The Experiences of Autistic Young People and Managed Moves

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Abstract

Managed moves were introduced to the UK policy landscape in 1999 as a way of avoiding permanent exclusions for young people, giving them an opportunity to have a ‘fresh start’ at a different school. Guidance defining managed moves and the processes involved is limited. Research suggests that managed move practice is varied and inconsistent across the country. There is currently no research exploring managed moves involving Autistic Young People, this is despite evidence pointing to Autistic children being at a greater risk of placement breakdowns due to exclusions, including managed moves. The aim of this research is to address this gap in the literature by focusing on Autistic young peoples’ experience of managed moves.

Autism theory from the Autistic community is drawn upon, and in particular Milton’s Double Empathy Theory. This theory reframes discourses of social communication and interaction deficits (e.g. theory of mind) as a ‘a two-way’ predicament; with non-Autistic individuals also experiencing difficulties in understanding and effectively responding to Autistic individuals. Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems Theory provides a framework for considering YP’s situated experience of managed moves. Therefore, the study looks into the YP’s accounts as well as the accounts of staff embedded within school and LA systems. Four Autistic young people and six members of staff were interviewed and data was analysed thematically using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Key themes from the perspective of autistic YP and staff are identified and implications for educational psychology practice are discussed.

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List of Abbreviations

CSJ	Centre for Social Justice
YP	Young People/ Young Person
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
EBSA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance
EP	Educational Psychologist
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
LA	Local Authority
OCC	Office of the Children's Commissioner
PCP	Personal Construct Psychology
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
UK	United Kingdom

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Aims of the research

This research focuses on the managed move experiences of autistic young people within the context of a local authority. Young people (YP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including autism, are excluded at higher rates than their peers (Cooke, 2018). Managed moves can be seen as a means of exclusion and there is little evidence about how they operate in practice or do so for autistic YP. The research aims to explore the experiences of autistic YP and managed moves, from the perspectives of the YP themselves as well as those in the school and local authority (LA) systems.

1.2 Chapter overview

The next sections will provide background context on what is known about exclusions, including managed moves involving autistic YP, and those with SEND. This is followed by a description of the term 'managed move' and of the local context in which the research was conducted. Different conceptualizations of Autism are discussed followed by a discussion about the researcher's positioning in relation to the research. The next chapter 'Methodology and Data Collection' starts by stating the purpose of the research and setting out the questions that it seeks to address.

1.3 Managed Moves

Managed moves were introduced to the UK policy landscape in 1999 (DfEE, 1999) as an intervention with the primary aim of preventing permanent exclusion and the associated negative outcomes. It describes a process through which headteachers can agree to move a YP from one setting to another, usually in response to behaviours that challenge. A key feature of managed moves is a trial period during which the YP is expected to demonstrate a willingness and effort to make the most of the 'fresh start' offered to them through the managed move. A successful trial period could result in the YP becoming permanently enrolled at their new school.

Protocols and processes in managed moves are set locally; little guidance is offered by central government. Managed moves do not have to be recorded, centrally. Therefore, evidence about how the policy is used and its impact cannot be drawn from any centrally held data. Research suggests that at times, managed moves are used as a form of informal exclusion that does not allow parents and carers the right of appeal (Gazeley et al., 2015). Calls to set clear guidelines that define managed moves and the terms of their use have been made in the Timpson Review (2019) and by the Centre for Social Justice (2018).

1.4 Exclusion rates amongst YP with SEND and Autistic YP

It is important to note that managed moves do not figure in the statistics below as they are unrecorded. Also worth noting is that this research was conducted at a time of global pandemic (Covid 19) during which extended periods of school closures meant that the latest exclusion figures at the time of writing were likely to be an underestimate. Therefore, much of the data quoted below relates to pre-pandemic exclusion rates.

Research conducted on behalf of the Institute for Public Policy Research (Gill et al., 2017) reported that those with a recognised need are seven times more likely to be excluded than their peers without SEND. This high incidence of SEND in excluded populations is supported by DfE data (DfE, 2017) which shows that almost eight out of ten children in schools for excluded children (e.g. PRU and other alternative provisions) have SEND.

According to a report commissioned by Ambitious About Autism (Cooke, 2018), exclusion rates involving Autistic Young People (YP) rose sharply between 2011 and 2016 by almost 60% across England, with every region in England seeing a rise of at least 44% in exclusions involving autistic YP. This is in contrast with a rise in overall exclusion rates of 4% during the same period. This rise in exclusions of autistic YP could not be accounted for by a rise in the number of pupils diagnosed with autism.

Official exclusion figures involving YP with SEND are likely to be an underestimate of the true picture. They exclude incidents of unrecorded

exclusions; YP who are undiagnosed but autistic; as well as YP whose SEND is unrecognised and unsupported. Qualitative research supports the likelihood that official figures underestimate SEND exclusion rates. Gill et al., (2017) suggested that many YP who are excluded fall below the threshold for particular classifications (e.g. SEND, Child in Need), despite having complex profiles of needs. Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) leaders in the same study reported working with YP with a range of previously unidentified needs; these children did not have a formal designation of SEND.

1.5 Autism, exclusions and managed moves

The figures above point to an education context in which exclusions feature disproportionately in the school experiences of YP with SEND and autistic YP. Despite this, there is little research that is concerned specifically with exclusions and autistic YP, and so, little is known of what underpins the risk of exclusion for this group.

It is possible that placement breakdown through exclusions (formal and otherwise) is linked with the complex demands that schooling places on autistic YP. Autistic children have difficulties in interacting with the world around them (APA, 2013), and indeed research suggests that schools also experiences difficulties in recognising and responding appropriately to autistic YP so that they are effectively included in schools (Brede et al., 2017; Sproston et al., 2017). Autistic young people are at increased risk of mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression. In addition, their sense of belonging within school can be compromised by social interaction differences that impact on their relationships at school. For some autistic YP, adhering to the norms, demands and expectations that are implicitly and explicitly inherent in school can be a challenge (Gore Langton & Frederickson, 2016). Sensory differences that are not accommodated compromise their wellbeing and their capacity to function to the best of their ability in environments that were not designed with neurodiversity in mind. It is not surprising that for autistic YP, inclusion in mainstream schools requires understanding of and responsiveness to their differences. Such a responsive approach is not a stated requirement in managed move policy as described by

the Department for Education (DfE,2012; DfE, 2017). Indeed, little is known of how managed moves are used with autistic YP or of their impact.

Inherent in a managed move as an intervention to prevent exclusion is a notion that the change will be experienced positively; a 'fresh start' carries the possibility of success, albeit elsewhere. However, existing research into the experiences of autistic students transitioning between schools suggests that for this cohort of students, transitions and new beginnings can be particularly challenging, even without the specter of exclusion and the burden of negative narratives around their behavior. Makin et., al (2017) explored the primary to secondary school transition experiences of autistic YP. The researchers described several issues that may well be unique to autistic children- or children with other SEN – raised by their participants, including sensory differences, difficulties with organisation and problems with developing and maintaining peer relationships. These are defining characteristics of autism (APA, 2013). Adapting to changes in people and routines was reported to be particularly challenging for the YP involved in the study. Makin et., al's (2017) findings were consistent with other studies which showed that autistic children can experience difficulties adjusting to new school placements (e.g. Dillon & Underwood, 2012; Tobin et al., 2012). Managed moves involve a transition for a group of YP for whom moving school can already be a challenge. Yet, there is currently no research that explores the lived experiences of autistic YP and managed moves.

1.6 The local context

This study was conducted in a unitary local authority in the South-East of England, where the researcher held the position of a trainee educational psychologist (TEP). The LA's rates of exclusion involving YP with SEND (SEN support and EHCPs) were twice as high as those involving YP without SEN (2019/2020), with overall rates of exclusion that exceed the national average when suspensions and permanent exclusions are taken into account. YP with SEND most likely to be excluded from schools were ones with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Social Communication and Interaction (SCI) as their primary areas of needs. SCI is the SEND code of practice (2014) category of

need usually ascribed to autistic young people. This renders the topic of this study worthy of researching in the local context.

1.7 Conceptualisation of Autism

It is estimated that one in a hundred children in the UK have a diagnosis of Autism (Cooke, 2018). Actual prevalence rates are likely higher given that not all Autistic children have a formal diagnosis. The number of children in receipt of educational supports for reasons linked to their Autism has risen significantly in recent years- 78 percent since 2010 according to a report commissioned by Ambitious About Autism (Cooke, 2018). Some Autistic YP require few adjustments to support their inclusion in mainstream schooling, whilst others may require varying degrees of additional help to support their learning, communication and/or wellbeing. The vast majority of autistic children in the UK are educated in mainstream school settings.

Historically, Autism was strongly linked with psychosis, in particular schizophrenia. Children exhibiting symptomology now diagnosed as autism, were characterised as ‘mentally retarded’ or their presentation would be associated with some underlying organic dysfunction (Wolf, 2004; Nadesan, 2005). The first to conceptualise Autism was Leo Kanner, describing it as ‘Early Infantile Autism’ in 1943. A key characteristic he described was a lack of interest in others. Thus, he named the condition autism, stemming from the Greek word ‘autos’ meaning self (Volkmar & Mayes 1990, cited in Cohen & Volkmar, 1997). He described dysfunctional patterns of social interaction, seen as the ‘hallmark’ of ‘Early Infantile Autism’. Past attempts to define Autism socially are limited and they have a difficult history. They centred around establishing cause or blame, for example the term ‘refrigerator mother’ coined by Bettleheim (1967) positioned blame on inadequate maternal caregiving. The refrigerator mother hypothesis faced dissent by psychologists (e.g. Rimland,1964; Wing ,1966) who critically examined limitations of the explanatory power of the refrigerator mother hypothesis, suggesting that the evidence was more consistent with a biological aetiology and emphasised the need for further research.

Current debates surrounding Autistic Spectrum Condition are multifaceted and centre broadly around:

1. **The aetiology of autism**-conceptualisations that stem from a medical model that delineate a genetic basis are particularly influential (Mac Carthaigh, 2019). Research which explored biological causes of autism (e.g. meta-analysis of twin based studies) provide evidence for the existence of a genetic component (Tick et al., 2016). Furthermore, a number of studies have suggested hereditability of approximately 50% (Colvert at al., 2015; Gaulger,et al., 2014). Despite the static nature of autism suggested by the lens of genetics, research evidence has pointed to instability of autism diagnoses overtime, when autistic children and adults failed to meet the criteria for an autism diagnosis in follow-up assessments (Woolfenden et al., 2012; Helles et al., 2015). From an educationalist perspective, concerns with the aetiology of autism is of little utility.
2. **Constructions of autism as a disorder**- a perspective that stems largely from a cognitive model. Conceptually, cognitive theories such as reduced theory of mind (Baron-Cohen et al., 1985); executive dysfunction (Ozonoff et al., 1991) and weak central coherence (Happé, 1996) have had practical utility as they underpin psychometrics used to diagnose autism (Mac Carthaigh, 2019). Conceptualising autism as a disorder, however, can be polarising and pathologising (Runswick-Cole, 2016).
3. **The neurodiversity paradigm** - repositions autism as a normal variance that exists within a spectrum of biodiversity (Singer,1998). Singer (2016) described the paradigm as a middle ground between the medical model of disability (which focuses on individual pathology) and the social model (which emphasises the role of society and context in disabling individuals). Thus, neurodiversity acknowledges individual differences whilst also acknowledging societal barriers.
4. **The post-social model-** which builds on the neurodiversity movement, emphasises the role of autistic individuals in constructing what is known of autism (Milton, 2017; Williams 1996). Autistic lived experience in its duality is considered central to understanding Autism (Milton, 2018), beyond that which can be achieved through a purely medical or social lens.

The neurodiversity paradigm and post-social model are positions with which the current research is most closely aligned.

Kourti (2021), who wrote about the epistemology of Autism, argued that although traditional theories of Autism make claims about underlying structures and mechanisms of Autistic behaviours, these theories are deduced from phenomenal/ behavioural observations. For example, weak theory of mind (Baron-Cohen, Leslie & Frith, 1985) and central coherence deficits (Happé & Frith, 2006). Kourti (2021) challenged the notion that Autism could be reduced to observable characteristics and argued that what constitutes knowledge of Autism should go beyond characteristics observed by a neurotypical observer. Prevalent knowledge of Autism is therefore knowledge of the phenomena of Autism; it does not encompass embodied experiences and realities of Autistic life.

> *"...right from the start, from the time someone came up with the word 'autism', the condition has been judged from the outside, by its appearances, and not from the inside according to how it is experienced."*
>
> (Donna Williams,1996, p. 14)

The call to develop understandings of Autism which stem from the lived experience was echoed by Milton (2017). Milton lamented the invisibility of the 'autistic voice' within the current knowledge production about 'autistic people' which often excludes the autistic voice from the processes of knowledge production about Autism and the autistic experience.

Fricker's (1999) concept of epistemological oppression is relevant. It is concerned with the operation of social power in the construction of knowledge. It states that social disadvantage produces epistemological disadvantage; that is those who are disenfranchised in society are locked out of meaning making and the construction of knowledge. One of the ways in which epistemological oppression operates is through testimonial oppression: a credibility excess or credibility deficit, depending on the positions individuals occupy within power structures. This study sought the accounts of autistic young people of their lived experiences of managed moves and school. The researcher drew on the work of autistic

scholars to inform the critical realist epistemological positioning of the research (Kourti 2021) and its theoretical underpinnings (Milton 2012).

Milton (2017) challenged the dichotomy of the medical vs social model of disabilities, cautioning that neither could offer a sufficient understanding of Autism alone. He described current psychological models as being *'inadequate at drawing the links between biology and behaviour, but even more so between biology and the lived experience of autistic subjectivity'* (Milton, 2017, p. 10). He described the medical model as being overly reliant on adherence to scientific 'gold standard' methods that do not value autistic voices. These scientific approaches draw on observations of behaviour from the outside-in and overlook sociological viewpoints. The social model was also critiqued; it could be blamed for a complacency that results in overlooking the individuality inherent in neurodivergence, promoting instead blanket 'best practice' approaches. Instead, Milton promoted understandings of Autism that emphasise individuality and duality of autistic subjectivity. He also reframed discourses of social deficits as a mutual disconnect of understanding and empathy between autistic and non-autistic persons (the double empathy problem).

This research is conducted from a biosocial perspective which recognises neurodiversity whilst also recognising that the autistic YPs' experiences are situated in social, political and historical contexts that impact on their school experiences. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Bioecological Systems Theory and Milton's Double Empathy theory (2012) are central to the study and are discussed in chapter 3.

1.8 Researcher's position

The researcher's interest in the education of autistic YP stem from professional experiences as a teacher, SENCo and psychologist. Interest in exploring managed moves experiences specifically started following observations of meetings at which managed moves were negotiated and agreed, known locally as the Behaviour and Attendance Panel (BAP) in the LA where the researcher held a position as a TEP. School leaders, with little or no reference to pupil of parental voice, negotiated and made decisions about the YPs' educational placement. At the time, the researcher noted that children with a diagnosis of

Autism were considered for managed moves too, and for reasons that could be linked to their autism. The researcher was curious about how managed moves work in practice for a group of individuals for whom change and developing new relationships in new settings can already be challenging. The researcher also noted that some YP were experiencing multiple moves, or were falling out of schooling altogether after being removed from their school, raising questions about social justice and the efficacy of manage moves. The managed move discussions at the Behaviour and Attendance Panel suggested that these were, in many cases, enforced moves. Literature suggests that managed moves can be used as a strategy to move children on when their behaviours challenge schools (Bagley, 2012). Therefore, they can be institution-centered rather than child-centered decisions.

The Children's Commissioner Report (2013) defined enforced managed moves as illegal and highlighted the problems of unlawful practices in exclusion:

> *'Illegal exclusions from school have been an elephant in the room for educators, policy makers and others. Whenever I speak to head teachers, educational psychologists or education welfare officers anywhere in England, all will admit, always in strict confidence, that these exclusions do sometimes happen. But nobody wants to go public or is prepared to name names. There is a feeling in these conversations that for the sake of inter-school harmony, or the reputation of the system, this is a subject best left alone.*
>
> (Children's Commissioner Report, 2013, p.4)

As a TEP who is committed to social justice and inclusion, the researcher considers the managed move experiences of autistic young people as an area that warrants critical reflection; this research can contribute to this.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter examines research relating to managed moves and also focuses on exclusions, including managed moves, involving Autistic children. The chapter begins with an outline of the systematic process undertaken to conduct a systematic scoping literature search. This is followed by a critical analysis of the literature and a discussion of gaps that were identified. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the review.

2.2 Process

An initial scoping literature review was undertaken as part of a research proposal in October 2021. This review aimed to gain an overview of the research literature related to managed moves in the UK since 2004, when managed moves were introduced to the UK education policy landscape (DfEE,1999). Since then, the researcher observed a meeting at which managed moves are discussed between school leaders and Local Authority representatives (the Behaviour and Attendance Panel), and it became apparent that several students had a diagnosis of Autism or were on a pathway to one. The researcher thought that the experiences of Autistic YP is an area that warrants exploration and so the focus of the thesis and therefore the literature review was revised in September 2021. An updated literature review was conducted to seek research literature that relates specifically to Autistic YP and managed moves, and to ensure any literature published since the initial scoping review is also captured within the current review.

Booth et al., (2016) described the aims of a systematic scoping literature review as identifying the nature and extent of research evidence. In line with this definition, a scoping review of the literature sought to address the following questions:

1. *What does the literature tell us about managed moves?*
2. *What does the literature tell us about managed moves and exclusions involving Autistic young people in particular?*

Although the research questions, suggest that the researcher expects that the literature search will address 2 different young populations (1. YP *per se* , and 2. Autistic YP), it is likely that young participants involved in any study regarding managed moves will include YP with an SEN/D, given the prevalence of all forms of exclusions in this population.

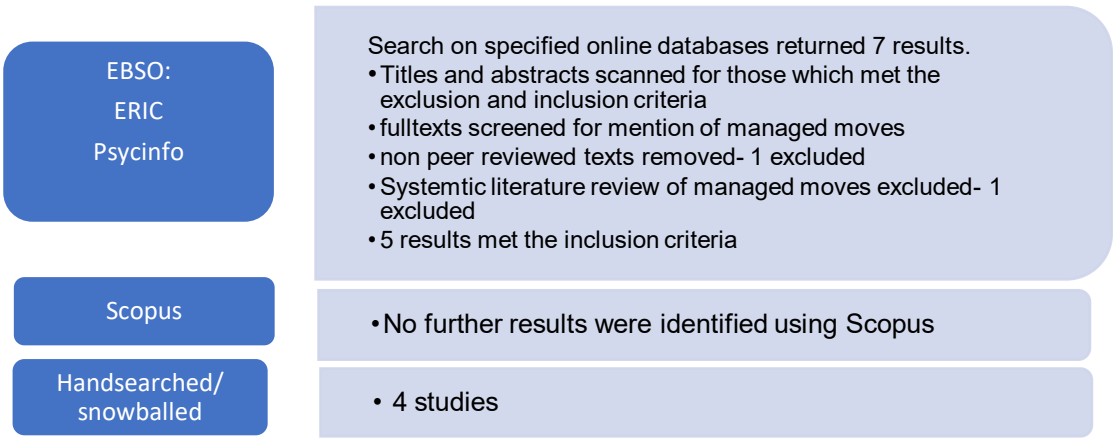
2.2.1 Literature search

Booth et al's. (2016) four stages of conducting a literature search were followed (identifying, screening, eligibility and inclusion). Two separate searches were conducted in September 2021; one sought research literature related to managed moves and the other related to managed moves and Autistic YP. This was done to ensure the literature searches returned results that cover the breadth of existing literature related to managed moves and to allow the researcher to focus in on literature relating to Autistic YP. The search terms are indicated in the section below.

Table 1: Search terms relating to Q1

managed move	OR	managed moves

Figure 1: Literature review search process relating to Q1



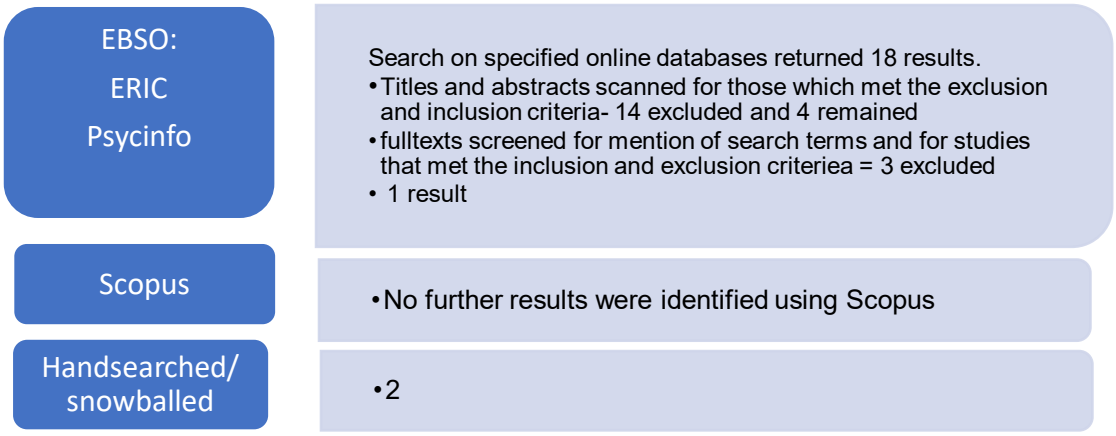
Total: 9 studies

Table 2: Search terms relating to Q2

Autism	AND	'managed move'
Autistic		'managed moves'
ASC/D		exclusion
'social communication'		
'demand avoidance'		
'demand avoidant'		
Asperger*		

**Although the term is no longer used, it was included in the search to capture studies which were published before 2013, when the American Psychiatric Association removed Asperger's Disorder from the DSM, offering instead the new DSM-V diagnosis: Autism Spectrum Disorder.*

Figure 2: Literature review search process relating to Q2



Total: 3 studies.

Each paper was initially scanned to check that it was relevant to the literature review questions. The papers were read and critiqued in terms of their limitations and strengths, applying the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (Singh 2013) framework to analyse the selected studies. The CASP framework is a checklist of criteria which is designed for application to qualitative research. A list of studies included in the literature review are included in Appendix 12.

2.2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 3: Literature review inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion criteria	**Exclusion criteria**
Type of study	Primary research Peer reviewed	Unpublished doctoral theses
Scope	Studies that are focused on managed moves. Studies that include participants who have experienced managed moves Studies that are focused on exclusion of Autistic young peopled AND some of the participants have experienced managed moves.	Studies that do not mention managed moves
Geography	UK context (managed movesare UK specific)	Studies conducted outside of theUK
Date	Studies in or after 2004 (whenmanaged moves were introduced)	Studies before 2004

2.3 Overview of the literature included in the review

In total, twelve papers were selected for review. Nine of those related to the first literature review question and three related to the second. The studies ranged in their focus and overall covered the views and experiences of parents, young people and staff of managed moves, as well as systemic factors in schools. Several studies included participants with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although the nature of their SEN/D was not described, and research methodology didn't distinguish between the experiences of YP with SEN/D and their typically developing peers. Three studies explicitly related to young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), including Extreme Demand Avoidance (EDA)/ Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA). Of these three studies, none were focused on managed moves specifically. Instead, the focus was on exclusion more broadly, and some participants had experienced managed moves alongside other forms of exclusion. This points to a gap in literature pertaining specifically to autistic young people and managed moves. Given that the managed move policy is specific to the UK education system, all the research literature was in a UK education context. Summaries of the studies included in the review can be found in the tables below.

Table 4: Summary of literature relating to literature review Q1

Authors & dates	Title	Summary
Harris, Vincent, Thompson & Toalster (2006) AND Harris, Vincent, Thompson & Toalster (2007)	Does Every Child Know They Matter? Pupils' Views of One Alternative to Exclusion. Managed moves: schools collaborating for collective gain (*one study was reported in two different journals)*	Evaluation of a scheme designed to prevent exclusions through managed moves. Conducted qualitatively through semi structured interviews with school staff, placement panel members, parents and CYP.
Bagley & Hallam (2015)	Managed moves: school and local authority staff perceptions of processes, success and challenges.	Qualitative research with the aim of increasing understanding about managed moves, from the perspective school and local authority staff. Two superordinate themes were discussed: 1. Factors that contribute to the success of managed moves 2. Challenges associated with managed moves
Bagley & Hallam (2016)	Young people's and parent's perceptions of managed moves.	Conducted in 1 local authority with 5 young people and their parents, the study aimed to increase understanding of the experiences of YP and their parents of managed moves- what contributes to their success and the nature of the challenges.
Flitcroft & Kelly (2016)	An appreciative exploration of how schools create a sense of belonging to facilitate the successful transition to a new school for pupils involved in a managed move	An appreciative inquiry to explore how schools in one LA create a sense of belonging to facilitate managed moves. Data was collected through a focus group with 6 secondary headteachers and a LA officer involved with managed moves.

Bagley & Hallam (2017)	Is there a role for educational psychologists in facilitating managed moves?	Conducted in one LA, the qualitative research aimed to explore the extent and nature of the role of EPs in managed moves. Participants included 11 school staff and 5 LA staff (2 of whom were EPs). Participants perceived a role for EPs in implementing, monitoring and supporting YP for whom a managed move was being arranged.
Enow, Trotman& Tucker (2019)	Young people and alternative provision: Perspectives from participatory- collaborative evaluations in three UK local authorities	The study reports findings of four separately commissioned evaluations of alternative provisions (APs) undertaken in 3 UK LAs. Research data confirms the value of a multiagency approach, but also shows an increase in the number of YP being referred to AP as a consequence of their exposure to performative school cultures.
Craggs & Kelly (2018)	School belonging: listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergone managed moves	The study sought to understand how secondary school students who have undergone a managed move experienced school belonging. A sense of school belonging resulted from positive peer relationships and an attendant sense of safety and acceptance. Participants expressed both the desirability of positive peer relationships, and expressed challenges in developing these. They valued subtle and sensitive support.
Gazeley, Marrable, Brown & Boddy (2015).	Contextualising Inequalities in rates of school exclusion in English schools: Beneath the 'tip of the ice-berg'	A qualitative study which explores the challenges faced by key stakeholders working to reduce inequalities (exclusions). Participants include: 8 tutors in initial teacher training departments; 7 LA staff; 55 pastoral staff and 53 YP. It concludes that embedding consistent good practise across systems is a key challenge.

Table 5: Summary of literature relating to literature review Q2

Authors & dates	Title	Participants
Langton and Fredrickson (2016)	Mapping the educational experiences of children with pathological demand avoidance	42 parents of children with PDA completed a questionnaire about their child's educational experiences. Parents' responses indicated that this group of children displays high levels of behaviours that challenge schools and receives corresponding high levels of special educational needs support. Yet, the group experienced high rates of exclusion and placement breakdown, including managed moves. Findings were discussed with reference to ASC and in terms of the implications for the inclusion of this group of children with complex needs.
Brede, Kenny, Pellicano, Remington & Warren (2017)	Excluded from school: Autistic students' experiences of school exclusion and subsequent re-integration into school	The study took place in an 'inclusive learning hub', especially designed to reintegrate excluded autistic students back into school. It was situated in a large autistic special school. 19 teachers, 9 students and 7 parents completed questionnaires and took part in semi-structured interviews designed to gain their views on school exclusion and re-integration. The study highlighted four key factors linked to successful reintegration: 1. Making substantial adjustments to the learning environment. 2. Promoting strong student staff relationships. 3. Understanding specific needs. 4. Targeted efforts towards improving student wellbeing.

Crane, Sedgwick & Sproston (2017)	Autistic girls and school exclusion: Perspectives of students and their parents.	The qualitative study sought to explore autistic girls' experiences of mainstream school and their parents' views of it. This included their experiences and views around alternative provision and school exclusion processes. 8 autistic girls and their parents (seven) took part. Three key themes were identified from the data: 1. Inappropriate school environments. 2. Tensions in school relationships. 3. Problems with staff responses.

