UNDERSTANDING AND EXAMINING THE DIFFERENT VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS ON SCHOOL REFUSAL

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the views and perspectives of twelve educational professionals on the topic of school refusal. These educational professionals were from different backgrounds, including Educational Psychologists, Teachers, Educational Welfare Officers, a Senior Outreach Worker, a Senior Manager and a Learning Support Assistant.

This was an exploratory study which used an inductive reasoning approach. An amended version of grounded theory was used to analyse the data.

The findings suggest that educational professionals identify a number of causes and reasons for school refusal. These were the young people's special educational needs, their experiences at school and social relationships with peers and adults, as well as emotional well-being issues. The educational professionals also referred to other contributory factor for school refusal, such as socio-economic markers and poor parenting skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

AHT	Assistant Head Teacher
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
DHT	Deputy Head Teacher
EBSP	Educational Based School Professional
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Services
EWO	Educational Welfare Officer
HT	Head Teacher
LA	Local Authority
LAP	Local Authority Professional
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
PSHE	Personal Social and Health Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEP	Senior Educational Psychologist
SM	Local Authority Specialist Team Manager
SOW	Senior Outreach Worker
SRAS	School Refusal Assessment Scale
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 1 outlines this research into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal.

The key objectives are described in section 1.2, followed by the rationale for the research in section 1.3. The aims and the approach of the research are discussed in section 1.4 and precede the relevance of the research to professional practice in section 1.5. The end of the chapter describes the distinctive contribution in section 1.6 before leading to a summary of the chapter in section 1.7.

1.2 Focus of the Research

The key objectives of the research were to explore and understand educational professionals' perspectives, views, approaches and practices to school refusal. The research also endeavoured to explore educational professionals' views on the systems and provisions of support available to address school refusal and its associated behaviours.

1.3 Rationale

School attendance difficulties have been studied in both education and psychology (Kearney and Silverman, 1995; Stickney and Miltenberger, 1998; Elliot, 1999; Evans, 2000). However. one of the prevailing issues is how attendance difficulties are recognised and defined (Lauchlan, 2003; Kearney, 2007; Pellegrini, 2007). Thambirajah, Grandison and De-Haynes (2008) argue that the difficulties with defining school attendance problems have contributed to a lack of systematic and consistent approaches within the educational system, which means that all attendance difficulties are subsumed under authorised or unauthorised absence.

> Although teachers have known all along that there was a group of children with school attendance problems who were loosely called school refuser or school phobics, official school non-attendance figures do not recognise school refusers as a separate group and they tend to be subsumed under truants or parentally condoned absences (Thambirajah *et al.*, 2008, p. 129).

Local authorities, schools and teachers have recognised that there are a significant number of young people who do not attend any type of educational establishment regularly, on any given day. Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson and Kirk (2003, p.15) report that the Audit Commission in 1999

estimated that "at least 40,000 of the 400,000 pupils absent from school each day are truanting or being kept off school by their parent". Recent non-attendance figures from The Department for Education (DfE) (2012b) identified that 450,333 children were absent from school, which is equivalent to 7.2% of the total school population. The attendance figures suggest that the equivalent time the young people are missing is one month of lessons in an academic year, and shows that there continues to be number of children who are missing education. However, the non-attendance figures presented above do not identify those within this population who are school refusing or have chronic attendance difficulties (Evans, 2000; Lauchlan, 2003).

The non-attendance figures highlight that there continue to be difficulties with improving school attendance in the UK. Research and journal articles within this area have focused on a number of factors. First, internalising and externalising behaviours, such as anxiety, fear or depression (King *et al.*, 1999; Kearney and Bates, 2005; Kearney, 2006). Second, issues pertaining to the definition and recognition of school refusal, (Lauchlan, 2003; Kearney, 2007; Pellegrini, 2007), and third, school experiences which take into consideration social relationships and academic experiences (Malcolm *et al.*, 2003; Lauchlan, 2003; Ravet, 2007; Dube and Orpinas, 2009).

Although research has focused on various factors associated with school refusal, as outlined, research exploring educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal are limited. Exploring educational professionals' views and perspectives, Schraw and Olafson (2002) examined the implications of teachers' epistemological world-views and how their beliefs influenced their teaching practices, concluding that teachers' ideas have implications on their professional practices. McCombs (2002), adding to Schraw and Olafson's research, recognised teachers' beliefs as being very influential on educational practices, acknowledging the relationship between teachers' beliefs as an influencing component in the educational system and an influential factor on teacher's behaviours and practices.

There are several studies investigating teachers' perspectives on issues such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning and achievement, as well as their views on motivation (Alisic, 2012; Hilgendorf, 2012; Joffe and Black, 2012; Sakui and Cowie, 2012). However, the research presented in this thesis is primarily interested in what educational professionals think about school refusal and what they do to address it within the educational system.

1.4 Aims and Approach of the Research

The research presented in this thesis explores the views of educational professionals working within schools and local authorities on school refusal. The twelve educational professionals who participated in this research represent the team around the child or can be considered to represent two locality teams within a Local Authority (LA) setting. Between them, the participants held a number of positions within schools and local authorities, which could be considered to be representative of the educational professionals who would play a key role (participants are listed in the methodology chapter).

To establish a comprehensive picture of the educational professionals' views on school refusal, the researcher generated some reflective questions which shaped the focus of the research, but were not necessarily the questions given to the participants. These reflective questions are as follows:

- When do attendance difficulties become a concern?
- Who are the educational professionals who identify the concern and what happens?
- How important are attendance difficulties in relation to other school priorities?
- Who are the young people who are most likely to have difficulties with their attendance?
- How do teachers', pastoral support staff's and school administrators' attitudes influence the support made available?
- What are schools doing to support young people who struggle to attend?
- What is the role of parents and the young person? Is parenting style a factor? Are young people being manipulative? Is the refusal to attend school an act of attention seeking behaviour?
- Are school refusers a silent minority whose needs are not recognised because they spend very little time in school? Or, is it a case of 'out of sight, out of mind?'.

The main objective of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the views and perspectives of professionals working in education towards school refusal. The epistemological paradigm which underpins this research is critical realism. Robson (2002, p.41) describes critical realism as offering a "third way between positivism and relativism". Furthermore, Walliman (2006, p.20) identifies that critical realism "can be seen as a reconciliatory approach" because critical realism advocates that there is an independent reality which is independent of our own thoughts. Therefore, research taken from this position considers both the objective and subjective realities of the topic. In the case of school refusal, the research explores both the subjective reality of the

participants on school refusal and the objective reality in terms of the provision of support to address school refusal.

This research is an inductive inquiry aiming to establish a theory from the data by identifying generalisations and inferences from the findings (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). The inductive, exploratory and interpretative nature of this research influences how the data was collected and analysed. A qualitative approach means that a semi-structured interview format was employed and an adapted version of grounded theory was used as an analytical technique to analyse the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Using an inductive approach means that the researcher's reflexivity is an important part of the research, as reflexivity allows the researcher to unpack the ideological, personal and demographical factors which might influence or impact on the research findings.

It was important to understand how individuals form their views and opinions, as well as understand what factors influence these views and opinions. Social psychology was thought to be a useful starting point to establish the underlying psychological theory which underpins this research. Hewstone, Stroebe and Jonas (2012, p.5) refer to Allport's (1954) definition which describes social psychology as:

> The attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings.

Crisp and Turner (2010, p.xxvi) qualify this definition of social psychology, explaining that:

> Social psychology involves trying to understand the social behaviour of individuals in terms of both internal characteristics of the person (e.g. personality, mental processes) and external influences (the effect of the social environment).

Social psychology provides a context for understanding educational professionals' internal and external influences on their social behaviour in relation to their views and actions towards school refusal.

1.5   Relevance to Role and Professional Practice

The research participants were sourced from a number of schools and local authorities within London and Surrey. The researcher works as a locum Educational Psychologist (EP) in a number

of local authorities, and the interviews took place within the context of the participants' work environments.

The research was developed from the researcher's experience of working as a school-based EP in an outer London borough. The researcher worked with three young people and their families. Two of the families self-referred to the EP without informing the school; whilst the Inclusion Manager requested educational psychology involvement for the third year 9 student because she felt that this student was a "health and safety risk". The Inclusion Manager reported that the teachers could not address the young person's behavioural difficulties, despite providing extensive support. Therefore, the student was at risk of being permanently excluded because the teachers felt that they could no longer meet the student's needs.

The first family who self-referred was concerned about their son who had transferred from primary to secondary school and was struggling with the transition. He was provided with transition support from the LA's Transitions Advisor and the school's Learning Mentor. However, the young person's difficulties intensified as the academic year progressed. The parents were at a loss at what to do. They had struggled with their son's attendance since nursery school and over the years they had seen very little improvement. They had heard through a family friend that the school had an EP who had previously worked with their daughter and it was suggested that they should contact the EP directly.

The second self-referral was by parents who were worried about their daughter's attendance, as she was refusing to go to school. This young person had struggled to maintain a good attendance record over her school career, but it was when she started secondary school a significant decline occurred. In year 9 she stopped attending school and as a result her parents were fined.

When the school's Inclusion Manager was informed about the parents who had self-referred, she explained that the two students were not a priority for the EP, explaining that involvement of the Transitions Advisor and Learning Mentor would resolve the attendance difficulties. For the student in year 9, the teacher stated that she struggled with her friendships and the family had been known to the Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) for many years. Due to no significant signs of improvement with the student's attendance, the family had been prosecuted and fined.

The length of educational psychology involvement varied for each of the individual students. For one student two terms, for another three to four terms and one student's Special Educational

Needs (SEN) were identified and they were transferred to a specialist provision. The other student was placed in an alternative educational provision and the third student showed marked improvement with her attendance. The researcher's involvement with these young people and their families provided the opportunity to reflect and ask questions about the situation. During this time, the researcher discovered the views of the teachers and the pastoral support staff. When the teachers and the other members of the school staff talked about young people with attendance difficulties, they often used phrases such as "they're manipulative", "they're attention-seeking", "they're just putting it on" and "it's the parents' fault, they're can't get them out of bed". These comments were both revealing and shocking at the same time, because the educational professionals appeared to be fairly inflexible and critical about the young people's attendance difficulties and their families.

The context of working as a school-based EP shaped this researcher's understanding of the views of the educational professionals working within the school. When reflecting upon the teachers' views, the researcher asked herself the question "Do other educational professionals share the same views?" To find the answer, potential participants were identified who worked within various educational contexts, with varied experiences and roles. At the time when this research started, the government was promoting the agenda for building multi-agency working practices, with the objective of establishing partnership working which focused on the needs of the child. Nine years ago, the DfES (2004b) defined professional services to young people through a paper entitled 'Every Child Matters'. This document highlighted the primary focus for professionals working with children and families, which was to provide more integrated services, based on easy and effective communication across organisations and professional boundaries. These ways of working were identified as having benefits for all children and families, including school refusers.

The school-based EP within this context used the consultation framework which Educational Psychology Services (EPS) refer to as the mode of practice. This mode of practice has become established into the EPS service users' thinking. Schools, Social Services and health service professionals use the Common Assessment Framework, CAF (DfES, 2006) to guide their thinking about children and young people's individual needs. Schools have become more open to using the consultation framework to understand the needs of the young person rather than automatically requesting traditional educational and attainment assessments.

The CAF is a four-step process whereby practitioners identify and assess holistically the needs of a child or young person. Some educational psychology services use the CAF as way of requesting educational psychology involvement, whereas other educational psychology services use other forms. Although there are formalised mechanisms for requesting the involvement of professional services in education and health, and for accessing Social Services, there should be some consideration given to who school professionals identify as a priority or a concern when requesting external agency support. Wall and Pryzwansky (1985) identify that teachers are less likely to seek psychological services for students with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Hence, it is possible that teachers might be less inclined to seek additional support for a young person refusing to attend school because of their opinions and perspectives on school refusal.

The consequences of school refusal have been primarily associated with poor academic outcomes (Öhlund and Ericsson, 2001). However, beyond the scope of education, school refusal is linked to delinquency and the involvement of young people with the criminal justice system. Other high risk behaviours, such as substance abuse and gang activity, are also associated with school refusal (Mueller, Giacomazzi and Stoddard, 2006). Moreover, the long-term effects of school refusal can be associated with mental health issues (Honjo, Nishide, Niwa, Sasaki, Kaneko, Inko and Nishide, 2001; McShane, Walters and Rey, 2001; Lauchlan, 2003; and Torrens Armstrong, McCormack Brown, Brindley, Coreil and McDermott, 2011).

Within the context that the researcher was working in (as a school-based EP), the teachers did not feel that the young people whose parents self-referred were a priority for an EP. The Inclusion Manager made no objections to using the EP's time, because the EP was employed full-time by the school. However, if a time allocation model was being employed to access educational psychology input into the school the families could have been denied access to the EP.

Educational professionals have many demands placed upon them within the context of their work environment and roles. The rationale behind this research project was to discover what educational professionals understand and think about school refusal, so as to ensure that young people with attendance difficulties have their needs recognised and prioritised.

1.6   Distinctive Contribution
School refusal is a complex issue which needs to be explored further and therefore this research aimed to provide:

- detailed information about educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal, because there is limited research on educational professionals' views on school refusal;

- further research that explores professionals' views and how their views inform or impact on their working practices. In the case of this research, it is concerned with how the educational professionals' views influence their approach to dealing with school refusers;

- a point of reference for educational professionals to raise awareness of the difficulties with addressing school refusal; and

- the opportunity for educational professionals to reflect, review and establish programmes of support for school refusers and their families.

1.7   Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the rationale and aims of this research, as well as identified its relevance to professional practice. The central issues which have defined this research into school refusal have been outlined and the professional context of the researcher has been illustrated.

The following chapters of this thesis include a literature review (Chapter 2) and the research methodology (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 outlines the findings of the research and presents the discussion. The conclusion and a summary of the thesis are presented in Chapter 5.

The next chapter, the literature review, provides a review of educational and psychological literature on school refusal which leads directly to the research question under investigation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 1 provided a description of the research presented in this thesis, and the rationale and aims of the research were discussed. The context of the research and researcher's professional role were outlined. The research approach, potential and distinctive contributions of the research were also introduced.

Chapter 2 presents the literature which contributes to understanding the research topic - school refusal. There are nine sections in this review, which include the following areas: defining school refusal (section 2.2), contributory factors to school refusal (section 2.3), psychological perspectives on school refusal (section 2.4), influential educational policy and guidance (section 2.5), eliciting professionals' views (section 2.6), theoretical underpinnings (section 2.7) and a statement of the research questions (section 2.8). A summary of the chapter closes the literature review in section 2.9.

2.1.1 Search Procedure

The literature review presents an analysis of the literature based on the key word searches. The key words are as follows: 'school refusal', 'educational professionals' views and school refusal', 'educational professionals' perceptions and school refusal', 'attribution(al) theory and school refusal' and 'social cognition and school refusal'. In order to generate a comprehensive list of the potential and relevant journal articles and books, the electronic database EBSCO was used with the following search engines CINAHL Plus, Education Research Complete, PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO. These searches were undertaken at different stages over the course of the research.

The first key word search used the term 'school refusal' and took place in May and June 2011. The parameters of the search were peer review articles, information circulars and journal articles written in English and published since 2000. The search produced a total of 186 articles (N=186) and 35 articles were selected. The specific selection criterion was restricted to full version articles which focused on defining or labelling school absenteeism.

The second phase of the search was undertaken in July 2011, and used the EBSCO database with the following search engines: CINAHL Plus, Education Research Complete, PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO. The key words used were 'educational professionals' views' and 'school refusal'. This search did not yield any results, but using the smart text search for the key words resulted in

755 items, which consisted of 526 academic journals, 186 magazines, 19 books and 24 reviews. The items yielded a range of articles which explored health professionals' views on a range of topics such as palliative care, refusal of medical treatment and mental health. The search was limited to full text articles only and this reduced the number of available journal articles. The search criteria was reduced further by selecting journal articles which referred to emotional, social, academic and family aspects of school refusal. The results of this search identified some journal articles from the first key word search and 20 other new articles.

The third phase of the search took place between October 2012 and March 2013. The parameters of this search were defined by the following key words: 'attribution theory', 'attribution and school refusal', 'social cognition, social cognition and school refusal', 'attribution and educational professionals' views', as well as 'social cognition and educational professionals' views on school refusal'. The EBSCO database was used with the following search engines: CINAHL Plus, Education Research Complete, PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO.

The results for the third phase of the search yielded a plethora of journal articles and some electronic books. Using the key word 'attribution' and the search breadth date of 1960 to the present day revealed that there have been over 35,000 articles using 'attribution' as a key word. However, when the date criterion was limited to articles between the years of 2010 and 2013, the results demonstrated that there were 4,160 articles.

During the third phase of the search, the search breadth was limited to the key words of 'attribution and school refusal'. The number of items generated was three (N=3), of which one was a dissertation about school refusal within the Latino community, while another was a journal article on the differences in perspectives of adolescents, adults and teachers towards school refusal, which was written in Japanese. The third journal article was not connected to education. The key words search for 'social cognition and school refusal' also identified a limited range of information. This search generated one item which was an editorial.

2.1.2 Inclusion Criteria for Studies Included in the Review

As previously mentioned, the literature review is divided into a number of sections. The inclusion criteria for the studies included in each section of the literature review varied. This was in accordance with the theme of the section. Section 2.2 (defining school refusal) explores the journal articles and books which explain school refusal and the various ways school attendance difficulties have been defined. Section 2.3 (contributory factors to school refusal) identifies journal

articles and books which highlight a range of contributory factors to school refusal. The total number of journal articles, government research and acts, as well as books, cited in this literature review is 44. These references were selected because they provide definitions on how school non-attending behaviour has been defined over the years. The specific studies included in the literature review were selected firstly because they focus on school-aged young people and secondly, the researchers sought the views of young people, parents/carers, educational professionals and teachers. In addition to these criteria, the articles also review the research of other researchers.

The section 'Defining School Attendance Difficulties – an Educational Perspective' (section 2.2.1) presents government policy and research, as well as highlighting the impact of governments' policies. In this section, six references are referred to. These selected references define both the current and past governments' perspectives on school non-attendance, and they also provide information about the most recent and past research into school non-attendance carried out by the government of the time.

In the section 'Defining Truancy' (section 2.2.2), eight research articles and books are cited because they demonstrate one of the ways of viewing non-attending behaviour (i.e., truancy). In the section 'Defining School Refusal' (section 2.2.3), attention is paid to one research article. This article was included because it reviews previous definitions and classifications of school non-attendance, as well as establishing an alternative way of assessing school non-attendance, in terms of understanding the many variables that may contribute to school non-attending behaviour. The two other articles cited in this section are included because the outcome of the research highlights the importance of the emotional template in understanding school non-attending behaviour, especially when research into truancy focuses on delinquency.

The section 'Extended School Non-attendance' (section 2.2.6) refers to one journal article. This article presents clear criteria for defining school non-attendance and also provides a different definition compared with other authors. The section 'Terminology to be Used in the Research' (section 2.2.7) cites three journal articles exploring the various definitions of school non-attendance. Their importance is that they explore and discuss the impact of non-attendance on learning.

In the section 'Contributory Factors to School Refusal' (section 2.3), twelve studies are cited, selected primarily because they focus on eliciting the views of the young person, their parents

and educational professionals. In addition to the selection criteria, these studies also aimed to explore and understand the relationship between school non-attendance as a result of the educational context and the experiences at schools. The other inclusion criteria are:

- Studies which provide sufficient information about the design of the study, participants and the collection, as well as the analysis, of the data.
- Studies which highlight an outcome or provide recommendations.
- Studies which are culturally relevant.

2.1.3 Discussion and Critical Review of Studies

The structure of the literature review and inclusion criteria are outlined. The literature review provides a descriptive and critical analysis of the studies. The studies are reviewed and critiqued in respect to the following:

- Questions and hypotheses, research goals.
- Methodology.
- Participants/sample selection.
- Reliability/validity.
- Findings.
- Conclusions/recommendations.

Within this study, the epistemological position of the researcher is described in Section 3.5. However, the researchers' epistemological frameworks are not always explicitly described in the reviewed studies. Although, it is possible to argue that the methodology employed in the research gives an indication of the epistemological position, such quantitative research suggests a post-positivist position.

2.2 Defining School Refusal

This section focuses on understanding the various ways in which school absence is defined. The literature review explores how education classifies school absence in terms of authorised or unauthorised absence. The distinction between truancy and school refusal will be highlighted and extended school non-attendance will be discussed.

2.2.1 Defining School Attendance Difficulties – An Educational Perspective

It is the duty of schools to ensure that school attendance is monitored, as set out in the 1996 Education Act which was amended in 2006. Schools need to ensure that absences are due to exceptional circumstances. In education, non-attendance is viewed in two ways, authorised and unauthorised.

The Department for Education's (DfE, 2012c) advice on school attendance distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absence. Authorised absence means that the school has given approval for the absence either in advance or afterwards, when a suitable explanation has been offered. The responsibility is placed on the school to either consider the request or accept the explanation. An absence is considered to be unauthorised when the school deems the reason for the absence to be unsatisfactory.

Taylor (2012) identifies that when schools started to monitor absences closely, they were criticised for having high levels of unauthorised absences. This resulted in schools being more proactive about following up non-attendance. However, when reasonable explanations were provided, schools would authorise the absence. The authorisation of absences deflects the attention from the young person, the parent(s) and the school.

Parentally condoned absences are subsumed under the category of unauthorised absences. The subsuming of parentally condoned absences means that there is a lack of distinction between the different types of absences, which has led to an under-recognition of school refusal (Thambirajah *et al.*, 2008). Ofsted (2001) identifies that there is a strong relationship between a young person's absence and parental agreement. Parentally condoned absence is termed 'parental withholding,' and refers to parental collusion with the young person. Malcolm *et al.* (2003) state that family attitude plays a key role in influencing school attendance or non-attendance. One of the ways of describing school non-attendance is as:

> The failure to attend school. School non-attendance may be initiated by the child, parents or peers: reasonable or unreasonable; occasional or persistent, motivated by pressures at school, from family or peers (Thambirajah *et al.*, 2008, p.11).

2.2.2 Defining Truancy

Stoll (1990) describes truancy as being absent from school without legitimate reasons or avoiding a specific or single lesson. Lee, Miltenberger and Raymond (1996) refer to truancy as a sub-classification of school refusal and they identify the following distinctive features:

- Concealment of time away from school from parent(s).
- No associated somatic issues.
- Displays of anti-social behaviour.

Lee *et al.*'s (1996) article examines the diagnostic and functional classifications of school refusing behaviours and within the classification categories, truancy is discussed. They also review the diagnostic procedures and methods, which involve structured clinical interviews and self-reporting. The functional assessment involves indirect and direct procedures for addressing the various types of attendance difficulties, such as school phobia.

Evaluating Lee *et al.*'s (1996) research in terms of the itemised appraisal, the first focus is the researcher's aim, which is to explore how school refusal is classified from a clinical and functional perspective. The article reviews the research and strategies employed to address specific attendance difficulties, and the article appears to be informative about the number of ways in which school attendance difficulties can be diagnosed. Lee *et al.* (1996) do not identify the methodology or inclusion criteria used to identify the studies to review. Their descriptive analysis provides no critical evaluation of the reported assessment tools, nor states whether the treatments have positive outcomes. However, the conclusion and implications section states that each of the classification systems has different purposes and merits. Significantly, the paper highlights the limitations to the diagnostic classification, noting that the functional classification system has been empirically assessed with identified success. Overall, the paper is an informative description of the possible ways of exploring school refusing behaviours. One of the strengths of the paper is that it identifies how a functional approach to understanding school refusal would be useful to a school.

Kinder, Wakefied and Wilkin (1996, p.2) describe a type of truancy which they classify as "post registration truants". This is when the young person registers for school, but fails to attend specific or some lessons. Truancy is considered to be a conduct disorder and is associated with acts of stealing, lying, cheating and destructive acts (Kim and Page, 2013). Truancy is also associated with poor educational outcomes, disaffection and youth offending behaviours (Zhang, Kisatsiyannis, Barrett and Willson, 2007).

Despite truancy being perceived as an act of delinquency, McIntyre-Bhatty (2008) questions the appropriateness of criminalising and pathologising truancy as a deviant behaviour. McIntyre-

Bhatty's (2008) article presents the case for defining the relationship between the state, state education, the role of the family and the school's ability to meet young people's needs, as well as aims to interrogate the attitudes and responses of unauthorised absence in school. McIntyre-Bhatty (2008) does not indicate the inclusion or exclusion criteria for the papers referred to. This means that it is not possible to establish how balanced this paper is in terms of presenting the school's attitude to unauthorised absence. It reports on the findings of previous research and government acts, as well as governmental papers. Referring to the issues of reliability and validity, it is possible to consider that the article presents a valid account of the range of published papers and studies from the 1980s to 2008. The article's conclusion highlights the possible ways of viewing non-attendance and ways forward to addressing the various types of non-attending behaviours.

Southwell (2006) supports McIntyre-Bhatty's (2008) perspective that truancy should not be seen in terms of a prelude to criminality. Southwell argues that truancy is a failure of the education system to recognise young people's SEN. The review is written from the perspective of a researcher who really understands the issues of truancy because the researcher identifies himself as being a former truant. There are positives and negatives to the researcher's closeness to the area of research. Referring to issues of validity and credibility in qualitative research, Southwell's experience of being a truant supports the credibility of the article, whereas from another research paradigm, the issues of objectivity and whether objectivity can be achieved would be discussed. Southwell presents a balanced discussion and explains that the definitions of truancy are interchangeable, which contributes to the confusion of seeing truancy, as a sign of unmet needs.

2.2.3 Defining School Refusal

Kearney and Silverman (1993, p.85) define school refusal as the "absenteeism from school and difficulty going to or staying in school". Their definition of school refusal aims to move school non-attendance away from a clinical conceptualisation that describes the symptoms of school refusing behaviour. They advocate that traditional classifications of school refusing behaviour are deficient in terms of the narrow band of factors used to identify school refusal. Their paper develops the School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS), which was designed to identify the variables in school refusing behaviour. Their research findings indicate that the SRAS is a useful clinical tool for identifying the variables that contribute to school refusing behaviour.

Kearney and Silverman's study involved 42 children who were identified as school refusers without other issues. However, it is possible to question whether school refusing behaviour can be isolated from other issues, such as depression or anxiety. Dube and Orpinas (2009) explain that excessive school absenteeism is an indicator of anxiety, depression or behavioural difficulties.

Referring to the participants' and their parents' socio-economic status was not a key factor in understanding the demographic status of the young people who school refuse. However, Kearney and Silverman (1993) explain that the majority of the families who participated in their research were from a middle class background. The question of representativeness should be considered, in terms of both the sample size and the demographic characteristics. From a quantitative approach, it is possible to reflect on whether generalisations can be made from the results where the majority of the participants are Caucasian and only four participants are African-American. Additionally, it is possible to consider whether the results of the research are applicable to the United Kingdom's (UK) population of young people who refuse to attend school.

Kearney and Silverman's scale contains 16 questions with each question being rated on a seven point Likert scale. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) explain that caution should be paid to the results of rating scales, because they do not allow for the degrees of sensitivity that respondents may have to the questions.

King, Heyne, Tonge, Gullone and Ollendick (2001, p.352) define school refusal as a "difficulty attending school associated with emotional distress, especially anxiety and depression". Comparing the definitions highlights that school refusal is defined differently by different researchers. Here, King *et al*. (2001) identify the emotional component to school refusal. Their views are influenced by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (APA, 1994).

2.2.4 Distinguishing Between Truancy and School Refusal

Dube and Orpinas (2009, p.87) describe school absenteeism as a "heterogeneous behavioural problem". Therefore, it is possible to distinguish between truancy and school refusal. Thambirajah *et al*. (2008, p.20) identify the following features of school refusal:

- Severe emotional distress about attending school; may include anxiety, physical symptoms or temper tantrums.
- Parents are aware of the absence; child often tries to persuade parents to allow him or her to stay at home.

- Absence of significant antisocial behaviours such as aggressive behaviours and fighting.
- During school hours, the child stays at home because it is considered a safe and secure environment.
- Child expresses willingness to do schoolwork and complies with completing work at home.

Thambirajah *et al.* (2008) also describe the characteristics of truancy, which are: the parents are not aware of the absence from school, there is no fear or anxiety about attending school and the young person shows a lack of interest or displays an unwillingness to engage with school work.

The information highlights the complexity of understanding school attendance difficulties, which stems from how school non-attendance is represented, described and labelled.

2.2.5 Difficulties with Definition

There is no definitive definition of school non-attendance. Terms such as 'truancy', 'school refusal' and 'school absenteeism' have all been used to research children's failure to attend school (Kearney, 2003; Dube and Orpinas, 2009; Torrens Armstrong *et al.*, 2011). Kearney (2003) explains that the differences in defining school non-attendance have led to a disparity about its concept, definition, assessment and treatment. Importantly, the lack of consensus in defining school non-attendance means that young people's school non-attending behaviours are categorised differently. Significantly, practitioners and researchers do not share the same opinions about addressing or classifying school absenteeism. This is currently reflected in this literature review, where the researcher has not maintained just one way of describing school non-attendance. The reason for this is because the researcher wants to highlight the number of ways that school non-attendance has been described, as well as suggest that the difficulty in defining school refusal is a contributory factor to addressing the issue.

Kearney's (2003) review of school absenteeism aims to provide an overview of the research and establish a consensus about definitions, assessments and strategies of support for young people with attendance difficulties. The article reviews the historical context of school refusal and highlights the issues between compulsory education and how non-attendance is viewed. Kearney refers to empirical research which aims to define the construct of school absenteeism, identifying that although empirical constructs have been used to understand school non-attendance, these constructs have not been supported empirically by research. The review also considers child motivated and non-child motivated non-attendance, which refers to parents withdrawing or deliberately keeping the young person off school.

Kearney (2003) does not indicate the selection criteria used for the studies reviewed. However, the review refers to a number of standardised assessments to measure and assess school refusing behaviours. Many of these assessments are rating scales which evaluate behaviour based on the perceptions of others or self-perceptions. Perceptions are different for different people; therefore caution should be applied when relying on information based upon perception. Macrae and Bodenhausen (2001, p.240) identify that a "person perception is guided by their knowledge and pre-existing beliefs about the social world". Kearney's review provides a balanced and open discussion about school refusal and the definition, identification and assessment of attendance difficulties over the years. It highlights the need for consensus with labelling non-attending behaviours.

2.2.6 Extended School Non-attendance

Pellegrini (2007, p.64) offers another description of school non-attendance, using the term 'extended school non-attendance' which highlights the following features:

- 'Extended school non-attendance' is exhibited by a small percentage of the school age population, who do not attend school for prolonged periods.
- 'Extended school non-attendance' is described as sex, race, and socio-economic non-specific.
- 'Extended school non-attendance' has been described as a heterogeneous behaviour, which does not appear specific to a particular population. It has been linked to poor academic outcomes, psychiatric disorders and poor achievement in adult life.

This description of school non-attendance provides another definition, which thus supports Kearney's (2003) perspective for the need to have consensus with regard to describing and labelling school non-attendance. However, beyond labelling the behaviour; the long-term issue is that poor attendance is an indication that there is something else of significance occurring in the young person's life which hinders them from attending school (Taylor, 2012).

2.2.7 Terminology to be Used in the Research

What is clear from the published information is that school non-attendance is a complex issue. The lack of consensus in describing and labelling the behaviour contributes to its complexity. The researcher felt that it was important to set out the term to be used in this research and to explain why this term is selected over and above the other descriptions. The term to be used in this

research is 'school refusal' because it encompasses the many descriptions for describing non-attending behaviour.

> All school refusers are simply that: they refuse for whatever reason or none, to go to school. This is the commonality among them and the starting point for dealing with their learning (Head and Jamieson, 2006, p.34).

Both Southwell (2006) and McIntyre-Batty (2008) advocate the importance of not criminalising and pathologising certain non-attending behaviours. They describe the importance of recognising SEN and its influence on school non-attendance.

Furthermore, another reason why 'school refusal' is the term that will be consistently used in this research is because the researcher feels that it describes the complex situation, where a young person feels unable to attend school for an extended period of time or may have difficulty going to school. The young person's refusal can be (as well as may not be) associated with emotional distress, which includes fear and anxiety. Parents may or may not be fully aware of the absences.

2.3   Contributory Factors to School Refusal

There are a number of reasons of why young people refuse to attend school. In this section, the researcher explores a number of causes and reasons. These reasons are associated with a number of factors such as the family, social relationships and learning experiences. However, before investigating the causes and the reasons in further depth, the introduction of this section focuses on the characteristics of young people who refuse to attend school.

McShane *et al.* (2001) identify the onset of school refusal, explaining that it occurs after periods of transition, and more particularly during significant transition periods, such as the move from primary to secondary school, with an average age of 12 years 3 months. The specific circumstances which contribute to school refusing behaviours are conflict at home, conflict with peers, academic difficulties, family separation, changing or moving home and physical illness. They also established a diagnostic profile of their sample of young people with school refusal difficulties, which suggests that 54% of the sample have anxiety disorders, while 52% have mood disorders.

> Young people with school refusal in this group mainly had anxiety and depressive disorders. Family or peer conflict and academic difficulties were the major stressors associated with the onset of the problem (McShane *et al.*, 2001, p.825).'

McShane *et al.* (2001, p.832) describe their research aims as:

> To describe the characteristics of young people presenting with school refusal
> to a child and adolescent psychiatric unit and examine the difference between
> those admitted for inpatient treatment and the rest.

Although one of the aims of their research was to examine the difference between inpatients and others, McShane *et al.* (2001) fail to clarify the population of school refusers they were investigating. The needs and characteristics of school refusers as inpatients in clinical settings may be different to those who are outpatients, as well as those who do not access clinical treatment (Thambirajah *et al.*, 2008). Therefore it is possible to question the representativeness of the sample and question whether the identified characteristics are applicable to the population of school refusers as a whole.

McShane *et al.* (2001, p.824) report that out of their 192 subjects, 54% live in dual parent families, while 39% live in single parent households. They did not account for 7% of their subjects' family circumstances. The research examines paternal and maternal illness and the results state that: "maternal psychiatric illness was reported in about half the patients (n = 102, 53%); approximately one-third (n = 66, 34%) had a paternal history of psychiatric illness". The results indicate that, in this study, there is a degree of mental health issues with the parents of school refusers. Mental health issues encompass a range of issues and McShane *et al.* do not report on how they established a picture of the parents' mental health needs. The research describes the characteristics of school refusers and suggests that parents' mental health is an important factor in the understanding of school refusal.

2.3.1 Family Factors

Familial relationships and school refusal have been a prominent theme in identifying reasons or causes for school refusing behaviour. Kearney and Silverman's (1995) review identifies the following familial sub-types: enmeshed parent-child dyads, conflictive families, detached families, isolated families and the healthy family.

The enmeshed sub-type is characterised by an over involved parent-child relationship, which is rooted in anxieties over separation from the parent for the child and, for the child, the parent. In this family sub-type, the parent(s) is overwhelmed by their feelings which then become internalised by both the parent and the child. As a result, the young person refuses to attend

school. In this type of family, the mothers are considered to be overindulgent and the fathers are considered to be passive.

The conflictive family is characterised by conflict and hostility, which is exhibited through verbal or physical interactions. In this family sub-type, conflict is a coercive process whereby the child is empowered to not attend through the family system, and the family also has inadequate boundaries which inadvertently reinforce school non-attending behaviour.

The detached family is described as being not well involved or interested in the other family members' activities. The parenting style employed is one where the parent(s) tends not to be vigilant about their child's problems. The mothers are described as being overwhelmed by the child's needs and the fathers are described as being withdrawn as well as passive. School refusal within the detached family is about the child gaining proximity to the parent because of fears of abandonment.

The isolated family is insular and has limited external social contact. Kearney and Silverman (1995) state that very little information is known about these families in relation to school refusal.

The healthy family sub-type shows a greater level of cohesion and lower levels of conflict. The child within the healthy family sub-type is described as being adaptive and able to function well in their daily life.

Although this review by Kearney and Silverman (1995) of family dynamics and school refusal highlights a number of different types of families, the descriptions of sub-types do not clearly indicate whether demographic factors (such as class, race, ethnicity and religion) or family type (such as nuclear, single or extended) have any influence. They appear not to make a distinction and therefore rely on the perceived concept of the family within a western context, the nuclear family.

2.3.2 Learning Experiences

Here, the researcher explores how learning experiences influence school refusing behaviour. The Department for Education (DfE, 2012a) identifies that poor school attendance impacts negatively on achievement and learning, which results in academic failure. The areas of focus for this section are academic achievement and disengagement.

2.3.2.1   Academic Achievements and School Refusal

Mueller *et al.* (2006) claim that the majority of young people who school refuse have difficulties in accessing the curriculum due to learning needs. Their case study explores an attendance court for an American programme to stem school refusal, which highlights that school refusal creates low academic achievement. When reviewing this research by Mueller *et al.*, it can be seen that the main source of information was gained from observing the attendance court. They used a mixed method research approach, where observations are a useful way of gaining information. The strength in observing is that it allows researchers to visually see information, but a weakness of this method of data collection is that there is a possibility that the researcher is not able to record everything. Additionally, the researcher may discriminate on what information is important or what is not.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2001) put into place special arrangements for meeting the needs of children who are challenged by the academic curriculum. This *Special Educational Needs, Code of Practice* provides schools with guidance on identifying and meeting the needs of learners with SEN.

> Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they: a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age… (DfES, 2001, p.6).

The Department for Education (DfE, 2011) Green Paper sets out the new direction for meeting the needs of learners with SEN. Southwell (2006) identifies that many young people who school refuse have unmet SENs.

Trautwein, Lüdtkte, Marsh and Nagy (2009, p.853) explain that difficulties within the classroom can influence young people's attendance patterns. Therefore, positive learning experiences and having a sense of achievement are important for their educational achievement and attendance. Learners gain the most out of the learning environment because "feeling competent in a specific area motivates and energises behaviour in that domain and is associated with favourable long-term outcomes".

Newcomb *et al.* (2002, p.172) focus on the possible causes of high school failure, which includes school dropout and truancy, stating that:

> Students who perform poorly in high school are more likely than others to drop out at both early ages... In addition to academic competence, a student's own dissatisfaction with school and lower expectations for academic achievement have also been shown to be related to dropout.

Their research data came from longitudinal research where the schools were located in areas with high crime levels. Some 808 students were invited to participate and 77% of those agreed. The participants were interviewed, covering a number of topics. The results suggest that poor academic competence and achievement influence school dropout. Evaluating their research, it can be seen that many of the participants were compensated (paid money) for taking part in the interviews, both initially and later when they were older. It is important to understand the researcher's influence on participants in any research situation. When participants are paid, this may have an influence on their responses to the interview questions, to the extent that they may answer questions in a way they believe the researcher wants.

The relationship between academic achievement and attendance is important, being framed within a learner's academic self-concept. Trautwein *et al.* (2009, p.853) report that research "indicates that a student's academic self-concept is strongly influenced by the achievements of others in his or her school". Therefore, the impact of social and academic comparisons within the learning environment can have a detrimental influence on some learners, and the consequences of this can be observed in the learner's attendance patterns and achievement.

Evaluating Trautwein *et al.*'s (2009) research, the participants were selected from the academic strand of secondary schools in Germany, all being in their final year of school and eligible to go to university. It is possible to question whether the results would be the same in the vocational strand of secondary schools. Moreover, the average age for the onset of school refusal is about 12 years and 3 months (McShane *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, it is possible to question whether the results of pre-university students are applicable to younger pupils and primary school children.

2.3.2.2 *Disengagement and School Refusal*

Kinder, Harland, Wilkin and Wakefield (1995) identify disaffection as a contributory factor to school refusing behaviour. Ravet (2007) explored teachers' and parents' perceptions of disengagement, identifying that learners can have associated feelings of hatred, anger, fear, fatigue and boredom with their learning experiences. Disaffection with their educational experiences can increase pupils' non-attendance and lead to school refusal.

There are a number of factors that contribute to disaffection and disengagement with the learning environment and educational experience. One way of understanding what these factors are is to explore factors that promote engagement, and highlighting those factors which contribute to disaffection and disengagement. Bond, Butler, Thomas, Carlin, Glover, Bowes and Patton (2007) consider that good school and social connectedness can have positive outcomes on mental health, educational achievements and future achievements in later life. Their investigation of 2,678 young people in secondary schools suggests that low school connectedness and interpersonal conflict within the early secondary phase of education predispose towards mental health problems and substance abuse during the latter years of their education. Analysis of their results further indicates that young people who were socially connected, but not connected to school, were likely to become regular smokers and users of marijuana.

Appleton, Christenson, Kim and Reschly (2006) report on the cognitive and psychological engagement of learners through the Student Engagement Instrument. Their research aims to understand academic and behavioural engagement. They conclude that understanding the cognitive and psychological engagement of the learner is important to improving the learning outcomes for young people, especially those who are at risk of educational failure. The three contexts that support young people's cognitive and psychological engagement are family, peers and school. The research participants are described as being diverse, representing an urban American school community. However, the ethnic breakdown of the participants shows that 40.4% of the participants were from an African-American background, whereas only 10.8% of the participants were from an Asian background. Reflecting on the possibility of making generalisations from the results, it would be fair to consider that the results describe African-American students' cognitive and psychological responses. They further suggest that young people's psychological frame of reference influences their engagement with their school experiences, both academically and socially.

2.3.3 Within Child or Social Factors and School Refusal
This section explores the influence of within child factors, such as self-esteem and social relationships, on school refusal.

2.3.3.1   Self-esteem and School Refusal
Research by Stroobant and Jones (2006) explores the identities of school refusers. They recruited adult females by placing an advert in a local university. They then interviewed seven participants, who reflected on their own personal experiences of school refusing. The interviews

reveal that these participants felt that specific family characteristics and personality traits attributed to their school refusing behaviour.

Exploring the personality traits of the participants, Stroobant and Jones (2006, p.6) categorise these qualities as 'the hypersensitive (girl) child' and 'the abnormal and inferior child'. Describing the former characteristics, they write that "In a strongly gendered analysis of the problem, all the women described themselves as 'shy', 'anxious', 'highly strung' or 'sensitive' children". Investigating the nature of 'the abnormal and inferior child', they report that most of the participants "described themselves as 'different' or 'abnormal' (ibid., p.15) in a negative sense at some point during their interview. Qualifying their categorisation, they refer to comments made by the participants, whereby one stated:

> I definitely thought I was different... I thought that generally [other children] looked better and they coped better and they were, sort of, better... that I think was probably something to do with me being a little bit socially isolated, 'cause I was a weirdo.

Another participant identified low self-esteem as an influencing factor in her school refusing behaviour.

Reflecting on this research, it is possible to ask whether university was the best venue for recruiting former school refusers. Evidence suggests that learners with attendance difficulties do not always achieve their academic potential to access tertiary education (DfE, 2012a). Stroobant and Jones (2006) interviewed only a small number of participants (seven), suggesting that the participants are not representative of a population of former school refusers. However, what the research highlights is the importance of self-esteem, and they report that the participants assigned low self-esteem to be a relevant factor in their childhood experiences and school refusal.

Self-esteem is an important emotional component which influences how young people are able to cope with the demands of school. Stroobant and Jones (2006) highlight the contribution of low self-esteem on school refusal, the academic curriculum and social relationships.

2.3.3.2   *Social Relationships and School Refusal*

Appleton *et al.*'s (2006) multi-dimensional construct of cognitive and psychological engagements identifies the importance of peers. Malcolm *et al.* (2003) report that peer relationships or inadequate social relationships can be a contributory factor for school refusal. Hastings, Sullivan,

McShane, Coplan, Utendale and Vyncke (2008) define the parent-child relationship as the template and model from which other social relationships stem.

Allen, Porter, McFarland, McElhaney and Marsh (2007) investigate the qualities and abilities of young people when establishing a best friend or best friends. Their research suggests that if the young person has sufficient relatedness and confidence in their own autonomy, then they will be able to foster and build relationships outside of their parent-child relationship with others. These ideas have been linked to the concept of educational resilience, where Crosnoe and Elder (2004) examine the concept of educational resilience through the contextual key relationships within the educational setting, such as friends, siblings and teachers. This perspective advocates that these relationships provide a psychological base for a young person to learn how to navigate the world outside of their family relationships. Furthermore, these relationships provide the foundation for them to develop their confidence to socially interact and meet challenges, pursue goals and cope with adversity.

Many young people who school refuse cite difficulties with peer relationships and bullying (Malcolm *et al.*, 2003). Gendron, Williams and Guerra (2011) explore the relationship between self-esteem, bullying and school climate. A self-report survey was employed to collect data over a period of one year from 7,299 children in 78 schools. The pupils were in grades 5, 8 and 11. The data was collected by computer and the results suggest that bullying behaviour was common and persistent among young people. Higher rates of bullying were discovered for males aged between 13 and 15 years old.

Gendron *et al.* (2011) identify their own limitations to the study, one of which concerns data sourcing. The data was sourced through self-reported methods and therefore the accuracy of self-report may be limited, especially when the participant is asked to describe their own behaviour. All the questions of the survey were not available, but examples of questions used to identify bullying refer to the physical nature of bullying and not the psychological nature. The researchers do not indicate whether this was explored.

2.3.4 Psychodynamic Perspectives on School Refusal

Psychodynamic perspectives on school refusal can be classified within the term 'school phobia'. The criteria used to identify school phobia are:

> (1) Severe difficulty attending school (resulting in 'prolonged absence'), (2) severe emotional upset (e.g., fear, somatic complaints, 'misery'), (3) staying at

home with parental knowledge, and (4) absence of antisocial behaviour (e.g., 'stealing, lying, wandering, destructiveness and sexual misbehaviour') (Kearney, Eisen and Silverman, 1995. p.68).

