R: We are here today to discuss what you think the factors are that impact the Sense of Belonging at school for the young people that you support in school. It would be really useful, where possible, if you can use examples to help me accurately understand what is discussed. Would anybody like to start off the discussion?
ZARA: Umm, for us, I guess we, we have to build relationships with them quite quickly and they know that they can come to us. And they do, don't they? For anything at all. I know that goes to the year office as well, but they because we're quite a small department, we get to know everything about them and they come and tell us everything. So we try and make sure that when they first arrive, they spend quite a lot of time with us. In fact we shadow them to start with for most of their classes and make sure that they know where to go at break time and they're comfortable enough to just come in and chat.

SONIA: yeah

ZARA: And that's really important. You just start with that.

R: So that relationship with you guys?

ZARA: Building the relationships, yeah.

SONIA: And that ties in with what you said before. What helped them, that induction, that was good for them and their families when they first came here, showing them around the school. Talking about the rules.

ZARA: Yeah, so, when the Ukrainians first arrived and we supported them through getting their uniform and their shoes and yeah, we gave them a tour together with their families, which was nice, which we don't always do anymore. We used to. And then with COVID, it's stopped. But with them they all came in and host families as well, which was really nice.

R: Thank you for sharing those insights. What do you think the impact of that support might have been for the young people?
ZARA: I think when they started, they felt, they weren't so nervous about coming because they had already met us.

SONIA: Less terrified of the school.

ZARA: Yeah

SONIA: Cause some of them came from smaller towns where the school was literally one building. One of the students said that today, so combined primary and secondary. So they're all in one building, and suddenly they're here.

ZARA: And they said their uniform before or anything like that.

SONIA: So school meals. Sorted things out.

ZARA: Yeah.

MARYAM: Yeah.

MARYAM: They didn't have a lot of what we would consider school rules [in home country]. So they were allowed to wear nails, makeup, eyelashes. Earrings. And here we're not allowed to do that at all. So it's a big change.

SONIA: That was very different

ZARA: Massive
R: Yeah, some massive change for them. And as you say, having you guys as the support for them is like their most safe space for them to come to.

ZARA: Yeah.
SONIA: We did a two week TEFL course with them so we were in a separate room

ZARA: Yes, so we took them out of their classes and spent time with them just doing pure English lessons and which really helped their confidence. I think some of them were fine but you're going into class but some of them were really, really quiet in class and then when we took them out of class and Justin Pier English, they came out of their shell, you know, they were totally different in that. Just nice was really nice.

SONIA: And as you can see on the board. We see quite a lot of them in the morning in tutor time. You know we do well grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, pronunciation.
MARYAM: So they get a lot, and a lot of the time it's things like helping them. We've had two that came in originally from Afghanistan, had never used a computer before. They didn't even know how to use the mouse and things. So, we'd spend quite a lot of time with them just doing, you know, this is how you turn it on. This is how you; you know. She'd never been in education at all, so would quite often get up and walk out of a class to go to the toilet without saying, you know she just thought she could do what she wanted all day.
R: I see what you mean

ZARA: These big changes, it’s things that you wouldn't necessarily think of that that they don't know how to do so.

MARYAM: Do you think you've learnt from that, moving forward?

ZARA: definitely

SONIA: Ohh yeah, a lot.

ZARA: Definitely. They I think they were the biggest ones that we learnt from, definitely. The two from Afghanistan when they came in, because everything was so different for them. There was no English. They obviously have different culture totally. Their reading.

ZARA: So the little girl hadn't been to school, so she couldn't read or write in her own language, so we couldn't even translate anything because she couldn’t read it.

SONIA: No google translate. Only pictures.

ZARA: It was pictures for everything.

SONIA: We're still doing MacBeth using pictures.
R: Oh really? So is it the work that her peers are doing that's been differentiated to suit her

ZARA: Yeah, by us.

SONIA: By us. Because that's another issue; some teachers don't [differentiate] or they do it initially for a couple of lessons

ZARA: And then it's it is extra work for them. So, we yeah, we were happy to differentiate a lot of them materials still.
ZARA: Yes, it's the cultural side that I think that you learn. And we've certainly learnt a lot from them.

SONIA: But I also think it affects their personality, ‘cause we've got a couple who I think they were quite outgoing in their country. But here because there's no friends or they had to make friends from scratch their naturally more shy.

ZARA: Yeah.

SONIA: And then yeah, so yeah, it's their personality as well.

R: So there's a couple of things that I've picked up from our discussion, which were the cultural side and the sort of difference in rules from previous schools to coming here. And you also mentioned the impact of language skills as well.

SONIA: Oh a lot. ‘Cause some of them have, well we have the boy who had no English and he is in year 11 so suddenly it's GCSEs.

