaneously receiving yet lacking support from colleagues.** | I work with my colleagues because you do, you need a wide amount of people, you know the unaccompanied asylum seeking children these days we're dealing with have some level of trauma, uhm, and, you, yeah, you need more than just one person to be able to manage that kind of caseload. | I've got a really good team around me so, whenever there's a, you know, a disclosure or whatever it is, especially if it's quite high level, we would just take a pragmatic approach and we'll take, you know, the emotion out of it to make sure actually we're doing the right thing. So, uhm, I I lean on the experience of my colleagues. | I, uhm, will quite often just go and have a chat with my principal, so I've got a line manager in school who will be linked to all of my roles and responsibilities, but my principal is uhm really quite in tune with the looked after children, they are our most vulnerable children across the whole of the school, and and yeah, if I've got a concern or a worry or I've just found out some information which I kind of just need to process and put into some sort of context, which actually I'm not familiar with at all, that that's that's probably the place that I would tend to go the most just to go and have a, uhm, a sit down and say did you know anything about this and and just talk it through, and then work out our next steps to support the young person. | Because this role is so individual I I don't I don't even know of other people really, I don't know the DT's [Designated Teachers] from other schools, and so it never really feels like there's someone else in the same boat, uhm, so that that can be a little bit isolating, you know. | I'm a person who doesn't want to disturb people, I don't want to take their time up, I don't wanna kind of burden other people with my feelings. |
| | | With our unaccompanied asylum seekers, actually, we kind of have a larger team around them because their educational experience was very different, and so we had to give a very bespoke curriculum | I use the team around me uhm who, you know, have been in their positions a lot longer than I have for like what do we need to do, what are our next steps, our options. | I mean, I've got a line manager, uhm, but I, the role of my line manager is much more functional and operational, uhm, so I don't tend to use them for emotional support. | It does feel like I'm I'm isolated in a way, but I am also working with everyone in the school, so I'm on my own for that student to a degree but then I'm going down to the science department and saying 'Do you know what they need?' 'They're not | We're really lucky in our school because we've got a large EAL team and so we have got people that speak different languages, so I've generally always had someone that can interpret for me to begin with |

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| | | | | | understanding that lesson', 'they're they're struggling in their double lessons so what I'm going to do is in second lesson, we're going to do an intervention there'. So I'm, I'm going to speak to other people, which is nice, but no ones doing the job with me. | |
| | | I kind of coordinate everything that goes on with them, but then I have other people around that also support the children | | I think it goes through waves, like an emotional rollercoaster, and that's what my role tends to be, like there tends to be suddenly there's information that's come out or someone, you know that, uh, new students come along and I think it it's never consistent, so, uhm, at times I think it can feel really consuming with no one to turn to. | You know we're quite, we're a tight team, so I can say, you know, go to whoever and be like 'that was, that's intense to read, that's intense to hear about, I need 10 minutes, I need a bit of time just to, yeah, reflect on that, what do to next'. | I've got I've got a very busy manager who is lovely and if I, we we should meet every fortnight but we pretty much in reality meet every term, sometime not that often. But if I need anything she's there and she, you know, and and I update her on things and you know so and so I know that I've got that if I need it. |
| | | I've been really lucky that I have quite a good team and it's grown quite a bit, so yeah, it it does make it easier in terms of like the day-to-day, uhm, liaising with different people, but also it means that I'm I'm not the only one who takes on the emotional wellbeing of the young people, and it's kind of shared between a little group of us and that way we kind of support a mixture of the children | | | I think there's, there is lots of sort of obviously line manager meetings each week, however it's, it's more the informal relationship you make in school it's not necessarily, I personally wouldn't go to a wellbeing drop in center or you know, it's more those, you know, smaller interpersonal relationships you make around the school, uhm, and I think they're the ones that are most important to me, uh, personally, because I can go | Because I am I suppose in my role I have been a bit of a individual worker, you know, you kind of get on and and and I think that's why doing sort of sharing the role will be a relief in some ways, with someone else understanding my role. That would be helpful because then it won't feel like it's all on my shoulders. |