School phobia includes the concepts of separation anxiety, dependency and school avoidance. Kearney *et al.* (1995) have reflected on these ideas and purport that the emotional upset that has been attributed to separation anxiety can be considered to contribute to how school phobia is viewed differently from school refusal. They refer to methodological problems with research carried out and, in so doing, question whether school phobia is a phobia. The concept of school phobia was established when school absenteeism was considered to be a clinical behaviour, which is an internalising disorder of childhood and adolescence.

There are many ways to describe school non-attendance, as in this literature review. It demonstrates that there is a lot of divergence regarding the definition and classification of school non-attendance. The different ways in which school non-attendance can be described and viewed influence the identification and support established to address the behaviour.

2.4   Influential Educational Policy and Guidance on School Attendance

The Department for Education recently released a press notice redefining and reclassifying persistent absence, which stated that:

> A child is defined as persistently absent if they miss 15 per cent or more of school time. Previously, children who missed 20 per cent of school were considered persistent absentees (DfE, 2012b).

The government lowered the threshold because they wanted to encourage schools to initiate early intervention programmes to address persistent absence. Prior to the government's initiative to address school refusal before the difficulties become entrenched, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2001) outlined its intentions for school improvement, inclusion and educational development, funded by the Standard Fund 2002-2003 and the Vulnerable Children's Grant introduced in April 2003. These funding structures enabled Local Authorities (LAs) to provide secure and improved access to education for vulnerable children. The identified targeted groups were:

- Looked-after children;
- children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs;
- gypsy/traveller children;

- young carers;

- teenage parents;

- young offenders; and

- school refusers.

The aim of the fund was to reduce the number of children who were not attending mainstream or special schools. The Vulnerable Children's Grant enabled LAs to use the fund to meet the needs of vulnerable children in a flexible manner, which facilitated a process which could be responsive to local circumstances and priorities.

2.5   Educational Policy and Guidance

One of the most recent influential polices from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2004c) was 'The Children Act' which preceded the publication of the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters in School' (DfES, 2005). 'Every Child Matters' promoted multi-disciplinary approaches to working and outlined integrated services. This document defined the key aspects regarding professional approaches to working with children and families. The key features of professional working practices were defined as being through integrated services, easy and effective communication and multi-disciplinary working.

Griggs, Payne and Bhabra (2006) reviewed the Department for Education and Skills' (2002) targets and non-statutory guidance (2004), which aimed to identify and maintain contact with children missing, or going missing, from education, and which suggested that by 2005 LAs should have systems in place to identify and track children missing education. They conclude that:

> There is evidence of much progress in stabling the systems and procedures
> that will enable Local Authorities to identify and maintain contact with children
> missing or at risk of going missing from education (Griggs *et al.*, 2006, p.7).

LAs were given a range powers to address persistent school absence, such as parenting contacts, parenting orders and penalty notices through the Education Act 1996. These measures all aim to promote better school attendance and behaviour.

2.6   Eliciting Professional Views

Over the years, there have been a number of studies which have explored the perspectives of professionals (Wall and Prywansky, 1985; Guttmann, 1982). Torrens Armstrong *et al.* (2011) explores the perceptions of school personnel on school refusal. Their findings suggest that health

professionals have a set image of the school refusing young person, being that of a sick pupil whose refusal to attend school is related to illness. They state that health professionals struggle to differentiate between the various reasons for school refusal and, therefore, they maintain, the 'sick pupil' image. Their findings also suggest that health professionals can play an integral role in screening and supporting the attendance of school refusers. The health professionals' perceptions of school refusal have implications for the young person, whereby their value judgements can influence and reinforce negative stereotypes. Willis (1978) and Pascal and Robinson Kurpius (2012) confirm this view.

Torrens Armstrong *et al.* (2011) claim that they were interested in the views of school personnel, but their findings focused on the emerging themes from the health professionals' interviews. Despite having access to a range of school personnel, they focused on the voice of just one professional group. Therefore, it is possible to consider that their findings are a reflection of health professionals' opinions and not those of general school personnel.

Guttmann (1982) investigated the causal attribution of children, teachers and parents in relation to problematic non-academic behaviour, highlighting that teachers attributed pupils' non-academic problematic behaviours to the following: the need for attention, physiological needs such as managing stress or calming down, psychological problems, poor examples set at home, social status and gaining prominence with their peers. In addition to the causes listed above, the teachers also identified the parents' level of education as a contributing factor to non-academic problematic behaviours. Guttmann concludes that "teachers project the responsibility for behavioural problems onto the child and away from themselves" (1982, p.18).

Guttmann (1982) yields interesting results and provides a great insight into pupils', teachers' and parents' causal attributions to non-academic problematic behaviours. Nevertheless, when taking these results as a valid or reliable contribution to such causal attributions, it is important to review the quality of the research. Guttmann states that 28 teachers participated, but no differentiation was made regarding the gender of the teachers. In Great Britain, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2004a) recorded that, between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003, the teacher flow into maintained nursery and primary schools in England was just 230 men out of a total of 3,830. Paton (2010) reports that male teachers make up 12% of the primary school workforce and indicates that there are no male teachers in a quarter of primary schools in the UK.

Considering these figures carefully, it is important to acknowledge that research suggests that male and female teachers have different self-perceptions about what they bring to the learning environment. Krips, Lehtsaar and Kukemlk (2011) researched male and female teachers' self-perceptions. Their research reveals that male teachers consider themselves to be more assertive, stronger and able to provide objective feedback, whereas female teachers rank themselves as having greater emotional skills and being more willing to maintain good friendly relations.

If the study's identification of these self-perception characteristics are considered further and are taken to demonstrate that male and female teachers have different self-perceptions, then there is the possibility that male and female teachers may perceive the learning environment differently. Guttmann (1982) used only female teachers' opinions. Therefore, caution should be paid to the findings, as they cannot be considered to be representative of teachers in general.

2.7   Theoretical Underpinnings

This research is an exploratory and descriptive study, characterised by an inductive reasoning approach. Therefore, there is no specific underlying theory which underpins this research into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal. Grounded theory is used as an analytical technique and through this method the theory emerges from the data. Nevertheless, the researcher is also interested in how people establish their views and perspectives, and even though this is not being researched in this study it will help define how educational professionals establish their views on school refusal. Social psychology offers a contribution to highlighting how views and perspectives are formed. The two theories that provide a useful starting point are attribution theory and social cognition.

Attribution theory or attributional theories aim to understand how individuals explain events and explore how these explanations have a psychological impact on the individual and their behaviour. They can be defined as:

> …(scientific) theories about naive theories, that is, they are metatheories;
> attribution theories are not (or only indirectly) concerned with the actual causes
> of behaviour but they focus on the perceived causes of behaviour (Försterling,
> 2001, p.4).

Criticism has been levied at attribution(al) theory regarding how it is defined. Malle (2008) acknowledges that attribution(al) theory is concerned with people's perceptions and their interactions, which develop through a conceptual framework and define behaviour. The framework which binds the ideas together has been called naïve, lay, common sense or folk

psychology. "Even though this framework is often labeled [sic] a theory there has been considerable debate over the adequacy of this term" (Malle, 2008, p.164). Attribution(al) theory provides a perspective on how educational professionals form their views and perspectives on school refusal.

Similar to attribution(al) theory, social cognition does not rely on any one theory. It shares the basic principle of trying to understand the factors that allow people to make sense of others and themselves within a social framework which can be considered to be a social schema. Social schema represents the cognitive structures that frame an individual's general knowledge about a concept, event or action. Fiske and Taylor (1991, p.19) define social cognition as:

> The study of... how people make sense of other people and themselves. It focuses on the people's everyday understanding both as the phenomenon of interest and as a basis for theory about people's everyday understanding. Thus, it concerns both how people think about the social world and how they think they think about the social world.

Social cognition researchers have always advocated that it is not how the stimulus provokes or influences our behaviour, but how our perception of the stimulus prompts our behaviour. Bless, Fiedler and Strack (2004, p.6) advocate that "we mentally construct and represent reality", and therefore our responses are dependent on the context in which the stimulus occurs. Associated with this idea is the view that a response to a given stimulus is based on the interpretation made by the individual. The interpretation is drawn from the context and consideration is paid to prior social knowledge. Prior social knowledge can be seen as the mediator to defining how an individual processes a particular stimulus, which in turn shapes the individual's subjective reality.

Thinking about educational professionals' views on school refusal from a social cognition perspective, these can be shaped by prior social knowledge, which in turn shapes the subjective reality and experience.

The theory which helps shape the researcher's thinking about how educational professionals form their opinions on school refusal is social cognition. This position has been taken because the researcher believes that individuals aim to make sense of the world through some form of exploration. Additionally, the researcher considers that individuals' responses to any given situation are mediated by cognition and are framed within prior learnt knowledge and experiences. Therefore, our cognitive processes influence perceptions and shape behavioural

responses, which in turn allow the individual to make social judgements and categorise information.

Macrae and Bodenhausen (2001, p.240) have explored 'person perception' in relation to stereotypical thinking. Although this has not been discussed in depth within this research, they identify that "person perception is guided by their knowledge and pre-existing beliefs about the social world". However, the researcher is mindful that as an inductive inquiry, the theory underpinning educational professionals' views on school refusal will emerge from the data.

2.8   Intervention Approaches to School Refusal

The study by Nutall and Woods (2013) into school refusal highlights that research into school refusal has failed to find conclusive evidence in favour of any particular intervention or approach. Their aim was to explore individual cases of interventions based on the perspectives of the young person, the school staff and their parents. The findings suggest that an ecological model is the most effective and successful intervention for addressing school refusal. They identify that successful interventions are based on integrated supportive services, believing that:

> "...successful intervention extended beyond child factors to interacting contextual and family variables significant to the effectiveness of intervention. Developing positive relationships between home and school, and meeting the needs of the families, appeared to be essential in supporting the young people's success, and in both cases there was a significant role for professionals and systems" (Nutall and Woods, 2013, p.359).

Overall, their research demonstrates the importance of everyone working together to address school refusal.

Critically evaluating their research, it is possible to question whether the results from a case study can be applied to the general population of school refusers. In addition, the case studies demonstrate the short-term impact of their interventions. Therefore, it is difficult to establish from the data any long-term impact of the interventions on the young person's attendance throughout their education.

Nutall and Woods (2013) highlight that there are a limited number of research studies evaluating the effectiveness of interventions for school refusers. One contributory factor is the difficulty of definition. The literature review highlights that there is very little consensus about defining school non-attendance. Such a lack of consensus can influence the range of interventions made

available to young people struggling with their attendance and with how the interventions are implemented. Having a shared view about understanding school non-attendance will enable researchers, professionals and parents to have a greater understanding of the behaviour and the strategies of support.

2.9   Gaps in the Literature Review

The literature review demonstrates that research into school refusal focuses on defining school non-attendance. It also demonstrates that researchers have tried to classify school non-attendance. Moreover, researchers have explored and discovered a number of reasons as well as causes for school non-attendance. The literature review identifies that there are a number of studies which explore teachers' perspectives on a range of topics. However, it also identifies that there are very few studies which investigate educational professionals' views on school refusal.

Therefore, the distinct contribution of this literature review is that it identifies that there are a limited number of research publications which have investigated teachers' perspectives on school refusal or any other educational professionals' views on school refusal.

2.10   Statement of Research Questions

The main objective of this research is to understand and examine the different views and perspectives of educational professionals on school refusal. The underlying research question is "What are educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal?". The research participants work in schools and LAs and the aim is to represent the team around the child.

The questions this research is interested in are as follows:

- How do educational professionals define school refusal/extended school non-attendance?
- Are there any differences in their views which can be linked to professional backgrounds or roles?
- What are the causes and reasons educational professionals identify as the reason for school refusing?
- Are there any policies or systems in place to support educational professionals' work with school refusers?
- Do educational professionals refer to any theoretical positions to understand or define their professional approaches or strategies?

- How well do educational professionals work together to address school refusal/extended school non-attendance?

- What role do EPs play in addressing school refusal/extended school non-attendance?

2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has defined school refusal and explored the causes and reasons of school refusing behaviours. Influential educational policies and guidance on school attendance have been discussed and the theoretical underpinnings of the research explored.

The following chapters of this thesis include the methodology (Chapter 3), the findings and discussion (Chapter 4), and the conclusion and summary (Chapter 5).

The next chapter provides a detailed account of the research and analytical process.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Chapter

The previous chapter outlined, analysed and reviewed the literature contributing to the research into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal. A definition of school refusal was established and the research questions for consideration were presented.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the methodology (Section 3.2), with an outline of the context and location of the study in Section 3.3. The research paradigm and epistemological position is located in Section 3.5. Ethical considerations are discussed in Section 3.10 and a detailed description of the analytical process is found in Section 3.14.

To commence, Section 3.2 introduces the researcher's understanding of what research is. This leads to the context and location of the study, as well as the research paradigm and epistemological position; which sets out the researcher's position. The issues of reliability and validity are explored with reference to the quality indicators used within qualitative research. The process and methods used from data collection to the analysis of the data are described in detail. A summary closes the chapter in section 3.15.

3.2 Introduction

Understanding the nature of research can be seen as the key which unlocks a gateway to greater knowledge about the world we live in or the world around us. There are many different perspectives about what research is and how it can be conducted. Brown and Dowling (2006, p.7) describe research as "an enquiry which seeks to make known something about a field of practice or activity which is currently unknown to the researcher". Sarantakos (2005) highlights the diversity of research which derive from the focus, method of enquiry, purpose and the research's underlying paradigm, while Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003, p.3) explores the ideas of research in terms of understanding an individual's need to make sense of "their environment and to understand the nature of the phenomena". Robson (2002) focuses on real world enquiry, characterised by distinct features such as solving problems.

The various definitions of research present a variety of opinions on what research is. Having described these different definitions, personal thoughts suggest that research is an investigation into an area, idea or topic; with the purpose of finding out new or more information. The investigation can be shaped by a number of things, such as the area to be investigated, the time

allocated to the investigation, the number of participants and the methods used to gather and analyse the data, as well as the underlying paradigm which provides the framework and structure of the research.

The research approach to data analysis is taken from grounded theory. In this research, grounded theory is used as an analytical technique. Therefore, attention will be granted to describing this approach in detail. Notwithstanding this, it is also important to acknowledge that the step-by-step process of data analysis employed in this research is an amended version of grounded theory, taken from Corbin and Strauss (2008). Hence, particular attention will be paid to describing the actual processes from data collection and transcription through to analysis of the data. This provides clarity and ensures that any divergence from the original approach is apparent, while providing supporting examples to assist with understanding the data and its analysis. Furthermore, consideration will be given to describing the role of the researcher, reflexivity and exploring ethical issues.

3.3   Context and Location of the Study

This research was developed from personal experiences of working with young people who were struggling with their school attendance. Linking these individual cases into the wider context of the school, LA and national context, it is important to acknowledge that successive governments have placed significant focus and priority on raising achievement, attendance and inclusion. The DfES (2001) outlined and defined the management of school improvement and inclusion, as well as identified specific areas pertaining to educational development, through the provision of the Standard Fund (in 2002-2003) and the Vulnerable Children Grant (in 2003). These policies enabled schools and local authorities to place a targeted focus on meeting the needs of specific learners through placing key personnel (such as Attendance Officers and EWOs), so as to play a contributory role to the team around the child within a multi-disciplinary and integrated framework (DfES, 2004a).

The initial premise behind the research was to investigate the views of twelve educational professionals working at various levels within schools and local authorities. The rationale behind the sample size was that it aimed to reflect and represent a real world model of working within a multi-disciplinary framework and constitute the professionals who would contribute to the team around the child within two locality or multi-disciplinary teams within education. The twelve research participants consisted of three EWOs, a Deputy Head Teacher (DHT), an Assistant Head Teacher (AHT), a Head Teacher (HT), two EPs, a Senior Educational Psychologist (SEP),

a Senior Outreach Worker (SOW), a Learning Support Assistant and a Local Authority Specialist Team Manager (SM). Some participants worked within local authorities within the London region, while others worked within a specialist state school for behaviour and an independent specialist provider located in Surrey.

3.4   Influential Theories

This research takes an inductive approach. Therefore, the researcher acknowledges that there is not an underlying theory to educational professionals' views on school refusal at this point in the research. However, acknowledgement needs to be paid to the psychological theories that have in some ways influenced the research journey. In addition to reviewing these theories, the researcher acknowledges the role of the critical realist position she has taken in terms of its influence and relevance to the study into educational professionals' views on school refusal.

One of the initial starting points for the researcher was to establish and understand whether any theory stood out when aiming to gain a greater understanding of school refusal. Initially, the researcher's personal experiences of working with young people refusing to attend school suggested that these young people had anxieties about being away from their caregivers. Therefore, at the beginning of the research, the researcher felt that attachment theory would be a useful starting theory for understanding school refusal.

The relevance of attachment theory has been documented in research over the years, especially in terms of separation anxiety and school refusal (Kearney and Silverman, 1995; Evans, 2001; McShane *et al.*, 2001). The phases of research into school refusal highlight that school refusal initially was perceived as a phobia, then later perceived as being a result of separation anxiety. Current research into school refusal identifies that school refusing behaviours have multi-layered reasons, which may involve anxiety. However, the anxiety that may be present in the behaviour may not be the result of proximity needs to a caregiver, but anxiety about a number of reasons such as social relationships and academic difficulties.

As previously mentioned, this research takes an inductive approach. However, the ultimate aim of the research is to allow the theory to emerge from the data. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the relevance of the researcher's epistemological position. The position taken by the researcher is that of the 'critical realist', which is defined in sections 3.5.1 and 3.6. The relevance of critical realism to this research is that it advocates that there is an objective reality of social phenomena which has an objective existence. This objective existence is separate from the

internal subjective reality of the social phenomena. Therefore, the critical realist position enables the researcher to explore both realities, in terms of the internal subjective reality of the educational professionals' views on school refusal and the external reality of school refusal in education.

3.5   Research Paradigm and Epistemological Position

Mertens (2010, p.7) describes research paradigms as "a way of looking at the world", explaining that each research paradigm consists of philosophical assumptions that shape and direct the thought processes and direction of the research. Historically, research was based on "what researchers experienced through their senses and not what they could logically create through their mind" (Sarantakos, 2005, p.4). The concept of investigating knowledge can be seen as a complex spectrum of views, in which the investigation of acquired knowledge can be placed on a continuum; from scientific approaches to human subjectivity. The continuum identifies the polarity of positivism and relativism, where positivism advocates that naturalistic sciences can be applied to social realities and incorporates the ideas of objectivism. At the other end of the continuum, relativism maintains the view that "structures do underpin social events and discourses, but... must be expressed in theoretical terms" (Walliman, 2006, p.15). Interpretivism falls within the continuum and importance is given to the interpretations and meanings which are assigned to social actions. Constructionism, as a paradigm, refers to social phenomena as a constant state of change, which is connected to social interactions. The research into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal falls within the continuum between objectivism and relativism. The researcher is interested in how educational professionals interpret and understand social actions - in the case of this research, the act of school refusal.

3.5.1 Realism

Realism advocates the importance of scientific practices to understanding the social world. This paradigm purports that natural and social sciences can share the same approaches to data collection, while maintaining the view that there is an external reality which is different and separate from how the social world perceives it. Drawing attention to empirical realism, this approach advocates that reality can be understood and there is a correspondence between reality and how reality is described.

Critical realism stems from a belief in the reality of a natural order. Critical realists suggest that understanding the structures behind events or situations enable the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the events. The critical realist epistemology advocates that structures may not

be apparent or observable, as they can only be identified through the theoretical and practical rigours of social science research techniques. In light of this perspective, critical realists acknowledge that there is a distinction between how researchers approach and define the outcomes of research.

Bhaskar (1989, p.180) reflected on "what is critical realism?", identifying and contextualising the framework in which critical realism is conceived. The objective of critical realism is to "aid and empower the sciences, and especially the human sciences, in so far as these illuminate and inform projects of human self-emancipation". Through aiding the empowerment of human sciences, critical realism is considered to have "a multi-layered and stratified ontology" (Somekh and Lewin, 2011, p.203). Somekh and Lewin (ibid.) identify three overlapping domains:

- The empirical: aspect of reality that can be experienced and observed directly or indirectly; these experiences constitute part of the 'events', which we can identify as the domain of
- The actual: aspects of reality that occur, but may not necessarily be experienced; these are in turn the outcomes of the domain of
- The real: 'deep' structures and mechanisms or tendencies that generate phenomena.

The three components of critical realism highlight the potential nature of this approach, which is to describe social phenomena and demonstrate the hierarchical structures that exist within a phenomenon. Baskar (1989, p.3) comments that critical realism "provides a set of perspectives on society (and nature) and how to understand them". This research into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal aims to present the reality of school refusal. The reality can be either experienced or observed. The research also aims to understand the actual experience of school refusal, which may not be experienced by the educational professionals but is gained through the analytical process. Hence, the research position is extremely important to understanding the key influences on the research.

3.6   Current Research Position

The research position taken by the researcher to investigate educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal is that of the critical realist. Robson (2002, p.41) explains that critical realism offers a "third way between positivism and relativism", but critical realism "can be seen as a reconciliatory approach" (Walliman, 2006, p.20). In light of this stance, the researcher approached the investigation into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal by using qualitative methodology. Qualitative methodology places emphasis on hearing

the voices and experiences of the participants, through the use of various methods and analytical techniques.

> Qualitative researchers tend to be concerned with meaning. That is, they are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events... Qualitative researchers tend to be interested in the meanings attributed to events by the research participants (Willig, 2008, p.8).

3.6.1 Defining Theory

There are many theoretical perspectives that can be taken into consideration when aiming to examine and understand educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal. However, this research has taken an explorative stance because there is no major theory underlying the proposed research. Bryman (2004) suggests that the link between theory and research may not always be straightforward and distinguishes between the ideas of theory in terms of reflecting on how theory is defined and how information is collected.

> [A] 'theory' can mean very different things to different people. In very general terms it is an explanation of what is going on in the situation, phenomenon or whatever that we are investigating (Robson, 2002, p.10).

Bryman (2004, p.5) advocates that there are different levels of theories. Grand theories tend to be more abstract and operate on a general level, while theories of the middle range "typically focus much more on theories with a higher level of abstraction".

It is possible to view theories in two ways. First, as something that guide or influence how information is researched or as something that occurs once the information has been collected and analysed. Deductive theories are linked to hypothesis testing and can influence how information is collected, while an inductive approach can draw the theory out of the research, ensuring that the theory becomes the ultimate outcome or product from the research. Researchers such as Strauss and Corbin (1997), Charmaz (2006) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) demonstrate how the inductive process is used through the use of grounded theory.

This research is an exploratory and descriptive study which is characterised by an inductive reasoning approach, whereby grounded theory is used as an analytical technique to ensure that conceptual schemes arise from the data through a systematic process of data analysis. Reflexivity is embedded into the researcher's approach, because personal reflections are acknowledged by the researcher, in terms of the presence they have with regard to influencing

the research process. Reflexivity is also embedded in the data analysis, because the researcher was reflective about the interpretations made. These qualities adhere to the critical realist paradigm because the researcher worked within an interpretative framework; in terms of axiology, ontology and epistemology.

3.7   Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was born out of the discipline of sociology by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1978, 1992; Strauss, 1987). They considered the theories that influenced sociological research at that time were not sufficiently robust to enable collected data to move towards building new theories. The principle underpinning grounded theory from its conception is that information can emerge from data which allows for the "development of new, contextualized theories" (Willig, 2008, p.34). In 1967, Glaser and Strauss published their pivotal work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, which has evolved since its first publication. Subsequent editions have addressed some of the criticism heralded at qualitative research in terms of being anecdotal, non-scientific and unsystematic. Since first publishing their book, Glaser and Strauss have ceased their collaboration and they now advocate different ways in which grounded theory can be utilised.

Willig (2008) identifies the basic foundations of grounded theory and acknowledges that there are various versions. However, the building blocks of grounded theory involve "the progressive identification and integration of categories of meaning from data. Grounded theory is both the process of category identification and integration (as method) and its product (as theory)" (Willig, 2008, p.34).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that grounded theory allows research to be free from preconceived ideas, as the process allows the theory to emerge from the data. Consequently:

> [Grounded theory] analysis is the interplay between research and data. It is both science and art. It is science in the sense of maintaining a certain degree of rigor and by grounding analysis in data. Creativity manifests itself in the ability of researchers to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons and extract an innovative, integrated realistic scheme from masses of unorganised raw data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.13).

The reason grounded theory was selected as an analytical tool is because it provides a systematic approach to analysing qualitative data. This systematic process provides rigour and

flexibility, which ensures that anecdotal and impressionist information does not contribute to the results of the research (Thornberg and Chamaz, 2011).

3.7.1 Rationale for Methodology

This research stemmed from personal experience. One of the influences and the idea behind the research was to make sense of an event or a situation from the perspective of the participants.

> Qualitative researchers study people in their own territory, within naturally occurring settings (such as the home, schools, hospital, the street). These are 'open systems' where conditions continuously develop and interact with one another to give rise to a process of ongoing change (Willig, 2008. p.9).

It was felt that interviews would be better suited than methods such as participant observation or the review of documents to capture the richness of the opinions, experiences and attitudes of the participants. A particular benefit of conducting interviews in this study was that they would allow the researcher to ask follow up questions to clarify the expressed opinions and thereby enable the researcher to capture the nuances of the participants' views. In justifying the use of grounded theory as an analytical tool, it is important to state that this research takes an exploratory and descriptive stance within an inductive approach. This approach is underpinned by the research paradigm. Grounded theory was used because it provides "an explanatory framework with which to understand the phenomenon under investigation" (Willig, 2008, p.35).

To reiterate, this research used an amended version of grounded theory or what is considered to be "the abbreviated version" of grounded theory (Willig, 2008, p.38). The primary reason why this research used an 'abbreviated version' is because the researcher collected data during a set period of time. The timeframe was dictated by the researcher's access to educational professionals within their work settings. At the time, the researcher was working as a locum EP within a number of settings (i.e. local authorities and an independent school). These assignments were only for limited periods of time. Therefore, accessing these professionals within the LA settings and the school would have been restricted after the assignments had ceased. The researcher thus took the opportunity to make use of the numbers of educational professionals available within the settings. To reiterate, the reason why the abbreviated version of grounded theory was used was because the majority of the participants were selected from one school and the interviews were held on just one day. The researcher did not have significant periods of time to fully analyse one interview before commencing another. Where necessary, permission was sought and granted by educational professionals who were in a position of authority to agree that the participants could participate.

Reflecting on what the 'abbreviated version' of grounded theory means and its implications for this research, it is important to draw the reader's attention to Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.ix) when they write:

> The Basics of Qualitative Research, Third Edition, is not a recipe for doing qualitative research and I would be offended if it is viewed as such. Rather, it presents a set of analytic techniques that can be used to make sense out of masses of qualitative data. Researchers are encouraged to use the procedures in their own way.

The researcher is confident that the data analysis has drawn upon the analytical techniques that grounded theory has to offer. This has been achieved by taking a flexible and rigorous approach to the analysis (see Section 3.14 and Appendix 5).

3.8   The Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is a significant component to any piece of research and should not only be seen in terms of the research design, paradigm and methods employed in collecting and analysing the data, but also with regard to the influences that shape the researcher's pre-existing knowledge. Mertens (2010, p.252) refers to Anderson's (1993) investigation into the role of the researcher when investigating race and ethnicity, whereby researchers:

> …should examine self-consciously the influence of institutional racism and the way it shapes the formulation and development of their research, rather than assume a color-blind stance (Mertens, 2010, p.252).

Here, Mertens highlights the importance of understanding the characteristics we bring to each situation. The quote may be aimed at race and ethnicity research, but it can also be referred to in a broader sense when considering the role of researchers in general. The sentiments of the quote help reaffirm that researchers should be mindful of what they bring to their research and they should actively examine their own value judgements, as well as their status, when conducting investigations.

Reflecting on the role of the researcher further, attention can be drawn to the participants' perspectives, particularly with regard to how the researcher is perceived by the participants. Power relationships or status factors can influence the type and amount of information collected. In the case of this research, some of the participants were known to the researcher, while others were not. However, one of the defining features of the researcher's role in relation to this

research was the researcher's professional role as an EP. Many of the participants had previously worked with EPs in their professional careers. This could have had some influence on the type of interactions established during the interviews. Most importantly, it could have influenced the amount of data collected. The majority of the participants were known to the researcher because they were colleagues working in a multi-disciplinary framework. This allowed for a rapport to be easily established during the interviews. Mertens (2010) suggests that there can be positives and negatives to interviewing individuals who are friends or strangers.

The researcher was mindful of the generosity that the participants provided with regard to their time, willingness to engage with the interviews and in sharing their opinions. The idea of reciprocity should also be considered. Mertens (2010, p.247) describes reciprocity in terms of the role of the researcher "feeling that they want to give something back to the participant during the interview process". Ultimately, researchers do not want to exploit or harm their participants, but may feel the desire to offer something to the participants for their valuable contribution. In terms of this research, the researcher showed appreciation by saying 'thank you' to the participants at the end of the interview.

This research is independent from any LA, school or organisational expectations, as the researcher worked within a number of organisations and the participants were informed about this. This provided the participants with the opportunity to each reflect and share their opinions in a way that they felt was most appropriate, knowing that the research was not linked to any particular organisation.

3.8.1 The Need for Reflexivity

Personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity are important features in qualitative research, especially when exploring the assumptions that have been made during the research.

> Reflexivity is important in qualitative research because it encourages us to foreground, and reflect upon, the ways in which the person of the researcher is implicated in the research and its findings (Willig, 2008, p.18).

It is hoped that both personal and epistemological reflexivity will ensure that transparency can be observed in this research, so that it will resonate with educational professionals who work with vulnerable and marginalised young people.

Referring to personal reflexivity, it is extremely important to be aware of the values and judgements which the researcher brings to the research, by reflecting upon what shapes these values and judgements. The influencing factors are gender, race and class; plus other life experiences. However, taking a personal approach and identifying the main influencing factor that shapes the opinions of this researcher, it can be said that it is the researcher's experience of working with educational professionals whose views are not particularly positive towards young people with attendance difficulties and their families.

Being mindful of this experience, the researcher used a research diary (see Appendix 10) throughout the analysis and entire process of the research. This diary proved to be a useful tool over the period of the research and it supported the reflexivity of the research (Creswell, 2003), because it enabled the researcher to be aware of the decision-making processes during the research and the data analysis (Walliman, 2006).

3.9   Sampling Framework

The sampling framework denotes how researchers identify their potential participants, being influenced by the paradigm which underpins the research. In this research, the defining characteristics for the sample were that the participants needed to work in education and have direct experience of working with young people. The roles these educational professionals held would be roles that are considered to be typically observed within an educational multi-disciplinary framework or a team around the child. Some participants were selected because of their role and the nature of how they worked with young people within a LA or a school setting.

A 'convenience sampling' technique was used for this research. The majority of the participants worked in one school. The researcher identified potential participants by approaching individuals in the school's staffroom. The participants were ultimately selected primarily by their availability on that particular day, although their designated role within the school played a key factor. There are limitations to this sampling technique, such as not having a diverse number of participants from a range of settings. The lack of diversity in terms of work settings may influence the ideas generated by the participants, which is a limitation of this research.

All participants were provided with a written document (see Appendix 2) outlining the research. They were informed that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, even after providing their signed consent. Details of the educational professionals who engaged in the semi-structured interviews are presented in Table 3.1.

Interview Number	Role of the Educational Professional
1	Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) Specialist Provision for Autism
2	Educational Psychologist (EP 1) Local Authority
3	Senior Educational Psychologist (SEP) Local Authority
4	Manager of a Local Authority Specialist Teaching Team (SM) Local Authority
5	Educational Welfare Officer (EWO 1) Local Authority
6	Educational Welfare Officer (EWO 2) Local Authority
7	Assistant Head Teacher (AHT) Pupil Referral Unit
8	Senior Outreach Worker (SOW) Pupil Referral Unit
9	Learning Support Assistant (LSA) Pupil Referral Unit
10	Head Teacher (HT) Pupil Referral Unit
11	Educational Welfare Officer (EWO 3) Local Authority
12	Educational Psychologist (EP 2) Local Authority

Table 3.1: Roles of the Participants in the Semi-structured Interviews

All participants had a number of years experience working in education. The maximum number of years was thirty and the lowest number was two. Only two of the twelve participants were male. Four of the participants were from an African-Caribbean heritage, one was from an Asian origin and one was from a white European (Polish) ethnic background. The other participants were all from a white UK background. The ethnic diversity reflected in the sample of participants is a reflection of the communities and demographics within Inner London.

Table 3.1 demonstrates that participants work either for LAs or specialist schools catering for children with social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) or autism. Reflecting on the

representativeness of the sample, Table 3.1 highlights that the education based school professionals (EBSPs) work within specialist provisions. Therefore, it is possible to question the representativeness of the participants' views, in terms of their work setting and whether the views of educational professionals working in specialist provisions can be considered to be the same as educational professionals working in mainstream educational establishments. However, it is important to acknowledge that the EBSPs have a variety of experiences within education and that the senior teachers have all worked in a number of mainstream educational establishments prior to commencing their roles in specialist provision. One of the participants has experience of working in all phases of education, prior to working in their current role as a DHT.

Reflecting further on the representativeness of the EBSPs, the researcher's aim was to identify a number of educational professionals who have different roles in education and within the school setting. The research into educational professionals' views into school refusal is a small-scale qualitative study and therefore the participants are not representative of the general population of educational professionals as a whole. However, the researcher strived to ensure that the quality markers for qualitative research were achieved in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Mertens, 2010).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The research has taken into consideration the University of East London's (UEL) ethical guidelines for conducting research (see Appendix 1). It was also conducted within the ethical principles set out by the British Psychological Society's *Ethics and Code of Conduct* (BPS, 2006). The participants were given information about the topic of investigation and they were asked to provide their signed consent based on the information provided (see Appendix 2). The participants were informed that they would not be required to engage in any activity that would cause or present any harm to them. In addition to these principles, the participants were informed that they were free to withdraw their consent from the research at any given time. They were debriefed after their interview and informed that they would have full access to the research when it had been completed. It is important to state that deception was not used at any stage of the research.

Confidentially was assured to each participant with regard to their identity, the identity of their place of work and protecting the information collected. All electronic data would be stored on an encrypted memory stick which is password protected. Assurances were given that all personal information from the interviews would be deleted on completion of the research.

3.11 Semi-Structured Interviews

The typology used to differentiate between the various forms of interviews is structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Flick, 2006). This research used a semi-structured interview format, as it provided predetermined open questions. This allowed for the possibility of flexibility in terms of the order of questions. There are both disadvantages and advantages to this method of inquiry. However, one key advantage is that face-to-face interviews offer a wealth of information that other methods of inquiry cannot provide (Robson, 2002); for example, non-verbal cues that are communicated during an interview.

In the case of this research, the interview questions were to steer the interview direction, so that the data would provide information on educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal. Willig (2008, p.25) explains that "interviewers should not abuse the informal ambience of the interview to encourage the interviewee to reveal more than they may feel comfortable with after the event". The researcher took this opinion onboard, because many of the participants were not strangers to the researcher, so there was a pre-existing relationship outside of the interview process. Due to the researcher's training as an EP with additional skills in counselling techniques, it was important that the researcher employed these skills to ensure that all participants were comfortable with their experience, both during and after the interview.

The interviews took place at the participants' workplaces, with the exception of two interviews. The participants were asked for their availability and the interviews were scheduled around the participants' schedules. Some of the participants talked at length and some struggled to think of answers to some of the questions. All participants were asked to allocate between 30 to 60 minutes for the interviews. One interview went beyond 60 minutes, while the rest of the interviews were completed within 60 minutes (see Appendix 3 for a list of the interview questions).

The questions for the semi-structured interviews were derived from the researcher's initial reflections on school refusal. These initial thoughts and questions were set out in section 1.4. Further research into the topic of school refusal, school absenteeism and truancy enabled the researcher to generate other questions based on the literature pertaining to school non-attendance.

In the list of interview questions, the researcher was aware that there is a closed question in the list of semi-structured questions. The reason for this was because the researcher was mindful

that some participants may not be fully aware about what schools are doing to address school refusal. Therefore, the question provided participants with the opportunity to answer 'yes' or 'no'. Then, if further clarification was required, the researcher could explore the response with the participant. Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p.154) state that "closed questions can also play a role in controlling the interview process".

3.12 Reliability and Validity

The quality indicators in qualitative research are different from the indicators for quantitative research. There are perceived and established criteria in qualitative research which parallel the criteria for quantitative research. These are credibility which is equal to internal validity, transferability which equates to external validity, dependability which is equivalent to reliability and conformability which equates to objectivity (Mertens, 2010).

To establish the quality indicators in this research, focus will be placed on discussing areas such as credibility, transferability and conformability. These quality indicators have an important influence on the value of the findings and the conclusion.

Qualitative methodologies are concerned with validity, as the method of data collection aims to ensure that the participants are given the opportunity to freely express themselves. In this research, the participants were provided with some structure through the questions asked of them. Otherwise, they were free to express themselves without restriction. This was demonstrated in one of the interviews, where a participant talked at length for about 90 minutes. One of the key features of qualitative research is that it is carried out in a naturalistic setting in the real world. The interviews were mainly carried out in the participants' work settings and this indicates that this research has "ecological validity" (Willig 2008, p.16). Validity of the data analysis is supported by the researcher's reflexivity, whereby reflexivity enables researchers to be aware of their own thought processes. Reflexivity ensures that the researcher does not impose their own meaning and interpretations onto the data.

Qualitative research takes the opposite approach from quantitative research, which aims to establish findings that can be applied to the general population. The nature of qualitative research means that sample sizes tend to be much smaller than quantitative research, meaning that the participants are not representative of the general population. Representativeness can present a difficulty in qualitative research, especially if the research aims "to explore a phenomenon that is relevant to more people than are actually involved in the study" (Willig, 2008, p.17). The research

sample size is not representative of the whole population of educational professionals who work in educational settings. Nevertheless, the professionals represent those key professions who would contribute to the team around the child when investigating school refusal.

Credibility in qualitative research refers to "prolonged and persistent engagement" (Mertens, 2010, p.256). Credibility as a quality indicator in qualitative research can be observed in terms of the level of involvement the researcher has within the area of research. Flick (2008) acknowledges that credibility provides the opportunity to promote quality in qualitative research; however, it does not have an established or defining criteria. Credibility is the balance between the researcher being sufficiently close to the research area and the researcher maintaining a level of distance to record information accurately (Mertens, 2010). Research credibility is linked to the interpretation of the researcher. Interpretations should be transparent and visible through the analysis, and findings should be supported by the data. To ensure credibility in qualitative research, sufficient time should be given to the area of research so that conclusions are not made on "limited exposure to the phenomenon" (Mertens, 2010, p.256).

Examining the ideas of credibility in this research, it would be fair to say that the researcher has had extensive experience of working with young people who were struggling to attend school. The introduction (Chapter 1) outlined the researcher's experience and briefly described the researcher's specific engagement with the young people. As an EP, a specific feature of the role is to work collaboratively with other colleagues, either within a multi-disciplinary framework or as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Therefore, it is felt that the researcher has sufficient knowledge about the community being investigated and has established sufficient distance to accurately record the data. The distance was created because the research commenced after the researcher's involvement with the young people who had difficulties attending school had ceased, and when the researcher was no longer working at the school that framed the researcher's experience.

To support the credibility of the research, the researcher approached two participants to seek verification about the collected and analysed data. The first member check was carried out with the first participant of the interviews and the second member check was carried out with the last participant. The reason why these two individuals were selected were for practical reasons, one of which was that there was a continued and existing relationship with these individuals. Most importantly, the reason why these two participants were selected was because the researcher wanted to explore how the collected and analysed data had evolved from the interviews with the

participants. The decision was taken to make the members' checks an informal process. This was because the researcher wanted the participants to reflect on their information without feeling that they were being questioned or probed intensely about their opinions. The researcher wanted the participants to validate the collected data and ensure that the analysis had established a true picture of their voices and opinions. Mertens (2010) explains that within qualitative research, validity is established by an interactive process between the researcher and what is being researched. Hence, the members' checks were an important step in establishing the credibility of this research.

Negative case analysis and 'progressive subjectivity' are the other quality indicators used to support the credibility of qualitative research. The researcher was attentive to these quality indicators by being aware of the data and any categories that did not fit into the emerging 'theory' gleaned from the analysis. Awareness meant that the researcher used a journaling method to record thoughts and feelings throughout the study. Yin (2010) refers to the process of triangulation, which involves corroborating and verifying information from different references to strengthen the validity of the study. The researcher drew upon other research studies and government sources pertaining to school attendance and school absenteeism.

Transferability is another quality indicator to which the researcher paid attention. Transferability in qualitative research is seen as a parallel concept to external validity in post-positivist research (Mertens, 2010), being concerned with identifying generalisations from the research. Goetz and Mahoney (2012) describe generalisations in qualitative research as a means of explaining outcomes by identifying factors.

> [Transferability] enables readers of the research to make judgements based on similarities and differences when comparing the research to research situation to their own. In qualitative research, the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context (Mertens, 2010, p.259).

Hence, it is with these thoughts in mind that the researcher provides sufficient and detailed information about the research, so that readers are enabled to make judgements about the transferability of this specific research.

Dependability is equivalent to reliability in quantitative research and confirmability is parallel to objectivity. The researcher ensured that interpretation of the data were not figments of the

researcher's imagination. Therefore, the analytical process is explicitly defined in this chapter and can be observed in the example of the interview analysis (see Appendix 5).

3.13 Transcriptions

The interviews were transcribed utilising the computer software programme 'Express Scribe'. This software enables digital recordings to be slowed down significantly, so that each word can be reproduced accurately. To assist with the transcription of the digital recordings, the interviews were slowed down to 50% of their original speed. There were times when the recordings were further slowed down or speeded up to ensure that accuracy was maintained and the written information was consistent with the recordings.

Transcription of the interviews took place between 6 January 2011 and 10 February 2011. The length of time required to transcribe each interview varied and was dependent on the length of each interview. The clarity of the recordings, the interviewees' intonations, speech patterns and accents all had an impact on the transcriptions. Once the interviews were transcribed, the recordings and transcripts were compared to ensure the highest level of accuracy. The recordings and transcripts were read and listened to simultaneously and, where necessary, changes were made. The recordings and transcripts were then stored on an encrypted password-protected memory stick, kept in a locked cupboard at the researcher's home.

3.14 Data Analysis

Data analysis started three weeks after the transcriptions were completed. To assist with familiarisation of the data, the interviews were listened to with the transcripts to ensure that there was no missing information. During the period between completing the transcripts of the recordings and commencing data analysis, a decision was made to re-read Strauss and Corbin's (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounding Theory* (second edition). This edition was used to describe the process for analysing the data for the research proposal. However, a decision was taken to read Corbin and Strauss's (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research* (third edition). After reading both books, a decision was taken to use the third edition as the template for the data analysis in this research. The reason for this is because the latest edition presented a narrative through memo forms that appeared to readily demonstrate the thought processes of the researcher.

3.14.1   Memos and Diagrams

Memos and diagrams are important features of the analysis when using grounded theory as an analytical tool. Memos are written records of the analysis and they vary in terms of "content, degree of conceptualization, and length, depending upon the research phase, intent and the materials one is coding" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.119). Diagrams are visual devices that "depict relationships between analytic concepts" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.117). The objective of using diagrams is to elevate the researcher's thinking from the data, to assist with organising the data and to integrate ideas. An example of a diagram representing the key relationships and interactions in a young person's life, as identified by the educational professionals (themes: the complexity of relationships), is presented in Figure 3.1.

The Complexity of Relationships
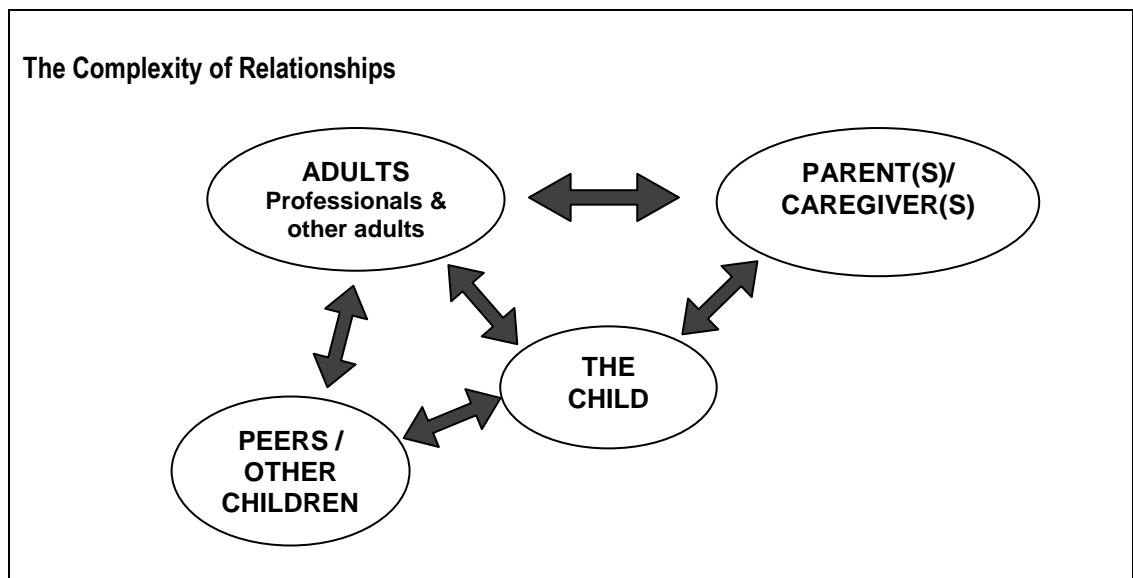
Figure 3.1: Diagram Representing Key Relationships and Interactions in a Young Person's Life

3.14.2   Analysis of the Interviews

The first step of the analysis was to identify the first section to analyse. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.163) refer to the use of "natural breaks in the manuscript as cutting off points, and usually these breaks denote a change in topics, but not always". The decision was made to use the structure provided by the semi-structured interview format, with the first response to the first question being the starting point. An example of this is shown in Figure 3.2. [1]

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[1]   In all memos and interviews, quotations are recorded verbatim.

