

What are the Views of Pastoral Staff Regarding Exclusion from Secondary School?

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Declaration

I declare that while registered as a research degree student at UEL, I have not been a registered or enrolled student for another award of this university or of any other academic or professional institution.

I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

I declare that my research required ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee and confirmation of approval is embedded within the thesis.

Imaan Cochrane

Signature:

Date:

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Abstract

The detrimental outcomes of school exclusion are well documented within research literature. Literature in this area has primarily focused on ascertaining the perspectives of children and young people (CYP) who have been excluded from school. However, very little research has included the perspectives of school pastoral staff, even less has focused solely on their views. This thesis aims to contribute to this identified gap in research by exploring the perspectives of pastoral staff on exclusion from secondary school.

Eight pastoral staff, from eight secondary schools within a large county in the East of England participated in the research. Using a qualitative research design, participants' perspectives were sought through the medium of semi-structured interviews.

The dataset was analysed using an inductive approach to thematic analysis and three main themes were identified. These themes encapsulated the attributions made by pastoral staff around the ecosystemic factors underpinning school exclusion; the types of internal and external support that the school accessed and what more could be done to support CYP who are at risk of exclusion.

The ecosystemic factors underpinning school exclusion are difficult to disentangle. It is proposed that an ecological systems approach to tackling school exclusion is taken with a particular focus on early intervention to lessen some of the negative outcomes for both the individual and the wider society.

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List of Abbreviations

BPS	British Psychological Society
CYP	Children or Young People/Child or Young Person
DfE	Department for Education
EHCP	Education Health Care Plans
EP(s)	Educational Psychologist(s)
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ESC	Education Support Centre
FPE	Fixed Period Exclusion
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEX	Permanent Exclusion
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides background and contextual information as a precursor to the current research. Relevant legislation around school exclusion is identified (1.2) as well as recent statistics to demonstrate the prevalence of exclusion across the UK (1.3). The demographics of those most likely to be excluded are presented (1.4) followed by research which questions the validity and reliability of school exclusion statistics (1.5). Subsequently, the detrimental outcomes associated with school exclusion (1.6), the local context of the research (1.7) and the researcher's interest in this area are considered (1.8). A summary of the content of this chapter follows (1.9).

1.2 School Exclusion and the Legislative Context

The current law on school exclusion is laid out in the Education Act (2002). Subsequent amendments were made in the Education Act (2011, s51A), the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations (2012), and accompanying statutory guidance from the Department for Education (2015a) (Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England).

Legislation permits two types of school exclusion; fixed period or permanent. A fixed period exclusion is where a child is temporarily removed from school. In one school year, a child can only be removed from school for a maximum of forty-five days; fifteen days per term. If the exclusion is longer than five school days, the school must arrange suitable full-time education.

Permanent exclusion occurs when a child is forced to leave a school and not return (unless the exclusion is overturned). After the first five days of a child being excluded, the local authority (LA) is responsible for providing the child with full-time education; this may be in a different mainstream school, a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), Education Support Centre (ESC), home-schooling or an alternative educational or vocational provision.

Legal guidance for schools, states that permanent exclusions may only be carried out by Headteachers and

“...should be reserved for:

- a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's behaviour policy;
- or where a pupil's behaviour means allowing the pupil to remain in school would be detrimental to the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school”

(Department for Education, 2015a, sect. 1.15).

The Education Act, 2011, which came into force from 1 September 2012, brought with it changes in legislation around discipline and school exclusion. Changes meant that teachers are now permitted to give children and young people (CYP) same-day detentions, without providing parents with one day's notice (Education Act, 2011, 21.5). In addition, parents who appeal their child's permanent exclusion to the school's governing body have the right to appeal to an independent review panel if their child is not reinstated. However, a significant change to the law means that the decision made by the independent review panel is no longer legally binding. Parents can subsequently challenge the decision of

the independent review panel in the High Court by way of judicial review (Education Act, 2011, 21.4).

1.3 Prevalence

In July 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) published their annual report analysing data from school exclusions in England. This research suggests that the total number of fixed period exclusions from state-funded primary, secondary and special schools had risen from 302,975 in 2014/15 to 339,360 in 2015/16. Similarly, the total number of permanent exclusions had increased from 5,795 to 6,685; 81% of permanent exclusions were from secondary schools (DfE, 2017b).

1.4 Local Authority Context

The LA within which this research was conducted, reflects the upward trend of school exclusion across England. Table 1.1 shows the numbers of fixed period exclusions (FPE) and permanent exclusions (PEX) between 2014 and 2016 within County A - a large county within the East of England.

Table 1.1 - Statistics on School Exclusion within County A

School	Number of FPE 2014/2015	Number of FPE 2015/2016	Number of PEX 2014/2015	Number of PEX 2015/2016
Primary	1,306	1,635	18	27
Secondary	4,463	4,705	26	37
Special	442	532	7	6
Total	6211	6872	51	70

(DfE, 2016b; DfE, 2017b)

The LA are likely to be driven to reduce exclusions for many reasons which may include the following: Firstly, the detrimental impact on CYPs' life chances.

Secondly, due to a lack of provision in the area and over-subscribed ESCs, CYP are becoming increasingly more difficult to place. Thirdly, the expense of school exclusion is clearly documented (section 1.8), however the LA is tasked with keeping costs to a minimum. Finally, LA league tables are published in which LAs exclusion figures are published. LAs may therefore feel pressure to outperform other LAs.

1.5 Reasons for Exclusion

Schools exclude CYP for a number of reasons, these can be due to one-off incidents including physical violence or verbal abuse towards adults or peers or more persistent breaches of the school 's behavioural policy.

Consistent with national figures, between 2015 and 2016 persistent disruptive behaviour was the most common reason for both permanent and fixed term exclusions in County A (DfE, 2017b).

1.6 Who is Excluded?

An annual report published by the DfE in 2017, showed that the rates of school exclusion are unevenly distributed amongst school-aged CYP.

Age

In 2015/2016, over half of all fixed-term and permanent exclusions occurred with pupils in Year 9 or above. In addition, statistics show that over a quarter of permanent exclusions within this period were given to children aged 14 years old (DfE, 2017b).

Sex

Statistics show that in the UK, boys are over three times more likely than girls to be permanently excluded from school and almost three times more likely to receive a fixed-term exclusion than girls (DfE, 2017b).

Ethnicity

Based on their relative population, students of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage have the highest rates of both permanent and fixed period exclusions (DfE, 2017b). In addition, the permanent exclusion rates of Black Caribbean students is over three times that of the school population as a whole (DfE, 2017b). The lowest rates of both permanent and fixed period exclusion were amongst students from Chinese and Asian ethnic groups (DfE, 2017b).

Socio-Economic Factors

Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals are approximately four times more likely to receive both permanent and/or fixed period exclusions than those who are not (DfE, 2017b).

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In line with the need for inclusive practice set out in the Equality Act (2010), statutory guidance from the DfE (2017a) states that

Head teachers should make additional efforts to consider what extra support is needed to avoid exclusion for those groups with disproportionately high rates of exclusion, including those with SEN, and, as far as possible, head teachers should avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an Education, Health and Care plan (p. 6).

Despite this, pupils with SEN were almost seven times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion and almost six times more like to receive a fixed term exclusion from school than those with no SEN (DfE, 2017b).

The statistics presented above portray a large inequity in rates of exclusions amongst certain groups. However, some argue that there are limitations to statistics on school exclusion.

1.7 Limitations of Statistics on School Exclusion

While data on rates of school exclusion can be used to gain some insight into the prevalence of this phenomena, some researchers argue that this data should be contextualised and interpreted with care. Parsons (1999) advocates that schools often feel pressure to under-record exclusion rates as they are used as a performance indicator which can result in 'hidden exclusions'. In concurrence, Vulliamy and Webb (2000) described unofficial/hidden exclusion practices such as schools coercing parents to move their child to another school and/or categorising exclusions as authorised absences so as not to impact exclusion figures. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) suggests that at times unofficial exclusion practices were used to ease the bureaucracy associated with official exclusions or to keep school exclusions off of CYP's records to not disadvantage them in future.

Gazeley, Marrable, Brown and Boddy (2015) advocated that data on rates of school exclusion should be contextualised before conclusions can be drawn from them. They suggested that when interpreting school exclusion data, one should consider factors including whether unofficial exclusions are taking place; whether fixed period exclusions are being used as an alternative to permanent exclusion and/or whether fluctuating rates of school exclusion are merely an indication that schools are getting better at recording exclusions.

1.8 Outcomes Associated with School Exclusion

The long and short-term effects of school exclusion on CYPs wellbeing and life chances are well documented (Ford et al., 2017; Fabelo et al., 2011; Daniels, 2011; Vulliamy & Webb, 2000; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017). Ford et al. (2017) found a bi-directional relationship between psychological distress and school exclusion in which consistently high levels of psychological distress were found in CYP who were excluded from school. School exclusion has also been found to have an adverse effect on academic performance and achievement (Fabelo et al., 2011), future unemployment and social exclusion (Daniels, 2011). In the long-term, school exclusion has been linked to victimisation, subsequent involvement in crime and incarceration (Vulliamy & Webb, 2000; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017).

The financial cost of school exclusion to both the individual and society are substantial. Brookes, Goodall and Heady (2007) identified that in 2005, the lifetime cost for one CYP being excluded from school was £63,851. Just under one quarter of this figure is lost by the individual receiving lower future earnings. The remainder is the cost to society; the biggest cost to society was identified as funding alternative education, followed by crime and then the involvement of social care. With such substantial social and financial costs to both the individual and society, much of the research in this area has focused on trying to prevent school exclusion.

1.9 Researcher's Interest in Exclusionary Practices

The researcher's interest in this area primarily stems from her experience of working as a learning support assistant in a PRU. This provision was for CYP aged between five and sixteen years old who had been excluded from mainstream schools. Many of the disaffected pupils felt that they had been 'given

up on'. Some became teenage parents, were put into care and/or became involved in crime.

Working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, the researcher has been involved in a number of cases where CYP, as young as seven years old, are at risk of or have been permanently excluded from school. These experiences have highlighted the importance of considering both the individual and systemic factors underlying students' social, emotional and mental health needs and how this information can be used to inform holistic, targeted intervention.

Educational psychologists (EP) are committed to improving the life chances of all CYP whilst helping them to reach their full potential (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2017). It was from this perspective that the researcher decided to embark upon this research project.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided contextual information around the issue of school exclusion. Key legislation and the prevalence of school exclusion within County A and across the UK was identified, as well as the disproportionality of exclusions amongst certain groups. The negative outcomes associated with exclusion were considered. Finally, the researcher's interest in this area was discussed. The next chapter will present literature on school exclusion with a focus on the perspectives of school staff.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the aim (2.2) and scope (2.3) of the systematic literature review as well as the search criteria used to identify relevant literature (2.4). Research examining the perspectives of school staff on school exclusion and related practices will then be critically reviewed and a summary of the literature will follow (2.5). A theoretical framework to aid understanding of research in this area will then be presented (2.6). Finally, a chapter summary and an explanation for the aims and rationale of the present research will be provided (2.7).

2.2 Systematic Literature Review

A systematic literature review involves the “review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically appraise relevant research and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review” (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016, p. 316).

The aim of this literature review was to find out:

What perspectives do school staff hold on school exclusion and associated practices?

2.3 Scope of Literature Review

As discussed in Chapter One, the current law on school exclusion is set out in the Education Act (2002). Whilst the procedure for appealing exclusions has changed (Education Act, 2011) since 2002, the researcher feels that this is unlikely to influence overall perceptions on exclusion. Therefore, this literature review will focus on research that was published in the United Kingdom (UK)

between 2002 and 2017. This is to ensure that the research is contextually relevant to current legislation on school exclusion within the UK.

The researcher began with the intention of reviewing literature that solely reported the perspectives of school staff on school exclusion. However, within the framework of inclusion and exclusion criteria, very little research focused solely on the perspectives of school staff (n=2). Therefore, the literature search was broadened to allow research with multiple stakeholder perspectives including those of school staff.

Due to the exploratory nature of the present research, the researcher was primarily interested in qualitative research into the perspectives of school staff. However, due to the limited amount of qualitative research found on the views of school staff regarding school exclusion and related processes, this was broadened to include mixed methods and quantitative research.

2.4 Literature Search

A systematic approach was used to identify and review relevant publications. Scopus and the EBSCO Host databases [Academic Search Complete, British Education Index, ERIC, Psych Articles and Psych INFO] were used to carry out online literature searches in May 2017- August 2017. Boolean search commands and a combination of keywords and phrases were used, including “school”, “exclusion”, “staff”, “pastoral”, “views”, “perspectives”, “perceptions”, “support” (see Appendix A Systematic Literature Review for search terms, search dates, inclusion/exclusion criteria applied and key papers).

Once relevant literature had been identified, the titles and abstracts were read and inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Literature considered to be the most relevant was selected for an in-depth critical review. Subsequent snowball

and hand searches were conducted to try to ensure that key research was not missed. Overall, fourteen articles were identified and selected for an in-depth critical review.

The researcher chose to present the literature thematically as it is a way to organise a complex body of evidence logically. After reading and familiarising herself with each paper, the researcher then cross-referenced each paper to identify key themes. Research was then grouped into themes. These themes were identified because they provided a powerful account of the exclusion process, arose most frequently and resonated across papers. Five of the papers discussed *Factors Affecting School Exclusion*; three papers examined *Alternatives to School Exclusion*; two papers were focused around *Contextualising Rates of School Exclusion* and a further four articles examined *Policy and Practice* around exclusions.

2.4.1 Factors Affecting School Exclusion

School Ethos

Hatton's (2013) research highlighted the influence of school ethos on school exclusion practices. In a mixed methods study, Hatton (2013) aimed to find out how some schools are able to manage behavioural challenges without the use of disciplinary exclusion. Hatton (2013) utilised three focus groups and unstructured interviews with two Deputy Headteachers. School staff including Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and school governors took part in focus groups. Depending on whether the schools had formally excluded at least one pupil during 2009/2010, they were categorised as either excluding or non-excluding schools. An inductive thematic analysis highlighted thirteen themes arising from the interviews and focus group discussions. These themes were used to inform

a questionnaire that was subsequently disseminated to staff across 16 primary and junior schools. The questionnaire was completed by 128 members of staff.

Qualitative data indicated differences between the views expressed by staff from excluding and non-excluding schools. This was reinforced by the quantitative element of the research which indicated that staff from non-excluding schools expressed more inclusive views than staff in excluding schools, which appears to suggest that some elements of school ethos may impact upon inclusion.

The results of the study indicated that the following factors could potentially negate the need to exclude pupils: clear and consistently implemented behaviour policy; a school culture which celebrates positive behaviour and the use of rewards over sanctions. Furthermore, Hatton (2013) suggests that staff should be supported to take responsibility for all pupils and understand that the needs of all pupils can be met within school.

Hatton's (2013) research provides an interesting perspective on potential reasons for the variation in school exclusion between schools. However, there are a number of limitations. Firstly, some of the schools experienced changes in their senior management teams between when the exclusion figures were released and when the data was collected. Therefore, the views of staff within these schools may not have reflected the school ethos at the time when the school was categorised as excluding or non-excluding.

Furthermore, this research compared the views of staff within 'excluding' and 'non-excluding' schools (ascertained by official statistics). However, Vulliamy & Webb (2001) advocated the importance of considering 'hidden exclusion' practices when interpreting official statistics. This brings into question the validity of this research. If 'non-excluding' schools are engaging in 'hidden exclusion'

practices, it brings into question whether they can be classified as 'non-excluding' schools.

Hatton's (2013) findings about the relationship between school ethos and school exclusion were echoed by Gibbs and Powell (2012) who examined the impact of school ethos (expressed within their research as collective beliefs in staff efficacy) and teachers' individual efficacy beliefs on the use of school exclusion as a sanction. An opportunity sampling approach was used in which 197 teachers from 31 primary and nursery schools across the north-east of England were recruited to take part in the research.

Teachers were asked to complete surveys to ascertain their individual and collective efficacy beliefs. In addition, school data was collected including information about the number of fixed-term exclusions in the previous year, the number of students on roll and the number of students eligible for free-school meals.

The authors completed a factor analysis which showed that 'Efficacy for Classroom Management', 'Efficacy for Children's Engagement' and 'Efficacy for Instructional Strategies' were most representative of teachers' individual efficacy beliefs. None of their views on efficacy were found to be associated with the number of children that were excluded from school. However, as noted by Gibbs and Powell (2012) a limitation of this research is that observational data was not collected. It is therefore difficult to ascertain how teachers' individual efficacy beliefs affects their practice.

The authors stated that the following factors were representative of teacher's collective efficacy beliefs: 'Efficacy for Teacher Skill', 'Efficacy for Motivating Pupils', and 'Efficacy for Addressing External Influences'. Findings indicated that exclusion was used less in schools where staff believed that teachers had the

ability to successfully address outside influences (home and the community). This factor also appeared to reduce the effect of socio-economic deprivation on school exclusion. However, not all teachers from each school completed the survey, it is therefore difficult to ascertain whether the views of the non-responders would be consistent with those of the participants.

Pastoral Support Practices

Tucker (2013) employed an ethnographic approach, in order to consider how best to support CYP at risk of school exclusion. Building a case study of staff and students at a number of inner-city schools in Birmingham, the research aimed to explore the potential 'causes' of exclusion, reasons for increased rates of exclusion in year nine students, the effectiveness of existing pastoral support systems and the underlying rationale for specific reforms and innovations in pastoral care practices within these schools.

Tucker (2013) used a random sampling technique to select two secondary schools and two centres for alternative provision; 49 students aged between 13 and 15 years old were selected by the schools, almost half had experienced either a fixed-term or permanent exclusion from school. A random sampling technique was then used to select eight behaviour co-ordinators and three school managers. Semi-structured interviews, conducted over a 12-month period, were utilised to investigate the perspectives of all participants.

Findings indicate that the development and emphasis placed on pastoral policies and practices, targeted at the most vulnerable students, were often shaped by a variety of internal and external pressures. For example, pressures from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the government's drive for performativity (the judgement of an individual/organisation based on their output e.g. statistics on achievement), which Tucker (2013) reports

has been accompanied by a significant reduction in funding for pastoral support initiatives within secondary schools. External criticism of schools' pastoral practices motivated schools to undertake whole school pastoral policy and practice reviews, which in some cases led to further professional development opportunities (aimed at providing staff with the knowledge and expertise to assess and support those most at risk). Multi-professional working, care targeted towards meeting the needs of particular individuals and groups, consistency between home and school, the early identification of need and internal sharing of information, were all seen as important practices within schools' pastoral programmes.

Tucker (2013) concluded that "the provision of well-resourced, high-quality pastoral care has the potential to turn some young people around and save them from exclusion and all the negative experiences that inevitably follow" (p. 290).

In a follow-up and re-evaluation of the research findings of Tucker (2013), Trotman, Tucker and Martyn (2015) aimed to create a better understanding of the factors affecting school exclusion. Findings indicated that transitions within a child's school career (between primary and secondary school and key stage three and four), had the greatest influence on negative pupil behaviour. Both pupils and behavioural co-ordinators felt that the development of negative behaviour and exclusions often followed 'failed transitions'. Pupils talked about the disconnect between the positive teacher-pupil relationships that they had previously experienced in primary school. The transition between key stage three and four was also highlighted as a challenge to pupils' behaviour. The availability and quality of pastoral support programmes were perceived to be important in reducing negative behaviour. In response to these difficulties, the behaviour coordinators suggested the development of robust pastoral support systems.

However, echoing Tucker's (2013) findings, Trotman, Tucker and Martyn (2015) advocated that "good quality pastoral support is often marginalised by the demands of performativity" (p. 250).

Concerns around a lack of parental involvement in the educational experiences of their children, particularly at times of difficulty or crisis, were highlighted. However, parents were not interviewed in this research so it is unclear whether parents would share this view.

The research findings of Tucker (2013) and Trotman, Tucker and Martyn (2015) should be interpreted with caution. As is a concern with any ethnographic study, there is a danger of reactivity. The researcher's presence may have affected the behaviour of the participants and influenced their responses during the interviews.

Parental Involvement

Concerns around parental involvement in children's school experiences were echoed by participants in a three-year project conducted by Macleod, Pirrie, McCluskey and Cullen (2013). The authors investigated destinations and outcomes for pupils permanently excluded from alternative provisions in England. The study consisted of interviews with 28 children (aged between 9 -14 years old at the time of their exclusion), 13 parents and 72 front line service providers, including Headteachers, teachers, support staff and social workers.

Parents spoke about the strain of having their child out of education for a long time (some had left full time employment to care for them); the difficulty of identifying a provision that was right for their child; having little say in the decisions made and feeling powerless to get the provision that they wanted.

Findings indicated that service providers tended to view parents as part of the problem, particularly if they appeared to be non-compliant or to disagree with their judgements. School staff referred to issues around family breakdown, parents colluding with the young people in order to avoid intervention, providing a lack of boundaries and inadequate accommodation within the parental home as contributing to the child's problems or even being the root cause.

However, the researchers provide very little information about the data analysis procedures. Their references to 'partially transcribed interviews', a 'simple content analysis' and 'constant comparative approach' lack clarity which detracts from the validity of the research findings. Therefore, the extent to which conclusions can be drawn from this research is limited.

Furthermore, this research was conducted prior to the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability: Code of Practice (DfE, 2015b). The code of practice emphasises the need for CYP and their parents/carers to be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want the CYP to achieve. It is unclear whether similar findings would occur following the implementation of the code of practice.

2.4.2 Alternatives to School Exclusion

Disciplinary Inclusion Rooms

With the national figures for fixed-term exclusions on the rise, schools have been making use of disciplinary inclusion rooms as an alternative to fixed term exclusions.

Using a mixed methods approach, Gilmore (2012) aimed to explore the nature, extent and characteristics of a disciplinary inclusion room in a secondary school in the south-west of England. The disciplinary inclusion room was used as an

alternative to sending children home for fixed-term exclusions. CYP were isolated within the room and given work from the lessons that they would have had that day. The room was developed between 2004 and 2009 with the aim of reducing fixed-term exclusions and improving attainment. Over this five-year period, the school under study had reduced their rates of fixed-term exclusion from 10% to less than 0.01%. Concurrently, school attainment improved, with the percentage of A*-C GCSE grades increasing from 43% to 73%.

Gilmore (2012) used document analysis to explore data that the school held on staff and student perceptions of the reason for use of the inclusion room, time spent in the room and individual data on demographics, achievement and SEN. An online questionnaire about inclusive practice, policy and culture was distributed to all staff, of which 30 responded (33% of all teaching and pastoral staff). In addition, a purposive sample of nine staff participated in detailed interviews. All participants had been identified as having influence over the inclusion room.

Results of the questionnaire illustrated that staff were generally positive about the majority of aspects of inclusive practice, policy and culture that was measured by the questionnaire.

During staff interviews, consideration was given to documents, activities and systems enacted by staff for students attending the inclusion room (who might previously have been given a fixed-term exclusion). Findings from the interviews indicate that the inclusion room was intended to be disciplinary, not nurturing and was used to send a consistent message to the children so that repair work could be carried out at a later date. Some staff talked about the need for parity of punishment, ensuring that students saw that issues of a similar 'seriousness' were dealt with equally. Staffs' views were more exclusionary prior to the

introduction of the inclusion room. For example, following the introduction of the inclusion room, staff believed that sending pupils home for a fixed-term exclusion was less successful than them spending time within the inclusion room, as they were able to continue with their learning.

Gilmore (2012) advocates that this research has demonstrated that a disciplinary inclusion room can complement educational objectives and that it should prompt others to reconsider the role of disciplinary provisions. However, only 10% of staff were involved in the in-depth interview process. It was not specified whether this 10% was mutually exclusive to the 33% of staff who completed the online questionnaire. Therefore, it is unclear how representative these perspectives are of the school-wide position on the inclusion room. Furthermore, this research was carried out within one school, it is therefore difficult to generalise these results. There may be factors, specific to the school under study, which have contributed to the reduction of fixed-term exclusion and increased attainment alongside the inclusion room.

The research specifically looked at the use of a disciplinary inclusion room for pupils in years eight and nine. It is therefore unclear whether the inclusion room and its related approaches would be viewed as effective for those in other year groups e.g. year 11 pupils with the added pressures of exam results.

Managed Moves

An initiative used by some schools as an alternative to permanent school exclusion is a managed move in which a Headteacher may ask the Headteacher at another school to admit a pupil. Guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) stated that managed moves enable students to get a fresh start at a new school with the co-operation of all parties, including parents, governors and the local authority.

Flitcroft and Kelly's (2016) research which used an appreciative inquiry approach, focused on how school staff created a sense of belonging to facilitate a fresh start for students involved in managed moves between secondary schools.

Using a case study design, data was collected from focus groups, made up of six secondary Deputy Headteachers, and an interview with a local authority officer (all of which had experience of working with young people and their families during the managed move process).

A subsequent thematic analysis of the data indicated that 'generating identity' by adequately preparing for students prior to their move; 'developing partnerships' between pupils, parents and staff; 'activities to create a sense of belonging' at a community level and the use of inclusive language were all seen as important practices to create a sense of belonging. In addition, new students were said to need additional monitoring, and collaboration between schools and the child's family was seen as important.

The research links school belonging to the managed move process and goes some way towards identifying good practice guidelines to facilitate a fresh start. However, the views of the students involved in the managed moves were not sought, therefore it is difficult to ascertain whether these students would concur and whether a sense of belonging was actually felt following a managed move.

The need for collaboration between schools involved in managed moves was echoed in the research undertaken by Bagley and Hallam (2015). Bagley and Hallam (2015) aimed to gain a greater understanding of the processes involved in managed moves for children at risk of school exclusion and to explore the successes and challenges of managed moves from the perspectives of school and local authority staff. They interviewed 11 school staff, including Headteachers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and

inclusion officers; all of which had been involved in hosting a managed move and requesting or enacting a managed move. Five local authority staff including the officers responsible for exclusion and managed moves in the area, Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Education Welfare Officers were also interviewed.

Following a thematic analysis, the research findings were presented under the super-ordinate themes of 'factors contributing to success' and 'challenges'. Bagley and Hallam (2015) advocated that managed moves can be an effective intervention when children are given a fresh start and not pre-judged in relation to their previous behaviours. However, when they took place at too late a stage, it was perceived that levels of disaffection were too high for a successful transition. Regular home-school communication was believed to be vital to success, as was pastoral support practices including transition work and helping to build relationships between the children, their peers and staff at the new school.

Bagley and Hallam's (2015) superordinate theme of 'challenges' associated with managed moves included inter-school tension (in relation to schools being honest and sharing information); narratives around young people (disliking a child), objectifying language (viewing the process as 'dumping' a child) and accurate diagnosis (of the child's needs prior to the managed move). Inter-school tensions were most commonly referred to amongst school staff indicating mistrust between schools. Whereas local authority staff most commonly cited the importance of an accurate diagnosis for the young person in that their behaviour was sometimes overshadowing underlying learning needs.