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| | | and provide the children with the best support because it's not just me, as the point of contact, I'm not taking everything on. | | | to them throughout the day, take 10 minutes, and think what to do next. | |
| | | | | | You know, there's only so much that people wanna listen to, you know, what's going on and there's only so much I can say to certain people, you know, I can't go into the ins and outs and start sharing what I've heard, so it's, you know, there are, luckily there are people I get on well with in school who I can have some of those conversations with, uhm, which is good, but as a whole, this job I do find quite isolating sometimes. | |

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| | | | | | The ideal, it would be another me another person working on the same thing, uhm, just someone in that day to day that you can say, ‘yeah I've had…’ you know, you can turn around to at any point really or ‘can I have support with this?’ ‘That made me feel like this’ that's that's something that I find difficult because I'm on my own, so even the admin side of it, the paperwork and that kind of thing, I can't just go, ‘oh, what's this? 'Cause you can't hunt anyone down, so it's it's a lot, it's just pressure, it is pressure, uhm, so yeah, I'd have another me with me. | |
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| **Support in managing the role.** | **Limited collaboration and support from outside professionals.** | The virtual school has been really supportive in terms of giving us as much help as they can do, we have really, all of our carers have been absolutely amazing, uh, I think social workers are sometimes a little bit lost with the the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children because it's all so very different what they've been through in terms of just, you know, not so much the traumatic events they've been through because obviously social workers are working with kids with all sorts of different trauma, I think just a different culture, different educational experiences that I think they find a bit more tricky. | Ultimately a lot of these young people have come from, uhm, yeah, from very difficult backgrounds and experience, things that you know, we are not overly well trained in, uhm, or, you know, we're we're we're working towards being a trauma informed school uhm but some of the trauma these students you know, have witnessed, and so on is is you know very different to the trauma that that we're trained in so uhm, yeah, uhm difficult. | So the other support is the virtual school, but that does and and I can phone them if it's like support about a particular student or wanting to talk through something, but it's not really support for me, uhm, they do offer training, but that's really more about my role as a designated teacher, it's not, uhm, kind of emotional, wellbeing support. | Uhm, but even then I find because, you know, you're having conversations with people who don't know your role, who don't, yeah, don't really get it, so they can sit there and they can say, 'oh yeah, OK, how's that?' You know, 'I understand' and but realistically you can't, you get more value, don't you, from someone who's going through the same thing | I have once a term I have sort of outside supervision and that's really helpful in terms of just being able to share and and process it and um allow you to kind of where you feel I'm not making a difference or I'm you know, it's it's good to reflect on that and be able to see, uhm, some of the the things that are making a difference I suppose. |
| | | (participant laughs) very little from my experience, uhm, you know there's a virtual school where I'm based, but that's supporting the children not the adults. | I had one supervision so far session so far and it was a bit, yeah, I don't know, it was a bit strange, I didn't, like personally, I didn't really find it overly useful, I mean, she's a very nice lady and I, you know, I quite enjoyed talking, but uhm, I actually got a | When there's been really, uhm, quite, really really harrowing cases, uhm, I have thought 'I wonder what there is for me', but there doesn't seem to be anyone, so, you know, you're really busy and you do just crack on. | It would give me the opportunity to support my wellbeing by you know, sharing rather than having to like bottle up what's going on or just crack on because maybe no ones around or you don't have the time to stop, so yeah, the ability to share and discuss with | I'm also lucky I have once a term I have sort of outside supervision and that's really helpful in terms of just being able to share some of that as well and and process it and um allow you to kind of where you feel I'm not making a difference or I'm you know, it's it's good to reflect on that and be able to see, uhm, some of the the |