2.4 Analytical method

In line with the process identified by Thomas & Harden (2008), thematic synthesis was used to identify themes in the literature. Following two separate systematic literature searches, relating to question 1 and then question 2, the researcher began the thematic synthesis by first coding text in each research paper according to meaning and content. In the second stage codes from the literature were grouped to create descriptive categories. Up to this point, the researcher had been completing these steps separately for literature relating to question 1 and then repeating the process for literature relating to question 2. The researcher noted that many of the descriptive categories that were generated from the literature relating to question 1 and then question 2 were similar. For example, both sets of literature were concerned with 'assessment and identification of SEN/D'. The third stage, therefore involved synthesising descriptive categories into analytical themes that relate to both research questions. Given the overall focus of the research, when synthesising the literature, particular emphasis was placed on content that was centred on the experiences of YP with SEN/D and those who are autistic. Synthesis by its nature requires the researcher to go beyond description. Thomas et al, (2008) described this stage as the most controversial stage owing to its dependence on the insights and the judgement of the reviewer. With this in mind, the researcher maintained a research journal in which reflections and reflexive considerations were recorded.

The analytical themes generated were:

1. Relationships
2. Special Educational Needs
3. Transition
4. Efficacy of managed moves
5. Role of the Educational Psychologist

2.5 Literature review themes

2.5.1 Relationships

Relationships were a dominant theme in the literature and included pupils' relationships with staff, peers and between home and school. In addition,

literature pertaining to the exclusion of Autistic young people highlighted particular challenges experienced by this group.

2.5.1.1 Pupils' relationships with peers

Bagley & Hallam (2016) reported peer relationships as one of the most commonly emerging themes in interviews with young people and their parents. Bullying, difficulty with making friends and the impact of school behaviour policies which sanction isolating young people from peers were all factors in managed moves being initiated. In the same study, the authors suggest that managed moves offered an opportunity for young people to alter their perceptions of their peer relationships. Young people who had reported being dissatisfied with peer relationships at their starter school recognised the contribution that positive peer relationships made to their wellbeing and engagement with learning at their receiving school following successful managed moves. Parents highlighted the importance of proactive action to promote positive peer relationships in receiving schools, for example through a buddying system (Bagley et al., 2016). They felt that prosocial peer relationships were fundamental in ensuring the success of a managed move. In Bagley & Hallam's (2015) study, staff and parents emphasised the efficacy of proactively harnessing positive peer relationships. Positive peer relationships were perceived to provide a social resource and to help overcome feelings of rejection experienced in previous school, helping pupils to achieve a psychological state in which they are able to engage with learning and make progress. Whilst peer relationships were a frequently occurring theme in the managed move literature, both as a factor that contributes to managed moves being instigated and to them being successful, there is little mention of interventions to foster positive peer relationships beyond allocating a buddy for the early days following a managed move.

Sproston & Sedgewick (2017) and Bede et al., (2017) highlighted particular challenges to peer relationships experienced by Autistic young people. Bede et al. (2017) explained that as children make their way through school life, the social milieu becomes progressively more complex, placing higher demands on Autistic young people, particularly those who find it difficult to make and keep friends, deal with conflict and to manage socially amongst peers who are friends or otherwise.

Sproston et al. (2017), whose study related specifically to the experiences of Autistic girls, explained that an early feminine advantage which enables Autistic girls to assimilate with peers diminishes with the onset of adolescence when physical, social and psychological changes cause difficulties with friendships and understanding conflict. Autistic girls who are socially motivated can feel frustrated by social rejection and resort to masking. They can give the illusion of coping and camouflage their social communication difficulties. As a result, they can be overlooked for support, posing a risk to their wellbeing and putting them at greater risk of bullying, isolation and rejection. Relational difficulties and altercations with peers were noted by the authors as reasons for placement breakdown for Autistic young girls, including through managed moves.

The body of literature concerning Autistic young people and exclusions points to specific vulnerability to poor peer relationships which contributes to negative school experiences and a higher risk of placement breakdown, including due to exclusion. Some of the accounts by the excluded pupils and their parents were harrowing as they described experiences of bullying, coercion and social exclusion (Sproston et al., 2017; Bede et al., 2017). The absence of literature concerning Autistic pupils' experiences of managed moves means that there is little to inform practices that support peer relationships in the context of a managed move for this group. Indeed, there is also no evidence that a 'fresh start' through a managed move ameliorates the negative social experiences of Autistic pupils.

2.5.1.2 Pupils' relationships with staff

Breakdown in relationships between young people and staff is a key trigger for a managed move (Craig, 2015; Bagley & Hallam 2016). Conversely positive relationships between the pupil and staff at their receiving school was widely reported as a factor in successful managed moves (Bagley & Hallam, 2015; Craig, 2015; Filcroft & Kelly, 2017; Vincent et al., 2007). A pastoral plan which includes having a named member of staff or key worker with whom the young person felt able to talk was viewed as critical to the success of a managed move (Vincent et al., 2007).

2.5.1.3 Home-school relationships

School staff participants in Filcroft & Kelly's (2016) study, which explored how schools create a sense of belonging to facilitate managed move, highlighted the importance of partnership between parents and schools. They perceived parents' attitude towards the managed move as important in influencing their child's attitude to the managed move, and therefore its potential success. Bagley et al. (2015) also reported that communication between the home and school was seen as being crucial to the success of a managed move, adding that the home-school relationship needed to be equitable with young people and parents feeling that their views were genuinely listened to throughout the process. Regular sharing of information and progress between home and school was perceived as being to the benefit of all concerned. In contrast, Gazeley et al. (2015) raised the concern that, unlike permanent exclusions where parents have some rights of appeal, parents can find it more difficult to challenge the nuanced practices that lead to the exclusion of their child through a managed move. They also questioned the extent to which parents actually have a choice when the alternative to a managed move is permanent exclusion.

Parents of excluded Autistic children called for improvements in communication from their children's schools (Sproston et al., 2017). They felt that school communicated with them to report problems and they were eager for positive communication. Parents were frustrated when settings did not listen to their feedback especially around their children's needs and how to support them (Sproston et al., 2017).

2.5.2 Special Educational Needs

2.5.2.1. Recognising and responding to individual needs

The importance of recognising and responding to students' individual needs is a recurring theme in the literature and is raised by professionals, parents and the young people involved in the studies (Bagley & Hallam, 2015; Bagley & Hallam, 2016; Brede et al., 2017; Sproston et al., 2017).

In Bagley et al's. (2015) study, establishing an accurate understanding of children's needs was raised by multiple stakeholders, alongside the need for referring schools to be open about these needs. Participants acknowledged that for some YP, a managed move may not be the best course of action given their profile. This echoes findings by Vincent et al. (2007), who reported in their evaluation of a managed moves programme that whilst some YP benefited from a 'fresh start' at another school, for others, support within their own school had the effect of reducing the risk of permanent exclusion. Indeed, young people expressed a preference for appropriate support within their existing school over the prospect of a managed move (Vincent et al., 2007).

Studies concerned with Autistic YP's exclusions, including through managed moves, make the case for specific challenges experienced by Autistic children and those with a PDA/EDA profile (Brede et al., 2017; Gore Langton & Frederickson, 2016; Sproston et al., 2017). Parent participants in Brede et al's (2017) study strongly asserted that a lack of understanding of Autism and Extreme Demand Avoidance (EDA) and inappropriate approaches adopted by school staff caused a decline in the YP's wellbeing and behaviour and ultimately their exclusion. Parents and YP felt that Autism and EDA being invisible disabilities underpinned the lack of recognition of their needs at school, and genuine difficulties were misconstrued as behavioural misconduct because the children look 'normal'. Similar findings were reported by Sproston et al. (2017). For the Autistic girls in the study, heightened sensory demands; relational and social difficulties; limited understanding of children's specific needs and inadequate responses to them were perceived to contribute to placement breakdowns, including managed moves.

In Gore Langton & Frederickson's (2016) study into the experience of children with PDA, 83% of parents who reported their child's category of need as it is presented on their EHCP/statement returned SEBD or SEMH rather than Communication and Interaction, which is the umbrella category for Autistic Spectrum Conditions. This may reflect current debates around the PDA as a condition in its own right, and as one that can be conceptualised within the Autistic Spectrum. Nevertheless, the authors highlighted particular vulnerability of students with PDA to placement

breakdown linked with non-compliance, difficulty with peer relationships as well ‘meltdowns’ when they experience demands as intolerably pressuring. In the same study (Gore Langton & Frederickson, 2016) 63% of parents reported that their child with a description of Pathological Demand Avoidance had experienced at least one placement change for reasons linked to their special educational needs- this included managed moves. 31% of participants reported that their child had experienced three or more moves. Figures suggest that for this group, managed moves occurred alongside multiple SEN related placement breakdowns, raising questions about efficacy.

2.5.2.2. Particular needs of Autistic learners

Sproston et al. (2017) explored Autistic girls’ experiences of school exclusions, including managed moves. One of three main themes highlighted by the study was the school environment. For Autistic girls with sensory differences, an inappropriate sensory environment at school contributed to students feeling as though they were in a ‘psychological enclosure’ which impacted negatively on their wellbeing and their ability to concentrate and learn. Noise levels, large numbers of pupils and room sizes were mentioned. Whilst large numbers of pupils were felt to contribute to sensory overload, smaller groupings were also a cause for worry for some participants because the of the potential for increased attention on them individually, which they did not welcome. Similarly, parent participants in Brede et al’s (2017) study attributed their children’s decline in engagement with mainstream education and subsequent placement breakdown to 1. Children’s difficulties adjusting to school and 2. School’s failure to respond to their children’s need. Parents raised a particular range of difficulties linked to Autism: coping with change (including unstructured times and transitions), coping with the sensory environment, difficulties with social aspects of school life leading to relational breakdowns and bullying and, in addition, poor mental health from constantly having to work hard to understand their environment. Parents in the study described having to fight to have their children’s needs recognised by schools and to gain access to support.

2.5.2.3. Mental health and wellbeing of Autistic young people

Young people in Brede et al's (2017) study, who had previously experienced exclusion, including managed moves, had multiple co-occurring conditions and the researchers' own assessments showed that many had clinically elevated levels of anxiety. Parents perceived staff use of inappropriate approaches in dealing with children's difficulties as the cause of a decline in their child's mental health and behaviour. This in turn leading to formal and informal exclusion, placement breakdown and ultimately permanent exclusion. Similarly, Sproston et al. (2017) reported that Autistic girls felt that school staff demonstrated little understanding of the strategies the girls used to manage their sensory needs and anxiety and penalised them. For example, one girl described being punished for wearing headphones whilst moving between classes, a time which she found particularly stressful.

2.5.3 Transition

Transitions were discussed in the literature in two ways. The first, is related to transitions between educational phases. The second relates to interventions and preparations to support the transition of pupils between referring and receiving schools in the managed move process.

2.5.3.1 Transition between educational phases

Trotman et al. (2019) described phase transition points (e.g. primary to secondary) as times when young people with complex presenting needs are at particular risk of exclusion, with the change in environment, expectations as well as perceptions of children becoming young adults placing greater pressures on the young people.

Brede et al's (2017) study involved Autistic pupils who had experienced multiple moves before ultimately attending an 'Inclusive Learning Hub' specifically for Autistic children. Pupils and their parents gave overwhelmingly negative accounts of the CYP's previous school experiences. A gradual decline in school engagement was described by parents who said that their children enjoyed positive relationships with staff in their primary schools and they felt that their child's primary school environment offered 'continuity'. As their children's school career progressed into secondary school, parents described difficulties adjusting

to the school environment. Several parents spoke of unrealistic demands being placed on their child by school staff leading to anxiety and feeling that they are unable to cope with the school day. The social demands of school were also raised, with young people recounting having few friends, being bullied and finding constantly having to work hard to understand social interactions draining. As a result of these experiences, parents in the study described their children as being in a perpetual state of crisis, which left them with poor mental health, with several describing self-injurious behaviours. Young people who responded to the researchers' questions regarding the reasons for their exclusion talked of internalised causes such as 'could never stay in the same place', 'liked to be in control' and 'being violent'. This suggests that they had accepted a narrative which locates the reasons for exclusions within the young person.

2.5.3.2 Transitioning between schools as part of a managed move

A carefully planned and executed transition process was widely perceived as facilitative of successful managed moves (Bagley et al., 2015; Bagley et al., 2016; Filcroft et al., 2016; Vincent et al., 2007). A gradual integration into the receiving school (Vincent el al., 2007), with opportunities for the pupil to visit prior to attending (Bagley & Hallam, 2016) were some suggested starting points. Further actions suggested in the first few days are an initial welcome by the headteacher and rapport building to garner the young person's commitment to managed moves (Filcroft et al., 2016). Having a named adult who can act as a key person was frequently mentioned (Bagley et al., 2016; Filcroft et al., 2016; Vincent et al., 2007). Clear communication between the pupil, home and the school in relation to school's rules and boundaries was suggested (Bagley et al., 2016) and establishing a timeline for the trial period was perceived to reduce anxiety and uncertainty for young people and their families (Bagley et al., 2015). Other factors that are reported to support a successful transition are concerned with processes; clear timbales, help navigating the school building and informing staff of the new arrival (Bagley et al., 2016; Filcroft et al., 2016).

Managing change can already be particularly difficult for Autistic students. The absence of literature pertaining to managed moves involving Autistic young people specifically, means that there is little to inform transition practice. However, some

of the recommendations above (e.g. gradual integration and an individualised approach) seem to echo approaches that are considered to be good everyday practice for Autistic learners. Additionally, the complex profiles of children at risk of exclusion who experience managed moves, would suggest that approaches that are suggested to support initial transition (e.g. a key person) in a managed move have ongoing utility.

A feature of the beginning of a managed move is a trial period, and young people are often set targets which act as conditions upon which permanent placement is contingent. This seems to place the onus on the young person. Filcroft et al. (2016) stressed the importance of schools considering individual needs to support successful integration, but the literature suggests that this flexible and responsive approach is not universal. In Sproston et al's (2017) study, a parent described how an unrealistic and inflexible attendance target led to a managed move for her Autistic daughter failing, ultimately leading to her removal to a PRU. In this case, the pupil's attendance had improved from 2% at her previous school to 60% at the receiving school, but this fell below the threshold set by the receiving school. This raises questions about social justice and the absence of an appeal process in managed moves.

2.5.4 The efficacy of managed moves

There is currently no requirement for schools and local authorities to record managed moves in their locality or monitor their efficacy. In addition, there are currently no studies that examine the effectiveness of managed moves involving Autistic young people. As such, there is little data to draw upon to evaluate the policy's efficacy in offering Autistic young people a fresh start and a sustained placement that meets their needs and aspirations. Factors that are reported to support the success of a managed move (e.g. relational factors, planned transitions) are discussed within previous sections of the report.

2.5.4.1 Reasons for a managed move

One of the stated aims of a managed move is to enable a young person to experience a 'fresh start' and develop new relationships at a different setting. Often, managed moves are initiated when there has been a breakdown in the relationships between the young person and their teachers (Bagley et al., 2016), and in response to behaviour difficulties or non- attendance due to bullying or social isolation (Bagley et al., 2016; Craggs & Kelly, 2018). Managed moves may also be used where difficulties with behaviour have been related to unmet special educational needs (Bede et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2006; Sproston et al., 2017). The exclusion experiences of Autistic young people in the literature suggest that they can experience multiple moves due to placement breakdown, with a managed move occurring as one of multiples moves (Brede et al., 2017; Gore Langton & Frederickson, 2016; Sproston et al., 2017). Although the participants in the studies were mostly drawn from alternative provisions and specialist settings, their previous school experiences in mainstream settings suggest that the reasons for placement breakdowns were linked to schools' understanding of and capacity to meet the needs of Autistic learners.

2.5.4.2 What constitutes a successful managed move?

There is no agreed understanding of the aim of a managed move, although it is typically understood within a spectrum of actions that seek to reduce problem behavior and avoid exclusion (Gazely et al., 2015). For parents of CYP with social communication difficulties who have experienced forms of exclusion including managed moves, finding placements that understand their children's' needs and have the expertise to meet them is a priority (Bagley et al., 2016; Bede et al., 2017; Sproston et al., 2017). Young people tended to define the success of managed moves in terms that were linked to their sense of safety and wellbeing (e.g. avoiding bullies); and the sense of belonging gained from establishing positive relationships with adults and peers in their school community as well as a positive self-perception (Bagley& Hallam, 2016). The literature suggests that there is a divergence in aims between the aims of parents and children on one hand, and the stated aims of a managed move (to avoid permanent exclusion). This

makes it difficult to establish a shared understanding of a 'successful' managed move. Achieving a shared understanding of success is particularly difficult when parents and school do not have a shared understanding of the cause of behaviours that challenge staff and the support the young person requires (Filcroft et al., 2016)

2.5.4.3 The emotional impact of managed moves

There is surprisingly little in the literature to describe the emotional aspects of a managed move, from the perspective of parents and the young people. This is despite their involvement in the majority of studies. Trotman et al's (2019) study which took place across three local authorities reported that parents, young people, governors and LA staff questioned the efficacy of managed move, highlighting examples of young people experiencing multiple managed moves and reflecting on the emotional toll on the young people and their parents. The emotional toll of managed moves was also articulated by parents and young people in Bagley & Hallam's study (2016). It included accounts of friction between different family members, worry for the young person, and feelings of relief when a managed move is successful. This raises questions around the level of support that families and young people are provided with throughout the process.

2.5.4.4 Managed Move Protocol

DfE guidance states that local authorities have a duty to put in place managed move protocol and for school to implement a support package for individual pupils to support the efficacy and process of managed moves; details of what this would entail is to be decided by schools and LAs as admission authorities. Whilst, local authority managed move protocols are not included in the literature, the researcher perused published managed move protocols for several local authorities, including the researcher placement authority; where SEN is mentioned it is almost exclusively in reference to SEMH. This is despite evidence suggesting that students with a range of SEN undergo managed moves (Craig, 2015; Harris et al., 2006; Hoyle, 2016), and young people with Autism being at a heightened risk of all forms of exclusion (Crooke, 2018).

2.5.5 Role of Educational Psychologists in managed moves

Bagley & Hallam's (2017) research explored the role of Educational Psychologists (EP) in managed moves in one local authority. They reported that the majority of school staff could not identify a role for Educational Psychologists in managed moves. School staff who did discuss a role for EPs tended to describe narrow roles such assessment of learning needs; local authority staff also viewed the EP role in a similar way. Schools reported that the nature of an EP's involvement with managed moves was variable and data within the local authority in which the research took place showed that EPs were rarely involved with children and families undergoing a managed moves; local authority staff reported that where an EP is involved, this is usually close to the managed move and used by the school as a tick box exercise to 'add weight' to their narrative about a young person. School staff tended to view learning needs as separate to behaviour, with managed move being closely aligned to the latter. Their findings suggest that schools were not aware of the potential role of EPs in working systemically with schools to prevent exclusions or managed moves. Distinct stages at which EP involvement would be considered valuable was offered by respondents. These included early preventative work: EPs were described as being well positioned to work systemically with schools and they are able to support early identification of learning needs. In addition, EPs were considered to be well positioned to:

A. Encourage a shared understanding between school, parents, children and others involved in managed moves
B. Promote an understanding of the child
C. Support staff to develop expertise
D. Liaise with and synthesise different professionals' input

There is an absence of research into the role of Educational Psychologist and managed moves for Autistic students. One study (Craggs & Kelly, 2016) mentioned the role of the EP in a managed move concerning a child who is described as having social communication difficulties. This mention was cursory. The study explored how secondary school pupils who have undergone a managed move experienced belonging. The pupil reported a positive impact from working with his school's link psychologist, who helped him to make sense of his behaviors. There was no mention of the role the Educational Psychologist in

working systemically. Whilst Bagley & Hallam (2017) study is not specifically about Autistic pupils, the four potential roles for EPs described above suggests a wide remit which could be explored further in the context of managed moves and Autistic young learners, including preventing the need for a managed move and supporting inclusion.

2.5.6 Summary and discussion

The managed move literature discussed in the review offered a range of insights into the views and experiences of stakeholders (parents, young people, staff). The role of relationships was explored; breakdowns in relationship were a significant factor in managed moves being instigated and positive relationships were facilitative of successful managed move. Particular challenges experienced by Autistic young people in managing the social milieu increased the risk of placement breakdown when young people's social needs were unrecognised or met by their schools.

It was widely acknowledged that young people undergoing managed moves present with a complex profile and that special educational needs are frequently present. It was also acknowledged that for some pupils, additional support within their current setting was preferrable. Literature concerning the school experiences of Autistic pupils who had experienced exclusions offered insights into the pressures Autistic learners face at school and pointed to a need for greater understanding of Autistic Spectrum Conditions and how to support students.

Transitions were discussed in two ways: transitions between educational phases (e.g. primary and secondary school), and transitions between schools in a managed move. Transitions between educational phases were recognised as a point when students are at a greater risk of placement breakdown. Factors that facilitate transitions between referring and receiving schools in a managed moves were outlined. The absence of literature concerning managed moves and Autistic learners in particular meant that there is little to inform transition practices for this group. Given that changes and transitions can require careful management with Autistic young people, this area warrants further research. It was also noted that

strategies put forward as ‘early days’ transitions practices (for example individualised and relational approaches) actually constituted good daily practice.

The ability to establish the efficacy of managed moves as a policy is compromised by the absence of data. There is also an absence of clear central policy that sets out the aims and remit of managed moves. The impact of this is evident in the broad range of reasons stated in the literature for which managed moves are instigated, including where children have additional needs. The absence of consensus around the aims of a managed move between stakeholders undermines managed moves from the onset. Overall, the literature suggests that managed moves can be a broad-brush and poorly defined approach. The literature did offer some insights into factors that are perceived to support the efficacy of managed moves. Educational Psychologists were described as being well positioned to work systemically with schools and a wide remit for their involvement was discussed. This could be explored further in the context of managed moves and Autistic young learners, including the role Educational Psychologists can play in preventing the need for a managed move and supporting inclusion.

For Autistic learners, who are at an increased risk all types of exclusion, the absence of literature concerning their managed moves, means that little is known of their experiences. This is despite many of the frequently occurring themes around managed moves (relationships, transitions, range of co-occurring special educational needs) being particularly pertinent to this group of young people.

Chapter 3. Methodology and Data Collection

3.1 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, the purpose of the research and the research strategies are set out. The philosophical underpinnings (in terms of epistemology and ontology) are outlined, along with the theoretical framework of the inquiry. Details of the data collection and analysis processes are given and reasons for decisions around research design are explained. This is followed by a discussion of research ethics before finally addressing the issue of research quality (including transferability, dependability, and confirmability).

3.2 Purpose

The aims of the research are exploratory. Stebbins (2001) suggests, researchers *explore* when they have little knowledge about a process or situation but, nevertheless, they have reason to believe it has elements worth discovering. The research sought to explore the experiences of autistic YP involved in managed moves, and to explore elements of the systems their managed moves occurred within. It did this by eliciting autistic YP's views around the move itself, as well as their views and experiences at their receiving school and previous school(s). School and LA staff who were involved in managed moves for autistic YPs were interviewed, seeking insights into processes, systems and relationships.

3.3 Research questions

1. *What are the accounts of autistic young people around their experiences of managed moves?*

2. *What are staff accounts of managed moves involving autistic young people?*

3.4 Research paradigm

> *'Interpretivism seeks to understand the researched phenomena from the point of views of the people involved. It accepts multiple interpretations and double hermeneutics.' (Elshafie, 2013, p.7).*

In line with the researcher's aims to understand the participants' experiences of managed moves from the point of view of the YP involved, and to gain insights

from staff, this research is being conducted from an interpretive research paradigm. The researcher recognised that interpretations are bound by both the participants' capacity to articulate their experiences, and the researcher's ability to understand them. The researcher is therefore actively involved in eliciting meaning and interpreting it. The researcher's own preconceptions, therefore, are at play, rendering reflexivity an essential component throughout the research. A reflexive diary was maintained during all stages of the study; research supervision meetings were also held frequently with the Doctoral research supervisor, which offered the researcher opportunities to engage in reflective and reflexive conversations.

A research paradigm encompasses ontological and epistemological assumptions (Scotland, 2012); these have been set out in the paragraphs that follow.

3.5 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and the claims we make about 'Truth'. It is foundational to any research endeavour; this calls for transparency around the claims made in the research in relation to 'truth' and 'reality'. It is the researcher's position that the experiences of autistic YP and managed moves can only ever be partially knowable to persons without the lived experiences of managed moves and autism. It is also the researcher's position that the meanings and interpretations that are drawn through this research are situated in and influenced by the context in which these managed moves occur. No claims are made about the generalisability of these experiences and so the researcher does not claim to uncover a 'truth' about how autistic YP experience of managed moves. Instead, the researcher holds the view that the situated experiences of the YP in the study, and critical engagement with the systems surrounding the managed moves, offers valuable, if limited, insights. This ontological position is aligned with critical realism.

3.6 Epistemology

Whilst ontology is concerned with the nature of truth or knowledge, epistemology is concerned with *how* knowledge is created or acquired (Scotland, 2012). Epistemological positions, therefore, '*reflect assumptions about what constitutes*

meaningful and valid knowledge and how such knowledge can (and should) be generated' (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.175).

The researcher's view is that YP can be trusted as reliable witnesses to their lived experiences; the insights they share constitute valid knowledge. Having examined the literature relating to managed moves and the exclusions of autistic children from school, the researcher came to the view that YP's managed moves are not exclusively rooted within child. Understanding managed move experiences of autistic children, the researchers suggest, calls for a researcher to delve into the constructions of other actors in the process; staff in schools and the LA who have been involved in managed moves. This is not driven by an assumption that such an approach would lead to a complete understanding, but to work towards a situated understanding of these experiences.

The research is guided by constructivist ontology, which posits that truth cannot be uncovered in its totality; individuals hold and create their own meanings, influenced by historical, cultural and social variations (Miller, 2016), as well as their own unique experiences. Therefore, one situation can be interpreted in multiple ways by different agents. This constructivist stance differs from constructionism due to the focus on how individuals make sense of their world, rather than a focus on how meaning is created discursively through interactions with others (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The researcher's ontological and epistemological positions influenced the design of the study. This is reflected in the chosen methods of data gathering, data analysis and interpretation. It is also reflected in the way that the outcomes of the research are presented, and the claims made as a result of conducting the study.

3.7 Theoretical framework

3.7.1 Bioecological Systems Theory

It is the researcher's position that the experiences of autistic YP and managed moves are situated in and influenced by the systems in which the managed moves occur. That is, managed moves are not caused and shaped by 'within person' difficulties alone. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Bioecological Systems Theory provides an understanding of human activity taking place within a hierarchy of systems that function both independently as well as in relation to one another.

The managed move experience of autistic YP occurs, and is studied, within a macrosystem of cultural, historical and political influences on the provision of services for YP and their families. This is expressed in an exosystem of policies and institutions, which influence the mesosystem of networks in which the children and staff are involved, and the microsystem of interactions occurring in any school that the YP attends.

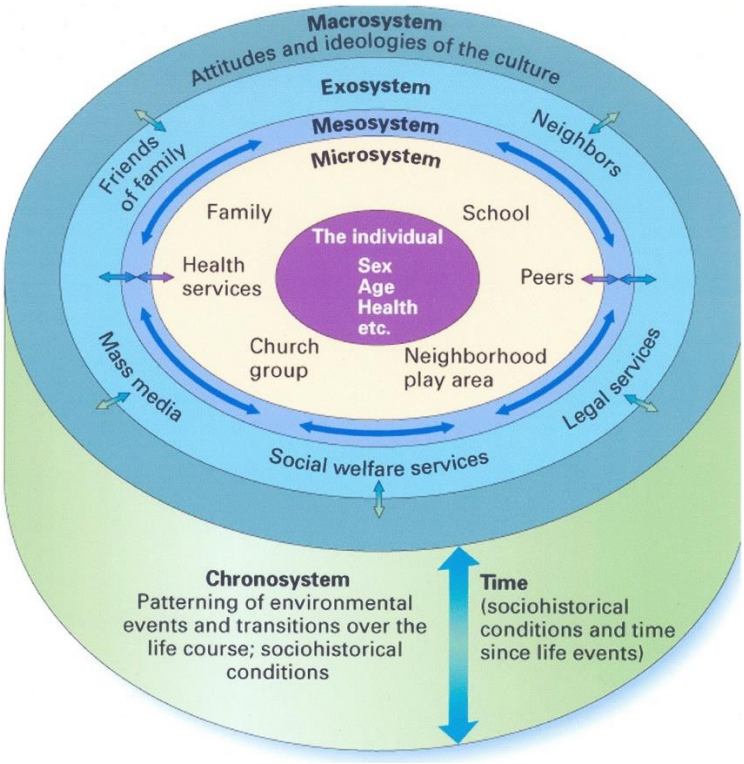


Figure 3: Model based on Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory for Human Development

In this study, Bioecological Systems Theory is operationalised as a framework for informing the research and in particular, guiding the researcher to focus the enquiry on, and gathering data through interviews with the YP, as well as individuals within their school system (microsystem) and the local authority (exosystem). In addition, the questions posed in the interview schedules sought to explore the relationships between groups and individuals within this system (mesosystem). For example, in interviews with YP, the researcher elicited responses around their relationships with peers and teachers at their school; staff

were asked about how they engage with different stakeholders around a managed move, including parents.