R: Okay, so would you say that impacts then on their learning?

SONIA: Well yes because for example some of them sometimes they know the answer, but, if you put yourself in their shoes, they're afraid to put their hand up because they're thinking I'm gonna be judged not only on what I say, but how I say it. If I make a mistake. And obviously the ones who are more confident will put their hands up. But the ones who are shy, thinking ooh everyone's looking at me, I don't wanna

MARYAM: Don’t want to speak, yeah, they might laugh at me, yeah.

SONIA: ‘Cause a couple of times we were like, ‘come on you know the answer’. But no. And you can't really force them, it's their decision. They'll be ready one day. And, yeah.

R: Okay, it sounds like what you are saying is that supporting these young people is an ongoing process, Not just people come in and then we do the things that help and it's finished, is that right?

SONIA: Yeah, and there's always something else coming up. Just when you think ‘ohh, this is sorted’, there's something else happening.

ZARA: Yeah

MARYAM: Yeah

 R: And how do you manage that then when there's lots and lots of different things coming up?
SONIA: It was very stressful to begin with

ZARA: When they first came it was very Stressful

SONIA: Because there were so many of them

ZARA: Of the Ukrainians

SONIA: Yeah, yeah

ZARA: Yeah, there were there was a lot going on when they first arrived. But the year office, you must see them a lot as well, do they come to you? (asking to P2)
MARYAM: Umm ish, I support year 11 so, yeah.
ZARA: You get parents queries more than us cause we don't get parents.

MARYAM: No. Well, no because well. CYP’s dad is here, isn't he? Not mum.

ZARA: Yeah, dad.

SONIA: He doesn't make any contact.

ZARA: OK.

MARYAM: Yeah, and the boy.

ZARA: His mum can't speak English.

MARYAM: Well, she well, I don't know. She types a lot of emails.

ZARA: OK
SONIA: Ohh, the one who misses a lot of school?

MARYAM: No, CYP

ZARA: OK. No, his mum does speak English.

MARYAM: Yeah, so she emails. I don't think I've. That's the only two that I've ever had any contact with. But interestingly, yeah, they those two come in a bit, but not, I wouldn't say a lot, but I think probably they come to you.

ZARA: We see them every morning, they pick up translator from here in the morning. So we see them. So if there's any issue they quite often say.

MARYAM: So I think probably you are now everything that might come to me. He comes in every now and again if he needs to ask me something, but umm yeah. But they know we are there if they need us.

ZARA: Yeah

SONIA: But the girl who just knocked on the door, she was the prime example cause normally it would be the year office, but

ZARA: She comes to us for lots of things and you see we get a lot where the parents can't do anything. And the parents don't speak any English so the children take on roles that the parents should be doing. So, she's asked if we can teach her to use the Internet to book doctor's appointments and things because parents can't understand how to do it.

MARYAM: Yeah, yeah
ZARA: So, we'll get lots of queries from them about stuff like that.

R: That's a lot of additional responsibility for a teenager, isn't it?

ZARA: Yeah.
SONIA: Yeah. And I think she was very worried and obviously it makes them, I think, more anxious because, it's them.

ZARA: Well, their language isn’t very good anyway. So, it's really difficult for them because they're then having to teach parents how to do things. And, you know, yeah, I don't remember when they came in. I think they've been here just over a year.

SONIA: Before Christmas

ZARA: Yeah, just over a year.

SONIA: Yeah.

ZARA: And they obviously, she'd not been to school before and didn't have any English. So, she's come on loads. And funny enough they those two in some ways have been better because they were just the two of them at the time. They've made all their friends are English, aren’t they? So even when she couldn't speak English, you see her outside playing.

MARYAM: Is that the two from Afghanistan?

SONIA: Yeah, and chatting, so

MARYAM: Well I found that, not that I know them that well, their demeanour to be very, well certainly the little girl to be very upbeat and very joyous.

ZARA: Yes, yes.

MARYAM: Not the same with the Ukrainians.

ZARA: No, it's a bit more of an attitude, I think.

SONIA: I think I wonder if [for her] it's also like ‘wow, I'm at school’. I actually thought she told me she, like, sometimes we walk together, and she says loves being here because she can walk on her own. She's got much more freedom [than at home]. Yeah. ‘Because we take it for granted. But for her, it's like, ‘wow’.

MARYAM: So, I think that's quite infectious, isn't it?

ZARA: Yeah.

MARYAM: But that's not the same as Ukrainian.

ZARA: No, it sounds bad, but they are more difficult. Yeah, they're more demanding. And they are less I don't want to say grateful cause it makes it sound like they should be grateful. But you can see the difference. The Afghans seem to be pleased about most things, and excited about most things.