However, Bagley and Hallam (2015) suggest that their small sample size is a limitation of the research and restricts the generalisability of the data. Perhaps a

greater limitation, is the lack of clarity around the method with which themes within the data were generated.

Bagley and Hallam (2015) state that the importance of the identified themes was measured by the number of times the theme was mentioned rather than the number of participants citing it. Therefore, if a single participant mentioned a specific issue multiple times, it may appear to be an important theme even if none of the other participants had mentioned it. The authors suggested that this would show the perceived importance of specific issues. However, in the results table, said to show the 'number of participants responding to each subtheme', what is actually represented is the number of times each theme was referred to and not the number of participants referring to it. Although this is noted underneath the table, this appears misleading and there is no way of knowing how many participants mentioned each theme. This lack of clarity brings into question the validity of the findings.

2.4.3 Contextualising Rates of School Exclusion

In research commissioned by the Welsh government in 2011, formal interviews and focus groups were conducted with 156 stakeholders including CYP, their parents, education practitioners and local authority staff. In addition, a statistical and policy analysis was completed. McCluskey, Riddell, Weedon and Fordyce (2015) aimed to evaluate the findings of the research project.

Findings showed that exclusion rates in Wales are decreasing overall. Stakeholders appeared to have an understanding of exclusion guidance and felt that there was a stronger challenge to unlawful exclusions. However, findings suggested that those with SEN and other students who face multiple disadvantages, continue to receive disproportionately higher rates of both official and hidden exclusion. McCluskey et al. (2015) suggest that an increased interest

in special needs has led to 'recognition of difference' so that children with dyslexia, young carers or refugees for example, are now recognised in the same way as other children with special needs. The authors argue that the expansion of special needs has created a hierarchy, in which some groups have a greater capacity to push for recognition and access to resources than others. "Children who experience disciplinary exclusion are also those least likely to have a vocal and influential lobbying group" (McCluskey et al., 2015, p.9).

This research provides a perspective on the inequity in rates of school exclusion. However, given that the job roles of the 'education practitioners' as well as the local authority staff were not explicitly stated, transferability of this research is limited. Furthermore, themes were drawn across stakeholders, it is therefore, difficult to ascertain the contributions that school staff made.

In comparison, Gazeley et al. (2015) aimed to consider how inequalities within the rates of recorded exclusions might be reduced. This research was conducted as part of a four staged-study, commissioned by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England.

The first stage consisted of focus groups with eight tutors at teacher training facilities. During the second stage seven local authority exclusion officials were interviewed, either face-to-face or by telephone. Stage three involved a review of publically available data such as Ofsted reports and behavioural policies. The final stage consisted of individual and group interviews with 53 young people and 55 senior and pastoral staff across six secondary schools. Pastoral staff in schools are staff who provide support, information, advice and guidance to students. In addition, they work in close partnership with teachers, parents/carers and specialist agencies.

Participants highlighted the risks of interpreting data on rates of exclusion due to informal exclusions. In addition, staff commented that an increase in fixed term exclusions may be indicative of a drive for reduction in permanent exclusions as it could suggest that children who would previously have been permanently excluded have been retained. In addition, school staff emphasised the link between managed moves, collaborative relationships between schools and a reduction in permanent exclusions.

The association between school exclusion and social disadvantage was highlighted. Staff explained how Pupil Premium funding was being used to fund a range of interventions and felt that an individualised inclusive approach, might provide better outcomes for groups over represented in school exclusion data.

The authors conclude that this research highlights the “interaction of institutional, local and policy-level factors... not only in setting an agenda to reduce exclusion rates, but also to ensuring that young people had access to alternative provision and additional support of quality” (Gazeley et al., 2015, p. 500). It is therefore suggested that a whole-systems approach is needed in order to tackle inequalities in rates of school exclusion.

This research goes some way towards contextualising the variation in the rates of school exclusion. However, the lack of transparency makes it difficult to ascertain the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. Firstly, although the authors mentioned how schools were selected, they did not explicitly mention the methods of sampling used to recruit the school staff and young people involved. Secondly, whilst it appears that some form of qualitative analysis of themes was employed, the authors provide no information about the method of data analysis that was employed.

Finally, given that the child's voice was sought during this research, it is unclear how their views contributed to the data analysis as direct reference was only made to the perspective of one young person.

2.4.4 Policy and Practice

The researcher identified two pieces of research following a snowball search of the references provided in the studies outlined above. A further two pieces of research were identified during a hand search of google scholar. However, these additional articles are not peer reviewed.

It is acknowledged that including research that is not peer-reviewed may impact the trustworthiness of this literature review. The research may be presented in a bias way to fit with the agenda of the publishing organisation. For example, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) provide training to government departments and organisations within education, therefore, they may advocate that teaching staff need more training on school exclusion so that they could be commissioned to deliver it.

However, the researcher made the decision to include these additional studies in the literature review. Due to the large samples of school staff involved within the research and the relevance to the literature review question, the researcher felt that by including these additional pieces of research, it would enable both the researcher and the reader, to gain a greater insight into the perspectives of school staff on school exclusion which may not have been identified if this research was not considered.

Research conducted by a team of researchers for the Institute of Public Policy Research in 2005, aimed to explore each school's narrative on school exclusion and behaviour; 251 participants including Headteachers, teachers, support staff,

pupils and governors, across 10 self-selected secondary schools took part in a series of focus groups and interviews.

Emerging themes were cross-referenced with the experiences reported across schools. The research findings indicated that teachers believed that at times school exclusion was necessary but only as a last resort. Both teachers and pupils saw fixed-term exclusions as having little or a negative impact on behaviour and felt that internal exclusion was more fair and effective. Some teachers felt that temporary 'informal' exclusions were necessary to help manage relationships within the school without undertaking the large amount of paperwork that comes with formal exclusions. While staff aspire towards 'zero exclusions', they feel that alternative curriculum provision and increased out-of-class facilities feature heavily in this vision (Reed, 2005a).

Reed (2005b) suggested that the government needed a four-pronged approach to tackle issues with behaviour and school exclusion including:

1. Creating conditions for better behaviour;
2. Building secondary schools' capacity on behaviour management;
3. Reducing the burden of schools with the greatest need;
4. Improving the alternative offer.

The authors acknowledge the potential for bias due to the self-selection of schools. Each school that chose to take part had its own reason for participating. Reed (2005a) suggests that this is reflected in the fact that all ten schools were involved in a drive to improve behavioural and exclusionary outcomes.

In 2012, the Office of the Children's Commissioner commissioned research to be carried out by the NFER. The research, reported by Smith, Aston and Pyle (2012), aimed to investigate teachers' understanding of policy and practice

related to school exclusions within schools in England. A survey was completed by 1609 teachers; focus groups and group interviews were carried out with 20 teachers and 20 non-teaching professionals. The sample was representative of teachers from a range of subject areas and both primary and secondary educational settings.

Findings suggested that teachers' awareness of school policy and statutory guidance on exclusions was varied; senior leaders were found to have a better understanding of the guidance. Some staff reported that their school engaged in illegal or unapproved exclusionary practices, such as encouraging students to move schools without recording the move as a permanent exclusion. These practices were more commonly reported by secondary school teachers. The majority of teachers felt that their school responded to the needs of vulnerable groups of students and most teachers had received training to help them meet their needs. However, the quality of training was not always deemed to be satisfactory. One in four teachers said that their school had not made them aware of the guidance surrounding the Equality Act 2010 (amendments 2012).

Smith et al. (2012) concluded that the data suggests the need for better training provision to raise awareness of statutory guidance and good practice, so that children are not disadvantaged by unfair exclusionary practices.

Qualitative data from the focus groups and group interviews was analysed by White, Lamont and Aston (2013). They found that teachers believed that their schools reflected national trends on the most excluded pupils, indicating that boys; those from certain ethnic groups; those eligible for free school meals and those with SEN were more likely to be excluded. Participants cited a number of reasons for school exclusion including disruptive behaviour and assault. A range of systemic reasons were also provided, including lack of time, training and

support from external services; lack of role models for some groups; failure to investigate underlying reasons for poor behaviour; a lack of flexibility within systems and procedures; and perceptions that some students' needs would be better met elsewhere. Participants highlighted a range of preventative strategies used by their schools including isolation, de-escalation, break out spaces and restorative justice; the use of key workers and learning mentors; effective monitoring and review and parental support. They generally felt that there was not enough training available for teachers, including training on the key groups that are at risk of exclusion and handling challenging behaviour and exclusion processes more generally.

Participants described their feelings on exclusion ranging from relief and seeing it as a positive outcome, to a sense of guilt and failure, and seeing exclusion as a last resort. Teachers felt that exclusion rarely benefitted the students concerned and if exclusion was required, then it was already too late for that pupil. Some saw permanent exclusion as a necessary step to multi-agency input to meet the needs of the child.

In order to reduce school exclusion, the participants recommended "better monitoring and accountability, training, establishing preventative strategies, developing policies and approaches based on legal requirements, encouraging parental involvement, and sharing best practice" (White et al., 2013, p. 5).

However, both the quantitative and qualitative elements of this research are open to response bias. Participants may be responding in a way that shows themselves and their schools in a good light. Additionally, participants may answer in a certain way through fear of reprisal, particularly when asked about illegal exclusionary practices and the disproportionate exclusions of certain social groups. It is

therefore unclear whether this research has uncovered the true extent of exclusionary practices, as it aimed to do.

2.5 Summary of Literature Review around School

Exclusion

The research presented suggests that school staff believe that an inclusive school ethos (Hatton, 2013; Gibbs & Powell, 2012) and attention given to promoting smooth transitions (Trotman et al., 2015) could potentially negate the need to exclude pupils. Staff felt that students' negative behaviours could be offset with the delivery of robust pastoral practices including multi-professional working, the early identification of need, information sharing and a home and school partnership (Tucker, 2013).

Trotman et al. (2015) reported that school staff were concerned about the lack of parental involvement in their child's education, particularly during periods of difficulty. In contrast, Macleod et al. (2013) advocated that it was not the lack of involvement but the way in which the parents were involved that staff perceived to be the issue. For example, parents were often seen as non-compliant or part of the problem, particularly when they challenged the decisions of service providers.

Research appears to suggest that some schools have successfully employed a number of alternatives to school exclusion. The use of a disciplinary inclusion room was believed to be more successful than fixed-term exclusions and was linked to greater educational attainment (Gilmore, 2012). In concurrence, school staff felt that managed moves are a viable alternative to permanent school exclusion as they enable young people to have a fresh start (Bagley & Hallam,

2015). Staff reported engaging in a range of practices to promote a sense of belonging and facilitate a fresh start (Flitcroft & Kelly, 2016).

While some schools have managed to reduce school exclusion with the use of viable alternatives, others highlight the disproportionality in exclusion amongst those with multiple disadvantages (Gazeley et al. 2015; McCluskey et al., 2015). However, the importance of exercising caution when interpreting school exclusion figures that do not account for informal and hidden exclusions was stressed (Gazeley et al. 2015; McCluskey et al., 2015).

Findings from research commissioned by official research organisations (Reed, 2005; Smith et al., 2012; White et al., 2013) have suggested the need to build capacity within schools so that they feel better able to manage behaviour without the need to exclude. For example, better training provision, developing policies and approaches based on legal requirements and encouraging parental involvement.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Psychological theories can be utilised to aid one's understanding of the research presented on the multifaceted phenomena of school exclusion. Much of the research presented within the systematic literature review appears to be underpinned by psychological theory; this will now be considered with reference to the aforementioned research. Further theory will be introduced within the discussion (section 5) to facilitate understanding of the findings from the present research.

2.6.1 Society and School Exclusion

Much of the research presented tends to look at school exclusion on a micro level. However, Marxist theory may help to understand the function of school

exclusion on a macro level. Marxist theory posits that in a capitalist society, workers are alienated from their own labour, from the products of their labour, from each other and from themselves. Under capitalism people are not intrinsically motivated to work, rather they work as a means to earn a wage and survive (Harris, Eden, & Blair, 2000).

Some theorists have highlighted the link between capitalism and education. Sarup (2012) describes education as “a mode of production involving pupils and teachers, and knowledge is both private property and cultural ‘capital’. Schools are factories” (p. 129). The teaching of compliance and subordination through the hidden curriculum (Billington, 2000), prepares CYP for the hierarchical structure of society and creates a subservient workforce needed for the perpetuation of capitalism (Harris et al., 2000).

In schools “conformity combined with scholastic behaviour are rewarded, whereas creativity and independence of thought are not” (Harris et al., 2000, p.47). In this light, it is possible to see how CYP who are incongruent with the government’s drive towards performativity (Trotman et al., 2015) and those who are not subservient to authority are excluded from school.

2.6.2 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Need is a developmental theory of psychology which postulates that an individual’s development is based on hierarchical motivations comprising both physiological and psychological needs.

These needs include physiological needs such as food, warmth and rest; safety needs; love and belongingness and esteem needs. According to Maslow (1943), an individual’s basic needs have to be met in order for them to be motivated to achieve higher level needs such as self-actualisation. Self-actualisation, the

realisation of personal potential and self-fulfilment, is at the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy.

As presented in Chapter One, national statistics on school exclusion suggest that children from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to be excluded from school than those who are not. Concurrently, research literature has highlighted the association between school exclusion and social disadvantage (Gazeley et al., 2015). Other research has suggested that issues relating to the home environment, including inadequate accommodation within the parental home may contribute or even be the root cause of a child's problems (Macleod, et al., 2013). If CYP are not having their basic needs met (within school and/or the family environment) then they are unlikely to feel motivated towards achieving their full potential. This could lead to a lack of motivation to learn/conform to school rules and potentially school exclusion.

2.6.3 Attribution Theory

Attribution theory stems from the work of Fritz Heider in 1958. Heider (1958) suggested that ordinary people act as 'naïve' psychologists, attributing causal explanations to the behavioural outcomes of others. These explanations for behaviour may either reside within the person (e.g. their ability, motivation or intention) or the environment (e.g. the difficulty of the task or luck). Over time these personal and environmental factors have come to be known as internal and external attributions.

Research has shown that individuals tend to underestimate the situational or environmental context determinants of behaviour and overestimate the degree to which a person's disposition or internal factors influence their behaviour; this is known as the fundamental attribution error (Ross, Amabile, & Steinmetz, 1977).

The research examined in the literature review presents a number of internal and external causal attributions underpinning school exclusion, including disaffection, lack of an inclusive ethos, social deprivation and family breakdown. The attributions that school staff make to understand students' behaviour, may impact the type of support accessed for those at risk of exclusion as well as the final decision to permanently exclude a child from school.

2.6.4 Ecological Systems Theory

Lewin (1951) described how behaviour should be viewed from a social ecological perspective, theorising that behaviour is a function of the person, the environment and the interaction between the two. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner (2007) suggests that a child's development is a function of the person and the environment. The literature presented in the literature review, illustrates how the complex interaction between the child and systems around the child (including their family, school and wider community) may impact upon their ability to cope within school (Parker, Paget, Ford, & Gwernan-Jones, 2016) and may help to account for variations in school exclusion rates. For example, government initiatives, school ethos and home/school communication.

In concurrence, an ecosystemic framework reflects the complexity of factors and networks that influence the behaviour and development of CYP (McElderry & Cheng, 2014).

In Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of human development, the environment is represented as a series of nested structures with the child at the centre. Each system corresponds to a different aspect of the child's environment, all of which are thought to impact the child's development.

The microsystem is the layer closest to the child which includes the child's immediate surroundings, family, religious institutions, teachers and peers. The child is an active force within this system, influencing the people around them as well as the relationships they share with others. These bi-directional influences are the strongest at this level and have the greatest impact on the child.

The second layer of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model is the mesosystem. This system is concerned with the relationship between the micro systems, "the connections which bring together the different contexts in which a child develops" (Keenan & Evans, 2009, p. 36). An example would be the child's teachers and parents.

Exosystems are the wider social systems that do not directly involve children. However, they interact with some aspect of their microsystem and can have a profound impact on a child's development. This layer includes formal settings such as the media, extended family and their parent's work setting.

The outermost layer of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model is the macrosystem. While not being a specific environmental context, this layer is comprised of the individual's culture, including their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, government initiatives and laws.

Child development does not occur in a vacuum. Bronfenbrenner (1979) introduced the chronosystem to represent the temporal aspect, the notion that development occurs over time. This includes all of the events that transpire in a person's life. For example, timing of puberty or a parent's death.

Literature suggests that taking a systems approach to school exclusion is necessary (Gazeley et al., 2015). School exclusion cannot simply be seen as a within child issue; children, their families and schools are involved in reciprocal

transactions that influence school exclusion (Cooper & Upton, 1990; McElderry & Cheng, 2014). An ecosystemic framework is therefore considered to be an appropriate framework within which to consider the complex interaction of systems contributing to school exclusion.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Very few studies have explicitly focused upon the perspectives of school staff on school exclusion. Often where the views of school staff have been sought, staff in an array of roles, with varying levels of involvement in the exclusion process have been recruited. Furthermore, in some research it is difficult to identify the perspectives of school staff as they are reported alongside multiple stakeholders.

The literature presented, suggests that robust pastoral practices with parental involvement is likely to be successful in supporting children who are at risk of exclusion (Trotman et al., 2015). The role of pastoral staff in schools is to provide support, information, advice and guidance to students. In addition, they work in close partnership with teachers, parents/carers and specialist agencies.

Due to the lack of research explicitly carried out with pastoral staff, the researcher felt that an exploration from this perspective could add to the body of research on school exclusion. The researcher considers pastoral staff to be well placed, to discuss the types of support that their school is accessing and what more could be done to support children at risk of school exclusion.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined relevant literature on school exclusion and provided a rationale for the present research. This chapter outlines the methodology used within this research. The purpose of the research (3.2) and research questions (3.3) will be presented, followed by an overview of the researcher's ontological and epistemological perspective (3.4). A description of the research design (3.5), recruitment of participants (3.6) and the process of data collection (3.7) will follow. Ethical considerations (3.8), strategies used to promote validity and trustworthiness (3.9) and the process of data analysis (3.10) will then be discussed. Finally, the content of this chapter is summarised (3.11).

3.2 Purpose of Research

Fox, Martin and Green (2007) describe exploratory research as that which aims to gain a better understanding of a little researched phenomenon. As highlighted in the literature review, there is little research relating solely to the views of pastoral staff on school exclusion. This research will build on literature in this area by exploring the views of pastoral staff on school exclusion. It will go on to consider the types of internal and external support that schools access in order to prevent school exclusion and what further support could be useful.

Much of the research on school exclusion is focused around multiple stakeholders including school staff. It is therefore difficult to ascertain which views are representative of school staff and which are representative of other stakeholders. In addition, where school staff are included in the research literature, their job roles vary including support assistants, teachers and senior

management. Therefore, staff are likely to have varying levels of experience with working with CYP at risk of school exclusion. The present research intends to seek a new perspective by solely exploring the views of pastoral staff.

Whilst this research is an exploration of the perspectives of pastoral staff, it is acknowledged that there is an emancipatory element to this research. An emancipatory approach attempts to

- “Reveal how dimensions of oppression such as social class, gender, race, age, disability and sexuality generate and maintain certain practices and understandings;
- Deconstruct commonly accepted ways of doing things and understandings so that these are not taken for granted but exposed for the extent to which they both influence and are influenced by prevailing ways of thinking;
- Provoke change in the direction of equality”

(Robson, 2011, pp. 39-40).

Barnes and Sheldon (2007) advocate that emancipatory research should not be built upon world views which construct those with disabilities as having needs that are ‘special’. These CYP “are like any others, but their needs are not currently being met by our education system” (Barnes & Sheldon, 2007, p. 237).

Parsons (2005) argues that the use of school exclusion as a disciplinary sanction is an overly punitive approach, despite its use within the UK education system having been both accepted and normalised. As previously discussed, the negative outcomes for CYP who are excluded from school are well documented.

Emancipatory research aims to produce knowledge that acts to the benefit of the disadvantaged such as those who have been excluded from school. Within this research, pastoral staff act as a mechanism for representing CYPs’ voice. In line

with a critical realist perspective (discussed in section 3.4.2), the researcher intends to uncover the causal mechanisms which lead to CYP being permanently excluded from school as well as the mechanisms that are in place to support CYP who are at risk of exclusion. By uncovering these mechanisms, it is hoped that this research may bring about change in practice, with consideration to the viewpoint that “it is not the disempowered excluded pupil that needs to change but rather the organisation that has excluded the pupil” (Fox et al., 2007, p. 56).

3.3 Research Questions

The research will focus on answering the central question:

What are the views of pastoral staff regarding school exclusion?

The following sub-questions will be considered from the perspectives of pastoral school staff:

1. *What, if any, internal and external support is available to schools in County A to help prevent permanent school exclusion?*
2. *At which stage do pastoral staff feel that more support would be useful and what kinds of support would be useful in helping schools to prevent permanent school exclusion?*

Subsidiary research questions were posed in order to answer the central research question and achieve the emancipatory aims of supporting schools to reduce the rates of exclusion in County A.

3.4 Ontological and Epistemological Perspective

3.4.1 Research Paradigms

A paradigm can be seen as a basic set of beliefs. “It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the

range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). However, Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that these belief systems are based on faith as there is no way of testing their truthfulness. Crotty (1998) advocates that ontology, which is concerned with the nature of existence - ‘what is’ and epistemology ‘what it means to know’, inform one’s theoretical perspective. As a practitioner researcher, it is important to be explicit about one’s ontological and epistemological positioning as it may affect one’s understanding of the research and interpretation of the data collected.

Traditionally, quantitative and qualitative research have been considered as divergent research paradigms (Kuhn, 1996). The quantitative research paradigm has been closely linked with Positivism and qualitative research has been linked to Constructivism.

Positivism

Positivism, which for many years was the standard philosophical view of natural science, postulates that through scientific methods, objective knowledge about reality can be gained. Positivist researchers tend to maintain a realist ontological perspective which would assert that an objective reality exists outside of the mind. This research paradigm is often linked with fixed research designs concerned with empirical testing of hypotheses in controlled conditions.

Constructivism

On the other hand, a constructivist paradigm refers to the perspective that people are actively engaged in the construction of their own world. People perceive the world differently and actively create individual meaning based on experience (Burr, 2003). From this perspective, it is believed that there is not one true reality but rather multiple truths. Constructivists argue that our actions are shaped by

the way in which we construe the world; as we each construe the world differently, in one sense we are not inhabiting the same world (Kelly, 1955).

Constructions can be seen as historically and culturally based interpretations rather than eternal truths, meaning that at different times and in different places, there can be divergent interpretations of the same phenomena – separate realities (Crotty, 1998). Constructivists tend to hold a relativist ontology, arguing that “the way things are is really just the sense that we make of them” (Crotty, 1998, p.64). Typically, research conducted from this perspective utilises qualitative research methods to understand the individual’s construction of knowledge and meaning.

3.4.2 Critical Realism

Critical realism is said to offer ‘a third way’ between positivism and constructivism (Sayer, 2000), by retaining an ontological realism while accepting a form of epistemological constructivism or relativism (Maxwell, 2012). Critical realism accepts that a real world exists whilst acknowledging that we cannot have an objective knowledge of the world, our knowledge will only ever be incomplete and fallible.

Maxwell (2012) argues that it is possible to have “alternative valid accounts of any phenomenon... Our understanding of the world is inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoint” (p. 5). From this epistemological perspective, it is acknowledged that research is value laden. The perspectives held by participants and the researcher within the present research, are part of the world that the researcher aims to understand (Maxwell, 2012).

Critical realism is often linked with emancipatory approaches; it encourages researchers to be critical of the value systems, constructs and

processes/mechanisms that are under study to bring about positive change. Kelly (2016) argues that critical realism serves to “further social progress and individual development by linking results to ethical systems and political and social action” (p. 21). Similarly, within the present research pastoral staff act as a mechanism for representing CYPs’ voice. It is hoped that this will create positive change for CYP who are at risk of exclusion.

3.4.3 The Construction of School Exclusion

Throughout history, the idea of schools and education has been socially constructed, to the extent that it is now a legal requirement for CYP to attend school, to get an education. This however, is not the case in all cultures, some of which provide education through experience, modelling, story-telling and wider socialisation.

The ‘westernised’ social construction of education, schooling and exclusion, encompasses a widely held social agreement of what it means to be well-behaved and intelligent. In relation to school exclusion, Parsons (2005) advocates that “in most other countries it would be decidedly abnormal, and unacceptably punitive to punish the young and dependent” (p.188).

As highlighted in Chapter One, persistent disruptive behaviour is the most common reason for school exclusion. However, behaviours that are deemed ‘disruptive’ and ‘exclusion-worthy’ are constructed through language and are specific to the current historical, political and cultural context in which they appear. These constructs may differ between schools. What may be deemed as severely disruptive in one school may be considered as a minor disruption in another (Paget & Emond, 2016). Burr (2015) advocates that as part of a co-construction of reality, categories within which we see the world (for example,

what we classify as 'good' and 'bad' behaviour) do not necessarily refer to real, naturally occurring divisions.

Whilst the researcher considers school exclusion to be a social construction, this does not negate the fact that the process of school exclusion exists. Exclusion occurs regardless of the meaning that individuals assign to it. Therefore, a critical realist perspective is deemed to be the most appropriate paradigm for the present research. Anastas (1998) as cited in Robson (2011), advocates that critical realism is the most appropriate approach for practice and value-based professions such as educational psychology.

By adopting a critical realist perspective, the researcher intends to "develop knowledge and understanding about the mechanism through which an action causes an outcome, and about the context which provides the ideal conditions to trigger the mechanism" (Robson, 2011, p.33). In the present research, the researcher aims to uncover and explore the mechanisms which are in place to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion, as well as those which lead to a pupil being permanently excluded from school.

3.5 Research Design

A research design is described as "a framework or plan to guide research activity" (Robson, 2011, p. 532). Quantitative research (a fixed design), is closely linked to positivism, in that quantitative researchers often believe that there is a reality that can be objectively measured. This scientific approach involves measurement and quantification of a given phenomenon.

Flexible research designs (qualitative) lend themselves well to exploratory research (Robson, 2011). Within qualitative research, the social world is seen as a creation of the people involved. Qualitative research strategies provide a

deeper understanding of the beliefs, motivations and opinions that people attribute to a given phenomenon than quantitative approaches would (Silverman, 2005).

A critical realist perspective lends itself to a flexible research design with qualitative data collection methods. Critical realists advocate that knowledge can only be viewed and understood from an individual's perspective whilst acknowledging that human interaction with knowledge is always open to bias and imperfection.