Bioecological Systems Theory is also used implicitly to appreciate the way in which time and events influence the systems and the experiences of the YPs involved in managed moves. This temporal dimension is particularly relevant as the research was being conducted at a time of a global pandemic which impacted on the educational experiences of YP. Furthermore, the literature review described temporal factors that are relevant to managed move experiences. For example, transitions between school phases was described as a time when autistic YP are particularly vulnerable to placement breakdown.

3.7.2 Autism theory

Earlier in the thesis (chapter 1), theories of autism were discussed. Dominant conceptualisations of autism, which are based solely within a medical model and its emphasis in symptomology were critiqued.

This research was conducted from a biosocial perspective. It recognises autism within a framework of neurodiversity. It also recognises that lived experiences of autism are situated and influenced by the social, political and historical contexts in which they occur. The research was influenced by the writings of Autistic scholars (Milton, 2017; Kourti, 2021; Williams, 1996) who emphasised the importance of knowledge of autism being generated from lived experience and with recognition of the duality in autistic life.

The research draws on the work of an Autistic scholar (Milton) for its theoretical framework. It is the researcher's position that for knowledge of the autistic experience to go beyond surface level observation and symptomology, knowledge generation should be informed by Autistic thought.

Double Empathy Theory (Milton, 2018) reframes discourses of social communication and interaction deficits (e.g. theory of mind) in autistic individuals as a 'a two-way' predicament; with non-autistic individuals also experiencing difficulties in understanding and effectively communicating with autistic individuals. The literature review suggests that relational breakdown is one of the most salient reasons for a managed moves being instigated. The shift in

emphasis which Double Empathy Theory instigates has the implication of distributing the onus and responsibility for positive relationships unto both autistic and non-autistic individuals. This theoretical positioning guided the formulation of the research questions which seek the accounts of autistic YP as well as staff involved with managed moves. It is also congruent with Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory, which transcends 'within person' thinking.

3.8 Research design and processes

Typically, qualitative research seeks to understand the experiences and views of participants, and the meanings that they place upon these (Willig, 2008). A qualitative approach was taken, in line with the exploratory aims of the research and the experiential questions it seeks to address. A qualitative design is also congruent with the interpretive paradigm and constructivist ontology that underpin this inquiry.

Mertens (2014) cited the Centre of Applied Special Technology's universal design guidelines for preventing barriers to participation (including in research) based on three principles:

1. Provide multiple means of representing information

2. Provide multiple means of action and expression

3. Provide multiple means of engagement.

Careful consideration was given to the methods used in the research to avoid disabling participants. Details of this is included in the accounts that follow.

3.8.1 Participants and recruitment

Recruitment was conducted using purposive sampling of managed move experienced autistic YP and staff who were involved with managed moves for autistic YP. Details of the recruitment processes will be outlined in two sections: recruiting autistic YP (group 1) and staff (group 2).

3.8.1.1 Participant group 1: young people

YP who fulfil the following criteria were sought:

- Autistic YP (with a diagnosis or on a pathway to a diagnosis, where an

initial assessment had taken place, often referred to as a stage 1 autism assessment)

- Autistic participants who have experienced, or are undergoing managed moves
- Participants attended school within the geographical limit of the Educational Psychology Service in which the researcher was a Trainee Educational Psychologist

The local authority in which the research took place a holds fortnightly meeting (Behaviour and Attendance Panel meeting) at which managed moves are decided, alongside placement at the city's Pupil Referral Unit. The Fair Access Protocol is also exercised at this meeting. The meeting is attended by school leaders, LA representatives who administer the process and have some accountability to managing exclusion rates, an Educational Psychologist, a representative from the Youth Offending Service and a representative from the police. Apart from referral forms completed by schools, and brief minutes of the meeting, no record is held of the managed moves - their frequency, outcomes or the profile of the YP affected are undocumented. Perusal of referral forms showed that they are seldom completed. The type of information most frequently reported on the form is extensive behaviour logs detailing misdemeanours by the referred child, leading up to the request for the managed move. Whilst identifying potential recruits of YP involved with managed moves would have been straightforward through these limited records, recruiting autistic YP was difficult, given the absence of contextual information. The researcher had recently observed the Behaviour and Attendance Panel meetings and noticed that several autistic children were being offered managed moves.

The researcher attended professionals' team meetings (Specialist teachers, Educational Psychologists and SENCo forums) to introduce the research and to recruit (YP and staff). Members of the panel where managed moves were decided were also addressed and their help with recruitment sought. Although the research received overwhelming support, the researcher found that schools were not forthcoming in helping to identify YP who have been managed moved, particularly if the managed move was from their own school to another setting.

In order to identify potential recruits, the researcher read the minutes of each of the Behaviour and Attendance Panel meetings that took place in the previous 12 months, searching for any mention of autism and social communication needs (a term used in the LA to describe children on a pathway to a diagnosis of autism). The researcher then noted the name of each child discussed at the BAP meetings and systematically checked against LA records for information that may indicate that the YP has a diagnosis of autism, or was on a pathway to a diagnosis. For example, the researcher searched through records of Educational Psychologists' involvement, specialist teachers' records, speech and language therapists' reports and referrals to the city's inclusion support services and mental health and wellbeing support services.

In total, seven YP and their families were approached to take part, of those 4 took part in the research. The tables below provide details of the participants.

Table 6. Participant group 1: Autistic YP who experienced managed moves

Pseudonym	**Age**	**Year Group**	**Number of MM**	**Managed move (s)**
Tyreiss	14	10	2	1 failed managed move 1 successful managed move by parental request following EBSA
Sally	14	10	2	2 failed managed moves (1x MM to PRU & 1x MM mainstream secondary school) Currently enrolled at PRU but not attending.
Daisy	11	7	1	At the time of the interview, Daisy had been at her receiving school for a few weeks. She was attending part-time at her parent's request.
Bo	15	10	1	Currently attending a mainstream school. He attends infrequently, when he does, he works mostly in isolation. Bo says that he

				finds the sensory environment in school overwhelming.

3.8.1.2 Participant group 2: Staff

Participants were sought who were school and/or local authority staff to whom autistic YP who have experienced a managed move (or are about to) were known. This could be through direct work, assessment or involvement with the process of the managed move.

LA officers and the Educational Psychologist who were members of the BAP were contacted directly and recruited. LA staff (e.g. specialist teachers and practitioners) and school staff (e.g. teachers, SENCo's, school leaders) were addressed at their staff meetings/ SENCo forums and and/or via email in attempt to recruit them. This did not result in any individuals being recruited. The two secondary school deputy headteachers recruited were contacted after the researcher had identified autistic YP who had undergone managed moves to/ from their schools. They then agreed to take part. The Specialist ASC teacher was recruited following direct contact as she was the teacher linked with the school the YP identified were attending/ moved to.

Table 7. Participant group 2: Staff participants

Participant Pseudonym	Role
Daniel	LA officer
Tony	LA officer
David	School leader
Fatima	School leader

Lauren	Educational Psychologist
Nathalie	Specialist teacher – ASC

3.8.2 Data gathering

The method of gathering data was through individual semi-structured interviews with staff participants and with YP. In line with the researcher's aim to adhere to the principles of universal design, so as to avoid disabling participants, autistic participants were given the option of sharing their experiences in a variety of ways, alongside the interview. One participant shared a piece of writing about her managed move following the interview and one participant offered some illustrations during the interview. One participant started to use Lego to help him describe his previous school, but quickly decided he would rather talk about it only; he was concerned that he could not build the school in its actuality out of Lego.

Two semi structured interview schedules were used, one for in interviews with YP, and the other for interviews with staff participants. These interview schedules were adapted by the researcher depending on the participants' specific roles (staff participants) and YP's ability, preference and motivation. See appendix 11 for an example interview schedule.

The YP who participated were at different stages of their managed moves. YP (with parental agreement) were given the option to be interviewed at home or at school. This gave participants who wished to be anonymous the option to remain so. It also meant that school non-attendance was not a barrier to participation. Three out of four YP were interviewed at home. Staff participants were interviewed at mutually convenient times, and all interviews with staff took place online.

The interview schedule for use with YP focused on questions about the school environment, learning, peers, teachers and the YP's feelings about the managed move. Questions were designed to elicit information about school experiences at the referring school and at the receiving school. For example, participants were

asked open questions such as ‘Can you tell me what the teachers at xxx school were like?’. In addition, YP were asked about their first day at the receiving school, the type of support they received/ wished they had received at their schools as well as their current and future hopes and aspirations.

Also using a semi-structured interview, staff participants were asked about: their role in managed moves involving autistic YP; systems and processes around managed moves involving this group; perceived benefits of the managed moves; perceived challenges as well as questions around their engagement with stakeholders (e.g. CYP, parents, staff, specialists, LA). In a similar vein to interviews with CYP, the researcher adhered flexibly to the interview schedule and all the main themes in the schedules were consistently covered. This flexible approach was important given the participants’ different roles. It was also helpful in allowing participants a high degree of control over the direction of the interview so that they could fully express their views. The researcher applied the principles of attuned interaction (Kennedy et al., 2011), a set of core principles that form the basis of attuned interaction.

In line with the researcher’s commitment to research ethics and aim to adhere to the principles of universal design in research (Mertens, 2014), the researcher sought to learn about the communication needs and preferences of the YP before the interview. This was done in consultation with parents, and with references to records of assessments relating to the YP’s communication profiles. On the day of the interview, YP were presented with a variety of options to help scaffold their communication e.g. Lego, drawing, writing, timeline. To facilitate this, all interviews with YP were conducted in person. The researcher made a conscious effort to use clear and unambiguous language and reflected in action (Schön, 1987), to respond to observed needs within the interview. For example, the researcher noted that some participants responded better to specific questions rather than questions that were too open ended. The semi-structured nature of the interview meant that adaptations to the questions could be made within the interview. Semi-structured interviewing also allowed the researcher to be guided by the participants, following the direction in which they wished to take the interview. The researchers training in VERP and the principles of attuned

interactions (Kennedy et al., 2011) were useful in helping the researcher to encourage the initiatives of young participants.

3.8.2.1 Data analysis

During data collection, the researcher audio-recorded the interviews. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher prior to analysis. Names were changed to pseudonyms when transcribing to preserve anonymity, and recordings were deleted once the transcriptions were complete. This was in compliance with the researcher's Research Data Management Plan (appendix 1).

To transcribe the data, the researcher first listened to each recording to familiarise themself with the data. A full verbatim transcription of each interview was printed. This included word for word transcription of what was said, alongside notes on how it was said (tone) where relevant.

The researcher considered different data analysis methods, at various stages of the research. A research proposal was put to the research supervisor in November 2020. At this stage the researcher considered a Narrative approach. This approach assumes that events are selected, organised, connected and evaluated by the narrator as meaningful for a particular audience (Reissman,2004; cited in Robson 2016). The researcher did not feel that this assumption was appropriate to a context where a neurotypical researcher is interviewing and autistic participant. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered, as part of a mixed method qualitative approach, where YP's accounts would be analysed using IPA, and staff responses would be analysed using Thematic Analysis. The ideographic nature of IPA, like narrative approaches, appealed to the researcher. However, the focus with this method on interpreting narratives about events which had already occurred was not appropriate given that one of the participants had only recently started their managed move. Furthermore, IPA is more than a method of analysis, it comes with philosophical and theoretical underpinnings (e.g. hermeneutics and phenomenology), that shape multiple stages of the research. Although IPA's aims and philosophy is congruent with some of the aims of this study (focus on lived experiences; critical realist epistemology), the theoretical framework was considered restrictive.

The analytic approach selected was Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). A benefit of using RTA is the theoretical flexibility it offers. This flexibility enabled the researcher to draw on the contributions to autism theory from within the autistic community. In addition, the researcher was able to draw on theoretical frameworks that can be used to explore systemic factors relating to managed move.

One of the researcher's reservations in using thematic analysis was the small number of CYP participants in the study. However, a recently published guide to Reflexive Thematic Analysis, allayed some of the researcher's concerns. According to Braun & Clarke (2021), the concept of 'sample size' in qualitative research is problematic because it is rooted in a positivist-empiricist research paradigm which aims to capture a selection of data items/ participants that provide a representative subtest from a larger population. Braun and Clarke (2021) also critiqued the concept of data saturation, guiding RTA researchers to prioritise 'information power' (Malterud et al., 2016, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2021); they invite the researcher to reflect on the information richness of their data set and how it links with the aims and requirements of the study. Despite the small number of CYP participants in the study, the data gathered was rich and corresponded closely to the aims of the research.

3.8.2.2 Content of the analysis

In interpreting the data, both semantic themes (what the participants said explicitly during the interview) and latent themes (ideas that underly the semantic content) were considered. Where latent interpretations were made, these were done cautiously, without veering too far from the participants' statements, and with reflexivity. The researcher holds the view that no latent analysis can be objective of the analyst; reflexivity involved the researcher considering how their own positioning and views come to bare upon the analysis.

The ecosytemic orientation of the research and the researcher's position that the experiences of autistic YP is influenced by a range of contextual factors necessitated an interpretive framework that allows for a wider level of analysis. Braun & Clarke (2006), described latent analysis as a method that allows for a focus on the socio-cultural contexts, and the structural conditions that enable the

individual accounts that are provided. The combination of semantic and latent analysis allowed the researcher to consider both the participants constructions of their experiences, and to consider systemic, contextual and temporal factors that may have influenced these experiences.

3.8.2.3 Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)

Braun & Clarke (2021) describe RTA as a 'theoretically flexible method… for developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset' (Braun & Clarke 2021, p.4). A central tenet of RTA is that the researcher's beliefs, experiences and positioning is an integral component of the research. That is, the researcher's subjectivity is an unavoidable influence on the research; it is not something to remove or avoid, but a resource to draw upon - with reflexivity. Reflexivity involves the researcher drawing upon their experiences, world view, and social position (e.g. gender) and critically interrogating how these aspects contribute to the research process. This has epistemological implications. Knowledge in RTA is considered as situational; the consequence of interaction between the researcher and the data. No objective claims about truths are made as a consequence of RTA. Instead, the quality of RTA can be characterised by depth; it can be superficial and weak, or compelling and strong.

The six stages of RTA, outlined by Braun & Clarke (2021), were followed. A detailed account of each stage is given below.

Phase 1: familiarisation with the data set

The researcher first became familiar with the data during the interview. To transcribe the data, the researcher listened to each recording in full, then played each interview again whilst transcribing verbatim. After that, the researcher listened to each interview for a third time to check the accuracy of the transcription. This process allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data.

From this stage on, the researcher worked separately on the data set compiled of interviews with YP, and the data set compiled of interviews with staff. Two separate RTAs were conducted following the steps outlined below and leading to

two thematic maps being produced. Each thematic map corresponded to a research question.

Phase 2: Coding

At this stage the researcher worked systematically through the data set identifying segments of the data that were potentially interesting or relevant to the research questions. The researcher applied analytical descriptions or codes to these segments, this coding was specific and detailed and it aimed to capture single meanings or concepts. Semantic and latent meanings were captured. Following this process of initial coding, the researcher collected the code labels and compiled relevant segments of the data for each code.

Phase 3: Generating initial themes

Unlike codes which typically capture a specific or particular meaning, the aim at this stage of the analysis was to construct themes that describe broader shared meanings. Clusters of codes that seemed to share the same core ideas or concepts and which might provide an answer to the research questions were compiled or grouped together. In Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) this was described as *searching for themes*. In Reflexive Thematic Analysis, however, themes are not searched for, the assumption that they exist and await discovery is dispensed with. Instead, Braun & Clarke (2021) describe themes as being constructed by the researcher based around the data and the research question as well as the researcher's own insights, experiences and positioning. This renders reflexivity key in the process.

Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes

This stage involved checking that the themes made sense in relation to the full data set as well as to the coded extracts. Taking each theme in turn the researcher considered whether the theme tells a story about an important pattern or shared meaning relating to the data set. The researcher also considered whether taken collectively, the set of themes that were constructed 1. highlighted the most important patterns in the data and 2. whether they related to the research question.

Phase 5; Refining, defining and naming themes

This stage involved the researcher grouping themes from stage 4 of the analysis into clusters that share a core concept, turning the themes from stage 4 into sub-themes, and the core concepts they share into main themes. A concise and informative name was chosen for each main theme.

Phase 6: Writing up

Two thematic maps were created corresponding to each of the research questions. These are presented in appendices 14 and 15. The findings were reported by addressing each research question in turn and expanding on the themes and subthemes reported in the thematic maps. The researcher chose to report the findings from YP's account first in order to foreground these in the research. The write-up includes relevant extracts from the transcripts to illustrate key concepts. Pseudonyms were used most of the time to attribute extracts to participants. However, at times the researcher made the choice to report findings without reference to pseudonyms when doing so could risk making a participant identifiable.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines from the British Psychological Society (2018) and the Health and Care Professions Council (2016). Ethical approval was sought and gained from the School of Psychology at the University of London. Permission to conduct the research was given by the Head of Inclusion Support Services in the researcher's Local Authority (appendix 2). The potential for harm to participants or the researcher was identified and mitigated through a risk assessment prior to the study occurring. As this study was being conducted during a global pandemic, the researcher considered and adhered to National and Local guidelines when meeting with participants. In addition, the researcher consulted with participants and parents to ensure that the researcher took into account individual circumstances and preferences to minimise personal risk to the participants and the researcher.

Before agreeing to take part, YP and their parents received a telephone call explaining the research, this was followed with an email containing two information sheets (one for the parent/guardian and one adapted to be accessible for the YP (appendices 4 and 5). This outlined the research purpose and process,

alongside key issues such as data storage, anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawal. Consent forms and contact details for the researcher and research supervisor were emailed at the same time (appendix 6). Parents and YP were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research during the initial telephone conversation and by contacting the researcher using the contact details provided.

Staff participants were addressed at their team meetings to introduce the research. Those who agreed to take part were contacted individually via email, to reiterate information about the research given at their team meeting and to offer the opportunity to have a preliminary meeting and/or to ask any questions. Information sheets (appendix 7) were sent to all participants before data collection, this outlined the research purpose and process, alongside key issues such as data storage, anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawal. Consent forms (appendix 8) and contact details for the researcher and research supervisor were also emailed.

The researcher recognised consent as an ongoing process, as opposed to a one-off event (Mukherji & Albon, 2018). Further verbal consent was sought from participants (YP and staff) at the beginning of each interview. At this stage, a brief outline of the research was also given, using language and a communication style appropriate to the participants' communication needs and preferences. The optional nature of participation was reiterated. This helped to ensure that the consent gained was fully informed. In addition, the researcher made participants aware of their rights in the research (Bell, 2008; Powell & Smith, 2009) e.g. their right to anonymity and confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the interview at any stage. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study, up to two weeks following the interview (after which their data will have been incorporated into the analyses). These rights were also communicated to parents.

A Data Management Plan was devised and agreed with the university. This contains details of how confidentiality and anonymity was maintained, and it addressed issues of data storage and management (appendix 1). The research

was conducted in accordance with LA guidance for data management and the Data Protection Act (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2018).

The researcher recognised that for YP, talking about managed moves can involve revisiting distressing experiences. Also, for some YP the researcher's positioning as an education professional and/or as a 'stranger' may have raised caution. They researcher considered their duty of care and non-maleficence (BPS, 2018; HCPC, 2016) proactively when planning the interviews and concurrently whilst conducting the interviews. For example, the researcher drew on Positive Psychology to include problem free talk (at the start), positive reframing and spotlighting of strength. The researcher remained watchful and alert to signs that indicate that a YP's wellbeing may be compromised (e.g. distress or the need for a break).

3.10 Audit Trail

An audit trail was maintained throughout the research project, including:

- A recruitment log of contact made with staff, YP and parents. Dates and notes of when consents were obtained
- Field notes
- Research diary which started from the initial stages of deciding on the research topic through to completion. Includes thoughts, decision points, feelings and dilemmas.
- Completed consent forms, ethical approval (including revisions), description of research for participants, Research Data Management Plan.

3.11 Research Quality

> 'Standards for evidence and quality in qualitative inquiries requires careful documentation of how the research was conducted and the associated data analysis and interpretation process, as well as the thinking processes of the researcher' (Mertens, 2014, p.267)

In previous sections, the methods used in the research were described in detail, including reflexivity. Lincoln & Guba (1985) described criteria for judging the

quality in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, replicability and confirmability. These elements will be discussed in turn.

3.11.1 Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility is concerned with the degree to which research findings are congruent with the realities, as they are experienced and expressed by participants. This is in contrast with the similar concept of 'interna validity' which is used in quantitative research; internal validity considers if in applying quantitative research techniques, the researcher measures what they had set out to measure. This qualitative research, which is conducted from a constructivist stance, does not seek out an objective Truth about managed moves, and it is not concerned with positivist agendas of measuring and classifying the experiences of autistic YP. In this study, the researcher considers credibility in terms of the degree to which the research accurately portrays the experiences and views of the participants involved in the study: autistic YP, and staff involved with managed moves involving autistic YP.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) described member checks as the most important way of ensuring credibility in qualitative research. Member checks refers to the practice of the researcher frequently checking their understanding with the participants. Informed by double empathy theory, the researcher frequently asked clarifying questions to check that they understood participants as they intended to be understood. Clarifications were sought explicitly, not relying on the autistic participants to pick up on communication breakdowns and attempt repair. The researcher used clear and unambiguous language, avoiding colloquialisms and reliance on non-verbal cues. The researcher frequently summarised what participants had said and checked if the summary accurately reflected what they had said.

An audio-recording was made of each interview, and transcriptions were checked twice for accuracy and completeness. This was essential in ensuring that the data recorded accurately reflected participants contributions. This is in line with the researcher's ethical duties.

One YP asked that her parent remained present during the interview. The researcher considered this appropriate and conducive to the YP's wellbeing.

Although it was emphasised that the YP was to be the participant in the research, the emotive nature of the topic meant that at times, the parent also contributed. Where this was the case, the researcher sensitively redirected the interview towards the YP, and recursively posed the interview question. Given the absence of consent for parental participation in the research, the researcher redacted the parental contribution.

3.11.2 Transferability

Transferability 'describes research where the specific context, participants, settings and circumstances of the study are described in detail so the reader can evaluate potential for applying the analysis to other contexts and settings' (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.144). Judgements around transferability rest with the reader; the researcher has provided a thick description of the study which addresses the variables described in Braun & Clarke's (2021) definition. This can be used by a reader to evaluate the potential for applying the research processes in this study to other contexts and settings.

3.11.3 Dependability and replicability

Lincoln & Guba (1985) identified dependability as the qualitative parallel to reliability. 'Reliability means stability over time in the positivist paradigm. In the constructivist paradigm, change is expected, but it should be tracked and publicly inspectable.' (Mertens, 2014, p.272). In the context of this study, the author adopted a flexible approach to data gathering to accommodate the range of communication abilities and preferences of participants and to avoid disabling participants. Research methods and any changes applied have been documented, allowing future replication of design. An established process for Reflexive Thematic Analysis was followed, in line with guidelines by Braun & Clarke (2021). Each step of the analysis was described in detail, preceded by a clear rational for the selected method of analysis. Sufficient details to allow replication was given in these accounts.

3.11.4 Confirmability

The concept of confirmability in qualitative research is aligned with objectivity in quantitative research conducted from a positivist paradigm. In Qualitative research, confirmability means *'that the data and their interpretation are not*

figments of the researcher's imagination. Qualitative data can be tracked to their source and the logic that is used to interpret the data should be made explicit' (Mertens, 2014; p.272). The researcher has provided a clear description of the methodology and processes involved in data gathering, analysis and interpretation. Guba and Lincoln recommended that researchers work with peers to conduct a confirmability audit to attest to the fact that the data can be traced to original sources, and to confirm the process of synthesising data to reach conclusions. Yin (2009, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2021) refers to this as providing a chain of evidence. Braun & Clarke (2021) in their description of Reflexive Thematic Analysis state that analysis and interpretation of data cannot be accurate or objective, but they can be weak (e.g. superficial, underdeveloped) or strong (insightful, nuanced, rich). They also state that good data analysis can be done alone or in collaboration. Where collaboration takes place, it is to enhance interpretation, reflexivity and understanding rather than to reach consensus around data coding. It is in this way that the researcher collaborated with a doctoral research colleague, to enhance the analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.12 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the design used in the study was outlined, providing a clear and transparent account of the research's purpose and philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. A detailed account was also given of research techniques, including recruitment, data gathering and analysis. Issues of research quality were addressed before concluding with a consideration of ethical issues. In the following chapter, analysis of the data and findings from the research are presented.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Chapter Overview

The previous chapter provided an overview of the design and methods used in the research. It outlined the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher, considered the purpose and design of the research, and detailed the research methods including data collection, recruitment and analysis.

This chapter presents the findings from the research. Each of the two research questions is considered in turn. Following a reflexive thematic analysis process, two thematic maps showing the themes and subthemes constructed from the data are presented in appendices 14 and 15. The researcher first reports findings from YP's accounts (research Q1) followed by staff accounts (research Q2). This order of reporting is deliberate so that the YP's accounts are given the privilege of primacy in the narrative. A detailed description of each of the themes and subthemes is presented in the sections that follow. These are accompanied by extracts from the data to illustrate key points. The chapter concludes with a brief summary. The following chapter, the discussion, discusses the findings in relation to literature and psychological theories.

4.2 Research Question 1: Overview of themes

The first research question sought to address the following question:

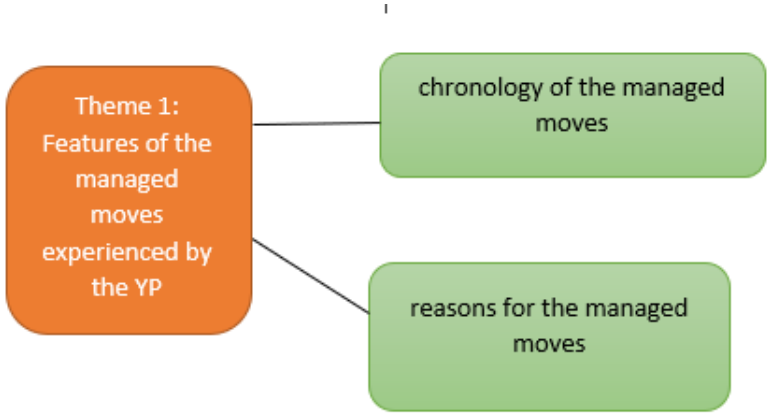
RQ1: What are the accounts of Autistic young people around their experiences of managed moves?

Seven themes were identified:

1. Features of the managed moves experienced by the YP
2. YP's reflections on the managed moves
3. YP's experiences as learners in mainstream schools and other settings
4. Identity
5. Relationships with staff
6. Relationships with peers
7. Impact of managed moves

Each of the themes along with subthemes is addressed in the sections that follow. Appendix 14 displays a map of the themes and subthemes relating to this research question.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Features of the managed moves experienced by the YP



4.2.1.1 Subtheme 1: Chronology of the managed moves

Although four YP shared their experiences in the study, in total six managed moves were experienced. Two YP experienced two managed moves, alongside additional school moves. For example, one participant experienced 5 transitions since leaving primary school, including moving twice between a PRU and an additional mainstream school. All the young people involved in the study had experienced emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) and hadn't attended school for at least one term around the time of their managed move. Due to Covid-related restrictions, all YP have also spent time at home whilst their schools were closed to them.

So I went to (school 1) … for six months and then I moved to (school 2). I stayed there for two years and I got kicked out. Then I went to PRU for months. But I just didn't go. Then I didn't go to school for the whole of 2021. And then I started (school 3) a couple of weeks ago and then I got kicked out

Sally

4.2.1.2 Subtheme 2: Reasons for the managed moves

The reasons for the managed moves were varied, with some managed moves being instigated by schools (4 out of 6), and others following a parental request (2

out 6). Both parental requests for a managed move occurred following a period of EBSA.

Daisy's mother requested a managed move a term after her daughter transitioned from primary to a secondary school, without a known peer group. Having tried to settle at her first secondary school, Daisy's mental health deteriorated and she had frequent panic attacks; she eventually stopped attending school. Daisy and her mother felt that attending a school with a known peer group from her primary school would lead to a better school experience, improved wellbeing and attendance.