Interviewer: Good afternoon. Interview number one, on school refusal. Can you tell me about your role in education so far and your experiences?

Interviewee: Currently, my role is as a Deputy Head Teacher in a special school which caters for the students on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder including Asperger Syndrome. I have been in education for about thirty years and I have worked in all key stages, including further education, post-sixteen as well. I actually started in post-sixteen then I moved to primary and then I taught in a special school for children with moderate learning difficulties and most of my career I spent in mainstream secondary, large secondary school, large comprehensive for boys. Then I moved into the independent sector where I taught English and also worked as a senior leader in a preparatory school and that was a boys' school, a very academic school and that was for boys aged two-and-a-half to thirteen. So I have covered all key stages.

Interviewer: Okay, now we are going to be looking at the ideas of school refusal and can I ask you from your understanding, when the term 'school refusal' is used to describe a young person what are the images formed?

Figure 3.2: Demonstration of a Natural Break in the Interview - Interview 1

Before commencing the description of the analysis, it is useful to define how the analysis assists with understanding the processes undertaken.

> Analysis involves what is commonly termed **coding**, taking raw data and raising it to a conceptual level. Coding is the verb and codes are the names given to the concepts derived through coding... coding is more than just paraphrasing. It is more than just noting concepts in the margin of the field notes or making a list of codes as in a computer program. It interacting with data (analysis) using techniques such as asking questions about the data, making comparisons between data... deriving concepts to stand or those data, then developing those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.66).

Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.67) refer to a variety of "analytic tools", describing them as "thinking strategies" because they are used in a strategic manner and with a purpose. These tools assist the researcher to move away from the standard ways of thinking about phenomena, providing an opportunity to break away from established literature and personal experiences which may prevent the researcher from exploring the data beyond established frames of references. The

analytic tools support the inductive process and allow the researcher to listen to and pay attention to the information.

The analytic tools are numerous and the purpose is not to define them all within this context. The objective is to demonstrate how they were used to elicit information from the data. Before progressing with the descriptions, it is important to consider how Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.85) reflect on the use of analytic tools, as "we expect that analysts will use the tools like any good craftsman, flexibly and as an extension of their own ability".

For the purpose of this research, the use of questioning was the first port of call. The first questions were: "What is the interviewee trying to tell me?" and "Why is the interviewee saying these specific things about their experiences?". Notably, it is essential to recognise that the researcher asked the participants to reflect upon their experiences in education. This was an open-ended question that allowed the interviewees to talk about anything they felt was relevant.

Further questions were asked of the data, such as "What image is the interviewee trying to establish?", "What is the participant not telling me about their experiences?", "Are these the most important experiences in the interviewee's professional career in education?" and "What does this information tell me about the interviewee's values, if any?' Figure 3.3 demonstrates the use of questioning the data.

Interview 1
Memo 1
1st March 2011
Defining professional self: Establishment of credible professional self.
Demarcation of educational settings and environments.

In the first line of the interview, the interviewee is setting the scene for her current professional role in education. The interviewee follows this by explaining that she has been in education for about 30 years. Indicating the length of time provides the platform for establishing herself through her experience and knowledge. The long period of time is qualified by the various roles and settings she has worked in.

The reason why the interviewee started the interview in this manner is because she was asked to think about her experience in education and her current role. In establishing her *professional self*, she explores the various settings, stating that she has worked both in mainstream and specialist provisions. "*I have been in education for about thirty years and I have worked in all key stages, including further education, post-sixteen as well.*"

The questions to be asked are, are there different skills required to work in the various settings? Does this make the professional more credible to have varied experience? Is the interviewee trying to establish their versatility, therefore this influences the manner in which questions are answered? Does the experience impact on the quality of the responses to the questions? *Versatility and credibility are important, and are intertwined with knowledge and experience.*

"*My role is as a Deputy Head Teacher in a special school*" and "*I taught English and also worked as a senior leader.*" The roles of Deputy Head Teacher and a Senior Leader are key roles in schools' leadership structures. These positions carry *authority and influence* within school and educational settings. These positions suggest that the person has *access to decision-making powers* and has influence over decisions and other members of staff. However, to define a shared understanding and to consider these roles, my own knowledge of school structures confirm that having these positions in schools do mean that the person is in a position of authority within that setting or is seen as an authority within the educational establishment.

In *defining and redefining her position and status* the interviewee qualifies her status and *ensures that this is embedded* by explaining that she worked in a large comprehensive boys' school. "*Most of my career I spent in mainstream secondary, large secondary school, large comprehensive for boys*". It is possible to notice that she uses the word 'large' three times in the sentence, as a way of emphasising and drawing upon the image created by the sentence. There are images that are formed about comprehensive schools, especially boys' and the secondary phase of education. These images or stereotypes are connected with ideas of toughness and being *difficult environments,* in comparison to where she was a senior leader in an independent preparatory school.

What does '*large'* mean to the interviewee? The ideas of responsibility or greater responsibility or just the word 'greater' comes to mind when thinking of the term '*large'*. When comparing educational settings is there a perceived view that specialist and preparatory schools are easier environments than '*mainstream secondary, large secondary and boys' schools*'? *Differences in educational settings and stages.*

Figure 3.3: Memo Demonstrating the Use of Questioning the Data – Interview 1

There are different types of questions that can be used to explore the data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define them as sensitising, theoretical, practical and guiding questions. Sensitising questions allow the researcher to become tuned in to what the data may be indicating. Theoretical questions support the researcher to explore whether there are any processes, variations or connections between concepts. Practical questions assist with providing directions for theoretical sampling and guiding questions shape how information is gathered. Figure 3.4 demonstrates how the researcher attempted to use sensitising, theoretical and practical questions to understand the data.

Interview 1

Why do you think some young people do not want to or find it difficult to attend school?

I think maybe because their experience of schooling has not been positive up to then. That's one reason. I think maybe they feel isolated by peers or they can't cope with their work but don't want to use that as an excuse. Trying to cover up that they are not able to understand or the work is not at their level. They may just point blank refuse to come. Other reasons would be emotional factors maybe caused by social problems. Family breakdown and maybe not being in the right school that caters for the needs of that particular individual. So it is just poor prior experience I would say of schooling.

Memo 3
1st March 2011
The interplay between external versus internal factors (within child and resiliency)
Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs.
The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others. The social dimension of the interactions with society.
Individual interactions versus wider group/society.
The separation of self from others and school work.
Social problems.

"*I think maybe because their experience of schooling has not been positive up to then. That's one reason*". This sentence draws upon the idea of issues linked to school. The word '*positive*' comes to my attention, but what does positive mean? On a spectrum, it is the opposite of negative but it still doesn't sum up what '*positive*' is. Perhaps, it means something good which then generates some form of internal well-being. Linking this idea to within child factors and resiliency the impact and the contribution of "*not been positive*" influence is significant. ***The interplay between external factors versus internal factors (within child and resiliency).***

"*They feel isolated by peers or they can't cope with their work*." 'Isolated' is to be on your own and not connected or separated from. The ability to cope with both the social and the academic demands. The ideas of demands both social and academic come into my mind. The ***young people who are school refusing are isolated by their peers and the classwork***. This leads to a complete separation. Are there degrees of isolation? Always isolated, partially isolated sometimes isolated, specific times or periods of isolation. The question here is, is it important to differentiate isolation as a physical experience or an emotional experience?

Another question to ask is why are they feeling isolated from their peers? Personality issues, social skills, lack of social engagement, physical attributes such as appearance, self-care issues, etc.

How does the interviewee know that these young people feel isolated? Are they assigning their own emotional label or tag to the young person's feelings? Or are the interviewee's years of experience of working with young people and assisting with the identification of these feelings being drawn upon.

However, thinking of the *social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others*. Plus, the ideas of the *separation of self from others and schoolwork*.

"*Trying to cover up that they are not able to understand or the work is not at their level.*" A statement which provides confirmation of difficulties with accessing the curriculum and the work at school. This is linked to other ideas explored so far in the data, with reference to the academic challenges and the school. **Aspects of school and academic challenges**. Also the interviewee talks about placement issues and the appropriateness of specific schools to meet the individual's needs. *Ability to meet the individual's needs*.

"*Emotional factors may be caused by social problems*". Once again emotional issues are drawn upon, but they are linked to '*social problems*'. What are social problems? Are these difficulties where individuals struggle to achieve, meet or interact well with society's rules? Could it be that *'social problems'* are linked to those who may **not be adhering to rules in society, or having problems with living up to them?** These ideas can be linked together with the concept of *maintaining, observing and achieving rules for society.* If they are broken then they may cause upset and cause problems for society. These can be linked to or connected with issues to do with background, where the background shapes the values and experiences individuals may have. These can be linked into the category of *The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others but the social dimension of the interactions with the wider society. Individual interactions versus wider group/society.*

Figure 3.4: Memo Demonstrating the Use of Sensitising, Theoretical and Practical Questions

Making comparisons and drawing on personal experience were used as an analytical tool to explore the interview data. These analytical tools assist with developing a greater insight into what the interview data is revealing. Figure 3.5 demonstrates how the researcher made use of these analytical tools.

Interview 1

When the term 'school refusal' is used to describe a young person what are the images formed?

If I hear the term 'school refusal', I will immediately think why has this situation arisen? What, why is the child not at school. So I would be looking first of all at the background. Why do we have a situation where the child refuses to come to school? I would look at the whole background, emotional issues and prior schooling and I would look at the child's file and talk to parents. But, to me the term may mean a sort of temporary hiccup as well, maybe because of emotional difficulties, problems at home, problems at school with peers, bullying and a child that normally would quite happy to come to school might refuse to come. So it is looking at all the background situation.

Figure 3.5: Memo Demonstrating the Researcher Drawing on Personal Experience

Another technique which was used to explore the data was waving the red flag. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.81) explain that the analytical technique of waving the red flag enables the researcher to maintain distance, to "think clearly and analytically about what is being said or done". The researcher aimed to be mindful of the interpretations made from the data. Using the

waving the red flag technique is a way of maintaining balance and distance from the data (see Figure 3.6).

Interview 1

Memo 2 (Continued)
1st March 2011

"*Problems at school with peers, bullying.*" ***Relationships with others, especially peers***. Being bullied, victims, fear and being unsafe. Ongoing difficulties that have not been resolved. What stands out is the ***theme of relationships going through the passage***. These relationships are at different levels such as the young person's relationship with school, relationship with their background, relationship with their peers, the relationship between their parents and the school. However, it is important to note that in this situation it is necessary to begin "waving the red flag" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.80). I am seeing what I want to see in the data? And if I am why?

Figure 3.6: Memo Demonstrating the Use of the Analytical Technique of 'Waving the Red Flag'

3.14.3   Coding, Categories and Concepts

Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.159) describe coding as "extracting concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions". They further describe the word concepts as:

> …words that stand for ideas contained in data. Concepts are interpretations, products of analysis… [whereas categories are referred to as] …higher-level concepts under which analysts group lower-level concepts according to shared properties. Categories are sometimes referred to as themes. They represent relevant phenomena and enable the analyst to reduce and combine data.

Figures 3.7 to 3.10 demonstrate the codes established from the analysis. The codes are listed in bold. Figure 3.7 demonstrates how these codes and categories are established.

Interview 1

You've touched upon the underlying causes of some of the reasons why some young people may refuse to go to school. Of the ones you've mentioned, which ones do you think are for you the most important causes or which one do you think stands out?

Alright, I would say for me what stands out first, is poor previous experience of the school environment.

60

Tell me a bit more why you think that is a key factor?

I think when a young person, indeed an adult, has an negative experience of something, they don't want this experience to be repeated because nobody likes failure and I think that if a young person fails at something, they don't want to fail again. So to me that would be the prime reason.

Are there any other causes that stand out for you, from of the ones you've mentioned?

I think that social problems within the family. Lack of role models or literacy levels and this is why maybe they can't cope with schoolwork and one of the reasons that is to avoid it and avoidance maybe school refusal.

Memo 5
1st March 2011
School Experience and Environment.
Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.
The role of the family.
Aspects of society, values and rules.

"*Poor previous experience of the school environment*". This is a recurring view of the interviewee, and it strikes me as being important. So does this override the importance placed on social problems or socio-economic disadvantages? Is the school experience the significant factor?

"Negative experience of something, they don't want this experience to be repeated because nobody likes failure." The interviewee brings up the ideas of negativity and failure which are repeated. It is possible to think that some young people feel that they are failures in school and this could be reinforced through the work, interactions with others and the environment. This can be linked into the interviewee's ideas of poor previous experience of school. *Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.* This can be also linked to *Resiliency – within child factors* where external factors are reinforced to a degree to where the individual internalises these feelings and *The separation of self from others and school work* becomes a part of the way the young person manages their feelings.

Figure 3.7: Memo Demonstrating the Establishment of
Concepts and Coding From the Data - Interview 1

3.14.4   Impressions of the Interview

As the analysis of the interviews drew near to the end, a memo was written defining the researcher's impression of the interview. Figure 3.8 demonstrates the researcher's impression of Interview 1.

Figure 3.8: Memo Demonstrating the Researcher's Impression of Interview 1

3.14.5 Summary Memos of Themes/Categories

Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.187) identify that the analysis "consist of brainstorming about the
data in order to identify meaning, then conceptualizing that meaning by assigning concepts to
stand for what is being expressed". To assist with the process of understanding the data and
analysis further, the researcher provided a summary of the emerging themes/categories that
came out of the data. It is necessary to be mindful that the codes and categories identified can be
modified or discarded as the analysis progresses. Figure 3.9 demonstrates the summary made of
Interview 1.

To arrive at the themes, all the codes were placed on a list (see Appendix 6). The codes were
separated and assigned to different pieces of paper. The codes were separated based on the
ideas they portray. To assist with the allocation of codes, the pieces of paper were assigned a
brief description about types of code that should be placed onto the paper. Once all the codes

were distributed, each code was reviewed to see if they were placed within the correct group. It was at this point that the contributory codes were used to name the themes. The researcher decided to use the codes which best summarised the general ideas of the codes and, in some circumstances, the researcher selected an assigned word or phrase which encapsulated the ideas of each theme. This is evidenced in integrative memo 2, which describes the analytic story (see Appendix 9) and which can also be observed in the list of themes with codes (see Appendix 7).

Interview 1

Memo 20
12 March 2011
Summary Memo of Themes/Categories
In this interview, I have been able to identify a number of themes/categories or ideas that stand out for me. However, I don't feel that I can pull everything together as yet, but I will try to draw out some of the themes/categories that I feel are significant in this current interview.

1. **Defining professional self:** This is when educational professionals identify themselves through their roles and the work that they do. It helps to shape and define their professional knowledge and experience which may impact on the views that they hold.

2. **The jigsaw puzzle of life - background influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life**: This is a long convoluted title but I was really unsure of how to represent it. The interviewee kept referring to the word '*background'* and this enabled me to think about what this means. I decided that this means the things that contribute to making us who we are, such as our upbringing, home environment, social and economic status. This does not stand alone, but I am not able to include all the themes that could be potentially included as yet. It is hoped that the other interviews will show whether this category or theme will be developed further or not. However, I am tempted to include the concepts identified in the list of concepts/codes such as 'The role of the family and home environment.'

3. **The interplay between external versus internal factors (within child factors and resiliency):** This category deals with how someone copes with their feelings and perhaps challenges. Are they emotionally resilient? Learning involves challenges and sometimes finding things difficult are a part of the process. This category is about this and how an individual deals with the emotional aspects that are involved with success and failure. Once again, I am not sure if the idea of separation of self from others and schoolwork (listed as No.12 in the list of concepts/codes) links into to this, or is this separate? However, looking at the list of concepts/codes, it could be possible to draw other concepts under this umbrella (for example, concept/code No.10 The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others which also links to the following category or theme. Here the social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others is concerned with both the physical process of interacting as well as the emotional capacity as well.

Figure 3.9: Memo Demonstrating the Summary the Researcher Made

of the Themes/Categories in Interview 1

3.14.6   *Theoretical Sampling*

Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.144) state that theoretical sampling is "a method of data collection based on the concepts derived from the data". As previously mentioned, this research used an amended version of grounded theory, in terms of using grounded theory as an analytical technique. Therefore, all information was collected before the analysis commenced. Corbin and Strauss acknowledge that it is possible to do theoretical sampling after the data has been collected although they highlight that "it may be more difficult" (2008, p. 150). Additionally, Corbin and Strauss (ibid.) conclude that research that has worked with data that was previously collected "doesn't mean that a study will lack significance or be superficial". The researcher tried to incorporate theoretical sampling into the research analysis by asking questions of the data, which was then explored in the analysis of the other interviews. The memo shown in Figure 3.10 demonstrates the manner in which theoretical sampling was used.

Interview 1

Memo 21
13 March 2011
Questions and Directions for Theoretical Sampling

Things to follow up on when analysing other interviews:

- Quality of pastoral care. This is an area to follow up on. Should be explored with the ideas of emotional well-being. The question that can be explored further is, is the quality of pastoral care one aspect of provision or is it provision in the greater sense?

- What are the hallmarks of a 'good relationship' between the adults and the young person at school?

- What are the relationships between peers and the school refuser like? What are their relationships like with peers in school as opposed to peers outside of school?

- Explore what ideal solutions there are for school refusal.

Figure 3.10: Example of Questions for Theoretical Sampling

3.14.7   List of Concepts/Codes

A list of concepts/codes were created. Figure 3.11 presents an example of the generated list. A full list of the codes can be found in Appendix 6. When reading the interview analysis memos, please note that some words are presented in bold while other words are presented in bold and italics. The words presented in bold at the top of the interview analysis memo, under the date, represent the list of codes established from the memo. Within the body of the analysis memos, the words presented in bold and italics are the codes developed during the analysis of the data.

The integrative memos also include words in bold and italics. These words in bold and italics represent the themes, whereas the words represented in italics in enclosed speech marks are the contributory codes to the themes.

Interview 1

List of Concepts/Codes
1. **Defining professional self: Establishment of credible professional self.**
2. **Demarcation of educational settings and environments.**
3. **Establishing a rationale and a theory on school refusal.**
4. **Development of a hypothesis and undertaking the research.**
5. **The jigsaw puzzle of life - background Influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life.**
6. **Resiliency – within child factors.**
7. **The complexity of relationships.**
8. **The interplay between external versus internal factors (within child and resiliency).**
9. **Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs.**
10. **The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others.**
11. **Defining social problems.**

Figure 3.11: Example of the List of Concepts/Codes Generated from the Analysis of Interview 1

3.14.8   Integrating Categories

Building a theory is not the ultimate goal for all researchers using grounded theory, but for this research it remains a goal. The integration process facilitates the linking of categories around a core category which results in the construction of a theory. The descriptive story creates the theory of how educational professionals view school refusal (see Figure 3.12). Appendix 8 provides the complete memo of the descriptive story: Integrative Memo 1. The analytic story provides the structure which links other major categories and creates the foundations of the

theoretical structure: Integrative Memo 2 (see Figure 3.13). A full version of the analytic story can be found in Appendix 9.

When reading an integrative memo, it is important to note that the themes are presented in bold and italics and enclosed in speech marks. The codes are enclosed in speech marks and presented in italics.

Integrative Memo 1
23 June 2013
The descriptive story

Thinking about the central notion of the study, I believe that the young person's experiences are the important thread which draws the themes together. The theme that I consider to be the starting point and the central focus of school refusal is "***The Complexity of Relationships***". If I ask the question, what kinds of relationships are in a young person's life? I would first reply by saying that there are a number of relationships. These relationships are characterised by "*relationships with adults*" with the view of understanding "*what are the hallmarks of a good relationship?*" However, when first reflecting on the initial relationship in a young person's life, "*the relationships between the child and the parent(s)/caregiver(s)*" is the relationship that comes to mind. It is the relationship that I consider to be the template which other relationships stem from. This significant and important relationship provides the "*emotional relationship between the child and the parent*" which in turns helps form "*the foundations of resiliency*". Thinking of a reason why the relationship is important is because it provides the opportunity for the child to learn about "*the social dimensions of interpersonal interactions with others*".

Asking myself, where else can "*the social dimension of interpersonal interactions*" develop? School. Schools are places where there are a number of different children and adults. The adults have a number of roles and the children are grouped together according to their age. Schools provide the opportunity for young people to develop their social experience through "*Teachers' and young people's involvement*." "*Teachers' and young people's involvement*" means that young people have the opportunity to meet and socialise with a number of adults and children. These social experiences highlight the "*role of other children/peers*" as an important social function with regards to the "*formation/development of friendships*". These friendships offer the opportunity for the young person to extend their social skills because they enable the relationship to go beyond the context of the school, "*relationships with peers in and outside school*."

Considering the importance of adult relationships with young people, outside of "*the relationships between the child and the parent(s)/caregiver(s).*" These adult relationships are important for the young person. Here, the responsibility is placed on the adults to learn about and understand the young person, "*Adult led relationship which explores the desire to understand the young person*". These adult led relationships allow the young person to understand "*the social dimension of the interactions within society*" because they provide a model of how others should interact and behave with each other. The adults in these relationships can become a "*key support figure*" for the young person outside of the child's relationship with their parent(s)/caregiver(s).

To understand the refusal to attend school further, I asked myself the question, would it be fair to say that school refusal is initiated when the above experiences do not occur in the young person's life? What I would say is that not having the described experiences above would have an influence and an impact on the young person's feelings. Perhaps the young person would start to feel "*a sense of social failure*" which may have a major influence on how the young person understands and manages their social world, especially their "*social experiences*".

Thinking about the exposure children and young people have to other relationships beyond their home context, it is possible to consider "the *role of school*". Asking myself the questions, what is school? And what do schools do? Then, I would say that school is the launching pad into society, the wider community and a means of understanding the world beyond the young person's home life or home systems. "*The role of school*" is to take the child on a journey that catapults the child from the nest of their home to the wider world and their community. Perhaps, it might be even fair to say that school is one of the training grounds outside of the "*home experience"* which also contributes to creating and developing the individual's sense of self within society.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I think to understand school attendance is to understand how it allows the young person to have access to the "**school experience**". The "**school experience**" of young people is shaped by a number of things, such as the "*demarcation of educational setting and environment*" and these are regulated by the "*curriculum, mainstream or special*". Schools vary from school to school. There are a number of "*inconsistencies between establishments*" with regards to ethos, approaches, personnel and strategies of support, to list a few. However, the major influential factor that shapes the "*school experience*" for young people is the "*role of the teacher*". This key role involves a number of components and is ultimately guided by the "*aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting the individual needs*". This code describes teachers' duty to ensure that the curriculum is adhered to and the appropriate focus is given to the individual's learning needs. The "*role of the teacher*" involves *"recognising the importance of individual need"* and means that teachers use a number of strategies to identify ways forward to "*meeting needs: strategies and activities*".

When young people's needs have not been met through appropriate strategies, activities and support by the teacher or teaching staff, the young person experiences "*reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties with the social context and academically*". The negative school experience that the young person experiences becomes the trigger for initiating the desire not to attend school. Therefore, it is possible to "*assign school refusal as a school issue*". The options for supporting the young person may be numerous, but one consideration may be to seek "*alternative approaches to education*" which may also provide the opportunity for the young person to experience a different "*school experience and environment*".

Thinking further about the "*role of the school*" and considering the "*school experience*". It is possible to ask a number of questions. The question that I think is important to ask is, what is the role of school? The role of school in terms of school refusal or what is the role of school in general? Having briefly discussed social relationships and the foundation of initial relationships, it is then possible to see school as a source for building on initial childhood relationships. Also, schools are vehicles for developing further the young person's experience of interacting with their community and the wider world. It is also through school that the young person is able to develop a sense of society through being a part of the school's community. The school's ethos, rules and values are the guiding light to reinforcing as well as shaping wider values in society which may or may not be present within the young person's "*home environment*". Ultimately, there are certain aspects of the school curriculum, which focus on reinforcing or teaching society's

values, expectations and rules. The curriculum subjects which do this are Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship. These subjects assist with laying the foundations for reinforcing, questioning and establishing thoughts and opinions about rules and values in society, *Aspects of Society, Values and Rules.*

Figure 3.12: Integrative Memo 1 Demonstrating the Descriptive Story

Integrative Memo 2
29 June 2013
The Analytic story

As previously stated the theme "***The complexity of relationships***" can be considered as the foundations to understanding school refusal. The initial relationships in the "home environment" provide the template and the access to the social world. The social world outside of the home for many young people is the world of school. The reason why school refusal is a difficult issue to address is because the important relationships in the young person's life are characterised by difficulties with communication and a failure to recognise the young person's needs. School refusal is about the young person's relationship with the various contexts of their social world. Their social world is made up from a number of aspects such as:

1. **School Experience:** This encompasses ideas and thoughts about negative prior school experiences both academically and socially for both the young person and, in some cases, the young person's parent(s). The school experience is located at the core of school refusal where the "*school environment*" is influenced by the school system which is created by the school staff. The school system is influenced by the lack of "*professionals being open to new information*", "*The process of identifying concerns"* and their understanding of what "*The meaning of pupil participation*" is. For the young person refusing to attend school, their level of participation may not be apparent because they may engage in a process of "*disguising the difficulties – young person*". The young person may have a "*resistance towards support strategies"* which then means that the young person is not open to "*The psychological transition for change*". Being prepared or ready for transitions means that the young person understands the "*relevance of meaning, the importance of outcome*" with regards to the support strategies implemented to address their school refusing behaviour. School refusal should not be seen as the first step in rejecting society, but should be seen as a result of negative school experiences because of issues such as "bullying" and "difficulties with the curriculum".

Figure 3.13: Integrative Memo 2 Demonstrating the Analytic Story

3.15 Summary

This methodology chapter has outlined the research paradigm and design for this study into educational professionals' views, opinions and perspectives on school refusal. Ethical

considerations have been described and thoughts about the researcher's reflexivity have been discussed. Details regarding the analytical steps and examples of the memos generated from the analysis have been provided. The integrative memos constitute the theory development and provide the theory of educational professionals' views, opinions and perspectives on school refusal. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
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4.1 Overview of the Chapter

The previous chapter outlined the research traditions and approaches to this research into educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal. Details of the research paradigm, methods and procedures were provided and a full description of the analysis was presented.

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews with the educational professionals are presented and the discussion is also incorporated into this chapter. The introduction (Section 4.2) defines the professional groupings and a description of the structure of the chapter is given in Section 4.3. The core themes are presented in Section 4.4, with the views of the EPs on school refusal in Section 4.5.

The chapter concludes with an overview of the main findings of the research (Section 4.6), with the findings and theoretical framework in Section 4.7. A critical evaluation of the methodology and processes is then given in Section 4.8, followed by an assessment of the relevance to practice and policy of EPs (Section 4.9). An assessment of the contribution of this thesis, along with potential future studies, is given in Section 4.10. A short summary then closes the chapter (Section 4.11).

4.2 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the twelve interviews conducted with the educational professionals. Grounded theory was used as the analytical tool. The educational professionals' views have been grouped together into professional identities, such as those of the EPs and the education based school professionals (EBSPs) which included an HT, a DHT, an AHT, a SOW and an LSA. The EWOs and the SM have been grouped together under the title 'Local Authority Professionals' (LAPs). It is important to acknowledge that EPs have dual roles when working within a LA framework. They are also Local Authority Professionals (LAPs). For the purpose of this research, they are grouped separately.

Grounded theory uses diagrams and memos to illustrate ideas, as well as to enable a greater understanding of the data. Examples of memos and diagrams have been presented in the methodology (see Section 3.14) and thus no memos or diagrams are presented in this chapter. Section 4.3 provides a guide on the structure of the chapter.

4.3   Structure of the Chapter

The data analysis identified a number of core themes. It is important to note that only the core themes are represented, and thus all of the individual codes are not fully addressed within this research. A list of all the themes and codes can be found in Appendix 7. The seven themes that will be discussed in this chapter are as follows:

1. the complexity of relationships;
2. the school experience;
3. developing partnerships and defining partnership working practices (multi-agency);
4. communication;
5. the interplay between external versus internal factors (within child factors and resiliency);
6. the jigsaw puzzle of life-background influence as a template of a young person's experience, outlook and approach to life; and
7. the key individuals and school refusal.

The core themes are discussed in section 4.4. The findings are presented by professional groups, the first being the EPs. The second professional group consists of the EBSPs and the third professional group is the LAPs. Under each theme, there will be a description of the theme and examples of the codes will be provided. Quotes from the participants will follow and an indication of who the participants are will be assigned to each quote. The researcher's interpretations will follow the quotes.

The data analysis of educational professionals' views on school refusal produced a number of themes. All of these themes are listed in Appendix 7. The researcher selected seven themes, listed below, to explore in greater depth within the discussion. The researcher's decision to select the seven listed themes was based upon the information discovered from reviewing the literature into school refusal and emerging information from the data analysis.

A discussion will be presented under each core theme. To identify the discussion, the word 'discussion' will be accompanied by the name of the core theme and will be presented in bold.

4.4   The Core Themes

Qualitative analysis of the educational professionals generated 173 codes. The codes were then grouped together to create themes. The themes and the codes are listed in Appendix 7.

4.4.1 Theme 1 - The Complexity of Relationships

The theme 'the complexity of relationships' describes the number of relationships in the young person's life. It identifies the importance of social relationships. Codes such as 'the social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others', 'the relationship between the child and parent', 'teachers and young people involvement', 'bullying' and 'not fitting in' all contribute to the theme.

4.4.1.1   Educational Psychologists' Views on Relationships

The EPs viewed relationships as being important in understanding school refusal. Peer relationships and relationships with the parent/caregiver were also considered to be as important.

> "*Might not actually have any friends*" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.4).
>
> "*May be that there's peer pressure, it might be cooler for them not to go to school and so they might be persuaded by their friends*" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.1).
>
> "*Usually there's a link in between and the relationship between the child and the primary caregiver whether that both parents, one parent, or granny whoever it is. There's usually issues of attachment*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.5).

The EPs referred to the young person as having no friends, and the lack of or inappropriate friendships. The EPs described peer relationships that include lots of negativity in terms of bullying, being pressured and being persuaded to do things. Although the EPs perceived peer relationships as important, they acknowledged the destructiveness of some relationships. EPs paid attention to the parent/caregiver's relationship with the child and they raised thoughts about attachment issues.

The recurring theme in all of the interviews was 'how do young people experience their relationships and what type of relationships are there?'. Young people have relationships with their school, work, parent(s)/carer(s) and other significant adults. The research also explored professional relationships as well as how parents and professionals communicate with each other. Examining the parents' and professionals' relationships, the EPs described the difficulties that they both experience when interacting with each other.

"His parents... seem to contact the psychology service a lot and they send me quite detailed emails and really they just being… and could say that are caring parents closely monitoring what professionals are doing" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.2).

"They also haven't got therefore the wherewithal to understand what their legal rights" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.1-2).

"I also think that this student is quite powerful now because they're almost choosing not to express their views and they are almost choosing that when they decide for themselves when they are not going to their lessons, and they are actually spending some one-to-one time with the SENCo, the time that they are in school. So they are cutting off, choosing to cut off" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.3).

"They either refuse to go to school or not. So, they have a choice basically and it's their responsibility in many ways to decide whether or not they want to go down that road or not" (EP 2, Interview, no.12, p.4).

The theme, 'the complexity of relationships' can be observed throughout the interviews and the analysis. However, it is possible to establish that the various relationships in the young person's life are intertwined in all aspects. The EPs explain that it is possible to see social dimensions which demonstrate 'the complexity of relationships'. These are the parents' relationship with the professionals and the young person's experience of their social world. Two of the EPs used the words "powerful" and "their responsibility" when describing the young person's position in relation to school refusal.

Contrasting the description of the young person developed by the EPs with their description of the parents highlights that the parents were described as having very little control or they were considered not to be in any position or not to have any influence over their child's behaviour. The EPs' descriptions portrayed the parents as trying to monitor the professionals relentlessly or they lacked the skills to establish a strong voice that could impact change for their child. Either way, the EPs presented a picture of weak parents and a powerful young person. By examining these perspectives in more depth, it was possible to establish that one EP described some parents of school refusers in a different way.

"A minority of the children are middle class, white. Usually, professional parents and they've been bullied; I'd say that three of them of the five that I can think of at the moment because they've got Asperger's Syndrome and that makes them usually vulnerable and the parents support them in not going to school actually" (SEP, Interview no.3. p.2).

The SEP in Interview no.3 referred to ethnicity, class and professional background. These demographic markers help to create a picture of the parents. The description shows the parent

taking charge and being in control of their child's school experiences. With the exception of the SEP in Interview no.3, the two other EPs did not make any distinction concerning how professional, middle class, white parents negotiate the educational system to achieve their desired outcome. The overall image evoked by the EPs is one of children who are disadvantaged in many ways; socially, economically and psychologically.

4.4.1.2 The Education-based School Professionals' Views on Relationships

The EBSPs referred to the social relationships with peers and adults in school, explaining that school refusers experience difficulties with peers, such as bullying, which promote feelings of isolation. These feelings are reinforced if the young person is not able to make friends.

> "*Problems at school with peers, bullying*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.1).

> "*I think maybe they feel isolated by peers*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.1).

> "*They're not forming friendships as, as well they could be so therefore when they are in school they're isolated*" (SOW, Interview no.8, p.2).

'Isolation' is the word that stands out in these extracts of the quotes. The EBSPs identify social relationships as the key contributory factor to school refusal. The inability to make friends and being subjected to bullying highlights the young person's experience of social relationships. The EBSPs place importance on the relationships established in schools. The main relationships they refer to are the adult relationships within school. The AHT explained that the difficulties some young people have with going to school stems from their relationships with the school staff.

> "*Negative experiences with members of staff*" (AHT, Interview no.7, p.1).

> "*Teachers 100% can cause the problem. I mean we have the power every single day to make your child's life enjoyable or absolutely awful and some teachers for some reason or others are less on the positive side and don't make kids see that*" (HT, Interview no.10, p.3).

The HT and the AHT talked about the importance of adult relationships in schools. These two EBSPs' perspectives contrast with those of the other EBSPs because they believe that the key and significant relationships in schools are with peers.

4.4.1.3 The Local Authority Professionals' Views on Relationships

The LAPs also referred to social relationships as a key contributing factor to school refusal.

> *"They don't feel comfortable. They don't feel valued. They don't feel appreciated. They haven't got the sort of relationship they need"* (SM, Interview no.4, p.2).

> *"Basically they've got issues with social relationships, bullying issues"* (EWO 1, Interview no.5, p.1).

> *"They may be bullied. They may not get on with their teachers"* (EWO 2, Interview no.6, p.1).

The LAPs identified that being comfortable and having the feelings of being valued are important experiences in relationships. Their ideas suggest that school refusers do not have these feelings within their relationships with adults or peers at school. Therefore, school refusers struggle with their social relationships. The biggest social issue that school refusers have to cope with is bullying. All educational professionals refer to bullying as being a major issue for school refusers.

4.4.1.4 Discussion: Theme 1 – The Complexity of Relationships

The findings in this research concur with the findings of Malcolm *et al.* (2003) that peer relationships or inadequate social relationships can contribute to school refusal. The findings demonstrate that the majority of the educational professionals considered negative relationships to contribute to school refusal and they identified bullying as the significant issue. Gendron, Williams and Guerra (2011, p.151) explored the problems of bullying in schools and identified that bullying "is prevalent across the elementary and secondary school years". The prevalence of bullying in schools is linked to the school environment, such as the school's ethos and the young people's self-belief about specific types of behaviour (Gendron *et al.*, 2011). Gendron *et al.*'s (2011) research investigated school climate and self-esteem. The results suggested that bullying is defined by social interactions and dynamics.

The educational professionals did not highlight specific difficulties with social relationships, with the exception of bullying. However, there are other social difficulties that young people experience at school. Sletta, Valhs, Skaalvik and Sebstad (1996) explained that low peer acceptance is associated with loneliness, which has an influence on the young person's self perceptions and socio-emotional reactions to difficulties with peers. The educational professionals believe that some of the social difficulties that some school refusers experience are about peer acceptance and the inability to make friends.

Allen *et al.* (2007) investigated the ideas of attachment security. They described this as adolescents being able to establish their autonomy while being able to maintain relatedness with their parents and peers. In adolescence, the establishment of close friendships involves

emotional support and is linked to attachment behaviour. The ability to establish friendships indicates that there is an existence of sufficient relatedness and confidence in their own autonomy. This is one of the building blocks for attachment security because it provides the foundations for the young person to learn to cope with peer pressure.

Allen *et al.*'s (2007) research advocated that the development of autonomy and relatedness can be seen as an indicator which identifies the adolescents who have established security in their parental attachment relationships. This means that the young person is able to form and maintain peer relationships. In terms of understanding school refusal it is possible to consider that young people who are not able to establish autonomy with social relatedness at school are not secure in their parental attachment relationships.

The research findings suggest that the majority of the educational professionals recognise the importance of relationships, both adults and peers. However, it is the EPs who refer to attachment relationships. In some ways, this is expected because of their training. However, the findings indicate that some of the EBSPs feel that the adult relationships are the key factor for addressing school refusal. Furrer and Skinner (2003) acknowledge that teachers have an influence on young people.

4.4.2 Theme 2 – The School Experience
Theme 2, The School Experience, describes the experience of the young person at school. It includes codes such as 'educational settings and ethos,' '*aspect of school responsibility with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual need'*, '*school environment'*, 'reinforced negative feelings of failure', '*curriculum issues*' and '*assigning school refusal as a school issue.*'

4.4.2.1   Educational Psychologists' Views on the School Experience
The EPs referred to a number of things within the school experience which may contribute to school refusal. One area that they discussed is the educational setting and ethos.

4.4.2.1.1   Educational Setting, Ethos, Experience and Environment
One of the main focuses for the EPs was to understand how the school experience influences teachers' practices in the learning environment.

> *"I think teachers in general; I don't like to decry them as a profession but I think actually, they don't give a shit about these kids and they think that they're over the top, they're pretentious, manipulative. I hear these phrases used all the*

time, which I find hugely distressing because they'll look at them and don't realise how difficult it is and they genuinely, genuinely think that these children are putting it on, that they are affecting it, that they're milking it, that they're manipulative, they're not vulnerable at all" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.2).

"Teachers invariably can be a law onto themselves I guess. So it could be in terms of their personality, it could be a personality clash. The way that they communicate with the child might not necessary be the best way to manage certain situations. They might be unsympathetic to their home circumstances. They might just be quite rigid in terms of laying down the rules and regulations of the school and not necessarily thinking outside of the box to develop different ways of working with the child" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.3).

Two of the EPs (Interview no.3 [SEP] and Interview no.12 [EP 2]) described the negativity they believe the teachers have towards young people who are school refusers. One EP referred to the teachers as being rigid and not being able to think outside of the box. Words such as "hugely distressing" and "unsympathetic" give a sense of some of the emotions involved. The EPs' described their distress knowing about how school refusers are treated and the lack of sympathy the teachers have towards the school refuser. The EPs explained that schools portray themselves as being inclusive when they are not. The EPs concluded that the school setting and ethos is not always a friendly and emotionally supportive environment for school refusers.

4.4.2.1.2   Curriculum Issues

The EPs described school refusers as having difficulties with accessing the curriculum.

"Depends on demands placed upon them in a classroom situation, so for example if this youngster has difficulties learning" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.3).

"There may be difficulties with their underlying cognitive development and they are not receiving adequate support for that which might cause them to fall badly behind which makes them feel not successful in the school situation" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.4).

"They expect everyone to conform to what they perceive to be the norm. So they won't make… they… I mean they differentiate things like learning, sometimes, if they feel up to it, they will not differentiate for behaviour or emotional difficulties. They see that as something quite pretentious" (SEP, Interview no 3, p.3).

Not being able to access the curriculum places pressure on the learner. The EPs described the young person as not feeling successful at school. It can be considered that the feelings of failure have been placed onto the learner because the teacher fails to recognise that the demands being placed onto the learner are not appropriate for supporting learning, behaviour or the young person's emotional self. The EPs advocated that these factors can contribute to school refusing behaviour.

Reflecting on what conformity is in the learning environment and the expectations teachers have in terms of learning responses, outcomes and behaviours. Teachers struggle when learners do not conform in terms of their responses to the curriculum. A lack of differentiation can be seen as the teacher's difficulty with understanding the learner's needs. When differentiation does not take place, it denies the learner access to conform to prescribed knowledge. The EPs advocated that a highly differentiated curriculum will promote learning, whereas a curriculum not differentiated will promote the rejection of school and school refusal.

4.4.2.1.3   Meeting the Young Person's Individual Needs – Special Educational Needs

The EPs referred to meeting the young person's individual needs, in particular SENs. The EPs advocated that having SEN is a barrier to accessing the curriculum. These difficulties can be specific to academic, emotional and behavioural issues, social and communication issues, as well as related to physical or visual impairments. It must be noted that this is not an exhaustive list and the examples given are an indication of some of the needs when the terms 'special educational needs' or 'special needs' are referred to.

> "*Vulnerability factors such as special educational needs in particular*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.1).

> "*Might be special needs*" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.1).

> "*There may be difficulties with their underlying cognitive development*" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.4).

The EPs discussed the feelings that young people may have with SENs or special needs.

> "*They can't actually cope with difficult or challenging experiences*" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.4).

> "*Concentrating in school is really hard for them... I guess it could be that they just don't enjoy going to school*" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.1).

> "*I think they stop... actually thinking they've got to engage and they become... there's sense of helplessness*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.7).

The EPs described the young person as not coping, or thinking and developing a sense of helplessness with their SENs. The EPs explored the young person's approach and feelings. They each identified different aspects, such as an inability to cope, difficulties with concentration and having a sense of helplessness. The EPs presented a consensus with acknowledging that the

young person would have some negative feelings towards their learning experience. The EPs suggested that school refusal occurs when a learner's SENs are not met.

4.4.2.2   The Education-based School Professionals' Views on the School Experience

The EBSPs described negative school experiences with regards to the young person's experience and the school environment.

4.4.2.2.1   Educational Setting, Ethos, Experience and Environment

> "*The school has failed the child, any support services has failed the child and the school is not offering what the child needs in order to further, for them to engage in education*" (HT, Interview no.10, p.1).

> "*I think maybe because their experience of schooling has not been positive up to then*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.1).

> "*Well, it... it, for me personally, I been thinking about someone whose experienced ahem... a lack of success or it possibly experienced a very negative... ahem... moment that could b*e" (AHT, Interview no.7, p.1).

The HT asserted that school refusal is an indication of the school failing the young person. This is because the school is not meeting the young person's needs in terms of their engagement with education. The negativity the young person experiences is formed by the lack of success and support. The HT stating that the school has failed the young person sounds very much as someone taking responsibility. The HT's perspective is distinctively different when compared to the other EBSPs' views.

4.4.2.2.2   Curriculum Issues

The EBSPs elucidated that difficulties with the curriculum contribute to school refusal.

> "*The fear of being found out that they can't access the work or fear of failure*" (AHT, Interview no.7, p.2).

> "*They find it difficult accessing the curriculum*" (SOW, Interview no.8, p.2).

> "*As the curriculum becomes tighter and becomes more rigid in a sense of what it's delivering to young people, it removes the flexibility to meet the needs of that young person at a particular time in their life or as in a particular style, so, you know, so TDA[2] was quite a good programme a few years ago because it allowed you flexibility to move away from the National Curriculum make sure the kid could do something he enjoyed and achieve in*" (HT, Interview no.10, pp.1-2).

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[2]   Teacher Development Agency.

The EBSPs used words such as "fear" and "being found out". The teachers described the curriculum as the barrier. Reflecting on this, it is not the curriculum that promotes "fear" and neither is the young person fearful of "being found out" about by the curriculum. It is possible to consider that the curriculum and the classroom provoke feelings of failure in the young person. It is these feelings that the young person might be fearful of. These feelings of failure develop because the young person is not able to access the curriculum due to SENs.

Distinguishing between the EBSPs' views, the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) referred to the expectation of conformity within the classroom for the young person. Conformity can be initially viewed in terms of the expected responses with regard to behaviour, but it is also important to consider the expected responses towards the curriculum, such as achieving the correct answer or taking onboard the assigned knowledge. The rigidity and lack of flexibility in the learning environment and curriculum means that some learners will reject school. The rejection of school emotionally can become the physical act of school refusal. The HT discussed this idea with regard to the curriculum and he suggested that the curriculum is a tool to ensure that conformity takes place.

4.4.2.2.3 Meeting the Young Person's Needs – Special Educational Needs

> "*Very weak academic skills which meant it was highlighted constantly that he wasn't able to meet the curriculum in the same way other people were and he also had a... quite an extreme squint in his eyes which I think was a contributing factor to him being very self conscious and lacking in self-esteem*" (SOW, Interview no.7, p.2).

One of the EBSPs referred to "weak academic skills" and the young person not being able to participate fully in the curriculum. This makes the young person self-conscious which then embeds negative self-feelings and creates low self-esteem.