MARYAM: she was skipping round the school from a long time, literally skipping round,

SONIA: Whereas because we have issues with the Ukrainian girls like P1 mentioned with nails and makeup because in their schools before they were allowed and suddenly it was a big problem. I've rolling and or why should I? So that took a while

ZARA: I guess they're here more in a forced situation. They didn't probably don't wanna be here at all, whereas for the other two, I think they were quite pleased.

R: It sounds like you are saying 1 almost are getting more freedom, being in school, and one getting slightly less freedom than they used to have to leave you. There's something around that as well

SONIA: I think mentally also for the Ukrainians, it's a bit of a limbo situation because they don't know if or when they are going back. If so, I suppose, yeah.

MARYAM: Yes, they feel this is temporary.

SONIA: Yeah, cause a lot of them do Ukraine too, so that's how it came out. One of the boys was lagging behind with his maths homework and it turned out that he was, like a lot of them, study online and they do their Ukrainian school online as well. So, it's like 2 lots of homework. And because they've got a big exam in April or May [in Ukraine], a lot of them will be doing that online

ZARA: Because they don't know whether they go back, so they have to keep up with it.
MARYAM: Yeah, do you think the year 11’s are doing that?
ZARA: I need to speak to them. I think they’re certainly doing school work for Ukraine, I don't know whether they've got exams coming up.

R: I wonder whether there's an impact on thinking that you might be going back to sort of allowing yourself almost to build the relationships.
SONIA: And the sort of life here.

ZARA: Yes, because we got one family who I think will stay, and the parents have got very good jobs here.

SONIA: But their whole family is here.

ZARA: Their whole family is family here, they brought their dog over, and interestingly, they are much more open to doing, to building like a life here. You know, they've joined clubs out of school. And it’s really nice. And they seem much more settled, don’t they?

SONIA: Whereas others, because if half of them, so for example the boy. So, he's here with his mum, but his older brother and his dad are in Odessa. So obviously OK. It makes it harder because their immediate family is split and not all of them are here. So yeah.

R: I see, do and what do you think the impact of separation or slow migration across the family is for these young people?

SONIA: I’m Polish, I understand some of when they speak to each other in Ukrainian. So, a couple of times for example, you hear them whispering in the lesson and it's not related to the topic, but they're discussing what's like my city's just been bombed or something.

ZARA: So, it's easy for us to forget after they've been here for a while. Because they have been here for a while, you forget the impact it has. I think because they just become like other students that you support.

MARYAM: I think that's probably because this school is so big that you do. Funny enough, we were talking about the boy, because one of the senior tutors had to escort him over to one of the exams last week. She came back, she said ‘Ohh God, I forgot’. But, you do. Forgetting about them sounds horrible, but because they’re sort of, they're not on your radar. You think ‘Ohh, they're all fine, they’re all enjoying SCHOOL life’ Because there's over 300 kids in each year group. It's a lot of children, so I think that's a downside, and I wonder moving forward where there should be some sort of, I don't know.

SONIA: But you, you are right

ZARA: Like a check in or a reminder for

MARYAM: Or we say once a month on a Monday in tutor we get all of them with with you guys and we just do a massive cheque in, I don't know, but it's very easy and I thought ‘God. Yeah, I don't think I've seen so and so for quite a while’, do you know what I mean? But it's not on purpose. It's because. Well, the girl that came and went, yeah, was difficult. She was in my office a lot because she didn't settle well at all.

R: She's left the school now, did you say?

MARYAM: Yes. I don't know. Did they go back?

ZARA: Yes, did they go back to Ukraine or to Poland?

SONIA: Umm, Poland first, and then Ukraine. I don't know if CYP is still in touch with her.

MARYAM: Yes. So, although they paired up, which was good. It wasn't a good combination at all. But they were in [our office] quite a lot. Mainly on negative notes, but at least you have that contact even though it was a bit spiky.

ZARA: Yeah.

MARYAM: Whereas CYP, I see periodically because he

SONIA: and his attendance is not good

ZARA: Yeah, we did have a translator in for them though, was it before Christmas?

SONIA: Uh, It a couple of week ago

MARYAM: It was just after Christmas.

ZARA: Seems like ages ago. Err, we got Ukrainian translator in, and we had appointments for parents to come in and sit and chat about anything it could be school, it could be home. And then we bought the students over at the same time. And the translator was from, she was Ukrainian and she was over here because of what had happened. She's had a different job in Ukraine, but that was really useful. And we've said we will do it again at some point because, well

MARYAM: That might be quite useful for year officers to attend for their year. So maybe just sitting on side.

ZARA: Yeah, definitely. It was interesting because there were things that came up. So one of them – the boy in year 11, the quiet one – his mum can't speak any English at all. They're lovely. Really, really is such a nice boy, but very nervy. And quite shy. And his mum was having real issues applying for Universal Credit as she couldn't get her National Insurance number right, because she's got 2 passports. And so the interpreter just sat down with her and we went through all the forms and sorted that out and free school meals and things. And that was really, really useful because it was clearly something that he was really, well, worried about but couldn't express it.