I can't go to (xxx school) because it is too stressful. I feel unwanted because of having hardly any friends, I constantly have to lie and not be myself. I lie and try to be someone I'm not to try to keep any friends at xxxx school as I don't have the same sense of humour as them. I was so anxious at xxx every minute of every day and I just want my old life back and I want to be happy like at (primary school). *Daisy*

Latent analysis would suggest that whilst Daisy and her mum sought a managed move to reunite her with friends, difficulties with social interactions and making friends were a barrier to settling at her new school.

Tyreiss experienced two managed moves. He described experiences of racism and conflict with peers as being the reason for the first managed move, which was initiated by school. Conflict with peers continued at his receiving school, leading to the failure of the managed move. Following the failed managed move and a period on EBSA, related to anxiety about coping with peer relations, his parents requested a further managed move which was successful.

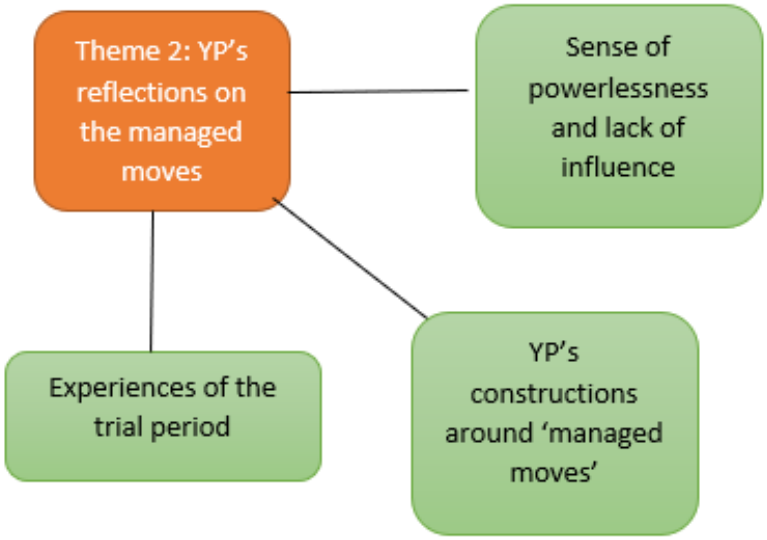
It wasn't really the best environment. I felt there was quite a bit of racial abuse towards me by students and teachers and there was a lot of things that some students thought that they can get away with. *Tyreiss*

Although Tyreiss and Daisy's moves were instigated by parents, they could not be accurately described as a parental choice; both Daisy and Tyreiss' moves were requested by their parents after placement breakdown and EBSA. They

were attempts to reintegrate the Autistic YP into a school, rather than exercising a choice between schools.

Most managed moves instigated by schools were viewed by the YP involved as compulsory removals. The reasons stated by YP for school initiated managed moves were either a series of altercations with peers and staff or a one-off event deemed to warrant a significant consequence by the school.

4.2.2 Theme 2: YP's reflections on the managed moves



4.2.2.1 Subtheme 1: YP's constructions around 'managed moves'

Whilst the terms 'managed move' and 'fresh start' were used to describe moves with YP and parental consent, school initiated moves were constructed by YP as exclusions.

But then when I got expelled -I call it expelled but it was a managed move but I think it's a way of sugar coating what it actually is. *Bo*

In addition to 'expelled', other terms used to describe the managed move include: kicked out, told to leave, excluded and moved on.

4.2.2.2 Subtheme 2: Experiences of the trial period

The YP responses suggested that they understood the trial period as a time when their receiving school would be closely monitoring their conduct; with the highest

expectations being placed on their behaviour and attendance. Attendance in particular was a key concern for participants who previously struggled to attend school because of EBSA.

I was trying my best to get into the school ….sometimes I'd miss a few days and I'd be worried about if they wouldn't accept me because I didn't have the exact percentage of attendance that they wanted me to do but they accepted me into the school. *Tyreiss*

Having a flexible timetable and attendance targets were deemed helpful, especially for pupils whose managed moves followed periods of non-attendance.

Some participants described the particularly high expectations, in terms of behaviour, as unrealistic or oppressive. Nevertheless, they strived to adhere to them. For example, Sally explained that:

I got into a few arguments with them. One about my hoodie, which in the end I took off. Like, yeah, I argued with them. I'm not going to lie for quite a while about it. And I would repeatedly come in with it. But in the end, I took it off…After the first 2-3 days. I just started wearing the full uniform. And they even said that. And I went to a few lessons'. *Sally*

However, Sally struggled to meet all her new school's expectations and she was eventually excluded. She reflected on the appropriateness of the expectations set out during the trial period:

Realistically, I've been smoking. I haven't been to school in a year. Like you cannot expect me to be perfect. *Sally*

Anxiety that a trial period aroused came at a time when Autistic YP were coping with transition and change due to moving school, and for some, trying to cope with a sense of loss and rejection having been told to move by their previous school.

4.2.2.3 Subtheme 3: Sense of powerlessness and lack of influence

Young people reflected on a sense of powerlessness at various stages of their managed move. For YP who underwent enforced managed moves, negative

emotions were experienced and expressed due to the lack of say in their removal, and destination. Bo reflected in particular on the issue of CYP rights.

You're a human too, you have rights too, regardless if you are 11 or if you're 77 it doesn't matter you have rights you're a human … we weren't born …we weren't born to be treated like… treated like dirt outside. *Bo*

Bo's experience was harrowing; he was told to attend a meeting with a group of teachers who questioned him about an event, it later transpired that he was not at fault. This YP reported that the teachers did not allow his parents to attend and so he attended alone, after school. He described feeling intimidated and pressured His account suggested that the communication and emotional demands placed on him were immense.

So they then said to me erm, when I was telling the story, they said (Bo demonstrated their sarcastic tone) 'we've got that bit move on'. In that's exact tone. They rolled their eyes at me and they just weren't listening.

He explained that:

Sometimes with autism you have a lot of difficulty with trying to get information across. So that's not fair.

Speaking about trying to understand what was being said at a meeting with his teacher at which the schools' behavior and consequences policy was being described:

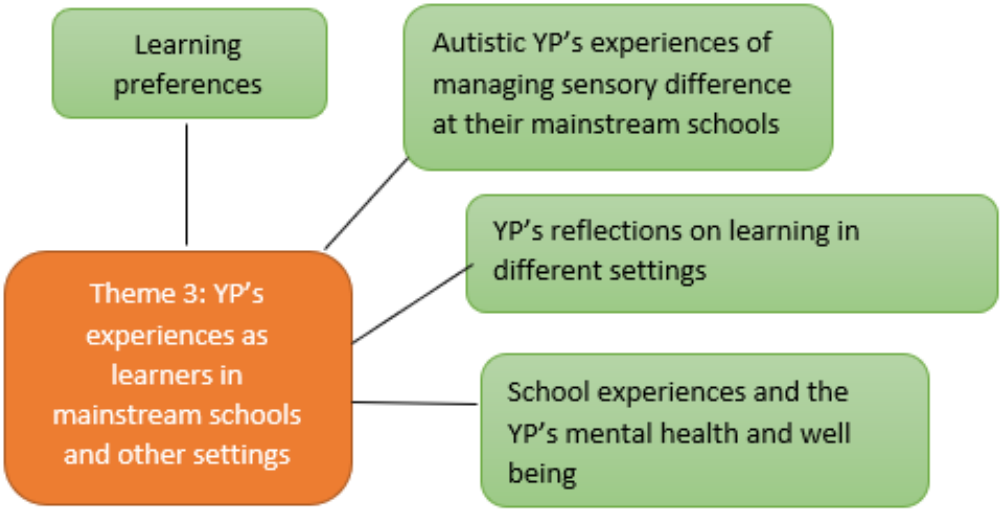
… it sounded like they were reading out the law to me and I never really understood it all coz… I just didn't for some reason

Describing how he felt following his meeting alone with teachers Bo said*:*

I went back to the car where my mum was waiting and I cried my eyes out cause I was absolutely miserable from that. It destroyed me because I felt like coercion played into it because they said 'if you don't do this, we'll do this.

Power imbalances in the children's accounts were inherent in child to adult relationships; communication differences; and the power to initiate a managed move/ agree one and choice of setting following a managed move.

4.2.3 Theme 3: YP's experiences as learners in mainstream schools and other settings



Overall, YP responses suggest that managing the content of learning was not an area of difficulty. They had clear insights to share about approaches that helped them learn along with the barriers that they had experienced.

4.2.3.1 Subtheme1: Learning preferences

IT-mediated learning was a preference for almost all participants, with several students reporting that using a computer to complete their work helped with their attention to, and engagement with, learning.

'I like the Chrome Books coz like... I hate it when you have to focus on one thing. So I can do my computing because I'm doing so many things it's like. Just easier. .. Cause it drives me crazy just sitting and listening and staring at the board. I actually go insane that's why most of the time I just start fidgeting or moving or like I have to talk to people because I get so bored and just like so aggravated like'. *Sally*

Purposeful learning (in the YP's view) and independent learning pursuits were important to several young people. For example, Daisy said she wished she could go to a Montessori school which she perceived as a school where she could pursue useful learning and develop independence.

It's not straight on classroom desk, paper learning. It's more like, handheld, and they're out in the woods, like forest and nature or whatever….They teach you good life skills…how to book a holiday and things like that. Like random things that you wouldn't learn in a normal school but that you would need in life a lot.

Daisy

One of the participants who will be returned to a PRU following a failed managed move described the lack of cognitive stimulation at the setting. This academically able YP reflected on her previous experience at the PRU saying:

In some ways, yes, okay, I did have some good memories, but at the same time, like no like, this isn't… I'm not doing anything. What's the point of me coming here if I'm going to the park and then just revising the same things I've already done again and again. *Sally*

Two out of the four participants reflected on the impact of the managed moves on the subject options available to them at GCSE level, with the change of school placement impacting on them being able to exercise choice and to continue with the same options previously available to them.

4.2.3.3 Subtheme 2: Autistic YP's experiences of managing sensory difference at their mainstream schools

Sensory differences were reported by three out of four participants. These differences were not perceived to account for the managed moved being initiated. However, the young people's responses suggest that sensory sensitivities in combination with other challenges the YP experienced, had a cumulative negative effect on their sense of wellbeing.

…they kinda said to me if you're not keen on the corridors, you can leave before the lessons a few minutes before to avoid err the rush… and I kinda said why not. And I kinda got on with that but then it was an issue that I had later on not necessarily with the corridors, with everything: with break time, with lunchtime with everything really. And then after school I'd have somebody go oh look it's that such and such or whatever they insult me in a variety of ways, some of them so extreme …it would just put your spirit right down. *Bo*

YP took actions to cope with sensory sensitivities in ways that at times were perceived by their schools as defiant. For example, they described frequent and prolonged visits to toilets, frequently exiting the classroom and fidgeting. One YP who was frequently reprimanded for non-adherence to school uniform expectations during the trial period -preferring to wear a hoody from home- described sensory sensitivities to touch and some textures.

At times, YP attempts at sensory regulation would end in altercations with teachers. One YP who frequently exits his class described:

They'd hunt for me coz they have teachers with walkie talkies saying this student is at such such door we need support and there'd be a big long corridor- there'd be one there, one there, arms out going you're not passing and…. I'd yell at them I'm f'ing passing mate and you're not stopping me *Bo*

Demands were a cause of stress for some YP, particularly when the demands restricted their ability to apply their coping strategies and when the YP perceived the demands as non-sensical or pedantic. Demands were seen to be embedded in spoken instructions, rules and the routines and expectations of the day. One YP described the emotional and sensory response evoked by demands.

I ran off from one of the teachers, then I went and sat in the toilets for 20-30 minutes. *Sally*

The participant explained that staff demands…

…give me the same aggravations like when you hear a tapping noise or a chewing noise. And it's really annoying…. Just makes me so frustrated, like leave me alone *Sally*

Sally, who was being reintegrated following a period of absence from schooling altogether and some attendance at a PRU, had hoped for a flexible approach to her reintegration that takes into account her recent experiences. Sally's managed

move was ‘failed’ within two weeks for frequent non-adherence to her schools’ expectations.

If a child is on a managed move, they are not going to be used to going into school normally again and the managed move is usually a lot less…How do I say it, flexible than an actual stay. So you are putting a kid, a child, in something that they haven't been in for a long time. But then you're not being flexible at all. Then you are being overly strict…. *Sally*

4.2.3.3 Subtheme 3: School experiences and the YP’s mental health and wellbeing

For all the young people involved in the study, negative school experiences were reported to have had a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. As previously mentioned, all participants experienced periods of non-attendance due to heightened anxiety around school. Social isolation, bullying and conflict with teachers and peers were frequently stated and linked to poor wellbeing. Latent analysis of the YP’s responses also suggests a cumulative effect of various experiences that occur during the school day on wellbeing (sensory overload, trying to make sense of social interactions, manging relationships and conflict). One young person used a metaphor to describe this:

When there's too much water build up the dam bursts- is just like that.

Bo

Ameliorating some of the difficulties experienced (e.g. socially) was perceived to promote resilience to other school experiences that challenge the YP- seemingly a reverse to the cumulative effect of adversity. For example, Daisy shared that:

My real friends …help me to feel more relaxed so I’d be able to feel comfortable, wanted, and less stressed… At the moment I would panic at any school but my friends might help distract me from my inner thoughts. *Daisy*

For some YP, poor relationships with school staff and the concept of a trial period contributed to increased anxiety and hypervigilance. Bo explained:

My hopes are that I can feel as though I'm a bit at ease. You know what I mean. I don't think constantly that they were out for me all the time. *Bo*

Managing repetitive and intrusive thoughts was a challenge for both Daisy and Sally. Whilst Daisy's thoughts were internally focused, Sally's were focused on peers. She explained that she has experienced periods of intense focus on particular peers, which impacts on her mental wellbeing.

At the time I was like, not right in the head at all. Obviously, I wouldn't do this now. But I was like. Not manic but crazy, I was acting crazy….I was obsessed. Like unhealthily. It would *actually affect my friendships, my life, my schedule, every single part of my life. Like it was horrific.* *Sally*

A range of mental health professionals were involved in working with the YP including psychotherapists and primary mental health workers. Practitioners were commissioned mainly through the LA and CAHMS. One young person who was assessed by a court's clinical psychologist, had no access to therapeutic services normally available to YP through the LA via a referral made by a school, despite this type of support being indicated. This YP had experienced very frequent movements between different settings and extended periods out of school altogether, which impacted on access to services.

4.2.3.4 Subtheme 4: YP's reflections on learning in different settings

The YP had experienced learning in different settings (in addition to mainstream schooling) prior to and following the managed moves. These included extended periods of home learning (due to Covid and EBSA), attendance at PRU and learning in isolation within their mainstream schools.

The YP in the study reflected on these experiences and shared some views on their preferred learning situations.

Isolation

Three out of four YP experienced learning in isolation, usually as a consequence of behaviours that challenged their school community. The young people reported negative emotions about these experiences and questioned the fairness of the practice. One young person continued to learn in isolation; he expressed a

preference for the sensory environment. Distrust in teachers meant that returning to the classroom was not motivating.

They actually put me in a separate room that sometimes other people were in- I hate it when other people are in cause I just don't get on with it… I feel like they'll make a slight noise, they'll drop a pen and I'll be like… you know… I don't want to hear that, be quite. *Bo*

Alternative provision

Two young people shared their views on alternative provisions. For Bo, who plans to attend an alternative setting from September, the move is perceived to offer him a small setting where staff can accommodate his sensory needs. Conversely, Sally who had actually experienced an alternative provision (PRU) did not prefer it.

*It didn't feel like normal school…It was… embarrassing and degrading….*I'm like… *I'm not special, I need to go to a normal school* *Sally*

At home

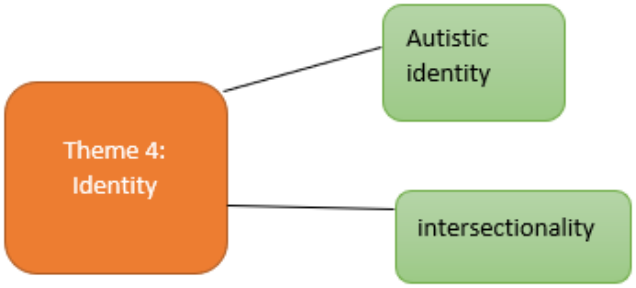
Participants shared positive experiences of learning at home during Covid-related school closures, and in some cases during periods of EBSA. Home learning offered an opportunity to escape the social pressures of mainstream secondary schooling, and an opportunity to a pursue a variety of activities linked to areas of high interest.

Mainstream schooling

Overall, the young people preferred attending a mainstream school. This includes Bo, who is willing to try an AP, but who wished that mainstream schools were able to recognise and understand Autism, and treat YP fairly. Sally's reflections suggest a view that Autistic children whose behaviours challenge others should be included in mainstream settings.

And then they (school staff) would retaliate. Well, then you shouldn't be in this environment. But then it's like I would be in the same in PRU. There are just some children who are going to be difficult, who you are going to have to accommodate to.' *Sally*

4.2.4 Theme 4: Identity



4.2.4.1 Subtheme 1: Autistic identity

‘ I feel quite separated from other people. Like I think that…I feel like I think differently to the way other people think about things’.

Sally

The two YP who were diagnosed some time ago did not place Autism at the centre of their experiences. Their lived experiences of managed moves were described in terms of the events they encountered and the relationships they had at school. They did not separate themselves from Autism. For the other two YP whose diagnosis of Autism occurred in the context of school placement breakdowns, it was apparent that their difficulties at school were shaping this identity. They expressed a tension between stereotyped deficit laden accounts of Autism and how they view themselves as capable YP.

For example, Sally said about her diagnosis

Yeah, I’m Autistic.. I’m ok with that now… it doesn’t mean that I’m ‘special’ or anything’.

Initially, Bo described Autism in terms that seemed stereotyped, and centred around difficulty.

They might struggle with you know… erm … with general social interaction. They won’t be able to.. they won’t be able to speak to even one person that they don’t know, can’t look at somebody, they can’t verbalise things, they take things literally, which sometimes I am guilty of (laugh nervously). But ultimately, again it’s this whole idea about being able to relate to people.

Bo later reflected that such a stereotyped view of Autism- which does not describe him- might be the reason that YP like him go unrecognised as Autistic and can be overlooked for support and misunderstood.

Mainstream schools, need to understand that Autism isn't just somebody that is is ….you know … non-verbal….you know struggles with everything. That's not always true you know. There's a …there's …you know ….they …I don't think call this anymore but Asperger's- its very different. High functioning Autism is what they call it. I think stop stereotyping Autism, stop stereotyping everything, but especially the things like Autism because these are the things that people might have, especially in this scenario.

Identifying with other Autistic peers and reflecting on their relationships with them was a recurring theme. Both Bo and Sally recognised some similarities between themselves and Autistic peers, describing some shared experiences of social difference. These similarities in some instances were viewed positively, and other times, the YP talked of difficulties in getting along with others who also found social interactions challenging.

'*Everyone that I speak to that I really gel with that I get on really well with, suffer with a lot of difficulties, not just ASD, a multitude of different things …it made me feel good about myself knowing that other people were in the same boat'*

4.2.4.2 Subtheme 2: Intersectionality

Autism is one aspect of the YPs identities and lived experiences. Gender, race, socio-economic status and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) intersect with Autism and were salient to the YP's experiences of managed moves.

For Tyreiss, racism was the most salient aspect of his negative school experience; this was evident in the way accounts of racism were presented very early on in the interview.

There was a lot of white students. I was one of the only black …mmm…mixed race students there and some of them some of them were alright, a lot of them acted a bit silly and childish… I mean sometimes like they would just be children who tried to ask if they can say the n word or they would say something err similar to do with it.

Experiences of racism made him feel unsafe at school and contributed to high levels of anxiety, leading to periods of EBSA.

Daisy talked about her experience of starting at a school that she perceived as ‘the posh school’. She talked of changing her behaviour to adapt to what she thought of as the expectations at such a school.

‘I was expecting it to be like, really posh. So I was like, I was like …. pretending to be really posh’.

The experiences on one young woman involved in the research suggested vulnerability to sexual exploitation. For this young woman, a managed move did not result in a ‘fresh start’, and at times the environment at her receiving school did not feel like a safe place.

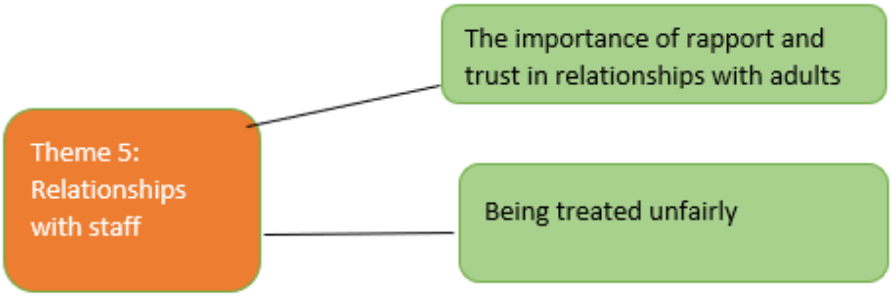
The boys would literally like follow me around the school. I'm not joking, physically walk behind me. And I turned around and round every corner they were there….they were horrible.

Furthermore, this young woman’s description of an ideal teacher was that they were female.

One YP who had experienced ACE’s described a tension between the gratification of being socially ‘relevant’ and the negative attention drawn to her when this attention came about through risky behaviours.

I like the attention, but at the same time… it wasn't good attention. It was just like….It made me so uncomfortable. Like in a way, I kind of liked it- just the concept of people talking about me, me being popular or relevant- but at the same time….No.

4.2.5 Theme 5: Relationships with staff



4.2.5.1 Subtheme 1: Young people expressed a sense of being treated unfairly

Fairness, or the perceived lack of it, was a frequently occurring theme, with 3 out 4 YP sharing experiences they felt were unfair.

For Sally, a sense of having been treated unfairly stemmed from the view that her receiving school quickly escalated its response to her behaviours that challenged them, resulting in her being removed from the school within two weeks. She felt that they had not considered her known difficulties, and that they had a lower tolerance for her behaviours than her peers'.

In describing teachers' responses to racist incidents encountered by him and his sister, Tyreiss described a sense of unfairness in the approaches taken by teachers who responded to his and his sisters' grievances in comparison to their white peers'.

Tyreiss: …there were some children who would say the n word towards her (his sister) or just in general, but some of the teachers said they can use a plain word like tigger or things like that.

Researcher: They would use a word like tigger?

Tyreiss: Yeah the teachers advised the students that they would say that instead of saying the n word

Researcher: What did you think of that?

Tyreiss: I thought it was horrible. I don't know how they get the job if they're going to say things like that we're supposed to be equal to everyone so if a student… if

a white student has a problem or black student has a problem they should sort it out for both of them not just sort out the white students problems.

Bo recounted a harrowing experienced at a school that expelled him. For the purposes of preserving anonymity, details of his managed move will not be disclosed in the research but a brief outline gives a context to his experience. Bo was removed because of the actions of a friend of his who attends a different school. Bo's school felt that, as the only link between the school and this friend, he must have been complicit. A police investigation found this not to be the case, nevertheless, the school decided that it was best for Bo to leave. Bo had no record of poor behaviour and had received many commendations for his learning and conduct.

Bo shared that he was deeply hurt that none of the teachers that knew him well during his time at the school came to his defence; he felt that his previous good conduct counted for little when his school had decided on the managed move.

'A lot of the actual teachers that taught me were the people that knew me the best….the reason I felt upset was that (member of staff) had every opportunity to say I know Bo… listen, I appreciate what your saying but this is a 14 year old, he's saying he didn't do it, we have no evidence. It's like I was an alien from out of space and they didn't understand anything I was saying. I didn't feel like I was listened to, I didn't feel I was even respected, you know. And I thought that that was the bare minimum – respect, you know'.

4.2.5.2 Subtheme 2: The importance of rapport and trust in relationships with adults

Rapport and trust were frequently recurring themes in the YP descriptions. Adult to YP relationships with rapport and trust were seen by the YP as being conducive to a sense of safety in school and the success of a school placement.

Speaking about how a particular teacher helped her feel safe at school, Daisy said:

I could just tell her anything…to me a teacher is someone who just teaches you and not really does anything else. But she's just like a normal person and teaches me at the same time.

Sally felt that her relationship with this teacher meant that she had a positive school experience, and reduced feelings of anxiety that could lead to panic attacks.

Sally and Bo's responses link behaviours that adhere with boundaries to positive relationships with adults, and vice versa. Sally described improved behaviour in classes when she felt that she got along with the teacher; these were teachers who did not place demands on her beyond those linked to learning, which she perceived as justified demands.

There have been some teachers that I click with. If I like them, then I can bond with them really well and like actually get along and behave.

Bo shared that prior to the events leading to his managed move (having wrongly been accused of misconduct), his behaviour was exemplary, despite the effort this took in terms of masking his sensory needs and coping with bullying. A break down in trust with adults at his excluding school impacted on his relationships with adults at his new school, and in turn his behaviour.

Bo: There would be times where I kind of lie and say I needed the toilet and then go and spend 30 minutes in the toilet, that's something I do (at his previous school). But then when I got expelled, I just used to be- I don't care I'm doing it (exiting the classroom at his new school). You're not gonna put your hands on me unless you wanna lose you job. And I never thought like that. I never thought I'm gonna abuse the system by just saying to them if you put your hands on me then it's not gonna look good for you.

Researcher: What's changed?

Bo: What's changed? I was like a switch. I was off before, I'm on now.

'It's not gonna look good for you' were words used by a teacher towards Bo at his referring school at the time of his managed move- at a meeting he attended alone and felt intimidated in. Using the same words against teachers at his new schools suggests that Bo has carried this loss of trust to relationships at his new school.

Tyreiss talked about two teachers at his receiving school who have come to be his trusted adults. They help navigate situations which would otherwise result in conflict. For example, his trusted adults help him talk with other teachers and children when he feels that he is not getting along with them. Tyreiss explained that in the past, when he didn't get along with a teacher, he would move classes. He has also experienced a previous managed move due to conflict with teachers and YP. In addition to helping him avoid conflict, the support of his trusted adults has meant that he did not have to cope with further change e.g. new teachers/ peers.

Although all YP were assigned a key worker at some point in the managed move process, the quality and nature of that relationship varied. Some children described keyworkers as being an assigned person that they were told that they could go to if they needed help. For others, the key worker met with the YP at regular and agreed intervals. Not all key workers were assigned, some were adults with whom the YP had a good relationship and came to be their trusted adult.

Some barriers to accessing assigned key workers in the context of a managed move were described by the YP. These include: the person being an unfamiliar adult; the perception that the keyworker is unavailable e.g. a busy teacher; YP's feelings towards the adults (e.g. distrust); and a sense of being disliked by adults.

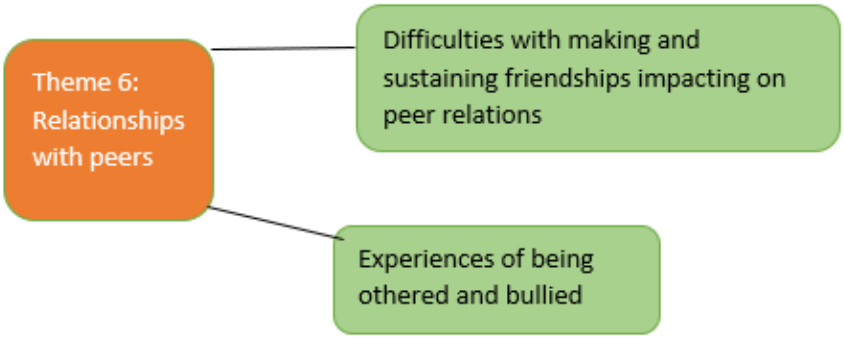
The notion of distrust in adults was particularly significant for two children- Bo (as previously mentioned) and Sally, who had experienced multiple placement breakdowns.

For Sally her distrust was apparent in the way she avoided adults e,g, exiting, hiding. Frequent exits eventually lead to her managed moved failing.

They'd say we need to talk to you, and I was like, no, cos then they will talk to me and then I will probably just get excluded on the spot. Or they will just do something awkward. So I was just like, no, I'm not going and I just left. I just went to my friend's house.

Several YP expressed feeling disliked by teachers or being an inconvenience. Words used by 3 out 4 YP to describe how their teachers feel about them include: hard work; too much bother; hated me; didn't like me; they think I'm an idiot; an annoyance.