4.4.2.3 Local Authority Professionals' Views on the School Experience

4.4.2.3.1 Educational Setting, Ethos, Experience and Environment

The LAPs viewed schools in two ways, in terms of how they treat the young people and how they work with outside agencies. LAPs believe that schools do not ask for help from outside agencies until things go wrong. However, when they do go wrong they exclude young people without taking into consideration the young person's disabilities or special needs.

> "*The school is not flexible enough and they are not seen as individuals*" (SM, Interview no.4, p.2).

> "*You know, if the school are not encouraging the children enough there needs to be lots of activities going on to keep those children occupied in the school*" (EWO 3, Interview no.11, p.5).

Being flexible is being able to recognise and celebrate the strength of the learners. The LAPs highlighted the need to encourage and occupy the learners at school. They referred to school refusing as the school not being able to recognise and meet the young person's needs. The LAPs believe that young people are happy when they are occupied at school.

4.4.2.3.2   Curriculum Issues

The LAPs identified that school refusal stems from the young person's experiences with the curriculum and learning. They believed that unidentified SENs and the teachers not making the subjects sufficiently interesting were contributing factors to school refusal.

> "*For me it is actually kids with ASD, Asperger's... it's points of change, when they are going from year 6 to high schools. It's changes of class when teachers don't really understand the level of flexibility that's required*" (SM, Interview no.4, p.1).

> "*It could be, you know even school work, it could be any, if they've got poor attendance they will fall behind with their school work. They will then not want to go to school because they'll feel that they've missed so much work*" (EWO 3, Interview no.11, p.2).

The word 'flexibility' is used to refer to the teacher's approach towards the curriculum. It can be used to describe the flexibility that is needed to work effectively with young people with SEN so that they are enabled to access the curriculum. The LAPs agree that the curriculum and learning issues are the barrier and underlying causes of school refusal.

4.4.2.3.3   Meeting the Young Person's Needs – Special Educational Needs

> "*They just may have ahem... SEN difficulties which hasn't even been picked up, ahem... which causes difficulties for the child*" (EWO 2, Interview no.6, p.2).

The LAPs referred to unidentified SEN and they explained that schools are not catering for young people's individual needs.

4.4.2.4   Discussion: Theme 2 – The School Experience

The findings identified that educational professionals who participated in the research believe that negative school experiences and having difficulties with the curriculum contribute to school refusal. Libbey (2004) defines school connectedness, attachment and bonding as motivational measures for greater academic engagement. The motivational factors encountered were: having feelings of belonging, teacher support, feeling safe through discipline and fairness, as well as extra-curricular activities. When the HT referred to the school as causing school refusal, the HT was correct because schools have the influence to create an environment which enables young people to belong through supportive teachers who make the young people feel safe and engaged with their learning.

The learning environment and the experience of learning build and influence the young person's self-esteem and emotional well-being. The findings suggest that the participants, the educational professionals believe that school refusers have low self-esteem and lack the resilience to cope with failure and the academic challenges within the learning environment (Loose, Régner, Morin and Dumas, 2012).

4.4.3   Theme 3 - Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency)

'Partnership working' refers to how educational professionals work with the young person, parents and with other professional colleagues.

4.4.3.1   Educational Psychologists' Views on Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency)

> "*Well most Local Authorities will have a missing children's register now and they will have a team or usually it's one person unfortunately, to actually address kids who are not attending through their EWO service usually. Ahem… but the trouble is with that it is very limited and the figures aren't accurate because it always dependent upon schools reporting to the Local Authorities who's not attending and do they do that. No. I don't think so, they don't want to do that because the moment they do, they are off their roll and they lose some money for them*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.4).

Not having accurate information from the schools has a detrimental impact on supporting young peoples' needs. The quote above highlights that schools are deliberately withholding information and therefore suggests that there is an element of mistrust among the professionals' relationships. The quote also demonstrates the importance of the school being the key factor in

disseminating information to other professionals. The EPs view partnership working as an integral approach in their daily work.

4.4.3.2 Education-based School Professionals' Views on Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency)

The EBSPs have a definite idea about their expectations of what the parent(s) should do, how the parents should be involved, what the involvement should look like and what the level of collaboration should be. The analysis indicated that EBSPs found it difficult to work with parents and they referred to the parents' manner, such as being upset and aggressive in their interactions. However, their own evaluation of their work suggested that they felt that they were engaging well with parents.

> "*My personal view is that rather than being punitive with mum... ahem... we need to look at what's called an education supervision order*" (SOW, Interview no.8, p.3).

> "*We actually have to engage the parents. We've got a very good relationship with the parent because it's our job. Our job is to make sure that even when the parents are angry that we don't become defensive, we don't become aggressive; we listen to what they've got to say, we passively agree in some ways in what they've got to say but we move on from those of problems. I actually spend a big part of my job is that I don't influence kids without influencing their parents and that is sometimes very difficult because they're being quite aggressive and upset*" (HT, Interview no.10, p.3).

Words such as 'defensive', 'aggressive' and 'punitive' stand out in the analysis. These are the descriptors which describe the EBSPs' interactions with the parents because of some of the difficulties in the interactions. The EBSPs recognise that it is their role to engage with the parents positively, regardless of the parents' behavioural presentation. The EBSPs also acknowledged that it is essential that schools and parents work closely together.

The EBSPs described working with other professionals. Their descriptions did not agree about how professionals work with each other. Multi-agency working was mentioned only by the SOW and LSA. For these participants, their ideas centred on information sharing and having suitable opportunities to do so.

> "*Parents and school need to work very closely. Maybe other professionals could be involved as well depending on the type of the issues. There could be CAHMS involvement; there could be involvement of an educational psychologist or maybe welfare officer as well, teachers, peers. But I think, primarily, you would want to work with parents*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.7).

> "*It's a multi-agency approach when you're working with... ahem... school refusers*" (SOW, Interview no.8, p.14).

> "*Lots of the meetings that we've had with the pupils, where they can find out what's going on with everybody*" (LSA, Interview no.9, p.7).

The EBSPs believe that having a number of professionals involved or having meetings with a number of professionals from different professional disciplines is working within a multi-agency framework. However, in relation to school attendance difficulties, the EBSPs mainly work with the EWOs.

4.4.3.3   Local Authority Professionals' Views on Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency)

> "*If there's an educational psychologist within the school, they would refer that child*" (EWO 1, Interview no.5, p.3).

> "*If there is an issue with the child, I can bring in other agencies to work with the child to help bring them into school. I've worked quite closely with Think Family, who have been great*" (EWO 2, Interview no.6, p.2).

LAPs do not talk about multi-agency working in the way that EBSPs do. They use words such as 'refer' and 'bring in other agencies'. These words appear to have a practical tone and are linked to action. 'Working closely' describes the partnerships that EWOs state they bring with their role.

4.4.3.4   Discussion: Theme 3 – Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency)

EBSPs advocate working within a multi-agency approach. The findings suggest that that despite positives attitudes towards collaborative working, EBSPs identified difficulties with communication and recognising when to allow other professionals to take a greater role, as barriers. Dumsmuir, Clifford and Took (2006) discuss the barriers to multi-agency work between EPs and speech and language therapists, these being professional differences with regard to the purpose and usage of cognitive assessment for educational psychology. Atwal and Caldwell (2005) investigated multi-disciplinary teams within health and social care settings and suggested that doctors took more of a dominant role, while the other team members' level of participation varied. Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Wood and Hawkins (2005, p.128) report strong social boundaries in health care professionals and suggest that their research identifies that "individual professionals within so-called multidisciplinary teams often found it difficult to agree" because of well-developed professional roles, identities and traditions in working practices. The implication of having well-

developed professional roles and identities means there is the possibility that it is extremely difficult for professionals working within a multi-disciplinary framework to transcend their professional roles and be aware of the knowledge and expertise that other professionals can bring. Therefore, there is rigidity in their approach and practices. If there is a rigidity and inflexibility, this means that addressing school refusal is a difficult task.

4.4.4 Theme 4 – Communication

This theme relates to how the various individuals communicate with each other. The individuals are the parents and professionals, the young person and adults, and the young person and their peers, as well as professional communication. The ideas embedded into this theme are codes that explore the voice of the young person, the barriers to communication for the young person or the adults, and understanding communication as an empowerment tool. These codes are '*communicating the voice of the young person', 'conflicted parent-school relationship,'* and *'the barriers to communicating for the young person'*. The other codes contributing to this theme can be found in Appendix 7. These ideas are linked to understanding how the young person creates a voice of expression for their emotional self.

4.4.4.1   Educational Psychologists' Views on Communication

Examining the way young people communicate their ideas with the adults, the EPs said the following:

> "*They're almost choosing not to express their views*" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.3).

> "*Most of our kids won't want to go talk to them because they perceive them as these old middle class grannies who know nothing about nothing*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.3).

The quotes highlight the EPs' perspectives on how they define young people's ability to communicate their needs. They describe the choices the young people make about who they will and will not talk to. Age and class were referred to by one EP and the question to be asked is 'would this be a barrier for some young people?'. The EP (EP 2) in interview no.12 did not refer to barriers in communicating with adults. The EP expressed concerns with regard to how schools communicate with parents and how teachers communicate with young people.

Reflecting on how adults communicate with young people, it was possible to establish from the EPs' interviews that they viewed the teachers' communication with young people as negative.

"I think actually listening to the young person, makes a difference" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.6).

"Teachers invariably can be a law unto themselves... The way that they communicate with the child might not necessary be the best way to manage certain situations. They might be unsympathetic" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.6).

"For staff to really concentrate on actually finding ways for a child to express how they're feeling and then actually acting accordingly to that" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.4).

Two of the EPs stated that the adults in the young person's life should help them find a way to express themselves. One of the two EPs felt that listening to the young person would make a difference. The EPs reported that the manner in which some teachers communicate with young people may not always be conducive to resolving situations.

The EPs explored the communication between parents and professionals, deeming it as not always being productive. They drew attention to the way EBSPs communicated with parents and they described the communication as being difficult for both the school and the parents.

"The school has not worked so well with the parents, they seem to view the parents in a negative way and the parents actually realised that and they tend to communicate with me. There seems to be not very good relationships between the school and the parents" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.7).

"The home school communication as well, they might not be the type of teacher that encourages that kind of dialogue" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.3).

The quotes highlight the difficulties experienced by both parents and the school when communicating. The EPs describe how parents struggle to establish positive lines of communication with the school-based staff. Looking at the quotes in further depth, the word 'dialogue' stands out and the EPs place the responsibility on the teacher to create a space so that the dialogue can occur. The EPs acknowledge that teachers hold negative views against the parents. These views can influence negatively on the communication between the parents and the school. Comparing the EPs' perspectives on communication between EBSPs and the parents, the analysis identified that the SEP in Interview no.3 did not describe specific details of parent-school communication. The SEP took a global perspective on the issues of communication and stated that many of the parents do not have the skills to cope with the demands of challenging the teachers or the educational system.

> "*They also haven't got therefore the wherewithal to understand what their legal rights are*" (SEP, Interview no.3, pp.1-2).

Professional communication was discussed and the subsequent analysis identifies that between professionals there is mistrust in the information provided. The quote below highlights this.

> "*Well most Local Authorities will have a missing children's register now and they will have a team or usually it's one person unfortunately, to actually address kids who are not attending through their EWO Service usually. Ahem… but the trouble is with that it is very limited and the figures aren't accurate because it always dependent upon schools reporting to the Local Authorities who's not attending and do they do that. No. I don't think so, they don't want to do that because the moment they do, they are off their roll and they lose some money for them*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.4).

The quote shows that schools are a key factor in ensuring that all professionals are kept informed. Moreover, the quote demonstrates that schools sometimes withhold information for financial reasons. The word 'dependent' reiterates and demonstrates the importance of the school.

4.4.4.2   Educational-based School Professionals' Views on Communication

> "*I would look at the child's file and talk to parents*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.1).

> "*The constant follow up, we're always on the phone to say, you know the, what we have is the first day response when someone is not in. We have a member of admin staff who will phone up and say why aren't they in. We also create that two way response when a parent will phone us and say I can't get them in*" (AHT, Interview no.7, p.4).

The EBSPs described a fluid line of communication between themselves and the parents. They identified that there is a two way process where either the parent or the school can contact each other. The telephone calls are to check the whereabouts of the young person. The word 'talk' was used to describe how some EBSPs communicate with parents. It is possible to interpret that when the EBSPs contact the parents, it is more about sharing their ideas and views or finding out information from the parent.

4.4.4.3   Local Authority Professionals' Views on Communication

> "*I contacted the parent and arranged a meeting with herself and the SENCo*" (EWO 1, Interview 5, p.5).

> *"There are unidentified needs and really there's something that is a big barrier
> for this young person They don't have the ways to communicate what the
> barriers are"* (SM, Interview 4, p.6).

The quotes highlight that LAPs initiate their work with the parents. They arrange meetings and go to the parental home. Here, the LAPs describe a hands-on approach to supporting parents and being proactive.

4.4.4.4   Discussion: Theme 4 – Communication

The educational professionals reported that they felt that communication was the essential factor in meeting the needs of school refusers. The analysis suggests that parent-teacher communication is the key issue when supporting and meeting needs. The findings indicate that EBSPs' communication with parents was characterised and thwarted with difficulties. They reported that parents would often have feelings of anger and frustration towards the school. Research has suggested that building a positive relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, is essential in teacher-parent communication (Eberly, Joshi and Konzal, 2007). The barriers identified between parent-teacher communication are characterised by the frequency and context of the communication. Powell (1978) reports that teacher-parent communication is often initiated by the teacher when things are not going well or when there are behavioural concerns. If parents of school refusers are only contacted when there are issues of concern, there is the possibility that parents can feel isolated by their experiences.

4.4.5   Theme 5 – The Interplay Between External Versus Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency)

This theme describes the emotional template of school refusers. It includes codes such as '*within child factors versus events that promote the emotional state,*' and '*resiliency – within child factors.*'

4.4.5.1   Educational Psychologists' Views on the Interplay Between External Versus Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency)

Two of the EPs referred to vulnerability issues which stem from internal factors and characteristics which are specific to the young person. These characteristics are being emotionally resilient and being able to cope with challenges.

> *"They feel that they are not understood and it causes so much anxiety for
> them"* (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.2).

> "*Some of these youngsters I have found are maybe more sensitive than children of their age and they are not as resilient and they actually find the day to day challenges quite difficult*" (EP 1, Interview no. 2, p.3).

> "*I think they have huge vulnerability factors that are not within their control, they feel helpless, they feel disempowered, they don't have that locus of control, that sense of control over their own life*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.2).

Words such as 'helpless' and 'disempowered' are the descriptors that give the impression that young people are powerless in their own experiences. They are unable to have any control over their lives. Their lack of resiliency means that they are unable to cope with everyday challenges and, therefore, they find school an overwhelming experience.

Comparing the views of the EPs, the analysis highlighted that one of the EPs did not identify vulnerability issues with the same focus as the other two EPs. The EP with the different perspective referred to other issues, such as the young person finding their feet, submitting to social pressures, rejecting the system and finding school difficult.

> "*I mean if you would think of the stereotypes, adolescent who is finding their own feet and wanting to rebel against the system or maybe finding school difficult and, or have been persuaded to do other things rather than go to school. Truanting*" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.2).

This quote brings to the attention the diversity of the EPs' opinions in terms of how they understand school refusal.

4.4.5.2 Education-based School Professionals' Views on the Interplay Between External Versus Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency)

The analysis of the interviews demonstrated that the EBSPs identified within child factors such as the resiliency and the ability to cope with challenging circumstances.

> "*For me it's more a case of getting them the experience to give them the strength and the enjoyment to get up and come to school every day*" (AHT, Interview no.7, p.4).

The analysis suggested that within child factors were not the primary concern for EBSPs. Only one of the professionals talked about giving the young person 'strength'. The analysis did not identify what the word 'strength' meant for this ESBP, but what it suggested was that it could be grouped together with the ideas of within child factors.

4.4.5.3   Local Authority Professionals' Views on the Interplay Between External Versus Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency)

"*They're not happy and they feel uncomfortable in front of the class*" (EWO 3, Interview 11, p.5).

The LAPs did not describe in any detail the emotional template of the school refuser. One LAP described the school refuser as being 'not happy' and being 'uncomfortable'. These feelings are strong emotions, but they are specific to the classroom experience.

4.4.5.4   Discussion: Theme 5 – the Interplay Between External Versus Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency)

The educational professionals interviewed referred to vulnerability issues as a contributory factor to school refusal. Researchers have identified that mental health issues in young people can have a detrimental influence on their lives, causing social withdrawal and ultimately depression (Burns and Hickie, 2002). Mental health issues or emotional well-being factors influence a young person's engagement and social connectedness to school. McLaughlin (2008) explains that emotional habits and the ability to regulate emotions are learnt from social relationships; therefore it is important to prioritise relationships with young people. The findings revealed that some educational professionals believe that teachers think school refusers are being manipulative. Gott (2003) considers that having mental health and emotional well-being discussed in school would be beneficial. The potential benefits are far-reaching for the young person and also for the EBSPs, as this would increase their understanding of mental health issues and emotional well-being in young people, so that they do not then consider them to be manipulative.

4.4.6   Theme 6 – The Jigsaw Puzzle of Life-Background Influence as a Template of a Young Person's Experience, Outlook and Approach to Life

The analysis identified that educational professionals viewed the young person's family experiences in terms of home life such as 'home environment', 'socialisation', 'socio-economic advantages', 'background' and 'financial circumstances' as contributory factors to school refusal.

4.4.6.1   Educational Psychologists' Views on The Jigsaw Puzzle of Life-Background Influence as a Template of a Young Person's Experience, Outlook and Approach to Life

The socio-economic disadvantages were explored by the EPs and their influence on school refusal.

"The majority of them have come from socially deprived backgrounds. Usually, third generation unemployed, lot of traveller children, ethnic minorities minimal because of the authority that we're in but having said that they're disproportionally represented within that group. But all of them I would say are economically disadvantaged. Usually, single parent families, third generation unemployed and financially disadvantaged to a significant level because most of the parents are on benefits" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.1).

"It shouldn't be, it shouldn't be that you have preconceived notions about children from lower socio-economic background. However, I guess statistics will bear out that there are a lot of children, or a overwhelming proportion of children who refuse to go to school probably come from backgrounds that are lower than your average in terms of socio-economics" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.2).

One EP described the value of education as being an important factor, rather than being from a deprived background. The interesting aspects about the EPs' views are that they could be placed on a spectrum with two EPs' views being at opposite ends.

The word 'background' was used by the participants and has been grouped under the category or theme '*The Jigsaw puzzle of life-background influence as a template of a young person's experience, outlook and approach to life.*' Despite being categorised under this theme, specific focus has been given to it by the participants. The word 'background' is underpinned by thoughts on family circumstances which include family breakdown.

"You think about what is going on in the child's home life" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.2).

"In my experience as well a lot of kids are being kept out of school due to the fact that they've got younger siblings to take care of, they've got other responsibilities that parents are vulnerable and they are used to being the primary caregivers to the family" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.2).

"It could be that their home circumstances are in… are chaotic or in disarray" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.1).

All of the EPs referred to home life or family circumstances as important contributors to school refusal. However, looking at the specific ideas expressed by the EPs, one EP used the words "chaotic" and "disarray" to describe the young person's home circumstances. However, when contrasting the opinions, the analysis demonstrated that only one EP thought young people having responsibilities within the home and being a primary caregiver to the family was a cause of school refusal.

Contrasting the EPs' views, all the EPs explained that they would explore what is going on in the young person's home circumstances. In some ways, the EPs explained that they would not form any firm conclusions or opinions until an assessment of the situation had been completed or all questions had been answered.

> "*There are lots of questions that come to mind*" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.2).

> "*If you get the opportunity to speak to the parents, teachers and the child in more depth, then it could be that you could tap into underlying causes*" (EP 2, Interview no.12, p.2).

One of the EPs interviewed stated that they drew upon their experience and prior knowledge a number of times during the interview. The question to be considered is 'why does this EP draw upon experience with a degree of confidence, while the other EPs referred to other strategies?'.

> "*Other than that the other factors that contribute that in my experience have been family breakdown and difficulties in the home*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.1).

4.4.6.2   Educational-based School Professionals' Views on the Jigsaw Puzzle of Life-Background Influence as a Template of a Young Person's Experience, Outlook and Approach to Life

The EBSPs also referred to background and family circumstances. They described the context of the young person's social experiences through poverty and other social ills.

> "*Social problems. I think I would say, surrounding the family like violence at home, violence with the family, neglect for whatever reason and maybe even abuse, child abuse*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.2).

> "*Just because someone comes from you know a disadvantaged socio-economic background doesn't necessary mean that they are going to refuse school*" (AHT, Interview no. 7, p.3).

> "*If you are from low socio-economic group you'll find access to the curriculum more difficult. For various reasons, you've got almost an isolated group, poverty caused by not having ICT equipment indoors, regular access to a computer, places where you can study and places where you can learn in silence*" (HT, Interview no.10, p.2).

The EBSPs referred to different indicators to describe the impact of social issues and background. They provided no consensus on what the social issues are or background challenges. However, one ESBP identified that background and social issues were not the influencing factors to school refusal. This professional identified the influences of gang associations on school refusal, a concept which was not referred to by any other professional.

The EBSPs all agreed that social and background issues can impact on the young person's access to the curriculum.

Another area that was discussed in relation to school refusal was the home environment. Two of the EBSPs, the HT and the DHT, painted a picture of home circumstances where neglect, abuse and violence arise, and being without resources (such as equipment and space) are featured. These views can be contrasted with the views of the AHT, who stated that home circumstances were not always the precursor to school refusal.

4.4.6.3 Discussion: Theme 6 – the Jigsaw Puzzle of Life-Background Influence as a Template of a Young Person's Experience, Outlook and Approach to Life

Family relationships were explored in this research. Kearney and Silverman (1995) considered family sub-types' structures and described separation anxiety as being characteristically featured in the population of school refusers. The findings of this research demonstrate that educational professionals suggest that the family and relationships within the family contribute to school refusal. Most of the educational professionals who participated in the research did not refer to separation anxiety as a contributing factor to school refusal - the only professionals to consider attachment relationships were the EPs.

Juri and Marrone (2003, p.5) describe attachment theory as being "fundamentally interested in the study of attachment relationships and their influence on psychic, psychosomatic and psychosocial life across the life cycle". Attachment theory places importance on the cycle of life and the relationships that are bound in this life cycle. Attachment relationships should be considered and understood in all interactions, as well as in any given relationships. Diamond and Marrone (2003, p.3) report that attachment theory is "imbedded in a systemic conception of the family, groups, society". Consequently, the attachment theory which Bowlby (2000) described can be seen as the template in which individuals negotiate their world and social relationships.

The findings highlight that the educational professionals identified the family as a platform to transmitting values. The professionals who work in education identified the role of the parent and referred to care issues and the management of the home, in terms of meeting care needs, the exposure to domestic violence and other social issues. The results of this research imply that the majority of educational professionals who participated in this research did not mention attachment, but described the interactions between the parent and the young person. The

findings suggest that the majority of educational professionals who participated in the research are not conversant with attachment theory.

4.4.7 *Theme 7 – The Key Individuals and School Refusal*

This theme explores the key individuals involved in school refusal - the main individuals being the parents, the young person and the teachers.

4.4.7.1 *Educational Psychologists' Views on the Key Individuals and School Refusal*

4.4.7.1.1 The Parents

The analysis of the interviews discovered that educational professionals in general acknowledged the role of parental influence on school refusal and extended school non-attendance. Looking specifically at the views of the EPs, the analysis indicated that EPs believe that parental influence can have an impact in a number of ways.

> "*The parents are highly anxious themselves but I think it more an emotional issue*" (EP 1, Interview no.2, p.3).
>
> "*Parents are vulnerable*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.2).
>
> "*There's a link in between and the relationship between the child and the primary caregiver whether that both parents, one parent, or granny whoever it is. There's usually issues of attachment*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.5).
>
> "*I think parents are significant because I think a lot of parents will collude with their kids, because they're emotional either blackmailed by them or they feel so distraught at the fact that their kids are upset that they play along with it and they collude with them and they keep them out of school*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.2).
>
> "*The parents have to let go, they have to be brave*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.5).

Analysis of the EPs' views identified that they considered the emotional makeup of the parent as the key factor to understanding school refusal. When looking at the perspectives of the EPs, only one EP did not refer to collusion as an issue. The EPs described parental anxiety as a significant factor. Two of the EPs mentioned collusion but in Interview no.12, the participant (EP 2) felt that the act of collusion with the young person was a survival mechanism for the parent because they were unable to cope. In Interview no.2, EP 1 described collusion as a response which stemmed from attachment issues and the parent being emotionally blackmailed by the young person.

In interviews no.3 and no.12, both EPs talked about the parents withholding their child from school as a protest. This is an interesting aspect, because the act of collusion for the EPs within

these circumstances is a defining act of asserting power for the parent. The act of collusion can be seen as an act of exerting power, as in some circumstances the parents are unhappy with their child's educational experiences. When the power appears to be associated with the young person, the image of the parent is one of a parent who is vulnerable and weak in their parental role.

4.4.7.2   Education-based School Professionals' Views on the Key Individuals and School Refusal

4.4.7.2.1   The Parents

> "*I think the prime responsibility lies with the parents and if they've got the right role model, the right support at home*" (DHT, Interview no.1, p.3).

The EBSPs identified the role of the parent as being a contributor to school refusal. However, exploring the analysed views further, these professionals' opinions were well defined about the parent being able to manage their parenting role.

> "*I think when there isn't a lot of discipline at home and the parent can't cope with... ahem... because there's no discipline there. They can't enforce their child to go. So, I think they find it easier to agree with them and not let them go to school and then it's ahem... circle they can't get out of*" (LSA, Interview no.9, p.3).

> "*Some parents I wouldn't say all, some parents find it hard to admit to themselves their child, the child is a problem, there are issues which need to be sorted out. I think in the beginning they condone and give they give reasons and give excuses for their children not coming into school*" (SOW, Interview no.8, p.6).

The EBSPs referred to the management of the young person's school refusing behaviour. The analysis highlights the contrasting views of the HT and AHT.

The EBSPs explored the parents' own experiences of school as the template for understanding school refusal. They believe that this is an important contributor to school refusal.

> "*The parents of the child actually had a negative school experience as well which maybe then also impacts the child too. So, I think family issues could be a link you know to it, in terms of family history, in terms of family experience. If a parent didn't have a positive school experience is it necessarily going to... to work out that the next generation suddenly has a positive view? It's a difficult one*" (AHT, Interview no.7, p.3).

The ideas of parental condoning and collusion were discussed with these professionals. The analysed data demonstrates that the EBSPs understand why some professionals would think that the young person was manipulative, as well as believing that the parents were condoning of the young person's behaviour. All the EBSPs agreed that there were features of collusion in the presentation of the parent-child relationship. They concluded that the colluding behaviours are about protecting the young person, whereas other EBSPs cited the parents' inability to acknowledge the difficulties until the situation had become entrenched and difficult to change.

Poor parenting skills and discipline were considered by one of the EBSPs. The analysis suggests that the EBSPs did not explore the parent-child relationships in any way other than parenting skills and collusion. None of the EBSPs explored the potential underlying reasons for the collusion or manipulation. They understood the behaviour as an act to achieve a desired goal. However, considering what may be driving the behaviour, the EBSPs did not present any further thoughts other than the reasons such as the school, academic or social challenges, as well as factors previously described. None of the EBSPs referred to attachment issues or theory.

4.4.7.3 *Local Authority Professionals' Views on the Key Individuals and School Refusal*
4.4.7.3.1 The Parents
The LAPs identified that parents were a contributing factor to school refusal, suggesting a number of factors pertaining to the parents and school refusal. The analysis discovered that LAPs felt that some parents were not meeting their parental responsibilities, with regard to care and parenting of the young person. Hence, the LAPs considered that school refusal could stem from this.

> "*This child refused to go to school because her mother was really at a disadvantage in terms of where she was living, ahem... no money, her financials were really not up to par, basically. She had... little or no clothing. So, basically, even her school uniform was very unkempt. Ahem... that was her main cause of not wanting to go to school*" (EWO 1, Interview no.5, p.2).

> "*I think a lot of it sort of stems from their family life. If their parents are not engaged with the school or even with their own children. The children obviously don't, may not feel it's important to go to school, you know, if they're able to sit up all night, so they are too tired to get up in the morning. Then parents may be working parents that leave the house first thing in the morning that are not there to see their children get ready for school*" (EWO 3, Interview no.11, p.2).

The LAPs highlighted parental conflict in terms of not working in partnership and having anger towards the school.

> "We've got parents, who get angry with the schools and don't know actually
> how to be flexible" (SM, Interview no.4, p.3).

The analysis demonstrates that parental values on education were an influencing factor on the young person's behaviour. The analysis also identifies the prevailing views of the LAPs and other educational professionals, that if parents have negative school experiences from their own childhood, these views and experiences will be transferred to the young person.

> "Sometimes... parents may feel that education is not important. They didn't
> have much of an education ahem... that kind of... sometimes it's instilled in the
> child that education is not important" (EWO 2, Interview no.6, p.2).

> "I think it is passed down traditionally. Ahem... the parent ahem... basically
> what they've been through ahem... their own path of schooling or their, their
> past life, growing up" (EWO 1, Interview no.5, p.3).

The LAPs did not refer to collusion in the same manner as the teachers. The collusion that was identified by the SM within the LA was when parents withhold their child from school until they obtain access to their preferred choice.

> "The parents who think, who's been seduced off by better opportunities like the
> independent sector who are going to actually support the child refusing
> because they think they are going to get a better offer and then we've got the
> whole tribunal SENDITS thing and we've got independent schools who are
> offering places without fees until the SENDITS results come out" (SM,
> Interview no.4, pp.2-3).

The interview and data analysis explored the idea of the young person being manipulative. The LAPs did not refer to this as an issue and in response to a direct question, EWO 3 stated the following:

> "I've not experienced, I've not come across any of that as yet. So, to be honest
> I wouldn't be able to comment on it" (EWO 3, Interview no.11, p.3).

4.4.7.3.2   The Pupils

The analysis of the LAPs' views suggests that the young people who school refuse are not comfortable and do not feel valued or welcomed at school. They suggest that school refusers have difficult relationships with their teachers and poor social relationships with their peers. All the LAPs explained that school refusers are more than likely to be recipients of bullying behaviour.

> "I had a parent come; well a couple of parents, mum and dad, came to see me
> last week. Their kid has got Asperger's, he's completely being bullied" (SM,
> Interview no.4, p.5).

> "*I've covered bullying issues, which is a big issue at the moment, cyber bullying, with phones and social network, Facebook and so on*" (EWO 1, Interview no.5, p.2).

> "*A few students refuse to go to school it because of bullying from their peers. Ahem... schools say that they don't, they are not aware of these bullying issues. But, the child actually saying no I've been actually bullied they've told teachers and they've told members of staff and they feel that nothing been done*" (EWO 3, Interview 11, p.3).

4.4.7.3.3 The Teachers

Analysis of the results from the LAPs' views suggests that the LAPs consider teachers to be a contributing factor to school refusal and they reflected on the role of the teacher. They believe that teachers do not have a good understanding of SENs and therefore this can impact negatively on the identification of difficulties.

> "*They just may have ahem... SEN difficulties which hasn't even been picked up, ahem... which causes difficulties for the child*" (EWO 2, Interview no.6, p.2).

The analysis highlights that LAPs describe teachers as being inflexible in their approach with managing the curriculum and learning environment.

> "*When teachers don't really understand the level of flexibility that's required*" (SM, Interview no.4, p.1).

> "*I keep saying be flexible, but I mean, maybe make a shorter day, maybe have work stations all that sort of thing*" (SM, Interview no.4, p.3).

Analysis of data reveals that LAPs feel that some teachers have negative attitudes towards young people refusing to attend school. The LAPs concluded that teachers find it difficult to be welcoming.

> "*You should be kind of welcoming, welcoming the young child back in and you know, just support them, you know, see help them to. Give them support where they've missed out on work etc while they've been away. Just try to engage them again*" (EWO 2, Interview no.6, p.3).

The LAPs reflected on relationships between schools and parents and deemed these relationships to be an important factor. They reported that they felt that teachers were not working in partnership with parents, or they were not able to. The LAPs looked at the teachers' contributions to school refusal and they stated that the teachers' own personal feelings towards their work was an influencing factor in their approach. The analysis of the LAPs' views identified

that the teachers felt fear and had feelings of being under pressure. Mainly, the LAPs felt that the teachers had insufficient support and encouragement by their school system to meet the challenging needs of some young people.

> "*Teacher, I think teachers, I think it is a huge, a huge task for them to be running a class and to be making the necessary judgements and I think there's probably a lot of fear that goes into it and they need support and encouragement*" (SM, Interview no.4, p.3).

4.4.7.4 Discussion: Theme 6 – the Key Individuals and School Refusal

4.4.7.4.1 The Teachers

The HT and the AHT advocated that school refusal is indicative of a problem within schools. In some ways, having this view is a commendable way of thinking because it suggests that if the school is reorganised and becomes more attractive, the young person will attend. However, for the young person with an attachment disorder, separation anxiety from a primary caregiver or other emotional difficulties, it would be questionable whether the school could be made more attractive without taking into consideration their emotional needs.

Wall and Pryzwanksy (1985, p.886) suggest that secondary school teachers are less likely to seek professional attention for children who are described as "emotionally maladjusted", concluding that teachers may be trying to deal with serious emotional problems themselves rather than referring them to trained professionals. Wall and Pryzwansky's conclusion does not explain why teachers would want to work with children who require specific and trained professional support. One reason could be that teachers are not trained to identify children with serious emotional problems. Therefore, they would not be able to recognise significant emotional difficulties.

Another factor to be considered, when aiming to understand why teachers continue to work with children with serious emotional problems, is because teachers are fearful of their school management and their colleagues, if they are open about having difficulties with a young person with emotional difficulties. They are scared that they may be viewed as not being good at their job or not following the school's ethos. The research analysis revealed a minority voice from among the educational professionals, who referred to the teachers having fears about not being able to meet the needs of their learners.

4.5   Educational Psychologists and School Refusal

One of the secondary reasons for this research was to understand the role of the EP and school refusal. The findings demonstrate that the EPs felt they could offer a lot to their schools and they explained that they are skilled professionals who can work in many ways.

> "*I think they [EPs] should be in there training teachers about it and I think they should be in there with head teachers setting up systems to support these kids, working with staff in the school to set up whole programmes of support. I think they should have a pivotal role in delivering therapeutic interventions in the home with these kids, not necessarily CBT etc, but I think there is a way in which they could be working with them. I think they've got huge therapeutic skills*" (SEP, Interview no.3, p.7).

However, EBSPs were not so certain about what EPs could offer to school refusers and felt that EBSPs were more appropriately placed.

> "*I don't know... I don't know... I don't know. Some Educational Psychologists are like paint, it depends on who they are. I mean JW who I worked well with was absolutely fantastic with listening and doing things and trying things. Other Educational Psychologists were less sensible and I mean I think, you've got a positive of sharing with the professions, you've got more chance on influencing things, if you tell professionals things, they tend to take them more on board, maybe I'm not. What role do Educational Psychologists play?*" (HT, Interview no.10, p.8).

The EWOs felt that when they had previously involved an EP, the involvements had been positive with their observations, but the primary personnel for working with school refusers should be the EBSPs.

The findings identify that EPs feel they are able to contribute tremendously to the understanding of the issues, causes and reasons for school refusal, as well as devise the support packages. However, the EPs explained that schools identify the priority for their work. Therefore, it is not often that they work with young people who are school refusing. The barriers for EPs to become more involved with working with young people who are refusing to attend school is based on whether the school personnel feel that they can offer a positive contribution. The EBSPs and some LAPs reported that they do not see the EP having a definitive role in addressing school refusal.

4.6   Overview of the Findings

The findings demonstrate that the professionals who participated in this research defined school refusal through their own understanding of the causes and reasons for school refusal. The

educational professionals looked at the influencing factors as the precipitators to school refusal. A medical framework to understand school refusal was not used and only one participant questioned whether school refusal was a medical problem. The educational professionals did not establish an elaborate definition of school refusal, but their descriptions were congruent with the perspectives of Kearney et al. (1995, p.66), who state that thinking of school refusal as school phobia is ill-defined. The findings also demonstrate that the educational professionals linked school refusal to tangible causes and reasons, therefore highlighting the potential for tangible strategies. Carey (1990, p.629) defines phobia as "a persistent and intense irrational fear... Generally, phobias will lead to avoidance of the situation". Generally, phobias should not be seen as a separate entity or as a less important experience to other mental health difficulties. They should be considered equally under the term 'mental health issues or difficulties' because they are disabling to the people who experience them. If school refusal is considered to be a phobia, then phobias are considered to be based on irrational ideas and this would make addressing school refusal difficult because of the irrational component of the term 'phobia' and the fact that the majority of schools do not have within their setting the expertise to address phobias through interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy, counselling or psychotherapy. However, there are services for this that can be accessed outside of the school setting.

Reflecting on the term 'school refusal', Kearney et al. (1995) explain that this term has been associated with neurotic maladjustment. Referring to the educational professionals' perspectives, which identified reasons and causes for school refusal, it is possible to understand that the educational professionals might believe that there is some substance to this thought. The analysis of the educational professionals' views reveals the following theme: the interplay between external versus internal factors (within child factors and resiliency, reinforced negative feelings or failure - social and/or academic) and the complexity of relationships which highlight the emotional factors to understanding school non-attendance. These ideas are all are concerned with the emotional well-being and stability of the young person, suggesting that school refusal is associated with a degree of emotional upset. Neurotic maladjustment is thus not strongly supported by this research.

The term 'school refusal' has been used in this research. Pellegrini (2007) explains that extended school non-attendance is sex, race and socio-economic non-specific. However, when considering the findings, the findings highlighted that educational professionals do not think of school refusal in terms of race and sex; however, the majority of the educational professionals interviewed do take into consideration socio-economic circumstances. Only a small number of the participants

did not feel that socio-economic circumstances were a relevant factor, referring to the value placed on education within the family.

The findings suggest that there are difficulties with identifying school refusal and it also suggests that teachers are not able to recognise serious emotional problems in children. The findings indicate that the educational professionals who participated in the research believe that there are difficulties with identifying young people's needs. Thambirajah *et al*. (2008), investigating parentally condoned absences, state that teachers blame parents for difficulties with attendance and consider parental collusion as a contributing factor. The findings suggest that the majority of educational professionals believe that parents are complicit in their child's attendance difficulties.

Some educational professionals identified that some parents were supporting their child's non-attendance because they believe that this would achieve better educational outcomes through a change in placement. They described a lack of parenting skills which results in colluding behaviour. These findings suggest that the participants, the educational professionals believe that parents are complicit in the nature of their child's refusal to attend school, either knowingly or not.

The results also suggest that some educational professionals have negative views about parents, which means that they often assign blame to them for school refusal. The process of assigning blame might be one of the underlying reasons why there are difficulties with identifying the needs of school refusers. The educational professionals discussed the importance of the value of education. This was mainly considered with regard to the lack of value for education by the parent(s). On a practical note, one of the reasons why teachers may find it difficult to identify the needs of school refusers is because the young people are not in school (Malcolm *et al*., 2003). The Department for Education (DfE, 2012b) identifies a number of children who are absent from school daily and over the duration of a term. If a young person is away from school for a prolonged period of time, or for extensive intervals, then it does not provide teachers with the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the young person's academic and social needs.

The research into educational professionals' views on school refusal reveals a number of informative pieces of information. However, reflecting further upon the findings of the research, it is necessary to consider how these findings relate to the research question, in terms of which research questions were and were not addressed.

The findings demonstrate that the educational professionals who participated in the research were able to identify a number of causes and reasons for school refusal. The data analysis also suggests that the participants were able to define school refusal and they were able to talk about the importance of working together. The findings also demonstrate that many of the educational professionals who participated in the research did not refer to specific policies on school refusal, but they identified school-based support mechanisms. The findings highlight that the EBSPs and LAPs who participated in this research were not guided by any theoretical positions regarding their work with school refusers. Additionally, the EBSPs and LAPs did not identify the EP as the main professional to become involved with school refusers, even though they acknowledged that the EP's contributions were valuable.

4.7 Findings and the Theoretical Framework

Examining the findings and theoretical framework, it is necessary to reiterate that the research objective was to explore educational professionals' perspectives and views towards school refusal and/or extended school non-attendance. Social cognition theory was considered a useful method in order to understand how educational professionals make sense of school refusal, because it explores how prior learnt knowledge and experiences shape our view of the world and our understanding of it.

The interview data highlights the perceiver's understanding of school refusal and the analysis of the data moved the data beyond the schema of the individual, to creating a schema of the educational professionals' views. These views were in turn translated into a theory of educational professionals' views on school refusal. What can be said about social cognition theory is that it provides the foundations to understand the schemas that educational professionals hold, while implicit psychology explores the precursors to understanding how our schemas drive our actions.

The findings of the research suggest that the educational professionals who participated in the research believe that teachers hold negative views toward school refusers and they consider school refusers to be manipulative. The findings also suggest that some of the educational professionals believe that the parents of school refusers are weak in the management of their parenting role. Reflecting on whether educational professionals' attitudes towards school refusal inform or influence behaviour, Levins, Bornholt and Lennon (2005) explored the attitudes that teachers hold towards young people with SENs. Their results suggest that thoughts can be associated with teachers' behavioural responses and their intentions toward children with SENs.

The results are consistent with the idea that positive thoughts result in positive intentions, whereas negative thoughts influence negative behaviour.

Associating educational professionals' thoughts to their expectations, Jussim (1989, p.469) explored teachers' expectations with regard to self-fulfilling prophecies, suggesting that teachers' expectations do influence such prophecies on learners' achievement and motivation, describing the "power of expectancies to create social reality". The results highlight the importance of teachers' expectations and their influence on motivation. Linking this research to school refusal, the results suggest that educational professionals need to understand the value of their expectations for the young person to attend, engage and reconnect with the school, as this will be a defining influence on the young person's behaviour.

The findings of the research suggest that educational professionals identify communication as being important. They describe different levels of communication. Puro and Bloome (1987) explored teacher-pupil communication, stating that the explicit content is more than what has been said, but by interactional context:

> Learning in classrooms occurs through and is embedded in the interpersonal communication between teacher and student and among students (Puro and Bloome, 1987, p.28).

Reflecting on the interpersonal communication that takes place in schools and the relationships that stem from this communication, it is important to consider that these relationships are not solely shaped by equivalence in status, but defined by unbalanced power relationships between the teacher and the child. Therefore, the importance of the teacher's thoughts and expectations cannot be underestimated. Puro and Bloome (1987) advocate that the teacher's expectancy can create a young person's social reality. In relation to school refusal, if educational professionals expect the young person to attend, then the young person's behaviour will reflect the teacher's expectations.

4.8   Critical Evaluation of the Methodology and Processes

The aim of the research was to discover educational professionals' perspectives and views on school refusal. Aiming to establish an understanding of their views, a qualitative approach was adopted to collect and analyse the data.

If specific criticisms are to be levelled at this research, it would be possible to say that some of the questions in the interview were too similar, which meant that there was the potential for an interviewee to feel that their knowledge or views were being questioned.

The interview tried to elicit the participants' views on a number of areas, and attachment theory was one area. The researcher wanted to discover whether educational professionals considered attachment theory as a useful theory in understanding school refusal. However, this question appeared to be vague and perhaps too discreet. In some ways, the question could have been more direct. Willig (2008, p.24) identifies the importance of the research question, stating that:

> It is important to acknowledge that it is the researcher whose research question drives the interview. Through his or her questions and comments, the interviewer steers the interview to obtain the kind of data that will answer the research question.

This research used qualitative methodology to gather and analyse the data, and this method of inquiry can be critically evaluated. Willig (2008) states that semi-structured interviews are a useful way of gathering qualitative data, but interview data does not always provide an opportunity to pay due attention to contextual features, such as the interviewee's and interviewer's interactions, which can enrich the gained data. Hammersley (2008, p.25) explored qualitative inquiry through the underlying premise that qualitative research identifies itself with and is based on the theoretical position of rejecting scientific evaluation of people's perspectives, stating that:

> …qualitative researchers have often been selective in seeking to understand the perspectives of the people they study. It is true that they have attempted to understand the views of people with whom they sympathised, for political or ethical reasons; and, laudably, these have been those subordinated, devalued, discriminated against or oppressed by the wider society.

Taking a personal stance to this position, it is possible to question who in society gives a voice to the oppressed, discriminated and devalued? These individuals do not normally have access to individuals in power, nor do they have access to the communication tools to express themselves or impact change on their behalf. Perhaps the consideration for this research is to adopt an emancipatory position which allows for the voice of the disenfranchised to be considered. Adopting a critical realist position, which Robson (2002) describes as the 'third way' between positivism and realism, has provided the opportunity to achieve a greater understanding about school refusal/extended school non-attendance from the educational professionals' perspectives, because they are key to being the agents of change for vulnerable individuals.

Hammersley (2008, p.32) explains that "qualitative researchers have failed to defend their work effectively against quantitative criticisms", for not being rigorous in identifying measurable concepts and differences, as well as failing to establish generalisable findings. When reflecting on the findings of this research, it is possible to consider that the findings have been consistent with previous research when exploring the causes and reasons of school refusal.

The role of the researcher is an important factor in qualitative research and Tuffin (2005, p.23) identifies some issues in research in general:

> Problems with conducting research with human subject do not end with the subject themselves, with many studies highlighting the fact that the role of the experimenter is far from passive.