Anastas (1999) argues that

all any study can do is to approximate knowledge of phenomena, as they exist in the real world (fallibilism) the process of study itself must be studied as well. Because all methods of study can produce only approximations of reality and incomplete understanding of the phenomena of interest as they exist in the real world, the findings of flexible method research can be seen as no more or less legitimate than those of any other type of study (p. 56).

The use of flexible/qualitative research strategies was chosen to find out about the perspectives that pastoral staff hold on school exclusion. Qualitative research is an inductive approach which enabled the researcher to generate theoretical ideas and concepts from the data that was collected, rather than testing pre-existing theories as is often the case in quantitative research.

3.6 Research Participants

3.6.1 Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was adopted in order to quickly reach a targeted sample. This type of sampling is commonly used within flexible designs (Robson, 2011) with the aim of generating an in depth understanding of the topic of interest

(Braun & Clarke, 2013). The sample was purposive, in that participants were selected based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria (see 3.6.2).

3.6.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 3.1 - List of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Staff in secondary educational provisions in a specific quadrant of County A.	Staff in pre-school, primary or further educational provisions in a specific quadrant of County A.
Staff with pastoral responsibilities (involved in supporting those at risk of school exclusion).	General teaching/school staff without pastoral responsibilities.
Staff who have had pastoral responsibilities for at least one school year prior to taking part in the research.	Staff who were newly appointed to their role.

Secondary Provisions

Secondary provisions were selected because the majority of permanent exclusions within County A in 2015/2016 are from secondary schools. Moreover, statistics show that the most common time for children to be excluded is at fourteen years of age (DfE, 2017). Therefore, the researcher felt it pertinent to explore the perspectives of staff working with children within this age range and to consider what support was being utilised to support those who statistics identify as most at risk.

Pastoral Staff

Pastoral staff are the focus of this research as the researcher feels that they are in an optimal position to work closely with and coordinate support from internal and external systems around children at risk of exclusion.

It was considered necessary for staff to have at least one year in role. This was so that they had time to reflect upon their experiences as well as time to become informed upon the types of support that was utilised within their provision.

3.6.3 Sample Size

As with many flexible research designs, the researcher did not undertake this research with a set number of participants in mind. In flexible research designs, the interviewer conducts their first interview, without knowing how many interviews will be sufficient; the process is then repeated until saturation is achieved (Robson (2011)). Saturation occurs when the researcher feels that subsequent interviews would not be adding any further information to the phenomenon that is being researched. Data saturation in the present research was deemed to have been achieved at eight participants.

3.6.4 Recruitment of Participants

In a meeting with the Area Manager of the EPS, a list was made identifying all of the secondary provisions in the area and the contact details of the Headteachers.

Initial contact was made with Headteachers of each secondary provision, asking them if the member of staff responsible for pastoral care within their provision would be willing to take part in the research. The research information sheet (see Appendix B) was attached for their consideration. If there was no response follow-up phone calls were made. Where the researcher was unable to make contact with Headteachers, SENCos were contacted using the same process.

Once the contact details of the staff responsible for pastoral care in the secondary provisions were obtained, emails were sent requesting their participation in the research and an information sheet was attached. Follow-up phone calls were made to arrange a convenient time and place for the meetings to take place.

The composition of the eight participants recruited were as follows:

- All participants were from different secondary schools;
- All but one of the participants were white British, one of the participants was of mixed race heritage;
- Five of the participants were female and three were male;
- Six of the participants were within the senior management team;
- Five participants were acting SENCos or Inclusion Managers;
- All participants managed pastoral support within their school.

3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Selecting a Method of Data Collection

While focus groups can be an efficient method for collecting a large amount of data in a relatively short period of time, individual interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate method of data collection for a number of reasons. Firstly, during the period when data was being collected, many of the participants had teaching responsibilities and had limited availability due to exams being held. Individual interviews can be conducted more flexibly than a focus group which relies on finding a convenient time for all participants.

Secondly, individual interviews allowed the researcher to create a rapport with the participants which may have encouraged them to be more open and honest when answering questions around what could be a sensitive topic for some.

Additionally, individual interviews allowed for rich and detailed data to be gathered about participants' perspectives (Robson, 2011), including the internal practices within each individual school and the knowledge, meaning and sense that was made of school exclusion; this may have been missed in the context of a focus group.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Robson (2011) argued that the main distinction between types of interviews is the degree of structure or standardisation of the interview. Fully structured interviews involve pre-determined questions being asked in a pre-set order. This type of interview can be seen as efficient in that a large amount of data can be collected in a relatively short amount of time. The data collected may also provide reliable data for a quantitative data analysis. However, structured interviews are limited in detail and depth, leaving little room for participant reflection and the discovery of new information.

Contrastingly, within unstructured interviews, the interviewer has a general area of interest but the direction of the interview is completely guided by the interviewee. Unstructured interviews provide rich and detailed data which might provide a new insight. Robson (2011) advocates that for novice researchers unstructured interviews are not an easy option. The informal nature of these type of interviews may lead to aspects of the research phenomenon being overlooked.

Semi-structured interviews usually involve the use of an interview schedule with a checklist of topics to be covered and a suggested wording and order for the questions. However, depending on the flow and direction in which the participant takes the interview, the order of questions may be modified and additional follow-up questions may be asked (Robson, 2011).

The use of an interview schedule facilitates the comparison of data collected across participants, enabling the researcher to look for themes which may not have emerged if the interviews were completely non-directive. Due to the exploratory nature of this research semi-structured interviews were chosen as they facilitated an in-depth understanding of participant's views whilst the structured element allowed the researcher to gather data relevant to the research questions.

Whilst semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate for this research, there are some limitations with this method of data collection that should be noted. Firstly, and a limitation of all types of interview, the lack of standardisation raises concerns about the reliability of the data. It is possible that both verbal and nonverbal cues from the interviewer may influence the participants to respond in certain ways.

In addition, semi-structured interviews are time consuming. The flexibility of this approach and the use of open-ended questions can result in a loss of control by the researcher, making data more difficult to analyse (Robson, 2011).

3.7.3 Interview Pilot

Prior to the pilot interview, the interview schedule was peer reviewed by a Senior EP. This was in order to ensure that the questions were clear, unambiguous, did not lead participants to respond in a certain way and would answer the research questions.

A pilot interview was then carried out with a member of pastoral staff in the target area. This allowed the researcher to consider whether to refine her data collection plans, for example making changes to the interview schedule or the time allocated to each interview. However, following the interview, the decision was

made to include the pilot data as the data collected was rich and the researcher felt that the interview schedule did not need to be adapted.

3.7.4 The Interviews

Interview Schedule

As suggested by Robson (2011), an interview schedule with a checklist of topics to be covered, prompts and a suggested wording and order for the questions was drawn up in advance of the interviews (see Appendix C). The majority of the questions on the interview schedule were open-ended. Open-ended questions provide a “frame of reference for respondents’ answers, but put minimum of restraint on their answers and their expression” (Kerlinger, 1970, p. 357). This allowed for individuality of participant response. Interview questions were informed by the themes highlighted in previous literature including parental involvement, support practices and managed moves.

The researcher was flexible and depending on the flow and direction in which the participant took the interview the order of questions was modified. Probes were used to encourage participants to go into greater detail and allowed the researcher to clarify meaning where it was felt necessary.

Questions were organised in such a way that they moved from general to specific. The interview started with less direct and sensitive questions such as the reasons why school exclusion is on the rise nationally. This enabled the researcher to begin to build trust and rapport with the interviewees. Participants were then asked more direct questions regarding their perspectives about exclusions from their own provision. Clean-up questions were used to bring the interviews to a close. These questions allowed for participants to bring up topics that had not

been covered (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and “defuse any tension that might have built up” (Robson, 2011, p. 284).

Timing

As this research was time limited and interviews were carried out solely by the researcher, interview schedules were kept relatively short and each semi-structured interview lasted between twenty-five minutes and one hour. Robson (2011) advocates that interviews lasting much longer than an hour may result in ‘respondent fatigue’ in which participants may become unwilling to continue.

The Interview Process

Participants were asked to choose a location where they felt most comfortable to meet, this was to ensure that participants felt that they could talk openly and honestly without fear of reprisal. All participants chose to meet within a quiet room within their school grounds.

Before the commencement of the interviews, time was taken to talk to the participant in order to build rapport and explain the purpose of the research. As a Trainee EP working and conducting research within the same county, the researcher thought that it was important to reassure participants of the distinction between the role of the researcher and her role within the county. It was hoped that this would encourage participants to be less inhibited and respond more honestly than if they felt that their interview would result in some negative consequences towards the participants or their school.

The participants were given the information sheet to re-read and time to ask any questions that they might have had. The researcher explained that the interviews would be confidential; what would happen to the interviewee’s data once it had been analysed and that they would remain anonymous in the write-up of the

research. Participants were asked if they were happy for the interview to be recorded and reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. Participants were asked to sign the consent form if they were happy to participate (see Appendix D).

Following the interviews, time was taken to debrief participants. Participants were given a debrief sheet which provided them with sources of support, should they need it (see Appendix E), and the opportunity to ask questions.

Each interview was recorded on an audio recording device and subsequently transcribed verbatim (see Appendix F for an example of a transcript; full coded transcripts can be found on the disc attached). This method was chosen to record data as it was seen as a relatively unobtrusive, reliable method of data collection.

Hand-written notes were not taken during interviews as it might have interfered with the development of rapport (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In addition, whilst looking down and writing, non-verbal cues which may have aided the researcher's understanding of verbal responses may have been missed. It was felt that non-verbal cues may also help the researcher to recognise if participants are becoming distressed or uncomfortable talking about a certain topic. The researcher would then have been able to decide whether to discontinue the line of questioning or take a short break.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

3.8.1 Ethical Approval

Ethics are usually concerned with "the general principles of what one ought to do" (Robson, 2011, p.198). Throughout the planning and execution of this research the HCPC Standards of Conduct Performance and Ethics and the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct were followed and complied with.

Formal ethical approval was sought and provided by the University of East London School of Psychology on 6th February 2017 (see Appendix G for a letter outlining ethical approval).

3.8.2 Informed Consent

Prior to the interviews process, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were provided with an information sheet and corresponding consent form in advance of the meeting. This enabled time for participants to consider whether they would like to be involved in the research. The information sheet outlined the purpose of the research, what was required of the participants and the areas that were to be covered in the interview. It informed participants what would happen to the data they provided, for example, storage arrangements and who would have access to it, in accordance with the (Data Protection Act, 1998).

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher checked that the participants fully understood the research and their role within it. Participants were then given a further opportunity to review the information sheet, seek further clarification and discuss any concerns they may have had prior to signing the consent form.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Participants were made fully aware of their rights to confidentiality and anonymity both verbally and in the information letter that each participant received. Participants were given the opportunity to meet with the researcher to discuss any concerns they may have regarding confidentiality and anonymity before agreeing to take part in the research.

The anonymity and privacy of the consenting participants was respected and the data collected was anonymised. The real names of the participants and any

identifying features including the county, school and individual names were omitted or pseudonyms were used in their place.

Participants were informed of the procedures regarding data protection (Data Protection Act, 1998) and confidentiality which were as follows. Audio files were stored in password protected data files and any identifiable data of the participants was kept in a locked draw in the EPS to avoid 'inadvertent disclosure'. The audio data collected from participants was permanently deleted once the data analysis phase of the research had been completed.

The limits to confidentiality and anonymity were clearly outlined to participants both verbally and within the information sheets provided prior to interview. In line with the BPS (2009) ethical guidelines, participants were informed that confidentiality would only be breached in exceptional circumstances; where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concern about the safety of participants or where the participant's behaviour may jeopardise the safety of others.

3.8.4 Protection of Participants

The risk of harm within this research was deemed to be no greater than participants would experience in their day-to-day life. However, in line with the BPS (2009) Code of Ethics, a number of steps were taken to ensure the protection of participants.

Firstly, the researcher explained to participants that they had the right to decline answering any questions and were free to withdraw from the research at any time, without fear of negative consequences. If the participants had become distressed at any point within the interview, the interview would have been stopped and the participants would have been given the opportunity to take a break or terminate the interview.

Secondly, participants were given time at the end of the interviews in which they were able to ask questions or raise concerns about what had been discussed. Participants were then given a debrief sheet, thanking them for their participation in the study. Complaint procedures were verbally explained and participants were provided with the contact details of the researcher and the researcher's Director of Studies.

Furthermore, participants were provided with contact details of appropriate support organisations, should they have experienced any distress as a result of participating in the research. If any unforeseen concerns had been identified, where appropriate, the researcher would have made referrals to appropriate professional services (BPS, 2009, 3.3).

3.8.5 Researcher Safety

A risk assessment was undertaken prior to the commencement of this research in which the research was determined to be of 'low' risk.

Participants were given the option of where they would like to be interviewed and all chose a room within school grounds during the school day. This environment meant that help could be summoned if needed.

Prior to each interview, the researcher's placement supervisor was made aware of the interview location and approximately how long the interview would last. The researcher carried a mobile phone at all times to ensure that emergency calls could be made if needed.

On arrival at the school, the researcher was informed about the school's health and safety policy and the processes to follow in case of a serious incident.

3.9 Validity and Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) proposed that qualitative researchers should consider four criteria in the pursuit of a trustworthy study. These are credibility (3.9.1), transferability (3.9.2), dependability (3.9.3) and confirmability (3.9.4). The researcher incorporated a number of strategies in order to establish validity and trustworthiness; these strategies will now be considered.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is the qualitative equivalent of internal validity, that is the extent to which the findings are congruent with reality. The researcher has taken the following steps, as highlighted by (Shenton, 2004), to promote confidence that the research is credible.

Examination of Previous Research Findings

In Chapter Two the findings of previous research were discussed. This enables the reader to assess the degree to which the findings from the present research are congruent with those of past studies.

Member Checking

Robson (2011) advocates that member checking helps to guard against researcher bias while showing the participants that their contributions are valued. Once the themes had been generated from the codes, the researcher used member checking. A thematic map was drawn up and shared with the participants to determine whether they felt that the identified themes were an accurate representation of their perspectives.

3.9.2 Transferability

In quantitative research work, the issue of external validity/generalisability concerns the extent to which research findings can be applied to a wider population. In comparison, qualitative research is usually undertaken with a small number of participants and does not claim to be generalisable. However, some researchers suggest that it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide sufficient contextual information so that the reader can choose whether to relate findings to their own situation (Bassey, 1981).

For the purpose of transferability, the researcher has provided the demographics of the schools in which the participants work, including the number of children on roll (see Appendix H).

3.9.3 Dependability

To tackle issues of dependability, the researcher has clearly documented the processes within the research thesis, to enable future researchers to replicate the work if desired. Furthermore, Shenton (2004) suggests that this will enable the reader to assess the extent to which the researcher has followed proper research practices.

Inter-Coder Agreement

Inter-coder reliability or agreement

“requires that two or more coders are able to reconcile through discussion whatever coding discrepancies they may have for the same unit of text - discrepancies that may arise, for instance, if some coders are more knowledgeable than others about the interview subject matter” (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013, p.297).

During the data analysis phase, a check for inter-coder agreement was made (see Appendix I for inter-coder agreement sample). A transcript was selected at random and a senior colleague, who is experienced in the interpretation of qualitative data, coded the transcript to check whether they would code it in the same way (Creswell, 2014).

Following the inter-coder reliability check, both coders deemed there to be a satisfactory level of inter-coder agreement. However, the decision was made to incorporate an additional code 'negative cycles' which was not at first identified by the researcher.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Reflexivity

Fox et al. (2007) advocates that researchers should be aware of how the language that they use, including the language that they use to construct the world, is an integral part of the research process. The process of listening to and interacting with the participants, alongside the researcher's own experiences, beliefs and background, influence how meaning is subsequently assigned to the data that is gathered (Gray, 2014).

In qualitative research, the process of researchers reflecting upon how their background, culture and personal experiences may shape the research, for example, themes and meaning given to the data, is known as reflexivity (Creswell, 2014).

For the purpose of confirmability, the logic behind the researcher's interpretations and the process through which the data is synthesised has been explicitly communicated. The researcher acknowledges that her values and personal

constructs will be implicit in the way that this research is both conducted and interpreted.

The researcher's views on school exclusion are likely to have been shaped by her experiences working as a primary school teacher and learning support assistant in a Pupil Referral Unit. Therefore, a research diary has been used to monitor how the researcher's thoughts and constructs changed as the study progressed (Mertens, 2015).

3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Data Analysis Tools

The researcher considered a range of qualitative data analysis tools but considered thematic analysis to be the most suitable method for this research project.

Grounded Theory

Developed by US sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory focuses on building theory from data. However, generating a new theory based on what the participants said was not the objective of this research. This research was intended to be an initial exploration of the perspectives of pastoral staff on school exclusion, an area which has received little research in the past.

Content Analysis

Content analysis can be used to identify patterns within qualitative data. However, "content analysis tends to focus at a more micro level, often provides (frequency) counts and allows for quantitative analyses of initially qualitative data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.29). Quantification of data was not the intention of this research. In addition, Mayring (2000) advocates that the procedures for content analysis

are less appropriate “if the research question is highly open-ended, explorative, variable and working with categories would be a restriction” (para. 27).

Discourse Analysis

A discourse analysis (DA) involves a detailed analysis of language that is used (Robson, 2011). Whilst this approach fits with the researcher’s epistemological position, DA has been criticised for having a lack of clear or concrete guidelines to follow and can be too complex and difficult for small student projects (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Whilst the process of data analysis using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) includes many of the same steps as thematic analysis, IPA is theoretically bounded to a phenomenological epistemology. It is concerned with exploring participants’ lived experience and the meaning that they assign to them (Smith, 2004). However, the questions asked to participants within this research were not phenomenological, in that they were exploring pastoral staffs’ perspectives of school exclusion rather than the way they experienced the process of exclusion.

3.10.2 Inductive Thematic Analysis

The data from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used to identify, analyse and report themes across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a flexible, qualitative, analytical tool that can be applied within a range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks and is therefore compatible with a critical realist perspective.

From a critical realist perspective, the researcher is interested in the sense that individuals make of the mechanisms that lead to, as well as those that prevent school exclusion. Therefore, thematic analysis was used to examine “the ways in

which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 9). In addition, thematic analysis was selected as Robson (2011) suggests that it is accessible to researchers with little experience of qualitative research.

The researcher chose to take an inductive rather than deductive approach to thematic analysis. This form of thematic analysis is data driven; the data was coded “without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 12). Due to a limited amount of literature being carried out with the targeted sample population, the researcher had limited pre-conceptions about the research findings and there was not deemed to be enough research to use pre-existing codes.

Whilst an inductive approach to thematic analysis was taken, the researcher acknowledges that her experience of working with CYP who have been excluded from school and her knowledge of school exclusion, gained from the literature review and related theory, may have influenced her thinking around the analysis. For the purpose of trustworthiness, an audit trail was kept to clearly demonstrate how themes were identified from the data.

3.10.3 Phases of Thematic Analysis

This section provides an overview of the steps involved in the data analysis process within this research. The researcher’s process of data analysis closely reflects the six phases of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). It is acknowledged that this is a non-linear, recursive process.

Phase One: Familiarising Oneself with the Data

The verbal data from all interviews was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The researcher chose to transcribe the interviews independently. Whilst a very

time consuming task, Robson (2011) advocates that it is a good way for researchers to start to familiarise themselves with the data.

During this phase, the researcher became fully immersed within the data. The data was then read and re-read whilst also listening to the audio recordings. The researcher took note of items of potential interest; ideas for coding were added to the transcripts (See Appendix J for a sample of initial coding ideas).

Phase Two: Initial Coding

This phase involved the creation of initial codes. Codes are “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be accessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998, p.63). NVivo (computer-assisted data analysis software) was introduced at this stage as it enabled efficiency, increased the organisation of data and facilitated visualisation allowing for analytic development (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Working systematically through transcripts, each section of the data was coded; where relevant multiple codes were given to the same section of text.

Phase Three: Searching for Themes

This phase involved the researcher looking at the data at a broader level of themes. Boyatzis (1998) defined a theme as “a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (p. 161).

Codes were printed, cut up, combined and sorted into potential themes; this was done by hand (see Appendix K for the process of theme development). NVivo software allowed the researcher to collate all relevant coded extracts under each potential theme. Using a semantic, rather than a latent approach, the themes were “identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst

is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.84).

A thematic map was created to enable the consideration of the relationship between codes, sub-themes and overarching themes. At this stage nine main themes were identified each containing a number of subthemes (See Appendix L for initial thematic map). Theme names were short phrases that aimed to capture the essence of the researcher’s analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Phase Four: Reviewing Initial Themes

The coded data extracts within each theme were read to check whether coded extracts formed a consistent pattern. Themes were refined through the processes of removal (of themes where there was not enough data to support it or removal of data extracts that did not fit); breaking down (into separate themes, where the data was too broad or diverse) and collapsing (where similar themes were combined to form one single theme).

At this stage, the entire data set was re-read to ensure that the themes were representative of the data set and where appropriate any data that had been missed at earlier phases was recoded under themes. This refinement process resulted in nine themes being condensed into three main themes with up to four subthemes. Subsequently, a ‘candidate’ thematic map was drawn up to show the refined themes. (see Appendix M).

Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes

In this phase, the researcher considered which part of the data each theme captured and how the research findings fit with the research questions. The boundaries of themes were defined and it was considered how themes fit alongside one another. At this point the researcher tried to ensure that there was

not too much overlap between themes. However, it is acknowledged that there will be some similarity and tension between themes.

Themes were refined and sub-themes were generated, this helped to “give structure to a particularly large and complex theme, and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.22).

Phase Six: Finalising the Analysis and Write-up

Following the analysis, the data was written up in an analytic narrative format. Verbatim extracts from participants have been used to demonstrate the themes that were identified (see Chapter Four).

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the research methodology used within this research. The purpose of the research, research questions and the researcher’s ontological and epistemological perspective were presented. This was followed by a description of the research design, the recruitment of participants and the interview process. Issues around ethics, validity and trustworthiness were considered. Finally, the process of data analysis was described. The findings of the research are presented within the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology including details about how the research findings were analysed. As previously highlighted, this research aimed to explore the perspectives of secondary school pastoral staff, due to there being very little research focusing explicitly on the views of school staff on exclusion. In this chapter, the findings of the research will be reported in detail. Three main themes (containing up to four subthemes), identified within the data will be discussed with exemplifying quotes. Finally, a synopsis of the research findings will follow.

An illustrative analysis has been used to present the research findings. Braun and Clarke (2013) propose that in an illustrative analysis “analytic narrative provides a rich and detailed description and interpretation of the theme and data quotations inserted are used as examples of the analytic points you are claiming” (p. 252). Hesitation and repetition have been removed from some of the quotes used and missing text is indicated using ‘...’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter 3, three main themes were identified, each containing up to four subthemes (see Figure 4.1 for a visual representation of these themes).

Figure 4.1 – Map of themes constructed to understand the perspectives of pastoral staff on school exclusion

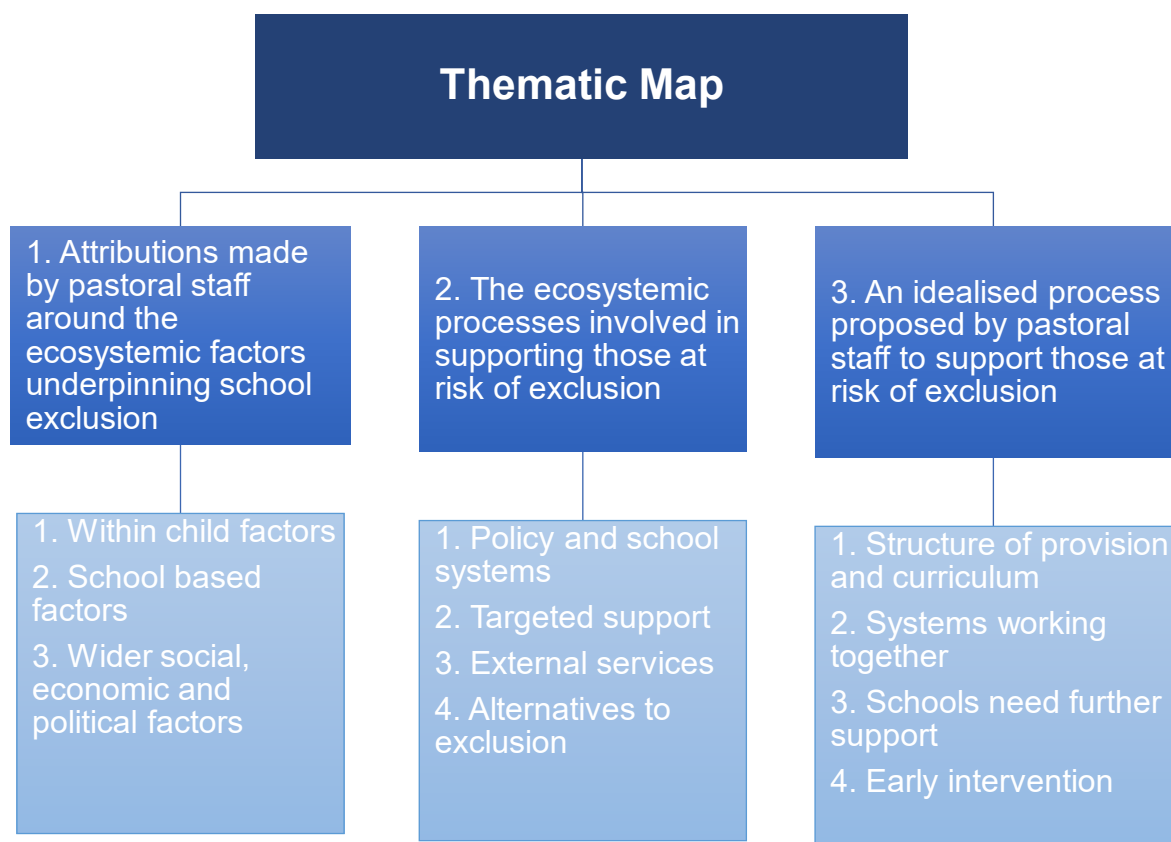
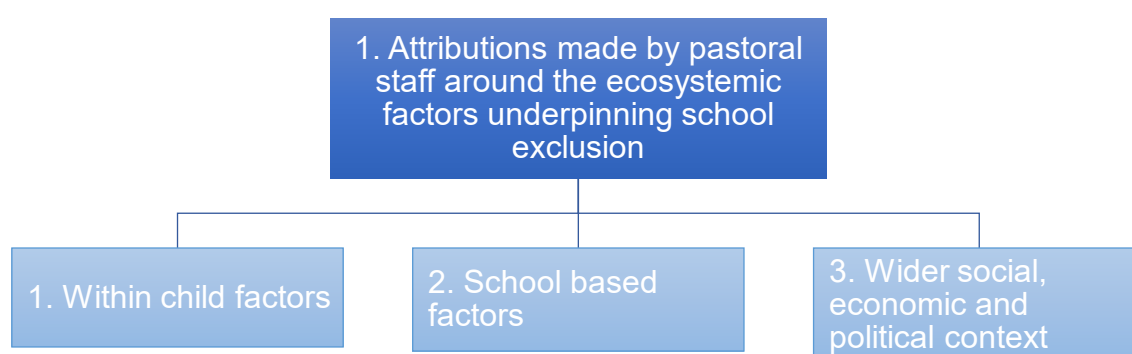


Figure 4.1 is the main thematic map, providing an overview of the themes and subthemes identified during the thematic analysis. Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show each individual theme and corresponding subthemes.