4.2.6 Theme 6: Relationships with peers



4.2.6.1 Subtheme 1: Difficulties in making and sustaining friendships impacting on peer relations

Friendships were raised in interviews by all the participants.

For some young people, friendships were easier to develop when they were in primary school. Daisy described how her friendships in her Reception class just happened and that she has never 'made' friends. She also highlighted that the motivations of others mattered too i.e. them wanting to make friends with her.

I didn't really make friends before I just made friends in reception. But because everyone was kind of wanting to make friends.

Worth noting is that Daisy has been able to sustain her friendships over a long period of time. She described how her friends understand her and are able to communicate in a way that does not exclude her, unlike peers in her new school whom she describes as 'cliquey and they do banter' which she does not understand.

Tyreiss shared that he had friends throughout his primary schooling but that making friends in a large secondary school was overwhelming.

I had friends but I moved to (local area). I was alright in primary school because it was such a small school… secondary school… probably got a bit overwhelmed

from it and didn't really make many friends and I was sort of just probably trying to make friends but they weren't the right people to make friends with.

He talked of frequent conflict with peers; whilst some of this was linked to racism, he found it difficult to reflect on his relationships with peers in other cases, beyond describing peers as not being right for him. Both Tyreiss and Daisy seemed to view success in friendships to be dependent on peers being able to engage with them.

For Sally, peer relationships were of the utmost importance. She reflected on how her social motivation developed over time; this coincided with the onset of adolescence.

I just isolated myself, like my whole childhood. And then I started getting really obsessed with being popular. And then.. like in year seven and then year eight I started to get popular. But by then I solely just viewed school as just like a social place. Like I never viewed it like as a school.

Whilst Sally has many YP that she refers to as friends, and she describes herself as 'popular', she too talked of difficulties with friendships. Sally expressed difficulties in managing boundaries in relationships, stating that she can at times become overly focused on a YP.

There was a whole thing about xxx. I was so obsessed. Not like stalker obsessed like, I didn't go to that length, but I was OBSESSED. Like unhealthily. It would actually affect my friendships, my life, my schedule, every single part of my life. Like it was horrific.

Other times, Sally feels that that her friendships can be superficial.

It's like a surface level friendship. Not great- we don't talk about things. We go out… but we don't connect. Don't like, talk about anything deep.

She further reflected that she is cautious not to get too close to friends, explaining that 'that that's when there would be trouble'. Like Tyreiss, Sally also described frequent conflict with peers.

For Bo, making friends has been difficult throughout his schooling. He described being able to relate better to children who have experienced similar difficulties with peer relations, particularly bullying. He spoke of one significant friendship with an Autistic friend.

4.2.6.2 Subtheme 2: Experiences of being othered and bullied

Experiences of being othered were frequently described by Autistic children. These include being left out, verbal and physical abuse and bullying. Some YP perceived these experiences to be a response to features of their Autism.

Sally

I'm not being a victim, but sometimes I would notice people being so unnecessarily horrible to me and I don't know if it's just because I'm a bit different. Like just by the way I speak and act

Bo

You know people would take advantage of me because I do such and such whether it's something as simple as I don't make eye contact very well or it might be something as nasty as how I look… you know it really doesn't have any particular.. its never one thing from everyone- its always something different which is equally as difficult as if it was just one thing because it like… its not one thing I have to work on it feels like its everything I have to work on- everything that makes me me is being criticised by others.

Daisy's descriptions of peer relations at her first secondary school suggested feelings of being othered through exclusions. Her descriptions of peers as being cliquey and leaving her were experienced as rejection.

The continuation of peer relations virtually means that experiences of bullying are not confined to school boundaries. Both Sally and Bo described experiencing negative interactions with peers online, amounting to stigmatising and bullying behaviours. Bo explained that whilst bullying at school could be reported to teachers, cyber-bullying went unchallenged. This led to Bo withdrawing from social contact with peers online during Covid-related school closure, which further isolated him from peers.

School staff responses to bullying and othering were discussed by all participants. Tyreiss' views on staff responses to racism was discussed earlier; he also shared how helpful he found key teachers at his new school in mediating relationships, including with peers. In contrast, for Daisy adult support in mediating relationships was not something that she felt that she wanted, preferring not to draw attention to her difficulties. Both Bo and Tyreiss described moving classes in attempt to avoid peer conflict and bullying; this approach was reported to have been ineffective and, in addition, meant that the YP had to manage new relationships, including with new teachers. Bo perceived staff as willing to deal with bullying, but ultimately ineffective; he suggested that his ongoing experiences of bullying evidences this. Bo also offered a view on restorative justice and on punishment.

I don't know if its called restorative justice, which is where they put you in a room with this individual , maybe their parents or just some sort of member of staff that would come to accompany you and you'd speak to them and you tell them why that hurt you …I just felt awkward. I felt like I didn't even wana tell them. I felt like saying to the teacher: its obvious why I'm upset because they've said this! What do you want me to tell them?! And a lot of the time I was never comfortable with telling them that, and I wasn't comfortable telling them I wasn't comfortable to talk to them. And so as a result, I kinda just sat in silence and it wouldn't get anywhere and then they'd kinda- they wouldn't literally nudge me but they'd kinda nudge me hypothetically and say if you're not gonna say anything, there's nothing that can be done. They didn't say it in that exact term but I felt that was the impression I got, so erm, they said… that they'll try something else and they tried to punish them and I thought.. ok punish them is one thing but if anything that makes them more frustrated because they think that oh well he's got me in trouble so I'm going to do it more to mess with him because he.. he… snitched on me or whatever they say.

4.2.7 Theme 7: Impact of managed move

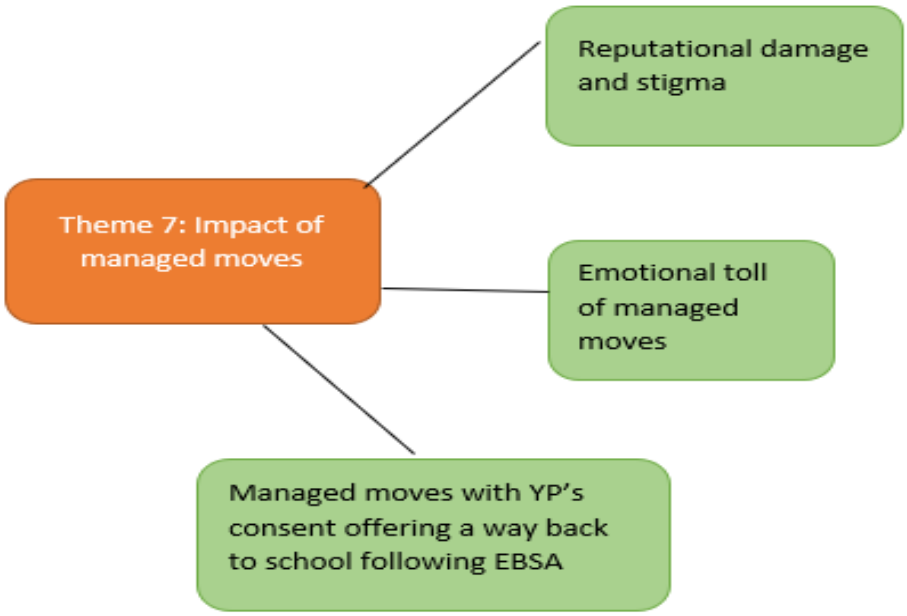


Table 8. Outcomes of managed moves

Managed move	Pupil	Who initiated the managed move?	Outcome following trial period
1	Tyreiss	School	Failed
2	Tyreiss	parent	Successful
3	Bo	school	Passed the trial period but Bo will be moving to an alternative provision after 1 year at his receiving school. His attendance is sporadic and he mostly learns in isolation.
4	Daisy	parent	Daisy was a few weeks into her MM at the time of the research.
5	Sally	school	Failed
6	Sally	school	Failed- now enrolled at PRU

It is not the aim of this research to offer a quantitative analysis of the success rates of managed moves, rather the research question emphasises lived experience. The table above is intended to be a concise representation of outcomes and destinations following a managed move.

4.2.7.1 Subtheme 1: Reputational damage and stigma following a managed move

Managed moves were frequently presented to the YP (by schools and in some cases parents) as an opportunity to start anew. Leaving behind reputational damage was a key aim. However, the YP's responses suggested that this aim was not achieved through their managed moves, and in some cases a reputation as the 'expelled' YP contributed to a sense of shame. Online connections between students from different schools meant that the YP's school experiences were not confined within a particular school.

S: Did you feel that the move gave you a chance to have a new reputation?

YP: No. No, no, no. Because I was quite an online person, so regardless of what school you went to… It was like my reputation was still there regardless. People in (distant school) talk to me…or other schools would know who I am and stuff that's happened.

4.2.7.2 Subtheme 2: Managed moves consented to by YP resulting in school attendance following EBSA

For young people who experienced (or are experiencing) successful and consensual managed moves (Tyreiss and Daisy), it has meant that they are now attending school following extended periods of absence from school. Tyreiss shared that he does not encounter racial abuse at his new school. His peers were welcoming, and he gets along with them. Although there are times when he does not get along with others, mediation by key teachers helps him avoid escalation. Daisy, who was interviewed shortly after starting at her new school said that she was delighted to be with familiar peers; she was attending consistently part-time. It is not possible to comment on the long-term outcome of Daisy's move, as she had only recently started at her new school at the time of the interview. Both 'successful' managed moves were conducted with the YP's consent.

4.2.7.3 Subtheme 3: Emotional toll of managed moves on YP

Passing a trial period was no guarantee of the long-term success of a placement in Bo's experiences. For Bo, the managed move had a significant impact on his mental health, described by his PMHW as post-traumatic stress disorder. Bo described being depressed as result of the managed move. This impacted on his ability to start afresh at another school. Speaking about starting at his new school, he said:

It was a pleasant environment, … I was just kind of not really paying attention. I wasn't interested. I didn't want to know because … at this point I was frustrated, I was miserable, I was borderline depressed you know. I didn't want to know anything about school.

The injustice that Bo had experienced meant that he had lost trust in the education system. His responses also suggested a sense of loss at the type of student he used to be and perceived to be- studious and well behaved. The managed move not only impacted on his views on school, it also impacted on his identity.

I felt irritated by these two individual teachers that were in (referring school) and it kind of ruined my reputation and it ruined my view of school, and it still has. I still despise it all. I still… I still feel awful about it and that's, that's so weird because I used to be a student that liked learning. And I still do like learning, but only on my own terms now. With the whole education system… I just don't agree with it… I feel like I've been treated wrongly and it's made me miserable depressed and not like myself- so therefore why should I care

Similarly, Sally has described an emotional toll to managed moves, which she experienced as rejection. She expressed that there should be a place at mainstream schools for children who find school difficult. Sally, whose second managed move ended in an expulsion and re-referral to PRU described being a 'PRU child' as 'embarrassing and degrading'. When she was previously referred to PRU, she did not attend; she now risks being out of education again.

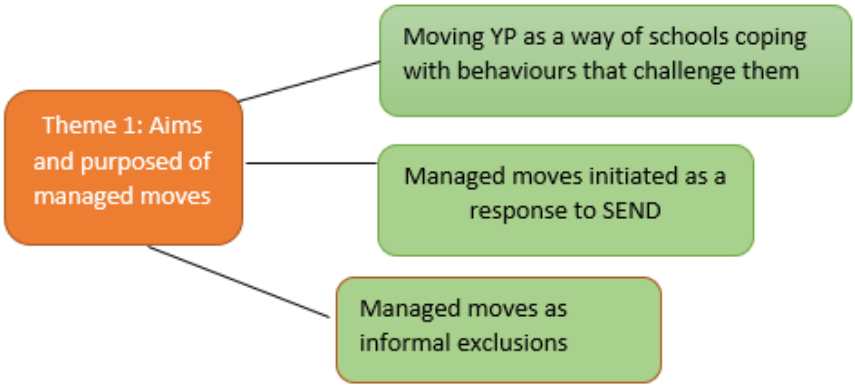
4.3 Research Question 2: What are staff accounts of managed moves involving Autistic young people?

Four themes were identified:

1. Aims and reasons for managed moves
2. Processes
3. Role of Specialist SEND Services in inclusion and managed moves
4. Factors that facilitate managed moves

Each of the themes along with subthemes is addressed in the sections that follow. Appendix 15 displays a thematic map of the themes and subthemes relating to this research question.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Aims and purpose of managed moves



A range of aims and reasons for managed moves were stated in interviews. These were varied and were closely associated with professional positioning. For example, those embedded within school systems emphasised children's behaviours and incidents. whereas those embedded within LA systems emphasised policy such as reducing exclusion rates. This suggests that members of the BAP chaired by the LA may be working to different aims, but their interests align when it comes to managed moves as a policy solution to children whose behaviours challenge school staff and who would be at risk of permanent exclusion, with implications for LA performance targets relating to exclusion rates.

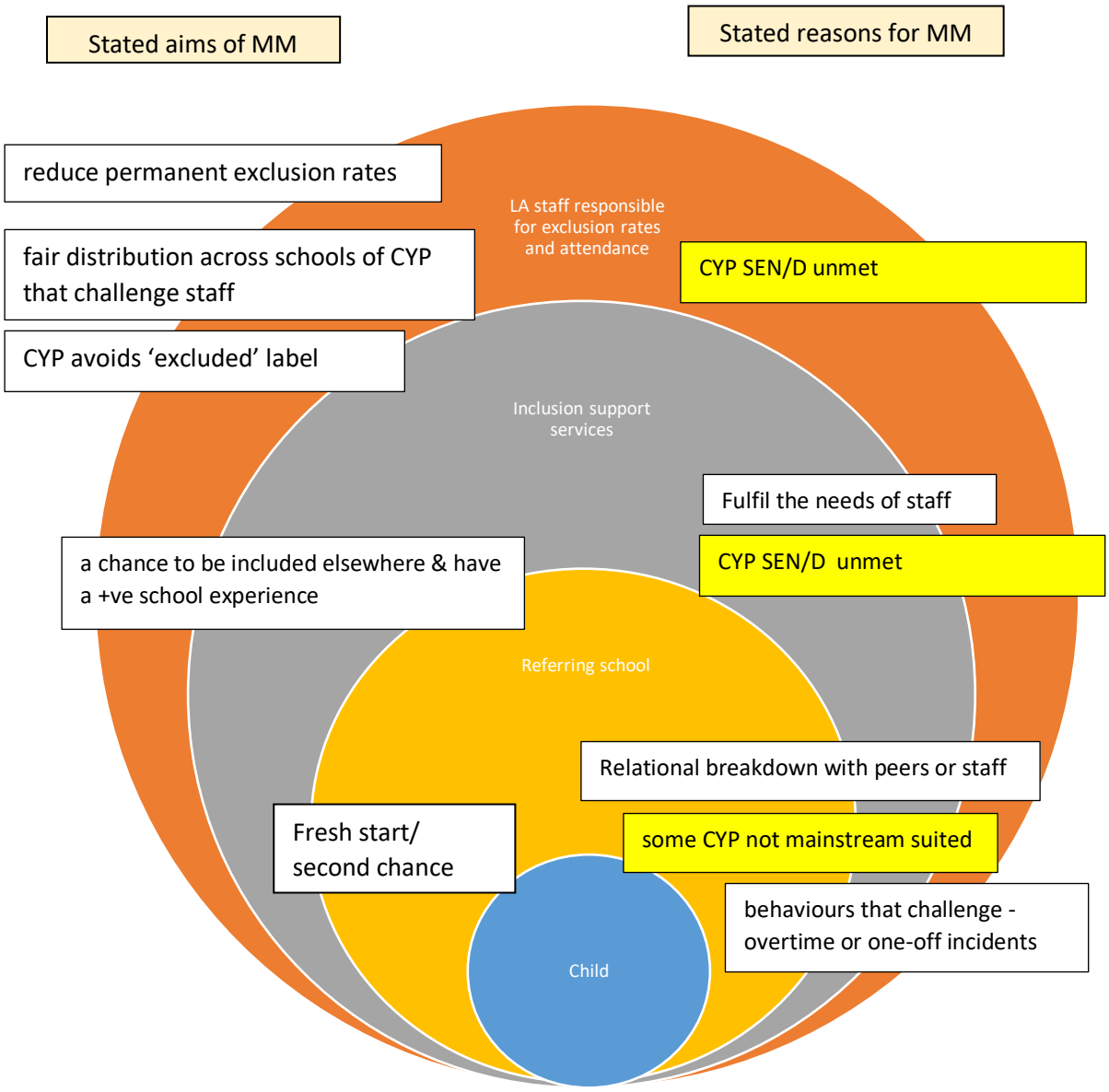


Figure 4. Staff stated aims and reasons for managed moves

4.3.1.1 Subtheme1: Moving YP as a way of schools coping with behaviours that challenge them

School staff described the most common reasons for managed moves being initiated or failed as persistent behaviours that challenge staff, or one-off incidents that result in the YP's position in the school being viewed as untenable. Examples of behaviours that warrant a managed move or contribute to a managed move failing could be described on a spectrum that ranges from serious incidents to breaking school rules in a way that is minor but persistent.

Staff responses suggest that these behaviours challenge school staff emotionally and relationally (placing a strain on relationships between staff), and they challenge schools' capacity in terms of expertise and resources. The EP in the study described strong emotional response through psychological projection experienced by staff who work with CYP whose behaviours challenge them. The specialist ASC teacher also highlighted the emotional demands on school staff working with the YP. Latent analysis of school staff responses also pointed to this affective dimension.

Deputy headteacher with pastoral responsibilities*: 'she was quite verbally aggressive towards me and another member of staff and we simply can't talk to people like that….we really wanted her to have the opportunity to be successful in mainstream…but she just …wouldn't go to lessons, she'd come in late, and then she'd go to a lesson or she'd then ...she'd just walked out of the lesson and hide in the toilet and she'd then go and have a confrontation with somebody else….it's really challenging when the rest of the time it was just, you know, taking so much time and energy to try and get her into a lesson or into the right place. That, you know, it's… yeah (sighs)… it was really difficult. And it just felt like she was saying, I really want to be here and I want to make it work but then none of her actions sort of showed that to anybody.*

The YP being discussed in the quote above failed their trial period within two weeks. The quote was selected as it illustrates multiple barriers (presented here and elsewhere in the data) to including Autistic pupils whose behaviours challenge school staff. These barriers were:

1. An emphasis on behaviour, whilst overlooking underlying SEND relating to Autism
2. A reliance on pastoral systems and staff to manage the behaviour of Autistic YP, rather than taking a SEND informed approach, involving a SENCo
3. The presence of an affective and psychodynamic dimension to the responses of adults to the YP. In this example, the deputy headteacher was clearly emotionally impacted and psychological

mirroring may have played a part in terminating the trial period for a YP who was perceived to be self-excluding by not adhering to rules.

A deputy headteacher, LA officer and the Educational Psychologist also acknowledged that managed moves were sometimes initiated to fulfil a need within the school system e.g. school staff's emotional need and the need to be seen to take action.

***EP**: he sort of said, the teachers were really quite upset about (pupil) because it was two teachers, I think that he'd hurt in some way. And I sort of said, well, they are the adults, it isn't very nice that happening, but..*

And…

***Deputy headteacher:** The people who come to us, I'm not always convinced that they need to come to us. I think you know, the seven that have succeeded with us, I can't believe those seven pupils cannot thrive and progress in their parent schools. It's just that sometimes senior leaders come under a lot of pressure in order to do something about quite a naughty pupil, and one of the responses is to move that pupil on.*

4.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: Managed moves as informal exclusions

Managed moves were described by some participants in terms that suggest that they are operationalised as an informal exclusion.

***Researcher**: When you say managed moves are different in (LA), can you tell me a little bit more about that?*

***Participant:** Managed moves should…the ideal is that it is a trial. If the trial goes wrong, then the person can return to their original school. That's how a managed move works. We've given you a go, if it works it works- great. If it doesn't work, we'll take them back and we'll try something else. The problem is when a child's being permanently excluded, it's a one-way sort of journey. We call it a managed move, but in effect it's a transfer- a managed transfer. And if that breaks down, then that person is back within the school system, they're not returning to the school they've been at.*

Furthermore, the managed moves were presented to parents at a point when the alternative is a permanent exclusion.

LA officer: *For pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, and we're offering a managed move as an alternative to permanent exclusion, then (LA member of staff) will be in contact with a parent and be talking to the parents and saying obviously, the school can permanently exclude your child. That means that child, (in audible) they will have a permanent exclusion on their record. The likelihood is we would still be seeking a place to a different school or we would place that child at the pupil referral unit. There are no other options if a child is permanently excluded; we would put them in another school or we would put them in the pupil referral unit. The options that we're offering you is to put them in another school which is what would happen anyway.*

LA participants' views suggests that policy frameworks for contesting permanent exclusions favour schools and their governing bodies; this is communicated to parents to encourage them to accept managed moves in place of permanent exclusions.

LA officer: *sometimes you hear what's happened to some of these children and it is shocking. Now, they couldn't have had a worse lot in life, but it doesn't matter, this is what I say to parents - you'll go in front of the governors and the governors go, 'oh, yeah, it was very sad but you did push past that teacher, and they can't be having that'. And that's it! And they uphold the exclusion. Of all the students we've had only three or four have been overturned. And three of those were because the school didn't bother with any paperwork.*

In the excerpt below, the LA officer offers an indirect response to the researcher's follow-up questions regarding exclusion and appeal rights relating for parents. Latent analysis suggests that this shift in focus seeks to underscore the aim of the LA to keep reported exclusion figures low; managed moves are a way of achieving this.

Participant: *parents sometimes fight it because the permanent exclusion system allows for a review of the permanent exclusion by the governing body and that*

can be upheld or it can be overturned. It then allows for a... if the parent disagrees, it can go to an independent review panel, who can then uphold or overturn. They will only uphold or overturn it on the permanent exclusion happened because the pupil broke the behaviour protocol of that particular school. So it's not based on a sort of ....universal, it's based on whether the school follows the protocol they should have followed in order to permanently exclude that pupil. So, it doesn't mean.... if the parent disagrees with the fact that the child has been excluded, it doesn't make any difference. The independent panel would look at whether the school followed their rules. And if they followed their rules and did everything in the right way, then that was fine. They could permanently exclude.

Researcher: *I keep mentioning Autistic children, because they are the focus of the research- is that the same for them too? In terms of the process of the exclusions?*

Participant: *Within (LA name) our aim is to have, I think our aim is to have only 10 permanent exclusions a year, across the whole city. Primary and Secondary. We have about 4 because permanent exclusion is seen as a failure. And that's across the country. If you're a school that permanently excludes then you're a school that can't work with the children you've got. If you're a local authority that permanently excludes, then you're a local authority that can't work with the children you've got.*

The view that managed moves are preferable to permanent exclusions was echoed by the majority of staff participants, with the child avoiding being labelled as excluded being the most often stated benefit.

Staff described some reservations around the use of 'managed transfers' for YP with SEND; for example, the EP described working with school to support inclusion. One of the LA officers, despite their role in persuading parents to accept managed moves in place of exclusions, reflected on how 'managed transfers' interfered with school governing bodies' ability to exercise their duty to hold schools to account for the inclusion of YP with SEND.

LA officer: *(parents) want to go in front of the governors. They want the governors to know that the school hadn't done this, and they hadn't done this and they haven't done that, which I think is an important step. And I think that's another thing potentially we get wrong is by a lot of these permanent exclusions not happening and becoming managed transfers, there is no scrutiny of those decisions. There's no oversight of those decisions. So when somebody turns up in front of the governor's once a year, or once every two years with a case, the governors go 'Oh yeah, well okay, we understand'. But if that was happening three, four or five times a year, that people were saying the same things, then actually, you know, you've got to be …you've got to be going away and saying OK, so what is it? Why have we failed these children? …Every school in the city does very well for a lot of children, but every school in any year will get rid of 2,3,4 or 5 people because they haven't done something or they don't feel they can meet the need*

4.3.1.3 Subtheme 3: Managed moves as a response to SEND

Almost all staff interviewed described managed moves for Autistic YP occurring for reasons linked to their SEN. School staff described receiving YP on managed moves for behaviours related to Autism, which can be upsetting for YP who experience this as a rejection.

Deputy headteacher: *… a very strong sense of rejection… often for a reason that is linked to their condition, you know. So they may have been persistently quite rude to staff or defiant or whatever it is, or truanting frequently because they're just trying to get away from difficult circumstances and actually to be rejected because of something that you deep down, know is a problem for you,.... it is really hard. I've heard young people say that their behaviour is being very much misunderstood and the sense that your school has rejected you without trying to understand your behaviour or trying to help you overcome it. And it's often the case that schools jumped to manage moves or expulsion quite quickly.*

The expediency with which managed moves can be and are conducted was raised by several participants, when SEN avenues may be more appropriate for an Autistic YP. The complexity of the SEN system and length of time it takes to

access services and a diagnosis of Autism was described as a barrier. One deputy headteacher's response to these systemic challenges stood out:

Deputy headteacher: *We wouldn't even consider moving a pupil to another school unless we've gone down the route of getting them an EHCP and recommending a change of placement on there. So we don't reject pupils, we don't offload pupils in that sense, we stick with them until we find them something that works… You know, If I'm saying to another school, I've got a pupil who cannot stay at (school) because their behaviour is so awful, I don't expect another school to be able to improve that. I just don't. We take pupils right to the very end of what I think a secondary school can offer. Therefore, it would seem absurd that another secondary school would be able to succeed, you know.*

The speed with which some managed moves proceed means that children's potential SEN/Ds are not always explored prior to a managed move request; unlike SEND systems governed by the SEND code of practice, there is no graduated approach towards a managed move.

It is important to draw a distinction between the expediency with which cases could be brought before a managed moves panel, and the complexity and length of time it can take for a YP to reach a receiving school. School staff discussed receiving YP who had been subject to a managed move via a PRU or alternative provision as well as pupils who spent time out of school altogether. Therefore, for some YP the managed move is a fast route out of a school, but not a quick way of getting a 'fresh start' at another mainstream setting.

The appropriateness of mainstream schooling for some of the Autistic YP undergoing managed moves was questioned by some staff, who believed that a specialist setting would be more suitable for the YP. This was a view shared by school staff and LA staff working in an administrative capacity.

LA officer: *Schools would say that there isn't enough provision for those pupils across the city. Like, if they've got any EHCP, they will go to (specialist setting). But if they haven't got an EHCP….schools are saying they need more.*

Researcher: *And in what way does that impact on managed moves for those young people?*

***LA officer**: In some cases, those pupils (without an EHCP) would benefit from going to some sort of special needs provision.*

Staff working in inclusion support services emphasised inclusion within mainstream settings.

***EP**: A lot of people go, that these children, we can't meet their needs, they need something different, they need to be somewhere else… a very within child model. Whereas I feel that we need as adults and professionals to work around… to think about what do we need to adapt to help this child's needs be met in either this school or sometimes, if this really is not working, what does that child need to be successful at another*.

School staff described some reasons which they believe make some Autistic children difficult to include in mainstream schools. These include rigid and repetitive behaviours that challenge schools.