The data was analysed using grounded theory as an analytical tool and therefore it is really important that there is acknowledgement that the researcher has imposed aspects of themselves and their frame of thinking onto the data. This is regardless of how rigorous the researcher tries to be with the analysis. However, when taking this into consideration, the researcher can only rely on thoughts to do with reflexivity:

> Reflexivity implies that the researcher make visible their individuality and its effects on the research process. There is an attempt to highlight those motivations, interests and altitudes which the researcher has imported to the research and to reflect on how these have impacted on each stage (Finlay and Gough, 2003, p.23).

It is important to consider what was brought into the research by the researcher. The researcher's influence can be observed in the following: the selection of participants, type of participants and how the data was analysed. However, grounded theory has embedded rigours to the analytical process which enable researchers to monitor themselves. It is important not to discount what the researcher has brought, especially when considering the theoretical underpinnings that have shaped the research. The researcher brought their gender, ethnic origins, social class (perceived or assigned) and age. Yet, in the same token, there are other demographic markers which may have been brought to the research that may not be so apparent.

4.8.1 Limitations of the Research into Educational Professionals' Views on School Refusal

The researcher used an amended version of grounded theory and if the researcher was to undertake very similar research again, that research would use the full version of grounded

theory. There are a number of limitations to using grounded theory as an analytical tool. The following paragraphs will explore these limitations.

Silverman (2011, p.70) writes that "a defining strategy of grounded theory is theoretical sampling". The researcher used grounded theory as an analytical tool, so therefore it is possible to conclude that the researcher has not been able to fully explore concepts with participants in the same way as a researcher using the full version of grounded theory. The researcher in this research into educational professionals' views on school refusal attempted to use theoretical sampling in terms of exploring the data on paper. This way of using theoretical sampling is limited, because it does not encapsulate the breadth of investigation that is possible when clarifying information with participants during an interview process. If a researcher uses theoretical sampling in the interactive way, as described in the full version of grounded theory, this would provide the researcher with an opportunity to investigate the participants' views and ensure that the saturation point is fully achieved. It is fair to say that using grounded theory as an analytical tool means that a saturation point was not fully achieved and therefore the themes presented in this research can be considered to be not fully developed.

Another limitation of the research is evidenced in the research questions. This can be observed in the language used to formulate the questions. It was previously mentioned that the questions could be perceived as being very similar to each other. This should be considered as a contributing factor to understanding the limitations of the research interview questions, as they did not provide enough breadth and depth. Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p.155) explain that "The most effective questions are those that are short and clear, leaving the interviewee with no uncertainty about the sort of information sought".

The representativeness of the participants has been explored in this research. However, it is important to acknowledge that this is also a contributing factor to the limitations of the research into educational professionals' views on school refusal. The EBSPs were mainly in senior positions within the school settings and therefore the research does not contain the views of class or subject teachers.

One general criticism about grounded theory is linked to the idea that the theory emerges from the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Dey (1999) questions the accuracy of this notion, suggesting that the themes or theories that emerge from the analysis of the data are dependent on the researcher's theoretical position and what the researcher is

essentially looking for. Referring to this research into educational professionals' views on school refusal, the researcher acknowledges that psychological theories and the researcher's epistemology have influenced this research.

Another criticism raised against grounded theory research is that it does not satisfactorily address the question of reflexivity. Charmaz (2006) addresses concerns regarding the social constructionist version of grounded theory, by recognising that the emerging categories and themes do not emerge from the data but are constructed by the researcher during the research process. Reflecting upon whether this criticism can be assigned to this research into educational professionals' views on school refusal, then yes it would be equally possible to do so. However, the researcher made every attempt to document carefully and in detail each phase of the research, as this enabled the researcher to keep a check and be mindful of influences that could be imposed onto the data. This research would use the full version of grounded theory, because there would be opportunities to use the theoretical sampling technique in another way. Additionally, it would be able to explore pertinent issues arising from the interview and data analysis in a more effective way.

4.9   Relevance to the Practice and Policy of Educational Psychologists

The data analysis highlighted that EPs believe that they can offer more to the world of education than they are permitted or considered by other educational professionals. The educational professionals identified positive experiences of having educational psychology involvement, but remained firm in their belief that school refusal is best managed by EBSPs or EWOs. Similarly, the EPs were in agreement with the other professionals and stated that they were best placed to be facilitators of the process of support and offer training programmes. However, the findings of Wall and Pryzwansky (1985, p.886) should be borne in mind that teachers tend to be "less sensitive to covert, intrapsychic variables that may effect their students' learning potential" and therefore less inclined to seek additional support. The findings suggest that the EPs' role is restricted and dictated to by the priorities of the school and if the priorities of the school are not concerned with a young person who is not attending, the request for educational psychology involvement will not be considered. However, despite educational professionals identifying value in the information gained from the EPs, there was a small degree of negativity identified from the analysis and pertained to the quality of the educational psychology input, by the EP.

Educational policies over the last decade have focused on multi-agency partnerships and building a team around the child (DfES, 2004c). These principles have remained embedded in the ways of

working in the new direction of educational policy. The Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration' (DfE, 2011b) continues to ensure that young people with SENs are appropriately managed and addressed. The Green Paper proposes that provision will be made for young people beyond statutory school age and continue until the age of 25 years. Families and the young person will be supported through a personal budget, which will allow the families to commission some of the services they believe they require. This change in educational policy could impact on the role of the EP, where they will need to build a more dynamic way of working with young people beyond the age of 19 years old and the statutory school leaving age.

The research findings suggest that educational professionals consider that some parents do not have the skills to meet the demands of working with professionals. In light of the changes to the allocation of financial support for families and young people with SENs through the personal budget. The role of EPs could change to support parents directly and young people with identifying the best support packages, provide information on available options and provide more therapeutic work for the whole family, as well as act as an advocate for the young person or the parent(s).

The research findings identified that educational professionals believe that there are difficulties with identifying needs and it is only when these difficulties become more entrenched that teachers consider collaborating with other professionals. Perhaps the new educational policy for SENs may continue to focus on early identification and the role that EPs can play in and outside of the school context.

The DfE (2011b, p.66, Section 3.37) Green Paper highlights that "We want teachers to have greater freedom to use their professionalism and expertise in order to help all children progress". This is where EPs are best placed to continue to support teachers to enable young people to progress through an integrated approach of consultation, assessment, training and collaborative working. EPs will need to continue to support schools with their expectations for the role of the EP.

4.10 Future Research Questions and Significant Contribution

The direction for possible future research is as follows:

- Research that explores how professionals' value judgements influence actions and thoughts.

- Research that continues to support helping professionals to understand the role of adult relationships in young people's lives, so that this understanding will contribute to the processes of prevention of disengagement and build social connectedness for young people, not only in schools, but also in the wider community.
- This research is a small scale study and the findings suggest that educational professionals have an underlying understanding of what young people need to be actively engaged in within their school experience. Further research into the effectiveness of various support packages.

The contribution that this study makes is that it highlights educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal, especially as there have not been many published studies exploring this. This research gives an indication as to why addressing school refusal will be difficult for school professionals without establishing a multi-agency framework to address young people's needs.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews and the data analysis. The findings were grouped together in terms of professional identities and the core themes were explored in depth.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, is the conclusion. This is where the researcher will locate the findings of the research to the initial aims and explore the serendipitous discoveries.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview of the Chapter

Chapter 4 presented the findings and discussion for this research into educational professionals' views on school refusal. The findings revealed that educational professionals believe that there are a number of reasons and causes for school refusal. They did not identify one single contributory factor, explaining that a number of issues could be influencing factors. The school experience and social relationships with adults and peers were critically identified and discussed.

In this chapter, the initial aims of the research are explored (see Section 5.2) in relation to the findings previously presented. The conclusion focuses on identifying any serendipitous discoveries, before considering the implications for future research and educational psychology practice.

5.2 Locating the Context of the Findings to the Initial Aims of the Research

The aim of this research was to understand and explore educational professionals' views and perspectives on school refusal. In so doing, subsidiary questions were considered, these being:

- Can the views and perspectives of educational professionals be influenced by their professional backgrounds?
- Do educational professionals' views influence their approach when working with school refusers?
- How do educational professionals raise awareness about school refusal and the associated difficulties of identifying and addressing school refusal?
- What is the role of the EP in addressing school refusal?

The findings suggest that there are shared common ideas with regard to defining school refusal. However, despite sharing many similar perspectives in identifying the causes and reasons for school refusal, the professionals' specific views varied. Some professionals referred to the role of family influences, such as the parent(s) and socio-economic markers, whereas consideration was also given to the school experience such as ethos, SEN and relationships with teachers, as well as peers. Focus was given to the young person refusing to attend school and the educational professionals considered the issues of self-esteem and well-being. In terms of identifying whether the educational professionals' role has an influencing factor in how educational professionals

work with school refusers, the findings suggest that there are a number of professionals in the school refuser's life and their role and experiences influence what they can do. EWOs can offer parents a more 'hands-on' role than teachers, because their role permits that.

The findings suggest that some educational professionals believe that school refusers are manipulative. These views were assigned more to teachers than other educational professionals. The findings did not establish in any way whether these views directly influenced teachers' actions and practices. However, previous research by Schraw and Olafson (2002) indicates that this could be a possibility.

The findings also suggest that educational professionals consider collaborative working as being a positive and valuable approach, especially when it is focused on sharing information. However, there are issues pertaining to communication which involve a degree of mistrust between schools and parents, as well as between the professionals themselves. The educational professionals not working in schools thought that the EBSPs were reticent about seeking other professionals' support, and that they tended only to do so when issues became entrenched.

All of the educational professionals interviewed (with the exception of one) cited positive experiences of working with EPs, but this was within specific contexts, such as issues pertaining to learning and some behavioural concerns. The majority of the educational professionals did not consider that school refusal was an area of focus for EPs, describing this area for other professionals such as the EBSPs and EWOs. The EPs believed that they could offer significant support with training and support packages. Interestingly, one of these EPs advocated that the role of the EP with regard to school refusal/extended school non-attendance was concerned with being a facilitator.

5.3   Serendipitous Discoveries

The findings indicate that educational professionals' views on the role of EPs are shaped by the context of their previous experience of working with them. Most educational professionals commended their experience of working with EPs, but they felt that other educational professionals had a more defined contribution. The findings suggest that the contributions that EPs can make to addressing school refusal/extended school non-attendance are undervalued and overlooked, especially with their theoretical knowledge and expertise. Therefore, it is very important that EPs do not just think and act purely on the notion of being a facilitator, as this will

lessen their presence and contribution by reinforcing common established identities of the role of the EP.

5.4   Implications for Future Research and Educational Psychology Practice

The government has set out an agenda which provides a commitment to improving services to vulnerable children, with a view to enabling the development of stronger families. The Children's and Families Bill (2013) describes the way forward for meeting children's needs. The bill consists of a number of different strands, such as adoption, virtual schools, family justice, shared parental leave and flexible working. The particular strand of the bill that is of significant interest to educational psychology and the current context of EPs' practice is the SEN strand. However, EPs' interests can and will extend beyond the SEN strand. Nonetheless, the SEN strand describes the single assessment process and the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which brings together all services. The SEN strand also advocates a stronger role for the parents' voice and the option of a personal budget to implement the plan.

Reflecting on the future role of EPs in light of the changes, it means that EPs will be able to build further on their practice of working within a multi-disciplinary framework. The initiatives of the single assessment will lead to more multi-disciplinary assessments and enable EPs to work within a varied context outside of the school setting. This initiative may also allow EPs to work closely with parents and families within the family setting, to assist and enable those families who are experiencing difficulties. The changes will mean that parents will have a greater say about which professionals they become involved with, especially in light of the option to manage the personal budget that accompanies the EHCP.

The future changes will also allow EPs to define the way they work with schools, parents and other professionals, especially when thinking about the role of EPs in the wider community. The 'Troubled Families Programme' identifies families who have or cause problems. The objective of the programme is to enable these families to build better lives. EPs can be an effective resource for helping others implement change and they are experienced in working with families. EPs can add value to this programme and help build on helping children to re-engage with education, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as support the development of the parents, their self-esteem and confidence through early intervention programmes and community support packages, as well as providing supervision and training to key family support workers. The findings suggest also that there is a need for further investigation into school refusal. Therefore, attention should be paid to the following areas:

- **Defining school refusal or attendance difficulties:** an established and comprehensive definition of school attendance difficulties should be made, based on research findings and reviews. This definition should be referred to by educational and other professionals, as this will assist with identifying and meeting the needs of young people with school refusal. The findings highlight that as long as there are different ways of identifying and labelling attendance difficulties, vulnerable young people will not meet their academic or social potential at school.

- **School refusal and friendships:** further research is required to explore the importance of peer relationships. Research could explore whether there are links between social communication difficulties and school refusal. The findings of this research suggest that educational professionals believe that school refusers struggle with their social relationships.

- **Social development:** previous research has identified the characteristics of school refusers (McShane *et al*., 2001). However, further research is needed to explore the school refuser's social development in all key stages, with a view to identifying the social vulnerability factors of the young person.

- **Effective social skills programmes:** school refusers would benefit from targeted support to help them develop their social skills within the school setting, which involves their peers or class members. This type of programme should be supported by research evaluating their effectiveness.

- **Emotional literacy and school refusal:** further research is required to gain a greater understanding of the vulnerability issues for school refusers, both in the school setting and within the community.

- **Teachers' views:** additional research is required into teachers' views on the impact that school refusal has on teaching and learning in the classroom.

- **Parental involvement:** research exploring the parents of school refusers' views on working with the teachers and school staff.

5.5   Concluding Remarks

The findings of this research highlight that the role of the EP working with school refusers needs to be critically examined. It was identified that continued work is needed to help educational professionals understand how well-being issues and social connectedness, both in and outside of

the school, can impact on a young person's life experience. Additionally, the wider impact of a lack of social connectedness at home and at school is also seen as important.

Continuing with the thoughts on the implications of the findings for educational psychology practice, it is important and necessary that EPs ensure that their knowledge and skills are acknowledged, so that other educational professionals tap into their expertise, especially when it concerns school refusal. Many educational professionals do not consider EPs as the initial source of support, yet EPs can be informative in developing the educational professionals' understandings of systemic family relationships, providing therapeutic input and offering guidance on well-being and mental health issues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Committee Permission Letter

_____

UNDERSTANDING OF EAST LONDON
APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROGRAMME
INVOLVING HUMAN
PARTICIPANTS

Please read the Notes for Guidance before completing this form. If necessary, please continue your answers on a separate sheet of paper: indicate clearly which question the continuation sheet relates to and ensure that it is securely fastened to the report form.

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1.   **Title of the programme: Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology**

   Title of research project (if different from above):

Understanding and Examining the Different Views and Perspectives of Educational Professionals On School

Refusal

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2.   **Name of person responsible for the programme (Principal Investigator): Professor Irvine Gersch**

   Status: Programme Leader

   Name of supervisor (if different from above) Dr Sharon Cahill

   Status: Director of Studies

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3.   **School: Psychology   Department/Unit:**

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4.   **Level of the programme (delete as Appropriate):**

   (c)   Postgraduate (research or Professional Doctorate)

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5.   **Number of:**

   (a) researchers (approximately):1

   (b) participants (approximately):10

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6.   **Name of researcher (s) (including title): Lorna Nelson**

   Nature of researcher (delete as appropriate):

   (a)   (b)   students   1   (c)

If "others" please give full details:

7. Nature of participants (general characteristics, e.g. University students, primary school children, etc):

The research participants will be educational professionals who are currently employed within Local Authorities and schools in the London area. These participants will be Teachers, Educational Psychologists (EPs), Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs), Local Authority Advisors, Learning Mentors and Teaching Assistants (TA)

8. Probable duration of the research:

   from (starting date): Jan 2010   to (finishing date): Jan 2011

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9. Aims of the research including any hypothesis to be tested:

The primary aims are as follows:

- A) To identify and understand the assigned descriptors educational professionals use to explain or define school refusal, the research will investigate and establish whether there are any differences; and whether differences can be linked to professional backgrounds or roles.

- B) To gain a sense of the educational professionals views for the reasons and causes to school refusal. Researchers, Hadjistavropoulos *et al* (2003) highlighted the work of Van Maanen and Barley (1984) which identified that '*specific occupational communities create and maintain unique work cultures that differ in philosophical ideologies, attitudes, socialisation, work codes and routine practices and behaviours.*'(p.98). In light of this, it would be interesting to investigate this throughout the research.

- C) To find out what educational professionals think about the current systems and provisions in place to support school refusers.

The secondary aims are as follows:

- a) To discover whether there are any theoretical positions which define the professional's approaches or strategies to working with school refusers.

- b) To identify how well educational professionals are working together to address school refusal or to explore the barriers, in light of the DfES (2004b) Every Child Matters.

- c) To examine the role of the Educational Psychologist and their contribution to improving the access to education for school refusers.

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10. **Description of the procedures to be used (give sufficient detail for the Committee to be clear about what is involved in the research). Please append to the application form copies of any instructional leaflets, letters, questionnaires, forms or other documents which will be issued to the participants:**

This research will use a qualitative framework, as a means of investigating educational professionals' views of school refusal. The approach for gaining information from the participants will be through semi structured interviews (Please see attached Appendix 1-Pilot Interview Questions).

The prospective participants will be approached and they will be provided with oral information about the research. This will be followed by a letter which outlines the aims and objectives or the research project. The letter will enable the potential participants to think about the project and then given their consent (Please see attached Appendix 2- Letter to prospective participants). All participants will be made aware that they can withdraw their consent from the research project during any stage if they request.

Once all the interviews have been completed the information will be transcribed for the purpose of analysis. All information will be secured safely and once the research has been completed the data will be destroyed.

11. **Are there potential hazards to the participant(s) in these procedures?**   **NO**

    If yes: **(a) what is the nature of the hazard(s)?**

                (b) what precautions will be taken?

12. Is medical care or after care necessary? **NO**

If yes, what provision has been made for this?

13. May these procedures cause discomfort or distress? **NO**

If yes, give details including likely duration:

14. (a) Will there be administration of drugs (including alcohol)? **NO**

If yes, give details:

(b) Where the procedures involve potential hazards and/or discomfort or distress, please state what previous experience you have had in conducting this type of research:

15. (a) How will the participants' consent be obtained?
The participants will be firstly approached by the researcher and the project will be described in detail. If the participant expresses an interest in participating in the research then a letter describing the project will be given and the potential participant will be asked to sign a consent form, under the knowledge that they can withdraw at any stage during the research project.

(b) What will the participants be told as to the nature of the research?
The participant will be told the exact nature of the research, which is that the research project aims to gain an understanding of educational professional's views on school refusal.

16. (a) Will the participants be paid? NO

(b) If yes, please give the amount: £

(c) If yes, please give full details of the reason for the payment and how the amount given in 16 (b) above has been calculated (i.e. what expenses and time lost is it intended to cover):

17. **Are the services of the University Health Service likely to be required during or NO after the research?**

If yes, give details:

18. **(a)** **Where will the research take place?**

It is expected that the research will take place in LA offices, in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

(b) **What equipment (if any) will be used?**

The equipment required is a Dictaphone.

(c) **If equipment is being used is there any risk of accident or injury?   NO**

If yes, what precautions are being taken to ensure that should any untoward event happen adequate aid can be given:

19. Are personal data to be obtained from any of the participants?   **YES**

   If yes, **(a)**   give details:

The only information that will be required from the participants is their job title and numbers of years experience they have had in their post.

            (b)   state what steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the data?

In line data protection electronic – password protected, stored in a locked cupboard at the researcher's home

            (c)   state what will happen to the data once the research has been completed and the results written-up. If the data is to be destroyed how will this be done? How will you ensure that the data will be disposed of in such a way that there is no risk of its confidentiality being compromised?

The paper information will be shredded and destroyed. This will be the same for electronic data tapes and files will be erased and destroyed.

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20. Will any part of the research take place in premises outside the   **YES**

   University?

   Will any members of the research team be external to the   **NO**

   University?

   If yes, to either of the questions above please give full details of the extent to which the participating institution will indemnify the researchers against the consequences of any untoward event:

I have personal indemnity insurance and as I am working with a Local Authority setting I will be covered by their insurance.

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21. Are there any other matters or details which you consider relevant to the consideration of this proposal? If so, please elaborate below:

NO

22. **If your programme involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, either direct or indirect (including observational), please confirm that you have the relevant clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau prior to the commencement of the study.**

NOT RELEVANT – ALTHOUGH CRB CHECKED – NUMBER: 001256877160

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23. **DECLARATION**

I undertake to abide by accepted ethical principles and appropriate code(s) of practice in carrying out this programme.

Personal data will be treated in the strictest confidence and not passed on to others without the written consent of the subject.

The nature of the investigation and any possible risks will be fully explained to intending participants, and they will be informed that:

    (a)   they are in no way obliged to volunteer if there is any personal reason (which they are under no obligation to divulge) why they should not participate in the programme; and

    (b)   they may withdraw from the programme at any time, without disadvantage to themselves and without being obliged to give any reason.

LORNA NELSON: **Signed: _____**
(Person responsible)

_____   **Date: _____**

NAME OF DEAN OF SCHOOL: **Signed: _____**

_____   **Date: _____**

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    ethics.app
    [8/12/2008]
    APPENDIX
    CONSENT FORM
    INFORMATION SHEET
    INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix 2: Information Letter and Consent Form Given to Participants

_____

Dear Colleague,

My name is Lorna Nelson and I am an Educational Psychologist.

I am currently undertaking a research project with a focus on finding out educational professionals views on school refusal. This research will contribute to meeting the requirement for a doctoral course in Applied Educational and Child Psychology. All information collected will be kept confidential and your anonymity will be assured.

Please be aware that all information will be collected and stored in accordance to the Data Protection Act 1998. At the end of the research, all information will be shredded and electronic data deleted.

It is hoped that your contribution to this research will assist with developing and improving our approaches to working school refusal.

You will be asked to attend an interview and be asked to share your ideas or experiences on school refusal. The interview will take forty-five minutes. If for any reason you decide that you do not wish to participate or would like your interview to be withdrawn from this research, please let me know; as you have the right to withdraw your participation without giving any reason at any stage of the process.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Nelson
Educational Psychologist

Consent Form

Please read the following statements and tick the appropriate box.

	YES	NO
I have read the letter.		
I would like to participate in this research project		
I understand that I can withdraw my consent from the research at any stage.		
I understand that the research data will be shredded once the research has been completed.		
I understand that all information provided will be kept confidential and my identity will not be revealed throughout the entire research.		

I, _____ (Name of Person) agree to participate in the interviews.

Signed: _____

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

_____

When the term school refusal is used to describe a young person, what are the images formed?

Why do you think that some young people do not or want to, or find it difficult to attend school?

What role do the following: parent, teacher, school and the pupil play in contributing to school refusing behaviour?

What do you think educational establishments do to support a young person, the family, and the school staff to address school refusal?

What strategies do you use to address school refusal. Are they successful, or not and how would you evaluate them?

Local Authorities have measures in place to address school refusal what are they?

Can you explain what do you think schools are doing to address school refusal?

Who are the key professionals to address school refusal?

Should school refusal be addressed in or out of the school setting?

What role should the Educational Psychologist play when addressing school refusal?

Who do you think needs support when addressing school refusing behaviour?

Finally, what do you think happens to young people who are school refuser?

Appendix 4: Transcript of Interview Number 2

School Refusal Interviews
Transcription of Interview 2

Interviewer: Interview number two on school refusal. Could you tell me about your experience and work in education?

Interviewee: Okay, well I actually studied psychology degree in the mid 90s and then after that I was interested in the route to becoming an educational psychologist. So, I realised that I would have to actually embark on a PGCE course and straight after I did that course. That led me to work as a classroom teacher for three years with a reception age pupils and also year one. I thoroughly enjoyed that time; I wasn't too sure whether I wanted to follow the educational psychology route so soon. I was kind of interested in actually developing my skills as an advance skills as a classroom practitioner. But, I just thought I would try and apply just to see the experience of what would happen. Just lucky I got a place at the Institute of Education. I did actually start that. Following the course, I took a position at Bedfordshire Local Authority and I worked there for about nearly three years because that was good for commuting from where I lived in the Midlands. Then, I actually then took a position in Leicestershire and I worked there for two years and after that experience sort of came to end. The reason it came to an ended because I actually got engaged and got married and I had moved to London. I worked in Ealing for a couple of years. Then in Hillingdon Local Authority for about 13 years as well. So, I think as I worked for the different Local Authorities I have learnt to do lots of different things. Earlier on in my careers more about getting to familiar with the different kinds of needs and for example children experiencing literacy difficulties, children on the autistic spectrum and those with for example behavioural and emotional needs. So just gaining experience working with children who present with a range of needs and trying out different assessment tools. During that time I also focused on improving my analysis on what I was presented with and actually then how to sort of feedback in more a concise way and as I moved to London, I was actually quite keen then, I felt quite confident with the different areas, especially with developing a specialism. There was an opportunity in Ealing where I spent a couple days a week in and they were actually quite bright. That's where I they approached me about managing friendship group, and it was actually affecting their learning. At the same time I would get phone calls from their parents about their daughter's attitude and disengagement from their relationship. How their performance have deteriorated at school. Also found the importance of communicating with the SENCo and I found that those with learning difficulties were getting raised. Once I started working after nine years, I wanted to develop these ideas further and I am on the doctorate programme. So, just recently I had a baby and I

am working part-time as an EP and I continue to enjoy the main-grade work and trying new things out and just developing my case load and working alongside that.

Interviewer: Okay, what we are going to be looking at the ideas of school refusal and what I want you to think about is from your understanding, when the term school refusal is used to describe a young person what are the images formed?

Interviewee: Okay, I think we can think of pupils and there are lots of questions that come to mind because you think that where is the pupil, are they at primary school then are they are at secondary school and sometimes you think and then you thinking about what are the reasons for this. Then you think about is it a girl or a boy. Then you think about what is going on in the child's home life and I would be interested in exploring that first and then the relationship the child has with their parents or careers and what the family dynamics is like. Also, you sort think about what are the possible causes in school is it about behaviour and looking at their emotional state and looking to see how do they actually communicate their emotions? There might be a barrier and to being able to get their views across and it might cause frustration because they feel that they are not understood and it causes so much anxiety for them that they don't want to be in the school environment. Those are some of the things that come to mind that I would want to get the information about.

Interviewer: What do you think shapes your thinking to do with school refusal about some of the things you would want to think about with regards to the barriers? What sort of things shape your thinking and what makes you think and ask those questions?

Interviewee: I think I recently had involvement with a case where there were issues a child being able to appropriately express his emotions he just wasn't really expressing his emotions so we didn't know if he was not doing that because there might be another issue going on and for example he is currently being investigated for maybe Asperger's Syndrome and so, we didn't know and there's that barrier. Or whether, he is quite bright and we didn't know whether he is choosing to trying to camouflage his difficulties on purpose. But, then the SENCo has been quite heavily involved this year because when he does come to school, it just takes him time to develop his relationship with others, once he does that he is forthcoming. Based on that we've ruled out that he not got Asperger's. He has not got trusting relationships. We looked at his family and his parents themselves are highly anxious people and seem to contact the psychology service a lot and they send me quite detailed emails and really they just being and could say that are caring parents closely monitoring what professionals are doing. So, didn't really think that feel that that there is anything wrong with that but other colleagues that have been involved in

this case feel that the parents are highly anxious themselves but I think it more an emotional issue.

I also think that this student is quite powerful now because they've almost choosing not to express their views and they are almost choosing that when they decide for themselves when they are not going to their lessons, and they are actually spending some one-to-one time with the SENCo, the time that they are in school. So they are cutting off, choosing to cut off from the mainstream experience. Almost as if they made that decision themselves so it is a case that I am currently talking about is ongoing and I've heard that this child is not attending at all now and I do worry about what is happening to him.

Interviewer: Thank you. Why do you think that some young people do not or want to or find it difficult to attend school?

Interviewee: I think it could be a range of factors that contribute to that. It might be that they've actually got to a point where they are experiencing certain issues because of more support demands that you have upon you in school environment that they may not having school support at an earlier stage. Some of these youngest I have find are maybe more sensitive than children of their age and they are not as resilient and they actually find the day to day challenges quite difficult where other children can manage sort the day to day multiple demands of school and kind contributes to being anxious on a day-to day basis and that seems to escalate to a point where and they can't actually manage those feelings and they get to the point they can't succeed maybe in a school environment because they become so anxious.

Interviewer: You mentioned multiple demands. Can you tell me a bit more about what that means for you?

Interviewee: Okay, I think my understanding of that is, having to cope with getting through the start of the day to the end of the day. So, that would involve coping with transitional points during the day. There are obviously busier times, there's a lot more in a secondary school environment, it is a lot more nosier and a lot more busier. Sometimes they may come across youngest that they don't know and that might become targets for bullying and also depends on demands placed upon them in a classroom situation, so for example if this youngster has difficulties learning possibly because they have been missing school it trying to possible because they have demands placed upon them in classroom situation and they might have gaps in their knowledge, so we could struggle with actually accessing the curriculum. I would also be thinking about their peer relationships, it might be that they don't find it easy to make friends or sustain friendships and that going to be another challenge that they have to face when they are at school. I think all of these little things add up and contribute to a higher level of anxiety. might have difficulties .

Interviewer: This follows on to what you have just been mentioning because I want you to think about what do you think are the underlying causes and reasons for school refusing behaviours?

Interviewee: It is difficult to say actually, I have been involved with a handful of cases, but they all seem to have a common pattern to them. I think that one of the underlying causes would be is that their needs aren't recognised earlier enough so they actually get missed. Whereas, I think in terms of their developmental emotional, social and behavioural development needs to be identified at an earlier stage when they are at primary school. I think they actually get missed quite easily for whatever reason maybe because they are not engaged in inappropriate behaviour, disruptive behaviour and so, I think that's one of the reasons. I think that in terms of their overall resiliency levels, I think that their resiliency levels are lower than their peers at that age because where they possible think they can't actually cope with difficult or challenging experiences. There maybe also issues to do with learning difficulties. There maybe difficulties with their underlying cognitive development and they are not receiving adequate support for that which might cause them to fall badly behind which makes them feel not successful in the school situation. This is what I have said before and I think because there might be gaps in their attendance might not have formed adequate peer relationships and so they haven't got a reason to come into school and might not actually have any friends. I think that one of these different factors might add up, to causing the anxiety and frustration.

Interviewer: Of the factors you've mentioned which one do you think could be the most important for you?

Interviewee: I think myself I think that the one that is important is focusing on the developing the young person's ability to be able to actually communicate their views really intent of how they are actually feeling even if they got difficulties, difficulties with expressing language for staff to really concentrate on actually finding ways for a child to express how they're feeling and then actually acting accordingly to that and that needs to happen on a frequent basis.

Interviewer: Someone I interviewed mentioned social economic disadvantages, how do you make sense of that as a cause?

Interviewee: So would you be talking about where they are living and possible impact? Well I think that even if you are actually from that crowd where you're disadvantage in terms of where you are living in a more deprived area if the parents actually still foster the importance of education and even if you live in a deprived area, I don't always see that as a factor that, I wouldn't see that as a factor that is worth it. I only think that relevant. I think that it is more important the values of the parents or the careers actually hold as supposed to where the child is actually living..

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Interviewer: Thank you. What role do you think the following: parent, teacher, school and the pupil and the individual themselves play in contributing to school refusing behaviour? You can think of them as named individuals.

Interviewee: Okay. I think parents need to recognise that they do need each work in conjunction with their child and school must realise that this issue is actually becoming more prominent. They need to be prepared to not back off from the school but work with the school. The parents needs to become involved in actually physically accessing the child, in actually trying to work out why the child is reluctant to go to school but at the same time they should be trying to make or encourage them to go to school, to attend school as well. I think it can be difficult for them because quite often they will be doing that, the child still refuses to attend school. I think the parents need to be opened minded about allowing the professionals to step in and become involved as well.
In terms of the teachers, I think there needs to be communication between the different adults that come into contact with youngsters, so if there are for example is any agreed plan in place. If there is a meeting between the SENCo and the parents that information needs to be shared with the adults in school so they are aware of what that youngster is responding to. It may be that they need lots and lots of reassurance and that information is feedback for example to given to subject teachers so that they can actually be involved in carrying that out. It might be that they don't like to be criticised so that it really valuable for teachers to actually know that and to when they try to address issues they are actually able to just work with that youngster.
In terms of the child themselves, I think the child probable will need to have, the child will need to have the opportunity to develop some kind a trusting relationship with somebody else at school, if they have not already. To help them with expressing how they are feeling about the whole school experience and gaining something positive for them.

Interviewer: In terms of the school as an organisation and what do you think their contribution might be?

Interviewee: I think it would be about them acknowledging the situation if they haven't tried identified concerns at an earlier point when the concerns do escalate and the youngster refusing they need to be supportive. They need to work out how to try include this youngster as supposed to sometimes getting too negative about the situation and thinking that the child does not want to actually come to school. Or thinking, making arrangements for the child to go elsewhere, so they need to try do their best to be supportive in that approach.

Interviewer: What do you think educational establishments do to support a young person, the family, and the school staff for addressing school refusal?

Interviewee: I think there are services available in the Local Authority that can steps in and obviously they would need to have contacted first, so that would include the Educational Psychology Service, included the child, family adolescent consultation service which supports the actual family and the child. So there are services out there. But what I find that there's not enough communication between the actual services themselves and in the events you might have involvement of the different services I think we really need to come together, to share their views and joint help to improve child. .

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that you had experience of working with a young person who was reluctant to attend school and you even described a situation where you think they are currently not in school. I want you think about the strategies you use as a professional working in that case?

Interviewee: What I used so far? I think it is important to actually look at what focus on information gathering and strengths also. I did look back in the pupil's file. They had been known the educational psychology service and I looked at their cognitive assessment that had been undertaken. I identified strengths and areas of needs. One of the first meetings with the school I raised with them the child strengths and this is what should be focused on during lessons and the needs, this is what should be accommodated in lessons to make his access to the curriculum more possible. Look at that area first. Then I was interested to finding out, this child had issues with his expressive language skills and I wanted to find out more about his emotional understanding and his resiliency levels because parents described him as being very sensitive and I carried out two assessments on resiliency on adolescent and then the Behavioural Emotional Screening system I was actually using this for my doctorate case I was working on. That's when I found it was quite significant, he has strengths in terms of his cognitive ability he was actually on purpose gave me a positive impression of himself that indicated to me that he is trying to camouflage that he has got difficulties at all.
There were some barriers going on with his social action communication. The Child and Family Adolescent Consultation Service were involved and they raised the question whether he was on the Autistic Spectrum. I asked the parents and the school to complex a check list that explores the triad of impairment. When I got the information back it actually came to light that he has not got that difficulties associated with that. The SENCo also highlighted that he does have good relationships with others. I actually ruled that out and I working through the information, developing hypothesis and testing them.

I have been supportive of the school and the parents in terms of implementing appropriate actions for this youngster. The school has actually applied for statutory assessment and they have support in place in terms of spending time with him for the whole morning. The school are involved in that they weren't too keen with going ahead with that. The parents, the school feel that there isn't a major issue; they feel that the issue is with the parents. There is a colleague of mine who is a dyslexia specialist. The child has dyslexia as well and believes that the issue is with the parents. I am reluctant to accept that. So we are kind of at the stage where we are waiting for the outcome of the statutory assessment.

Interviewer: Would you describe your strategies so far, would you described them as successful or not. How would you evaluate them?

Interviewee: I think in terms of my professional practice they way I have actually in terms of how I've dealt and managed this case. I think that I have followed the steps involved and produce a comprehensive report at the end of it. The school has not worked so well with the parents, they seem to view the parents in a negative way and the parents actually realised that and they tend to communicate with me. There seems to be not very good relationships between the school and the parents. The school have taken over, have implemented the actions that we've agreed. I think they have only done it half-heartedly. So that what's the barrier has been with the system in terms of the implementation of the strategies.

Interviewer: You mentioned the local authorities previously, what measures have local authorities or services put in place to address school refusal?

Interviewee: Actually, this is the first authority where I have worked closely with the school refusal or those who refuse to attend to school. My attention has not been drawn to any particular approach to use with school refusal. A colleague of my who is a dyslexia specialist shared literature with me around school refusal but I felt it was out of date, about 20 years old so I didn't take it too seriously. I think if my involvement continues with this case then I will do some background reading, to find more current views on school refusal. Do a literature review on school refusal.

Interviewer: Can you explain what do you think schools are doing to address school refusal?

Interviewee: I think that I have not had the opportunity to specifically ask them about that I wouldn't be totally sure about the affects. I think they do attempt to work closely with the parents and outside agencies, EWO and other professional involved. I do see efforts around that.

Interviewer: In terms of key professional, personnel to addressing school refusal, you mentioned a few just a minute a go. Who do you think those key professional should be?

Interviewee: I think they should be ones who have a relationship with whether that school teacher, SENCo or a Mentor. I also think it is useful to have a maybe peer mentor. If it is a secondary school maybe an older youngster. In terms of the school working favourable, it depends on the outside agencies involved. .

Interviewer: Can I ask you? Should school refusal be addressed in or out of the school setting?

Interviewee: I think it least needs to be assessed initially in the school setting, but there does needs to be involvement by outside agencies, specially looking at other areas in more depth to see whether explanations to what could be contributing.

Interviewer: What role should the Educational Psychologist should play when addressing school refusal?

Interviewee: I think the EP should be in the role of facilitating and supporting the school, when they are actually collaborating with the parents. So, I think like the example I have provided, so in terms of looking at what's being investigated, signposting. Whether there are any gaps in the investigation, signposting the appropriate agencies, making sense of the incoming information, using that information to put together a very tight plan to use regularly by the school.

Interviewer: Who do you think needs support when addressing school refusing behaviour?

Interviewee: Pupils and the actual parents. The school needs to work in conjunctions with all. I feel myself being involved in the case. I felt at time to raise this case at supervision. I felt that it got to the point where I tried various avenues myself based on my professional experiences and ability and it reached a point where I felt it needed to be discussed further with more experienced person than myself.

Interviewer: Finally, what do you think happens to young people who are school refuser?

Interviewee: I think they end up not being in school. This is happening to the youngster I have been involved with. In another authority where I have worked, the Child and Family Adolescent Service acknowledge that the youngster had a high level of anxiety and the acknowledgement that the youngster was not mainstream.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Appendix 5: Example of Analysed Interview: Interview Number 2

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School Refusal Interviews
Analysis of Interview 2

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Question 1

Interview number two on school refusal. Could you tell me about your experience and work in education?

Okay, well I actually studied psychology degree in the mid 90s and then after that I was interested in the route to becoming an educational psychologist. So, I realised that I would have to actually embark on a PGCE course and straight after I did that course. That led me to work as a classroom teacher for three years with a reception age pupils and also year one. I thoroughly enjoyed that time; I wasn't too sure whether I wanted to follow the educational psychology route so soon. I was kind of interested in actually developing my skills as an advance skills as a classroom practitioner. But, I just thought I would try and apply just to see the experience of what would happen. Just lucky I got a place at the Institute of Education. I did actually start that. Following the course, I took a position at Bedfordshire Local Authority and I worked there for about nearly three years because that was good for commuting from where I lived in the Midlands. Then, I actually then took a position in Leicestershire and I worked there for two years and after that experience sort of came to end. The reason it came to an ended because I actually got engaged and got married and I had moved to London. I worked in Ealing for a couple of years. Then in Hillingdon Local Authority for about 13 years as well. So, I think as I worked for the different Local Authorities I have learnt to do lots of different things. Earlier on in my careers more about getting to familiar with the different kinds of needs and for example children experiencing literacy difficulties, children on the autistic spectrum and those with for example behavioural and emotional needs. So just gaining experience working with children who present with a range of needs and trying out different assessment tools. During that time I also focused on improving my analysis on what I was presented with and actually then how to sort of feedback in more a concise way and as I moved to London, I was actually quite keen then, I felt quite confident with the different areas, especially with developing a specialism. There was an opportunity in Ealing where I spent a couple days a week in and they were actually quite bright. That's where I they approached me about managing friendship group, and it was actually affecting their learning. At the same time I would get phone calls from their parents about their daughter's attitude and disengagement from their relationship. How their performance have deteriorated at school. Also found the importance of communicating with the SENCo and I found that those with learning difficulties were getting raised. Once I started working after nine years, I wanted to develop these ideas further and I am on the doctorate programme. So, just recently I had a baby and I am working part-time as an EP and I continue to enjoy the main-grade work and trying new things out and just developing my case load and working alongside that.

Memo 1

8th April 2011

Concepts gained from Interview 2:

1. Professional Journey.
2. Professional well-being.

Defining professional self: Establishment of credible professional self.

The concept of 'Defining professional self: Establishment of credible professional self' applies to this interview as well. This is partially due to the fact the information was given in response to a direct question proposed by the researcher.

Exploring the similarities between the interviewees, both refers to their years in education. Interviewee 2 described her experience through a narrative but in total the interviewee's years in education appears to be over 20 years, "*work as a classroom teacher for three years.*" "*I took a position at Bedfordshire Local Authority and I worked there for about nearly three years.*" "*I actually then took a position in Leicestershire and I worked there for two years*". "*I worked in Ealing for a couple of years*". "*Then in Hillingdon Local Authority for about 13 years as well*".

What is interesting is how the interviewees establish their credible professional self interviewee #1 describes the various settings and context in which they have worked and interviewee #2 described the various Local Authorities.

However, when exploring if there are any differences it is possible to gain a sense of career journey for one of the participants. Interviewee #2 said "*I was interested in the route to becoming an educational psychologist.*" She uses the word "embark". Thinking about what this word means, it suggests the ideas of getting on board, to put on something or in an actual sense of getting on board a plane or a ship. This reinforces the idea that Interviewee #2 sees her roles in education as a professional journey and the experience gained from this supports her ***professional journey***. Interviewee #2 talks about her emotional experiences and said, "*I thoroughly enjoyed that time.*" Here there interviewee #2 describes a ***professional well-being***, which is not present in Interview #1. The language used is intertwined with the journey and she uses terms such as "*Developing*", "*Just lucky*" and "*After that experience sort of came to end*".

Looking closely at the language used and the ideas presented by Interviewee 2 with regards to her experiences she explores her own learning, which is different to describing the context of which experiences where gained. Interviewee 2 said, "*I have learnt to do lots of different things. Earlier on in my careers more about getting to familiar with the different kinds of needs.*" "*I also focused on improving my analysis on what I was presented with and actually then how to sort of feedback in more a concise way.*"

Reflecting what does learning mean to educational professionals and who does the learning? In Interviewee #1, the participant describes how she teaches and taught others while Interviewee #2 explores her own learning. What does this tells me about

the participants and their roles in education? Both Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 have a sense of their own professional journeys. Interviewee 1 describes her experience in terms of a having experienced it. While Interviewee #2 describes what she has learnt from her experiences. The question here is does this mean the same thing and is there really a difference? Perhaps there is no real difference because ultimate it is the experience that is the important fact? Bearing in mind that others may feel that it is what is learnt from the experience is of most value. It would be possible to link this to other concepts elicited from Interview 1, for example **Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate** and then to link this idea to one of the identified the themes/categories **Professional: Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate.**

Something that stands out in Interview 2 is the manner in which Interviewee #2 connects the events of her personal life to her professional life. Interviewee #2 explained "*So, just recently I had a baby and I am working part-time as an EP.*" Furthermore, Interviewee #2 promotes the idea of **professional well-being** by saying "*I continue to enjoy the main-grade work and trying new things out and just developing my case load.*"

Memo 2

8th April 2011

Concepts gained from Interview 2:

3. **Developing professional confidence.**

4. **Professional communication.**

5. **Professional Discourse.**

Demarcation of educational settings and environments.
"*Following the course, I took a position at Bedfordshire Local Authority and I worked there for about nearly three years because that was good for commuting from where I lived in the Midlands. Then, I actually then took a position in Leicestershire and I worked there for two years and after that experience sort of came to end. The reason it came to an ended because I actually got engaged and got married and I had moved to London. I worked in Ealing for a couple of years. Then in Hillingdon Local Authority for about 13 years as well. So, I think as I worked for the different Local Authorities I have learnt to do lots of different things.*"

It is possible to recognise that Interviewee 2 has worked in a number of Local Authorities as an Educational Psychologist and therefore this has allowed her to work in a variety of educational settings and environments. Both Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 have worked in a number of settings and therefore, the assumption can be made that between them there is a wealth of information, knowledge and skill.

The difference between Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 is that Interviewee #1 describes her role more. It appears that Interviewee #1's role changes within the context of her working experiences and the setting reflects this. It is possible to gain a form of professional progress, which stems from the title of the roles. Therefore, over the years, Interviewee #1 started as a teacher and now has progressed to becoming

one of the most senior individuals within a school setting, the Deputy Head. Whereas Interviewee #2 has worked in a number of Local Authorities and educational settings but the title of her role remains the same, Educational Psychologist.

The question which has been raised how does Interviewee #2 mark her professional progress? It is necessary to do so? Does title for positions limit or enhance our understanding of the role? Interviewee #2 refers to herself as a 'main –grade', stating that "*I continue to enjoy the main-grade work.*"

"Main-grade". What does main-grade mean? Bog standard? Average? General? These words do not incite or carry the ideas or thoughts of authority and influence. Interview 1 explored these ideas and Interview 2 presents the contrast.