MARYAM: That that's not nice, is it?

SONIA: No, that's not right. That's assuming the responsibility that they're too young for. But what P2 also said, some of the students from Ukraine who came here, they were quite good students and praised a lot in their schools and suddenly here because they're put in bottom sets, not because of their ability or knowledge, but because of their English. Because that's what CYP, for example, complained about because she was used to being told how wonderful she was and suddenly it was ‘Oh, you are in lower set, but only because of the English’, but I think that also affects their confidence because suddenly it's like ‘ohh, I actually know more than those people’ but they can't express it.

MARYAM: Yeah.

ZARA: This is like maths. There was way ahead of their flying there because they're saying when we did this, when we were about 10 in in our country.
MARYAM: Oh right. That’s a little embarrassing [for us].

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You have.

R: Okay, so you’ve mentioned about the difference between schooling, and trying to get used to their experience here, when it is probably quite different what they're used to

ZARA: The one lesson which has been really good. And it's interesting because when they first arrive, teachers are really like, ohh, no, we can't possibly teach them because they've not done this subject before, is French. They always do really well in French because it's a language and it's new for everybody. We're not very good in England at languages. So the students typically are quite low and don't retain it, so ours [asylum seekers], even the two Afghans are now like, really, really good at French and they're quite near the top of the class.

SONIA: And quite confident

ZARA: Quite confident because of the style of the lesson.

MARYAM: So, in a way that's nice confidence boost for them, isn’t it?

SONIA: Yes it is, because there is a look of whiteboard work and show me tasks.

ZARA: And games and things like that, so they actually end up doing better in French than most of their other subjects. And they're on a par with their peers and their, which is lovely.

ZARA: It's not something you think about, and the teacher's don’t either. They're terrified when you bring them a new student and you say ‘oh they haven't studied French before’, they said, ‘well, we can't have them in here cause these have had two years of French’, but actually it doesn't take very long for them to catch up.
R: Ohh that is interesting.

ZARA: it's nice to see them doing well in it, you know

SONIA: But even the girl from Afghanistan, I was in with her in maths last year a lot and we started from literally 1 + 1 and we had counters. And now OK she's in the bottom set but she's actually doing better than some of the other students when I was in maths with her the other day. So, looking at the progress she's made and they were doing very basic equations. But she could do it and I was like, ‘wow’.

MARYAM: Yeah, probably. The difference is there she didn't. This is a bit of a sweeping statement. But, umm, she wants to learn. Where as often in bottoms set she'll have got a bit of a mix in there.

ZARA: Yeah
MARYAM: Yeah, you've got your people that do just need to support and people that just aren't interested.

R: Okay. We've discussed a lot of stuff there that's really useful. We have covered this a little bit, but I was wondering if we could discuss cultural identity and some examples of how the young people you support might feel able to sort of express their own culture at school. This might include how different cultures are viewed and valued by peers by adults in school, or I know you just mentioned about speaking in their own language at school, could we talk a little more about how that's viewed by peers and adults?

ZARA: We encourage it. We never used to. It used to be thought that they should only speak English, but actually we do realise that it's really important that they retain their home language as well. So a lot of their texts and classes are translated into their own language by the teachers. So we've asked them to do that, haven't we? And we translate things into their own language as well and with the Ukrainians, they have a choice of either Russian or Ukraine, cause some of them prefer Russia and I think.
MARYAM: Depends which week.
ZARA: But yeah, they're not discouraged. I mean, obviously they're not supposed to talk a lot in class anyway, but they come in here in the morning and they're all chattering away and Ukrainian. And it's like we [P1 and P3] both come from language school background and there we were always like English only. We were told there that they're never allowed to speak their own language because they were only short term usually, so it's really just coverage there. But here they chat away in their own language and it's nice.

SONIA: And it is natural for them.

ZARA: It's nice and the little girl from Afghanistan or it's not a brilliant influence that's found a girl in an older year group. You [other participants] probably know who I'm talking about, who speaks Pashto as well. And you do see them together sometimes. And although it's not the best influence, it's nice that she's got another girl to speak Pashto with, because although her English is okay now, she's not gonna be able to speak about everything she wants to in English.

R: Yeah.

SONIA: And also, in year 11. So, we've got students that I support in English pretty much every day. So they both Ukrainian but one of them he came with better English; the one who was absent quite a lot, and he's been here longer, so he translates for the weaker one.

R: oh nice

SONIA: Obviously it speeds things up a bit. Or he explains. So yeah, that that's good

ZARA: They’re very good with each other, actually, aren't they? All of them generally they look after each other.