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| | | | call of the middle middle of it and had to run out and deal with that, so it didn’t really work for me. | | someone who understands, uhm, that will have a massive impact. | things that are making a difference I suppose so. |
| | | There's a huge amount of training on everything else, but there's been very little information out there so far about supporting unaccompanied asylum seekers and best practice for that so we've had to kind of find our way around it. | It's very much like, here's your start day and then, you know, in terms of the preparation and support, well, it’s minimal. | What I need is to just kind of 'cause I am a talker and I do like to, uhm, that's how I like to work through things. So, uhm yeah, I think it would be useful to, it would certainly be useful, I mean, in many respects it would be useful to have just a yeah, yeah, a kind of debrief type person, uhm, who didn't need to know anything and just ask the right questions. | Yeah, just, I think the main thing is having someone to talk to who understands. | I think sadly, you know, for for social workers they're so, so busy, uhm, that quite often they haven't got the capacity to you know always you know do what they might like to do but uhm so uhm so I do find quite a lot of carers come to me and say well what about this, what about that or share some of the stuff that's going on and I'll advise them |
| | | We were asking before they arrived for any information about them, anything anyone knew at all in terms of their educational background, uhm, what their experiences had been in terms of any traumatic events, uhm, what their age was, what, uhm, you know, what subjects they learned at school, or anything, and it was just “you'll have to find out for yourself”… “off you go, enjoy yourself, see what | Yeah, I think, difficult because we rarely get any information from social service or the virtual school or whoever about uhm any trauma, any experiences, so as an education provider then coming in, it's a it's a difficult situation uhm and, you know, we have to sort of take a fairly one-size-fits-all approach and then tip toe around it. | I think what, what I need is just, yeah, the opportunity to, uhm, to just kind of have an outlet, I mean, like everything it would be, it would need to be protected time, because time is so precious and then and then it just in my mind it becomes an impossibility, so even the idea that you would just sit down once a month and just kind of have the time and space to, uhm, come to unwind and talk things through, uhm, (participant laughs) just in this role that just never happens. | it's hard because I do find wellbeing support, we moan when we don't get it, but when we get it we don't take it up because it's impacting our, you know, oh no, I've got stuff to do I've, I've got a meeting to do, I’ve got this to do, that to do, so, again, it probably comes down to protected time and that, uhm, yeah, protected time and then space then to have those conversations on a one to one basis. | The virtual schools ask a lot from us, so it would be asking them if anything can be streamlined. I’m lucky that this is my full-time role, but for other designated teachers, it isn’t, so If it's killing me what is it doing to other people? You know, to do the job that they’re asking, it's not manageable, you know, I don't know what the answer. I mean, I think things like looking at the PEPs, do we really need to be writing 50 pages every term for every child? |

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| | | you can possibly do with that”. | | | | |
| | | We were asking before they arrived for any information about them, anything anyone knew at all in terms of their educational background, uhm, what their experiences had been in terms of any traumatic events, uhm, what their age was, what, uhm, you know, what subjects they learned at school, or anything, and it was just “you'll have to find out for yourself”. | | | I think there needs to be a lot more crossover between social services, uhm, you know, we have our PEP, we have two a year, but I find myself constantly trying to get in touch 'cause every day trying to get in touch with the social worker and they’re run so thin that it's it's impossible so and, you know, they've got however many students so it’s it's hard for those students have someone championing for them, they've got me in school but I'm limited and then not having someone directly and sometimes, you know, going to carers and stuff they, I don’t know, they’re new to their placement or whatever it is, they're not fully there for that child they can't be fully there for that child, uhm, so yeah, I think a triangulation approach, you know, of the virtual school, of social care | I really value my supervision, it very much helps my thought processes and and also she's really helped me to gain boundaries, have the strength to put boundaries in, and asking “does that really need to be me?” |

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|  |  |  |  |  | and of us, we could get a lot more done. |  |
|  |  | Being told here's a child who's come from different country being chucked into this country has probably experienced some trauma, has no knowledge of anything, “enjoy”, I think there needs to be something else. |  |  | So a lot of the time the social worker will try and give us as much information as possible.  Sometimes we get a wealth of, you know, information and we can work with that, sometimes, and I think it's been a bit more often, there's been, the child has not disclosed anything and is not ready to talk. That’s no ones fault, but it does mean it falls on me when the child does share something to unpick that and liaise with other professionals, and that’s ok, I just want support from the social worker in doing that. |  |
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| **Support in managing the role.** | **Disruptions to seeking support in personal relationships.** | A lot of what I deal with in this role has to stay in school, I can’t be talking about children’s lives with people outside of school, so in that way, I’m almost forced to switch off. | I don't talk to my wife about it, uhm, just because she would take it all personally and then would be adopting every kid in the school. And so, I, yeah, I don't talk about any any of these situations and stories. | I probably do hold back because I because of the like confidentiality aspect of it but if you and so, you know, when people, my family or my friends or have asked about work, I'll give them snippets, but that’s not enough for me. | People don’t know what I do, no (participant laughs) absolutely not, you know, I sometimes just I find myself thinking If I had to explain what has happened from the start of my day to the end of my day it just, it just doesn't make sense, even to me. | I would say, it does impact my personal or home life a lot, but it’s more because, so I would say in the earlier days the children would stay with me a lot and I would be like who can I talk to about this stuff when I get home, you know? But, I think I have got better in kind of it sitting better in me. |