4.2 Theme 1: Attributions made by Pastoral Staff around the Ecosystemic Factors Underpinning School Exclusion

Figure 4.2 – Theme 1: Attributions made by Pastoral Staff around the Ecosystemic Factors Underpinning School Exclusion



This theme encompasses the causal attributions that pastoral staff deemed to underpin the behaviour of those at risk of exclusion and/or those who had been excluded from school. The three subthemes indicate the different areas in which pastoral staff felt that the problems lie. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn in this section.

4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Within Child Factors

Many of the participants attributed the high rates of exclusion amongst CYP aged between twelve and fourteen to outside pressures placed upon them as well as their stage of development. Participants commented on the hormonal changes that take place within adolescence *“they are going through changes hormonally which obviously exacerbate their anxiety or their mood swings”* (Debbie, lines 21-22). It was suggested that at this age CYP are likely to experience pressure from their peers to act in a certain way

We've not experienced any gangs or anything like that but I would assume that is where the time is when you're starting to move into those, quite strong friendship groups. Possibly the shift then is the movement from the family over to friends and the influence which will come accordingly (Bob, lines 28-32).

Similarly, some participants drew links between peer pressure, bullying and the use of technology *"a lot of the exclusions are for friendship issues, bullying, using social media, inappropriate use of social media, amongst girls and boys...or using Snapchat and Instagram to direct message each other"* (Heather, lines 16-20). Adam described how some children at risk of exclusion were badly behaved because they cannot cope with the pressure to fit in so sought attention in other ways

I think that's too much for some students to cope with and that will then present in negative behaviour because they think that's fun and better and also it's a way of getting attention. And sometimes getting negative attention is better than getting no attention (Adam, lines 27-30).

Some participants viewed the students at risk of exclusion as being disaffected, in that they do not see the purpose of school, and have become disengaged with the learning process

They see benefits, they see their parents in the sense that they're surviving so why should I have to worry about it...an irrelevancy of what education can do for them with the job market... They see people who have gained education not being treated with respect... I don't think you can model a society like that and then be surprised that children turn round and say well what's the point, basically (Emma, lines 14-24).

Similarly, Adam described an 'education shift' since when he was at school. However, he believed that some students were at risk of exclusion because they did not know how to behave

When I was a boy, we were expected to turn up, behave and then go home. I think some of these students do not know how to...I think they do not know how to sit there, work, copy, you know five hours a day (Adam, lines 381-386).

The link between school exclusion and children with SEN was highlighted by a number of participants *"probably if you looked at the behaviour statistics on exclusions, they probably have this EHC plan, somewhere down the line"* (Bob, lines 325-326). Participants noted the rise in mental health issues particularly within CYP that were at risk of exclusion and/or those sent to Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provisions *"we are now SEMH and quite rightly Social, Emotional and Mental Health and the amount of mental health issues we are seeing is phenomenal"* (Emma, lines 453-454). Similarly, Fred stated that most children were excluded due to their SEMH needs

*They're gonna be excluded because they've told Mr. Johnson to "F*** off" numerous times, or they've told Mr. Jones to "stick one" and they've had a few fights with peers and stuff like that. And they're confrontational when they're approached, they're disruptive, they'll stop lessons functioning, they can also stop the school functioning. And those sorts of things tend to be linked to more mental health and SEMH these days and obviously the child's capacity to manage those situations where there's conflict or disagreement (Fred, lines 496-501).*

Adam suggested that the increase in class sizes could be exacerbating some students' mental health issues

You've got thirty-one in a classroom, rather than twenty-eight or twenty-six like we used to have. It's just more bodies, there's less room, there's more conflict... putting some highly anxious SEN student whose behaviour, you know they will present with bad behaviour although there is a hell of a lot of reasons why they are doing it (Adam, lines 545-550).

Analysis showed that participants identified a number of within-child factors that were seen to underpin the behaviour of students who were either at risk of exclusion or those who had already been excluded from school. The next subtheme explores the school-based factors that pastoral staff identified as contributing to exclusion.

4.2.2 Subtheme 2: School Based Factors

Analysis revealed a range of school based factors that participants suggested impacted upon school exclusion. Adam spoke about the pressure on schools to achieve good exam results acting as a barrier to inclusion *"but the problem with it all is that the pressure on, from the government is all about exam grades, and we turn into exam factories"* (Adam, lines 499-500). Some of the participants saw this pressure from government as a reason for the rise in exclusion rates in County A *"if you put somebody in an ESC you actually carry their grades... a permanent exclusion would take them off your figures. So if you're cynical some people would, some schools would do that"* (Bob, lines 6-14). This 'cynicism' was echoed by Gloria

From a cynical point of view, I think it might be that sometimes schools want to remove students from their role before they're on the census in Year 10 which is where they are gonna count on their exam results whether they are here or not (Gloria, lines 15-17).

Pastoral staff felt that the pressure on schools to achieve good exam results was associated with a lack of flexibility within the school curriculum

...it wants schools in a very rigid formula. And I think you could probably appreciate this more than anyone, square pegs in round holes just don't always go... 69% of the population that get A-C grades and there's still that same 31% that don't achieve (Fred, lines 110-117).

Fred talked about how the current structure of mainstream education was putting some CYP at a disadvantage because not all CYP are academically minded

And when I think of people in that generation that left school at a certain age, didn't necessarily have great academic com-, but have gone on to be very successful adults do you know what I mean? And I think that's slightly where we're getting it wrong... not everyone needs to be forced through at 16 years of age into public examinations (Fred, lines 127-134).

Many participants spoke in depth about the lack of capacity including staffing and resources, particularly in secondary schools, and how this acted as a barrier to support. Debbie spoke about how a lack of staffing limited their use of the reflection room *"we only run it for a couple of days a week, just because we are such a small school, staffing it is an issue"* (Debbie, lines 380-382). Some participants discussed the inequity between the amount of support that was available to CYP in primary schools as opposed to secondary schools *"before that support could have been put in place in primary schools with the teaching assistant. I think there is always someone around in primary schools and that and we lose that quite heavily in a secondary school establishment"* (Adam, lines 33-35).

The cuts to school budgets was seen by participants as reducing schools' capacity to support those at risk of exclusion "*I think, schools are probably under a greater deal of challenge in terms of resourcing, budgets, financial capacity to develop a range of interventions that can support our most vulnerable students if I'm honest*" (Fred, lines 4-6). Adam described a negative cycle to demonstrate how cuts may be indirectly affecting exclusion rates. He commented on how with fewer teachers there was an increase in workload and teacher stress

...everyone is so stretched that that ultimately has an impact on sort of the teaching and learning and then that has an impact on the behaviour and that has an impact on the amount of people that get excluded and sort of present as badly behaved I don't think they are but that's how they present. They present as naughty when actually they're not, their needs aren't being met (Adam, lines 12-16).

Schools not being able to meet the needs of all students was a dominant theme across participants. Financial constraints placed upon schools were seen by most participants as a barrier to meeting CYP's needs

What would be absolutely wonderful, if you could get people to do it, is to have some sort of recourse where you can say look I'm struggling with this child, we need extra resources to be able to meet this child's needs, even if it's just for a season, and that isn't there. The understanding of what's needed isn't there (Emma, lines 223-227).

Debbie talked about the frustration that she felt when the school were unable to meet a student's needs "*it is incredibly frustrating when we're not able to find different provision or funding or whatever it is for that child when they're actually here... I think we do our absolute best with what we have*" (Debbie, lines 325-328).

Some participants spoke about how staff struggle to cope with managing the challenging behaviour of students “...particularly staff that might be finding it difficult with kids with challenging behaviour, or finding it difficult to manage their relationship, particularly if they have a kid that’s on his last knockings, exclusion wise” (Fred, lines 248-250). Similarly, Emma stated that her school would choose to permanently exclude when all avenues of support had been exhausted and staff/peer relationships had broken down

...when we feel that everything that we’ve tried is not going to make a difference, we cannot meet that child’s needs and he needs a different environment or another environment because he’s broken down relationships perhaps with peers or staff here (Emma, lines 102-105).

Others felt that they were unable to meet the needs of some students as they had been inappropriately placed within mainstream schools

We’ve had some students that have moved from us to a special provision for behaviour, because they are inappropriately placed. And we struggle with them, you know we keep going with them... at the end of the day it’s still a mainstream school... (Catherine, lines 187-191).

Pastoral staff spoke about how schools feel pressure to exclude because they have to show that they are taking a serious stance on behaviour

We have to react to some of the things that have gone on so from our perspective it has to be seen by teaching staff, by other children, by parents that we are serious with what we do. You can’t bring in offensive weapons into school (Debbie, lines 41-44).

Similarly, Catherine described how some students and teachers in her school agree with exclusion and feel that more students should be excluded “*they think*

more students should be excluded (laughs). Teachers feel exactly the same, more students should be excluded for different things but as an SLT we look at each individual case and each individual student” (Catherine, lines 89-91).

Analysis revealed that participants saw a number of school-based barriers to supporting those at risk of school exclusion. In addition, participants believed that wider contextual factors were contributing to the rise in exclusion rates, these will be considered in the next subtheme.

4.2.3 Subtheme 3: Wider Social, Political and Economic Context

A range of social, economic and political factors were highlighted by pastoral staff as contributing to school exclusion. The impact of cuts to public services on exclusions, particularly in terms of the availability of services, was a dominant theme discussed by all participants. Participants frequently spoke about how cuts meant that there were not as many services as there once were *“where you used to be able to access outside agencies and various support, and everything seems to be sucked down a bit...”* (Adam, lines 6-7).

Heather reiterated this point whilst noting that many of the external services that are available are too expensive for schools to access *“I would say there’s not as much as there used to be because of funding, some stuff is quite expensive so we have to make do with what we can access for a reasonable amount of money”* (Heather, lines 97-99).

Many participants spoke about how cuts to services made it difficult to seek support from agencies such as CAMHS and the EPS

...I know they are struggling with funding and staffing so for both of them, if there was more of them and they were able to come in more often to

assess students, to work with students... we would be very happy to have EPs work with us more... but there's no EPs (Gloria, lines 256-263).

Where it was possible to seek support from external agencies, participants talked about how the lack of capacity within services meant that they were slow to respond

...it's whether you can afford to call in the people and whether they have capacity to respond. If you needed an Ed Psych quick, how quickly would you get the Ed Psych? If you needed the Autistic Advisory Service, how quickly can you get the Autistic Advisory Service (Emma, lines 301-304).

Cuts to wider public services such as the police force were also believed to have an effect on school exclusions. Debbie discussed how when students had been excluded from school, a lack of police presence meant that excluded students were hanging around outside of school and having a negative influence on other students

...there's not enough back up when they're hanging around and they're waiting to pick off our kids that are coming out of school because it's learned behaviours... we used to have for example a PCSO and that was fantastic but that service was withdrawn because of funding within the police. So to have that presence I think would help deter outside coming towards school, I don't think it would prevent all permanent exclusions but it would prevent students hooking up into those kids (Debbie, lines 279-287).

Emma discussed the need for a complete rethink of the resourcing of society. She described how effective spending and early intervention could lead to future savings

It's not just about money but you can't keep cutting everything and expect a better service, it doesn't work like that, there is a cost element to everything. So you've got to be willing to spend money to save money, and I think you would save money if you spent it quickly enough and effectively enough. You definitely would save money, you wouldn't have so many people in prison (Emma, lines 462-466).

Some participants spoke about how the lack of specialist provision both nationally and locally meant that some students were placed in schools that were unable to meet their needs *"there are some students in comprehensive secondary schools that actually shouldn't be there and they're setting them up to fail but there's not enough provision within the area"* (Debbie, lines 235-237). Similarly, Fred suggested that when mainstream schools were unable to meet the needs of students, it often led to exclusions

...one of the major issues is the pressure that's put on schools through lack of external support, lack of access to alternative provision... what you've got is this vicious cycle of schools not knowing what to do with their most vulnerable kids that often there's snap exclusions (Fred, lines 22-25).

When asked what they thought was behind the rise in exclusions within the local area, some participants felt that students' behaviour was influenced by the area in which they grew up and the types of behaviour that they were exposed to *"...it's the movement of people out of (city)... so the behaviour that's more common in (city) such as gangs and drugs and those type of things seem to be moving outwards with the population that's moving outwards"* (Heather, lines 5-11). Debbie spoke about accessing behaviour support services from areas that were closer to the city as they were used to dealing with more complex behaviour

...they'd perhaps see some more hardcore behaviours. Where they'd actually seen perhaps you know stabbings and that sort of thing as opposed to our kids... some of the behaviours that come out from (area) are much more extreme. They are starting to come into this area more and more and that's why we brought in from sort of an outside area (Debbie, lines 142-147).

While some participants believed that behaviour was location-dependent. It was also noted that the types of external services and provision available varied depending on where students lived “*we deal with several different boroughs so it depends what the structure is within those counties*” (Emma, lines 143-144); “*...that's the one that works for (area in County A) so it's in (different area in County A)... So it doesn't necess-, on where they go to school, it's where they live*” (Catherine, lines 178-184).

Some participants felt that there was a direct link between school exclusions and socioeconomic deprivation “*the ones who are the most disadvantaged i.e... pupil premium are quite heavily on that list of students, who suffer from those exclusions*” (Adam, lines 49-51). Debbie described a cycle of learned behaviour that she believed to be influencing CYP from deprived backgrounds

There's no vumph within kids to actually, do you know what I mean, no energy or no spark to actually be successful in life, to be driving Mercedes, to have a big house. And I think that's partly because of the demographics of the area. Whereas you've got a lot of deprived families so it's learned behaviours, they are quite happy not to work or to have ten kids or whatever. It goes from there really so I think again it's a whole mindset aspirational culture of society that needs to be looked at (Debbie, lines 342-348).

Similarly, Fred believed that the breakdown of the family unit and a lack of positive role models may be contributing to the rise in exclusion rates

A lot of kids that again I work with around that KS3 area where there's been quite a dramatic change in circumstances at home i.e. the family breakdown. Yep and I think that leads into, that is a contributing factor... in London, I was teaching a lot of young lads that were fatherless, had no clear male role model whatsoever and they'd largely gone through primary school being contained (Fred, lines 34-40).

In concurrence, the attribution of students' behaviour to poor parenting was a dominant theme amongst pastoral staff "...there's whole pockets of people whose upbringing of their children is appalling, it's absolutely appalling. It's appalling because they don't know any better" (Emma, lines 390-392). When asked why she thought the ages twelve to fourteen were the most common time for students to be excluded, Emma said

I think it's parental control. I think a lot of the parents nowadays want to be friends with their children, they don't want to parent... that's exactly the time they back off because that's when parenting gets really tough when you've got to parent a teenager. And a lot of parents back off from that because they don't want confrontation, they don't want the bother, they don't want the upset in their house. It's exactly the time when children will start pushing boundaries and that's why you're getting more of them, it doesn't surprise me at all. Lack of accountability as well to parents (Emma, lines 29-58).

Emma described how over time children have become more empowered and less respectful of authority

I think a lot of parents nowadays, we've certainly seen in this school, are very child-centred in that they have empowered the children to the point where the children are making decisions they are not qualified to make, and shouldn't be making, it should be a parental thing. So I think the whole of the way children are handled has become much more lax and children have taken advantage of that (Emma, lines 7-12).

Similarly, Bob believed that some parents are not socialising their children to behave from a young age

You start to see them kicking off from their parents and the parents control... which actually goes back to what they've done, three or four years before, and they've not engrained those behaviour habits into their child and then maybe we see that more when they get that independence and they start to actually utilise that power that they have in the household (Bob, lines 33-40).

Participants believed that a number of social, economic and political factors underpin school exclusions. These included cuts to public services, a lack of special provision, socioeconomic deprivation, family breakdown and poor parenting.

4.2.4 Theme 1: Summary

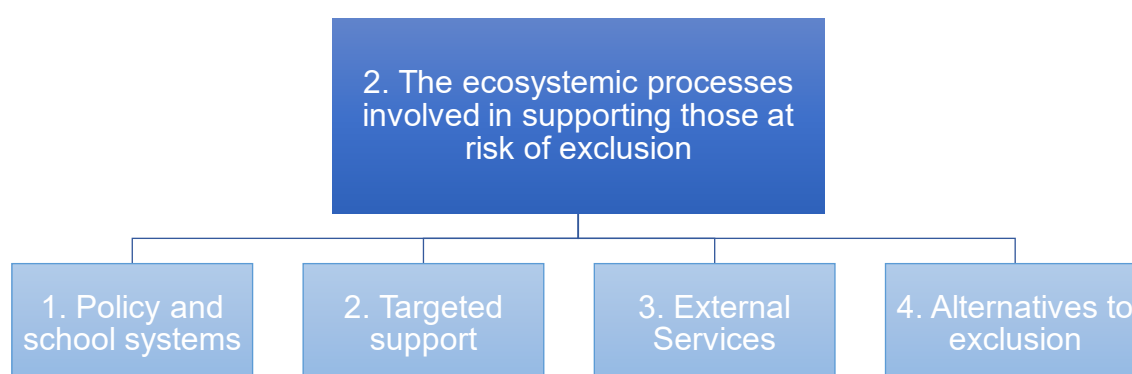
The data suggests that participants believed that a range of individual; school-based; and social, economic and political factors underpin CYP's behaviour and subsequent exclusion.

Participants frequently spoke about how cuts to funding to schools and wider external services were acting as a barrier to support for students who were at risk. Pastoral staff described doing the best they could with the resources that

they had. The next theme, explores the support that schools access and provide to CYP who are at risk of exclusion.

4.3 Theme 2: The Ecosystemic Processes Involved in Supporting those at Risk of Exclusion

Figure 4.3 – Theme 2: The Ecosystemic Processes Involved in Supporting those at Risk of Exclusion



This theme presents participants' views on the internal and external mechanisms that are involved in supporting CYP who are at risk of school exclusion. This theme encompasses four subthemes which highlight the processes involved in supporting those at risk of exclusion, as well as the factors that pastoral staff deemed can affect the success of intervention. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn in this section.

4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Policy and Systems

Pastoral staff described a range of school policies and systems that were in place to support students' behaviour including behaviour, reward and detention policies. Emma talked about how policies were used, to ensure a consistent approach to behaviour support and safeguard the students *"staff would deal with people within the policy of the school, there's no mavericks, we cannot have mavericks, safeguarding is everything"* (Emma, lines 132-134). Contrastingly,

Fred believed that staff in his school took very different approaches to managing the behaviour of students, irrespective of the policies that were in place

...for every one member of staff that would manage a situation with a child at risk of permanent exclusion effectively, there'd be one member of staff that doesn't. And again, there'll be an empathetic, sympathetic, supportive approach from one member of staff and there'll be another member of staff that'll be not wanting that child in the class with them. And I think that, that's one of the main concerns and issues with mainstream secondary schools, is that the variation of approach can be quite different from one hour to the next (Fred, lines 221-227).

Participants frequently described a staged approach to behavioural support in which exclusion was only used as a last resort “...they'll be a whole process of things that are put in place to stop permanent exclusions” (Heather, lines 36-37); “so it's a staged process towards exclusion and then various things are put in to support the child through that” (Debbie, lines 72-73). This approach was often said to be written in to the school's behaviour policy

...it's a warning, name written down, detention and then it obviously escalates. You can be removed, you can have time outside the lesson and be brought back in and then there's various things like some people use lunch time detentions, some people use after school detentions but then it's the severity of the punishment. You could go to like what we call school detention which is run by the middle leaders of the school for something which is over and above what a teacher would set. And then if you're removed from a lesson for whatever reason from SLT, you then have a Headmaster's detention on a Friday night for an hour and a half. If you miss that then it's a straight isolation (Adam, lines 179-187).

Some staff spoke about the process of reintegration for students following exclusion or periods of respite. This often included elements of restorative justice *“we have integration meetings and things like that to get them back. Yeah, they would come back, we’d try again... do restorative justice with peers or with teachers and try and get them back on role”* (Emma, 346-348 lines); *“reintegration meeting and then some repair and rebuild maybe with the teacher or straight back in lessons because they’ve realised that what they’ve done is wrong”* (Cathy, lines 147-148).

Adam felt that funding cuts were limiting effective reintegration *“there does need to be some kind of staggered approach to gradual reintegration back... So we’re building it up rather than, you know straight back into the fire”* (Adam, lines 565-571).

Some pastoral staff spoke about the importance of positive reinforcement *“so obviously rewards are absolutely key”* (Debbie, lines 365-366). Adam described the reward policy at his school and the incentives that were used to motivate students to behave

It’s merits, and it’s done on SIMS and I believe there is things like tokens for certain shops that they get if they get gold, silver, bronze and public recognition... we’ve sort of heavily asked them what they want and most of them want iTunes vouchers... it’s early days but they’re really trying to plug actually it’s better to praise than it is to be negative (Adam, lines 192-196).

Bob felt that at his school, the school ethos motivated students to behave well

We try and create an ethos whereby they would say ‘why would I do that?’ Because all the other students would look at them and say ‘what are you

doing?’ So we try and create that ethos from Year 7... They want to be at the school. The attendance rate is at 96.4% so the indicators of the whole school ethos, hopefully would mean that the student has a buy-in (Bob, lines 133-138).

Pastoral staff spoke about the systems that were in place to monitor students’ behaviour and how this was used to help make decisions about when to put support in place. Heather described how a student being placed on report to a Head of Year would trigger intervention

...as soon as someone started showing up on the radar as having issues, then it would be the case of, the Head of Year would put in place what they feel would support that student. So as soon as someone is on report to a Head of Year, then we start talking about what support we can do (Heather, lines 119-122).

Some staff used the number of behaviour points to monitor students’ behaviour and determine whether further support was needed *“the Deputy Headteacher talks to every student that gets more than 4 behaviour points in one week and they are either given a Saturday detention- but it depends on, the severity of what’s happening in the classroom”* (Catherine, lines 249-252).

Participants spoke about the range of staff that were involved in supporting students who were at risk of exclusion and how staff worked collaboratively to deliver this support. Most participants mentioned that support was co-ordinated by the Pastoral Leaders, in most cases this was the research participants themselves

...initially it will be the Heads of Year and then they might get referred down to me... we might look at some TA support for a period of time, that sort of

thing but generally I would try and co-ordinate that. But the form tutors are involved from the start. We have a report card system so they could be on form tutor report, Head of Year report and a Key Stage Manager report... that is all sort of pastoral but then ultimately, I suppose some form tutors say, "well I've done what I can, it's now over to you" and then I work quite closely with the Heads of Years to try and unpick if there is anything else that we can do (Adam, lines 201-209).

Some participants spoke about the need for effective communication within school when supporting those at risk. They described systems that were in place to share information between staff

...we brief in the morning about what's happened the day before, in terms of decisions taken. At the end of the day we debrief and any children's names or action that needs to be taken is logged and then the senior management team will look at that and decide what action is going to be taken, along with the head (Emma, lines 85-89).

In concurrence, Debbie described how staff met to discuss specific students and how information arising from these meetings was shared with staff

We have teach meets so each week we select students that we feel need some specific strategies with the teaching staff. They're disseminated and then we do classroom observations to make sure those strategies are being used... myself, the SENCo and the senior leadership for behaviour, meet and we are called the Inclusion Panel and we discuss emotional needs, we discuss learning needs of all the students...and give strategies to staff on kind of a newsletter and pick the more complex kids to do the teach meet with...it's just to have the awareness around the school as well. So that's how we disseminate and communicate (Debbie, lines 104-114).

Analysis revealed a number of school based systems and processes that were used to support those at risk of permanent school exclusion; these were often referred to as part of a staged approach in which school exclusion was the last resort. The next subtheme will consider how support is targeted towards certain individuals/groups of students.

4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Targeted Support

Participants described various methods of targeted support that were used within their schools, including preventative, individualised support and support for parents and families.

Pastoral staff spoke about the preventative measures that were put in place to support groups of children such as year groups whose behaviours is a cause for concern *“my colleague, she has now taken on looking at the behaviours of Year 8 and Year 9 so we’re concentrating on those because they are our biggest cause for concern”* (Catherine, lines 117-119).

Targeted interventions tended to be focused around building student’s self-esteem

We have things about trying to get them involved in activities, sports, we use the fire brigade do something about increasing self-esteem. We give them a private mentor. I don’t think the stick works personally, I think it’s got to be a combination but more on the side of self-esteem (Bob, lines 130-133).

Some staff described the need to empower students to make the right decisions *“I think you need to give them the tools in order to make changes, rather than just expect them to make changes”* (Adam, lines 380-381). Similarly, Gloria discussed the need to provide students with strategies that would empower them

...empower students, that could be with relationships, it might be a student might fight. It could be where, like the way they talk to their parents or talking to teachers, they just need some support in learning strategies of when not to speak in a certain way. You know that kind of thing which could ultimately lead to someone being permanently excluded (Gloria, lines 55-59).

Adam spoke about how his school employed a family worker to unpick the underlying reasons for students' behaviour so that intervention could be tailored to meet their needs *"our full-time family worker, to look at really the holistic point of view, is it home is it here, try and work and try and unpick those reasons behind that behaviour"* (Adam, lines 93-95). Similarly, some participants spoke about how at times students presented with behavioural needs because their learning needs were not being met. Therefore, intervention was targeted towards meeting their learning needs

some of these issues of behaviour are a learning need... if you're in school every day and you can't understand anything every day, why wouldn't you misbehave? So taking that on board we do put a lot of, on the academic sort of intervention and the learning need, which will have an impact on the behaviour and especially at Year 7 if you get them early (Bob, lines 255-261).

Some pastoral staff discussed how staff received training on prevalent diagnoses *"staff meetings on for example, dealing with CLA students, dealing with autistic students, dealing with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and we will sort of educate them about the student there"* (Bob, lines 156-160). Similarly, Emma described how staff received training on diagnoses such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Pathological Demand Avoidance so that they

could better support their students' needs within the school context "...*the staff are all trained to recognise and understand the needs of children with the main ones that we get*" (Emma, lines 79-83).

Participants described monitoring individual students' behaviour in order to put preventative support in place before their behaviour escalated "*we sort of track it quite heavily but we do track behaviour all the time and I think it's trying to be, early identification of need*" (Bob, lines 410-411). Bob described how support could then be targeted towards individual children "*it's a personalised package put around that child. We do have our whole school systems, fixed terms, things, but each individual child will get something wrapped around them according to what the needs are*" (Bob, lines 140-143).