Therefore, it is possible to think about what is going on? Interviewee #1 identifies herself through establishing her authority, versatility and influence with the context of knowledge, experience and the educational setting she works within. While Interviewee #2 does not refer to or present any ideas of this. Actually, Interviewee #2 suggests that as a professional she is developing her confidence. "*I felt quite confident with the different areas, especially with developing a specialism.*"

Is confidence and authority the same or two different things? The ability to enable others to have confidence might promote a degree of change, while having authority means that the degree of change is greater; or the access to influencing change is greater? It is possible to think that Interviewee #1 recognise her authority because it is automatically associated with the title of the role. Whereas Interviewee #2 is to inspire confidence be a facilitator in enabling others. This is achieved through having *professional confidence*, which support by *knowledge and experience*.

Authority is sometimes linked with decision making. Interviewee #2 does not present this in her description of her role. Interviewee #2 explained that "*Also found the importance of communicating with the SENCo.*" What does communicating mean? Listening? Speaking? Do professionals communicate with each other in a different way? Does this communication involve authority where one person is trying to influence another? *Professional Communication*.

Thinking about professionals' communication, it is possible to probe and think what is going on? Is Interviewee #2 highlighting something specific about professionals' communication? What does take place when professionals communicate with each other? Do they use different language, more complicated ways of expressing themselves? Is there a sense of equality when communicating? Is the manner in which professionals communicate influenced by exerting their knowledge position or views? These questions develop the ideas of is there a *Professional Discourse*, which is different to *Professional Communication*? Professional Discourse focuses on what and how someone may say something and is influence by who the audience and the recipient are of the information. The audience maybe other professionals or not, but it takes into consideration the sensitivities or consideration the other person(s) understandings and feelings. While Professional Communication draws upon the

mechanics of how communication is convened and associated with authority and influence. Perhaps what draws people professionals together and then the professional discourse defines how they speak to each other.

Question 2

Okay, what we are going to be looking at the ideas of school refusal and what I want you to think about is from your understanding, when the term school refusal is used to describe a young person what are the images formed?

Okay, I think we can think of the pupils and there are lots of questions that come to mind because you think that where is the pupil, are they at primary school then are they are at secondary school and sometimes you think and then your thinking about what are the reasons for this. Then you think about is it a girl or a boy. Then you think about what is going on in the child's home life and I would be interested in exploring that first and then the relationship the child has with their parents or careers and what the family dynamics is like. Also, you sort think about what are the possible causes in school is it about behaviour and looking at their emotional state and looking to see how do they actually communicate their emotions? There might be a barrier and to being able to get their views across and it might cause frustration because they feel that they are not understood and it causes so much anxiety for them that they don't want to be in the school environment. Those are some of the things that come to mind that I would want to get the information about.

Memo 3
19th April 2011
Concepts gained from Interview 2:

6. **Processes and steps involved in professional work**

7. **Within child factors vs events that promotes the emotional state.**

8. **Communication – the voice of the young person**

9. **Barriers to communicating for the young person**

10. **The relationship between child and parent.**

11. **Socialisation**

12. **The emotional relationship between child – parent. /The foundations of resiliency.**

Establishing a rational and a theory on school refusal
"*Okay, I think we can think of pupils and there are lots of questions that come to mind because you think that where is the pupil, are they at primary school then are they are at secondary school and sometimes you think and then you thinking about what are the reasons for this.*"
Both Interviewees question themselves. Interviewee #1 "*I will immediately think why have this situation arise?*" and Interviewee #2 "*I think we can think of pupils*" "*Then*

your thinking about what are the reasons for this?"

The similarity between the interviews is that both Interviewees are questioning and wanting to find out what is happening. However, the types of questions they ask themselves are different from each other. Interviewee # 1 thinks about what factors have contributed to make the situation occur, while Interviewee #2 thinks of the pupil. Interviewee #1 used the word "immediately" which suggests a quick response, while Interviewee #2 slowly describes thinking about the pupils which leads to then thinking about the possible reasons.

Development of an hypothesis and undertaking the research
The analysis of interview 1 reflected on one of the phrases used by Interviewee #1 where she said, "*If I hear*". However, there is a difference between the Interviewees. Interviewee #2, said*, "I think we can think of the pupils."* There is a difference between the Interviewees and this is linked to their thought processes. Interviewee #1 makes sense of what they are being told by others. While Interviewee #2 begins the process of generating ideas or gathering information. The response of Interviewee #1 is a conclusion has been made and she is making sense of it, establishing their own views on why something occurs. While Interviewee #2 begins a process of gathering information to make a conclusion. Therefore, there is a distinction between the interviewees but at this point I am finding it difficult to identify. Perhaps, this is because one is making sense of what they are being told while the other is an investigator, establishing their hypothesis and then doing their research. Interviewee #1 makes sense of what they are being told and act up it. While Interviewee #1 gathers the information, formulates a conclusion and labels the behaviour. This can be linked to the ideas which have come out of memo 2 *Professional Communication and Professional Discourse.*

Looking closely at the language used by the Interviewees. Interviewee #1 says "If I hear", and Interviewee #2 says, "I think". One suggests a passive activity, hearing while thinking suggests an active activity. Therefore, it is possible to view this language as an indicator of the *Professional Communication and/or the Professional Discourse?*

The jigsaw puzzle of life - background Influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life.
"*Then you think about is it a girl or a boy. Then you think about what is going on in the child's home life and I would be interested in exploring that first and then the relationship the child has with their parents or careers and what the family dynamics is like.*"

"*Then you think about is it a girl or a boy."* My own personal view is to ask myself is this relevant to the nature of school refusal or extended school non-attendance? Is school refusal more prevalent in boys or girls? Actually, I am unable to answer this and therefore, this should be explored further when researching information on school refusal. Gender issues are important, research has highlighted how girls are having more successful experiences of education and if one of the markers is exam success

then girls are achieving and doing well. What are boys and girls experiences of school and of life? Life is too board but school is something that can be explored. Are gender issues important to the interviewee? Female and male success and achievements differ or are similar?

"*Then you think about what is going on in the child's home life and I would be interested in exploring that first.*"

Both interviewees reflect on the influence of the child's home life. Interviewee #1 referred to the word "background" to initially raise this concept. While Interviewee #2 refers to the "*child's home life*". However, thinking closely about these similar ideas, the expression of these ideas is very different. Interviewee #2 refers to the "*child's home life,*" suggests that this is something created and therefore, there is a degree and the possibility of change, while the word '*background'* suggest something that you are born into, which is something innate, unchangeable like ethic origins and genetics.   As a concept there isn't much difference but there is a slight difference which needs to be explored further in this interview and perhaps.

"I would be interested in exploring that first." This sentence was spoken by Interviewee #2 and suggests that there are no real established ideas; this is opposite to testing a hypothesis. The interviewee appears to be interested in finding out what there is first, before judgements are made or referred to. The word first does suggest that it would be the main action in the investigation. The exploration appears to be important for the Interviewee and could be linked to the manner in which she carries out her work. This can be seen as the way in which we carry out our work. The **Processes and steps involved in professional work.** Perhaps different professionals have different approaches to how they carry out their work and there is a different perspective.

Resiliency –within child factors
"*Also, you sort think about what are the possible causes in school is it about behaviour and looking at their emotional state and looking to see how do they actually communicate their emotions*? *There might be a barrier and to being able to get their views across and it might cause frustration because they feel that they are not understood and it causes so much anxiety for them that they don't want to be in the school environment.*"

Both interviewees refer to emotions. Interviewee #1 referred to "emotional issues" while Interviewee #2 referred to "emotional state". Exploring the words emotional issues and emotional state, the thing that comes to mind is that emotional issues suggest that there are aspects which are within the person, while emotional state indicates in some ways that the emotions come out of something, perhaps an event. Furthermore, the idea of emotional state suggests that it is temporary for a period of time and then the person comes out of that. **Within child issues verses events that promotes the emotional state**.

The ideas of resiliency features in both of the interviews.   The difference which appears is the idea that resiliency is linked to someone ability to cope with challenging

circumstances and this is associated with individual's own personal skills, internal strength. If the individual is unable to cope then they may have emotional issues, as the feelings are completing internalised. Therefore, the individual is unable to manage events that they perceive as a challenge. While emotional states suggest a reaction to an event or situation with could be remedy if the situation or event is handled differently.

"*There might be a barrier and to being able to get their views across.*"
"Barriers." Thinking of what this might mean the word obstacles come to mind as well. The barrier/obstacles can be physical or psychological. The barrier can be a person or people, an organisation or the systems, ethos of the organisation. The barriers can be anything and difficult to identify. Linking these sentences together, it is the barrier to getting your views across. This brings to the forefront ideas about how we communicate and the ability to do so, effectively and well. The concept of communication featured in interview 1 but it is featured in relation to how the professionals/adults may communicate with each other. The context in which Interviewee #2 brings this idea to the forefront is through talking about how the young person may communicate. The ideas of *communication – the voice of the young person* stands out here, but more so in terms of the *barriers to communicating for the young person*.

"*It might cause frustration because they feel that they are not understood and it causes so much anxiety for them that they don't want to be in the school environment*."
Interviewee #2 uses descriptors of emotions such as "frustration" and "anxiety" to describe the possible feelings that might occur if someone is unable to communicate effectively. Comparing the two words, there is a sense of understanding of what I perceive anxiety and frustration to be in relationship to my own understanding of the words and my own personal experiences. However, describing the possible feelings does not indicate the possible observed behaviours that could be displayed and therefore, there is change that the labelling of behaviours could be incorrect. This can be linked to *communication – the voice of the young person*, where it is important for the young person to label their own behaviour, instead of others assigning meanings and labels.

"*They don't want to be in the school environment.*"
Using the Flip-Flop technique, turning this statement upside down to obtain the opposite. Let assume that they do want to be in the school environment. I would then ask myself what is happening in the school environment which makes some children want to go to school. Or on the other hand what is happening that could make some children not want to go to school.

The complexity of relationships
"*The relationship the child has with their parents or careers and what the family dynamics is like.*"
Both interviews discuss relationships and the importance of these. However, Interviewee #2 would seek to explore the relationship "*the child has with their parents or careers".* When interviewee #2 says this, it is possible to ask oneself what does this

mean? When we think of the word relationship, what comes to mind? Is the parent-child relationship different to parenting or are they confused? Looking closely at the word relationship within the context of the family unit, it would be fair to consider the actual interaction between the child and the parent(s). Exploring the type of reassurance offered. Examining the communication between the parent and the child. What makes a child-parent(s) relationship? *The relationship between child and parent*.

Interviewee #2 refers to "*family dynamics*". The language suggests who is in the family and what is going on. Furthermore, it links to ideas of communication between the family unit and provides a sense of role and individuals taking on the various roles. I am not quite sure whether "family dynamics" incorporates parenting, as this can be seen as the mechanism which provides the foundation for individuals to establish their understanding of their unit and the systems within their own family, as well as imparting and defining their role within the unit. This also shapes how they understand and interact with the wider society, as draws upon the ideas of **Socialisation**. This ideas links to the category *Aspect of Society, values and rules.*

Thinking back to Interviewee #2 sentence "*The relationship the child has with their parents or careers*". As previously mentioned relationship can appear to be very broad. If I am to consider the emotional relationship between a parent and a child, this can be a significant component to the dynamics of a child's emotional and life experiences. It maybe possible to consider the child-parent emotional relationship as a template for future relationships and how this shapes individuals interactions with each other and the outside world. Linking this idea to the concept of resiliency, it is possible to consider that the emotional relationship established between the chid-parent(s) also provide the template how to cope with perceived challenging events which may draw emotions and feelings. *The emotional relationship between child and parent – Foundations of Resiliency*.

Referring to both Interviews, it is possible to assert the idea that both interviews place value on relationships. Interviewee #1 highlights relationships between peers as a significant factor, whereas; Interviewee #2 point points the family as the key feature of the starting point of the exploration.

Question 3

What do you think shapes your thinking to do with school refusal about some of the things you would want to think about with regards to the barriers? What sort of things shape your thinking and what makes you think and ask those questions?

I think I recently had involvement with a case where there were issues a child being able to appropriately express his emotions he just wasn't really expressing his emotions so we didn't know if he was not doing that because there might be another issue going on and for example he is currently being investigated for maybe Asperger's Syndrome and so, we didn't know and there's that barrier. Or whether, he is quite

bright and we didn't know whether he is choosing to trying to camouflage his difficulties on purpose.

But, then the SENCo has been quite heavily involved this year because when he does come to school, it just takes him time to develop his relationship with others, once he does that he is forthcoming. Based on that we've ruled out that he not got Asperger's. He not got trusting relationships. We looked at his family and his parents themselves are highly anxious people and seem to contact the psychology service a lot and they send me quite detailed emails and really they just being and could say that are caring parents closely monitoring what professionals are doing. So, didn't really think that feel that that there is anything wrong with that but other colleagues that have been involved in this case feel that the parents are highly anxious themselves but I think it more an emotional issue.

I also think that this student is quite powerful now because they've almost choosing not to express their views and they are almost choosing that when they decide for themselves when they are not going to their lessons, and they are actually spending some one-to-one time with the SENCo, the time that they are in school. So they are cutting off, choosing to cut off from the mainstream experience. Almost as if they made that decision themselves so it is a case that I am currently talking about is ongoing and I've heard that this child is not attending at all now and I do worry about what is happening to him.

Memo 4
25th July 2011
Concepts gained from Interview 2:

13. **Diagnosing and labelling behaviour, which provides greater understanding and perception change.**
14. **Empowerment and having a voice of the Young Person.**
15. **Teachers and young people involvement.**
16. **Professionals protecting the rights of the individual and the family**
17. **professional responsibility**

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The interplay between external verse internal factors (within child and resiliency)
"I think I recently had involvement with a case where there were issues a child being able to appropriately express his emotions he just wasn't really expressing his emotions so we didn't know if he was not doing that because there might be another issue going on and for example he is currently being investigated for maybe Asperger's Syndrome and so, we didn't know and there's that barrier."

Once again it is possible to observe that both interviewees talk about 'emotions' but within the context of Interview #2 the interviewee talks about "*appropriately express his emotions.*" The opposite of this is inappropriate ways of expressing emotions. This can be linked to the concept of ***communication – the voice of the young person*** and ***the concept barriers to communication for the young person***. Moreover, when reflecting on the phrase, "appropriately express his emotions." It is possible to

associate these views with the ideas of resiliency and connecting to ***The emotional relationship between child and parent – Foundations of Resiliency.***

"There might be another issue going on and for example he is currently being investigated for maybe Asperger's Syndrome and so, we didn't know and there's that barrier."

The process of labelling the behaviour to provide greater understanding of the situation. A label is achieved when an investigation by professional perhaps medical or educational personnel takes place. However before this, the behaviour can be assigned to be within the child factors or linked to the family circumstances or social situation and can suggest that the behaviour is purposeful and without context. The diagnosis appears to enable individuals to understand the context further and the behaviour. When someone perceives they understand the behaviour through a label the behaviour can appear to be different and the perception changes, so the behaviour becomes something different***. Diagnosing and labelling behaviour, which provides greater understanding and perception change***

"*Or whether, he is quite bright and we didn't know whether he is choosing to trying to camouflage his difficulties on purpose*".

Interviewee #2 has a different approach in trying to understand the behaviour of school refusal. Firstly, interviewee #2 discusses one of the possible reasons through using a medical model approach. Interviewee #2 goes through the process of ruling various factors out such as Aspergers Syndrome. Then she discusses any barriers to learning and a word which stands out is 'camouflage'. Paying attention to the word camouflage, which means to hide, not be seen or recognised allows for the Flip-Flop Technique to be used and by turning the word upside down this can enable the thinking to probe for further ideas. Therefore turning the word camouflage on its head could mean that the behaviour is not about hiding but it is about letting everyone know that there is a problem and a need. The attention drawn to the individual because of the behaviour does not let them hide in anyway, but allows them to stand out as being different or requiring something different. Actually, the behaviour could be seen a way of the young person empowering themselves to having a voice. ***Empowerment and having a voice of the Young Person***

What is linked to the ideas of ***Empowerment and having a voice*** is the idea that Interviewee #2 presents when she says, "*we didn't know whether he is choosing to trying to camouflage his difficulties on purpose". "Choosing" and "on purpose".* Key words in supporting the ideas that the young person is trying to find a voice to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings*.*

The difference between Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 is that Interviewee #2 talks about the voice of the young person and how this voice is communicated. While Interviewee #1 talks about feelings and emotions.

Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs.

"*The SENCo has been quite heavily involved this year*". This comment presents has that school has taken on board their responsibilities for meeting the young person's individual needs. However, thinking more about the sentence, I am inclined to ask myself what does "*The SENCo has been quite heavily involved this year*" mean? "Heavily involved?" Does this mean academically or socially. It is hard to develop a concrete picture of what "Heavily involved" would look like, but if I am to make some assumptions would "Heavily involved mean spending time with the young person? Taking this trail of thought further and drawing on experiences, Teachers often comment on not having enough time to spend with children and therefore spending time to get to know a young person outside of their academic experiences and as a person can appear to something rather unique. Can "Heavily involved" mean spending time with the young person? This draws out new concept of ***Teachers and young people involvement***. If so, this concept links into to the code of **The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others. The social dimension of the interactions with society.**

"When he does come to school, it just takes him time to develop his relationship with others, once he does that he is forthcoming. Based on that we've ruled out that he not got Asperger's. He not got trusting relationships".

Interviewee #1 highlights relationship difficulties with peers as something that is a significant barrier. While Interviewee #2 highlights the time it takes to develop relationships with others as a barrier. Focusing specifically on relationships, the two Interviewees identify that relationships are important but the reasons are different and perhaps this is pertinent in understanding school refusal or extended school non-attending behaviours.

Individual interactions verses wider group/society.

"*He has not got trusting relationships.*" It is difficult to see how this statement really fits into this category readily. But it does because the premise behind building our interactions with others is that we function primarily in a small unit and the experience allows us to build a template of possible outcomes that might occur when interacting with others in a larger unit. How we function in a smaller setting does prepares us to interact outside of our unit or group.

Taking these ideas and referring back to Interviewee #2 sentence. I think it is important to ask, what are trusting relationships? These are reliable and stable experiences that help shape our understanding of the world. The question to be asked is why is it that this young person does not have "trusting relationships? How can Interviewee #2 make this statement and what evidence supports this. Or is this Interviewee #2 own view of this young person's experience of the world?

Exploring the ideas of a trusting relationship further, if I am to think that he does not trust the school staff and propose the question why? What is it about the school staff behaviour that does not provide confidence in this young person? The question of trust

is quite important in itself because why should this young person automatically trust these people? Have they done something to enable him to trust them? This is the same for peers. However, schools and some organisations do not work in that way, the assumption is that teachers and the adults in schools will be able to and willing to build a relationship with a young person. This might not be the case. Moreover, drawing on the fact that time might be a big factor in influencing teachers' and school staff interactions.

Thinking back to a sentence made by Interviewee #1, "*I think maybe because their experience of schooling has not been positive up to then*". However, perhaps it is not schooling that is the factor; it is the relationships and the interactions within the school that might be an important factor. Bringing these ideas together, the relationships are important because without trusting relationships the actual art of learning cannot take place because school does not feel like a secure base or a place to learn and develop both academically as well as socially. This can be linked to the code of ***The separation of self from others and school work***.

Social problems
"*We looked at his family and his parents themselves are highly anxious people and seem to contact the psychology service a lot and they send me quite detailed emails and really they just being and could say that are caring parents closely monitoring what professionals are doing.*"

The concept of social problems where raised by Interviewee #1 and discussed. Interviewee #1 said, "*Other reasons would be emotional factors maybe caused by social problems. Family breakdown.*" The role of the family appears to be pertinent to both interviewees. However, Interviewee #2 starts to paint develop a portrait of the family and described the family as '*highly anxious people and seem to contact the psychology service a lot and they send me quite detailed emails.*' 'Highly anxious' meaning fearful, scared, nervous. Why? What are the fears and anxieties about? Previously, the ideas of social problems have identified some characteristics but do not lead to a detailed profile of the parents. Interviewee #2 highlights that the parents are monitoring what the professionals are doing. Monitoring, to closely observe. Monitoring can be active or passive. Interviewee #2 initially thought the monitoring was a good thing but after discussions with colleagues felt that it was an indication of something but felt that the parents emotional issues where being presented.

Interestingly, both Interviewee #1 and interviewee #2 identify emotional issues or emotional factors. Interviewee #2 links the emotional issues to parents which is then having an impact on the young person while Interviewee #1 identifies emotional factors which stem from social problems. What is the difference? There is a different but it is not that easy to break down. Do the emotional issues stand alone? Can there be no social problems but emotional issues.

Thinking further along and thinking about the anxiety that the parents have. Is their anxiety, a fear against professionals or a fear against society? This can be linked to the concept of **Breaching/understanding societal rules of social conventions and**

behaviour. The nature of the parents means that they don't breach society's rules and there is a chance that they understand the rules and conventions, as well as the behaviour. But they remain anxious about those who do not adhere to society's rules and behaviour. Therefore, their communication with professionals is about ensuring that their fears are quelled and that they are protected by the professionals. This idea brings forth the idea of ***Professionals protecting the rights of the individual and the family.***

"*I also think that this student is quite powerful now because they've almost choosing not to express their views and they are almost choosing that when they decide for themselves when they are not going to their lessons.*"

Here Interviewee #2 uses the word "powerful" and in doing so changes the presentation of the school refuser's experience. This word allows the young person's experience to be viewed from passive recipient of experiences, which then leads them to become school refusers. However, the word powerful highlights another side to where powerful can be considered to be where the young person is in control and making decisions, as well as expressing themselves. Once again this idea is linked to the following category, ***Empowerment and having or hearing the voice of the Young Person.***

"*They are actually spending some one-to-one time with the SENCo, the time that they are in school.*" Once again, Interviewee #2 points of the quality of the relationship that the young person is experiencing with the professionals. This can link to the category of **The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others. The social dimension of the interactions with society. Plus, Individual interactions verses wider group/society.** These ideas are presented in the views of Interviewee #1 as well.

"*So they are cutting off, choosing to cut off from the mainstream experience. Almost as if they made that decision themselves.*"

Interviewee #2 draws upon the idea of choice and making a decision referring to the ideas that the young person is cutting themselves off. Looking closely at the word cutting off, it can mean to separate, isolate and sever. Interestingly, cutting off does suggest a difficulty with rejoining. If something is cut off then how can something be put back together? "Cut off from the mainstream experience". This idea links with the code and discussion ***The separation of self from others and school work.*** This brings to mind the question what is the process of the separation for the young person and whether it can be reversed. What aspects of the young person's experiences allow this process to begin? Perhaps more ideas will come from the other interviews through theoretical sampling

"*A case that I am currently talking about is ongoing and I've heard that this child is not attending at all now and I do worry about what is happening to him.*"

'Currently', something that is up-to-date. 'Ongoing', something that is still relevant and

active. "I*'ve heard that this child is not attending at all now".* Interviewee # 2 uses the words current and ongoing to and yet says, 'I've heard' which seems like a passive activity. This brings to mind questions such as what is the professional's role in this case and what contribution is the Interviewee being asked to make in this case? Is it to listen or to provide answers? ***Defining the role of the professionals.***

"*I do worry about what is happening to him.*" To express concern for the young person. Interviewee #2 worries. However, what does this worry look like? Is worrying just another form of reflection. Or does worrying lead to doing something? Looking closely at the word worry, it means to have great concern, to be thinking over and over someone. Worrying can be seen as passive activity which does not prompt any action. On the other hand worry can lead to an action. However, the worrying represented in this sentence is an expression of ***professional responsibility***

Thank you. Why do you think that some young people do not or want to or find it difficult to attend school?

I think it could be a range of factors that contribute to that. It might be that they've actually got to a point where they are experiencing certain issues because of more support demands that you have upon you in school environment that they may not having school support at an earlier stage. Some of these youngsters I have find are maybe more sensitive than children of their age and they are not as resilient and they actually find the day to day challenges quite difficult where other children can manage sort the day to day multiple demands of school and kind contributes to being anxious on a day-to day basis and that seems to escalate to a point where and they can't actually manage those feelings and they get to the point they can't succeed maybe in a school environment because they become so anxious.

Memo 5
7th August 2011
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"*I think it could be a range of factors that contribute to that. It might be that they've actually got to a point where they are experiencing certain issues because of more support demands that you have upon you in school environment that they may not having school support at an earlier stage.*"

It is difficult to understand what Interviewee #2 is saying in this part of the interview. However, trying to break the information down further. It is possible to refer to the sentence "*It might be that they've actually got to a point where they are experiencing certain issues.*" Is this a point where a person can't take anymore? Or what are certain issues? Are certain issues difficulties with school?

Once, again the interviewees refer to support that is required and having needs being met. This idea links to the previous code in interview # 1 which was classified *as **Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and***

meeting individual needs. The idea that can be drawn out of the sentence is that there is a point or ceiling where someone reaches. The question is how does someone identify that point, is the young person or the adults able to recognise the point? Whose responsibility is it to recognise some of the challenges or certain issues that may pose a challenge to someone?

"*Some of these youngsters I have find are maybe more sensitive than children of their age and they are not as resilient and they actually find the day to day challenges quite difficult.*"

The word sensitive stands out here because when I think about the message that this may bring. The ideas of sensitivity are linked to words such as sympathy, compassion, understanding, kindness, warmth and degrees of feelings. Sensitive describes a response towards something and is used to describe how someone or something responds. This is associated with words such as responsive, receptive, susceptible and perceptive. While, it is equally associated with words such as thin-skinned, easily upset, easily hurt, hypersensitive and vulnerable. The sensitivity presented by interviewee #2 highlights that there is a difference between some children and others. This brings to the forefront thoughts of emotional resilience and thoughts of resilience and within child factors. This can be linked into the codes from the previous interviewee such as **Resiliency –within child factors.** As previously mentioned both interviews present the ideas of emotional issues or certain issues.

Thinking further about what are the certain issues, it is possible to link these 'certain issues' to the ideas presented in interview #1. In interview #1 the interviewee talked about the young person's experiences linked to prior schooling and experience with peers. Could these things be what Interviewee #2 is trying to express when she talks about 'Certain issues'?

"*Other children can manage sort the day to day multiple demands of school and kind contributes to being anxious on a day-to day basis and that seems to escalate to a point where and they can't actually manage those feelings and they get to the point they can't succeed maybe in a school environment because they become so anxious.*"

The comparison between those children who can cope and those who cannot can be seen in both interviewees. Asking myself why? Perhaps it is possible to refer to within child factors.

"*They can't succeed maybe in a school environment because they become so anxious.*"
What is meant by 'they can't succeed?' Is this academic success or is this about being able to actually socialise with others in the school environment? Both Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 refer to the school experience. Interviewee #1 mentioned prior school experiences while the current interviewee explores this through talking about the school environment. Interviewee #1 referred to peer relationships and being isolated. Suggesting that the individual is not able to succeed in establishing links with others and this leads to feelings of isolation due to limited peer interactions. This can

be linked to the ideas of **Breaching/understanding societal rules of social conventions and behaviour** but this can be seen in a different way to how Interviewee #1. Here, this lack of understanding can mean that the young person is unable to function in society or cope with the demands of social interactions. Therefore, they tend to withdraw from social situations creating isolation that they experience and demonstrate their inability to mix with peers. These views can be linked also to the code **Defining social problems,** as Interviewee #2 presents another perspective in terms of defining social interactions which can be associated with social problems. Individuals who are unable to socialise with society can lead to different social problems and impact on others in a different way to other individuals who may demonstrate inappropriate social behaviour.

You mentioned multiple demands. Can you tell me a bit more about what that means for you?

Okay, I think my understanding of that is, having to cope with getting through the start of the day to the end of the day. So, that would involve coping with transitional points during the day. There are obviously busier times, there's a lot more in a secondary school environment, it is a lot more nosier and a lot more busier. Sometimes they may come across youngest that they don't know and that might become targets for bullying and also depends on demands placed upon them in a classroom situation, so for example if this youngster has difficulties learning possibly because they have been missing school it trying to possible because they have demands placed upon them in classroom situation and they might have gaps in their knowledge, so we could struggle with actually accessing the curriculum. I would also be thinking about their peer relationships, it might be that they don't find it easy to make friends or sustain friendships and that going to be another challenge that they have to face when they are at school. I think all of these little things add up and contribute to a higher level of anxiety might have difficulties.

Memo 6
8th August 2011
Concepts gained from Interview 2:

18. **The role of the Teacher**

19. **The role of the other children/peers**

20. **A sense of social failure**

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School Experience and Environment
"*Okay, I think my understanding of that is, having to cope with getting through the start of the day to the end of the day. So, that would involve coping with transitional points during the day. There are obviously busier times, there's a lot more in a secondary school environment, it is a lot more nosier and a lot more busier*".

Interviewee #2 describes the context of the school experience in terms of the school structure of the timetable. In doing so, Interviewee #2 starts to build a picture of the

school experience and environment. Furthermore, Interviewee# 2 makes a comparison between different schools explaining that secondary schools are more nosier and busier. Strangely enough, thinking about nosier and asking what does that mean? It is possible to think that Interviewee #2 is suggesting that as there are lost more people around therefore, there is more noise. It is still possible to draw more from this idea and think about bigger environments can seem scarier places with regards to social interactions, more teachers to get to know and for some children more people to avoid.

Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.

"*Sometimes they may come across youngest that they don't know and that might become targets for bullying and also depends on demands placed upon them in a classroom situation, so for example if this youngster has difficulties learning possibly because they have been missing school it trying to possible because they have demands placed upon them in classroom.*"

The ideas of reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically, really stand out in the above statement. Interviewee #2 highlights hope the feelings can be developed in terms of the social context such as being a target for bullies, within the learning experience such as the '*demands placed upon them in a classroom situation and they might have gaps in their knowledge, so we could struggle with actually accessing the curriculum'*. Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 begin to present how the details of school environment and build a bigger picture.

When thinking about this more, it is possible to ask yourself; who are the individuals who contribute to these feelings in the young person. The teaching staff and, or the peers? Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 talk about the curriculum and struggling to access it, '*they might have gaps in their knowledge, so we could struggle with actually accessing the curriculum.'* Using the flip-flop technique it is possible to turn this idea around and to question whether the children really are struggling to access the curriculum or are the teaching staff making the curriculum inaccessible. Due to the teaching strategies and methods they employ This can be linked to other codes such as *the curriculum (Mainstream and special).* Moreover, it is possible to ask, What is the role of the Teacher? Asking this question really draws the attention to the teacher and their role in the learning environment. This allows for another code to be established and provides an avenue for further investigation in the other interviews. *The role of the Teacher*

Thinking along the same lines, with regards to the peer relationships. Once, again it is possible to draw upon the Flip-Flop technique and explore whether peers create the difficulty in denying the opportunities for the individuals to socialise. So, they create the isolation in the young person by refusing to engage with the young person experiencing the difficulties and some are targeted for different reasons. *The role of the other children/peers.*

"*I would also be thinking about their peer relationships, it might be that they don't find it easy to make friends or sustain friendships and that going to be another challenge that they have to face when they are at school.*"

Interviewee # 2 suggests in the above sentence that the peer relationship difficulties are within the individual who are having the difficulty, stating '*It might be that they don't find it easy to make friends or sustain friendships.*'

Here, it is possible to draw from the interviews the Interviewee's describes of the young person's social and academic failures. Is the interviewee describing a sense of social failure on the part of the young person who is having difficulties? **A sense of social failure**. However, this could be linked to the concept of **Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.** What the concept of **A sense of social failure** is about looking at and exploring the internal processes someone goes through initially before the reinforcement occurs. It is felt that this might be difficult to explore from the data alone and perhaps further investigation into self perception would be best sought. Furthermore, this could be an area for theoretical sampling

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This follows on to what you have just been mentioning because I want you to think about what do you think are the underlying causes and reasons for school refusing behaviours?

It is difficult to say actually, I have been involved with a handful of cases, but they all seem to have a common pattern to them. I think that one of the underlying causes would be is that their needs aren't recognised earlier enough so they actually get missed. Whereas, I think in terms of their developmental emotional, social and behavioural development needs to be identified at an earlier stage when they are at primary school. I think they actually get missed quite easily for whatever reason maybe because they are not engaged in inappropriate behaviour, disruptive behaviour and so, I think that's one of the reasons. I think that in terms of their overall resiliency levels, I think that their resiliency levels are lower than their peers at that age because where they possibly think they can't actually cope with difficult or challenging experiences. There maybe also issues to do with learning difficulties. There maybe difficulties with their underlying cognitive development and they are not receiving adequate support for that which might cause them to fall badly behind which makes them feel not successful in the school situation. This is what I have said before and I think because there might be gaps in their attendance might not have formed adequate peer relationships and so they haven't got a reason to come into school and might not actually have any friends. I think that one of these different factors might add up, to causing the anxiety and frustration.

Memo 7
8th August 2011
Concepts gained from Interview 2:

21. **The hierarchy of identification - professional verses parent and profession and professional.**

22. **Value judgements made by professionals**

23. **Understanding the power and authority in relationships**

24. **Defining the role of the parent**

25. **Adult led relationships which explores the desire to understand the young person**

26. **Understanding behaviour as a communication tool.**

27. **Formation/Development of Friendships**

Recognition of and the importance of individual needs.

"*It is difficult to say actually, I have been involved with a handful of cases, but they all seem to have a common pattern to them. I think that one of the underlying causes would be is that their needs aren't recognised earlier enough so they actually get missed*".

Interviewee #2 searches for a common pattern in her professional experiences of working with individuals who are refusing to attend school. In doing so, she suggests that that this is a common pattern in professional's experiences of working with non attending individuals? In doing so, this can be broadly linked to other codes such as the code; **Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability.** The process of recognising needs involves taking responsibility to actual explore someone's experience further than on a surface level, then owning if the exploration discovers that something is required to be done and thirdly accepting that there is an element of accountability on everyone involved. In doing so, this links onto other codes such as **Roles and expectations of key players: schools, parents and young person.** As well as, **Defining the role of the professionals.**

Roles and expectations of key players: schools, parents and young person/ Developing Partnerships and Defining partnership working practices (multi-agency)

"*Whereas, I think in terms of their developmental emotional, social and behavioural development needs to be identified at an earlier stage when they are at primary school.*" The identification of individual emotional, social and behavioural development needs are mentioned but it is possible to think who is to identify? When I think about parents I have worked with, who often describe their difficulties with managing their children's behaviour or wishing to seek some form of help. They often describe a situation where professionals do not take them seriously. To recall a recent experience, where a parent had approached her General Practitioner (GP) because she wanted her GP to refer her son to CAMHS. The GP refused to do so without the school's support and a report from an Educational Psychologist. Some of the behaviours the parent was concerned about would not be displayed in the school environment. This situation allowed me to ask the question who has the valid role in identifying a need? The teacher, the parent, the young person or the other

professionals. If early identification is a difficulty why would the GP turn a parent away if they do not have the support of the school? ***The hierarchy of identification - professional verses parent and profession and professional.***

Thinking further about the identification and the hierarchy of identification. This brings me back to Interviewee #1 and a comment which was made. Interviewee #1 said, "*School and other professionals, peers are there all part of the picture but I think the prime responsibility lies with the parents and if they've got the right role model.*" Here Interviewee #1 identifies the parent has the key component and having the prime responsibility. More poignant, Interviewee #1 stated "*If they've got the right role model.*" This can be linked to understanding why the GP may turn away a parent identifier of need than a professional because they GP might be questioning whether the parent has provided the young person with the 'right model' of experience. Moreover, this idea brings to the forefront views on value judgments professionals make about the individuals they may have to work with. The value judgement can influence how the professional interacts and guide the level of importance they place on the concern. ***Value judgements made by professionals***.

Thinking about the value judgements professionals may make, it also encourage thoughts about power and authority in relationship that occur when focusing on school refusal. That is parent – child, teacher – child, teacher – parent, teacher – outside professionals, other professionals outside the school – other professional outside the school and parent – teacher – other professionals outside the school. ***Understanding the power and authority in relationships***. Additionally, it is important to ask are partnerships really taking place between professionals and the individuals with the concern.

When going back to the original train of thought to comparing views of Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2. Interviewee# 1 identifies individuals who are all a part of the picture while Interviewee #2 does not in the same why but does explain that identification of needs should be done in the primary school. Does this mean by the primary teachers?

Also, the experience describing the parent going to the GP does highlight the issue of partnership working and whether the parent can be seen has a partner or whether they are on the outside of the partnership being the recipient of what the professionals do? This is linked to understanding the ***Roles and expectations of key players: schools, parents and young person.***

The analysis of interview 1 brought forward the concept of defining the role of the professional but does not the discussion about lead to thoughts about does the parent's role need to define further? I am not quite sure bout it is something to investigate within this analysis and in further analysis. ***Defining the role of the parent***. To clarify I believe that this is different to exploring ***The role of the family*** with regards to school refusal.

"*I think they actually get missed quite easily for whatever reason maybe because they*

are not engaged in inappropriate behaviour, disruptive behaviour and so, I think that's one of the reasons."

Looking at this sentence in isolation from the context of the question asked and the other sentences. It is possible to wonder who '*get missed quite easily for whatever reason?'* Exploring the words '*get missed.'* It is possible to ask what does this mean what picture does these two words paint and why these two words out of the sentence, instead of '*quite easily,'* or '*whatever reason.'*

Of could the discussion pertain to children who do not attend school, so are we truly talking about these children being missed or is there any relevance in the saying 'Out of sight out of mind?' They are missing from school. To me the idea that the two words bring together in '*get missed,'* for me suggests that the children are present but someone misses their needs. However, for me it is their absence that means their needs are not identified. The frequent and regular non attendee means that nobody is able to really to establish a comprehensive picture of the young person's needs or what is going on for that young person. Perhaps this shapes the level of investment into building a relationship with the young person. Some individuals find it hard to invest in things that are not tangible. Let think of human relationships. It is easier to build a relationship with someone who is a there than someone who is hardly turns up and there is no consistency to the pattern of attendance. Exploring friendship and these sometimes stem from the access and the availability of the person. So, drawing on these ideas, it is their absence that should speak volumes not their presence. ***Adult led relationships which explores the desire to understand the young person***.

'T*hey are not engaged in inappropriate behaviour, disruptive behaviour.'*
What is important is to understand what behaviour means and what it communicates. In education, I often hear people talking to young people about inappropriate behaviour and for some reason there is an automatic assumption that the word 'inappropriate' says it all. But on reflection it is possible to question further what is the inappropriate? Is it behaviour that I personally find inappropriate, is it the behaviour that some else finds inappropriate, or perhaps it behaviour that society says is inappropriate? However, the context can influence whether the behaviour is seen to always inappropriate.

Using the Flip-flop technique, the interviewee said, T*hey are not engaged in inappropriate behaviour.'* But perhaps their behaviour is inappropriate because their failure to communicate their needs with others. For example, if someone was in pain, doing nothing can be seen as not an appropriate approach to dealing effectively with the pain. What is the interviewee saying about how individuals communicate their needs, what opportunities do they have to communicate their needs and are they skilled at communicating their needs effectively? ***Understanding behaviour as a communication tool.***

"*I think that in terms of their overall resiliency levels, I think that their resiliency levels are lower than their peers at that age because where they possibly think they can't actually cope with difficult or challenging experiences."*

The ideas of resiliency have featured in both interviews. Interviewee #1 talked about '*emotional issues,*' as previously discussed. However, in this sentence Interviewee #2 described resiliency in terms of levels and resiliency being less in young people who are unable to cope with challenging experiences. ***Resiliency –within child factors***

"*There maybe also issues to do with learning difficulties. There maybe difficulties with their underlying cognitive development and they are not receiving adequate support for that which might cause them to fall badly behind which makes them feel not successful in the school situation.*"

Here interviewee #2 thinks about the learning needs of the young person and their cognitive development. These comments can be placed under two codes firstly ***Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs*** and ***The curriculum (Mainstream and special).***

In some ways the interviews so far have drawn upon many issues but very little has been said about the learning needs of the child who is refusing to attend so far. Here, Interviewee #2 refers to the cognitive development and the support required. When doing so, for me the word that stands out is the word '*adequate*' and this allows me to ask what does adequate mean? Just good enough? This is a word that can say so much but also say very little, it is similar to the word appropriate. Used frequently but the meaning changes according to the person using it. 'Adequate support.' The right type of support or just good enough support? In Interview #1 the codes taken from the analysis of the interview brought out two codes, ***Aspects of school and academic challenges and the Ability to meet individual needs***.

"*This is what I have said before and I think because there might be gaps in their attendance might not have formed adequate peer relationships and so they haven't got a reason to come into school and might not actually have any friends.*"

Here this sentence explores the aspects of relationships which appears to be a recurrence theme in both of the interviews but in Interview #2 social relationships plays more of a significant role and these ideas are brought together under the code/concept ***Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.*** Importantly, Interviewee #2 theorises about why school refusal may occur and the lack of social relationships and the gaps in their attendance might contribute. Is it possible to ask what characteristics are needed to develop friendships in school? Regular attendance would be one of them, ability to talk to and play with peers. Not being seen as significantly different from peers in behaviour or manner of communication. Ability to communicate with peers and have similar interest to them. ***Formation/Development of Friendships***

"*I think that one of these different factors might add up, to causing the anxiety and frustration.*"
It is possible to ask what is anxiety and frustration. Feelings. Are these feelings connected to ideas of ***Resiliency –within child factors?*** However, how do we learn

to cope with these feelings? How do we learn to overcome them? Why are some able to face these feelings while others are not able to?

Of the factors you've mentioned which one do you think could be the most important for you?

I think myself I think that the one that is important is focusing on the developing the young person's ability to be able to actually communicate their views really intent of how they are actually feeling even if they got difficulties, difficulties with expressing language for staff to really concentrate on actually finding ways for a child to express how they're feeling and then actually acting accordingly to that and that needs to happen on a frequent basis.

Memo 8
18th August 2011

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Communication and ownership
"*I think myself I think that the one that is important is focusing on the developing the young person's ability to be able to actually communicate their views.*"

The analysis of Interview 1 drew out ideas of communication and ownership and these ideas were drawn from the following sentence from the interview: "*I think the information can get lost between the different agencies. So the co-ordination of the process, I think is key.*" Comparing the ideas of communication Interviewee #2 concentrates on the young person's ability to communicate their views and feelings to adults around them. This brings to minds thoughts about the relationships and the power in relationships and questions who owns the power? It is possible to take the view that it is ultimately the young person's responsibility to be able to express themselves appropriately. However, focusing on the key word '*developing*' it can be viewed that Interviewee #2 believes that they young person should be taught how to communicate their views. Therefore, shifting the ownership to the adults around the young person. The idea of communication is interesting because Interviewee #1 focused on communication between adults and professional services and information being lost. Where Interviewee #2 discusses the inability to communicate. In both cases feelings are lost and not accounted for can be viewed at two different levels a micro level (individual to individual) and macro level (organisation to organisation).

Referring back to the word 'develop,' it is possible to ask the question who is supposed to help the young person to develop their ability to communicate their needs? The Professionals or the family? This can lead to codes identified as **The role of the family** and **Defining the role of the professionals.**

In taking this line of thought, it is necessary to ask where does this line of thoughts lead? It is possible to say that it leads to demonstrating how intertwined and interlocking ideas can be and to recognise that the codes and lead to various concepts

but it is still early stages and it is extremely important to break information down even further. Moreover, this does link back to the following code identified in this interview which is: ***Understanding the power and authority in relationships***.

"*Really intent of how they are actually feeling even if they got difficulties, difficulties with expressing language for staff.*"

"*If they got difficulties, difficulties with expressing language.*" The word 'difficulties' is used twice here and somehow I am left with the feeling that the difficulties are related to within child factors, as discussed in interview #1. 'Difficulties' was a word that featured in interview #1 four times by the Interviewee, yet when exploring the analysis the word was used 24 times. However, comparing the usage of the word 'difficulties,' Interviewee #2 used it 11 times during the interview. To bring codes together, it is possible to view the statement 'D*ifficulties with expressing language.'* **communication – the voice of the young person** and **barriers to communicating for the young person**

Turning this view on it head, it is possible to think about what allows someone to have a voice? Do we need others to be listening to have a voice and what constitutes a voice? Thinking about the riots in London, listening to the LBC in another country and being so far away, it is possible to hear the voices of some of the participants, as they explain their actions as a way of having a voice. Yet if I ask myself the question what is the voice of the school refuser? Is it to be silent to walk away? To be forgotten? Or by not being present is a bigger voice because the absence speaks louder than words? This is about communicating your needs to others.

Meeting the needs: Strategies and activities
"*To really concentrate on actually finding ways for a child to express how they're feeling and then actually acting accordingly to that and that needs to happen on a frequent basis.*"

Both Interviewee #1 and Interviewee #2 explore ways of supporting the young person unable to attend school. However, when describing the support, Interviewee's #2 opinions are different in terms of Interviewee #2 speaks of supporting the young person with expressing themselves and other '*acting accordingly to that.*'   Whereas, Interviewee #1 has a definite way of what the support would look like and describes the mechanisms of support as follows:

"*And say he was for a period of time, withdrawn from lessons and taught in a small group of students maybe three or four students within the SEN department, until he was ready to be integrated into mainstream curriculum lessons, with extra support; with extra teachers' support.*" (Interviewee #1, p.15 of Analysis of Interview 1 or p.? of Transcript of Interview).

Firstly before drawing these ideas together, it is important to think about what Interviewee #2 means when the following words were said, '*acting accordingly'.* This suggests that there is a prescribed way of approaching young learners who struggle to

attend school and therefore 'acting accordingly' suggests that there is previous knowledge of how to act and then it is necessary to put in place the necessary steps or employ prescribed known strategies. Is there an element of assumption? This assumption is due to a professional confidence because of training, knowledge and experience which other professionals working with school refusers may not have. *Professional Confidence.* It is also important to note that this code can be linked to the following themes *Defining professional self*, because professional confidence stems from an assured knowledge based on experience gained from the individual's professional background. This is centred on knowing the right things to do and at the right time. In some ways, it is about being knowledgeable and putting the knowledge to use and this is associated with the code that have emerged from the analysis of this interview *Professional Confidence*.