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|  |  |  |  | That brought up conversation between me and my partner because, you know, I can't really talk about my role, and uhm, they were really shocked and I and you know, by this young person's experience too | You can't talk about your students, you can't talk about the ins and outs of things but also people don't get it or they go, 'Oh yeah, that's sad' they they're not experiencing it first hand, it's like when you open the news and you see things it's like it's desperately sad and you're like 'Aw, yeah', and then you put it down, you go away, it's not your responsibility, whereas I've got these, these children, and they are my responsibility and if they're in a residential home, they've got no one else there, it's the the pressure is high, definitely. | Obviously, I can't speak speak to people outside of school about my role because of confidentiality, uhm, I hadn't really thought about that actually, you know, whether people understand what I do or not, probably not, because I can't talk about it. |
|  |  |  |  | The the other people in my life that are outside of work, I think it's really hard for anyone to be to to to understand 'cause, it's just so far removed from most people's lives. | I think it's it's it's hard because there's limits you can talk to people about things when they're not in school. |  |
|  |  |  |  | I'm, I'm, I'm very cautious when I do speak to friends and family, uhm about, you know, it's it's certainly more functional, uhm yeah, conversations. | It's it's it is hard because you can't talk to everyone about it because of, you know, you can't talk about your students, you can't talk about the ins and outs of things but also people don't get it or they go, 'Oh yeah, that's sad' they they're not experiencing it first hand, it's like when you open the news and you see things it's like it's desperately |  |

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|  |  |  |  |  | sad and you're like ‘Aw, yeah’, and then you put it down, you go away, it's not your responsibility, whereas I've got these, these children, and they are my responsibility. |  |
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| Group Experiential Theme 4 | Sub-themes | Alex | Robin | Jessie | Jordan | Kim |
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| **Ways of coping.** |  | We're used to working with lots of children who have had traumatic experiences. You learn to not be surprised and actually, yeah, I think you need to do that | I can’t, I can’t let it, well, because if I emotionally invested in everyone then I, yeah, well, I wouldn't be able to come to work every day. I'd be a wreck, yeah [participant laughs]. | In terms of our experience of, uhm, of the the information that comes our way, uhm, I think, I think in this role, uh, I don't want to say you become, things become, you become unshockable, but, yeah. | It is hard to process and and the the worry I think you, working in school you see people who have been in it for so long and they’re just desensitized and you never you never want to get to that point where it doesn't affect you, I I I don't ever want to get to that point, and I think if I got to the point where I'm not affected or, you know, it doesn't give me a feeling in my heart then I'm, I know I need to need to step back ‘cause I think you can only do the best when you're empathizing and you've got that empathy for the children, uhm, but as well as protecting my own mental health. | Their families in [country] and obviously they don't know where their families are they they can't have contact with their families and that for me it's so hard because you want to do something to try and and you know but you can't and so actually recognizing that the things I suppose taking the things you can have some control over which is looking at how do I support these young people person? How do I meet their needs how do I uhm make sure that they have got someone to talk to if that's something that they want to do? Uhm, it's it I I found it I suppose better to to do that now compared to the first few years of the role. |