Some pastoral staff spoke about specific interventions tailored towards meeting the needs of hard to reach students

We have done for one student a sort of a Fresh Start programme after quite a lot of exclusions, that was when he came back in after a period of time. And he was here I think about four hours a day, one to one by teachers, co-ordinated by myself but he was having set lessons with teachers one to one to build up relationships and that was really, really successful, for that time and I would say for about six to eight months after that (Adam, lines 150-155).

Participants frequently spoke about the use of Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs) with those at risk of school exclusion, these were used to tailor support around a child's needs

We have a PSP - pastoral support plan, um which is a 16-week kind of intervention plan, where we will obviously set targets, mentoring sessions,

focused 1 to 1 work and that, obviously do, regular reporting, staff feedback and so a very close monitoring procedure that we follow over a 16-week period, before we move to permanent exclusion (Fred, lines 166-169).

Bob felt that PSPs were an effective way of co-ordinating support

If you are at risk you go on a PSP for 16 weeks. I think the framework for the parent buy-in is really good and then you review it formally every 4 weeks and informally every 2 weeks. It holds the school to account. We get external agencies involved... Parents involved in the process with their feedback and, I think that the system there is good. It's a real buy-in of all the stakeholders there and it makes you as well reflect on how you've dealt with the issues and what you could do to improve it (Bob, lines 223-230).

Pastoral staff spoke about how the involvement of parents was valued and they were included as much as possible *"Well I would hope that parents are involved early on. The minute there are behaviour issues the Head of Years or Form Tutors would be contacting the parents, they'd have them in meetings"* (Gloria, lines 197-199). Similarly, Fred commented on how he communicated with and supported parents

...making sure they've got the right information at the right time and making sure they feel empowered to understand the rationale behind a lot of the decisions that are made. I think that's a crucial thing and if they understand the rationale whatever stage their child is, invariably enough they support the decisions that we make. And obviously invariably enough a lot of the decisions in that regard are quite collaborative (Fred, lines 445-455).

Some participants described how parents were themselves supported *“we go through you know is there any support the family needs because sometimes it’s family support as well as individual support that’s needed”* (Debbie, lines 84-86). However, support offered to parents was not always accepted *“because we do offer parenting classes to parents. The thing is that those are the type of parents, exactly who need it who don’t engage”* (Heather, lines 212-213).

Analysis revealed how schools targeted support towards individuals as well as groups of students in order to negate the need for them to be excluded from school. Parents were involved throughout the process and were offered support themselves. The next subtheme will consider how and when external services are accessed to support those at risk of exclusion.

4.3.3 Subtheme 3: External Services

There were numerous examples of pastoral staff listing a wide range of external services that were accessed in order to support those at risk of exclusion (for an example see Debbie, lines 147-162). The need for an external perspective was a dominant theme amongst participants *“I think it’s helpful for the students to have somebody external come in... talk to them and work with them rather than, you know just have somebody with a different perspective”* (Gloria, lines 233-236); *“I think external eyes are quite important because you can be quite set in your ways and not see something that somebody else can say ‘have you ever thought of this?’, ‘ah ok, fair point’ ”* (Bob, lines 298-300).

Staff talked about a needs-led approach to making decisions about accessing external support *“almost like the, plan, assess, do review sort of what we’ve done, what else can we do and then let’s monitor it from there”* (Adam, lines 348-350); *“we will use any professional we can have which we think will have an impact and if it doesn’t have an impact we’ll try something different”* (Bob, lines 175-177).

The research participants were often highly involved or in charge of making decisions about when and which external services are accessed

...if it's part of the services that are offered free within the borough, it doesn't come through me, but if it's something that costs money-. If it's free, anyone can access it (laughs). But decisions are made depending on the needs of the child, we would consider what support is needed (Heather, lines 104-111).

Staff talked about how they monitored students' behaviour and made decisions as to when support from external services needed to be sought *"when things have been escalated so say the amount of behaviour points, they perhaps are on a Head of Year report, things haven't improved. Perhaps the Key Stage Manager is now involved, we'd look to involve someone else"* (Adam, lines 345-347); *"as soon as we see the issue is bad enough or the issue is something which needs more specialist input, more than what the school can offer"* (Bob, lines 265-266).

All participants accessed support from the behavioural outreach team at the local ESC. Adam described the structure of their work

...it will be a programme of work for roughly six to eight weeks, weekly for an hour, same time and they will do a piece of work with like a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire at the start and then the end and that kind of thing... (Adam, lines 104-106).

Debbie described the work that the behavioural outreach team do as *"really fundamental because they are very much part of managed moves and integration. So if they've done some work they know the kids and they know the kids that are coming through"* (Debbie, lines 210-213). Fred commented on how the work of the behavioural outreach team fits within the PSP process *"... a 10-*

week programme of intervention being delivered by behaviour support... so that fits into the PSP monitoring process as well... sort of focused 1 to 1 work, bit of support in class, observation in class” (Fred, lines 465-467).

The majority of participants viewed EPs as a useful resource *“I do think that you guys have got the knowledge, far greater knowledge” (Adam, lines 432-433).* Debbie felt as though EPs contribute a lot to supporting students who are at risk of exclusion

...they can observe, they can give us strategies. You know for our teach meets to help the families, the kids and the staff as well. For EHCPs absolutely key, we need to make sure that we’ve got EP input. For Team Around the Family meetings, it’s great to have somebody that’s got that title if you like. Families take them seriously, it’s, you know looking at psychology of their child and that’s key isn’t it really (Debbie, lines 247-251).

Similarly, Heather described how EPs were used to help ascertain the students’ needs

We always try to see the Educational Psychologist if there is a problem associated with their learning. The service is quite full, we don’t get to see one very often but they can be really helpful in helping the students to understand and identify what issues they are having in terms of their learning (Heather, lines 198-201).

However, participants acknowledged that schools were not given as much time and support from the EPS in recent years *“I know we don’t get as many visits as we used to” (Bob, line 332); “there’s not a lot the EPs can do now...the EPs don’t have a lot of time now” (Catherine, lines 298-300).*

In contrast, Emma commented that at times, staff at her special school have such a great knowledge that EPs are not really needed despite being offered more support than mainstream schools

Because we are a special school we don't have any trouble getting EPs because we get priority anyway... But we only bring them in if we're really flummoxed but normally we're not really flummoxed if you see what I mean because we are doing this all of the time. Whereas if we were a mainstream school, trying to cope with someone like a boy that would be eventually sent here, I could imagine they are in an absolute quandary about what to do. We tend to use EPs to tick boxes for Education and Health Care plans, to be absolutely honest... (Emma, lines 265-272)

The majority of participants discussed the difficulty in accessing support from CAMHS “CAMHS appointments are like gold dust and they're far too much in the distance to help immediately” (Emma, lines 290-292). Debbie described using the school's EP as a stopgap to provide support whilst waiting for CAMHS

Having an Ed Psych as sort of, not as a replacement but as something to hold for the mean time until we can actually get the child in to see some specialists on a regular basis, it gives us a bit of a help to guide the families and that child forward (Debbie, lines 254-257).

Participants frequently discussed the frustration that they experienced when trying to access support from services such as CAMHS and being told that their students do not meet the criteria to receive support

...because you may spend all this time to get there and then they dismiss them and you think 'how have you dismissed this one but you've taken this one on board?' When they've, they display far different symptoms within

school. But that's not for us to say it's for them to do, but it is the referral process takes such a long time (Bob, lines 178-181).

Similarly, Fred described the work that goes in to making referrals to external services and the subsequent frustration experienced when students are turned away

There's nothing worse than putting in a range of work, an in-depth piece of work, then you refer and it doesn't happen often but then... you don't meet the criteria or you don't meet the threshold. And we're the wrong service, or you get through the door and they say, 'Oh we want you to-'. There's one service in particular that... we refer to them and obviously the referral goes through, they go in for the initial consultation and they're very quickly looking to refer the parents on elsewhere. You probably know who I'm talking about? I appreciate that they're under pressure, and I appreciate that they're struggling and they want schools to be more resourceful themselves... (Fred, lines 296-305).

Similarly, Emma felt that the bureaucracy involved in accessing services can delay the process of students getting the support that they need

We've had to go through social worker after social worker, thinking that they can powder it with some talcum powder and bring in this advanced team on ADHD. I've sat here, I've ranted and raved, I said don't bring in so and so it's past their remit, no we've got to do it we've got to tick that box, so we bring them in, they say its past our remit (Emma, lines 359-363).

Analysis revealed that schools accessed a range of external services to support those at risk of exclusion. However, the time taken to access services and the

criteria to access support often acted as barriers. The next subtheme will highlight processes used by schools as alternatives to permanent exclusion.

4.3.4 Subtheme 4: Alternatives to Exclusion

The majority of participants described permanent exclusion as a last resort

It really is a last resort, something that we would do anything in our power to avoid because we know that it is, it is not a good route for a child to go down and ultimately it could really badly influence their life chances (Gloria, lines 64-67).

Participants described the use of various alternatives to exclusion such as managed moves often as a way of keeping a permanent exclusion off of the child's record *"It can be to mainstreams, it can be to other special needs schools. If we can keep permanent exclusion off of a child's record, we will do that"* (Emma, lines 175-176).

Managed moves were frequently described by participants as giving students the opportunity to have a fresh start *"Some of the time they'll result in managed moves to other schools for pupils to have a fresh start which we have had a few of this year"* (Heather, lines 37-38); *"it's been effective from the point of view that it's given the child a fresh start"* (Fred, line 400).

Gloria described how she felt about managed moves and the success that her school had experienced using them

...some you rub your hands together, like 'yay, he's gone' but equally we've had students coming to us from other schools and they work with varying degree of success but on the whole, I would say yes. The students, certainly the ones that we've had in from elsewhere, they've been, stayed

here and completed their education not being excluded which is what it's about really (Gloria, lines 188-193).

Others discussed the challenges that managed moves presented. For example, when children were moved to nearby schools *"geographically we are quite close to a lot of schools so moving the problem from you know half a mile down the road when everyone knows everyone is not always the best way forward"* (Debbie, lines 178-180).

Participants spoke about their wariness in taking students who moved around a lot

This is his third school, that's always an indication of a concern. If you've got a boy moving, or girl moving from school to school to school, technically termed as hoppers. You know that there are probably underlying issues why they're moving so much. It could be that they are being bullied etcetera but there could be underlying parental issues and behaviour issues so schools are very wary of hoppers coming across (Bob, lines 235-240).

In concurrence, some participants discussed how managed moves just moved the 'problem' around and did not address the underlying issues *"we are asked to take students who are struggling in other schools and they come here and they are still struggling so it's just moving the problem on from one school to another"* (Catherine, lines 82-83); *"so really the problems are bounced from one school to the next... I just think the problems are pushing from pillar to post and they are not actually addressed"* (Debbie, lines 47-54).

The inequitable nature of managed moves was frequently discussed by participants. Catherine spoke about the fair access protocol which aimed to make the process more equal

We have a lot of managed moves moved into us. It's supposed to be under the Fair Protocol but we sometimes feel that it's actually not very fair. We seem to be picking up more and more students from other schools... if there's a child that's hard to place, the local schools are supposed to take it in turns to take a student... our fair share seemed to be a lot higher than anybody else's. It could be that we've got spaces but it does make a difference to our students when we keep picking up lots of students with, challenging behaviour (Catherine, lines 201-215).

Some participants spoke about not being told the truth about students' needs and educational history prior to the child's move to their school

We've had a few, I'll be honest with you, that have been, managed moves but we haven't had the truth. So, we have been lied to and then we, have unpicked the truth and then we realise why they are trying to move... we've had our fingers burnt (Adam, lines 296-306).

Some pastoral staff spoke about the use of the integration team as an intermediary body to enable a more honest and equitable managed move process “we seem to go down the integration route because then... it's people who are dealing with those students who are then saying, ‘there's the paperwork, this is the truth, do you want to give them a go?’ ” (Adam, lines 301-303); “we use integration at county and that is usually when a student is flagging up as being at risk of permanent exclusion and we also take in... they're kind of the lynch pin of where they put different students” (Debbie, lines 175-177).

Some participants described using the respite facility at the ESC *"We haven't permanently excluded someone for years. However, we were using the ESC to put people in the ESC if they are at danger of permanent exclusion"* (Bob, lines 46-47); *"we send children there for respite and then they come back or sometimes they move onto other schools"* (Catherine, lines 159-160).

Adam described the advantages for students being placed at the ESC *"I know some students who are mine down there who are very comfortable down there and I suppose why wouldn't you be. Small class sizes, lots of attention"* (Adam, lines 536-538). However, Adam also expressed some dissatisfaction with the ESC from his perspective *"I don't see it necessarily fair that we then get all of their exam grades because there isn't that PRU to go to... we then keep their exam grades even though they're not turning up there"* (Adam, lines 243-246).

Similarly, Bob said

We would be reticent now about using the ESC, for students that we see are at risk and the reason being is that we now carry their figures... actually the achievement doesn't seem to increase when they go there... at the moment we have 3 people in the ESC, the achievement is not good (Bob, lines 56-62).

Some participants discussed the use of fixed term exclusions which Debbie deemed to be effective in some situations

For some, you have one fixed term exclusion it helps, you know they're really distraught at the fact they've had a fixed term exclusion. For others, no it can be an accolade and be a way out. And at home as I said to you before, parents are not keen, even though it is their responsibility to get their child to work, quite often they don't... they are a means to an end because there isn't anything else to do particularly and they are effective

with some but I would say actually that is a minority (Debbie, lines 356-364).

Participants frequently explained that fixed term exclusions are not seen as a punishment by students as they prefer to be at home

I'm not sure what good it does because I think the main thing that it does is give the school and give the child a breather but it actually might be better if they weren't excluded to home but were excluded to some sort of base rather than home because for a lot of the kids, being at home is a gift. They can play on their Playstation, you know, parents... they don't know where they are (Emma, lines 324-328).

This was one of the reasons given by pastoral staff to explain why schools were using internal exclusion/isolation more regularly “*so the head is looking at internal exclusion and not sending them home so they can play on computers. He is keeping them in school but they are excluded from the rest of the school*” (Catherine, lines 94-96). Internal exclusions were also used more when students from vulnerable groups were at risk of permanent exclusion

Quite often the students that you end up excluding are the ones who should be in school... we do have a high proportion of Pupil Premium students who are excluded, either internally or externally so we try to keep those in school. Again, if a student has got low attendance then we try to keep them in school because it seems ridiculous to exclude them, unless we really need to (Gloria, lines 121-127).

Similarly, Heather explained that internal exclusion was used a great deal in her school

Statistically attendance in the Pupil Premium students is poorer and the level of consequences of this is higher than the Non-Pupil Premium students. So we always try to come up with an alternative to external fixed term exclusion and that may be an internal exclusion, where they work with the behaviour support worker for the day in the internal isolation room, instead of being permanently excluded (Heather, lines 68-72).

Emma talked about how internal exclusion at her school was used as a time for students to repair and reflect *“the child reflects on what he could have done better to have resolved the situation without resorting to whatever he’s done. It’s supposed to be a learning process”* (Emma, lines 116-117).

At times, the use of internal exclusion was restricted by a lack of capacity in schools *“we don’t use it particularly that much because we have to man it so that takes a member of staff out all day but we do use it now and again”* (Emma, lines 114-115); *“we haven’t got an isolation room... I would rather have the student with me for the day but it’s not ideal... if I need to make phone calls then I would need to make them sit out of there”* (Gloria, lines 127-130). Gloria described a time when her school used isolations in order to reduce the number of fixed term exclusions. This was met by opposition from staff *“people were voicing the opinion that in some cases it seemed like there was no escalation and there was just sort of repetition. You know, a child would have an isolation and then he’d have another isolation”* (Gloria, lines 146-148).

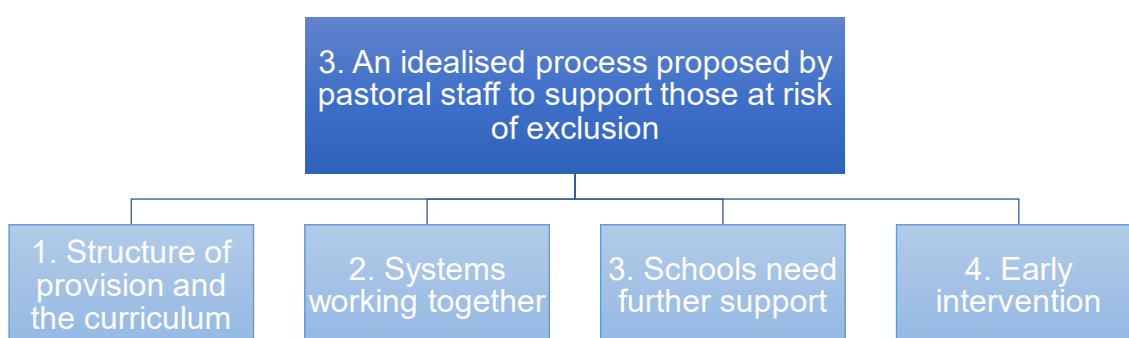
This subtheme showed that participants viewed school exclusion as a last resort. They were often involved in seeking viable alternatives to permanently excluding students from their schools.

4.3.5 Theme 2: Summary

The data suggests that participants accessed a range of internal and external support in order to negate the need to permanently exclude students from their schools. Participants described barriers that often prevented them from providing the support that they felt their students needed. The next theme, explores what further support participants felt was needed to support those at risk of exclusion.

4.4 Theme 3: Idealised Process to Support those at Risk of Exclusion

Figure 4.4 – Theme 3: Idealised Process to Support those at Risk of Exclusion



This theme encompassed the idealised perspectives held by participants in terms of the support that they felt was needed to support those at risk of exclusion. Their suggestions incorporated things that were deemed to be more practical and realistic as well as some that were acknowledged to be more difficult to implement; participants often preceded these suggestions with ‘in an ideal world’. This theme is made up of four subthemes in which participants describe a need for further support within their own schools as well as county wide initiatives and services. Each subtheme will be discussed in turn.

4.4.1 Subtheme 1: Structure of Provision and the Curriculum

Some pastoral staff talked about how the structure of schools needed to change to better meet the needs of those who are at risk of exclusion. Fred talked about the need for nurture groups to be run within mainstream provisions

...nurture provisions are important and they're a great way of integrating certainly our most vulnerable members of... I think if there's a bit more of a nurture group approach in year 7, with a gradual sort of integration back end of year 7 and into year 8, we may see a bit more of a reduction in exclusion figures... where there's clear transition in, clear managed transition out. So that they're not just in the nurture group the whole time and they have a balance of nurture so they've got their safe place, yep and obviously they can learn their socialisation skills, the emotional resilience skills, to cope with being in a mainstream secondary school (Fred, lines 59-82).

A number of participants commented on the need for flexibility within the curriculum in order to motivate students who are at risk and to prepare them for adult life “...I actually really believe in, that you're giving them that breadth of curriculum, the curriculum which is maybe more work experience with the core subjects” (Bob, lines 81-83). Bob emphasised how changing the curriculum could make students feel happier at school

...changing the curriculum to have far more breadth of subjects. They may not be on the Progress 8 scores but it will allow effective intervention and allow them to be happy at school and therefore achieve at the other subjects as a by-product of that (Bob, lines 401-403).

Similarly, Adam felt that work experience could help to reengage disaffected students

Even sort of say work experience for a day, to give them that focus to see that this is why you need to learn. Sort of, not get rid of them, but to give them something outside of the school environment, I think would be quite a good way of reaching out to them (Adam, lines 477-480).

Fred felt that schools should have less of a focus on teaching children to pass exams and more of a focus on preparing children for adulthood

...we need to make sure that people are able to access being adults in a constructive way and being able to support themselves, I think that's far more important...are they able to support themselves holistically as people and adults in a normal functioning family environment (Fred, lines 134-138).

Some participants commented that the structure of the ESCs needed to change

We've got to change the role of the ESC. In terms of their understanding of the Progress 8 and the pressures on the schools because people won't send them to ESC centres, especially as we have to pay for it now. We'd therefore demand that they will be having to hit the criteria set out by the governments agenda... (Bob, lines 393-397).

Adam believed that not having a PRU was “*the fundamental flaw in the county*” (Adam, line 220). Adam went on to discuss why the county needs PRUs

I do agree with trying to get them back out to mainstream, however I also don't think you should set them up to fail... you know we've got them now for twelve weeks then they must be gone and now I don't think you can put a time limit on some students... and actually if you're told, you're going

somewhere but you're not going to be there forever, then is that just someone else giving up on them... how focused can you be if you know you're not going to be there (Adam, lines 235-261).

Analysis revealed that participants felt that having greater flexibility within the curriculum and more alternative provision could benefit students at risk of exclusion. Participants also felt that a more joined up approach was needed to tackle school exclusion, this will be detailed in the next subtheme.

4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Systems Working Together

Participants commented on the need for services to work together in order to support those at risk of exclusion, this included better links between schools as well as further education provisions

I do think we are good at saying we all work together but I don't think we really do in this area. I think we are very all standalone and we do it this way and tough. I mean we have got some fantastic colleges and we've got some fantastic schools but actually if we all came together a little bit more... (Adam, lines 496-499).

Possibly more... involvement with, say colleges, I think giving some of these, say certainly students in Key Stage Four a reason to be educated. Some sort of some outreach work, brick laying, plastering. I think that we've utilised that before but it's quite expensive, so something along those lines would be good (Adam, lines 474-477).

Some of the pastoral staff felt that joined working and sharing information, especially around times of transition would help to reduce exclusion rates

...the hoppers coming across or the EHC plan people coming across, they're all transition stages. That's where we need to have a far more collective approach, in the intervention and in the transition and the monitoring process. And I think that would be quite a big shift and reduce exclusions (Bob, lines 348-352).

Fred described how he gathered information from primary schools so that before the student started at his secondary school he could start thinking about what support would need to be put in place and so that he could provide services with evidence of previous interventions

...already I've got an overview of what intervention they've already had... all the relevant specialists reports, if there are any, and then that can sort of influence a lot of the decision making about whether referrals are submitted (Fred, lines 277-281).

Similarly, some participants talked about the need to work collaboratively with a range of professionals. Fred pointed out that the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice legislated the need for joined working between professionals but he felt that this was still not really happening *"the whole thing with the education health and care plans was about greater, closer more integrated working. I don't necessarily think that's happening... there's the same disconnect and the same issues that occurred with statements"* (Fred, lines 368-373).

Pastoral staff felt that in order for the systems around the child to work together more effectively, outside agencies would need to have a better understanding of schools and their pressures and processes

We had CAMHS asking us, "this person needs to drop two subjects and take two more up" in the middle of Year 11 sort of idea. It's just not possible but it really shows up ignorance, that they should actually be aware of the academic system, that they can't promise this to the parents... they've got to be far more aware of the pressure the schools that, you can't just drop or not do English or maths at this time. It's just not possible. The government agenda is everybody needs a life opportunity to take these subjects. That causes angst with the parents so I think from our point of view, it is educating the parents, educating sometimes the external agencies (Bob, lines 380-389).

Similarly, Emma expressed the frustration that she felt when external bodies did not understand the dynamics of her school and what could feasibly be offered to the students placed there

...we find ourselves at loggerheads with the SEN team on quite a regular basis because basically, those people who are talking about or assessing a child's needs are not educationalists... Sometimes we've said that we cannot meet a child's need because we know that that child isn't going to fit in and we end up in loggerheads about who can come here and who can't... if you know that a child is going to end up being excluded because they are at a severe end or have a level of need which we cannot meet, then there's no point placing them here in the first place (Emma, lines 211-221).

The problem is that it's a very specialised area and people don't understand it. Unless you worked here and you've been with these type of children and you've seen what problems are and you've witnessed what

can help, you basically don't know your base from your apex... Then to turn round and say well you should've done this with this child, it doesn't really wash. It's not allowing people to do their job, it's not respecting professional integrity, it's not understanding the areas that you have a responsibility for and an input with, when you blooming well should if you're in that position I think (Emma, lines 248-255).

Some staff advocated the need for a more strategic process during school moves in which students' needs are fully assessed and clearly documented

...you write saying what you believe is, that you may not be able to cater for their needs or you may have issues. You get a reply back saying 'we think it's fine'.... But then when you look back at the history you get mixed set of notes, you get an EHC plan which is quite old, you look back and it seems to be nothing has been done for so much time and then suddenly you're expected to take on these very complex needs from where really it's too little too late... probably if you looked at the behaviour statistics on exclusions, they probably have this EHC plan, somewhere down the line and then maybe that could be a faster moving system (Bob, lines 316-327).

Analysis revealed that participants felt that having better links with schools and colleges could help to reduce exclusions. Participants talked about the need for further support both within schools and across the county, this will be detailed in the next subtheme.

4.4.3 Subtheme 3: Schools Need Further Support

All participants felt that more could be done in order to support those at risk of school exclusion. Whilst the majority of participants felt that EPs already

contributed a lot to this area, participants felt that EPs could be more involved in the transition process by directly assessing the needs of students and/or providing specific strategies to their new schools

Sometimes it's knowing what the child can do, would help us. 'Cause sometimes we pick up children that we don't know a lot about... I mean we have their file but we don't have a lot of information about the kids so it is very difficult for us to know and that's what I would use an EP for (Catherine, lines 294-297).

Similarly, Bob talked about how EPs could help with students transitioning into his school with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)

...for exclusions, I think you know maybe if we have the EHC plan... we could use the Ed Psychs far more in that process.... it seems to be a vital cog within setting up an individual plan for a student that they do have the Ed Psych report either as part of the meeting for maybe a transition across on an EHC plan or working beside the SENCo for some of these specific learning needs that we all agree with, that is the most logical thing (Bob, lines 333-339).

Some participants felt that there needed to be a shift in the way that EPs deliver their services. Adam favoured a return to the time allocated model of service delivery

The beauty of what used to happen was parents were involved, I was involved, I could get the Heads of Year involved and it was almost like a mini statement, mini health care plan where targets were set. They were communicated with staff, the student was aware and then we were all working towards (Adam, lines 423-427).

Adam advocated that the consultation model of service delivery needs to be adapted so that it is more child centred

I suppose the consultation could be half hour with parents and school and then half hour with the child. Perhaps looking at books and that kind of thing so that you get more of a thorough, idea of sort of what is going on. I think that the child needs to be at the centre of everything... we get a very distorted view if we just talk to parents and if we just talk to, say myself. I think if you talk to the child you get more of an idea about what is going on (Adam, lines 450-455).

A few participants described how funds and resources should be allocated. Emma felt that schools should have access to a central fund or resource that could provide extra support to schools

...some sort of availability of resources particularly around counselling, the alternative provision and the specialists, bringing in specialists. If there was some sort of fund or something you could dip into and say look we've got this kid, if we don't do something about blah, this will be a permanent exclusion because he needs some sort of help around whatever... that type of thing would cut down permanent exclusions an awful lot I think. Immediate response type body of people funding (Emma, lines 286-296).