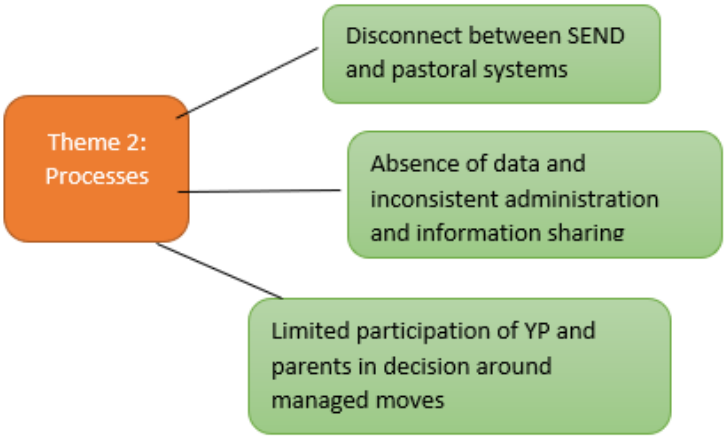
***Deputy headteacher**: …she didn't like some of the rules. And we tried to work with her because obviously we could understand that she actually had quite a fixed mindset. She'd say to me, okay, I'll follow all of your rules (teacher) but I won't follow that rule because I don't like it. It was challenging in those situations, we were sort of desperately trying to support her and trying to… find a way to get her to understand why we're asking her to do those things. We knew she was quite black and white thinking around that. 'I don't want to do that because I don't think there's any purpose behind it'*

***Researcher:** What were the rules she wasn't sure about?*

***Participant:** Wouldn't wear a school jumper was one of them. She wanted to wear just like a big hoodie and <u>we don't,. we don't have any hoodies</u>.*

Latent analysis also suggests rigidities are embedded within the school systems; its norms, routines and the expectations that staff assert. This impacts on schools' flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of YP e.g. their sensory differences.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Processes



4.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: Disconnect between SEND systems and pastoral systems

One of the recurring themes in the data is the distinction between 'behaviour' and special educational needs; these were conceptualised as separate and distinct. This was apparent at different levels and within different systems

1. At the child level: Autistic YP were at times spoken about in terms that suggest culpability. For example, staff spoke of forgiveness, clean slates, second chances and behaviour expectations when talking about the 'fresh start' and the trial period. This placed the onus on the YP to change their behaviour for a successful managed move.
2. At the school level: the systems for initiating and coordinating managed moves mainly involved 'pastoral leads' whose role was associated with behaviour management. SENCos were not routinely involved in managed moves.
3. Within the Behaviour and Attendance Panel: staff reflected on the power differential within the panel between schools and LA officers on one hand and the Educational Psychologist who represented inclusion support services on the other. This power imbalance was perceived to stem from inclusion professionals (including the EP) being situated within a different directory (SEND directory) to the LA officers and school representatives (Education directory), with the latter directory being responsible for exclusion rates and chairing the panel through which managed moves were agreed.

4.3.2.2 Subtheme 2: Absence of data and inconsistent administration and information sharing

The LA and schools do not keep a record of managed moves that occur across schools. Whilst schools are expected to complete a referral form before discussing managed moves for individual YP at a BAP meeting, staff suggest that these are frequently incomplete and there are inconsistencies in the type of information provided to the BAP, including if a YP is Autistic. Latent analysis would suggest that, given the role managed moves play in keeping formal exclusions at a low rate, the absence of records is inherent in the function of managed moves, and maintaining the sense that they are 'exclusions avoided'.

4.3.2.3 Subtheme 3: Limited participation of YP and parents in decisions around managed moves

Autistic YP

It was frequently stated, and by all staff participants, that Autistic YP's consent was key to a managed move resulting in the YP attending an educational setting.

***Deputy headteacher**: …and I sort of started by sort of saying:*

'How do you feel about joining (school)?'

'I don't want to come to this school,'.

And it was really hard…the school and the parents are saying, 'Oh, no, but this is a really good opportunity for you, you know, this is great, this is your fresh start,'. And you can do all of these kinds of things but I think if, if the child doesn't feel like it fits, it's really difficult. That child did start with us, but they didn't want to be here and to the point where actually it was making them quite distressed. So, we did say that the managed move wasn't going to continue.

When Autistic YP named a specific setting, or refused to attend a particular setting that they had been allocated, this was perceived as a rigidity in thinking, linked to their Autism.

Some of the barriers to YP being offered the school they have chosen were around the appropriateness of the peer group at the potential receiving school, and school's sense of their capacity to meet their needs.

Deputy headteacher: *I think there is a limit to the number of managed moves that any school can take at any one time, and I think there's a limit to the number of really challenging pupils that any school can manage. And I think one of the reasons we're in a position where we can say no, you know, we don't want to take a managed move is because we know when our provision within school hits its limit, you know. And actually you need to know as a school where your limit is because if you take a pupil under a managed move and you can't really do that pupil justice because we haven't gotten an inclusion support officer or we haven't got the support around them, it will fail. So schools, I think, need to be really acutely aware of where their resources finish, you know, or finite level, just so you can give every single pupil a fair chance of succeeding.*

Parents and carers

The importance of clear communication with parents during a manged move, and particularly the trial period was frequently discussed by school staff. They described having regular contact with parents (sharing positive and negative experiences) as one of the ways that they work with parents during the managed move.

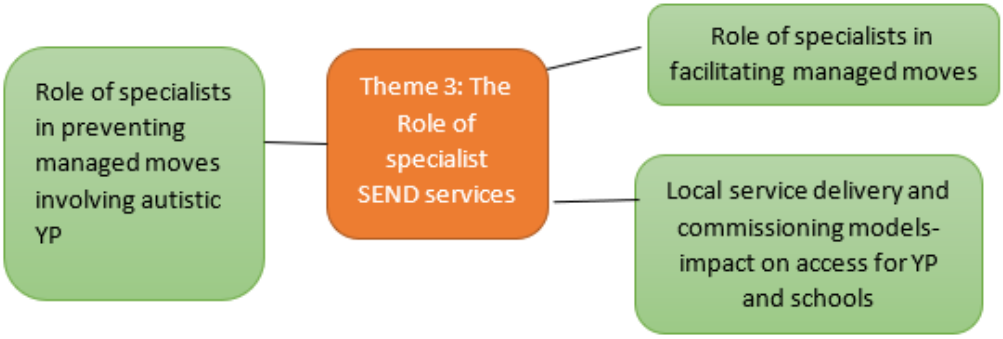
When school staff talked from their position as a receiving school, they emphasised the importance of recognising the difficult feelings and sense of rejection parents and YP are likely to have experienced, and the importance of investing in relationships with parents of incoming Autistic YP.

The majority of experiences of working with parents in the context of managed moves was in the context of transition and the trial period. Little was said about whether parents were involved at earlier stages e.g. in considering if a managed move is appropriate for their child, or in choosing a school. The ASC specialist teacher raised a particular case in which a parent requested a managed move for their daughter to a school with a known peer group, following a period of EBSA. The ASC teacher shared their reflections on working with parents.

ASC specialist teacher*: I still feel as a city we are not great at validating parental concern. That we still have a sense in which it has to be rubber stamped by a professional in order for that parent's concern not to be sort of seen as a neurotic or anxious parent. And I see that, particularly in relation to girls on the spectrum*

…I feel that maybe they don't have as much impact as they should be able to have, really.

4.3.3 Theme 3: The role of specialist SEND services



The role of specialist SEN services was raised in the context of facilitating managed moves and in the context of availability of, and access to, services. Specialists in this context includes CAHMS services for mental health as well as diagnosis of ASC. In addition, it refers to Autism and mental health and wellbeing services available through the LA.

4.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: Role of specialists in facilitating managed moves

The Educational Psychologist and Autism specialist teacher described their roles in the managed moves they had been involved with. These were moves where the Autistic YP had experienced prolonged periods of time out of school and a placement solution was being sought by all parties. They viewed themselves as being well positioned to elicit the views of young people and act as advocates on their behalf. It was the specialists' perception that a YP is more likely to attend a school if they consent to the placement; this means that a managed move requires careful framing and mediation to:

- Frame the managed move in terms that are meaningful to the young person
- Framing the managed move to school staff was also important as finding a setting that will take on a YP with SEN was reported to be challenging. Specialists liaised in person with prospective schools to add description to the information contained in reports, so that the profile of the YP is understood.
- Illicit the YP's views and preferences and ensure these are represented in discussions regarding managed moves

- Exploring the YP constructs of school was described by the EP as a helpful way of exploring what it is that a YP would like from their school setting, particularly if their school of choice is not available to them through the managed move.
- Liaising with parents and carers so that their views are heard in the process; being positioned outside of the school system was considered to be conducive to this.

4.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Role of specialists in preventing managed moves involving Autistic YP and supporting inclusion

All participants acknowledged the role played by specialists in supporting the inclusion of Autistic children. ASC specialist teachers played a role in supporting schools to implement good Autism practice systemically and offered advice on the inclusion of individual Autistic CYP following assessment, observation and consultation with parents and school staff.

The role of EPs in supporting inclusion was discussed in a number of ways. LA and school staff and the EP recognised that EPs are well positioned to offer a holistic assessment of YP needs and help to make these needs understood to schools. Eliciting the views of parents was also a recurring theme, particularly in relation to understanding YP's SEND and advocating for support.

The EP involved in the study viewed her positioning outside of the school system as advantageous in promoting, through supervision, the reflective practice of those working with YP whose inclusion requires emotional integrity and resilience.

EP: *and some of the adults …get a real powerful feeling…then think, oh, I need I need to get rid of (YP) because they've (the member of staff) been so uncomfortable with the feelings of inadequacy. We've got a real role as Edpsychs to help people with reflective practice. And these are actually… it's not you, this has been projected into you. It's not something that you are, you know, it's understanding all those psychodynamic systemic things, I think we've got a lot to offer, as edpsychs in schools'*

4.3.3.3 Subtheme 3: Service delivery and commissioning models- impact on access for YP and schools

Staff explained access to support services can be disrupted when a managed move occurs. In a traded commissioning model, children moving between schools

may not have access to the same services as they move between schools (e.g. school commissioned counselling services). In managed moves where schools subscribe to the same services, a manage moved pupil may be arriving at a school after existing pupils had been prioritised for work with specialists. Furthermore, CYP whose managed moves fail and/or who spend time at an alternative provision between school moves loose access for them and their family to some LA specialist services (e.g. specialist teachers and practitioners), as they are only commissioned to work with mainstream schools, which has implications for YP with high mobility between settings and EBSA.

The specialist ASC teacher held the view that it is unusual for Autistic pupils to be involved in managed moves, and that they would expect that schools would inform their team if they were. This is in contrast with views expressed by others in the research, particularly schools who have described a number of managed moves into and from their schools of children at different stages of an ASC diagnosis (on a pathway to a diagnosis; diagnosed following a managed move; CYP who had a diagnosis of ACS at the time of their managed move).

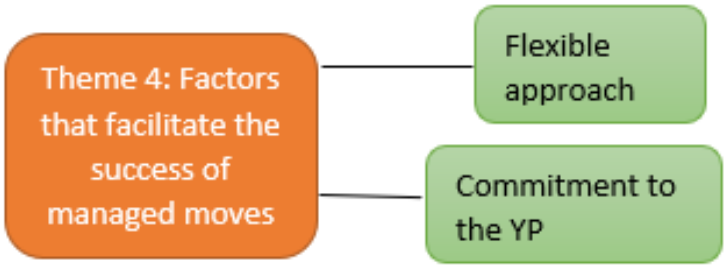
The local specialist ASC team is not commissioned to work with YP until they have received a diagnosis of Autism, which may go some way to explain their limited involvement and awareness of managed moves involving CYP with social communication difference on a pathway to a diagnosis (a status which may last for 2 or 3 years, given local ASC assessment timelines at the time of writing). It may also impact to school' access to advice and identification of SEND, without a diagnosis.

Deputy headteacher: *There are some young people that you don't know (they are Autistic), and actually, sometimes when a child goes on to a managed move, and they go to a new environment, I think sometimes actually, the new school might pick up on different things in a different environment and flag up different concerns... We have taken some children on managed moves then we have actually gone ooh I wonder why this has never been explored…you do get children that go on a manage move and actually there is something that has sort of been hidden by the fact that their behaviour has been so challenging or so difficult to manage.*

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Autistic YP undergoing managed moves were often viewed in terms of their presenting behaviours that challenge, with their SEN being overlooked; therefore, schools did not automatically seek specialists' input in a managed move. The EP in the study commented that…

EP: *Well, all I keep doing for this child is going please, can you invite me to the meetings for the transition, and sometimes what happens is, they just don't do it. People don't invite you. So you've got to be quite proactive at chasing this stuff. If you're going to sit around and just expect people to invite you in or involve you… You've got to just try and really be quite child centred…making sure that it's not us that are letting that child down.*

4.3.4 Theme 4: Factors that facilitate the success of a managed move



4.3.4.1 Subtheme 1: Flexible approach

Flexibility was the most frequently mentioned facilitator of success in managed moves and was raised by staff across teams. This was relevant to:

1. Setting of targets on which the success of the trial period would be assessed.

Deputy headteacher: *Now we in the last 12 months, almost exactly 12 months, we've had eight pupils come to (the school). We've set very fair targets and seven of the 8th of succeeded in their managed move and they've really enjoyed being here. You know, they've come here, they've joined the community, they've become a full part of the community and they they've been successful.*

2. Flexible response to SEN, taking into account pupil voice.

Deputy headteacher: *the young person as well can express what they believe they need in school. For example the last managed move we did the young*

person was a year 11 boy who just said they don't need anything- I would rather just be able to absorb into the school community quickly without any additional you know, sort of things being put in place and he did that brilliantly. We've had absolutely no problems. Other pupils come with a list of things that they would like us to try and implement and we do that you know, we very much listen to what they need.

Researcher: *What sorts of things have they asked for in the past?*

Deputy headteacher: *they've asked for, I mean really minor things like… have a locker; a map of the school; can I eat my lunch in a quiet space in the school; can I access the SEND area for lunch times is quite a key one because that's a quieter space. They sometimes ask for a time out pass immediately to say look, there will be times that I can't always make it through a 50 minute lesson.*

4.3.4.2 Subtheme 2: Commitment to the YP

Deputy headteacher: *The most important thing that we would do is start the meeting in a very positive way, making them feel very welcome, making them understand that this is a genuine fresh start, no judgment is being passed by the school on previous behaviour. They are becoming a full member of the (school name) community. They wear the uniform and be part of our community and be welcomed as such.*

Showing commitment to YP from and early stage was reported to be conducive to the success of a managed move by school and LA staff as well as the Educational Psychologist. Schools showing a commitment to the YP and wanting to make the managed move work was underscored by LA officers in particular, who observed that when schools commit to a young person, managed moves are less likely to fail for reasons that the schools can resolve.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the themes which were identified through the thematic analysis process. Each research question was addressed in turn and each theme was outlined, accompanied by extracts from interviews with the participants. The next chapter aims to provide a synthesis of the research findings and discuss this in line with the research base identified in Chapter 2. It also provides a critical

analysis of the current study. Implications for Educational Psychology practice and further research opportunities are explored.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1. Chapter Overview

The previous chapter provided an analytic narrative of the research findings based on the themes drawn from the thematic analysis. This chapter provides a reflective synthesis of these findings in relation to theoretical frameworks and the literature base around managed moves. The researcher critically evaluates the research in terms of its strengths, limitations, and implications for local and national contexts including the contributions to Educational Psychology practice. The chapter ends with a reflection on ideas for future research.

5.2. Revisiting the aims of the study

This study sought insights into the experiences of Autistic YP around their managed moves. It is the researcher's position that these experiences and the meanings that are drawn from them are situated in and influenced by the context in which these managed moves occur. This calls for critical engagement with the systems surrounding the managed moves, including schools and local and national education context. As such, this research set out to explore the answer to two research questions in relation to managed moves:

- *What are the accounts of Autistic young people around their experiences of managed moves?*
- *What are staff (in schools and the LA) accounts of managed moves involving Autistic young people?*

5.3. Operationalising the theoretical frameworks

In chapters 1 and 3 the theoretical frameworks for the study were set out. Milton's (2018) Double Empathy Theory critiques traditional modes of conceptualising Autism as a sum of a persons' difficulties as referenced in the DSM-V (2013). Instead, it reframes discourses of social communication and interaction deficits (e.g. theory of mind) in Autistic individuals as a 'a two-way' predicament; with non-Autistic individuals also experiencing difficulties in understanding and responding to Autistic individuals. This theory is operationalised in this discussion chapter to critically engage with the narratives of staff and YP around school experiences,

placement breakdown leading to a managed move and integration into receiving settings. Also worth revisiting is the researcher's epistemological positioning in relation to Autism as a condition that is objectively real; this is in line with the research's critical realist orientation. References to YP's individual needs in this chapter (e.g. sensory difference) are rooted in this positioning.

Bronfenbrenners' (1994) Bioecological Systems Theory offers a theoretical positioning which transcends within person thinking. From this positioning, the researcher is able to consider the influence of systems around the YP on their school experiences and managed moves. In addition to the two main theoretical frameworks outlined, this discussion chapter will also draw on existing relevant research relating to exclusions and managed moves as well as a range of theoretical perspectives.

The following sections of this chapter seek to develop the analytical narrative presented in the findings chapter, and produce an integrated, rich narrative based on key ideas and themes from the findings. The researcher acknowledges that they play an active role in meaning making, in line with the constructivist and reflexive approach to the inquiry outlined in the methodology chapter. The researcher's own positioning in relation to the exclusion of autistic young people is reflected in the narrative; the choice of language such as the way in which some of the subheadings are phrased reflects this.

5.4. National and Local context

It was highlighted in the research that in managed moves policy the aims of the LA to keep reported exclusions rates low is congruent with school approaches which informally exclude (though managed moves) YP who are deemed to be on the edge of mainstream schooling, and whose inclusion may require attention to their special educational needs. This congruence allows for the operation of what is perceived to be a legitimate process for schools to remove some Autistic YP whose behaviours challenge, whilst working cooperatively with the LA to keep exclusion rates low.

The national policy context which allows for these practices to have a place in

LAs and schools, is vague. At the time of conducting and writing the research, and at the time of the managed moves discussed in the research taking place, the DfE provided no guidance to school around managed moves. Instead, local admission authorities are expected to publish their own protocols. Previous research suggests that the managed move policy is a vague and ill defined (Timpson et al., 2019b), describing a range of practices, the current research confirms this.

5.4.1. Managed moves– a disparate experience

The managed moves experienced by young participants as well as those described by staff cover a broad spectrum of placement breakdown and managed move experiences. Autistic YP's destinations following a managed move illustrate the disparate nature of the policy in practice. For example, some managed moves involved moving YP to mainstreams schools, others to alternative provisions- some of which did not offer fulltime timetables. Some YP did not make an immediate transition to any setting, and instead experienced prolonged absences from school. Furthermore, some YP identified by the researcher as potential participants were home educated following managed moves out of their school without a destination setting that schools, parents and the YP could agree on. In these scenarios, the YP and their parents had given up hope of being able to have positive school experiences in mainstream schools; home education was perceived as conducive to better mental health and wellbeing for their children. As such, this research would suggest that managed moves for Autistic YP in the LA are not a straightforward transfer between mainstream schools with the safety net of the YP returning to their original school if the managed move does not succeed. Destination outcomes for the YP included a variety of ways in which the YP remained out of mainstream schooling but without being formally recorded as excluded. The LA policy of one-way managed moves, described by staff participants as 'managed transfers', contributes to a practice in which schools can relinquish responsibility for a YP before they are settled into a setting permanently.

Managed move experiences shared in the research also included YP whose managed moves were sought by parents and consented to by the YP. These

managed moves were viewed positively by the YP and, at the time of the research, were proceeding successfully. However, the researcher notes two main points from this type of managed move. Firstly, the nature of the recruitments process, meant that managed moves by parental request were overrepresented in the study. The LA does not hold records for YP who are managed moved, and the limited paperwork (minutes, agenda and the researcher's own notes from BAP meetings in which managed moves are discussed) seldom mention YP's SEND. The researcher's request to panel members and LA staff to help in identifying and recruiting Autistic YP people who are experiencing/ experienced managed moves returned two managed moves by parental request; perhaps it felt safer for schools and the LA to share details of these managed moves in comparison to others which were more adversarial. The second point worth registering around the managed moves by parental request is that they also stem from very difficult school experiences for the YP involved and as such constitute placement breakdown. Perhaps the difference being that the managed moves initiated by parents were for hardships that impacted on their child (racism and social exclusion) whereas school initiated managed moves were for behaviours that challenged the school community.

Brede et al. (2017) and Sproston et al. (2017) reported that for Autistic YP, placement breakdowns can be multiple in their school career and that they can take different forms, including self-exclusion through school avoidance; prolonged periods of school absence because of EBSA were a feature of the lived experience all the YP participants who participated, whether the managed move was initiated by school or by their parent.

5.5. Rigid school systems that lack empathy and understanding of Autistic YP's school experiences

Previous research into the school experiences of Autistic YP who were excluded from school highlighted a lack of understanding and responsiveness to the YP's special educational needs as a barrier to inclusion (Brede et al., 2017; Sproston et al., 2017). The current research underscores these findings. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of YP's accounts and staff accounts of managed moves offered the

researcher the opportunity to consider these views alongside one another, under the theoretical framework of Milton's (2018) double empathy theory.

Rigidities and mismatch in understanding were evident in schools' lack of awareness and responsiveness to the needs of Autistic YP. YP's coping behaviours, particularly linked to their sensory differences, were misinterpreted as misdemeanors that are contrary to school rules. For example, YP and school staff recounted placements breaking down when young pupils frequently exited classrooms and/or did not adhere to school uniform expectations- behaviours that can be linked to YP's sensory differences and their attempts to cope. Similarly, relational breakdown with peers and staff was construed as poor and aggressive behaviour, and not associated with Autism or the experiences of othering at the hands of peers, as shared in the Autistic YP's accounts.

Implicit, and at times explicit, in discussions with staff was the notion that Autistic YP experiencing managed moves were not suited to being included in mainstream school settings. This suggests some fixed and preconceived notions of who a 'mainstream child' is and who is not. This is despite all managed moves discussed involving secondary school aged YP with a history of previous successful mainstream education, particularly in their primary school.

Furthermore, accounts suggest that a particular school in the LA had been repeatedly successful in integrating previously excluded and managed move Autistic YP. On the other hand, accounts suggest that secondary schools that initiate managed moves operated as a closed system to some YP who are perceived to disrupt the equilibrium of the school. For example, children were perceived to be a threat to staff cohesion and to the resources of schools.

YP were described as rigid when they named a school that they would accept as their receiving school. Worth noting is that these reported rigidities in so called 'school choice' were in the context of compulsory managed moves and difficult school experiences. YP's accounts in this study suggest that compulsory managed moves had a significant emotional impact on YP which also impact on their school readiness and the success of future managed moves; an effect which was also

recognised by one of the school leaders involved in the study. The emotional toll of managed moves was also articulated by parents and young people in Bagley & Hallam's study (2016). Where young people specified a preference for a setting or a refusal to attend one, meaningful reasons were shared. For example, one YP who finds it difficult to make friends and who frequently experienced panic attacks at school wanted to attend a setting with a known and established friendship group; having friends, she explained, helps her manage her anxieties. A YP's refusal to attend a PRU was linked to feelings of stigma and low cognitive challenge at the setting. When the views of YP are elicited and heard, their 'rigid stance' could be reframed as a natural response to a process in which change their voice is viewed as a barrier to the outcomes sought by schools and LA systems.

Many Autistic YP (those who were participants and those whose managed moves were discussed with staff participants) had experienced multiple placement changes, due to managed moves and otherwise. Given that change can be particularly challenging for some Autistic YP, and even more so when change is enforced and coupled with rejection, the risk of YP not attending any educational setting was heightened. Tyreiss, Sally and Bo all spent extended periods of time out of school following a managed move. Furthermore, accounts from staff participants described YP who, having been managed moved out of a school, were not attending any setting. Set against this risk, the voice of YP in describing a setting they feel able to attend could be reframed as a resilience and an opportunity to prevent prolonged absence.

YP's accounts suggested that their perceptions of school demands extended beyond those explicitly sated by teachers and those recorded in trial period targets. YP saw demands and expectations as being embedded throughout the school day and its routines: the uniform, timetables, class groupings, seating and social conventions amongst others. Adherence to these demands was effortful for some Autistic YP but their efforts were not always apparent to school staff. Nonadherence to these demands was often a cause for tension between YP and staff. This is in line with research by Gore Langton & Frederickson (2016) which described a particular vulnerability to exclusion of YP who find the demands challenging. Schools being flexible with their expectations and responsive to the needs of their

pupils was widely reported as conducive to the success of managed move and positive school experiences for Autistic YP (Brede et al., 2017; Gore Langton & Frederickson, 2016; Sproston et al., 2017).

5.6. Power, discourse and participation

"Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true….. the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true"

(Foucault,1980, p.109-133)

According to Foucault, some discourses are privileged and accorded the status of Truth, whereas others are subjugated. A privileged discourse in the context of the research was that of managed moves being a way of protecting or saving YP from 'exclusion' and offering them a fresh start. The researcher observed managed moves panels and noted the absence of parental and YP representation. A subjugated discourse was the lived experiences of managed moves and school life from the perspective of the YP and their families when decisions about their school careers were being made at the Behaviour and Attendance Panel..

'But then when I got expelled -I call it expelled but it was a managed move but I think it's a way of sugar coating what it actually is'. Bo

The quote illustrates a belief held by some YP and staff in the study, that some managed moves were in effect informal exclusions. Young people's accounts also challenged the notion of a 'fresh start' in the context of a geographically small unitary authority and in the context of the digitised social domains in which YP interact beyond the school gates. However, power imbalance means that the discourse of managed moves as a positive action prevails.

Power imbalances in favour of the LA and schools were also apparent elsewhere. The power to initiate managed move or to allow one to proceed rested with schools and the local authority. The majority of managed moves discussed in the

study (discussed by YP and staff) were initiated by schools in response to behaviours that challenge staff. Accounts also suggested that YP were manage moved for reasons linked to their special educational needs. Interviews with LA staff suggest that managed moves were initiated and presented to parents under the threat of the of permanent exclusion. This is despite DfE guidance stating that managed moved should not be presented under the threat of permanent exclusion, in contrary with the principle of parental consent. They were therefore informal exclusions.

Some managed moves were initiated by parents with the consent of the YP, but it would be problematic to describe them as a choice. The parental requests tended to be preceded by extended periods of emotionally based school absences linked to negative school experiences, including a previous failed managed move. When parents requested managed moves, these were in the gift of schools. Several participants shared that schools were not always forthcoming in offering a school place to Autistic YP seeking managed moves.

5.6.1 Discourse that places blame on Autistic YP

Notions of 'redemption and second chances' were prominent in the discourse surrounding managed moves, and it positioned the blame and onus to change on the YP. Schools did not have to demonstrate a graduated approach to SEND, or that they endeavoured to respond to individual needs prior to initiating a managed move. When managed moves failed, YP tended to be blamed for not adhering to expectations set out in the trial period contract, with schools bearing little accountability for the placement breakdown. Dominant narratives around the managed moves situated blame and responsibility upon the YP, thus ligitimising their expulsion.

Positioning theory (Davies & Harre, 1990) proposes that people are positioned with respect to their rights and duties out of first order self-constructions of identity/role and second order constructions (or narratives) of identity/role. The theory emphasises that the interaction of these constructions is fluid and continuous and is mediated through speech acts i.e. language. Positions are associated with a set of rights and duties which delimit what can be said or done from a certain position

and in a particular context. In the context of managed moves, narratives that situate problems and blame on the YP mean that from this positioning, schools do not have a role to play or be accountable for in the inclusion of Autistic YP whose behaviours challenge. Furthermore, being positioned as culpable can have the effect of silencing YP, rendering them worthy of fewer rights. This was evident in the account of YP who felt treated unfairly and unheard.

YP's consent (and parents') to take part in the research and share their experiences could be seen as an act of reflexive repositioning in which the YP and wished to resist their positioning as 'culprits' and share their counter narratives. Power imbalances in the way managed moves are conducted, mean that YP do not usually have the opportunity to share their views; this is also neither an expectation in DfE guidance or in the local managed moves protocol.