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| | | They've experienced something horrible, yeah, I know that, I I think I want to know what do I need to do today, that's what I stay focused on. | it's one of those ones where it's OK that's what they're dealing with, let's be let's be how do we remove the barriers, how do I remove, you know, the fact they've got 8, 10 ACEs or whatever before they are 12 years old, alright well, let's make sure we give them as many, you know, BCEs and let's you know, let's get him into clubs or sport, or let's use art or let's create really positive relationships, let's make sure that we are the safe place, we are, the consistent thing in their lives. Uhm, so I guess that's how I deal with it, it's just, 'alright, it is what is is' what am I going to do from now. | I'm of a kind of strong enough nature and mental capacity to compartmentalize things which I think you have to do to a certain extent. | It's heartbreaking. It really is, uhm, it, I think you, the longer you're in the role, you come to rationalize, and you think, I can't save everyone, I can't do everything, but I do feel I will try and go above and beyond in ways in other ways, so, for instance, getting funding for equipment so that the student can engage in activities they love and go onto further education with the right resources. So it's, you know, it isn't, you know, it's not family, but it's doing whatever you can. | I think that I suppose self-awareness, being aware of the fact that all of the children's experiences are contributing to you and how you feel is it's really important and so, I think that's all been being helpful. |
| | | | | My life, my upbringing was so very different to so many students that I teach, and certainly miles and miles and miles away from, uhm, yeah the the kind of experience of our unaccompanied asylum seekers that I wonder if ignorance is a little bit bliss as well, uhm, because there's so much information that you can be told, but I think a lot of it, it | You don't, I don't think in this role you switch off, you don't, you know, you are constantly concerned, you know, there's always that thought in the back of your mind, like where are they now? Are they you know, are they on their own? Have they made friends in the community? | I think it's being able to let things go knowing that actually by holding on to it isn't gonna help them because actually it's gonna make you more upset or frustrated or stressed or whatever and actually that's not helping them. So being able to, uhm, find ways to process it and and work through that is is actually helpful for them. |

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| | | | | would be you know, you'd be hard pressed to actually imagine those experiences. | | |
| | | | | I actually also, uhm, have quite a busy life at home as well, and uhm and I think that kind of balance is quite good | | What can I do to make this right? What can I do to take this away? what can I... And coming to be ok with the fact that actually you can't take any of that away you can't like solve the problem you know. |

## 8.22 Appendix 22: Reflective account.

Throughout completing the research project, I kept a ‘reflective diary’ to support and develop the researcher-learning-process. Below are examples of my reflections during particular stages of the research process, beginning with the literature review.

*Literature review – a reflection on the entirety of the process.*

When completing a systemic literature review to answer the question ‘what is known about supporting Newly Arrived Children, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and/or Asylum-Seeking Children, within education systems across the Western World?, I experienced a range of feelings. Beginning the literature review, I felt apprehensive due to a seemingly daunting task of needing to read a wealth of literature and identify those papers to be included in my thesis. With this came an element of fear due to not wanting to get it wrong, particularly because I felt privileged to be afforded the opportunity to research a topic in such depth, and also wanting to do the topic justice, so that I could add to the already existing body of literature. However, through discussions with my supervisors and ensuring that I had a clear literature search process based on the research study’s aims and questions, as well as using a CASP and MMAT checklist to review each research study, my apprehension lessened. Furthermore, I reframed my apprehension and understood it as being my desire to be integrous, respectful, and consistent, which then guided my decision-making during my research project.

*Development of research questions – a reflection on my decision-making processes.*

As addressed in Chapter 2: Literature Review, during the literature review process, I identified a dearth of research exploring Designated Teachers’ experiences of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Mindful of this, I decided that the first research question of my study should be: ‘What are Designated Teachers’ personal experiences and feelings concerning the responsibility of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?’ In this way, I hope to add to the body of literature by giving voice to a particular cohort of school staff, Designated Teachers, providing them with an opportunity to share their experiences and feelings of their role. Furthermore, I viewed this research question as a pre-requisite to any further research questions; it seemed important to understand the entirety of their experiences before exploring additional factors to their role.

From this, I then established a further two research questions where the focus shifted on identifying both supportive and challenging factors to their role: ‘What is helpful for Designated Teachers’ wellbeing and/or developing their competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?’ and ‘What are the challenges that Designated Teachers perceive in relation to their own wellbeing and competence when supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children?’ For me, without the first research question, the research study would be restricted by only presenting challenging and supportive factors of the role, and therefore, I felt that the three questions each supplemented one another for the purpose of adding to the body of literature within this topic area.

The final research question aimed to bring all of the information together and provide a ‘so what?’ to the research project: ‘If there is a role for Educational Psychologists, what could this support look like for these Designated Teachers?’ Overall, I hoped that in establishing these research questions I could bring value to this under-researched topic area, and to the role of Designated Teacher, by providing one way of understanding staff’s experiences of supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, as well as exploring desired support for the future of the role.