R: Do you find that their sort of initial relationships they make in school obviously apart from with you and adults are with similar language peers?
ZARA: The Ukrainian’s have all stuck together. Yeah. I think some of them have got friends from - They haven’t really made many friends in their own classes, but they've made friends that group like some of them go to clubs and things. So, they'll talk to others. The Afghan girl and boy

SONIA: she’s very sociable

ZARA: Both of them have integrated with English people. But the Ukrainians have stuck together as a group, even across age groups. They still -

SONIA: But that is quite because, for example, the girl who is in year eight. She's got a brother. She's lovely, but the girls in her class are not so nice. So, they're not necessarily someone she would be friends with, even if she was English. Yeah. And I do feel a bit sorry for her cause she doesn't have friends in that class and she is lovely. And they haven’t encouraged, Like no one talks to her.
I think they do like she said, that they [her family] do because, obviously, there's so many Ukrainians here now. And she was talking this morning about on Saturday because of the anniversary of the war started. So, they had the big meeting in Bournemouth. Yeah. And because there's quite a lot, I think they meet up with other Ukrainian people. Yeah. I don't think she's made any English friends.

ZARA: No, I don't think she has either.

R: What do you think the impact of that might be them for her.

ZARA: I do feel sorry for.
SONIA: I do too. I think she feels - it's like even those little bits in the lesson where the for example doing an experiment and you know they're paired up and the teachers preparing something. So, they've got time to chat to each other and she has no one, I was with her, but obviously she was looking at other students and that must feel horrible, but I don't really wanna ask her, ‘Have you made friends?’ Because it's putting the pressure on her.

MARYAM: You don’t want to emphasise it

ZARA: She's a rare kind of really nice, very pleasant, and lovely. You know, she would never be nasty, and that's quite unusual for girls in that age group here, and especially the ones in her class, they are not very nice.

MARYAM: Is it just because, um, there's no chance of there being moved?

ZARA: No
SONIA: I think as her English improves, but it's quite difficult to move sets now. Because they are just for maths.

MARYAM: Hmm, yeah, what year?

ZARA: Eight.

SONIA: Yes.

MARYAM: Ah, so you haven't got the X and Y split yet.

ZARA: Next year it would be good
MARYAM: Because obviously then you’ve got two bottom sets.

ZARA: Yeah, she’s higher up, isn't she? She is, isn’t she? or not?

SONIA: The moment they have no, like English split. It’s only one at the moment, there still not divided. Yeah, but she's still with her brother who was a completely different character, but so at least she's –

ZARA: And they each other at break time. The other students, they got the same breaks. We've only got one lunch break now, which makes it easier. So they're all together.
R: So does she talk to the other Ukrainians?

ZARA: Yeah. Yeah.

SONIA: Yeah

MARYAM: You want them to build friendships, but you can’t force it.
SONIA: But it takes time. It's the same with my daughter, you can't tell them, ‘I want you to be friends with this person, not this person’. Well, you can tell them to them, but it's their decision at the end of the day.

R: So, do you find that as language skills increase, there's a building of more friendships with English people. Or is it still quite a divide

SONIA: So, like, the ones from Afghanistan. Definitely. But the kind of in Ukraine –

ZARA: They've just thrown themselves in and I think the thing is with them they've got no - they don't seem to have any filter of embarrassment about making mistakes, which is really good. They just have just embraced it, haven't they?

MARYAM: Yeah, but also, they probably are trying to build a life here.

ZARA: Yes, they are.

MARYAM: All those your mindset is different as in.
SONIA: And the Ukrainians, because they have each other, that kind of hinders developing other friendships. So it's like, is it like a double edged sword really? Because on one hand you’ve got someone to fall back on, but then it doesn't encourage you to at the moment explore other possibilities.

MARYAM: Yeah. She's got a long way to go in this school if she stays.

ZARA: Yes, she ha

MARYAM: Cause you're right. It's not like, yeah, year 11 or 12 where you're thinking you're not going to be in this sort of rigid environment for too long.

SONIA: But then hopefully as her English improves, she picks it up really quickly, she'll be put in better sets with nicer people.

ZARA: Nicer people, yeah

R: And I guess maybe, like you say, it comes back to that not knowing whether she this is gonna be home.

SONIA: Yeah, it’s like a limbo
R: It's hard cause that's not something we can really change, isn't it?

ZARA: No, no.
SONIA: You know, and then this was the funny thing when they started quite a few teachers said ‘Ohh, you know how long they here for?’ and I thought ‘How long is it a piece of string?’