5.6.2. Young People's voice and participation

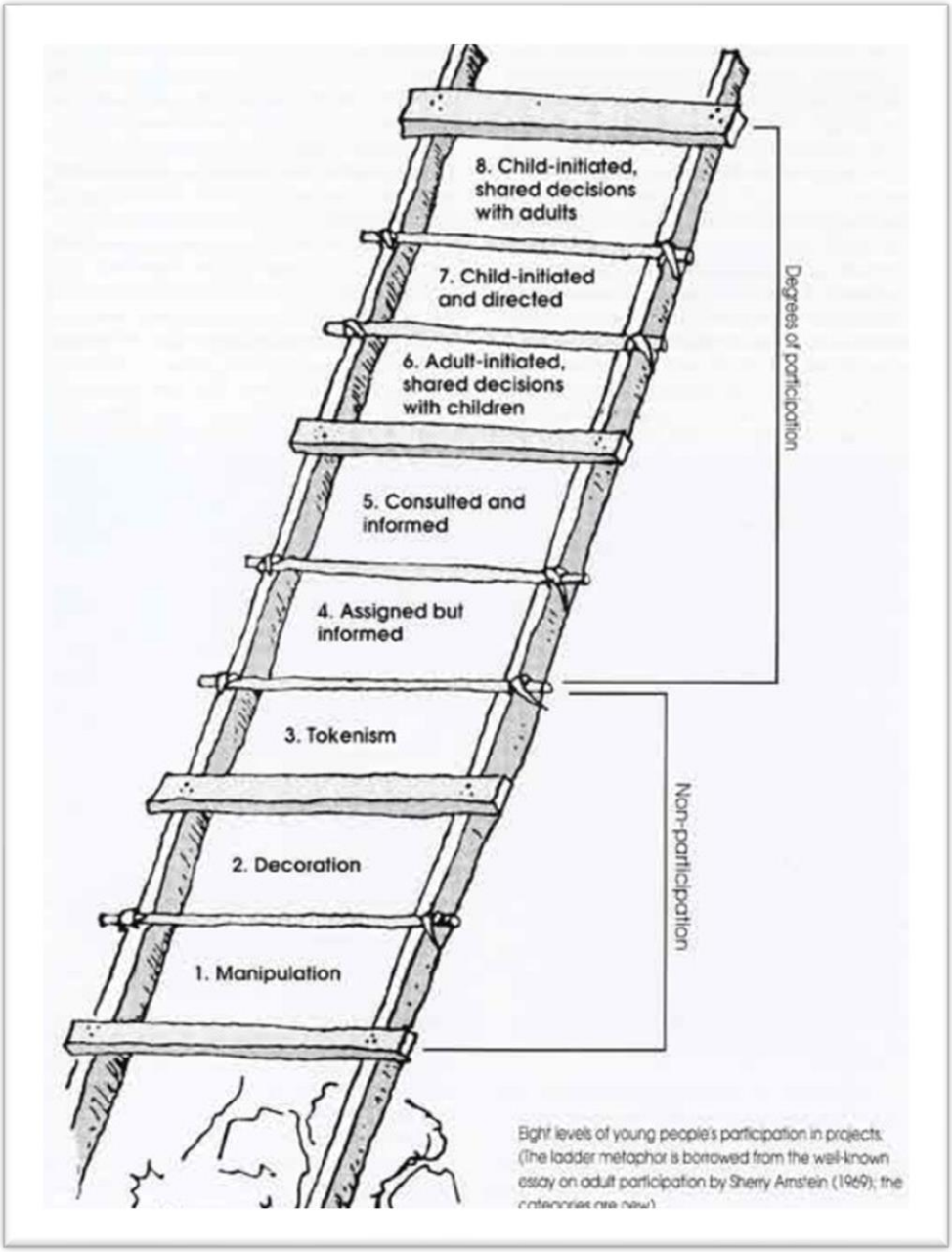


Figure 5. Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation. Sourced from: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf

In previous sections, the researcher discussed how pupil voice was viewed as problematic when it contradicted the wishes of schools, e.g. choosing a receiving school that does not wish to accept the young person. Findings also suggest that staff participants perceived Autistic YP's consent as integral to the success of a managed moves, and their lack of consent as a barrier to the managed moves

proceeding. This renders pupil voice and engagement in the management move process essential.

Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation Hart (figure 5) depicts different levels of participation that children can have in decisions that concern them, with the lowest of these rungs representing non-participation. YP's participation in managed moves, overall, could be viewed as lower order participation according to the accounts of YP who felt unheard and disenfranchised in the process.

Counter to discourses that question the suitability of Autistic YP for mainstream schooling, YP's accounts often offered insights into how they could be included. They had managed to be part of mainstream schools prior to the managed moves and therefore had developed some ways of coping in school environments and systems that were not designed with neurodiversity in mind. As such, their participation should be integral in planning approaches and provision to support their inclusion, wellbeing and to prevent placement breakdown.

5.7. Supporting YP resilience and agency to cope with the demands of mainstream secondary schooling

The stress bucket model was created by Brabban & Turkington (2002) to demonstrate how stress impacts on wellbeing and functioning. The model has been widely used be Educational Psychologists and mental health professionals as an analogy that illustrates the cumulative impact of a range of stressors on the ability of Autistic YP to cope with pressures inherent in schooling. The model also emphasises the role good coping skills play in keeping the metaphorical tap working and therefore avoiding overwhelm and stress.

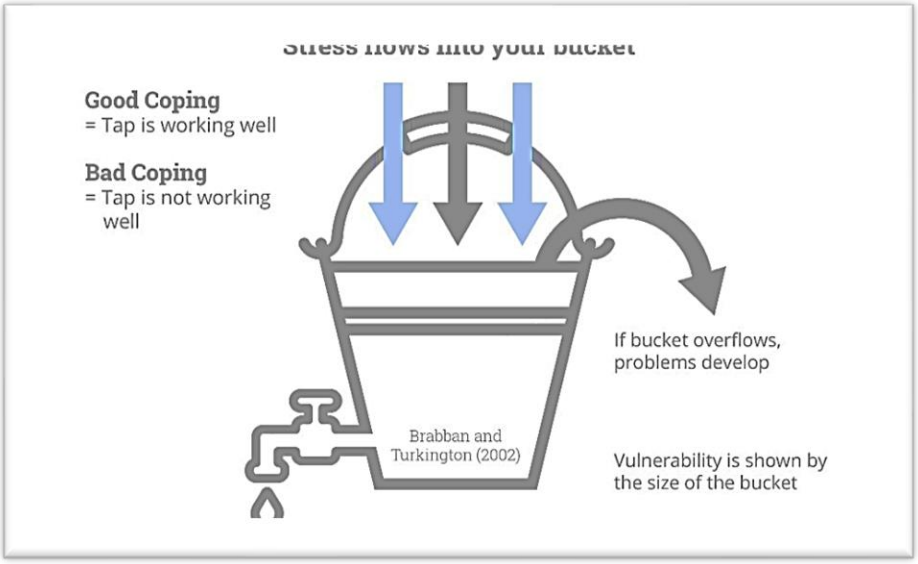


Figure 6- Brabban & Turkington (2002) Stress Bucket Model

Bo's analogy of a dam when describing how he copes with the various challenges he experiences in secondary school (sensory, bullying), until their load becomes unbearable is coherent with the cumulative notions expressed in the stress bucket model. Staff and YP's accounts suggested hopeful insights into supporting the education of the YP that did not require a complete overhaul of mainstream schools or sending YP to special schools. In a seemingly reverse effect, removing or ameliorating some stressors and supporting existing coping skills seemed to have a virtuous and cumulative effect on YP's wellbeing and ability to attend and engage with schooling. For example, for Tyreiss, adults mediating in his relationships with teachers and peers helped him avoid conflict and renewed expulsion through a managed move; it also had the effect on reducing anxiety and EBSA. For Daisy, being with a known friendship group contributed to a sense of belonging which helped manage her phobias and remain in school. This level of knowledge about YP's resilience and coping requires a relational child centred approach to inclusion in which adults get to know the YP and recognises their individual and neurodivergent identities. This is in contrast with biological models that emphasise deficit, or social models which emphasise blanket approaches described as best practice (Milton, 2018).

5.8. Relationships with peers

Young people shared accounts of difficult peer relationships at school which

included experiences of bullying, racism, social exclusion and harassment. These experiences had a significant detrimental impact on YP's mental health and were a key factor in prolonged absences from school, contributing to a managed move being initiated. Social communication and interaction difference and mismatch between Autistic YP and their peers was a barrier to their social inclusion. Research on managed moves has found that developing peer relationships in the receiving school can result in increased emotional wellbeing (Bagley & Hallam, 2016) and a sense of security, comfort and safety which leads to a greater sense of belonging (Craggs & Kelly, 2018). Furthermore, previous research has found that intimate adolescent friendships are linked to increased self-esteem, and a reduction in mental ill-health (Buhrmester, 1990). The frequency with which peer relationships were mentioned by YP and the depth of their reflections suggested that this an important area from the perspective of the adolescents. Supporting their inclusion in mainstream school would therefore require attention to this significant aspect of schooling.

5.9. Implications for Educational Psychology practice

Previous managed moves research pointed to relational breakdown between pupils and staff as being one of the most salient factors in managed moves being initiated (Bagley & Hallam, 2016). In facilitating managed moves, having access to a key adult in school was a widely stated strategy in the literature (Bagley & Hallam, 2016; Filcroft et al., 2016; Vincent et al., 2007). This was also the case in the current research. However, participants' accounts varied in their descriptions of the nature of the relationships between the YP and the adult, as such the term key worker is used to describe relationships offering varying degrees of access and relational quality. Educational psychologists are well placed to support the development of empathetic and relational approaches between keyworkers and YP. For example, Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) and Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) are evidence based interventions that can be used to support empathy, attunement and wellbeing through intersubjectivity (primary and secondary).

Educational Psychologists are well positioned to offer school and local authority staff a space in which to reflect and on their actions but also on policy and processes surrounding managed moves. Their positioning outside of school systems means that they can offer containment in what could be an emotionally

charged time for staff, YP and families.

Previous research (Williams, 2021; Timpson et al., 2019b) and the current study highlight that some schools continue to view behaviour separately from SEND, with pastoral teams holding the responsibility for YP whose behaviours challenge staff. Autism being a hidden disability can exacerbate this particularly when Autistic YP are academically and linguistically able (Brede et al., 2017; Sproston et al., 2017), as was the case with the young participants in this research. In this context, Educational Psychologists' holistic view of SEND which does not demarcate a distinction between behaviour and SEND is an advantage. For example, EPs can facilitate communication between teams and staff within schools and they can also engender cohesion thorough a multiagency approach to case working. In the local authority where the research was conducted, access to LA Autism specialists is contingent on a diagnosis. This can act as a barrier to schools accessing advice and support preventatively for Autistic YP without a formal diagnosis. Educational psychologists are well placed to offer accurate and holistic assessment of a YP strengths and needs without a diagnosis. Through systemic work, EP's can build school's capacity to recognise and respond to the needs of Autistic YP whose SEND might be overlooked.

> *"discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart"*
>
> (Foucault,1998, p.100-101).

According to Foucault discourses can alter the perceptions we hold. EPs' conversations within the process of managed moves can help to thwart and undermine the negative constructs held of YP.

EPs are skilled at eliciting the views of YP (BPS, 2015). They are able to gather the views of YP using a variety of techniques, when working with schools around managed moves. The views they gather can be central to problem solving and planning to meet YP's needs.

5.10 Dissemination

Stakeholders for this study include schools; Local Authority teams concerned with the Education, SEND and attendance; parents; groups that advocate for the education and wellbeing of Autistic YP and the young people themselves.

The researcher aims to provide an executive summary of the research to members of the Behaviour and Attendance Panel where managed moves are negotiated. A presentation of the research findings and the implications for EP practice will be shared at a Service Development Day for the EPS to provide an opportunity to consider how the findings can inform practice. Dissemination will include research findings and key discussion points, alongside lessons learnt by the researcher on conducting research with Autistic YP.

The researcher aims to publish findings from this research following the thesis viva e.g. in a research journal with a focus on Autism education and education policy. The findings from this research can contribute towards national strategy and guidelines for supporting the education of Autistic YP and preventing exclusion.

Following the thesis viva, the researcher will send a summary of the research findings as a whole to participants' parents, written in a form that is accessible to a non-specialist audience, including the YP.

5.11. Strengths of the research

This research has explored a previously unresearched area of managed moves, involving a cohort of YP who are particularly vulnerable to placement breakdown through different forms of exclusion. It was never the intention of the research to offer a definitive account on managed moves involving Autistic YP. Instead, the study offers valuable insights into YP's situated lived experiences. In the absence of records and data pertaining to the managed moves, the mere emphasis on the topic highlights this as an area that merits attention and critical reflection. The merits of study go beyond this. Gaining the accounts Autistic YP of the school experiences around the managed move has offered insights into challenges they face in mainstreams secondary schools, and the way managed moves operate to

exclude them as they are rendered as ‘not suited’ for mainstream schools. The potential for consented managed moves (initiated by parents) to offer a way back to school points to the value of parental and YP consent and participation. YP views also offered insights into their resilience and coping, and the research has proposed that person centered approaches, which emphasise pupil voice, as a way of responding to individual and neurodivergent student populations.

The research’s ecosystemic orientation offers up points of reflection on the impact of local and national policy on practice and the experiences of Autistic YP of inclusion and exclusion. This transcends beyond within person thinking and challenges dominant discourses that position blame and the onus to change on YP. For example, the research questions local and national accountability measures that focus on reported exclusion figures but leaves other forms of exclusions unaccounted for, therefore allowing them to proceed unhindered by scrutiny. Research findings also raise questions about the efficacy of managed moves in preventing exclusions given that they are perceived by YP as exclusions when initiated by schools. The efficacy of the managed moves is also rendered questionable when one considers the variety of ways in which Autistic YP risk falling out of mainstreams schooling following placement breakdown.
A further strength of the study is the rich data gathered from interviews with YP and staff. The researcher’s flexible approach to interviews and efforts to garner the YP’s trust have yielded detailed accounts. A cross section of staff participants which included LA senior officers and administrators, SEND specialists and school leaders meant that a broad range of perspectives were captured in the research.

5.12. Limitations of the Research

The researcher recognises, from speaking with staff participants and from monitoring managed moves that arise in the LA in which the research was conducted, that parental requests for managed moves are rare. It was acknowledged in a previous section of the chapter that schools were more likely to share details of consensual and successful managed moves. Thus, a limitation of the research is that it is likely to have disproportionately skewed the type of young

participants recruited in favour of managed moves that are successful and/or ones initiated by parents. As the research also draws on then staff accounts of a managed moves, overall the research has covered a broad range on managed moves, either directly from the perspective of YP and/ or from the perspective of staff. It is worth emphasising that the researcher did not rely on staff to relate YP people lived experiences, however staff accounts gave useful insights into a wide range of managed move typologies, practices and outcomes.

The research did not seek the views of parents and carers; doing so would have offered valuable insights into the managed move experiences of Autistic YP from the perspective of those who know the YP well. The researcher would have welcomed the opportunity to conduct the research in triads including the YP, parent/ carers and a member of staff involved with the YP's education/and or managed move. However, the researcher could foresee ethical challenges, in terms of confidentiality as well as potential (further) relational breakdown between school staff and parents/ carers and the YP, if perspectives and accounts varied widely within the triads.

5.13. Reflexivity and reflections

> *"No research is free from biases, assumptions, and personality of the researcher and we cannot remove the self from those activities in which we are intimately involved"* *(*Sword, 1999, p. 277).

The researcher practiced several reflexive strategies in the research journey, not in an attempt to remove personal influence in the study, but to be aware of it and to exercise reflexive repositioning when needed (Davies and Harre, 1990). For example, having analysed the data from interviews with YP, the researcher felt impassioned with a strong sense of injustice having heard of the school experiences of Autistic YP. The researcher reflected on their positioning as a practitioner in the LA, and as a prospective LA officer in their future role as an EP. As such, the research's systemic orientation emphasises the impact of national and local policy on practice and the lived experiences of the young people.

The researcher maintained a research diary in which key decisions about the research along with the researcher's thoughts and reflections were recorded.

Discussions with the research supervisor also supported and challenged the researcher's thinking about the project.

5.13.1 Conducting research with Autistic YP

In preparing to conduct the research, the researcher met/spoke with the young participants prior to the interview. This was done with the purpose of forming rapport and ensuring that the YP understood the purpose and process of the research interview. The researcher also sought to ascertain what adjustments would need to be made to support any needs and preferences that YP may have. On reflection, the most rewarding efforts by the researcher was to spend time engaging in and talking with the young people about topics of interest to them. Through this secondary intersubjectivity and shared attention to a task relevant to the YP, the researcher was able to form rapport which helped to elicit the views of the YP. A flexible interview protocol meant that the researcher could follow the participants' lead and elicit experiences that they felt were most salient to their managed moves.

The researcher was aware of a duty of care towards the YP who in their interviews shared unguardedly, with one participant sharing information that raised safeguarding concerns. Local and university safeguarding protocols were followed and redactions were made to the interview transcripts.

5.14. Concluding comments

This research was conducted concurrently with a number of government reviews into education policies and practices e.g. the SEND green paper (DfE, 2022) and the publication of an updated suspension and exclusion guidance (DfE, 2022). It is not the intention here to critique or discuss these in detail. However, it is worth registering the high level of education policy activity around how school systems manage the education of YP with special educational needs, including those who are perceived to be on the 'edge of the mainstream'. This research, concerned with the previously unresearched topic of managed moves involving autistic YP, is relevant and timely in this context.

The ‘SEND green paper: right support, right place, right time’ (DfE, 2022) considers special educational needs and disabilities alongside alternative provision, recognising that ‘alternative provision is increasingly being used to supplement the SEND system’ (DfE, 2022, p.7). This research suggests that managed moves too are used as an outlet by schools who perceive some autistic YP in their care as unsuitable for their settings because of their behaviours that challenge staff. These behaviours, the current research suggests, were often linked to features of autism e.g. sensory difference. Conversely, acceptance as well as adopting flexible and relational approaches support inclusion.

In addition to spotlighting alternative provision, the SEND review also signals an expansion in the range of SEND provision that is ‘ordinarily available’ in mainstream schools. It suggests a drive to include more children with SEND in mainstream settings; thus reducing demand on specialist settings as well as demand for EHCPs. This policy direction, if it proceeds as envisaged, could demand a shift in thinking regarding who mainstream schooling is for, potentially bringing the ‘edge of the mainstream’ securely within it. Alternatively, an expansion of alternative provision could see a greater exodus. Being optimistic about the prospect of an increase in inclusion, the researcher would like to end by underscoring a key theme in the study as a contribution to thinking. This research demonstrates that when autistic YP in mainstream schools are listened to, they are able to offer valuable insights into their experiences as well as their coping skills and resiliency. Person centered approaches to inclusion, that value pupil voice and invest in relationships should be at the center of practice.

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Appendix 1- data management plan

UEL Data Management Plan: Full

For review and feedback please send to: researchdata@uel.ac.uk

If you are bidding for funding from an external body, complete the Data Management Plan required by the funder (if specified).

Research data is defined as information or material captured or created during the course of research, and which underpins, tests, or validates the content of the final research output. The nature of it can vary greatly according to discipline. It is often empirical or statistical, but also includes material such as drafts, prototypes, and multimedia objects that underpin creative or 'non-traditional' outputs. Research data is often digital, but includes a wide range of paper-based and other physical objects.

Administrative Data	
PI/Researcher	Shahinaz Mahdi
PI/Researcher ID (e.g. ORCiD)	UEL ID: U1944333
PI/Researcher email	U1944333@uel.ac.uk
Research Title	The Experiences of Young People with Social Communication Difficulties and Managed Moves
Project ID	N/A
Research Duration	Proposed end date of April 2022
Research Description	Qualitative research concerned with the experiences of children undergoing managed moves, focusing specifically on children/ young people with social communication difficulties. The research is exploratory and transformative in its aims. **Research questions**

	What are the accounts of C/YP described as having Social Communication Difficulties around their experience of Managed Moves? What are the accounts of staff involved with C/YP described as having a Social Communication Difficulty of a Managed Move? **Participants** Children/ young people who are currently undergoing or have undergone a managed move within the previous year. They will be school aged pupils -primary or secondary. CYP may have a diagnosis of Autism or they may be known to Educational Psychologists and/or specialist teachers as pupils with an identified social communication need. The staff involved in the study could be: school staff (teachers/learning mentors/ teaching assistants /school leaders); Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers. They will be adults who have worked with/assessed or know (well) pupils who are participants in the study.
Funder	N/A – part of professional doctorate
Grant Reference Number (Post-award)	N/A
Date of first version (of DMP)	18/03/2021
Date of last update (of DMP)	26/03/2021
Related Policies	Research Data Management Policy
Does this research follow on from previous research? If so, provide details	N/A
Data Collection	

What data will you collect or create?	Audio recordings in mp3 format Transcriptions in MS Word format - electronic only. Nvivo software may be used to analyse transcripts. Personal data will be collected on consent forms (names) and prior to the interview (email address and/or telephone number for purposes of arranging the interview, via the researcher's UEL email address). No sensitive data will be collected. No further data will be created in the process of analysing the transcripts. NIvio software may be used to analyse data.
How will the data be collected or created?	8 to 10 children and young people and 8-10 members of staff will be interviewed. Interviews will be 40 – 60 minutes long and semi-structured. Interviews will be recorded on a Dictaphone, so audio only. Audio files of interviews will be transcribed on a computer as a Word document. by the researcher. Data will be anonymised at the point of transcription. Participants will be emailed consent forms and asked to return completed consent forms electronically via email (UEL email).
Documentation and Metadata	
What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?	Participant information sheets, consent forms, list of guide interview questions and debrief sheet.
Ethics and Intellectual Property	
How will you manage any ethical issues?	• Written consent will be obtained for all participant interviews. • Participants will be advised of their right to withdraw from the research study at any time without being obliged to provide a reason. This will be made clear to participants on the information sheets and consent forms. If a participant decides to withdraw from the study, they will be informed their contribution (e.g. any audio recordings and interview

	transcripts) will be removed and confidentially destroyed, up until the point where the data has been analysed. I will notify participants that this will not be possible more than 7 days after the interview due to the data having already been analysed. • In case of emotional distress during or following the interview, contact details of a relevant support organisation will be made available in a debrief letter. If participants appear distressed during the interview they will be offered a break or the option to end the interview. • Transcription will be undertaken only by the researcher to protect confidentiality of participants. • Participants will be anonymised during transcription to protect confidentiality. Agreement will be made that no names will be used or any other identifiable information including schools or local authorities. • Each participant will be given a participant number (in interview chronological order) and all identifiable information (e.g. names, schools, locations, identifiable scenarios) anonymised in the transcripts.
How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights issues?	There are no copyright or intellectual property rights issues.
Storage and Backup	
How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?	Audio recordings and transcriptions will be saved on UEL OneDrive for Business. Audio files and transcripts will be saved in separate folders. Each audio file will be named with the participants' initials and the date of the interview. Each participant will be attributed a participant number, in chronological interview order. Transcription files will be named e.g. "Participant 1". No list will be kept of participant numbers linked to personal identifying information. Audio files of interviews will be uploaded from the researcher's unencrypted dictaphone onto UEL's OneDrive for Business then files will be deleted from the Dictaphone.

	Consent forms will be scanned and uploaded onto the UEL OneDrive for business and backed up on the H drive. Paper versions will then be destroyed. Data will be stored in UEL OneDrive for Business and backed up in the H drive (accessed remotely via Remote APP and VPN). Scanned consent forms will be saved in a separate location to other research data.
How will you manage access and security?	The researcher will transcribe all interviews (removing identifiable information in the process) and only the researcher, supervisor and examiners will have access to the transcripts. UEL OneDrive for Business will be used for sharing. Recordings from the Dictaphone will be uploaded onto the researcher's password protected personal laptop immediately after the interview has ended. Recordings will then be deleted from the device. Audio files will be saved in a separate folder on the researcher's laptop and titled as follows: 'Participant initials: Date of interview'. Anonymised transcripts will be shared with the research supervisor via UEL email. File names will be participant numbers e.g. Participant 1.
Data Sharing	
How will you share the data?	Extracts of transcripts will be provided in the final research and any subsequent publications. Identifiable information will not be included in these extracts.
Are any restrictions on data sharing required?	Yes. It is not envisaged that data generated will be of interest to others, apart from those interested in assessing reliability and research integrity. Participants will be giving consent on the basis that data shared will be for the purpose of the study described and not for other purposes.
Selection and Preservation	

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?	Audio recordings and electronic copies of consent forms will be kept until the thesis has been examined and passed. They will then be erased from both the UEL servers and anonymised transcripts will be transferred to an encrypted folder and saved for one year for possible future publication.
What is the long-term preservation plan for the data?	The researcher does not require long term preservation of the data.
Responsibilities and Resources	
Who will be responsible for data management?	(Researcher)
What resources will you require to deliver your plan?	N/A
Review	
Date: 26/03/2021	Reviewer name: Penny Jackson Research Data Management Officer

Appendix 2 Permission to conduct research

RE: Permission to conduct research

[redacted]Mahdi

You replied to this message on 21/04/2021 09:23.

Hi Shahinaz,

Very happy to give my consent, sounds really interesting and helpful to the profession.

BW

[redacted]

[redacted] | Principal Educational Psychologist & Head of Inclusion Support Services |

[redacted]

Appendix 3- ethics review decision to approve the research

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates in Clinical, Counselling and Educational Psychology

REVIEWER: Matthew Jones Chesters

SUPERVISOR: Miles Thomas

STUDENT: Shahinaz Mahdi

Course: Prof Doc in Educational and Child Psychology

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.

2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.

3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below)**:** In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY
(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

APPROVED

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer)*:

Major amendments required *(for reviewer):*

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

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

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature):* Shahinaz Mahdi
Student number:

Date: 27/08/21

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

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEACHER *(for reviewer)*

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

YES

Please request resubmission with an adequate risk assessment

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

[ ] HIGH

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

[ ] MEDIUM (Please approve but with appropriate recommendations)

[X] LOW

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

Reviewer *(Typed name to act as signature)*: Matthew Jones Chesters

Date: 27 August 2021

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

Appendix 4- YP information and consent letter

What you need to know before deciding if you agree to take part in my research

I am doing research to help me learn about young people who have moved or will be moving to a new school to see if it may help them.

Researcher's photo

Hello,

Your views and thoughts are very important!!!

I am a Trainee Educational and Child Psychologist, and I'd like to learn more about children who have a social communication difficulty (such as Autism) who move schools because of a managed move.

The title of my research is:

Exploring the experiences of young people with social communication difficulties and managed moves.

Invitation to participate

I would really like you to help me with my research. I know you may have tried a managed move, and I think I could learn a lot from you about the experience. Your thoughts are really important. **Anyone who takes part will receive a £10 Amazon voucher.**

What would be expected of you

I would ask you to talk to me about your experience. I record the discussion in order to be able to write about it. I will use a machine called a Dictaphone or a computer.

I will then think about what our conversation and may include what you say in my research project.

However you will always remain anonymous. That means no-one will know it was you who said those things.

When my research is over, I will delete the recording on the Dictaphone to protect your identity.

What would happen next

If your parents/carers agree and yourself agree to take part, I can come to talk to you.

What if I change my mind

If you change your mind at any point in this process, you can withdraw from the research. It's that simple!!

What could I get out of it

You could help me and other professionals in Education to understand it from your perspective. Children don't often get to say what they really think. My research will give you that chance.

Who will see what I said

Academics at the University of East London will read my research project, which might include quotes from you. Also, people called external examiners (academics from other universities) will also read it and ask me questions about it.

I also expect to share my findings with my boss and my colleagues.

If my research is interesting, other people might want to know about it, for example educational psychologists or headteachers or other educational professionals.

Contact details

If you or your parents would like to discuss this further, please contact me. My email address is: **Shahinaz.mahdi@**

If you are unhappy with the research process or with me, you can contact my research supervisor to tell him about it:

Dr Miles Thomas: m.thomas@uel.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

I have understood the information about the research, and I have had a chance to ask questions before deciding if I want to take part.

Please tick one box:

I agree to take part ☐

or

I do not agree to take part ☐

Name:…….. Date:……..

If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is ok. You can contact me at Shahinaz.mahdi@

Appendix 5- Information Letter for Parent/Guardian of Prospective Participants

Information Letter for Parent/Guardian of Prospective Participants

The Experiences of Young People with Social Communication Difficulties and Managed Moves

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

Who am I?

I am a postgraduate student in the School of Psychology at the University of East London and I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology. As part of my studies I am conducting the research your child is being invited to participate in.

What is the research?

I am conducting research into the experiences of children and young people with social communication difficulties and managed moves.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that the Committee's evaluation of this ethics application has been guided by the standards of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to participate?

Your child has been invited to participate in my research as someone who fits the kind of people I am looking for to help me explore my research topic. I am looking to involve:

1. Children and young people with social communication difficulties who have been involved in a manged move or are about to do so.
2. Staff to whom children with social communication difficulties who have experienced a managed move (or are about to) are known. This could be through direct work, assessment or involvement with the process of the manged move.

I emphasise that I am not looking for 'experts' on the topic I am studying. Your child will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

You are quite free to decide whether agree to your child's participation and should not feel coerced.

What will participation involve?

If you agree for your child to participate, they will be asked to:

- Take part in an interview where they will be invited to share their experiences of managed moves
- Interviews should last approximately 45 minutes
- An audio recording of the interviews will be made

I will offer participants a £10 Amazon voucher for participating in my research.

Taking part will be safe and confidential

Privacy and safety will be respected at all times.

- Participants will not be identified by the data collected, on any written material resulting from the data collected, or in any write-up of the research.
- Participants do not have to answer all questions asked of them and can stop their participation at any time.

What will happen to the information that is provided?