*Recruitment – a reflection on the entirety of the process.*

When engaging in the recruitment process for this research study, I experienced an ‘emotional rollercoaster’, where I had periods of excitement and triumph, whilst other times feeling frustrated and hopeless. Whilst I have had experience in recruiting participants for research studies, I think because I was interested in the present study topic area, I assumed other people would be too, and eagerly willing to take part. However, I seemingly misjudged the recruitment stage as I did not experience a flood of responses, and had to widen my recruitment search to include two further Local Authorities. Despite this, each time I would have a response and complete an interview, it gave me the motivation to continue to persist. It seemed that my patience and perseverance paid dividends, as I was able to speak with five individuals who met the inclusion criteria over the period of May-November 2022.

*Data collection – a reflection on completing my first interview compared to my final interview.*

When completing my first interview with a participant, they engaged throughout and seemed to want to share their experiences. During the interview, I felt that the participant was holding back from answering my questions fully. For example, I didn't feel that they always referred to their feelings and experiences, rather, they referred mostly to processes and practices involved in supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children within their school. Initially, I felt a level of disappointment that the interview had not gone as planned and the view that the data would be irrelevant for my research questions. However, as I began to explore this feeling further over subsequent days, I wondered whether this feeling didn't come from the data I had collected, but more from what I had expected from this interview. I had expected the participant to openly share their personal feelings and views, but the participant seemed hesitant to do so. This demonstrated to me the importance of reflecting on your expectations and then putting these aside so to appreciate the participant's individual experiences. As such, I will endeavor to be more mindful of my feelings and potential reasons as to why I may be feeling these emotions, particularly when related to expectations I may be holding. Moreover, this experience made me realise that sharing personal experiences with a stranger is not typical and so I shouldn't have necessarily expected this. In turn, for my future interviews I will spend more time trying to build a rapport and be accepting of participants' choices regarding how they respond to my questions. Finally, I wondered whether my nerves meant that I rushed the interview and so I did not allow the participant enough space to reflect on their own experiences. Therefore, I will also take my time, give space, and ensure that I ask follow-up questions after participants responses.

My final interview was around five months after completing my first interview. Over time, I feel that my interview skills and overall confidence grew. For example, I spent time building a rapport with individuals, learning about them, their educational setting, and finding common ground. I wondered whether this supported participants to feel more at ease, subsequently sharing some of their personal views and feelings with me. I also feel that with experience, I became more present during later interviews, where I remained attuned to participants feelings and prompting them to expand on what they had shared with me.

Spending more time 'in the moment' seemed to support participants to further explore their experiences during the interview process. Despite my apprehension during interviews, all participants shared that they valued the space to reflect on their role with some commenting that it felt as though they had been given supervision, and another telling me they will "go home feeling good now". This was comforting to me as I was pleased to hear that an interview was not a one-way process, whereby only I would benefit from them sharing their experiences. Therefore, this demonstrated to me the importance of reflecting on my personal experiences after each interview in order to improve my research skills and provide participants with a valuable experience.

*Data analysis – a reflection on the entirety of the process.*

The process of data analysis was an enjoyable, albeit challenging, experience. Having chosen to complete IPA as a method for analysis, I appreciated the flexible guidance rather than prescriptive approach I could take. Through engaging in a specific framework to data analysis as outlined by Smith et al (2022) in their second edition of 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Theory, Method and Research', this enabled me to feel an element of reassurance during analysis, whilst also having the permission to return to any step throughout the process to ensure my interpretations reflected the data. In other words, I completed an iterative process of analysis, whereby I remained mindful of how my understanding and experiences can influence my interpretations of the data.

During the analysis stage, I found it particularly valuable to look at one transcript at a time, leaving at least a week before moving onto the next transcript. This encouraged me to see each participant in their own right, respecting their individuality and unique experiences. Spending considerable time with one transcript at a time meant that I felt immersed in the data and, only then, did I move onto the final stage to explore connections between individuals' experiences. Through developing connections between the data, I felt that my data 'came alive' and I could begin to make sense of my participants' lived experiences of their role. Throughout the process, I learned the importance of stepping back when feeling overwhelmed and sensing a lack of clarity on how to understand participants' experiences. Although relatively time-consuming, in giving myself breaks, I could allow thinking time to process the data and ways of understanding it. I also practiced bracketing in an attempt to put aside any preconceptions or putting meaning from another transcript onto the data I was currently analysing. Overall, analysing data was a stimulating and immersive experience.