MARYAM: But now, obviously, t’s been ages, so.
R: We just have to see what happens faster, ongoing process. So, kind of similarly, but just well, we're talking about the sort of. I know we've mentioned a bit about the other young people in the class and maybe their attitudes in general. If we're thinking about their attitude sort of towards young people coming in from different cultures and towards accepting sort of newcomers, is there anything that comes to mind? That might be impactful for the asylum-seeking young people.

ZARA: I think generally here they're quite good, aren't they? We have so many foreign students, not just refugees, but it's quite normal.

SONIA: Or one parent is British.
ZARA: Yeah. I mean, yeah, I don't think it's a big shock to them when anybody's started. We've got a new starter today from Turkey, I think, we haven’t seen him yet, but it it's quite normal for them and in most classes there's somebody that's got a parent or that comes from a different country, so.

R: Yeah

SONIA: I wonder if it also the younger they are the more but then the student that we talked about who hasn't made that manifest, she's in year 8.
MAYRAM: Yeah. Yes, she was here in year 7, and it didn’t really help.

ZARA: I don't know. Sometimes they're quite interested. You know, when we had CYP start and as they all knew, all the girls were quite interested. But he was very shy and couldn't speak.

SONIA: He was terrified.

ZARA: Absolutely terrified. Didn't speak for about a year. But I think I'm quite - I haven't heard, although we tend to hear things cause we sit in a minute in amongst them rather than the teacher being at the front. We hear a lot of things going on cause they forget you're there after a while and I'm not really heard anything negative towards any of them

R: Yeah.
ZARA: What think about? I think I don't know. Do you hear things in the year office about any kind of like?
MARYAM: No. Nothing like that.

R: And I guess that potentially might have a positive impact on their sort of sense of belonging in school is feeling that people accept them, even if those friendships aren't built. They do potentially feel quite welcomed by accepted?

ZARA: Yeah, and they will help them, won't they? They, the other students generally are quite helpful in class and things too

SONIA: Because that's another thing I just thought about, which is the double edged sword. Because obviously if we're with them, then they cannot be sat with another student.
ZARA: Yes. Sometimes we probably hinder them.

SONIA: So because that's how somehow friendships develop. But then we there to help them and to give them more confidence and more English. So, and we know in all lessons.

R: I think it's difficult isn't it because both are important the language in the long run, the language will probably help the friendships like yeah, but yeah, it's just I guess you're right. Maybe having someone sat there is a bit of a barrier.

SONIA: And an adult when you're a teenager is like, you know

ZARA: The interesting thing is that the students that don't have you with them. Ask you questions and are quite jealous sometimes, and it's like, well, how come he gets help and why aren't you helping me? You know, but the ones that you're with quite a lot of them are like they see you coming and even the Ukrainians, you've got one at the moment that he said he's like ‘I don't I don't need you in here, can you go?’
SONIA: Yeah, I I had to say to him, the teacher has specifically asked me to be there in your lesson, and he is kind of like Urgh OK.
R: But do they engage with you quite well when you are there?

ZARA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, we do. We're quite lucky we don't have many behaviour problems with our students. They tend to be pretty good. Although at the moment we've got two that I think the more Language they pick up depends on the, the, the cheekier they are. When they can express themselves. Yeah, like this student that we've just mentioned. And I have to be very blunt with him. And I just say I am here to help you. So we need to go.
ZARA: Yeah. Because I think they think when we're there, they have to do more work, you see.

SONIA: And he's quite relaxed, let’s put it this way

ZARA: If we are not there to help them, they can get away with saying ‘Ohh wait, I don't understand’.
SONIA: Because they're very often sat at the back ‘oh you've got your Kindle. OK, OK’. But this time, he's the front with me. So he's like, ‘urgh’. They’re still teenagers, really, aren’t they?

R: Ohh it can be interesting. And see, I feel like that it sounds like that is an area or maybe actually is working quite well. So belonging at the moment and people hopefully are feeling quite included and accepted by their peers and adults around them, which is really nice. And similarly, we have talked about this, it's just that there was anything else to sort of mention was around the sort of relationships. So thinking again about your experience of being in the classroom or around the young people. Is there any sort of relationships that come to mind that you think might be impacting their belonging either positively or negatively? So, it's sort of thinking about like the depth of the relationships that they build and even their sort of home relationships. I know we've talked about a little bit and maybe how they're impacting their ability to sort of feel like they fit in at school you it won't.

ZARA: Before you came, it was talking about how the two, certainly the two boys from Afghanistan, now that their dad's not around and can even the girl to some extent a lot of being at secondary school socially is to do with things like sleepovers and meeting each other in town and things like that. And I think that probably impacts on their friendships because I don't think they can do any of those things.
SONIA: No, they won't. They won't be allowed.
ZARA: So, we know that they prefer being at school than not being at school. In the holidays, they're always really upset.

SONIA: The only ones who are like ‘Ohhhhh’.