Some felt that professionals such as EPs should be based within schools

In an ideal we'd have the EP in to say it is actually the learning 'cause we believe, is it the behaviour that affects the learning or is it the learning that affects the behaviour... in an ideal world we would have an EP attached to our school all the time and they could assess the children's learning (Catherine, lines 304-308).

Similarly, a dominant theme throughout Fred's interview was the need for services to be directly attached to schools

You hear of local authorities struggling to recruit Ed-psych's, OK fair enough, why are they not providing provision for schools to recruit their own Educational Psychologists... if people want schools to be more resilient in this way then they need to be resourced in the right way. A CAMHS specialist on site, an Ed-psych specialist on site, people specially trained in V.I. and hearing impairment, sign language (Fred, lines 319-331).

I will be a great advocate of people with your skillsets working directly in schools... because then the proper diagnosis can be carried out, the proper assessment, and not that I'm saying the assessments that you do carry out are not proper, but I think they could be done more holistically. With you having more knowledge of the family better, you having knowledge of the cohort better, you having knowledge of the social factors (Fred, lines 556-561).

Most participants talked about the need to build capacity within their schools to support those at risk, by upskilling staff "I think we should be inclusive, I do, but then, there needs to be money put in to training people to be inclusive as well" (Adam, lines 268-269); or employing new staff to support those with SEMH needs

No teacher, I feel, probably goes into school with the thought of being a skilled, emotional resilience, or SEMH counsellor or specialist educational psychologist. My view is if they want schools to be more resilient and more

capable in that way, well then they need to provide the money for schools to employ people to work in that way (Fred, lines 315-319).

A few participants felt that their schools needed training and/or further intervention on behaviour management

We looked at the STEPS training... Again, I think that training was very good, but I think it hit people that actually don't want to escalate things anyway. I think staff training and staff awareness would be beneficial... but again you do get some very cynical people, in education and they will just look at it as you know, they're naughty... (Adam, lines 466-473).

In addition, some participants also spoke about the need for further support around anger management "more support with behaviour management and anger management at any time would be helpful because that's something that, as I say other than the behavioural outreach service I can't think of anyone else that we'd access" (Gloria, lines 219-221); "there is no anger management that's free... and available to students with anger issues. And that's a lot of the students who are coming through and are coming onto Pastoral Support Plan, it's anger management issues" (Heather, lines 181-185).

Analysis revealed that participants felt that they needed further support with individual students and with building capacity within schools to support a number of students. Pastoral staff felt that early intervention was crucial, this will be discussed in the next section.

4.4.4 Subtheme 4: Early Intervention

The majority of participants identified a need for early intervention. Emma believed that early intervention could break the negative cycle of learned behaviour and cut costs to society in the long-term

...these are the type of kids who are going to cost society lots of money because they are going to wreck jobs, they are going to wreck relationships, they are going to produce kids that are then going to need to be educated and brought up by the state... the cost to society is far more by not tackling this, in the long run. Exclusion is just one part of it. You know most prisoners in prison have an educational, special need that has not been met... There is this correlation between lack of education and ongoing problems and those ongoing problems cost millions. When do you want to spend it? Spend it at the beginning, head it off at the pass, then you'd have less to deal with at the end (Emma, lines 366-377).

Emma reiterated that if money was spent early enough it would reduce the long-term costs for society

That should be funded because if that counsellor can get to the problems with the kids quick enough, you're saving money in the long-run because you're not going to have all the CAMHS thing, you're not going to have the placement breaking down... it's that early intervention that needs looking at, early support (Emma, lines 234-238).

In concurrence, participants frequently commented on the need for early intervention as it was often deemed too late when students reached secondary school

I think there are lots of issues around mental health, deprived families, etc. that are not really being addressed so by the time they actually get through to year 7, aged 11, 12, the issues are already embedded within them and it's very, very difficult then to change those behaviours (Debbie, lines 9-12).

Debbie went on to describe an early intervention that she was trialling with one of her link primary schools which aimed to promote good mental health and wellbeing

I'm actually setting up something with a primary school at the moment. We are looking at mental health from Year 3, it does lead right back to reception. Again, it's the emotional language, it's the awareness, it's the signs of-. You know I'm not saying that this is not normal for a child but there are some traits of mental health, abnormalities, behaviour and it's really getting in early, it's getting the intervention in early, it's getting the specialists in early (Debbie, lines 299-305).

Pastoral staff advocated that early intervention needed to go back as far as early parenting *"it's a bit late for parenting classes for a lot of them. I think it's a big problem. Perhaps kind of an early intervention with the parents. On the other side, I think it is a societal issue though..."* (Gloria, lines 277-279). Similarly, Emma suggested that the government should spend money *"supporting the mothers and the fathers on how you raise that child... It's alright telling them what to do, you've got to enable them to be able to do it"* (Emma, lines 435-437). Emma went on to advocate that

...early years mental health intervention is crucial... If you can get attachment right, you're going to head off so many other things... If you can get people to get what parenting is about, brain development is about, emotional development is about, and you do it early enough then, you know? (Emma, lines 411-418).

Analysis revealed that participants viewed early interventions such as parenting support as a way of reducing rates of permanent exclusion in the future.

4.4.5 Theme 3: Summary

This theme highlights the further support that participants feel is required in order to help reduce rates of school exclusion. This included recommendations about the structure of the curriculum, provision, external services and the need for early intervention.

4.5 Overall Thematic Summary

This chapter set out the research findings through describing the themes that were identified across the data set. These key themes were: 'The attributions made by pastoral staff around the ecosystemic factors underpinning exclusion'; 'The ecosystemic processes involved in supporting those at risk of exclusion' and 'An idealised process proposed by pastoral staff to support those at risk of exclusion'.

Many similarities can be drawn between the data gathered and the findings of previous research such as that presented in Chapter 2. The next chapter will consider how the data answers the research questions and will highlight links between the findings of the present and previous research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the themes identified during the data analysis (5.2). The aim of the research and research questions will be revisited (5.3); a consideration of how findings from this research link to previous research and psychological theory follows. Strengths and limitations of the present research are discussed (5.4). The ways in which the research findings will be disseminated are highlighted (5.5) and the implications of the findings on EP practice are considered (5.6). The researcher's reflections on undertaking the present research will then be presented (5.7) and final conclusions will be drawn (5.8).

5.2 Summary of Themes

Analysis of the interview data highlighted three main themes. The first theme was the 'attributions made by pastoral staff around the ecosystemic factors underpinning school exclusion'. This encompassed three subthemes - within child factors, school based factors and wider social, economic and political factors. This theme incorporated a range of factors pertaining to a CYP including factors within the systems around the child that pastoral staff felt may contribute to a child becoming at risk of exclusion.

The second theme, 'the ecosystemic processes involved in supporting those at risk of exclusion', was made up of four subthemes – policy and school systems, targeted support, external services and alternatives to exclusion. This theme incorporated the internal and external support that schools utilised to support CYP who are at risk of exclusion. The barriers to this support also formed part of this theme.

The final theme, 'an idealised process proposed by pastoral staff to support those at risk of exclusion', encompassed four subthemes – structure of provision and the curriculum, systems working together, schools need further support and early intervention. This theme included suggestions that pastoral staff felt would help to reduce school exclusion.

5.3 Research Questions

The main aim of this research was to explore the perspectives of pastoral staff on the subject of school exclusion. In the following sections, each of the research questions presented in Chapter 3 will be revisited and discussed in relation to the research findings. Many aspects of the findings in the present study reflect those of previous research (reviewed in Chapter 2). The links between the present research and previous research will be highlighted along with a theoretical conceptualisation of the findings.

5.3.1 Main Research Question: What are the Views of Pastoral Staff Regarding School Exclusion?

The main research question was:

What are the views of pastoral staff regarding school exclusion?

As this was the overarching research question, all three of the main themes help to answer this research question. Seemingly most pertinent to participants' perspectives were the 'attributions made by pastoral staff around the ecosystemic factors underpinning exclusion'; this was a dominant theme discussed in detail by the majority of participants.

Attributions made by Pastoral Staff Around the Ecosystemic Factors

Underpinning School Exclusion

Participants made a number of internal causal attributions to students' behaviour. The CYPs' age and stage of development (adolescence), were thought to account for some of the behaviour that put them at risk of school exclusion. Participants talked about the hormonal changes that take place during adolescence and how at this stage CYP push away from the control of their parents and come under greater influence of their peers. Peer pressure, attention seeking and the need to fit in were believed to be exacerbated by the rise in popularity of social media.

Elkind and Bowen (1979) hypothesised where this heightened concern of the perspectives of others originates and how this has the potential to influence the behaviour of adolescents. They described an aspect of social cognition termed adolescent egocentrism, where adolescents have difficulty in distinguishing their own perspectives from those of others (e.g. feeling that others are preoccupied with their appearance and behaviour because they are), which can lead to feelings of self-consciousness. Elkind and Bowen (1979) believed that as a result, adolescents will mentally anticipate how others will think about and behave towards them and in this sense, are constantly reacting to an 'imaginary audience'. Adolescent egocentrism was said to lessen around the ages fifteen to sixteen years old. This theory could help to explain why statistics show that ages thirteen and fourteen are the most common time for CYP to be excluded from school.

However, somewhat paradoxically, many of the participants also commented on how often, by the time CYP had reached secondary school, it was 'too late for them'. They talked about how at this point the CYPs' behaviour was so engrained that they had very little influence to help them make a positive change.

Cullingford (1999) advocates that research often lays blame on the security or insecurity that CYP may feel upon adolescence and their developmental stage despite it being unclear whether the underlying difficulty lies within the CYP, the systems around them or both. Cullingford (1999) argues that it is less about the child's stage of development and more about the organisation of schooling. He described the move from a nurturing primary school environment in which one teacher has the main responsibility for the teaching and wellbeing of children within their class, to a much larger school in which many different teachers are focused on bestowing their subject knowledge upon students and how this can lead to CYP becoming disengaged.

In line with previous research (Trotman et al., 2015), participants in the present research spoke about how the transition from primary to secondary school could potentially be a disruptive element to CYP's schooling. This was spoken about in terms of less adults being around within secondary schools to provide support to CYP. Similarly, Trotman et al. (2015) advocated that transitions had the greatest influence on negative pupil behaviour. They argued that this was due to the disconnect between the positive teacher-pupil relationships that they had previously experienced in primary school. This disconnect could potentially lead to CYP feeling alienated and becoming disaffected. Cullingford (1999) argues that "for those who wish to learn, the teacher as a fountain of knowledge is more than adequate. For those who do not, the same source of wisdom becomes an alienating being" (p. 99).

In addition, participants made a number of external causal attributions to students' behaviour. Participants identified how some CYP were at an increased risk of developing behavioural difficulties and subsequently being excluded from school. In line with the findings of White et al. (2013), participants described how

CYP from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were often more likely to be excluded from school.

Echoing the findings of White et al. (2013) some participants discussed how those from deprived socioeconomic backgrounds lacked positive role models which they felt led to a cycle of disadvantage. CYPs' attitude towards education and those in authority as well as a lack of academic aspirations, was described as 'learned behaviour' modelled by their parents.

These findings may be explained in terms of Bandura's (1971) Social Learning Theory (SLT) which explains how new behaviour can be acquired through observation of others. SLT pertains that children pay attention to the behaviour of some models and may subsequently imitate such behaviour in future.

As discussed by some of the participants, CYP who see that their parents and/or others have been (what they perceive as) successful in life, without having achieved well at school, may see very little reason to conform within the current structure of the education system.

Similarly, some participants felt that the area within which CYP lived may influence their behaviour in that they may have greater exposure to gangs, violence and other criminal activity. With the gentrification of some of the UK's largest cities, some of the most socially deprived families have been displaced or rehoused in large counties such as County A. Some participants believed that this move has brought with it more complex, violent and aggressive behaviours that are more commonly seen in inner city areas, this may also be explained by the SLT. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) found that children who are exposed to aggressive models are themselves far more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour. CYP may have witnessed more violent and aggressive behaviour in inner cities and may be imitating this behaviour within County A.

Another possible explanation for the participant's perspectives may be prejudice and the stereotyping of these CYP. Woolfolk (2007) speaks of prejudice as

a rigid and irrational generalisation – a prejudgement - about an entire category of people... one source of prejudice is the human tendency to divide the social world into two categories – *us* and *them* or *in-group* and *out-group*... we tend to see members of the out-group as different from us but similar to each other (p.172).

It is possible that participants may view themselves as part of an in-group, living and working within County A. Prejudice may have led them to generate stereotypes about CYP from inner city areas. Stereotypes can cause people to miss/dismiss information that does not fit with their stereotypes and notice information that conforms with them (Woolfolk, 2007).

Prejudice and stereotyping may lead to discrimination placing these CYP at a greater risk of exclusion. In addition, stereotyping may actually perpetuate challenging behaviour, causing a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby the CYP behave in a way that they feel is expected of them.

In line with previous research (White et al., 2013; Gazeley et al., 2015; McCluskey et al., 2015) and government statistics, participants also discussed how CYP with SEN (e.g. mental health issues) were at greater risk of being excluded from school. Reflecting the findings of White et al. (2013), in some instances participants felt that they were not able to meet the needs of some CYP in mainstream schools and that their needs would best be met elsewhere. This belief tended to surface when a child had been transferred to a participant's school following a managed move to avoid permanent exclusions.

It is possible that these students may be labelled as 'deviant' and based upon the prejudice and stereotypes held by their teachers, the same behaviour may be treated differently if it were to be executed by a student without such a label (Vulliamy and Webb, 2000).

A number of participants discussed how the government's drive towards schools' performativity was impacting on the rates of school exclusion. Studies by Tucker (2013) and Trotman et al. (2015) corroborate these findings, highlighting how good pastoral support practices were often less of a priority than schools achieving well. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) described how the 1988 Education Reform Act led to the marketisation of schooling, in which attainment data is published and used as an indicator of school performance. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) believe that this may have led to an increase in school exclusions. Similarly, Cullingford (1999) argues that the government's "ever-greater emphasis on league tables, targets and blame" (p. 12) is undermining the drive for inclusion.

Parffrey (1994) advocates that "naughty children are bad news in a market economy" (p. 108), in terms of a school's image, league tables and teacher stress these children are undesirable. Parffrey (1994) went on to argue that these reforms have "rendered this already vulnerable group even more vulnerable – vulnerable to exclusion, vulnerable to under-resourced alternatives, vulnerable to having their rights to education in its fullest sense, abused" (p. 108).

In the present research, participants suggested that some schools were permanently excluding students, in order to take them off their roll, so that their grades would not impact the school's performance data and subsequent positioning in the league table.

The exclusion of students to take them off roll is in itself unlikely to explain the overall rise in school exclusion. Particularly due to the introduction of school exclusion rates as a performance indicator, something that is considered when schools are inspected by Ofsted. Vulliamy and Webb (2000) highlight the difficulty of using school exclusion rates as a performance indicator. Firstly, a comparison between schools with very different intakes can be misleading. Next, while exclusion rates are quantifiable many of the other practices associated with its use are not, such as the quality of pastoral practices. Finally, as previously highlighted, schools may partake in hidden exclusionary practices.

Gazeley et al. (2015) advocates that school exclusions are shaped by the interplay of policy and practice within schools, between schools and in relation to the wider context. By looking at exclusion through a within-child lens, it is possible to ignore the effect that the wider environment has on the development and perpetuation of behavioural difficulties, making it difficult to intervene and provide appropriate support. Therefore, the present research findings are perhaps best understood using an ecosystemic framework.

The need to take an ecosystemic perspective on this issue is echoed by the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools report that was published by the DfE in 2016. The report identified risk and protective factors for developing mental health issues and behavioural difficulties. These were split into factors within the child, the family, the school and the community e.g. low self-esteem, peer pressure, family break down and socioeconomic disadvantage (see Appendix N for a full list of risk and protective factors). This paper highlighted how

Boys with more five or more risk factors were almost eleven times more likely to develop conduct disorder under the age of ten than boys with no risk factors. Girls of a similar age with five or more risk factors were

nineteen times more likely to develop the disorder than those with no risk factors (DfE, 2016a).

Interestingly, the majority of the attributions made by pastoral staff as to reasons underpinning school exclusion feature on this list.

As presented in Chapter 2, people make internal and external causal attributions to help them to understand a person's behaviour. Guttman (1982) advocates that the causal attributions that a person makes to another's 'problem behaviour' will affect their own behaviour and attitude towards that person.

The attributions that pastoral staff make to the reasons that students are being excluded from school may influence the support that is being provided as well as the amount of support that is given to CYP before the decision is made to permanently exclude. For example, if pastoral staff are making internal (within-child) attributions as to the reason a child is at risk of being excluded, then they might feel as though they cannot have as much of an impact or feel less guilt than they would for excluding a child for a school based attribution (such as pressure from staff to exclude or financial constraints) which they might feel they have greater influence over. This was evident in the research of Gibbs and Powell (2012) who found that exclusions were used less in schools where staff believed that teachers had the ability to address outside influences. This could be an interesting area for future research to explore.

Guttman (1982) argues that interactions between stakeholders e.g. the parent, child and school staff, are likely to be more positive if there is a congruence between the causal attributions made to the child's behaviour. For example, both the parent and child believed that the child's misbehaviour was caused by pressures placed upon them at school. Guttman (1982) advocates the importance of sharing these attributions as this shared understanding is likely to

improve co-operation between stakeholders as well as the way in which behaviour is dealt with.

5.3.2 Sub-Research Question 1: What, if any, internal and external support is available to schools in County A to help prevent permanent school exclusion?

In response to sub-research question 1, within the second theme (the ecosystemic processes involved in supporting those at risk of exclusion), participants listed various means of intervention used to support CYP who were at risk of permanent school exclusion; support tended to be preventative and/or targeted towards meeting the needs of an individual or group. Some interventions were deemed to be more successful than others. Participants also described the barriers to providing effective support.

The Ecosystemic Processes Involved in Supporting those at Risk of Exclusion

In the present research, some participants felt that their school ethos influenced the rates of school exclusion. Participants commented on how they encouraged an ethos in which students would not want to misbehave, whilst others thought that exclusions were viewed positively, in that staff and students felt that more exclusions were necessary.

Previous literature (Hatton, 2013) highlighted the impact that school ethos can have on exclusion rates. Hatton (2013) described how schools with a consistently implemented behavioural policy, a culture that celebrates positive behaviour and the use of rewards over sanctions could help to reduce the need to exclude.

While some participants spoke about the use of rewards and incentives, interestingly when asked about the support that was provided to CYP at risk of

exclusion, the majority of participants also described the use of punitive measures (e.g. detentions and periods of isolation) as a form of support.

Operant conditioning, which was first introduced by Skinner in the 1950s, is a means of learning in which voluntary behaviours are changed (strengthened or weakened) by reinforcement or punishment. Positive reinforcement strengthens a behaviour by presenting a desired stimulus after the behaviour e.g. giving a child a sticker when they have sat quietly (Woolfolk, 2007). However, positive reinforcement can also reinforce challenging behaviour e.g. when peers laugh at a child's attention seeking behaviour.

Negative reinforcement strengthens behaviour by removing an aversive stimulus when the behaviour occurs e.g. a child misbehaving in class because they know that will lead to them being sent out which subsequently allows them to avoid completing their work (Woolfolk, 2007). In this sense, it is possible to see how the behaviour of CYP within the school context may be reinforced.

On the other hand, punishments are intended to weaken or suppress a behaviour, this could include detentions, extra work or taking away of privileges. Woolfolk (2007) advocates that different people have different perceptions of what is punishing. For example, one child may find a fixed-term exclusion from school punishing while another would not mind it.

While punishment aims to suppress a behaviour, it does not address the root cause of behaviour. Participants spoke about how managed moves were just moving the 'problem' without addressing it. Moreover, in line with statistics, participants described persistent disruptive behaviour as the most common reason for CYP to be excluded from their school. If this undesirable behaviour is persisting despite punishments it would appear that this may not be an effective method of helping CYP to change their behaviour. Skinner (1971) argued that the

trouble with punishment “is that when we punish a person for behaving badly, we leave it up to him to discover how to behave well” (p. 62). Some participants advocated that some CYP do not know how to behave yet there was very little mention of intervention that explicitly taught CYP how to behave pro-socially. Furthermore, participants spoke about the process of managed moves and how this often meant that the ‘problem’ such as a child’s behaviour, was being moved without addressing it.

On the other hand, consistent with the findings of Bagley and Hallam (2015), participants described how managed moves could allow CYP to have a fresh start in a new school. However, they described challenges such as interschool tension which arose from schools not openly sharing information and/or being dishonest about the reasons for a student moving.

In line with Bagley and Hallam’s (2015) research findings, a number of participants described how CYP’s behaviour sometimes overshadowed learning needs. Hence, participants felt that it would be useful to get a holistic assessment of a child’s learning needs prior to them transitioning to another school.

Government legislation states that every LA is required to have a Fair Access Protocol which is developed in partnership with local schools. Fair Access Protocols were introduced to ensure that “unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are found and offered a place quickly, so that the amount of time any child is out of school is kept to the minimum” (DfE, 2012, p. 3).

Despite this, the inequitable nature of in year moves was frequently highlighted by participants. It was felt that undersubscribed schools were taking on many more children than other schools; these children often had challenging behaviour and it was felt to be changing the school’s dynamics. In concurrence, Gerwitz, Ball and Bowe (1995) described a process in which oversubscribed schools

concerned at preserving their place in the league tables, threaten students with exclusion to encourage parents to change their school. This results in undersubscribed schools being faced with supporting some of the most vulnerable students with limited resources.

However, participants tended to view managed moves as a last resort; participants described a range of support that had been put in place before a managed move was considered.

In the present research, participants described a range of pastoral practices which Tucker (2013) advocated were necessary for effective pastoral support programmes including multi-professional working, care targeted towards meeting the needs of particular individuals and groups, a good relationship between home and school and the early identification of need. These may best be understood with reference to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework (1979) which posits that difficulty in one of the child's systems could lead to disturbances in other systems and subsequently impact the child's development. Much of the policy, practices and intervention described by participants appeared to target the factors believed to be causing and perpetuating CYPs' behaviour, within the various systems around the child.

As previously discussed the Microsystem encompasses bi-directional interactions that a child has with their immediate surroundings (e.g. parents, peers and school); this is thought to have the most impact on a child's development. Participants identified a number of interacting factors that put CYP at risk of school exclusion. These included factors deemed to be within-child that were often exacerbated by the school environment e.g. SEN, anxiety and low self-esteem. Support for within-child factors included counselling, mentoring, drug and alcohol intervention, empowerment projects and self-esteem building

activities. These were provided by professionals trained within the school and on the occasions where students met the criteria, this intervention was sought from outside specialists. Other interacting factors were school-based such as the school being unaware of a child's needs and/or being unable to meet a child's needs; or family-based factors such as family breakdown and poor parenting.

The Mesosystem refers to the child's relationships within the Microsystem e.g. between the child, their teachers and parents. Restorative justice practices were often used as a way of rebuilding positive relationships between CYP and their peers or teachers within a school, particularly as part of the reintegration process.

In line with previous research (Tucker, 2013), participants saw the importance of building home-school relationships and having CYPs' families involved in the support process. This tended to occur as part of the Pastoral Support Programme. The importance of the family dynamic on the CYPs' wellbeing was discussed by the majority of participants, some of which offered support to parents who appeared to be struggling e.g. parenting classes.

The Exosystem, which does not impact the child directly, still has some bearing on the interactions within the Microsystem. This system includes factors such as a parent's work schedule. Some participants discussed providing support at this level. For example, some schools excluded CYP internally rather than externally so that parents would not have to miss work to care for their child. Furthermore, echoing the findings of Gilmore (2012), the majority of participants favoured the use of internal exclusions as they felt that CYP preferred to be at home so fixed term exclusions were rarely seen as a punishment. Internal rather than external exclusions may also have been used by schools in order to suppress the rates of fixed-term exclusion which as previously discussed may be used as a performance indicator.

The Macrosystem is not a specific environmental context but rather encompasses the cultural context of the child's life e.g. ethnicity, values and socioeconomic status. Despite statistics highlighting the overrepresentation of CYP from certain ethnic groups within exclusion statistics, this was discussed very little within the present research. This may have been due to the demographics of the CYP attending the schools within this county. However, one participant mentioned accessing mentoring services targeted towards children from black and minority ethnic groups.

More prevalent was the use of intervention for students who were eligible for pupil premium. Participants commented upon the link between socioeconomic deprivation and poor attendance which has been noted in previous research (Cook, Rutt, & Sims, 2014). Consequently, schools utilised alternatives to fixed term exclusions such as isolation so that it would not further impact upon the attendance of these students.

Gazeley (2010) advocated that although policy makers have found it useful to focus on differences in group outcomes that might be considered inequitable (e.g. black and minority ethnic groups or students eligible for pupil premium), at practice level there continues to be a tendency to focus on individual outcomes. This was largely supported by the findings within this research.

The Chronosystem represents the temporal aspect of a child's life including their development and life circumstances over time. Intervention within this system occurred through staff monitoring students' behaviour and well-being for early identification of need. Teacher meetings in some schools allowed staff to share information about events that may have an impact on a student's behaviour such as the death of a pet or family member.

Despite the use of some seemingly robust pastoral support practices, participants frequently described cuts to school budgets and to other external services as a barrier to supporting those at risk of exclusion. The link between funding cuts and the quality of pastoral practices was mentioned in Tucker's (2013) research findings. However, there appears to be a shortage of research in this area looking at the direct impact of funding cuts on school exclusion.

In the present research, one participant talked about how funding cuts created a negative cycle which exacerbated CYPs' behavioural difficulties. He described how cuts to funding meant that staff in schools were stretched which impacted on the teaching and learning process and subsequent behaviour of students.

The cuts to funding within schools meant that at times, some of the services that schools wanted to access were too expensive. When participants did attempt to access external services, they felt that cuts to public services meant these services were often slow at responding. In addition, participants commented on how the criteria for accessing services was often so high that many CYP did not meet the threshold for support, again this may be a direct impact of cuts; if cuts have been made to staffing levels then services may increase the threshold for support so that fewer individuals meet the access criteria. One participants described how this resulted in CYP being referred to service after service without receiving the support that they needed.

The impact of cuts to wider public services were also said to be felt by schools. It was felt that a reduction in police presence (due to cuts to the police force) meant that CYP were hanging around schools following school exclusions and were subsequently able to influence the behaviour of other CYP. In line with Bandura's (1971) SLT discussed previously, it is possible that this could be exacerbating the exclusion problem.

5.3.3 Sub-Research Question 2: At which stage do pastoral staff feel that more support would be useful and what kinds of support would be useful in helping schools to prevent permanent school exclusion?