What I will do with the material that participants provide will involve:

- Audio recordings of interviews will be made then transcribed. Transcripts will be anonymised and saved separately from any potentially identifying data e.g. consent forms
- Identifying information will be redacted both in the transcripts and in the reporting of the research
- Anonymised data will be accessible to research supervisors at the University of East London who will be supervising the research project through the various stages
- Data will be stored electronically; it will be encrypted and password protected
- Any data related to the research (including interview recordings, transcripts and consent forms) will be saved until the completion of the research study and the conclusion of the thesis

What if you or your child want to withdraw?

You are free to withdraw your child from the research study at any time without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. Separately, you may also request to withdraw your child's data even after they have participated data, provided that this request is made within 3 weeks of the data being collected (after which point the data analysis will begin, and withdrawal will not be possible).

Contact Details

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

Shahinaz Mahdi

Email: Shahinaz.mahdi@

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

Email: [M.Thomas@UEL.ac.uk]

or

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

(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Appendix 6- Parental Consent to a Child's/ Young Person's Participation in Research

Parental Consent to a Child's/ Young Person's Participation in Research

The Experiences of Young People with Social Communication Difficulties and Managed Moves

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the activities in which my child will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my child's involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to my child's participation in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I and my child have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should my child withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…….

Parent/ guardian's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…….

Parent/ guardian's signature

……..

Researcher’s name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

Researcher’s signature

……

Date: ……..…….

Email: Shahinaz.mahdi@

Appendix 7- Information Letter for Prospective Participants (Staff)

Information Letter for Prospective Participants (Staff)

The Experiences of Young People with Social Communication Difficulties and Managed Moves

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

Who am I?

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

What is the research?

I am conducting research into the experiences of children and young people with social communication difficulties and managed moves.

My research has been approved by the School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee. This means that the Committee's evaluation of this ethics application has been guided by the standards of research ethics set by the British Psychological Society.

Why have you been asked to participate?

You have been invited to participate in my research as someone who fits the kind of people I am looking for to help me explore my research topic. I am looking to involve:

> ***Staff to whom children with social communication difficulties who have experienced a managed move (or are about to) are known. This could be through direct work, assessment or involvement with the process of the manged move.***

I emphasise that I am not looking for 'experts' on the topic I am studying. You will not be judged or personally analysed in any way and you will be treated with respect.

You are quite free to decide whether agree to participate and should not feel coerced.

What will participation involve?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Take part in an interview where you will be invited to share your experiences of managed moves
- Interviews should last approximately 45 minutes
- An audio recording of the interviews will be made

I will not be able to pay participants for participating in my research, but your participation would be very valuable in helping to develop knowledge and understanding of my research topic

Taking part will be safe and confidential

Privacy and safety will be respected at all times.

- Participants will not be identified by the data collected, on any written material resulting from the data collected, or in any write-up of the research.
- Participants do not have to answer all questions asked of them and can stop their participation at any time.

What will happen to the information that is provided?

What I will do with the material that participants provide will involve:

- Audio recordings of interviews will be made then transcribed. Transcripts will be anonymised and saved separately from any potentially identifying data e.g. consent forms
- Identifying information will be redacted both in the transcripts and in the reporting of the research
- Anonymised data will be accessible to research supervisors at the University of East London who will be supervising the research project through the various stages
- Data will be stored electronically; it will be encrypted and password protected
- Any data related to the research (including interview recordings, transcripts and consent forms) will be saved until the completion of the research study and the conclusion of the researcher's thesis

What if you want to withdraw?

You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without explanation, disadvantage or consequence. Separately, you may also request to withdraw your data even after you have participated data, provided that this request is made within 3 weeks of the data being collected (after which point the data analysis will begin, and withdrawal will not be possible).

Contact Details

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

Shahinaz Mahdi
Email: Shahinaz.mahdi@

If you have any questions or concerns about how the research has been conducted, please contact the research supervisor Dr Miles Thomas. School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ,
Email: [M.Thomas@UEL.ac.uk]
or
Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr Tim Lomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ.
(Email: t.lomas@uel.ac.uk)

Appendix 8 - Consent to Participation in a Research Study

Consent to Participation in a Research Study

The Experiences of Young People with Social Communication Difficulties and Managed Moves

I have the read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher(s) involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage and without being obliged to give any reason. I also understand that should I withdraw, the researcher reserves the right to use my anonymous data after analysis of the data has begun.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

…….

Participant's signature

……..

Researcher's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

……..

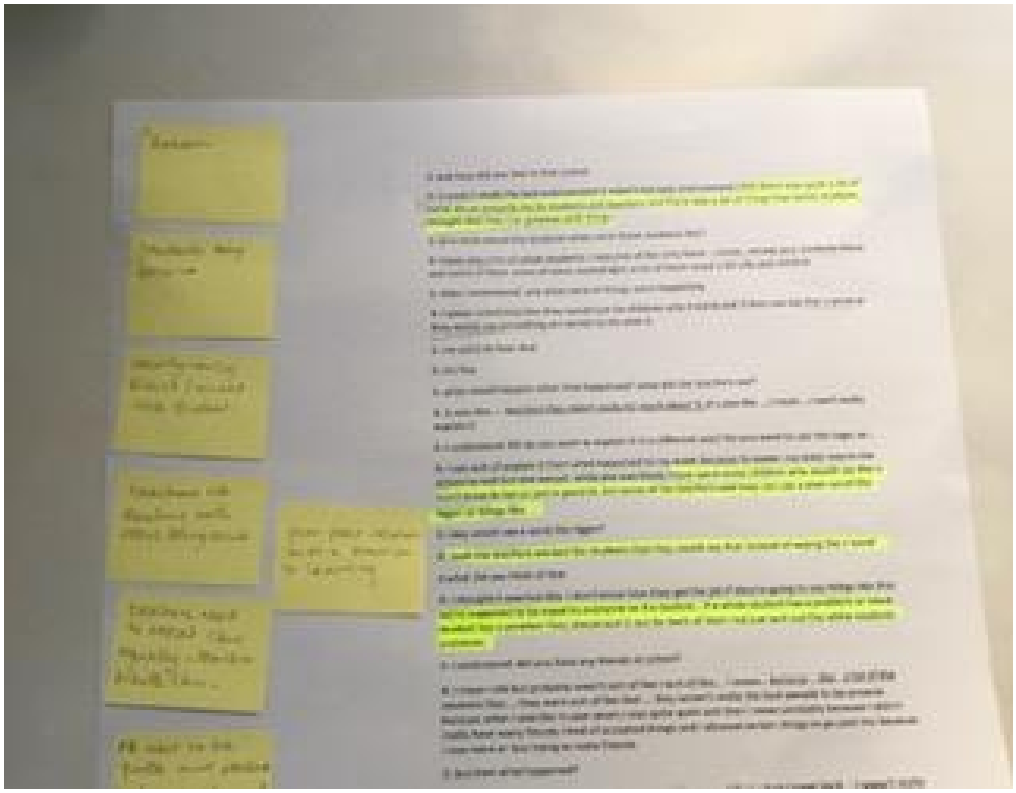
Researcher’s signature

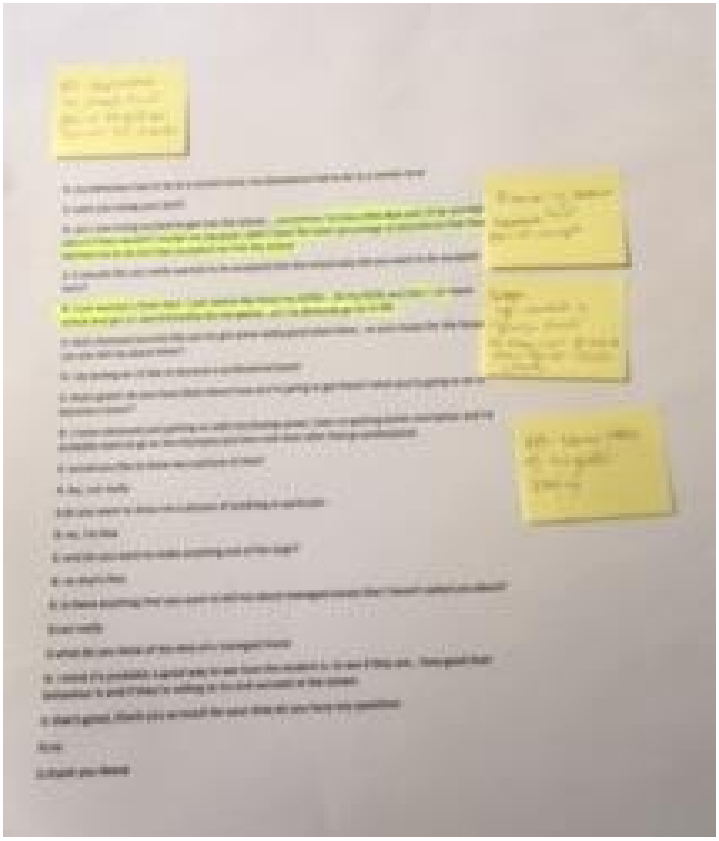
……

Date: ……..…….

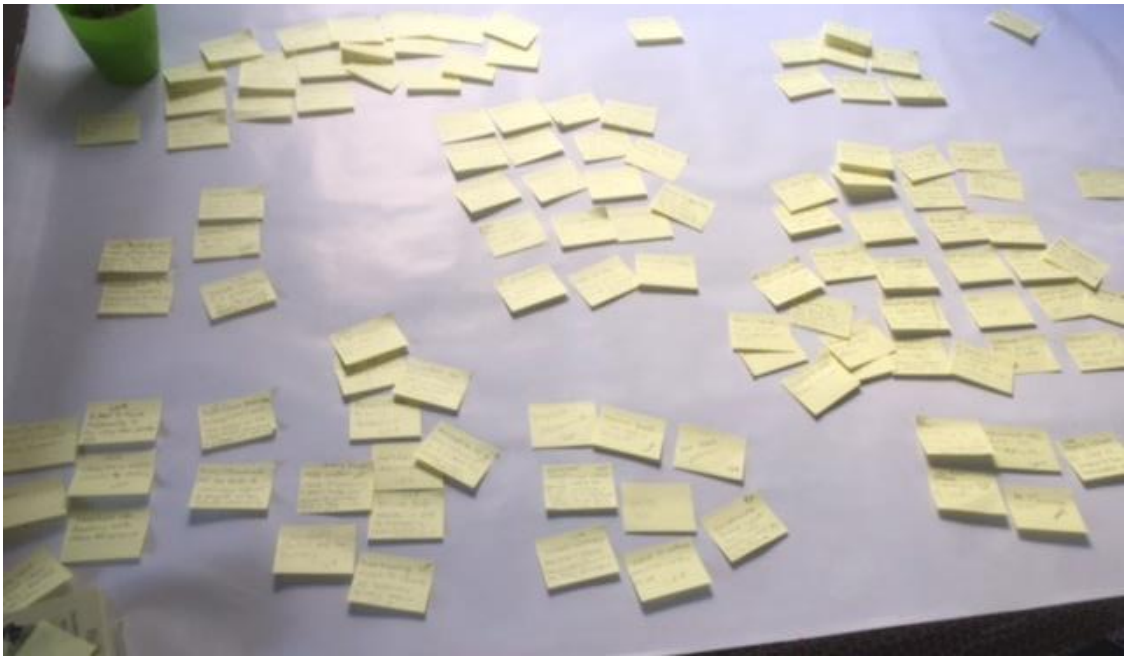
Email to: Shahinaz.mahdi@

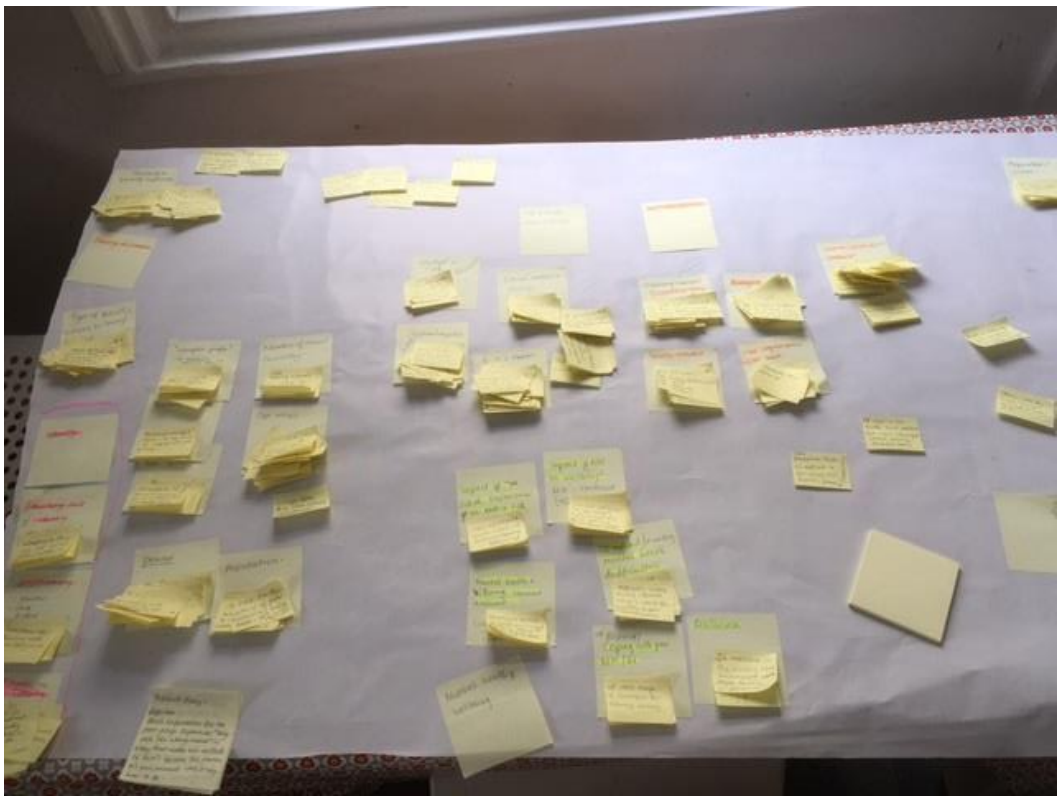
Appendix 9- examples of initial coding





Appendix 10- examples of generating themes





Appendix 11- example of semi-structured interview transcript (staff)

Interview schedule- school leaders

Can you tell me about your role?

How would you describe what a managed move is?

How would you describe your role in managed moves in your school?

Is your role different when managed moves involve a YP who is autistic?

- What are some of the considerations when a managed move involves an autistic YP?
  Transition/ trial period/ relationships with staff/ children
- What systems/policies do you consider?

Can you share examples of times when an autistic YP had a manged move out of your school? / Can you share examples of being a receiving school for an autistic YP on a managed moves?

- What were the reasons for the move?
- Can you tell me about the process of the managed move?
- What was the outcome of the move?

Who are the key stakeholders that you engage with when a managed move involves autistic YP?

Do you engage with the following? How?

- Schools staff
- Parents
- YP
- Any other agencies and services

In your view, what makes a managed move successful for a autistic young person? What are some of the challenges?

Can you share an example of when you have successfully included autistic YP in your school?

Appendix 12 -Studies included in the literature review

Bagley, C., & Hallam, S. (2015). Managed moves: school and local authority staff perceptions of processes, success andchallenges. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, *20*(4), 432–447.

Bagley, C., & Hallam, S. (2016). Young people's and parent's perceptions of managed moves. *Emotional & BehaviouralDifficulties*, *21*(2), 205–227.

Bagley, C., & Hallam, S. (2017). Is there a role for Educational Psychologists in facilitating managed moves? *EducationalPsychology in Practice*, *33*(3), 323–333.

Brede J, Remington A, Kenny L, Warren K, Pellicano E (2017) Excluded from school: Autistic students' experiences of school exclusion and subsequent reintegration into school, *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 2: 1-20.

Craggs, H., & Kelly, C. (2018). School belonging: Listening to the voices of secondary school students who have undergonemanaged moves. *School Psychology International*, *39*(1), 56–73.

Flitcroft, D., & Kelly, C. (2016). An appreciative exploration of how schools create a sense of belonging to facilitate the successfultransition to a new school for pupils involved in a managed move. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, *21*(3), 301–313.

Gazeley, L., Marrable, T., Brown, C., & Boddy, J. (2015). Contextualising Inequalities in rates of school exclusion in

Englishschools: Beneath the ‘tip of the ice-berg’. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *63*(4), 487–504.

Gore Langton, E., & Frederickson, N. (2016). Mapping the educational experiences of children with pathological demand avoidance. Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 16(4), 254-263.

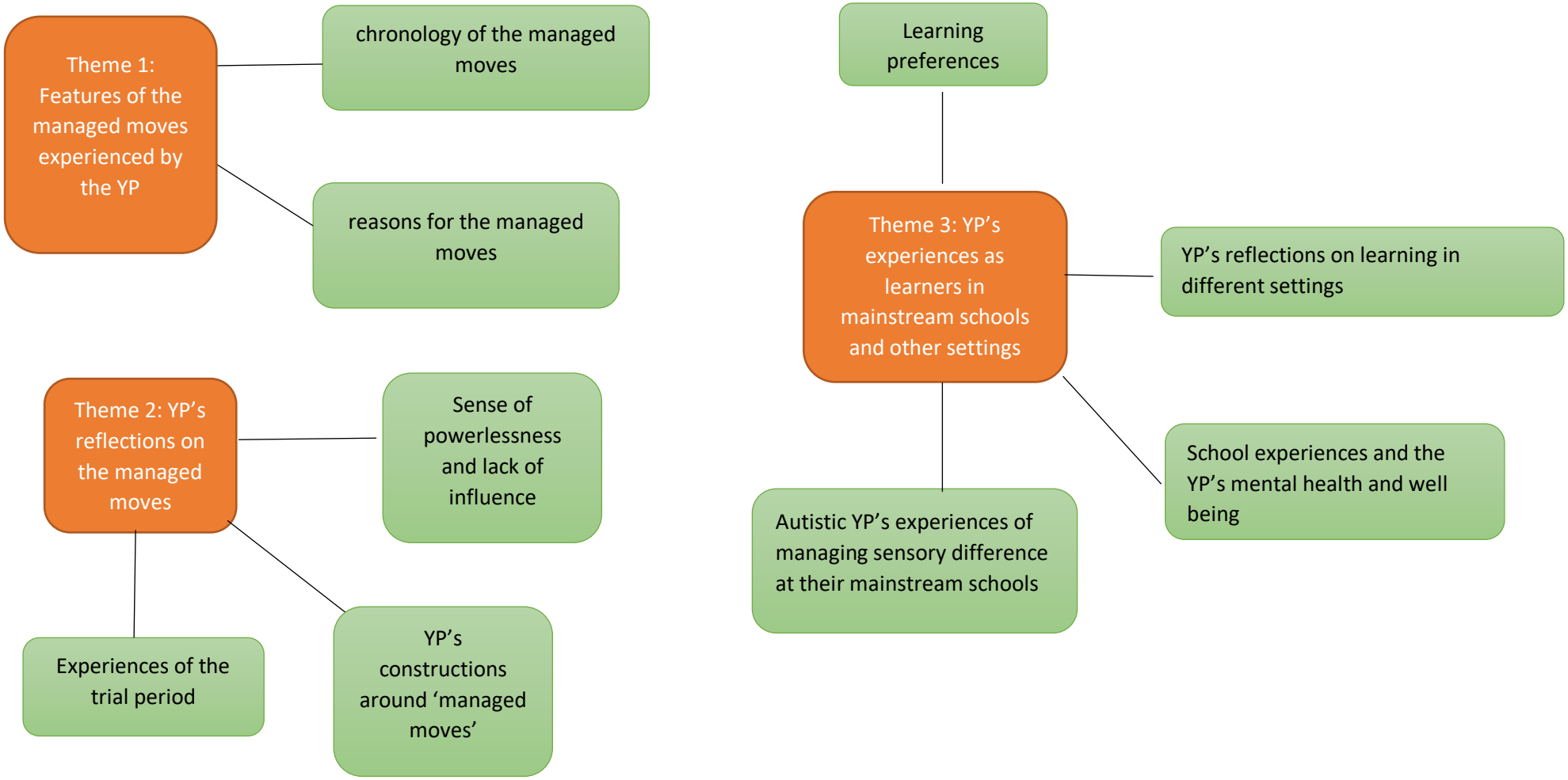
Harris, B., Vincent, K., Thomson, P., & Toalster, R. (2006). Does every child know they matter? Pupils’ views of one alternativeto exclusion. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *24*(2), 28–38.

Sproston K, Sedgewick F, Crane L (2017) Autistic girls and school exclusion: Perspectives of students and their parents, *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 2: 1-14.

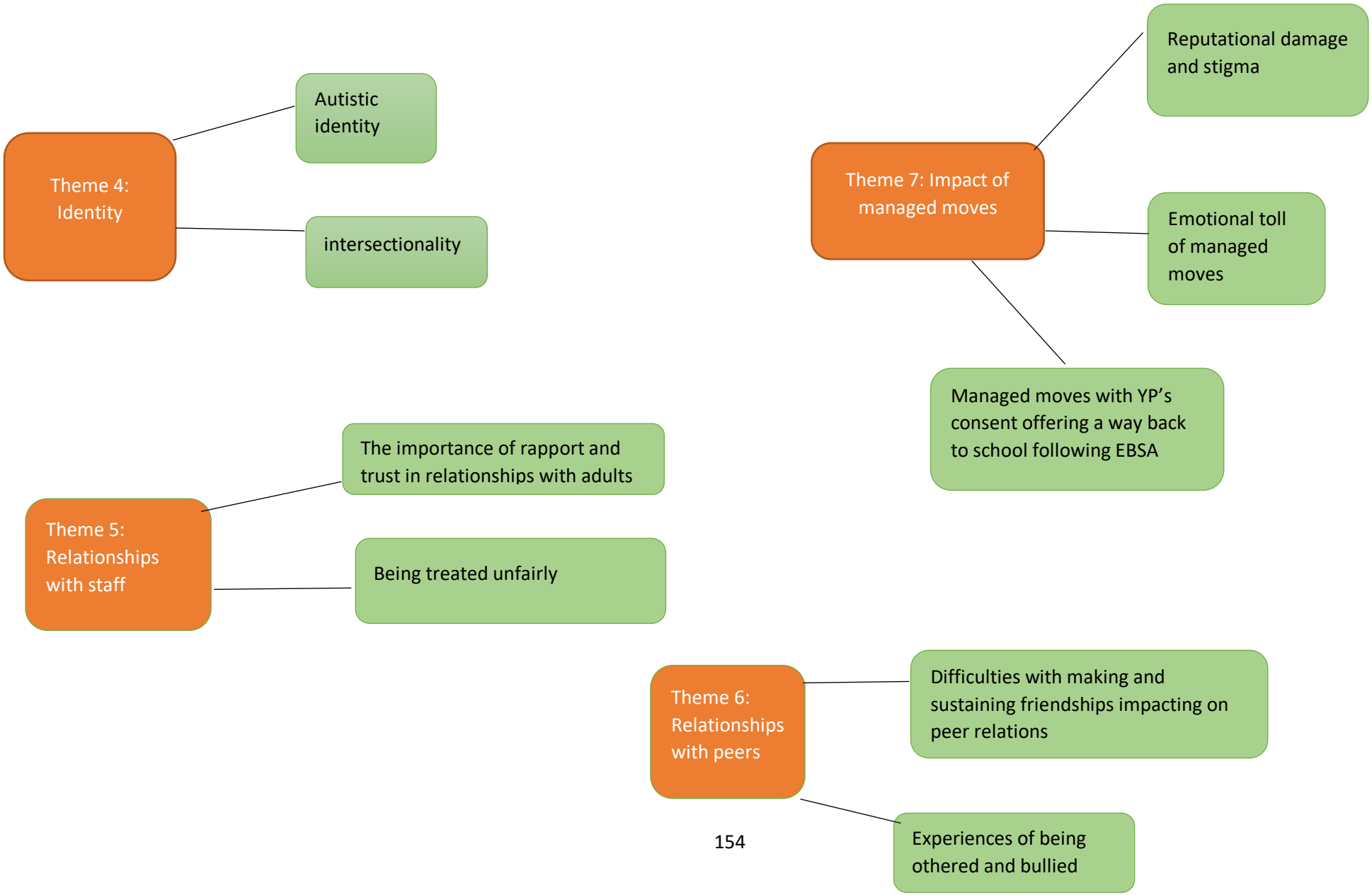
Vincent, K., Harris, B., Thomson, P., & Toalster, R. (2007). Managed moves: schools collaborating for collective gain. *Emotionaland Behavioural Difficulties*, *12*(4), 283–298.

Appendix 13- Thematic Map: Q1 What are the accounts of Autistic young people around their experiences of Managed Moves?

In this thematic map, orange boxes denote themes and green boxes denote subthemes.

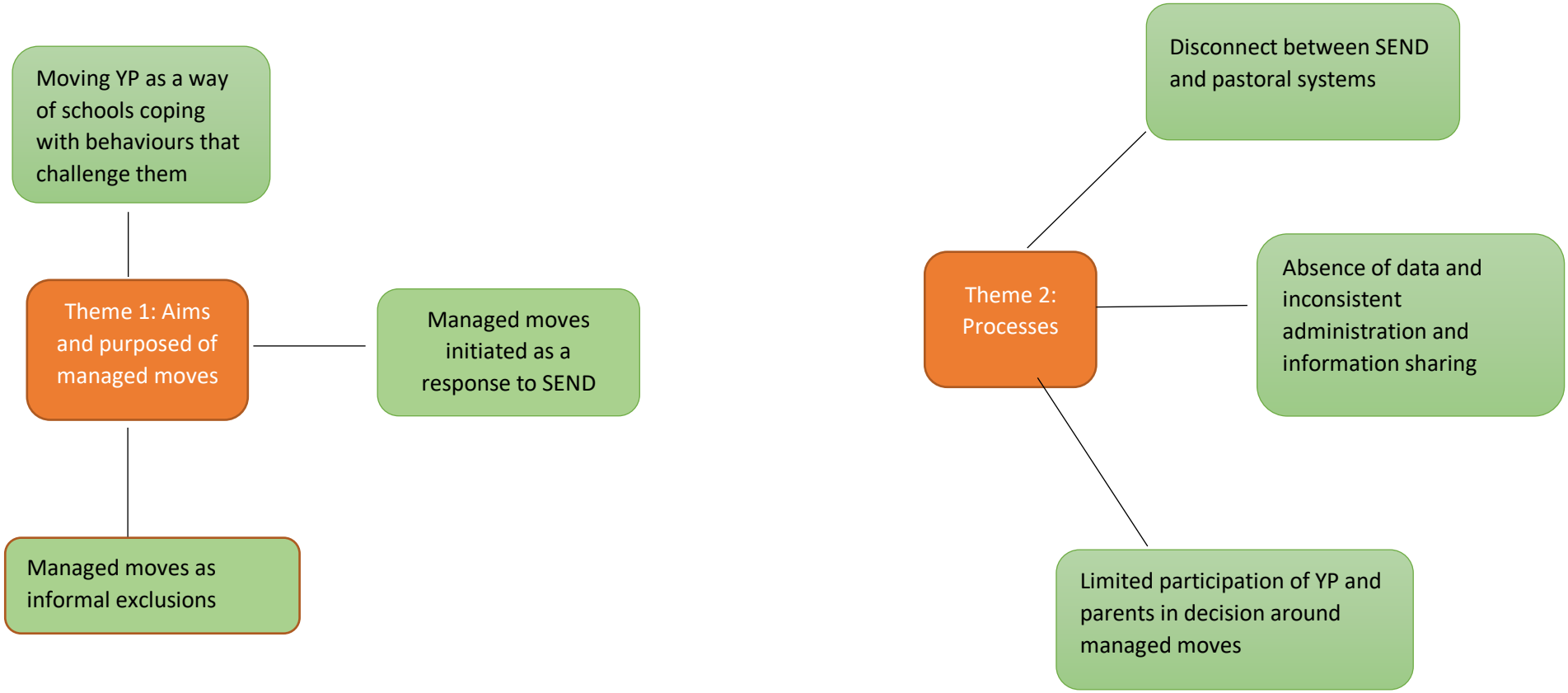


Continued- Thematic Map: Q1 What are the accounts of Autistic young people around their experiences of Managed Moves?



Appendix 14- Thematic Map: Q2 What are staff accounts of managed moves involving Autistic young people?

In this thematic map, orange boxes denote themes and green boxes denote subthemes.



Continued- Thematic Map: Q2 What are staff accounts of managed moves involving Autistic young people?