ZARA: They don’t want to be on holiday, because they say they do nothing.

SONIA: It's boring, that’s what the boys say.

ZARA: It's boring. They just stay in all the time, and they don't socialise. So of course, when they come into school. They are really excited to be back again and that's when you've got a bit more freedom now,

SONIA: Especially the girl.

ZARA: Especially the girl, because I think she literally doesn't go anywhere at all when she's at home. So yeah. I mean, I guess the Ukrainians are lucky because they've got each other, so they can speak in their own language to each other and talk about everything they need to in their own language, whereas, with the Afghans because of the culture he doesn't like, they don't like to be together at all, do they? And to start with, they put them in the same class, and he wouldn't help her with anything. He wouldn't translate. He used to just pretend he hasn't heard you if you asked him to help. But it's a bit of a sexist thing where he, he's older, he's been back-yeared anyway, and she's a girl, so she's not as important. So. And they’ve split them now, but obviously they don't have anybody else at school really that they can speak their own language to. So even though she plays outside with other kids, they're not. They have a very superficial level of, yeah, what they can talk about.

SONIA: Yeah. Because although she obviously has made so much progress with her English, but it's still very limited because she knew nothing. It’s almost like the other we want when you think about it, the students from Afghanistan, they met, they made a lot of friends at school, whereas the Ukrainians haven't. But outside school, the Ukrainians and the some of the Ukrainian parents, and they do came friends. So obviously now visit each other. Yeah. So it's almost like the other way round.

MARYAM: You are not being straight with English people though, the Ukrainians, outside of school?

ZARA: No their not, no. Especially since they've gone out of their house families now most of them. So, they probably don’t.

MARYAM: No

ZARA: And a lot of them [the parents] have fairly good jobs, the ones that are still here. There is one that's a radiographer in the hospital, somebody else is at JP Morgan, they've got good, good jobs and they're the ones that have stayed. There is couple that haven’t I think, as well. One is a housekeeper at the Hilton, but you can see the difference in I guess where they've come from in Ukraine

SONIA: and their status, social status as well, yeah
MARYAM: So do you think that they are bothered that they are not integrating with English children?

SONIA: They’ve never said it, but, but then I don't know if a teenager would come to us and say I feel very sad because I haven't made any English friends, do you know what I mean?

MARYAM: Its difficult to be. If you put yourself in, their shoes, it would be weird to be in a environment where you're just speaking to the people that even now and not speaking to someone from that country.
ZARA: That's what tends to happen though, isn't it? I mean, you [P3] you've had that experience. I've had that experience you. But you [P2] have obviously been here for a long time, but I used to live in Turkey and my only friends were ex Pats.

MARYAM: I see what you mean. Yeah.

SONIA: So for me, my friends were, my initial friends were my husband's friends.

ZARA: But then did you speak really good English originally?

SONIA: Yes. Really. Yes. Yeah.

ZARA: See, I didn't speak very good Turkish to start with. So it's like, I craved English company because then you can actually have a proper conversation with people. So.
MARYAM: So wonder whether they they can't offload things. I think they're maybe they're keeping a lot of stuff in because they don't want to meet up with any other Ukrainian and just offline personal things, whereas you and I may, I might come and find you out and offload you because you don't really know me. That. Would you see what I mean?

ZARA: Yeah. So what you mean? Yeah

R: I think a couple of things I've kind of picked up on from that discussion was maybe one about support of the community outside of school as well as a sort of facilitator for feeling like you belong and you fit in. I think like you're saying maybe the Ukrainian people's have kind of stuck together in school. It sounds like outside of school they've maybe got more support and more from other families than the Afghan asylum seekers that have maybe been a bit more in school.

ZARA: Yeah.

R: And then also I hear coming across maybe something to do with the social status from before they migrated across maybe having an impact.

SONIA: Cause you can see the differences in education as well.

ZARA: Definitely and with the two Afghan boys in year.

SONIA: Ohh yeah, of course.

MARYAM: I don't know what year they are now.

SONIA: Nine

ZARA: We thought when they both - when one of them arrived we thought ohh brilliant we've got a friend for him they were like totally one would speak to the other one.

MARYAM: Oh, okay.

ZARA: Because they, because ones that Dad works at the university here has come from a really wealthy background, was well educated and the other has come from a village in the mountains

SONIA: They are almost like nomads because they're trouble. Yeah. So.

ZARA: And they're certainly a class divide there, and they don't have any interaction even though they speak the same language.

SONIA: They view them as inferior, or almost inferior. He's not rude because I am with them in English. But you can see that he likes to keep his distance.

ZARA: Yeah, he is very nice.
MARYAM: I guess it's like throwing two people together from the same country. You think, ‘Ohh, they're gonna get on just because they speak the same language’
SONIA: What's like with our Ukraine and some unlikely friendships developed because X wouldn't necessarily become friends with Y, but because they're both from Ukraine and they're in the same class or set they become, do you know what I mean?