In response to sub-research question 2, as demonstrated within the third theme (*an idealised process proposed by pastoral staff to support those at risk of exclusion*), participants felt that more could be done both within the school and wider societal context, to support CYP who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The majority of participants described a need for early intervention reaching as far back as early parenting, it was often felt that by the time CYP reached secondary school it was too late.

An Idealised Process Proposed by Pastoral Staff to Support those at Risk of Exclusion

Reed (2005a) suggested that one of the ways of reducing school exclusion is by improving the alternative offer such as work-related learning, nurture groups or an outdoor alternative. Participants believed that the rigidity of the current curriculum/system of schooling could be underlying some CYPs' challenging behaviour. The need to provide alternatives for CYP who had become disaffected, particularly with the academic subjects within school was discussed. Similarly, Kinder, Harland, Wilkin and Wakefield (1995) suggested that disaffected CYP did not see the relevance of the school curriculum.

In line with this, participants felt that greater access to work experience and vocational courses could help to reengage some disaffected CYP. However, Gazeley et al. (2015) described how recent educational policy has restricted access to vocational courses that were used to reduce the risk of school exclusion because of the perception that schools were choosing courses that were an 'easy

win', as a way of improving their performance in league tables, rather than considering the interests of the pupils.

Some participants felt that ESCs had the opportunity to be more flexible, in terms of the curriculum that was offered to students. However, they also commented on how attendance and attainment at the ESC was not held to a high enough standard. It was felt that this may have led to schools permanently excluding students instead of using respite at the ESC so that they did not retain their grades. In answer to this, in terms of student performance, participants suggested that ESCs should be held to the same account as mainstream schools.

Trotman et al. (2015) found that there was a lack of parental involvement in children's education, particularly around periods of crisis such as a child becoming at risk of exclusion. In contrast, participants in the present study felt that parents were involved in the support process as soon as a child was flagged as a cause for concern, particularly in terms of Pastoral Support Programmes.

Despite this finding, in line with the research of Macleod et al. (2015), participants often saw parents as being part of the problem. Poor parenting was one of the most frequently made attributions believed to be underpinning school exclusion. Participants described family breakdown and a lack of parental control/boundaries as contributing to CYPs' behaviour. Furthermore, some participants described 'poor parenting' as the cause of some CYPs' behavioural difficulties.

Attachment theory posits that the quality of relationship between a child in infancy and their primary caregiver has an impact on later relationships (Bowlby, 1969). Similarly, previous research has advocated that disruption to relationships within the Mesosystem will result in instability for the child and subsequent difficulty interacting with the wider environment. Addison (1992) suggests that a lack of

affirmation within the parent/child relationship will lead to a child looking for that attention and affirmation elsewhere which may result in antisocial behaviour and the forming of inappropriate relationships, particularly in adolescence.

As previously discussed, participants described the cycle of learned behaviour in which CYP were imitating the behaviour and attitudes that was modelled to them by their parents. Similarly, Cullingford (1999) advocates that “parenting is an issue, as they (parents) struggle to deal with the same mistakes that were perpetuated on them” (p.213).

To help break this negative cycle, participants suggested that early intervention should be focused around early attachment, parenting, emotional literacy and mental health awareness. Cullingford (1999) states that “parent training with pre-adolescents is effective in reducing disruptive behaviour” (p. 209). However, participants also noted that often the parents who are most in need of support of this nature are the parents who do not engage with it. It is therefore important to consider ways of engaging ‘hard to reach’ parents.

Tucker (2013) highlighted the importance of multi-professional approaches in supporting CYP at risk of exclusion. However, participants in the present research believed that despite legislation that encourages multi-professional approaches and joined up working, this is something that could be improved.

Participants felt that this lack of joined up working meant that some outside professionals did not understand the day to day running of schools and the pressures that were placed upon them. Some participants advocated that professionals being based within the school setting would aid their understanding of the context within which the child was based. However, similar schemes such as a trained social worker based within schools, have shown varying levels of

success in improving the outcomes of CYP at risk of exclusion (Vulliamy & Webb, 2000).

As previously mentioned, due to cuts to public services and national shortages of professionals such as EPs, the idea of employing a range of professionals to work in each school may not be entirely feasible. A possible alternative, as discussed by participants was upskilling school staff in areas such as SEMH needs so that they feel more equipped in supporting these vulnerable CYP.

The research of White et al. (2013), demonstrated how some teachers saw exclusion as the only way in which they could get multi-disciplinary input to meet the needs of a child. Similarly, participants in this research felt that EPs could help schools by assessing the needs of more CYP, particularly those who were moved into a school as part of a managed move.

Many participants commented on how staff struggle to cope with the challenging behaviour displayed by some students. Previous research has linked staff efficacy to rates of school exclusion (Gibbs and Powell, 2012). Therefore, in schools where staff feel that they do not have the skills to support these vulnerable CYP, it may result in increased rates of school exclusion.

In comparison, studies such as White et al. (2013) identified how staff felt that they needed further training, particularly around supporting CYP with challenging behaviour. Smith et al. (2012) noted that where staff had received training it was not always viewed as satisfactory.

Conversely, in the present research the quality of the training was not brought into question, rather the concern was around the staff that were given access to training. Adam talked about how training was not targeted at those who needed it most. For example, members of the senior leadership team were given training

including de-escalation strategies, although he felt that they were often already skilled in this. Reed (2005b) suggests that to help reduce rates of school exclusion, a key focus should be on building capacity in secondary schools around behaviour management.

Following the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, there was a shift in terminology from Behavioural, Social and Emotional Needs to SEMH. A possible rationale for this shift is that it encourages more attention to be paid to the underlying reasons for behaviour rather than the presenting behaviour itself. In the Code of Practice SEMH difficulties are described in the following way

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties... Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder (DfE, 2015b, Section 6.32).

Following this shift, a behavioural difficulty in itself is no longer regarded as a SEN (Norwich & Eaton, 2014). Therefore, CYP who have behavioural difficulties but have not been identified as having a SEN may not receive the intervention and support that they require, as some external professionals may see this as requirement before they would become involved. Moreover, statutory guidance for Headteachers states “the Headteacher should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an EHC plan” (Department for Education,

2017a, Section 23). As a result, CYP without an identified SEN or EHCP may be more vulnerable to school exclusion.

Participants discussed how many of the children with behavioural difficulties had anger management issues. However, they identified that there was a lack of anger management intervention within the county and felt that extra support in this area may help to reduce exclusions.

5.4 Strengths and Limitations of the Findings and Implications for Future Research

A key strength of this research was that the research was conducted on an under researched topic. As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the research in this area focuses on the perspectives of a range of stakeholders and at times the views of school staff were not clearly represented. There are a number of other strengths and methodological limitations of the present research which will be considered in the following section; the implications of these in terms of future research will also be considered.

5.4.1 Sampling

Due to the time frame within which this research had to be conducted, a purposive sample was used to quickly reach a targeted sample. Time constraints also meant that a small number of participants were interviewed. Therefore, it is unclear whether the perspectives of the sample would be representative of pastoral staff at large and thus statistical generalisation is not possible. However, these findings may have theoretical generalisability in that the insights provided by the findings of this research may help to understand similar situations (Robson, 2011). As previously stated, the researcher has provided contextual information in terms of the participants' schools and of the county that the

research was conducted in which will allow the reader to decide whether insights from this research can be generalised beyond this particular context.

Interestingly, the majority of the pastoral staff that agreed to take part in the research came from schools with low/very low rates of permanent exclusion (as ascertained through talking to the EPS team manager). As previously discussed, Hatton (2013) found differences in the perspectives of staff and other stakeholders at excluding and non-excluding schools. This brings into question, the transferability of these findings, particularly to schools with high exclusion rates.

On reflection, the researcher has a number of hypotheses as to why pastoral staff from schools with high exclusion rates may not have wanted to take part in this research. Perhaps staff from these schools have lost faith in external services and as the researcher is a LA representative, they may have viewed her in the same way. On the other hand, it could be that schools with high exclusion rates have little involvement with external services which may have actually led to higher rates of school exclusion. Alternatively, pastoral staff in these schools may have been afraid that the research would shine a light on their exclusionary practices and felt that they may have been judged as a result of this. Finally, it may have been that pastoral staff felt that they did not have enough time to take part in the research and managing behaviour might have been seen as a priority. Future research could consider how to include schools with high exclusion rates as they are likely to have a good knowledge of the process of school exclusion and are likely to benefit from having their voices heard.

Out of the participants that agreed to take place, there was some diversity in the participants' job roles e.g. SENCo, Deputy Headteacher. This may have affected their perspectives on school exclusion. For example, a SENCo may have a

slightly more inclusive perspective than a Deputy Headteacher who is also responsible for the school's performativity. Therefore, future research could focus on whether participants' roles and responsibilities affect their views on school exclusion.

5.4.2 Data Gathering

It is possible that the researcher's position (Trainee EP) caused participants to answer in a way that showed EPs in a positive light. For example, many of the participants discussed how highly skilled EPs are and how they would value more EP involvement. This may have impacted the validity of the research findings.

Similarly, as the researcher was the contact EP for two of the schools involved in the research, it is possible that participants from these schools may have felt that they had to answer in a way that presented themselves and their schools in a positive light. To lessen the impact of this, the researcher emphasised the purpose of the research and reiterated that data gathered from interviews would be confidential and participants would be anonymous within the research write-up.

In many schools, the member of staff who was responsible for behaviour had senior management responsibilities. Due to the breadth of their responsibility, it proved difficult to arrange a date and time that was convenient for them to meet and some of the interviews were shorter than anticipated. The researcher is aware that the data gathered may have been influenced by the school context and confounded by time pressures. As the interviews took place within the school day, participants may have felt under time pressure and meeting within the school may have meant that they were concerned about being open with their responses. It is therefore unclear whether key information had been missed.

To offset the effect of this, member checking was completed. This involved a summary of the research findings being sent to each participant to ensure that their perspectives were reflected within the themes. Four out of the eight participants provided a response (one participant was no longer in post), all of which felt that their views had been incorporated into the themes. For example, Emma said “I have just looked this over and found it interesting to see that we are all suffering from the same sorts of problems” and Gloria said “the themes certainly represent my perspective and that of many of my colleagues too”. Thus, it would appear that despite these constraints the themes reflected the participants perspectives on school exclusion.

5.4.3 Data Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, the researcher is aware that research is value laden; the active role that the researcher played in identifying the themes is acknowledged. Therefore, as with all research there is a risk of bias, in that the researcher may have interpreted the results in a way that fit with her preconceptions or previous experience of the exclusion process.

From a critical realist perspective, the researcher acknowledges that school exclusion is occurring within schools but that it is a product of the current system of schooling, policies and practice which have been socially constructed within western society. The emancipatory element of this research has come from the researcher’s belief that school exclusion can be detrimental to the life chances of CYP and her wish to see a more equitable society in which CYP from all backgrounds are given every opportunity to succeed in life.

Robson (2011) states that a clear audit trail can “help in ruling out threats to validity” (p.159). In this vein, to ensure that the researcher had minimal impact on the research findings, the researcher kept a full record of her activities while

carrying out the present research, this included transcripts of interviews, a research journal and details of the data analysis. In addition, member checks were completed to ensure that the findings had not been misinterpreted or biased by the researcher's own values and experiences.

5.5 Feedback to Participants

The researcher feels that it is important to share the findings of this research with members of the EPS and integration team, with the hope that this may help to bring about positive change within these services. This will be done as part of a research presentation during the summer term (2018).

The researcher feels that it is important to provide feedback to the participants who gave up their time to share their perspectives on school exclusion. Whilst a summary of the research findings was shared as part of the member checking process, during the summer term, participants will also receive a full summary of the research alongside a summary of the implications for the EPS.

5.6 Implications for EP Practice

The findings of the present research have implications for EP practice. While the findings also have implications for the work of pastoral staff and the LA, due to the limited word count, it is beyond the scope of this research to include. The researcher will give these implications further consideration and intends to publish and disseminate them to the research participants and the LA.

5.6.1 Implications for Reflection

This research has highlighted a number of things that EPs need to consider in their practice. It is often felt that part of an EP's unique contribution is to consider the underlying reasons for a child's behaviour. However, the findings of this

research demonstrate that school staff also think deeply about this. Therefore, EPs should consider how they use hypothesis sharing and joint formulations to inform interventions.

In addition, “psychologists are often in a position to see the effects that social and economic changes have on people. We also occupy a relatively powerful position as professionals and therefore have an ethical responsibility to speak out about these effects” (McGrath, Griffin, & Mundy, 2016). In County A funding for EHCPs has been dissolved into school budgets, in some schools this budget has not been ring-fenced. Therefore, EPs need to reflect on their role in supporting SENCos challenge SEN budgets as this may be impacting on the support that vulnerable CYP are able to access.

As highlighted in both the present and previous research, school staff struggle to manage challenging behaviour. Often, teacher training courses provide only a small input around behaviour management. It is therefore important to reflect upon how school staff can challenge systems such as training courses and the LA, to introduce initiatives so that they feel more equipped to deal with behaviour as it arises.

5.6.2 Implications for Action

In line with the ecosystemic framework the implications of the findings of this research on EP practice will be considered in terms of their work with individual CYP, schools and the wider society.

Individual Case Work

A dominant discourse amongst participants was that they felt that EPs could be more involved in assessing the needs of CYP, particularly prior to transitions between schools. The BPS (2017) states that one of the five core functions of an

EPS is the assessment of CYP. However, as previously noted behavioural difficulties are not in themselves considered to be a SEN which may mean that EPs are less likely to become involved.

If the message that is coming from schools is that they are not able to meet the needs of CYP who are being excluded, this may be because they do not have a holistic understanding of what is underlying the needs of these CYP in the first place. It is important for EPs to consider their role in the exclusion process as EPs are perhaps best placed to perform a holistic assessment of a child's needs and provide individualised, evidence-based strategies to support them. For example, in line with an ecosystemic approach to supporting CYP at risk of school exclusion, a holistic assessment could include consultations in which stakeholders share their hypotheses of what may be underpinning a CYP's behaviour and collaboratively generate an action plan to support them.

However, in practice, particularly in the county where this research has been conducted, EPs are rarely called in to provide advice in these cases unless CYP are at serious risk of permanent exclusion. It is therefore important for EPs to consider how to work with schools to identify, monitor and target children that may not be identified as having SEN but are at risk of exclusion. EPs need to develop strong relationships with their link schools in which information is shared openly so they are aware of students moving between schools and can provide support accordingly. This may also call for a review of policies and time frames relating to when EPs become involved with a case.

EPs have the tools to work with CYP to reflect on their behaviour and help them to work towards making positive changes. For example, EPs could use psychoeducation to help CYP to consider their thoughts and feelings (particularly relating to how they perceive they are viewed by others) and how that impacts

their behaviour. Alternatively, the use of tools such as motivational interviewing could help CYP to develop a discrepancy between their future goals, aspirations and their current behaviour.

However, due to the model of service delivery in some EPSs direct work/intervention is not possible. It is therefore important to consider how EPs can work systemically to influence positive outcomes for a greater number of CYP.

Working with Schools

EPs could work more closely with schools following the transition of CYP from primary to secondary. For example, EPs could meet with the secondary Head of Year, school SENCo and a representative from the behavioural outreach team, to focus on the CYP in Year 7 and consider what support needs to be put in place. This may help to ease the transition and may help to prevent more serious behaviours from developing.

Part of the role of the EP is to ensure that their practice is informed by an evidence-base. Thus, EPs knowledge of research and practice could be used to conduct small scale research projects into the efficacy of the internal and external support/interventions that are being used by schools to support those at risk of exclusion. Alternatively, taking a practice-based research approach, EPs could help to make links between schools with high rates of permanent exclusions and those with low/no permanent exclusions so that they are able to share good practice.

As discussed earlier, interactions between stakeholders are likely to be more positive if there is a congruence between the causal attributions made to CYPs' behaviour (Guttman, 1982). Therefore, EPs could use the process of hypothesis

sharing to help stakeholders understand each other's perspective. In addition, EPs can use this information to target their recommendations towards each stakeholder's hypotheses. A subsequent review of the CYP's progress against these recommendations may help to provide a greater insight into the function of their behaviour.

Working within the Wider Community

EPs are well placed to provide extra support to parents who need it. EPs' knowledge of theory (e.g. attachment theory and theories relating to child development) and their skills around working systemically, could be used to provide training to schools to run parenting classes. Alternatively, EPs could provide direct support to individual parents. For example, some EPs are trained to use Video Interactive Guidance. This could be used as a means of sharing and modelling positive parenting practices as well as providing advice and suggestions to help parents to feel more empowered. This could then be something that parents are able to take on and support each other with. EPs could also provide support and information around parenting teenagers. For example, running information sessions for parents and/or schools including theory around adolescent development, may help them to understand why CYP are acting in certain ways.

5.7 The Researcher's Learning

This section will be written in the first person in order for the researcher to reflect on her learning from this research experience.

On the whole, I have enjoyed conducting this piece of research. It has given me a greater insight into school exclusion and allowed me to reflect upon my role within the exclusion process and the ways in which I could provide further support

to the CYP, parents and schools with which I work. Through conducting this piece of research, I have learned more about the research process, particularly the process of conducting a qualitative piece of research from an initial idea to the finished article. This process will help me to feel more confident and competent when conducting research in future.

Conducting interviews with participants was the most enjoyable part of my research. I felt that this research allowed the participants space to talk about issues that were impacting their day to day lives. Having worked as a teacher, I feel that time for reflection is often pushed aside by the pressures that accompany the role. However, I believe that reflection can be an intervention in itself and by giving participants space to reflect it may have generated positive change in terms of their own wellbeing and practice.

Whilst I enjoyed conducting the research, at times I found the process quite time consuming particularly transcribing and coding the transcripts. As a result, I feel that I began to procrastinate and fell slightly behind the deadlines that I had set myself at the beginning of the research process. In future, I will set smaller more achievable weekly targets to try and keep myself motivated.

As highlighted in my literature review, very little research has examined the perspectives of pastoral staff. Therefore, I feel that this research has given a voice to a group that is under-researched.

As previously noted, many of the findings from this research echoed those of previous research in this area. It could be argued that this research does not add anything new to the body of research in this area. However, this research has drawn attention to practices used to support CYP who are at risk of exclusion as well as looking at what more is needed, particularly in terms of support provided in County A. Taking an ecosystemic perspective to this research has highlighted

the importance of tackling school exclusion at multiple levels, not just looking at within-child factors.

As a trainee EP, I am committed to promoting opportunity and reducing inequality both within the education system and the wider society, this meant that at times I found it difficult to listen to the dehumanisation of CYP, described as ‘hoppers’ and reduced to exam statistics.

Before beginning this research journey, I was keen to garner the perspectives of CYP around issues relating to school exclusion. On reflection, I feel that my research was driven by the agenda of the LA within which I am based (as discussed in section 3.2). Whilst this research was carried out with the hope that it would somehow benefit disempowered CYP, I would agree with the reflections of Trotman et al. (2015) who advocate that “young people can act as reliable witnesses and we lose something significant if we fail to listen to their voices” (p. 251).

5.8 Conclusion

This research has explored the perspectives of pastoral staff, a population who have received little direct research within literature in this area. While many of the findings echoed those of previous research on school exclusion, this research has provided insight into the types of support that schools access as well as what more could be done to support those at risk. The findings from this research exemplify how difficult it is to disentangle the causal factors associated with CYP being excluded from school exclusion. Therefore, along with previous research in this area, the researcher would advocate taking an ecological systems approach to tackling school exclusion at school-, community- and policy-based levels.

Gazeley et al. (2015) advocate that “the failure to ensure consistency of practice across local contexts leaves some young people more vulnerable to poor immediate and long-term outcomes than others” (p.500). While it is possible that the participant’s schools are using hidden exclusionary practices, the very low rates of exclusion in some of the schools that took part in the research may imply that there is some good practice around supporting those at risk of exclusion. It would therefore be useful to open up the lines of communication between schools. Instead of government initiatives that encourage competition, which research has demonstrated can lead to increased rates of formal and informal exclusion, the focus should be on schools in similar localities utilising each other as a resource in order to support some of society’s most vulnerable CYP.

The researcher echoes the message portrayed by the participants in this research; if the government spent more money on early intervention, it would save the long-term costs to both the individuals and society as a whole. The researcher would therefore call for the government to reconsider the longstanding cuts to the resourcing of schools and other educational services. We also need to be very wary of focusing too much on costs or we risk being left with an education system that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

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Appendices

Appendix A Systematic Literature Review

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Preliminary Criteria – 2002-2017, English language, peer-reviewed.

Subsequent criteria applied to abstracts:

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Studies focussing on the process of school exclusion including both fixed-term and permanent.• Studies seeking the perspective of staff (broadened to studies including multiple perspectives e.g. parents and children, on school exclusion or related practices if not many articles derived).• Any gender• Any race• Studies conducted at secondary provisions (broadened to include primary age if not many articles derived).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Studies not focussing on the process of school exclusion.• Studies not seeking the perspective of staff on school exclusion or related practices.• Studies of children not of secondary age.• Research is specific to race or gender.
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written in English• Research based on UK schools• Research conducted during or after 2002.• Research published during or after 2002.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not written in English.• Research not based on UK schools.• Research conducted /published before 2002

All articles were considered in terms of the inclusion and exclusion criteria above.

Search Results - EBSCO

Databases searched	EBSCO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Search Complete; • British Education Index; • Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC); • PsycINFO; • PsycARTICLES. 		
Date of search	Search terms used	Search results following preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria	Number selected for in-depth review (after inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to abstracts)
19.05.17	*School exclusion*	275	5 Trotman, D., Tucker, S. & Martyn, M. (2015); Gilmore, G. (2012); Bagley, C. & Hallam, S. (2015); Tucker, S. (2013).
19.05.17	*School exclusion*, *views*, *opinions*, *perspectives*, *beliefs*, *perceptions*, *teacher*, *staff*.	145	3 Gibbs, S. & Powell, B. (2012); Hatton, L. A. (2013); Gazeley, L., Marrable, T., Brown, C., & Boddy, J. (2015).
01.08.17	*School exclusion*, *expulsion*, *suspension* *views*, *opinions*, *perspectives*, *beliefs*, *perceptions*, *staff*, *pastoral*, *professionals*.	19	1 McCluskey, G., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., & Fordyce, M. (2015).

Search Results – Scopus

Databases searched	Scopus		
Date of search	Search terms used	Search results following preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria	Number selected for in-depth review (after inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to abstracts)
19.05.17	*School exclusion*	155	1 Macleod, G., Pirrie, A., McCluskey, G. & Cullen, M. A. (2013).
01.08.17	*School exclusion*, *views*	11	0

Hand-Search

A search was then conducted on 1st August 2017, using the search engine Google Scholar, to access relevant articles that had not been identified in the database search. This resulted in a further piece of research being accessed. Findings from this research were reported in:

Reed, J. (2005a). Classroom lessons for policy makers: Toward zero exclusion project, primary evidence report.

Reed, J. (2005b). *Toward zero exclusion : an action plan for school and policy makers*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Snow-Ball Search

The references of all articles selected for in-depth review were examined to ensure all relevant research was included. This resulted in a further piece of research being accessed. Findings from this research were reported in:

Smith, R., Aston, H., & Pyle, K. (2012). NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus November 2012 Survey: School exclusions.

White, R., Lamont, E., & Aston, H. (2013). OCC School Exclusions Inquiry: Perspectives of teaching staff and other professionals Executive summary.

The following table provides the main findings of the fourteen journal articles that were found through the EBSCO and Scopus databases, a hand and snow-ball search.

Author(s) and Date of Publish	Research Design	Sample & Method	Main Findings
Bagley, C. & Hallam, S. (2015).	Qual.	11 school staff and 5 LA staff. Interviews.	Where managed moves took place at too late a stage it was perceived that levels of disaffection were too high for a successful transition. Home-school communication was vital to success. A student buddy and named member of staff to provide the young people with support helped. Conclusion: Managed moves can be an effective intervention.
Flitcroft, D., & Kelly, C. (2016).	Qual.	A case study design, data was collected from focus groups, made up of 6 secondary Deputy Headteachers, and an interview with a local authority officer.	'Generating identity' by adequately preparing for students prior to their move; 'developing partnerships' between pupils, parents and staff; 'activities to create a sense of belonging' at a community level and the use of inclusive language were all seen as important practices to create a sense of belonging. Collaboration between schools and with the child's family was seen as important. Conclusion: Good practice guidance for creating a sense of belonging for pupils involved in a managed move was identified.
Gazeley, L., Marrable, T., Brown, C., & Boddy, J. (2015).	Mixed methods	Focus groups with 8 tutors, interviews with 7 local authority exclusion officials, a review of publically available data and individual/group interviews with 55 senior and pastoral staff and 53 young people across 6 secondary schools.	Participants highlighted the risks of interpreting data on rates of exclusion due to informal exclusions and that an increase in fixed term exclusions may be indicative of a drive for reduction in permanent exclusions. School staff emphasised the link between managed moves, collaborative relationships between schools and a reduction in permanent exclusions. The association between school exclusion and social disadvantage was highlighted. Conclusion: a whole-systems approach is needed in order to tackle inequalities in rates of school exclusion.

Gibbs, S. & Powell, B. (2012)	Quant.	197 teachers from 31 primary and nursery schools. Participants completed surveys and demographic and school level data was also collected.	Factor analysis indicated that 'Classroom Management', 'Children's Engagement', 'Instructional Strategies' were most representative of teacher's individual efficacy beliefs. Individual efficacy was not associated with numbers of children excluded. Exclusion was used less in schools where staff believed that teachers had the ability to successfully address outside influences. Conclusion: this study indicates the importance of understanding and supporting teachers' beliefs in their collective efficacy.
Gilmore, G. (2012).	Mixed Methods	Analysis of school data, 30 members of staff completed the online questionnaire and 9 received in-depth interviews	Results of the questionnaire illustrated that staff were generally positive about the majority of aspects of inclusive practice, policy and culture that was measured by the questionnaire. Data from the interviews indicate that the inclusion room was intended to be disciplinary, not nurturing. Staffs' views were more exclusionary prior to the introduction of the inclusion room. Conclusion: a disciplinary inclusion room and related practices can complement educational goals.
Hatton, L. A. (2013)	Mixed methods	128 staff across 16 primary and junior schools. 3 focus groups and 2 interviews and questionnaires.	There were differences expressed in the views of staff, parents and governors from excluding and non-excluding schools. Non-excluding school staff expressed more inclusive views than staff in excluding schools. Conclusion: Some elements of school ethos may impact upon the success of inclusion. Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties often pose the greatest challenge to inclusion.
Macleod, G., Pirrie, A., McCluskey, G. & Cullen, M. A. (2013).	Qual.	24 young people, 13 parents and 72 front-line service providers. Interviews.	Service providers tended to see parents as part of the problem not as genuine partners if they appeared to be non-compliant or to disagree with their judgements. School staff discussed familial issues as contributing to the child's problems or even being the root cause. Conclusion: increasing the amount of time service providers spend with families may improve understanding.