Pulling these ideas together, the similarities between both interviewees is that there is an understanding that strategies should be put in place. Interviewee #2 talks of enabling the young person to have a voice to express themselves. While Interviewee #1 talks of strategies to enable them to actively participate in their education. Are the two interviewees talking about the same thing? No and Yes. Having a voice does not lead to participation and neither do specific withdrawal sessions with opportunities for integration. What the two interviewees share is a sense to help the young person and they share an understanding that the school refuser will need support. What the support looks like and is varies for each of the Interviewees. The question is why? I think this draws from the ideas linked to the theme *Defining professional self* and the code *Professional Confidence.* Interviewee #1 professional background is a Teacher and Interviewee #2 professional background is an Educational Psychologist. They shared similar experience with regards to their professional identity yet they see the world differently and this could be because of their professional training. This can be linked to codes drawn from first analysis of interviews such as *Qualities of a professional (knowledge, expertise and sensitivities).*

Someone I interviewed mentioned social economic disadvantages, how do you make sense of that as a cause?

So would you be talking about where they are living and possible impact? Well I think that even if you are actually from that crowd where you're disadvantage in terms of where you are living in a more deprived area if the parents actually still foster the importance of education and even if you live in a deprived area, I don't always see that as a factor that, I wouldn't see that as a factor that is worth it. I only think that relevant. I think that it is more important the values of the parents or the careers actually hold as supposed to where the child is actually living.

Memo 9
18th August 2011
Concepts gained from Interview 2:

    28. The value of education

Home Environment / The role of the family

"So would you be talking about where they are living and possible impact? Well I think that even if you are actually from that crowd where you're disadvantage in terms of where you are living in a more deprived area if the parents actually still foster the importance of education and even if you live in a deprived area, I don't always see that as a factor that, I wouldn't see that as a factor that is worth it."

Interviewee #1 brought up the idea of social and economic disadvantages as being a contributory factor. I thought it would be a good idea to explore this further through other interviews (Theoretical Sampling).

"*So would you be talking about where they are living and possible impact?*"

By using the term social economic disadvantages, this allows the interviewee to define what the possible meaning of this term is for them. The interviewee's response was interesting by posing a question. "*Where they are living and possible impact?*" Living and impact. The word impact explores the influence something has on another thing.

"*Well I think that even if you are actually from that crowd where you're disadvantage in terms of where you are living in a more deprived area.*"

The word that stands out for me is '*if you are actually from that crowd*'. I think of the word as being a group of people together but it can be used differently in terms of describing an association to a group of people. Here it is describing an association, almost in colloquial terms, if someone hangs out with a certain group. The certain group in this case is those from disadvantaged circumstances, more so from a '*deprived area*'.

What does deprived mean? I recall from my childhood in London, I would often hear on the television people talking about inner city deprivation, a lack of facilities and opportunities but this deprivation was physical and connected to poor housing, poor nutrition, poor social behaviour, poor educational standards and outcome. Somehow, I realised that deprivation was aligned to disadvantages in family life physical and emotional (such as the images of single parent families portrayed in the media, neglect and abuse towards self or others). Then one day I realised they were talking about the community that lived in. The term inner city deprivation is not talked about today because of the regeneration programmes that have taken place in the inner cities throughout the UK. However, sitting back listening to the radio and watching videos in Jamaica about riots in the various cities in the UK. I wonder about the term deprived areas and does it reflect a mentality more so than a state of physical environment. Therefore, social economic disadvantages mean so thing more than deprived areas. It is difficult to think about what is being said here and label into a code. I am tempted to think about these in terms of the code **Social Problems**, but in doing so; I am dividing social problems into various aspects such as the family, home environment, and the social environment and its relationship with society.

"*If the parents actually still foster the importance of education and even if you live in a*

deprived area, I don't always see that as a factor that, I wouldn't see that as a factor that is worth it."

Interviewee #2 talks of '*foster the importance of education.*' What does foster mean? To encourage or to promote. Here, the interviewee talks about the value of education and links the promotion of the value of education on to the family. This can be further linked to the code ***The role of the family*** and a code identified in this analysis is ***Defining the role of the parent.*** Interestingly, thinking back to what the interviewee said, they identify the value of education and link this responsibility to the parent. ***The value of education***

"A*nd even if you live in a deprived area, I don't always see that as a factor that, I wouldn't see that as a factor that is worth it. I only think that relevant. I think that it is more important the values of the parents or the careers actually hold as supposed to where the child is actually living.*"

Here, Interviewee #2 does not see living in a deprived area as a significant factor which contributes to school refusal. Interviewee #2 states that '*I wouldn't see that as a factor that is worth it.*' To compare Interviewee #2 perspective regarding understanding of social economics disadvantages and linking it to deprived areas. For Interviewee #2 what is the most significant factor is the parents foster the importance of education regardless of where the person lives. Whereas, Interviewee #1 draws on social economic disadvantages as a contributor and talks of social problems. The difference that stands out in the two perspectives for me is ***the value of education*** as a key contributor to why someone may not refuse to go to school.

My own personal reflection on this is presented in more of a question format, what is the rate of school refusal in emerging economies in the developing world? There are lots of children who may not attend school. This is more to do with economic reasons such as not being able to afford the fees, books etc which impacts on attendance. However, these children and their families given the opportunity would go to school. In countries where education is free, is school refusal a common feature? When socio economic difficulties are presented as a reason is this not relative to the country's standard of living? So in emerging or developing economies is a lack of money the prevailing factor? Whereas socio-economic disadvantages in the UK means something else. This makes me think of Maslow's Hierarchy of Need and his theory of motivation and personality. Somehow, I am thinking the value of education is seen in communities, countries are relative to their circumstances and values in their society as a whole. However, to add to this way of thinking I am thinking could the lack of value in education in the UK be linked to the following codes ***Aspects of society, values and rules*** and ***Conformity: Doing and thinking as other in behaviour and thoughts that is socially acceptable***. Mainly to do with rejecting aspects of society's values and rules and not conforming in terms of thinking, behaviour to what is deemed as socially acceptable.

"*I think that it is more important the values of the parents or the careers actually hold as supposed to where the child is actually living.*"

Here, Interviewee #2 identifies the important factors which impacts on school refusal which is the values of the parents or their careers. This remains linked to the following codes *The role of the family* and *Defining the role of the parent.* This is about setting an example for children to achieve to but underneath understanding the values and the careers there are many influences on values and careers that could be explored.

Thank you. What role do you think the following: parent, teacher, school and the pupil and the individual themselves play in contributing to school refusing behaviour? You can think of them as named individuals.

Okay. I think parents need to recognise that they do need each work in conjunction with their child and school must realise that this issue is actually becoming more prominent. They need to be prepared to not back off from the school but work with the school. The parents needs to become involved in actually physically accessing the child, in actually trying to work out why the child is reluctant to go to school but at the same time they should be trying to make or encourage them to go to school, to attend school as well. I think it can be difficult for them because quite often they will be doing that, the child still refuses to attend school. I think the parents need to be opened minded about allowing the professionals to step in and become involved as well.

In terms of the teachers, I think there needs to be communication between the different adults that come into contact with youngsters, so if there are for example is any agreed plan in place. If there is a meeting between the SENCo and the parents that information needs to be shared with the adults in school so they are aware of what that youngster is responding to. It may be that they need lots and lots of reassurance and that information is fed back, for example to given to subject teachers so that they can actually be involved in carrying that out. It might be that they don't like to be criticised so that it really valuable for teachers to actually know that and to when they try to address issues they are actually able to just work with that youngster.

In terms of the child themselves, I think the child probably will need to have, the child will need to have the opportunity to develop some kind a trusting relationship with somebody else at school, if they have not already. To help them with expressing how they are feeling about the whole school experience and gaining something positive for them.

Memo 10
18th August 2011
Concepts gained from Interview 2:

29. **Early identification of needs**
30. **Feelings of disempowerment and failures in the parenting role**
31. **Reflections of Professionals and being a reflective practitioner**

32. Understanding the power and authority in professional relationships
33. Professional competences and understanding what your skill sets are
34. Adults communication with young people
35. Lack of accountability
36. *Professionals being open to new information*
37. The strategies the professionals use
38. Defined and effective strategies
39. Child Centred Strategies

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Ways of working together.
"*Okay. I think parents need to recognise that they do need each work in conjunction with their child and school must realise that this issue is actually becoming more prominent.*"

Interviewee #2 reinforces ways in which people can work with each other and the phrase '*conjunction with their child'.* Here Interviewee #2 reflects on how the parents can work with their child. The word conjunction suggests that the parent is to actually listen to what the child wants and the child is to listen to what the wants.

"*They need to be prepared to not back off from the school but work with the school.*"

Interviewee #2 uses the words '*To be prepared to not back off.'* Asking what does this mean? To step back to be scared off by the professionals? To be scared off by what the situation mean? To be scared off by the responsibility of dealing with the issues? The analysis so far has discussed the authority relationship between parents and professionals ***Understanding the power and authority in relationships.*** The sentence highlights that the power and authority in relationships are an important factor.

Recognition of and the importance of individual needs
"*And school must realise that this issue is actually becoming more prominent.*"

The words '*actually becoming more prominent*' stand out because it suggests that there is a recognition that something is occurring but the school waits until it becomes more prominent, evident. ***Early identification of needs.***

Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability
"*The parents need to become involved in actually physically accessing the child, in actually trying to work out why the child is reluctant to go to school but at the same time they should be trying to make or encourage them to go to school, to attend school as well.*"

The word '*actually*' features again in this sentence and is featured twice. It is necessary to explore this word in greater depth. '*Actually*' can be used as an indication of fact or to express an opinion. When referring to this word as a being as fact it is to used to emphasise that something really exist or is so, when there is a difference of

opinion. Secondly, actually can be used to express an opinion that is contradictory or to change the subject. Exploring how actually is used within this context; Interviewee #2 uses this word to suggest an engagement with something or to do something.

Looking closely at what is being said Interviewee #2 feels that parents need to be more active in accessing their child and offering them encouragement to attend. It is possible to acknowledge that Interviewee #2 is talking about ***Defining the role of the parent*** and the parent ***Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability***.

"*I think it can be difficult for them because quite often they will be doing that, the child still refuses to attend school. I think the parents need to be opened minded about allowing the professionals to step in and become involved as well.*" Once again I think these sentences can be linked to the following codes ***Defining the role of the parent*** and the parent ***Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability.***

However, I feel Interviewee #2 highlights the difficulty for parents. "*Quite often they will be doing that, the child still refuses to attend school.*" Here Interviewee #2 draws on the ability of the parents to be able to get their child to school. I am prompted to ask some questions, who is in control; the child or the parent? How empowered do parents feel to manage their child's or children's behaviour? What does it feel like to be a parent whose child does not follow your instructions? Furthermore, it brings to mind a picture of a parent without any authority and what is the validity of this picture. I have met many parents who feel that they have no authority in their relationship with their children. This is not just specifically with parents whose children refuse to attend school but with children who have perhaps additional needs or unidentified needs. They feel disempowered, weak and almost as if they are failures. ***Feelings of disempowerment and failures in the parenting role***.

"*I think the parents need to be opened minded about allowing the professionals to step in and become involved as well.*"

"*Opened minded*" What does opened minded mean? There is a sense that that the person will be open to suggestions, willing to talk about their feelings with other, will try anything? Here does open minded mean something different? Does it mean willingness to allow others into their lives and have confidence that being open with their lives will see an improvement in their situation? It is possible to view Interviewee #2 as a description of highlighting was of working together. ***Ways of working together.***

However, if it is possible to explore the internal mechanisms of the process of being open-minded and to ask what it involves? I would think that it involves someone admitting to themselves that they might need further help. Someone making themselves open to the professionals that they may meet during the process. Recognising and accepting their strengths and what type of support they are willing to accept and what they think they need, as well as being open to becoming involved with a different frame of reference when working with various professionals. Here I would

say where Interviewee #2 refers to open-mindedness, there is a possible that Interviewee #2 is referring to this and I believe that this process of engagement with regards to thought processes and actions are essentially connected to the concept of ***Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability***. For someone to find solutions for their concerns there is an element of accepting responsibility, taking ownership and being accountable, especially for strategies that are put into place. As well as seeing yourself as a part of the solution and with the skills to achieve the solution.

Defining the role of the professionals
"*In terms of the teachers, I think there needs to be communication between the different adults that come into contact with youngsters, so if there are for example is any agreed plan in place.*"

Communication as an idea features in both Interviews. Interviewee #1 refers to information being lost and Interviewee #2 talks about communication in terms of adult communication as well as enabling the young person to communicate their needs effectively, Moreover, in this analysis ideas has been drawn from the data and been thought through in terms of ***Professional Communication and Professional Discourse***

"I think there needs to be communication between the different adults that come into contact with youngsters." What stands out for me in this sentence is the type of communication that is involved. Here we have adult to adult communication and there is adult to child communication. The importance that Interviewee #2 presents is adult to adult communication. Both interviews talk about the importance of communication and the responsibility that this brings. This can be associated with the code ***Communication and Ownership.*** Here the ownership is on the adults who are working with a young person to effectively express their views and create a platform to do so. This is linked back to ***Defining the role of the professionals*** and defining their responsibility to bring key adults in the young person's life together so that they can have an effective dialogue.

Qualities of a professional (knowledge, expertise and sensitivities)
 "So if there are for example is any agreed plan in place."
Interviewee #2 uses the words '*so if*'. To consider what the 'so if' means then it is possible to state that the 'if' is about questioning what the professionals are doing. But 'if' does not stand alone here and it is important to consider what does the 'so' mean in this context. The 'so' could be about emphasising the possibilities that there are different outcomes professionals can draw from their knowledge and expertise to support a young person.

"*There are for example is any agreed plan in place.*"
'*There are*' can be considered to be words that are confirming words and used to emphasise precise and definite actions or things. Almost as if these words can lead onto confirming a fact. However, when looking closely at the sentence it suggests an ambiguity in the Interviewee's confidence in the professionals, especially with defining

what the professionals are doing? There is a possibility that the Interviewee plucking an example out of nowhere to provide the constant in professional contributions. In questioning professionals, this can allow the interviewee to question themselves as professionals. ***Reflections of Professionals and being a reflective practitioner.*** This code is linked to the code ***Reflections: Think, Review and Evaluate*** which was identified in the analysis of interview #1, where Interviewee #1 saw the reflections to be centred on reviewing the situation for the young person to help them re-integrate into school. Interviewee #2 draws from a similar position as Interviewee #1 but it is possible to consider that there is a slight degree of difference because the reflections can be viewed to not only involves the strategies for the young person but draws on reflection and a process for the professionals.

Reflections and Reviews approaches
"*If there is a meeting between the SENCo and the parents that information needs to be shared with the adults in school so they are aware of what that youngster is responding to.*"

Once again Interviewee #2 starts with an 'if' suggesting that something is not definite. The sentence as a whole can be looked at to be associated with the code ***Ways of working together.***

"*A meeting between the SENCo and the parents.*"
Breaking the sentence further down, it is possible to once again explore the word meeting and to ask what normally happens when the SENCo and the parents meet. Meeting as a word conjures up the idea of a number of people or a two people coming together to discuss issues, share views and will lead to an outcome or greater understanding. It is possible to be mindful of previous analysis and refer to a code that was drawn from this analysis ***Understanding the power and authority in relationships.***

"*That information needs to be shared with the adults in school.*"
The word 'shared' can be considered to be interesting in different ways, especially thinking about what sharing might mean. The question that comes to mind is, is information equally shared between the adults in school or is information given to some adults and not to others? My own personal experience of working in schools is that information is provided on a need to know basis for certain issues, while other information is easily circulated such as if there has been a bereavement in a child's family or a medical condition such as an allergy. This information would be equally shared to all staff because the child has the possibility of meeting and working with a number of school staff. What this highlights that there is a decision making process about what information is given and who is in the know. This can be linked to different codes such as ***Ways of working together, Professional Communication and Professional Discourse*** *and* ***Understanding the power and authority in relationships***

When thinking about how information is being shared, I felt that ***Understanding the power and authority in relationships*** is useful as the discussion so far has identified

the power relationships between parents and professionals. Thinking about why some adults are kept informed and why others are not it is possible to think that there is a power and authority relationship between professionals. ***Understanding the power and authority in professional relationships***.

"*So they are aware of what that youngster is responding to.*"
'*Aware*' can be similar to being informed or to be knowledgeable of but I think that there is an element of not having to be ultimately responsible for. It is almost like wanting someone to know because it provides them with a greater understanding but they are not required to do anything. It almost as if there is an acceptable that informed some school staff do not need to be accountable for anything accept being informed or aware of a situation. Could this be a class of a lack of accountability and ownership or is there something else going on? At the moment I am unable to establish what is going on but it might be something that could be investigated further. ***Lack of accountability.***

"*It may be that they need lots and lots of reassurance and that information is feedback for example to given to subject teachers so that they can actually be involved in carrying that out.*"

When reading this sentence without the context of the other sentences prior of after. It is possible to ask who needs a lot of reassurance and who needs information that is feedback? Using the Flip-flop technique. Interviewee #2 is talking about the young person needing lots of reassurance. However, if this is turned on its head and I make the assumption that the teacher and the staff working with school refusers need lots of reassurance and information, then what does that mean?

"*It may be that they need lots and lots of reassurance.*"
Using the Flip-flop technique this sentence could to be applied to the professionals because of the challenges faced when working with children who find it difficult to attend school. Here is could be for the professionals to accept that sometimes they will not have the answers. This is about being reflective about ***Professional competences and understanding what your skill sets are.***

Developing professional partnerships: Participation
"*And that information is fed back, for example to given to subject teachers so that they can actually be involved in carrying that out.*"

Here Interviewee #2 talks about providing information to subject teachers so that they can become involved. This suggests that subject teachers are not expected to play a role or perhaps the role they play is extremely limited. Thinking about the secondary school format where, young people spend more time with their subject teachers so it seems unclear why they would not be given sufficient information to be able to support the child and seems to be contrary to the ideas of the team around the child. Moreover, it is during this phase of a child's education where there is an increase in school refusal.

"*It might be that they don't like to be criticised so that it really valuable for teachers to actually know that and to when they try to address issues they are actually able to just work with that youngster.*"

Here Interviewee #2 continues to highlight how the different members of the school community can work together to support the young person. This reinforces the concept that everyone can contribute to supporting a young person if they are appropriately informed of the young person's needs.

Looking closely at the sentence and breaking down further it is possible to gain greater understanding of what Interviewee #2 could be saying.

"*It might be that they don't like to be criticised.*"
The word criticised stands out for me here because if I ask myself what does criticise mean? I would say that it takes on the form of something negative which can knock someone's self-esteem. '*Criticised*' is hardly ever used to reflect something positive, but there is a tendency for the person making the criticism to say that they are making the comments to offer the person they are making the comment about a chance to have some greater insight into themselves. The person making the comment could see this as support while the person receiving the comments could see this as destructive. Here, this highlights how adults communicate with young people and leads to the code ***Adults communication with young people***.

"So that it really valuable for teachers to actually know that."
This sentence suggests that there is something that the teacher should be open to and be able to learn. The word valuable stands out with regards to the meaning of the word. Valuable can mean precious or important. Teachers are usually the source of value information and this sentence suggests that instead of the teachers teaching, they are the ones who have something valuable to learn. This idea can be linked to the code, **Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate.** However, considering this association I would say that the association is slightly tentative because the reflection aspect to the code suggests thinking. The question is does being given valuable information allow someone to think review and evaluate? For some individuals additional information can be a source of new thought processes but for others it is valuable information which may or may not be acted upon. This links with the ideas of accountability and the lack of accountability.

Thinking more about this, perhaps there are some teachers or educational professionals who are not open to new information and therefore, the valuable in the sentence is never transmitted to those who are closed minded to new information. ***Professionals being open to new information.*** It is possible to link this code together with the code, ***Reflections of Professionals and being a reflective practitioner.***

"When they try to address issues they are actually able to just work with that youngster."
The word '*try*' means to attempt does not suggest successfully, but there is a

recognition that an effort is being made. Here, Interview is talking about the teachers' attempts to work with the young person. ***The strategies the professionals use.***

'*Address issues*'
Is another way of saying dealing with or tackling, but thinking closely about addressing the issues, it is possible to think in terms of something needing to be done. This could be involve doing anything and does not always imply that there is a degree of reflection. When bringing the sentence together, with the whole sentence, it suggests that the person should be able to work with the young person. This can be linked to the following code which was identified in the analysis of Interview #1 ***Relationships with adults: What are the hallmarks of a 'good relationship'?***

"*They are actually able to just work with that youngster.*"
What is meant by actually being able to just work with that youngster? Looking at the words that stands out for me are actually and just. Thinking why these two words? If I am being honest I am not quite sure. If I remove these two words does it change the meaning of the sentence? They are able to work with that youngster. I think it makes a slight difference and this is to stress the work that is needed to help the young person. Here in Interviewee #2, uses actually and just to stress the need for a focused individual approach required for the young person. This can be linked to the following code, ***Types of Support strategies.*** When referring and comparing the both interviewees identify that support needs to be offered. Interview #2 defines this in terms of the work needed to be done for the young person, whereas Interview #2 suggests that support needs to be offered. Therefore, considering the work needed to be done, it almost as if they should be ***defined and effective strategies*** that are known the work. Here, it could be considered that Interviewee #2 is talking about ***Child Centred Strategies,*** which focuses on meeting the needs of the young person. This could be placed under the heading of **Meeting the needs: Strategies and activities**

"*In terms of the child themselves, I think the child probably will need to have, the child will need to have the opportunity to develop some kind a trusting relationship with somebody else at school, if they have not already.*"
Here, Interviewee #2 refers to relationships with others and specifically relationships with adults. Therefore, this can be linked to ***Adults communication with young people*** and ***Adult led relationships which explore the desire to understand the young person***. Ultimately, this code be linked to the following category: (**The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others. The social dimension of the interactions with society. Plus, Individual interactions verses wider group/society). Also, this code can be linked to Relationships with adults: What are the hallmarks of a 'good relationship'?**

"*To help them with expressing how they are feeling about the whole school experience and gaining something positive for them.*"
Once again, this sentence can be viewed in terms of helping the young person to have a voice. This sentence can be linked to the concept of ***communication – the voice of the young person*** and ***the concept barriers to communication for the young***

person. However, here Interviewee #2 stresses the importance of the young person voice or views on their whole school experience. Almost as if saying that the young person is entitled to have their say. Thinking about this further, it is possible to ask the following question, why is it important to share views? In a school situation does this have any importance? Can the young person's views lead to change

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In terms of the school as an organisation and what do you think their contribution might be?

I think it would be about them acknowledging the situation if they haven't tried identified concerns at an earlier point when the concerns do escalate and the youngster refusing they need to be supportive. They need to work out how to try to include this youngster as supposed to sometimes getting too negative about the situation and thinking that the child does not want to actually come to school. Or thinking, making arrangements for the child to go elsewhere, so they need to try do their best to be supportive in that approach.

Memo 11
22nd August 2011
Aspects of society, values and rules
Transition
Inconsistencies between establishments/schools and comparisons
The common features of School refusal.
The characteristics of School refusal.
Conformity: Doing and thinking as other in behaviour and thoughts that is socially acceptable.
Criteria for success
The curriculum (Mainstream and special).
Role of Local Authority and School refusal.
Defining the Role of Educational Welfare Officers
Lack of understanding of different professional roles.
Schools: Distinguishing between mainstream and special.
Developing professional partnerships: Participation
Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate

What do you think educational establishments do to support a young person, the family, and the school staff for addressing school refusal?

I think there are services available in the Local Authority that can steps in and obviously they would need to have contacted first, so that would include the Educational Psychology Service, included the child, family adolescent consultation service which supports the actual family and the child. So there are services out there.

But what I find that there's not enough communication between the actual services themselves and in the events you might have involvement of the different services I think we really need to come together, to share their views and joint help to improve child. .

Memo 12
20th August 2011
Responsibilities in the School Setting
Division of responsibilities between school based vs LA staff.
Relationships with adults: What are the hallmarks of a 'good relationship'?
Relationships with peers: In and outside school.
Complexity of School Refusal: Process involved and procedures.

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You mentioned earlier that you had experience of working with a young person who was reluctant to attend school and you even described a situation where you think they are currently not in school. I want you think about the strategies you use as a professional working in that case?

What I used so far? I think it is important to actually look at what focus on information gathering and strengths also. I did look back in the pupil's file. They had been known the educational psychology service and I looked at their cognitive assessment that had been undertaken. I identified strengths and areas of needs. One of the first meetings with the school I raised with them the child strengths and this is what should be focused on during lessons and the needs, this is what should be accommodated in lessons to make his access to the curriculum more possible.

Look at that area first. Then I was interested to finding out, this child had issues with his expressive language skills and I wanted to find out more about his emotional understanding and his resiliency levels because parents described him as being very sensitive and I carried out two assessments on resiliency on adolescent and then the Behavioural Emotional Screening system I was actually using this for my doctorate case I was working on. That's when I found it was quite significant, he has strengths in terms of his cognitive ability he was actually on purpose gave me a positive impression of himself that indicated to me that he is trying to camouflage that he has got difficulties at all.

There were some barriers going on with his social action communication. The Child and Family Adolescent Consultation Service were involved and they raised the question whether he was on the Autistic Spectrum. I asked the parents and the school to complex a check list that explores the triad of impairment. When I got the information back it actually came to light that he has not got that difficulties associated with that. The SENCo also highlighted that he does have good relationships with others. I actually ruled that out and I working through the information, developing hypothesis and testing them.

I have been supportive of the school and the parents in terms of implementing appropriate actions for this youngster.   The school has actually applied for statutory assessment and they have support in place in terms of spending time with him for the whole morning. The school are involved in that they weren't too keen with going ahead with that. The parents, the school feel that there isn't a major issue; they feel that the issue is with the parents. There is a colleague of mine who is a dyslexia specialist. The child has dyslexia as well and believes that the issue is with the parents. I am reluctant to accept that. So we are kind of at the stage where we are waiting for the outcome of the statutory assessment.

Memo 13
20th August 2011
Leadership and transferable responsibility.

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Would you describe your strategies so far, would you describe them as successful or not. How would you evaluate them?

I think in terms of my professional practice they way I have actually in terms of how I've dealt and managed this case. I think that I have followed the steps involved and produce a comprehensive report at the end of it. The school has not worked so well with the parents, they seem to view the parents in a negative way and the parents actually realised that and they tend to communicate with me. There seems to be not very good relationships between the school and the parents. The school have taken over, have implemented the actions that we've agreed. I think they have only done it half-heartedly. So that what's the barrier has been with the system in terms of the implementation of the strategies.

Memo 15
3rd March 2011
Assigning School Refusal as a school issue.
School environment.

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You mentioned the local authorities previously, what measures have local authorities or services put in place to address school refusal?

Actually, this is the first authority where I have worked closely with the school refusal or those who refuse to attend to school. My attention has not been drawn to any particular approach to use with school refusal. A colleague of my who is a dyslexia specialist shared literature with me around school refusal but I felt it was out of date, about 20 years old so I didn't take it too seriously. I think if my involvement continues

with this case then I will do some background reading, to find more current views on school refusal. Do a literature review on school refusal.

Memo 14
3rd March 2011
Types of Support strategies
Other Professional Services outside of the school
Peer Mentoring

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Can you explain what do you think schools are doing to address school refusal?

I think that I have not had the opportunity to specifically ask them about that I wouldn't be totally sure about the effects. I think they do attempt to work closely with the parents and outside agencies, EWO and other professional involved. I do see efforts around that.

Memo 15
3rd March 2011
Prior knowledge shaped by experience which guides decision making

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In terms of key professional, personnel to addressing school refusal, you mentioned a few just a minute ago. Who do you think those key professional should be?

I think they should be ones who have a relationship with whether that school teacher, SENCo or a Mentor. I also think it is useful to have a maybe peer mentor. If it is a secondary school maybe an older youngster. In terms of the school working favourable, it depends on the outside agencies involved.

Memo 16
3rd March 2011
Complexity of School refusal: Difficulties with identification.
Shifting perspectives with experience.

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Can I ask you? Should school refusal be addressed in or out of the school setting?

I think it least needs to be assessed initially in the school setting, but there does needs to be involvement by outside agencies, specially looking at other areas in more depth to see whether explanations to what could be contributing.

Memo 17
3rd March 2011
Role of the Educational Psychologist linked to changing behaviour
Defining/assigning the role of Educational Psychologist.
Changing Behaviour and Attitude
Service being provided: A qualified Approach

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What role should the Educational Psychologist should play when addressing school refusal?

I think the EP should be in the role of facilitating and supporting the school, when they are actually collaborating with the parents. So, I think like the example I have provided, so in terms of looking at what's being investigated, signposting. Whether there are any gaps in the investigation, signposting the appropriate agencies, making sense of the incoming information, using that information to put together a very tight plan to use regularly by the school.

Memo 18
3rd March 2011
Reasons for failing to address school refusal.
Alternative approaches to education.
Ideal Solutions.

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Who do you think needs support when addressing school refusing behaviour?

Pupils and the actual parents. The school needs to work in conjunctions with all. I feel myself being involved in the case. I felt at time to raise this case at supervision. I felt that it got to the point where I tried various avenues myself based on my professional experiences and ability and it reached a point where I felt it needed to be discussed further with more experienced person than myself.

Memo 18
3rd March 2011

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Finally, what do you think happens to young people who are school refuser?

I think they end up not being in school. This is happening to the youngster I have been involved with. In another authority where I have worked, the Child and Family Adolescent Service acknowledge that the youngster had a high level of anxiety and the acknowledgement that the youngster was not mainstream.

Memo 19
10 March 2011
Impressions of Interview
I am amazed that so much information has been gained from the interview. My impression of the interview is that the interviewee has strong opinions and is able to elaborate on them with confidence and knowledge.

The participant has so many years working within schools and has worked in a variety of settings. These experiences have shaped the interviewee's outlook. The interviewee mentioned ideals, but in doing so, highlights the reality of the situation.

The interviewee's opinion on the background and social aspects stand out for me, as it places responsibility on the home environment "All things start at home." Furthermore, the interviewee has clear expectations of parents and professionals. It is possible to gain an understanding that the interviewee feels that the role of the parent is to ensure that the young person is ready to learn and then this prepares the way for the school to educate the young person. When this does not happen the reasons are numerous.

If I was to ask myself what feelings I gain from the interviewee, I would say that it very matter of fact, detailed and structured. The ideas are formulated and embed in the interviewee's experiences.

Memo 20
12 March 2011
Summary Memo of Themes/Categories
In this interviewee, I have been able to identify a number of themes/categories or ideas that stand out for me. However, I don't feel that I can pull everything together as yet but I will try to draw out some of the themes/categories that I feel are significantly in this current interview.

4. **Defining professional self:** This is when educational professionals identify themselves through their role and the work that they do. It helps shapes and defines their professional knowledge and experience which may impacts on the views they hold.

5. **The Jigsaw puzzle of life- background influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life**: This is a long convoluted title but I was really unsure of how to represent it. The interviewee kept referring to the word '*background'* and this enabled me to think about what this means. I decided that this means the things that contribute to making us who we are, such as our upbringing, home environment, social and economic status. This does not stand alone, but I am not able to include all the themes that could be potentially included as yet. It is hoped that the other interviews will show whether this category or theme will be developed further or not. However, I am tempted to include concepts identified in the list of concepts/codes such as 'The role of the family and Home environment.'

6. **The interplay between external verse internal factors (within child factors and resiliency):** This category deals with reflecting on how someone copes with their feelings and perhaps challenges. Are they emotionally resilient? Learning involves challenges and sometimes finding things difficult are apart of the process. This category is about this and how an individual deals with the emotional aspects that are involved. This also includes dealing with success and failure. Once again, I am not sure if the idea of separation of self from others and school work (listed as 12 in the list of Concepts/Codes) links into to this, or is this a separate? However, looking at the list of concepts/codes, it could be possible to draw other concepts under this umbrella for example concept/code No. 10 The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others which also links to the following category or theme. Here the social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others is concerned with both the physical process of interacting as well as the emotional capacity as well.

7. **The complexity of relationships:** This is a concept that seems to be occurring throughout the interview. However, there seems to be a number of relationships that are taking place and are at different levels such as the young person's relationship with school, relationship with their background, the relationship with their peers, the relationship between the parents and the school. Also, I am not sure at the moment if it is possible to draw all these things together and I am questioning whether they mean the same things.

8. **Aspect of Society, values and rules:** The category brings to the forefront the ideas that there are common rules and values in society which individuals should adhere to. These are the values that people should share. I am not sure if social problems is a category on it's own at the moment or is it linked to this category. However, I feel that the concept/code listed: 'Breaching/understanding societal rules of social conventions and behaviour could be linked to this category.

9. **Demarcation of educational settings:** This category explores the different educational settings such as mainstream, special and alternative. It also includes the ideas that the different settings require different skills and therefore it might suggest versatility in terms of the educational setting, perhaps the curriculum or even the types of adult working within these settings. This is where I will admit that there is an element of confusion about whether the following concepts should be included under this category for example the 'Inconsistencies between establishments/schools and comparisons' and 'Schools: distinguishing between mainstream and special.' Essentially this category is about what is on offer and available to young people, as well as how they are similar and different.

10. **The social dimension of the interaction with society:** This concept was drawn out of the interview when exploring the ideas of social problems. This category aims to understand how interactions between individuals, especially peers have a wider context such as the impact on the community or society. The interviewee talked about peer pressure and wrong relationships. Also, it is felt that this category includes the concept/code of individual interactions verses wider group/society, as this still links into this category. Furthermore, I am not quite sure but the concept of 'Conformity: Doing and thinking as other in behaviour and thoughts that is socially acceptable' or not acceptable. This about adjusting views or behaviour to mirror the wider group.

11. **School experience:** The idea behind this concept came from the interviewee's perspective on negative prior school experience. This concept aims to provide a sense of what the school experience is. This can be social, academic, environment. However, it is felt that at this moment it is intertwined with the academic and social difficulties. I am aware that the social relationships have been highlighted before and analysing the other interviews will shape what this category will eventually look like. It will also include concept/code such as 'The curriculum (mainstream and special)' and 'Assigning School Refusal as a school issue.'

12. **Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties with the social or and academic contexts:** This category aims to highlight the feelings that may occur in the learning environment, it can be essentially linked to the concept 'School Experience'. Also this concept brings up the ideas of self-fulfilling prophecy, self-perceptions, motivation and self-efficacy.

13. **Developing partnerships and defining partnerships working practices (multi –agency):** This theme/category brings together many ideas, such as 'Roles and expectations of key players; schools, parents and the young person', 'Defining the role of the professionals', 'Ways of working together', 'Lack of understanding of different professional role', 'Developing professional partnerships: participation', 'Taking responsibility linked to ownerships and accountability', 'Communication and ownership', 'Responsibilities in the school setting', and 'Leadership and transferable responsibility.' Ultimately, this theme/category will explore how individuals work together.

14. **The role of the Local Authority and School Refusal:** I am not sure if this goes under the other theme/category but I feel that it is slightly different in some way. Local Authorities play a role in ensuring that legislation is incorporated into school practices. To support this process, schools have access to a number of Local Authority Officers. This theme/category can include the concept/code 'Defining the role of Educational Welfare Officers', 'Division of responsibilities between school based and Local Authority staff', 'Defining/assigning the role of the Educational Psychologist linked to changing behaviour' and 'Other professional Services outside of the school.'

15. **Professionalism: Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate:** This theme/category focuses on the professional qualities that the person may bring within the context of their assigned roles (Teacher, EWO or EP for example). This incorporates the following concept/codes 'Qualities of a professional (knowledge, expertise and sensitivities', 'Prior knowledge shaped by experience which guides decision making', 'Shifting perspectives with experience', and 'A Service being provided: A qualified approach.'

16. **Complexity of School Refusal: Difficulties with identification:** This theme/category is about examining further the various reasons behind school refusal. This is a theme that is hard to establish without drawing on other concepts and codes. The ones that will be brought together are: 'Recognition and the importance of individual needs', 'The common features of School Refusal', 'The characteristics of School Refusal', 'Complexity of School Refusal: Processes involved and procedures',

17. **Social Problems:** This theme/category can potentially be linked to other themes and categories. However, before this is linked I would like this code explored further. Social problems describe all society's ills.

18. **Transition:** This theme/category describes difficulties with experiencing change. Change can be linked to different situations. Transitions can be micro or macro. The macro transitions are home to primary school, from primary school to secondary school. Then secondary school to the outside world. Smaller transitions are specific to the learning, home, wider community environments. Nevertheless the impact can be significant for specific children, who are unable to cope with change.

19. **Meeting the needs: Strategies and activities:** This theme/category explores what is available or on offer as support, this theme/category includes the following concepts/codes 'Peer Mentoring', 'Types of Support Strategies', 'Alternative approaches to education'.

20. **Emotional Well-being: Pastoral Care:** I am not sure about the direction of this theme/category will take but it draws upon the ideas of meeting the emotional needs of a young person and what this may look like in the school setting. This theme/category can be associated with other concepts/codes such as 'Relationships with adults: What are the hallmarks of 'good relationship'? 'Relationships with peers: In and outside of school'.

21. **Criteria for Success:** This theme/category is about establishing ways forward to addressing school refusal or what is the perceived best ways forward. This theme/category involves concepts/codes 'Ideal Solutions' and 'Changing behaviour and attitude.'

22. Reason for failing to address School Refusal: At the moment this theme is a category on it's own but it could be linked to the criteria for success and the opposite opinion. Once again this will be explored further in the analysis of other interviews.

Memo 21
August 2011
Questions and Directions for Theoretical Sampling

Things to follow up on when doing further interviews:
Communication with professionals.
Family life and background: what is the difference?
How does the professional role shape the steps or the processes to dealing with matters of concern?
What is the springboard for our relationships with our peers and the wider society?
What is the process that begins the separation of self? What does self mean within this context? Is it possible to reintegrate self?
What is the role of the Teacher in creating the school experience?
What is the role of peers in creating the school experience?
What is the internal process with regards to describing a sense of social failure and what does this mean in general.
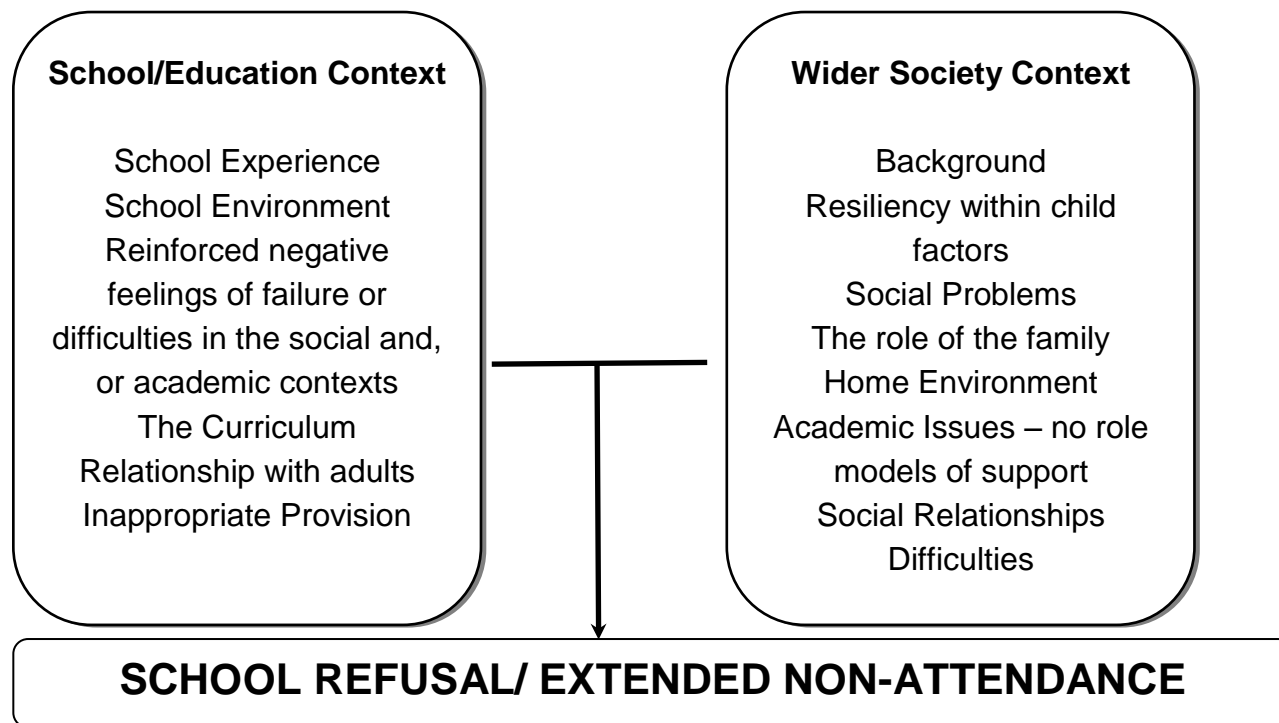What does accountability mean in the context where you are required to be just aware? Or is this accountability or the lack of it?

List of Concepts/Codes

1. Defining professional self: Establishment of credible professional self.

2. Demarcation of educational settings and environments.

3. Establishing a rational and a theory on school refusal

4. Development of an hypothesis and undertaking the research

5. The jigsaw puzzle of life - background Influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life.

6. Resiliency –within child factors

7. The complexity of relationships

8. The interplay between external verse internal factors (within child and resiliency)

9. Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs.

10. The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others.

11. The social dimension of the interactions with society.

12. Individual interactions verses wider group/society.

13. The separation of self from others and school work

14. Social problems

15. Defining social problems

16. Breaching/understanding societal rules of social conventions and behaviour

17. School Experience and Environment

18. Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.

19. The role of the family

20. Aspects of society, values and rules

21. Home Environment

22. Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability.

23. Developing Partnerships and Defining partnership working practices (multi-agency)

24. Roles and expectations of key players: schools, parents and young person.

25. Defining the role of the professionals.

26. Transition

27. Inconsistencies between establishments/schools and comparisons

28. Communication and ownership

29. Emotional Well-being: Pastoral Care

30. Recognition of and the importance of individual needs.

31. The common features of School refusal.

32. The characteristics of School refusal.

33. Conformity: Doing and thinking as other in behaviour and thoughts that is socially acceptable.
34. Meeting the needs: Strategies and activities
35. Criteria for success
36. Reflections and Reviews approaches
37. Qualities of a professional (knowledge, expertise and sensitivities)
38. The curriculum (Mainstream and special).
39. Ways of working together
40. Role of Local Authority and School refusal.
41. Defining the Role of Educational Welfare Officers
42. Lack of understanding of different professional roles.
43. Schools: Distinguishing between mainstream and special.
44. Developing professional partnerships: Participation.
45. Reflections: Think Review and Evaluate.
46. Responsibilities in the School Setting
47. Division of responsibilities between school based vs LA staff.
48. Relationships with adults: What are the hallmarks of a 'good relationship'?
49. Relationships with peers: In and outside school.
50. Complexity of School Refusal: Process involved and procedures.
51. Leadership and transferable responsibility.
52. Assigning School Refusal as a school issue.
53. School environment.
54. Types of Support strategies
55. Other Professional Services outside of the school
56. Peer Mentoring
57. Prior knowledge shaped by experience which guides decision making
58. Complexity of School refusal: Difficulties with identification.
59. Shifting perspectives with experience.
60. Role of the Educational Psychologist linked to changing behaviour
61. Defining/assigning the role of Educational Psychologist.
62. Changing Behaviour and Attitude
63. Service being provided: A qualified Approach
64. Reasons for failing to address school refusal.
65. Alternative approaches to education.
66. Ideal Solutions.

Diagram 1:
Contributory Factors

School/Education Context

School Experience
School Environment
Reinforced negative
feelings of failure or
difficulties in the social and,
or academic contexts
The Curriculum
Relationship with adults
Inappropriate Provision

Wider Society Context

Background
Resiliency within child
factors
Social Problems
The role of the family
Home Environment
Academic Issues – no role
models of support
Social Relationships
Difficulties

SCHOOL REFUSAL/ EXTENDED NON-ATTENDANCE

Steps to resolve school refusal/extended non-attendance

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

To gain greater understanding of the following:

| **The Characteristics of School** | **Emotional Wellbeing: Pastoral Care** | **Recognise the importance of individual** | **Transition Issues** | **Relationships with school staff and peers** | **Meeting the needs: Strategies and** | **Reflections: Review and Evaluate** |

Criteria for Success: Integration into School

Appendix 6: List of Codes

1. Defining professional self: Establishment of credible professional self.

2. Demarcation of educational settings and environments.

3. Establishing a rational and a theory on school refusal

4. Development of an hypothesis and undertaking the research

5. The jigsaw puzzle of life - background Influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life.

6. Resiliency –within child factors

7. The complexity of relationships

8. The interplay between external verse internal factors (within child and resiliency)

9. Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs.

10. The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others.

11. The social dimension of the interactions with society.

12. Individual interactions verses wider group/society.

13. The separation of self from others and school work

14. Social problems

15. Defining social problems

16. Breaching/understanding societal rules of social conventions and behaviour

17. School Experience and Environment

18. Reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties within the social context and academically.

19. The role of the family

20. Aspects of society, values and rules

21. Home Environment

22. Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability.