McCluskey, G., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., & Fordyce, M. (2015).	Mixed Methods	A statistical analysis and formal interviews and focus groups were conducted with 156 stakeholders including CYP, their parents, education practitioners and local authority staff.	Findings showed that exclusion rates in Wales are decreasing overall. Stakeholders had an understanding of exclusion guidance and felt that there was a stronger challenge to unlawful exclusions. Those with SEN and other students who face multiple disadvantages, continue to receive disproportionately higher rates of both official and hidden exclusion. Conclusion: there should be a drive to tackle inequality rather than focusing on difference.
Reed, J. (2005a & b).	Qual.	Focus groups and interviews with 251 participants including Headteachers, teachers, support staff, pupils and governors, across 10 secondary schools.	At times school exclusion was seen as necessary but only as a last resort. Teachers and pupils saw fixed-term exclusions as having little or a negative impact on behaviour and felt that internal exclusion was more fair and effective. Some teachers felt that temporary 'informal' exclusions were necessary to help manage relationships within the school. Conclusion: a four-pronged approach to tackle issues with behaviour and school exclusion is needed.
Smith, R., Aston, H., & Pyle, K. (2012).	Qual.	A survey was completed by 1,609 teachers; focus groups and group interviews were carried out with 20 teachers and 20 non-teaching professionals.	Teachers' awareness of school policy and statutory guidance was varied; senior leaders had a better understanding of this. Some staff reported that their school engaged in unapproved exclusionary practices. Most teachers had received training to help meet vulnerable students' needs. However, the quality of training was not always deemed to be satisfactory. Conclusion: there is a need for better training provision to raise awareness of statutory guidance and good practice.
Trotman, D., Tucker, S. & Martyn, M. (2015).	Qual.	49 Pupils aged 13-14 years old. 8 Secondary school behaviour co-ordinators. Semi-structured interviews.	Transition had the greatest bearing on negative pupil behaviour. Transition from primary to secondary was traumatic and an underlying cause for negative behaviour. Conclusion: Need positive attention to transition experiences
Tucker, S. (2013).	Qual.	49 year 9 pupils, 8 behaviour co-ordinators across 7 secondary	Schools need to develop need to develop comprehensive pastoral care policies and practices to support YP at risk of PEx.

		schools and 3 school managers. Semi-structured interviews.	Conclusion: high quality pastoral care has the potential to turn some pupils around before they are excluded.
White, R., Lamont, E., & Aston, H. (2013).	Qual.	See Smith, Aston and Pyle (2012).	Teachers believed that their schools reflected national trends on the most excluded pupils. Participants cited a number of behavioural and systemic reasons for school exclusion. Participants reported a range of preventative strategies used by schools but they felt that there was not enough training available for teachers. Teachers felt that exclusion rarely benefitted the students concerned. Some saw permanent exclusion as a necessary step to multi-agency input. Recommendations: better monitoring and accountability, training, preventative strategies, developing policies and approaches based on legal requirements, encouraging parental involvement, and sharing best practice.

Appendix B Research Information Sheet

UEL Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology



What are the Views of Pastoral Staff Regarding Exclusion from Secondary School?

Research Information Sheet

My name is Imaan Cochrane; I work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist in County A and I am studying at the University of East London. As part of my doctoral training, to become an Educational and Child Psychologist, I am conducting a piece of research which aims to explore pastoral staffs' perspectives on school exclusion.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research. Please read the information below before deciding whether you would like to participate. The following information explains the purpose and what the research will involve. If you decide that you would like to take part in this research, please sign the attached consent form and return it to the address provided.

Why is this research being done?

The national rates of school exclusion have continued to rise. These findings are echoed locally, where permanent school exclusions have almost doubled in the past four years. The short and long term negative outcomes associated with school exclusion are well documented and reduction in rates of exclusion is viewed as a priority at both a local and national level. With your help, I would like to find out:

- Your perspectives on school exclusion.
- What, if any, internal and external support is available to schools to help prevent PEx?
- At which stage do the pastoral staff feel that more support would be useful? What kinds of support would be useful in helping schools to prevent school exclusion?

Who will be in this project?

Pastoral staff will be interviewed to find out their perspectives on school exclusion. I hope that this research will help school staff, working with young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion, to know what kind of support is available to them. The information you provide might help to inform future support to help prevent school exclusion.

What will happen if you consent to be part of this research project?

You will be the only person who will know that you have decided to take part in the research. I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for us to meet. Prior to the interview, if you would like to meet with me or have a phone conversation, I will be available to answer any questions that you might have about the research. If you agree to take part, I will ask you some questions about your perspectives of school exclusion, including the internal and external support that is available to your school. You are entitled to refuse to answer any of the questions and to stop the interview at any time.

The interview will last for approximately 1 hour and will be recorded using an audio recording device. No one else will listen to the recordings or read the notes that I make within the interview. The contents of the interview will remain private and confidential.

The only time I would have to break this confidentiality is if you told me something that I feel puts you or someone else in danger.

What will happen when the research project is finished?

Following the interviews, I will write a research thesis. Any responses to questions included in the thesis will not be linked to names, schools or any personal details. You will not be identifiable within the write up. All audio recordings will be kept in password encrypted files and notes will be locked in a safe place during the research; these will subsequently be destroyed when the project is finished.

What if I have more questions?

If you have any additional questions or you would like to discuss your participation in the research further, please contact me on the details below:

Imaan Cochrane (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Email: U1529159@uel.ac.uk

Disclaimer

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without the obligation to give a reason or disadvantage to yourself. Should you withdraw after the data analysis has begun, the researcher reserves the right to use your anonymous data in the write-up of the research.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this information letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how the study has been conducted, please contact the researcher's supervisor Dr Miles Thomas, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. Email: M.Thomas@uel.ac.uk.

or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr. Mary Spiller, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. (Tel: 020 8223 4004. Email: m.j.spiller@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you for reading this information and taking the time to consider this research. If you would like to participate then please complete the consent form.

Appendix C Interview Schedule

There has been a marked increase in school exclusion in County A in the past 3 years. Why do think this may be?

National statistics show that the ages 12-14 are the most common time for children to be excluded. What do you think might contribute to this?

What is the main reason for permanent exclusions from your school?

How are exclusions viewed in your school?

What does your school have in place, internally, to support children at risk of school exclusion?

Prompts:

- What about your behavioural policy?
- What about internal exclusion?
- How do staff work with children at risk of exclusion?

What external services do you access to support those at risk of permanent school exclusion?

Prompts:

- What outside agencies?
- What about managed moves?
- Are parents involved?

How do you make decisions about accessing external services?

- Who accesses them?
- When do they?
- Why?
- Is there anyone else?
- Tell me more about that...

Are there key times in the exclusion process that you think additional support would be useful? If so, what?

What do you think EPs can contribute to this area?

What would help to reduce permanent exclusions at your school?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Is there anything I didn't ask you today that you thought I would?

Further Prompts

Why do you think...?

Can you tell me more about...?

Appendix D Consent Form

UEL Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology



What are the Views of Pastoral Staff Regarding Exclusion from Secondary

School?

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

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

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

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

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

Participant's Signature.....

Date.....

Thank you, your participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

Appendix E Debrief Sheet

UEL Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology



What are the Views of Pastoral Staff Regarding Exclusion from

Secondary School?

Debrief Sheet

Thank you for participating in the above study. This research aims to explore the perspectives of pastoral staff on the subject of school exclusion. It is hoped that this research will illustrate the types of internal and external support that schools can access and highlight any further support that may be useful in helping to prevent PEx.

Any responses to questions included in the thesis will not be linked to names, schools or any personal details. You will not be identifiable within the write up. All audio recordings will be kept in password encrypted files and notes will be locked in a safe place during the research; these will subsequently be destroyed when the project is finished.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to ask them at this time or email the researcher on: u1529159@uel.ac.uk.

In the event that you feel psychologically distressed by participating in this study please contact the researcher on the above email. If you are feeling distressed and are unable to contact a person associated with this study, please contact the Samaritans on freephone: 116 123 or call Mind on: 0800 123 3393.

Thanks again for your participation.

Appendix F Sample of Coded Transcript



I: There has been a marked increase in school exclusion in County A in the past 3 years, why do you think this may be?

H: I went to a meeting with lots of head teachers from across (County A) and (name of another county) and one of them were- lots of people were saying that it's the movement of people out of (name of city). So they're moving out of borough from (name of borough) up towards (name of area in County A), from (name of area in County A) up towards (name of area in County A), (name of area in County A) up towards (name of area in a neighbouring County) so the behaviour that's more common in (name of city) such as gangs and drugs and those type of things seem to be moving outwards with the population that's moving outwards.

I: Right, ok. So national statistics show that the ages 12-14 are the most common time for children to be excluded, what do you think might contribute to this?

H: I can speak from my experience at the school and, a lot of the exclusions are for friendship issues, bullying, using social media, inappropriate use of social media, amongst girls and boys. And anti-social behaviour outside of school so that kind of age group when they are riding bicycles down the road and gathering outside of Morrisons or using Snapchat and Instagram to direct message each other. I think it's the hormones at that age. And the involvement of boys and the group dynamic shift as well. So it moves away from that innocent year 7 thing more towards year 9 so I would say the most exclusions at the moment are in year 8 so it supports those statistics I would say.

I: Ok, so what is the main reason for permanent exclusion from your school?

H: We've only had one permanent exclusion this year and that was a Year 7 boy which is really quite rare. And he has had a lot of issues that came from primary school. He had an Education and Health Care Plan and I don't think that mainstream school was appropriate for him. He has since been permanently excluded and he has got a space at a special school so I think it was, it was the wrong place for him. In terms of the rest of it I can't speak because we've only had one permanent exclusion this year.

I: Ok, so how are exclusions viewed in your school?

H: As an absolute last resort. So they'll be a whole process of things that are put in place to stop permanent exclusions. Some of the time they'll result in managed moves to other schools for pupils to have a fresh start which we have had a few of this year. Or they'll be accepted into (name of ESC) which is an alternative education. But they'll, like I said there's a package of support which happens for students before they get to that stage. So we have something called an SNS grid which tracks all of the support put in place for students. It will be working with the Attendance and Safeguarding Officer. Connexions, a whole level of graft and different reports. We have something called an Individual Support Plan which ties in outside and inside agency support for students. It could be some like outreach, mentoring, counselling, careers advice, all those type of thing. Ethnic minority mentoring. Then if that doesn't work then they will go on to a Pastoral Support Plan which lasts 12 weeks. At the

Appendix G Ethical Approval

School of Psychology Research Ethics Committee

NOTICE OF ETHICS REVIEW DECISION

For research involving human participants
BSc/MSc/MA/Professional Doctorates

REVIEWER: Dr Matthew Jones Chesters

SUPERVISOR: Dr Miles Thomas

COURSE: Professional Doctorate in Child and Educational Psychology

STUDENT: Imaan Cochrane

TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY: What are Pastoral Leaders' Perspectives on School Exclusion?

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. **APPROVED:** Ethics approval for the above named research study has been granted from the date of approval (see end of this notice) to the date it is submitted for assessment/examination.
2. **APPROVED, BUT MINOR AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMMENCES** (see Minor Amendments box below): In this circumstance, re-submission of an ethics application is not required but the student must confirm with their supervisor that all minor amendments have been made before the research commences. Students are to do this by filling in the confirmation box below when all amendments have been attended to and emailing a copy of this decision notice to her/his supervisor for their records. The supervisor will then forward the student's confirmation to the School for its records.
3. **NOT APPROVED, MAJOR AMENDMENTS AND RE-SUBMISSION REQUIRED** (see Major Amendments box below): In this circumstance, a revised ethics application must be submitted and approved before any research takes place. The revised application will be reviewed by the same reviewer. If in doubt, students should ask their supervisor for support in revising their ethics application.

DECISION ON THE ABOVE-NAMED PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

(Please indicate the decision according to one of the 3 options above)

Minor amendments required

Minor amendments required *(for reviewer):*

In your method/recruitment section, set out how the individuals who are potential participants will be approached (e.g., by email, telephone call) and how you will obtain their names and contact information (e.g., are they known to you already?).

Ensure that correct title of the programme is given on all materials.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK TO RESEARCHER *(for reviewer)*

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

☐

HIGH

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MEDIUM

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LOW

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

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

Matthew H Jones

Date: 6th February 2017

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

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

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

Student's name *(Typed name to act as signature):* Imaan Cochrane
Student number: U1529159

Date: 13.02.17

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

Appendix H Participants' School Information

Participant Number and Gender	Job Title	Provision	Number of Pupils on Role	Ofsted Behaviour Rating
Adam	SENCo & Head of Inclusion (Senior leadership team)	All boys academy secondary school and sixth form.	1,132	Good
Bob	Deputy Headteacher (Senior leadership team)	Mixed gender academy primary, secondary and sixth form school.	1,257	Good
Catherine	Inclusion Manager (Senior leadership team)	Mixed gender academy secondary school.	352	Good
Debbie	Student Support Manager	Mixed gender maintained secondary school.	340	Good
Emma	SENCo & Deputy Headteacher (Senior leadership team)	Secondary academy special school for Boys with Learning, Social, Emotional, Behavioural and Mental Health Difficulties.	65	Good
Fred	SENCo	Mixed gender academy secondary school and sixth form.	1,190	Outstanding
Gloria	SENCo & Deputy Headteacher (Senior leadership team)	Mixed gender academy secondary school and sixth form.	1,460	Good
Heather	Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral Lead (Senior leadership team)	Mixed gender academy secondary school and sixth form.	657	Good

1 I: There has been a marked increase in school exclusion in County A in the past 3 years, why do you think this may be?

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4 A: Primarily due to I think cuts that have come into schools regarding use of interventions and external support. I think everything has changed dramatically over, certainly the last three years. Where you used to be able to access outside agencies and various support, and everything seems to be sucked down a bit and that includes the amount of staff that are in school as well. With less teachers, everyone's teaching more, I think that leads to increasing workload. That then possibly increases the sort of the stress of the teachers, therefore that, the behaviour then deteriorates across the school and then there isn't that support in place. If you think about teaching assistants and if you think about behaviour support, you know programmes they just don't seem to exist anymore. I think everyone is so stretched that that ultimately has an impact on sort of the teaching and learning and then that has an impact on the behaviour and that has an impact on the amount of people that get excluded and sort of present as badly behaved. I don't think they are but that's how they present. They present as naughty when actually they're not, their needs aren't being met... and there's not that outside help to come in. There is but it's at a price and the school hasn't got any money. So I think it's financial.

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21 I: National statistics show that the ages 12-14 are the most common time for children to be excluded, what do you think might contribute to this?

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24 A: Erm, I think the transition from primary to secondary is quite huge. I think they go from quite a sort of nurturing environment to more of a... a get on and do type of environment, certainly in this establishment, where they lose that, that nurture and with that comes a peer pressure, outside influences, the need to fit in and with all that kind of stuff going on, with mobile phones and social media, with all that kind of stuff going on I think that's too much for some students to cope with and that will then present in negative behaviour because they think that's fun, erm and better and also it's a way of getting attention and sometimes getting negative attention is better than getting no attention. And certainly think that's got a lot to do with it. I think lots of them are struggling academically now... and it seems to be coming to a fault earlier on whereas before that support could have been put in place in primary schools with the teaching assistant. I think there is always someone around in primary schools and that and we lose that quite heavily in a secondary school establishment. So... and then we don't necessarily reward for being good so therefore they prefer to be punished for being bad and getting that attention elsewhere.

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40 I: Ok, so you spoke about school exclusion in general but what do you think is the main reason for permanent exclusion in your school, do you know or...

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43 A: ... I believe, bearing in mind my background, I believe it's about not meeting the needs of the student primarily, and not... being accepting that some students are more vulnerable and more disadvantaged than others and then therefore not catering to those needs within the classroom.

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48 I: And is that the same statistically?

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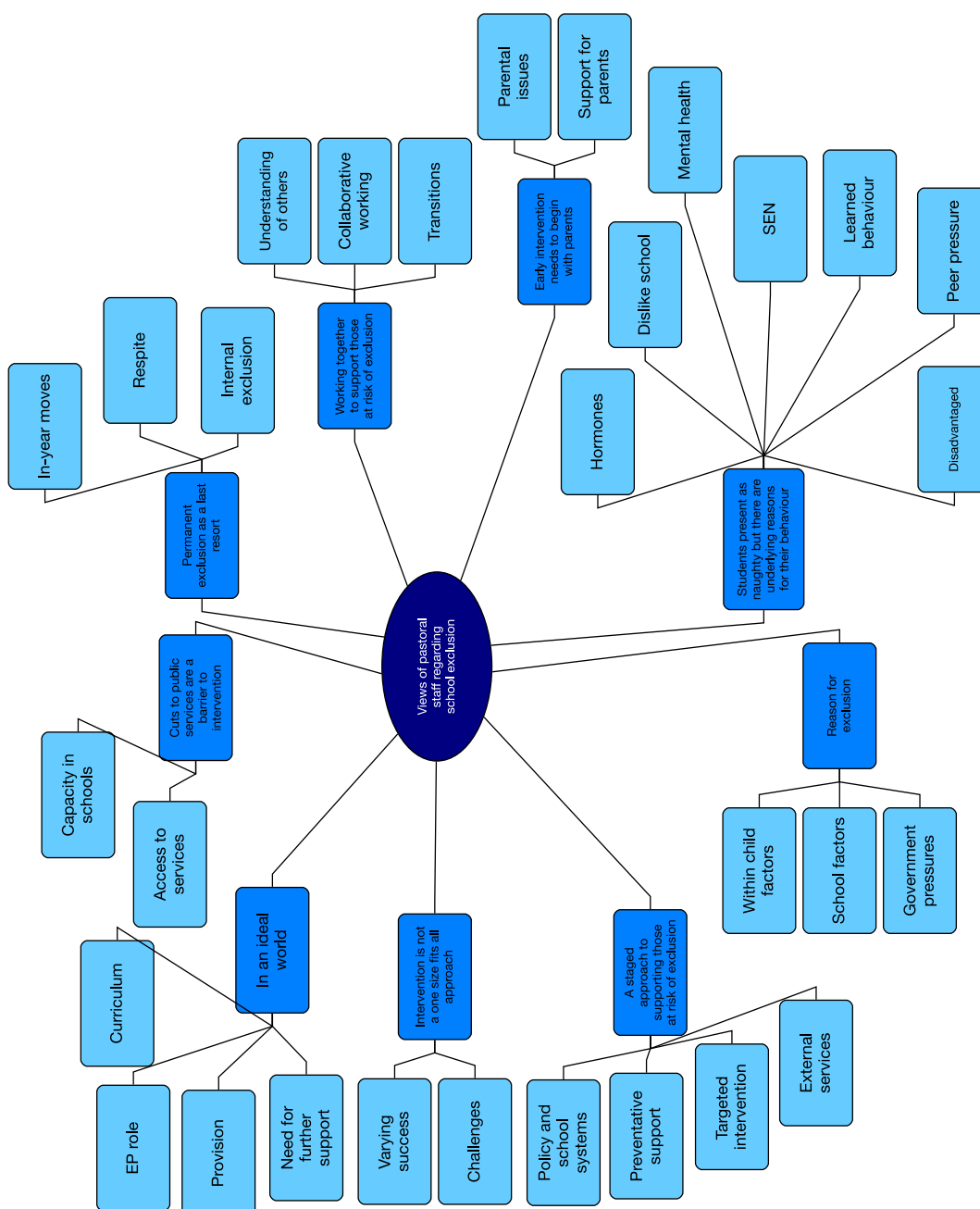
Appendix J Initial Coding Ideas

1	I: There has been a marked increase in school exclusion in County A in the past 3 years, why		
2	do you think this may be?		
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4	A: <u>Primarily due to</u> I think cuts that have come into schools regarding use of interventions	Imaan Ilyas COCHRANE Cuts to public services	
5	and external support. I think everything has changed dramatically over, certainly the last		
6	three years. Where you used to be able to access outside agencies and various support, and		
7	everything seems to be sucked down a bit and that includes the amount of staff that are in		
8	school as well. <u>With less teachers</u> , everyone's teaching more, I think that leads to increasing	Imaan Ilyas COCHRANE •Negative cycle •Underlying reasons for behaviour •Financial constraints on intervention	
9	workload. That then possibly increases the sort of the stress of the teachers, therefore that,		
10	the behaviour then deteriorates across the school and then there isn't that support in place.		
11	If you think about teaching assistants and if you think about behaviour support, you know		
12	programmes they just don't seem to exist anymore. I think everyone is so stretched that		
13	that ultimately has an impact on sort of the teaching and learning and then that has an		
14	impact on the behaviour and that has an impact on the amount of people that get excluded		
15	and sort of present as badly behaved I don't think they are but that's how they present.		
16	They present as naughty when actually they're not, their needs aren't being met...and		
17	there's not that outside help to come in. There is but it's at a price and the school hasn't got		
18	any money. <u>So I think it's financial.</u>		
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20	I: National statistics show that the ages 12-14 are the most common time for children to be		
21	excluded, what do you think might contribute to this?		
22			
23	A: <u>Erm</u> , I think the transition from primary to secondary is quite huge. I think they go from	Imaan Ilyas COCHRANE Impact of transitions	
24	quite a sort of nurturing environment to more of a... a get on and do type of environment,		
25	certainly in this establishment, where they lose that, that nurture and with that comes a	Imaan Ilyas COCHRANE •Adolescence •Peer pressure	
26	peer pressure, outside influences, the need to fit in and with all that kind of stuff going on,		
27	with mobile phones and social media, with all that kind of stuff going on I think that's too		
28	much for some students to cope with and that will then present in negative behaviour		
29	because they think that's fun, <u>erm</u> and better and also it's a way of getting attention and		
30	sometimes getting negative attention is better than getting no attention. And certainly think		

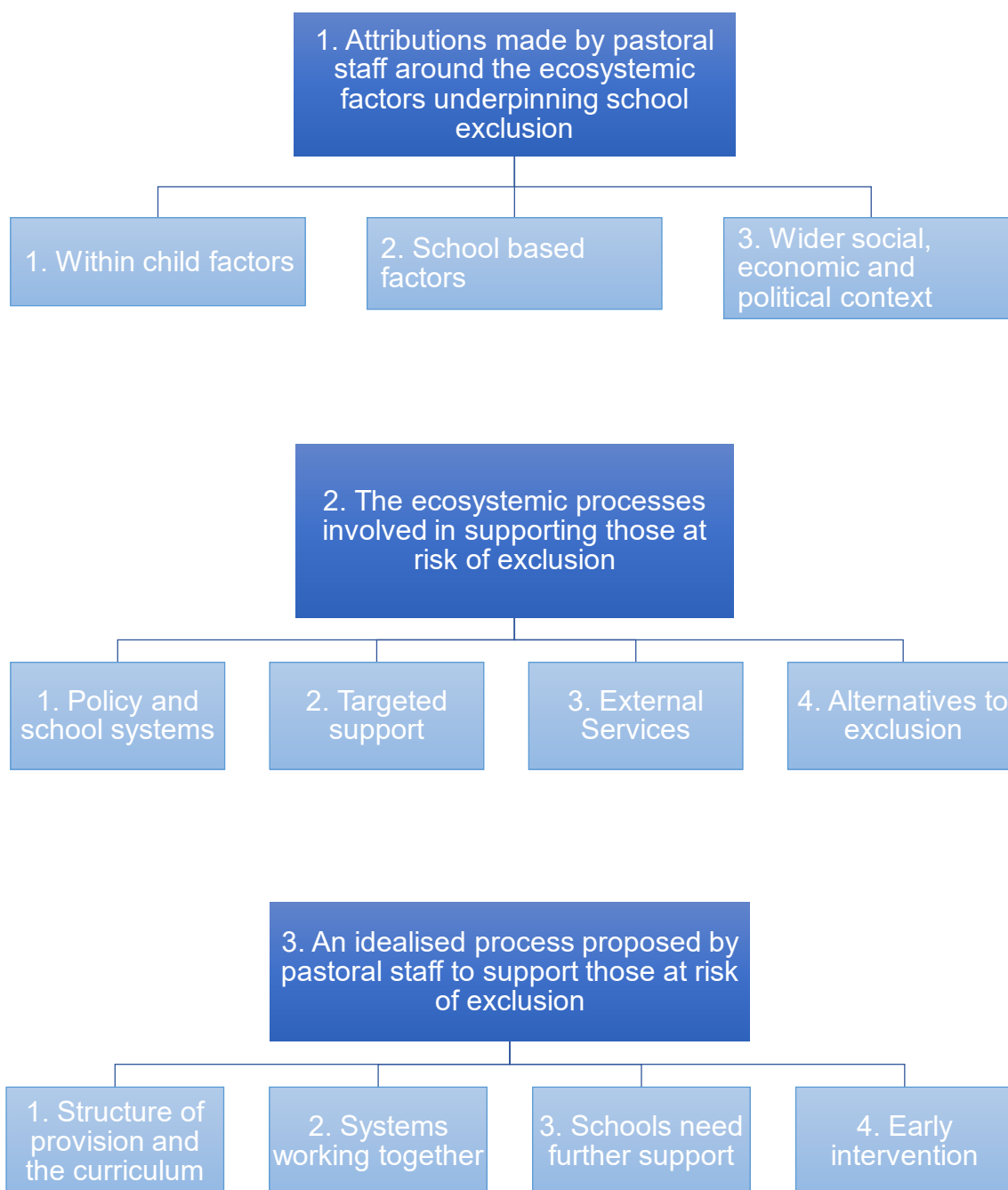
Appendix K Process of Theme Development



Appendix L Initial Thematic Map



Appendix M Candidate Thematic Map



Appendix N Risk and Protective Factors for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (DfE, 2016a)

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child ^{5,6}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic influences Low IQ and learning disabilities Specific development delay or neuro-diversity Communication difficulties Difficult temperament Physical illness Academic failure Low self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being female (in younger children) Secure attachment experience Outgoing temperament as an infant Good communication skills, sociability Being a planner and having a belief in control Humour Problem solving skills and a positive attitude Experiences of success and achievement Faith or spirituality Capacity to reflect
In the family ^{4,5}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overt parental conflict including domestic violence Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) Inconsistent or unclear discipline Hostile and rejecting relationships Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse Parental psychiatric illness Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder Death and loss – including loss of friendship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) Affection Clear, consistent discipline Support for education Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullying Discrimination Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships Deviant peer influences Peer pressure Poor pupil to teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear policies on behaviour and bullying 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health Positive classroom management A sense of belonging Positive peer influences
In the community ^{4,5}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic disadvantage Homelessness Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events Discrimination Other significant life events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider supportive network Good housing High standard of living High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying Opportunities for valued social roles Range of sport/leisure activities