23. Developing Partnerships and Defining partnership working practices (multi-agency)

24. Roles and expectations of key players: schools, parents and young person.

25. Defining the role of the professionals.

26. Transition

27. Inconsistencies between establishments/schools and comparisons

28. Communication and ownership

29. Emotional Well-being: Pastoral Care

30. Recognition of and the importance of individual needs.

31. The common features of School refusal.

32. The characteristics of School refusal.

33. Conformity: Doing and thinking as other in behaviour and thoughts that is socially acceptable.

34. Meeting the needs: Strategies and activities

35. Criteria for success

36. Reflections and Reviews approaches

80.   Empowerment and having a voice of the Young Person.

81.   Teachers and young people involvement.

82.   Professionals protecting the rights of the individual and the family

83.   professional responsibility

84.   The role of the Teacher

85.   The role of the other children/peers

86.   A sense of social failure

87.   The hierarchy of identification - professional verses parent and profession and professional.

88.   Value judgements made by professionals

89.   Understanding the power and authority in relationships

90.   Defining the role of the parent

91.   Adult led relationships which explores the desire to understand the young person

92.   Understanding behaviour as a communication tool.

93.   Formation/Development of Friendships

94.   The value of education

95.   Early identification of needs

96.   Feelings of disempowerment and failures in the parenting role

97.   Reflections of Professionals and being a reflective practitioner

98.   Understanding the power and authority in professional relationships

99.   Professional competences and understanding what your skill sets are

100.   Adults communication with young people

101.   Lack of accountability

102.   Professionals being open to new information

103.   The strategies the professionals use

104.   Defined and effective strategies

105.   Child Centred Strategies

106.   The process of identifying concerns

107.   Young people's preparedness and the foundations of making choices

108.   Adult responsibility for enabling a young person's voice

109.   Negative views held by the educational professionals

110.   The presenting characteristics but not the underlying issue (cause/reason)

111.   Professionals psychologically and physically abdicating their commitment to meeting the needs of the young person

112.   The psychological transitions for change

113.   Working with Local Authority Services/Initiating the relationship

114.   Local Authorities being informed of the needs of the school population and the support required

115.   The purpose of professional communication

116.   Researching the information

117.   Formulating ideas and a picture of the situation

118.   Parents' perspective on their child's personal qualities

119.   Assessment of Resiliency

120.   Continued Professional Development

121. Relevance of meaning, the importance of outcome
122. Disguising the difficulties – young person
123. The meaning of pupil participation
124. Resistance towards support strategies
125. Bringing together the different opinions of professionals
126. Evaluating and defining the value of the work carried out
127. The value judgements made by the parents
128. Having shared outcome goals
129. Barriers for addressing school refusal relationship/communication between parents and school
130. Conflicted parent – school relationship
131. Professional quality and commitment
132. Changing Behaviour and Attitude of the professionals
133. Level of professional experience of working with school refusers/extended school non-attenders.
134. Noticing and professional participation
135. Not noticing and decreased level of participation by professionals
136. Status of being a professional and specialist
137. Discounting of ideas or other people's views and perspectives
138. Evaluation of the work of others (school and teachers) to discover the impact
139. Difficulties with partnership working
140. Key support figure
141. Role of Local Authority and School refusal
142. Supporting the school to build more collaboration with parents
143. Providing guidance on the investigation and ensuring that they are going in the right direction
144. Supporting the school to develop strategies and plan
145. Referring to more other professionals who are experienced
146. Outcome of School Refusal/Criteria for lack of success in addressing school refusal
147. Outlook and approach to life.
148. Defining the role of the professionals
149. Reflections and Reviews approaches
150. Relevance of meaning, the importance of outcome
151. Leadership and transferable responsibility
152. The value judgements made by the parents
153. Defining/assigning the role of Educational Psychologist
154. Difficulties with partnership working
155. Inconsistent messages
156. Not treating the young person like an individual
157. Celebrating the strength of pupil
158. Not asking from help from services until things go wrong
159. Excluding young people without taking into consideration their disabilities or needs.
160. Supporting transition
161. Not comfortable at school

162. Not feeling valued or appreciated at school
163. Not getting on with teachers
164. Poor social relationships with peers
165. Being bullied
166. Not meeting their parental responsibilities
167. Failing out with the school
168. Not working in partnerships with the school
169. Making choices about preferred schools
170. Being angry with the school
171. Making choices about preferred schools
172. Parental values of education
173. Parental illness
174. Own negative school experiences which is transferred to the young person
175. Collusion
176. Not attending to the child's needs
177. Not understanding special educational needs
178. Not understanding the need for flexibility
179. Being under pressure
180. Negative attitudes towards the young person
181. Not being welcoming
182. Not working in partnership with parents
183. Having fear and insufficient support and encouragement
184. Home visits
185. Escorting the young person to school
186. Handing the young person to a named individual in school
187. Supporting the family
188. Involving other professionals
189. Working as a professional team
190. Access to specialist provision if mainstream placement not suitable
191. Differentiated curriculum
192. Social services
193. EP involvement

Appendix 7: List of Themes with Codes

Theme	Codes
The Complexity of Relationship	▪ The social dimension of interpersonal interactions with others ▪ Relationships with adults: What are the hallmarks of a good relationship? ▪ Relationship with peers: In and outside school ▪ The relationship between child and parent. ▪ The emotional relationship between child-parent/The foundations of resiliency ▪ Teachers and young people involvement ▪ The role of other children/peers ▪ A sense of social failure* ▪ Understanding the power and authority in relationships ▪ Adult led relationships which explores the desire to understand the young person ▪ Formation/Development of friendships ▪ Key support figure ▪ Relationship with adults: what are the hallmarks of a 'good relationship' ▪ Bullying ▪ Not fitting in
School Experience	▪ Aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting individual needs ▪ School experience and environment ▪ Reinforced negative feelings of failure – difficulties within the social context and academically ▪ Inconsistencies between establishments and comparison ▪ Recognising the importance of individual need ▪ The curriculum (mainstream and special) ▪ Schools – distinguishing between mainstream and special ▪ Assigning school refusal as a school issue ▪ Alternative approaches to education ▪ Demarcation of educational settings and environments ▪ The role of the teacher ▪ The role of the school

Aspects of Society, Values and Rules	▪ The social dimension of the interactions with society
	▪ Individual interaction versus wider group/society
	▪ Breaching /understanding society's rules of social conventions and behaviour
	▪ The value of education
	▪ Participation
	▪ Social problems
	▪ Defining social problems
Defining Professional Self	▪ Professional journey
	▪ Professional well-being
	▪ Developing professional
	▪ Developing professional confidence
	▪ Processes and steps involved in professional work
	▪ Diagnosing and labelling behaviour which provides greater understanding and perception change
	▪ Professionals protecting the rights of the individual and the family
	▪ Professional responsibility
	▪ Understanding the power and authority in professional relationships
	▪ Professional competences and understanding what your skills sets are
	▪ Professionals being open to new information
	▪ Defining professional self
	▪ Defining the role of the professionals
	▪ Qualities of professional (knowledge, expertise and sensitivities)
	▪ Lack of understanding of different professional roles
	▪ Taking responsibility linked to ownership and accountability
	▪ Reflections and review approaches
	▪ Developing professional partnerships: Participation
	▪ Leadership and transferable responsibility
	▪ Prior knowledge shaped by experience which guides decision making
	▪ Service being provided: A qualified approach
	▪ Lack of accountability
	▪ The strategies professionals use

	▪ Negative views held by the educational professionals
	▪ Professionals psychologically and physically abdicating their commitment to meet the needs of the young person
	▪ Researching the information
	▪ Professional quality and commitment
	▪ Level of professional experience working with school refusers
	▪ Status of being a professional
The Jigsaw puzzle of life – background influences as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life	▪ The role of the family
	▪ Home environment
	▪ Socialisation
	▪ Outlook and approach to life
	▪ Financial
	▪ Socio-economic disadvantages
	▪ Social problems
The interplay between external versus internal factors (within child factors and resiliency)	▪ Resiliency – within child factors
	▪ The separation of self from others and school work (school experience)
	▪ Emotional well-being pastoral care
	▪ Within child factors versus events that promote emotional state
	▪ The emotional relationship between child-parent/The foundations of resiliency
	▪ Assessment of resiliency
	▪ Empowerment and having a voice – young person*
Developing partnerships and defining partnerships, working practices (Multi-Agency)	▪ Developing partnerships (multi-agency)
	▪ Ways of working together
	▪ Developing professional partnerships: participation
	▪ Division of responsibility between school based professionals vs LA staff*
	▪ Responsibilities in the school setting*
	▪ Other professional services outside of the school
	▪ Working with LA services/initiating the relationships*
	▪ Bringing together the different opinions of professionals
	▪ Having shared outcomes goals
	▪ Difficulties with partnership working

	▪ Referring to other professionals who are experienced
The role of the Local Authority and School Refusal	▪ Role of the LA and school refusal
	▪ Working with LA services/initiating the relationship
	▪ Local Authority being informed of the needs of the school's population and the support required*
	▪ Evaluation of the work of others (school and teachers) to discover the impact
	▪ Supporting the schools to build more collaboration with parents
	▪ Provide guidance on the investigation and ensure that the school staff are going in the right direction
	▪ Support the school to develop strategies and plans
	▪ Division of responsibilities between school based and LA staff
	▪ Leadership and transferable responsibility
	▪ Service being provided: A qualified approach*
Professionalism: Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate	▪ Reflections and review approaches*
	▪ Reflections: Think, review and evaluate
	▪ Shifting perspective with experience
	▪ Value judgements made by professionals
	▪ Reflections of professionals and being a reflective practitioner
	▪ The psychological transition for change*
	▪ Researching the information*
	▪ Formulating ideas and picture of the situation
	▪ Relevance of meaning, the importance of outcome
	▪ Evaluating and defining the value of the work carried out
	▪ Changing behaviour and attitude of the professionals
	▪ Noticing professional participation
	▪ Not noticing and decreased level of participation by professionals
	▪ Discounting the ideas of others, people's views and perspectives
	▪ Negative views held by educational professionals

	▪ Establishing a rationale and theory on school refusal ▪ Developing an hypothesis and undertaking the research on school refusal ▪ Other professional services ▪ Transition
Complexity of school refusal: Difficulties with identification	▪ The complexity of school refusal, process involved and procedures ▪ Assigning school refusal as a school issue ▪ Reasons for failing to address school refusal ▪ The hierarchy of identification – professional versus parent and professional and professional ▪ Early identification of need ▪ The process of identifying concerns* ▪ The presenting characteristics but not underlying issue (causes/reasons)
Meeting the needs: Strategies and activities	▪ Types of support strategies ▪ Peer Mentoring ▪ The strategies professionals use ▪ Defined and effective strategies ▪ Child centred strategies ▪ The process of identifying concerns* ▪ Resistance towards support strategies ▪ Recognition of and the importance of individual needs* ▪ Early identification of need* ▪ Criteria for success ▪ Ideal solutions ▪ Diagnosing and labelling behaviour which provides greater understanding and perception change
Reason for failing to address school refusal	▪ The common features of school refusal ▪ The characteristics of school refusal ▪ The process of identifying concerns* ▪ Barriers for addressing school refusal – relationship/communication between parents and school ▪ Outcome of school refusal ▪ Criteria for lack of success in addressing school refusal* ▪ Resistance to support strategies

Communication	- Professional communication* - Professional discourse - Communication – the voice of the young person - Barriers to communicating for the young person - Understanding behaviour as a communication tool - Adult communication with young people - Adult responsibility for enabling a young person's voice - Local Authority being informed of the needs of school population and support required* - The purpose of professional communication - Barriers for addressing school refusal/relationship and communication between parents and school* - Communication and ownership - Conflicted parent-school relationship* - Empowerment and having a voice* - Value judgements of parents*
The Pupil/The Young Person	- Empowerment and having voice - The young person's preparedness and the foundations of making choice - Disguising the difficulties – young person - The meaning of pupil participation
Role of the parent	- Role and expectations of key players: schools, parents and young person - Defining the role of the parents - Feelings of disempowerment and failure in parenting role* - Parents' perspective on child's personal qualities - The value judgements made by parents - Attachment issues - Collusion - Depression/ill health
The Role of the Educational Psychologist	- Defining /assigning the role of the EP - Role of EP linked to changing behaviour - Changing behaviour and attitude - Provide guidance on the investigation and ensure that school staff are going in the right direction

Appendix 8: Integrative Memo 1 -The Descriptive Story

Integrative Memo 1
23 June 2013
The descriptive story

Thinking about the central notion of the study, I believe that the young person's experiences are the important thread which draws the themes together. The theme that I consider to be the starting point and the central focus of school refusal is, "***The Complexity of Relationships***." If I ask the question, what kinds of relationships are in a young person life? I would first reply by saying that there are a number of relationships. These relationships are characterised by "*relationships with adults*" with the view of understanding "*what are the hallmarks of a good relationship?*" However, when first reflecting on the initial relationship in a young person's life, "*the relationships between the child and the parent(s)/caregiver(s)*" is the relationship that comes to mind. It is the relationship that I consider to be the template of which other relationships stem from. This significant and important relationship provides the "*emotional relationship between the child and the parent,*" which in turns helps forms "*the foundations of resiliency*". Thinking of a reason why the relationship is important is because it provides the opportunity for the child to learn about "*the social dimensions of interpersonal interactions with others.*"

Asking myself, where else can "*the social dimension of interpersonal interactions*" develop? School. Schools are places where there are a number of different children and adults. The adults have a number of roles and the children are grouped together according to their age. Schools provide the opportunity for young people to develop their social experiences through "*Teachers and young people involvement.*" "*Teachers and young people involvement*" means that young people have the opportunity to meet and socialise with a number of adults and children. These social experiences highlight the "*role of other children/peers,*" as important social function with regards to the "*formation/development of friendships.*" These friendships offer the opportunity for the young person to extend their social skills because they enable the relationship to go beyond the context of the school, "*relationship with peer in and outside school.*"

Considering the importance of adult relationships with young people, outside of "*the relationships between the child and the parent(s)/caregiver(s),*" these relationships are important for the young person. Here, the responsibility is placed on the adults to learn about and understand the young person, "*Adult led relationship which explores the desire to understand the young person.*" These adult led relationships allow the young person to understand "*the social dimension of the interactions within society*" because they provide a model of how others should interact and behave with each other. The adults in these relationships can become a "*key support figure*" for the young person outside of the child's relationship with the parent(s)/caregiver(s).

To understand the refusal to attend school further, I asked myself the question, would it be fair to say that school refusal is initiated when these above experiences do not occur in the young person's life? What I would say is that not having the described experiences above would have

an influence and an impact on the young person's feelings. Perhaps the young person would start to feel "*a sense of social failure*," which may have a major influence on how the young person understands and manages their social world, especially their "*social experiences*".

Thinking about the exposure children and young people have to other relationships, beyond their home context and it is possible to consider "the *role of school.*" Asking myself the questions, what is school and what do schools do? Then, I would say that school is the launching pad into society, the wider community and a means of understanding the world beyond the young person's home life or home systems. "*The role of school*" is to take the child on a journey that catapults the child from the nest of their home to the wider world and their community. Perhaps, it might be even fair to say that school is one of the training grounds outside of the "*home experience,*" which also contributes to creating and developing the individuals' sense of self within society.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I think, to understand school attendance is to understand how it allows the young person to have access to the "**School Experience**." The "**School Experience**" of young people is shaped by a number of things, such as the "*demarcation of educational setting and environment*" and these are regulated by the "*curriculum, mainstream or special.*" Schools vary from school to school. There are a number of "*inconsistencies between establishments*" with regards to ethos, approaches, personnel and strategies of support, to list a few. However, the major influential factor that shapes the "*school experience*" for young people is the "*role of the teacher.*" This key role involves a number of components and is ultimately guided by the "*aspects of school responsibilities with the role of academic challenges and meeting the individual needs.*" This code describes teachers' duty to ensure that the curriculum is adhered to and appropriate focus is given to the individual's learning needs. The "*role of the teacher*" involves "*recognising the importance of individual need*" and means that teachers use a number of strategies to identify ways forward to "*meeting needs: strategies and activities.*"

When young people's needs have not been met through appropriate strategies, activities and support by the teacher or teaching staff, the young person experiences "*reinforced negative feelings of failure or difficulties with the social context and academically.*" The negative school experience that the young person experiences becomes the trigger for initiating the desire not to attend school. Therefore, it is possible to "*assign school refusal as a school issue.*" The options for supporting the young person may be numerous, but one consideration may be to seek "alternative approaches to education," which may also provide the opportunity for the young person to experience a different "*school experience and environment.*"

Thinking further about the "*role of the school*" and considering the "*school experience*". It is possible to ask a number of questions. The question that I think is important to ask is, what is the role of school? The role of school in terms of school refusal or what is the role of school in general? Having briefly discussed social relationships and the foundation of initial relationships, it is then possible to see school as a source for building on initial childhood relationships. Also, schools are vehicles for developing further the young person's experience of interacting with their community and the wider world. It is also through school that the young person is able to develop

a sense of society through being a part of the school's community. The school's ethos, rules and values are the guiding light to reinforcing as well as shaping wider values in society which may or may not be present within the young person's "*home environment.*" Ultimately, there are certain aspects of the school curriculum, which focuses on reinforcing or teaching society's values, expectations and rules. The curriculum subjects which do this are Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship. These subjects assist with laying the foundations for reinforcing, questioning and establishing thoughts and opinions about rules and values in society, ***Aspects of Society, Values and Rules.***

School is the platform where the ***Aspects of Society, Values and Rules*** are taught, so that the young people learn to understand "*the social dimension of interactions with society,*" and it helps ensures that the young person learns their place in terms of "*individual interactions versus wider group.*" When thinking further about the meaning of "*the social dimension of interactions with society.*" This code identifies the importance of understanding how individual's interactions impacts on the wider society. When individuals' interactions adhere to the social rules and values, they reinforce a sense of society. However, when an individual's interaction does not appears to be consistent with the majority then the behaviour can be viewed negatively and means that the individual is acting in regards to their own individual needs than what is expected of them in society, "*individual interactions versus wider group.*" Within the school setting, the teachers and the teaching staff establish rewards and sanctions, which can be considered to replicate a sense of rewards and sanctions within society. The ideas that if someone lives life in a specific manner then they will reap either rewards or sanctions for example doing well at school means that someone will have a bright future outside of school, whereas poor academic and social outcomes can lead to a negative future, such as disenfranchisement. Referring back to the rewards and sanctions systems established within school organisations, these systems enable the young person to learn about "*breaching/understanding societal rules of social conventions and behaviour.*"

Asking myself again the same question, what is the role of school? I contemplate whether there is a better question to ask and would that question be, what is the purpose of education? I would say that teachers and school staff are there to encourage and develop the young person as a learner. If this is what teachers are supposed to do, is it also important to ask what would be valuable information to learn? The government says the National Curriculum. The requirements and the topics change according to the governments' priorities. Yet, if I consider the social curriculum, which is less, descript and includes overt and covert rules, which may or may not be school specific. What can be said is that school provides a platform for the process of conformity to begins, "*Conformity: Doing and thinking as others in behaviour and thoughts that are socially acceptable.*"

Thinking about young people whose behaviours do not conform automatically and the reason for the lack conformity cannot be readily labelled. Then their behaviours can be considered as a "*social problem*" or stemming from an environment which is considered to constitute "*social problems.*" However, when looking closely at the ideas of what constitutes "social problems," it allows thoughts and ideas to consider "*defining social problems.*" The definition of social

problems may be different to different people. The one thing that is clear is that different characteristics or acts of behaviour can be deemed as "social problems," but there is consensus among the majority of people about certain behaviours or acts, such as stealing. However, when the discussion falls to *social economic disadvantages*, *lack of positive role models*, single parents families, families with poor education and families where neglect and abuse may be present. The discussion is not clear cut and some family circumstances maybe within the categories of what is considered to be social problems, yet it does not fit the established opinions.

Keeping these ideas within the context of school refusal, then I believe it is possible to ask, is school refusal a "*social problem*?" My own initial thoughts would be without hesitation, yes. However, thinking of the analysis of the data, then before answering the question, there are other aspects to consider: one of which is "*the value of education*." The code "*the value of education*" is interesting because it can suggest that there is a lack of value for education. More importantly, it is necessary to consider whose values? The parent or the young person? Secondly, where are values formed? As discussed previously, schools play a role in establishing and reinforcing certain values. However, where does the value of education fit into the framework of "*social problems,*" poor educational experiences and "home experiences"?

Thinking about the questions of the "*value of education*" the context of understanding where values stem from, it is possible to consider "**The complexity of relationship.**" This theme is the thread to understanding school refusal. The central notion about the importance of relationships has been established. However, paying specific attention to the adult relationships in the young person life, these individuals help create the young person's "*value of education*" because they pass on their own "*value of education*" onto the young person in the messages they communicate and their actions. Moreover, observing the adult relationships in the young person life in greater depth one of the significant relationships is the relationships between the professionals and the parent(s)/caregiver(s). These relationships do not occur without a context and one of influential factors in these relationships are the intricate interactions which shape how they work with each other, "*understanding the power and authority in the relationship*". These relationships are mostly defined by the professionals having a sense of who they are, "**Defining professional self**." The theme "**Defining professional self**" is defined by the "*qualities of professional (knowledge, expertise and sensitivities).*" The knowledge and expertise of the professional allows the professionals to "*take responsibility linked to ownership and accountability*" and through their "*professional journey*" they are able to reflect and review.

Thoughts on what is professionalism have been highlighted in the analysis and the theme "**Professionalism: Reflection, Think, Review and Evaluate.**" This theme indicates how professionals develop an understanding of school refusal with the view of changing their own views on school refusal by "*shifting perspectives with experience.*" Being able to do so; requires the professional to be aware of the "*value judgements made by professionals.*" Furthermore, by doing so; the "*reflections of professionals*" enhance their own skills and enable them to become a "*reflective practitioner.*" It is through the professionals' ability to reflect, think, review and evaluate that the professionals are able to establish a "*rational and a theory on school refusal*" specific to the individual's circumstances.

They "*develop a hypothesis and undertake the research.*" These steps of "*researching the information*" enable the professional to "*formulate ideas and a picture of the situation.*" Through the reflective journey, the process allows the professionals to "*discount the ideas of other's views and perspectives*" and provide the opportunity for evaluation, "*evaluating and defining the value of work carried out*", which involves sometimes "*shifting perspectives with experiences,*" which describes the learning journey of the professionals. The learning journey that professionals undertake when they develop their reflective skills means that it provides them with "the psychological transition for change." This involves either a change in views, thoughts or behaviour.

The essence of professionalism is about the relationship the professional has with themselves and the learning journey they undertake. Contemplating the importance of reflection, I began to ask the question, if professionals are not provided with the opportunity to "*reflect, review and evaluate*" would their openness be compromised, especially when they are exposed to situations that they are not familiar with or feel challenged by? My answer was yes. Asking the question, who are the professionals whose opportunity to reflect is reduced by their working practices? The analysis suggests that teachers have a narrow view of school refusing behaviours and they "*view the young person as manipulative.*" Teachers were also identified as "*having fear and insufficient support and encouragement*" by the school management systems. Moreover, referring back to the learning journey that some professional experiences, it is possible to equally think about how reflection, reviewing and evaluation is about influencing change in the professional's perspective so that they can influence change in other people's behaviours, such as the young person, parent and other professionals.

Concentrating on professionalism and how this evolves, the context of the majority of educational professional's working life take place in the prism of working with others. This introduces the theme "**Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices, (Multi-agency)**." This "*way of working together*" provides the essential ingredient which allows the development of "*professionals partnerships: participation*" In these partnerships, schools can call upon "*other professionals services outside of the school*" and build a relationships with Local Authority Services "*working with LA Services/initiating the relationship.*" The partnership between school personnel and LA staff mean that they have to establish a common ground where the "*division of responsibilities between the school based and LA staff,*" are defined through "*shared outcomes/goals.*"

Partnership working can be thwarted with difficulties, "*difficulties with partnership working.*" These difficulties are associated with a "*lack of understanding different professional roles,*" issues pertaining to "*leadership and transferable responsibility,*" "*lack of accountability,*" "*negative views held by the educational professional,*" and "*professional's psychologically and physically abdicating their commitment to meeting the needs of the young person.*" These potential difficulties come within the backdrop of "bringing together different opinions of professionals and understanding the teacher's "responsibilities in the school setting." These issues cause a barrier

for professional partnerships and ultimately impact on the way that school refusal is seen and the support strategies made available to the young person.

Thinking about how these barriers influence professionals working practices and then it is important to acknowledge that it is the professionals that identify school refusal. These barriers are highlighted in the theme "*Complexity of School Refusal – Difficulties with Identification*." One of the contributory factors is "*understanding the power and authority in professional relationships and the status of being a professional*," which influences "*The hierarch of identification – professional versus parent and professional versus professional*." The barriers leading to difficulties with identification is that there are limited or well defined "*process involved and procedures*" and this influences the "*process of identifying concerns*" and "*early identification of need*" because there is a lack of understanding of "*the presenting characteristics but not underlying issues (causes/reason)*." Therefore, there is pre-occupation with the causes of school refusal which can result is assigning blame. Some educational professionals "*assign school refusal as a school issue*" whereas other educational professionals attribute the causes and reasons to other issues such as factors outside of the school.

The importance of relationships still remains the significant thread driving the ideas for understanding school refusal. Thinking about the relationship with the parent(s)/caregiver(s) and the professional, it is extremely important to understand the value of the relationship because this relationship can influence the "*value judgement of the parent.*" The parent's value judgements about educational professionals are shaped by their interaction and their communication with the professional. The relationship between the educational professional and the parent may not always be smooth; in particular the relationship with the school based professionals is sometimes defined by "*conflicted parent-school relationship.*" The "*value judgement of the parent*" can be considered to be normally based on their past experience with professionals. It is through this interaction that parents may consider that they are not in receipt of a "*service being provided – a qualified approach*" and the professional is not acting in accordance to perceived expected behaviours such as the "*professional protecting the right of the individual and the family*." Some parents feel challenged negatively by the educational professionals, which mean that the professional and the parent are unable to establish a common ground, so that the educational professional is able to demonstrate their understanding, skills and competences, "*professional competences and understanding what your skill sets are*", as well as "*professional quality and commitment*." However, in some parents' experience their difficulties relating to school based professionals is based on their own "*prior school experience.*"

One of the influencing factors which shape how relationships are formed is "*Communication*." The theme "*Communication*" encompasses many ideas about the various and the numerous ways in which communication takes place in daily interactions. Reflecting on communication and starting with "*professional communication*" and "*professional discourse*". I asked myself the question, is "professional communication" different to other forms of communication? I would say that when professionals communicate with each other, they communicate differently than when they communicate with parents and young people. Their communication can be influenced by their professional discipline such as, teacher, Educational Psychologist, or Educational Welfare

Officer. "Professional communication" is intertwined with some of the ideas expressed in "*The complexity of relationships*" and "*Defining professional self*", where understanding the "power and authority in professional relationships," but most importantly what defines the communication is the ways that professionals work with each other, "*ways of working together.*"

Reflecting further and it is possible to ask, who is communicating with whom? So starting first with the professionals, professionals communicate with other professionals, parents/caregivers and young people. Young people also communicate with their peers and other young people. Asking myself, what does communication mean to the professionals, the young people and the parent(s)/caregiver(s)? Or thinking about how schools or Local Authorities. Then it is important to think about what communication is; communication is an intricate and powerful medium or way of sending messages and getting information across to others. This could be through language in terms of what is and what isn't said, body language and behaviour.

The theme "**Communication**" highlights how communication enables the young person to have a voice, "*the voice of the young person*."   Thinking of the term voice, this voice is not just representing oral communication but it represents "*understanding behaviour as a communication tool.*" Therefore, school refusal can be seen as "*the voice of the young person*." School refusal is a "communication tool" and highlights the "barriers to communicating for the young person." Hence, school refusal can be seen as the young person's expression of their feelings or their needs. School refusal occurs when there are difficulties with "*adults' responsibility for enabling the young person's voice and with adult communication with young people*."

However, what the educational professionals did not discuss in depth is the young person's communication with other people, especially their peers.   The educational professionals highlighted issues pertaining to bullying, but to describe what is actually said or communicated between young people was not touched upon. Bullying as a concept is easily understood in terms of someone being made to feel different or bad about themselves because of others actions or words.

Looking in greater depth at the communication between the parents and professionals, especially the school based professionals which highlighted that the communication was characterised by challenges. Thinking more about this matter and asking myself what do parents bring to the situation and I concluded that parents would be influenced by their own established value judgements about the professional based on prior experiences or influenced by their own prior educational experiences, "*value judgements of parents*." The analysis identified that the manner, in which some educational professionals communicate with parents create the "*barrier for addressing school refusal*" and highlights the importance of the "*relationships and communication between parent and school*". This communication barrier contributes to a "conflicted parent-school relationship." Drawing these ideas together, if professionals could work effectively with other professionals and parents, this could lead to the empowerment of the young person to express their feelings, knowing that they would be effectively heard, "*empowerment and having a voice – young people*."

The question to consider is would parents and educational professionals, especially school staff stop school refusal? For some young people school refusal is act of self expression, where they are unable to express their concerns in other ways. Therefore, if parents and educational professionals work together this would enable the young person to express their concerns.

Asking myself who are the young people who refuse to go to school? The ideas of vulnerability issues which is summarised in the theme "***The Interplay between external versus internal factors (within child factors and resiliency)***." This theme appears to be one of the underlying issues in understanding the characteristics of young people who refuse to attend school. So, looking further at the young people who are school refusing and it is possible to say that they refuse because they are "*not comfortable at school*," and they do "*not feel valued or appreciated at school*." Furthermore, they may consider themselves as "*not getting on with teachers*," having "*poor social relationships with peers*" and they are "*being bullied*." These ideas build into thoughts of the young person's emotional self and help create a picture of the young person's emotional state. Thinking about the young person's emotional state, I believe that it would be useful to consider that the emotional state of the young person dictates whether they are able to cope with their "**School Experience.**" As previously mentioned the emotional state of the young person is developed through, "*The emotional relationship between child and parent*" which creates "*the foundations of resiliency*." Resiliency is the product of "*within child factors versus events that promote the emotional state*" and is the key factor in enabling the young person to cope with their experiences. When the young person's emotional state is vulnerable and their resiliency is low this leads to "*the separation of self from others and the school work*" and results in school refusal.

Thinking about what these young people need, the analysis identified that they need key support to ensure that their emotional well-being in school is catered for through the adults in school and the pastoral care system, "*Emotional well-being – pastoral care.*" These young people's emotional well-being is fragile. Therefore, if they feel challenged by their "School Experience," school refusal is a way of not having to face the challenges of the curriculum and their social experiences. However, in some circumstances; school refusal is not about the young person's inability to cope with their "school experience," but it is about the responsibilities the young person has within their home, "*home environment*."

What creates the emotional template that individuals draw upon? The theme "***The jigsaw puzzle of life-background influence as a template of an individual's experience, outlook and approach to life***," describe the key factors that contribute to shaping the template, which are "socialisation" and the "home environment." It is through these key factors that "*The role of the family*" is highlighted with regards to contributing to school refusal and explaining what the young person's "*outlook and approach to life would be*." When thinking about "*the role of the family*" it not only identifies the parents as the key individuals, which have already been briefly touched upon. Moreover, "*the role of the family*" helps shape the context of my understanding of the theme "***The Complexity of relationships***".

Thinking of the question, who are the parents of children who refuse to attend school? The theme "**The role of the Parent**" is important to consider. The analysis highlighted that educational professionals see parents in a number of ways, from being disempowered in their parenting role to being helpless many ways. The ways in which educational professionals considered parents to be helpless is because they believe that the majority of the parents are unable to negotiate the education system to ensure that their children's or child's needs are met. Some professionals refer to attachment issues of the parent-child need to maintain a degree of proximity to due to emotional issues or care needs. Additionally, some educational professionals identified that some parents have mental health issues such as depression. Nonetheless, the majority of the educational professionals saw the parental role, as being one of collusion with their child's school's non attending behaviour.

Many of the educational professionals thought of parents of school refusing children as "*not meeting their parental responsibility*" "*by not attending to the child's needs*" and they highlighted that parents "*own past negative school experiences*" had been passed onto the young person. The parents own "*background*" and "*experience of education*" shaped "*the parental values of education.*"

The educational professionals expressed the view that the key defining characteristics about the parent of a school refusing young person, which hinders progress in addressing the school refusal is the parent's or parents lack of willingness to work with the school are, "*not working in partnership with the school*," "*falling out with the school*," and "*being angry with the school.*"

Having discussed professionals in some depth in terms of the manner in which they work. I think it would be important to consider who the professionals are. The professionals can be numerous when considering the scope of the potential professionals who could be involved in a child's life. However, when thinking in terms of school refusal and the services connected to school, then it limits the scope of the potential professionals. The professionals can be thought of in terms of the professionals in school and those outside of school. The majority of the professionals who work outside of school are either from Local Authority services or health professional services.

Exploring the school based professionals' role in relation to understanding school refusal and the analysis identified that the teacher appears to be the principal person in the school, "**The Role of the Teacher.**" Then subsidiary staff such as Learning Support Assistants, Learning Mentors, Pastoral support staff and Attendance Officers have a role to play. The theme "**The role of the teacher**" draws attention to causes of school refusal and identifies why some educational professionals believe school refusal is a school issue. The analysis highlighted that professionals believe that teachers do not have good understanding of special educational needs, "*not understanding special educational needs,*" and neither do they "*understand the need for flexibility.*" Furthermore, some educational professionals believed that teachers were "*not welcoming,*" "*not working in partnership with parents*" and "*not being inclusive.*" But most importantly, the teachers held negative views about the young person and therefore they viewed "*the young person as manipulative.*"

"*The role of the Teacher*" can also be understood in terms of their role in schools. The analysis of data identified educational professionals believed that teachers tended not to request support from others services, such as Local Authority or Health Services until issues escalated, "not asking for help from services until things go wrong." Teachers were active in making decisions to exclude young people without taking into consideration all their needs, "*excluding young people without taking into consideration their disabilities or needs.*" These actions compound the difficulty in meeting the needs of the young person. These are contributory factors for the "*Reason for failing to address school refusal*" and to understanding "*The Complexity of School Refusal – Difficulties with Identification.*"

When thinking about the role of other educational professionals, I was interested in the role of the Educational Psychologist. This was not to say that other professional roles where not important, but as an Educational Psychologist, I wanted to gain a greater understanding of how other educational professionals viewed the role of Educational Psychologist in relation to school refusal. The Educational Psychologist was by educational professionals as professionals who could assist with prompting "*changing behaviour and attitude.*" Asking myself, whose behaviour? It is fair to say the young person; the school refuser was the primary focus. However, when considering "*changing behaviour and attitude*" in further depth, it could possible to see the role of the Educational Psychologist could be to influence all the individuals involved in the way that they work, in term of offering guidance to other professional, "*provide guidance on the investigation and ensure that school staff are going in the right direction*". Therefore, to support "*changing behaviour and attitude,*" Educational Psychologist offered training, "training teachers" and worked with Head Teachers "working with Head Teachers."

Having identified that there are many themes to choose from, I believe that it is "The Complexity of Relationships" is the theme that underpins why some young people may refuse to attend school. This theme highlights a number of issues that shape the young person's experience of the world. The theme defines and highlights how complex interpersonal relationships are between professionals, professionals and parents, the parent and the young person, the young person and professionals, as well as the young person and peers. Here, importance is placed on the parent-child component of the relationships but it is equally important to understand that none of the various relationships should it be over played as the only factor contributing to understanding school refusal. There are other core themes, these are as follows:

- School Experience
- Aspects of Society, Values and rules
- Defining Professional Self
- Professionalism: Reflection, Think, Review and Evaluate
- Developing Partnerships and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency)
- Complexity of School Refusal – Difficulties with Identification
- Communication
- The Interplay Between external Versus Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency)

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- The Jigsaw Puzzle of Life-Background Influence as a Template of an Individual's Experience, Outlook and Approach to Life
- The Role of the Parent
- The Role of the Teacher
- Reason for failing to address school refusal
- The Professionals – The Role of the Educational Psychologist

I believe these core themes encapsulate educational professionals' view and perspectives on school refusal. The themes also demonstrate why school refusal is a complex and difficult issue to address.

Appendix 9: Integrative Memo 2 – The Analytical Story

Integrative Memo 2
29 June 2013
The Analytic Story

As previously stated the theme "The complexity of relationship" can be considered as the foundations to understanding school refusal. The initial relationships in the "Home Environment" provide the template and the access to the social world. The social world outside of the home for many young people is the world of school. The reason why school refusal is a difficult issue to address is because the important relationships in the young person's life are characterised by difficulties with communication and a failure to recognise the young person's needs. School refusal is about the young person's relationship with the various contexts of their social world. Their social work is made up from the a number of aspects such as

1. **School Experience:** This encompasses ideas of thoughts about negative prior school experiences both academically and socially for both the young person and in some cases; the young person's parent(s). The school experience is located at the core of the school refusal where the "*school environment*" is influenced by the school system which is created by the school staff. The school system is influenced by the lack of "*professionals being open to new information,*" "*The process of identifying concerns*" and their understanding of what "*The meaning of pupil participation*" is. For the young person refusing to attend school, their level of participation may not be apparent because they may engage in a process of "*disguising the difficulties – young person.*" The young person may become "*resistance towards support strategies,*" which then means that the young person is not open to "*The psychological transition for change.*" Being prepared or ready for transitions means that young person understands the "*relevance of meaning, the importance of outcome*" with regards to the support strategies implemented to address school refusal. Therefore, school refusal should not be seen as the first step in rejecting society, but seen as rejecting specific school experiences, such as "bullying" and "difficulties with the curriculum."

2. **Aspects of Society, Values and Rules:** The aspects of society theme brought to the forefront the ideas about common rules and values in society. This theme considered the template of personal and family values, explored within the context of whether general expectations within society and school's systems are congruent with the educational professionals thoughts on the school refuser's family's values. In the case of this research, the school was explored with the view of understating the expectations on the young person to conform. However, this theme explored what the overriding impact will be when conformity does not occur and whether a rejection of the school system, mirrors a rejection of society's expectations and values?

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3. **Defining the Professional Self:** This theme encompasses the idea of professional identity which the professional brings to their working world. It is defined by their professional knowledge and experiences which shaped the views that they professionally hold. These views are grounded in both life and training experiences, and they are the foundations to how the professional makes sense of the world, especially their working world. The link between professional knowledge and experiences with an individual's general life experiences are influenced by their professional journey, in terms of the level of professional confidence, discourse and the assigned title of role. Intertwined in this theme of professional self is the qualities that the professional brings, which stems from the key influences such as class, race, gender, age, and religion to list just a few.

4. **Professionalism and Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate:** The theme brought together ideas on the quality educational professionals, in terms of what they may bring to their assigned roles, as Teacher, Educational Welfare Officer, and Educational Psychologist. This theme identified focus on educational professionals' thoughts on expertise, knowledge and sensitivities which they defined as professionalism. The professionals highlighted the need to have a qualified approach and the ability to understand what guides and enables others with their decision making.

5. **Developing and Defining Partnership Working Practices (Multi-Agency):** The theme of developing partnerships emerged from the analysis and provided the framework for how educational professionals make sense of working with their colleagues. This theme included thoughts on the role, the expectations of the professionals and the individuals involved. It highlighted the ways of bringing people together, especially the parents and the young person. It included enhanced ideas of partnership participation, ownership and accountability as well as taking responsibility. The defining consideration of this theme was how the individuals established partnerships to resolve school refusal.

6. **The Jigsaw Puzzle of life – Background as a Template of an Individual's Experience, Outlook and Approach to Life:** This theme explored the various factors and influences that educational professionals identified as being influential in contributing to an individual's identity and who they are. The word background referred to demographic markers such as social class and familial financial circumstances. This theme could have been an all encompassing theme that provided the template of defining someone's life journey. However, this theme focused on how the educational professionals established ideas about the young person's template and was primarily concerned with the role of the family, and the home environment. Specific focus was given to the role of the parent and looking at the parental values.

7. **The Interplay between External Verses Internal Factors (Within Child Factors and Resiliency):** This theme investigated the young person's feelings. It identified that these feelings are enshrined in having the skills and the ability to cope with emotional challenges. The premise that drove the analysis was the views on the emotional resilience of the young person to be a part of a social system. This social system is built

on the ability to negotiate the social world, especially when dealing with success and failure within the learning context. The idea of separation from self and others and the school work became an important component, in understanding the young person's social dimension of personal interactions and academic experiences. The emergence of this theme allowed some professionals to draw on their understanding of the foundations of relationships and to consider theories of initial relationships.

8. **Reinforced Negative Feelings of Failure Social and Academic Contexts:** The emerging idea that stemmed from this theme was centred on the feelings the young person hold towards their social and academic experiences. These feelings are negative and have become entrenched in the young person's way of thinking. The negative feelings become a dominant force in the young person's views of themselves and their learning experiences. The participants brought to the forefront ideas and thoughts that could be linked to perspectives on the self-fulfilling prophecy, self perceptions, motivation and self-efficacy.

9. **The Role of the Local Authority and School Refusal:** The emerging theme of the role of the Local Authority explored how school based professionals are supported by professionals working outside of the context of the school. This theme highlighted how the participants reflected on how the various educational professionals' roles and responsibilities are divided between the school based professionals and the Local Authority staff.

10. **Professionalism and Reflection: Think, Review and Evaluate:** The theme brought together ideas on the quality educational professionals, in terms of what they may bring to their assigned roles, as Teacher, Educational Welfare Officer, and Educational Psychologist. This theme identified focus on educational professionals' thoughts on expertise, knowledge and sensitivities which they defined as professionalism. The professionals highlighted the need to have a qualified approach and the ability to understand what guides and enables others with their decision making.

11. **The Difficulties with Identification of School Refusal:** The analysis of the data identified that educational professionals described the difficulties with identifying school refusal and the common barriers for identifying needs. This theme drew upon educational professionals' thoughts on the recognition of individual need and the ability to recognise common characteristics that indicate school refusal.

12. **Transition:** This theme highlighted the difficulties that some young people have when experiencing change. These periods of changed can be linked to educational milestones such as changing schools. The initial major transition is home to nursery, nursery to primary school and primary to secondary school. Young person's experiences are not just made up of macro transitions, but micro transitions, which is concerned with moving from task to task or from class to class. This theme explored how specific children are unable to cope with the experience of change.

13. **Meeting the needs: Strategies and Activities:** Educational professionals explored the various strategies that would support a school refuser. The analysis of the data identified how the professionals would use internal and external resources to support a young person with the focus on building relationships.   The employment of child centred strategies and having a defined step by step process was considered.   This theme demonstrated how young people respond to their situation and reacts to the support provided.   The theme equally helped highlight how resistance from those involved (the young person, the school and the parent) can be a key factor to not meeting the need of a school refuser.

14. **Communication:** This theme emerged essentially through other categories and codes that were coming from the analysis.   The defining feature of this theme is the level of communication between the professionals, parents and the young person.   The theme explored the barriers for the individuals and considered the professional discourse, as well as the purpose of professional communication.   But most importantly, this theme looked at understanding the voice of the young person, where behaviour is used as a tool of empowerment.   Attention was paid to the voice of the parent and how they negotiate their experiences within the domain of school refusal and working with educational professionals.

Appendix 10: Research Diary Entries

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Thursday 5 May 2011
In the interview, the first participant said, 'When I hear the term school refusal.' I thought about the question who is labelling the behaviour? Thambirajah et al (2008) highlighted that teachers and educational professionals should acknowledge their lack of involvement in the identification and the recognition of school refusal. But how can they become involved? Who invites them to become involved?

I am quite surprised that everyone has an opinion of what school refusal is. Some of the perspectives are similar to the definitions in the journal articles. Thambirajah et al (2008) stated that there is a division between psychological and psychotherapy perspectives on school refusal. What is the division and what does it mean to my understanding? They don't really explain what the division is but translating this idea back to the educational settings, does the divisions of what school refusal is matter to teachers? Perhaps not.

However, thinking about some of the articles I have been reading, a lot of the information is collected in clinical settings. I am not quite sure is this represents the young people, I am interested in or I come across. The young people, I am thinking about who don't go to school I don't think will ever end up in as in-patients in mental health provisions. Of course, they might need therapeutic assistance but to be admitted, I don't think so. I am not quite sure what to think about this stuff and even when looking at the way school refusal is defined. I have got to work out the term I will need to use. I am just wondering if I could avoid making a choice and use school refusal and extended school non-attendance simultaneously? There are just too many ways of thinking about how non school attendance is classified.

05 August 2011
I have been doing some of the analysis of the interviews and I am starting to think about the ideas of separation of the young person from others and their school work. Teachers seem to think of school refusers as being isolated with inadequate social relationships. However, if I ask what do they do socially with their time? Perhaps they don't do much. Perhaps they just stay at home because that is where they feel stay and secure. If they are not in school where are they?
My head is not really into this stuff at the moment, I just feel really stuck without feeling I can move on in any way. I am going to take a break until I can see and feel the data more.

27 December 2012
I haven't done any work on my analysis for a long time. I have decided to read the book again to refresh my mind on what needs to be done. The memos are just too much, I feel like I am going on and on, breaking down every word and every phrase that was uttered. Perhaps I am working too much at a word level, asking myself what I think the participant means when they used a word. Maybe I am looking so much as the small details that I am failing to see the big picture. Actually I am starting to worry whether I am doing the right thing with this method of analysis. I feel lost without the book and yet I know I am not supposed to follow it to exactly in a prescribed manner, there is meant to be a degree of flexibility. If I am not too careful, I may become ridged and this might influence what I see in the data.

Word Count: (excluding references and appendices): 41,880