ZARA: These two haven’t though, the Afghans, have they?

SONIA: And I don't think they will have it.
ZARA: I guess it depends as well, doesn't it? On the sort of cultural values from that they've been brought up with as well. And the difference that sound like we were saying about the male female split. I know that's very different in Afghanistan to how it would be here or potentially in the Ukraine as well, you know

SONIA: Cause we have this should of cooked food though.

ZARA: So yes, he really wouldn't do it.

SONIA: It's the boy the boy from Afghanistan

ZARA: Woman's work and then would wash up or help to the washing after

SONIA: so we were showing him pictures of Gordon Ramsay, and you [P1] found a chef from Afghanistan.

ZARA: He was a man and we were saying that it's, you know, men here are very good chefs, It's not embarrassing to be, but he's still didn't really. He didn't engage with that very well.

SONIA: I think he's polite. So now he nods along and he does it at school because he he has to.

ZARA: But he used to throw his food away. Didn't wanna take it home because he had made it and it was embarrassing that he'd made it.
R: I guess that's difficult, isn't it? Because he doesn't want to give up his values. But that probably also makes him feel a little bit uncomfortable, but also potentially a little bit different to his peers, who are all happy to get involved.

ZARA: Yeah, he's definitely calmed down a lot. There were a lot of cultural problems to start with, weren't there? I do think. I don't know if you've ever heard anything.

SONIA: Ohh that religion wise as well?

ZARA: Religion, wise views and also kind of inappropriate behaviour towards girls because.

SONIA: A lot

ZARA: Yeah, which we think has calmed down a little bit

MARYAM: Well it has. But I what I well, I don't know if it winded its way back to the parents cause he used to pick on a few year Elevens, didn't he? Saying inappropriate comments and umm, but they actually just used to scream and find it hilarious.

SONIA: They egged him on

ZARA: The girls?
MARYAM: Ohh yeah, I know, I know. Yeah. But I wonder whether if they went home and said to their parents this boy at school said this to me, whether that would be phone call the next morning.

ZARA: Yeah. Some of the girls probably encourage it, don’t they?

MARYAM: Probably yeah

ZARA: Because that's funny. Yeah. There has been a few.

MARYAM: There's been that, but it's not. It's not been taken seriously by the girls.
ZARA: But there was some younger ones that

MARYAM: That's older girls saying there just laughing it off. But if it's going down school, that's different, isn't it? Year 11 girls, are practically grown-ups, aren’t they these days?

ZARA: Yeah. So we've had to have conversations. Male staff have had to kind of take him aside and explain that, you know, what's inappropriate.
R: It must be quite hard to find a balance between sort of respecting his cultural values, but also explaining to him those values which are maybe not so acceptable in school or in UK in general?

SONIA: Yeah, and his age makes the difference because all his life he's been told or exposed or taught that women are inferior and suddenly he's here and it's different. So, it's not gonna just he's not gonna change just like that. Yeah.

R: I suppose then, do you think there's an impact of other people's understanding the young people’s cultural backgrounds and maybe their experiences that have led to them seeking asylum?

SONIA: Some students don't. They have very limited knowledge. Cause I had students saying to me in year 11 English, ‘Miss, where Ukraine, where's Ukraine?’ And you know, it's Europe, so Afghanistan or someone who is from much further away.

ZARA: He's the worst actually. Though I have to say he's the worst for saying inappropriate things for the Ukrainians.

R: Ohh really?

ZARA: Yeah, and although he knows because he's come from that. He would laugh and say ‘ohh you know, there's a war in your country’ and things so he even though he's come from it, I think he's the only one I have heard trying to kind of wind them up a bit.

SONIA: ‘Ohh Ukraine’s not a country’

ZARA: Yeah and ‘no it's not, it's belongs to Russia’. So there's a lot of you know and that's the only time actually that I've heard any students saying anything in appropriate to them really

MARYAM: I mean there's probably a lack there's probably some students that lack understanding. And they shouldn't be unaware, because everyone has religious studies lessons all way throughout school. But I would agree it's probably there is a bit of a lack of understanding from some students maybe.

R: Okay, what do we what do you think the impact of that is?

ZARA: Possibly their feelings of inclusion, they had an assembly.
MARYAM: Yeah, which is quite sad in a way, because she think, well, they've been sitting sat through lots of educational lessons.

ZARA: And they did do this assembly and they had an assembly when it all happened before they arrive. Yes, we had an assembly so that the students were aware of what was going on. And we are quite good, really. I mean, when there was the earthquake in Turkey recently, we went round and checked on all our students that had any kind of Turkish background or connection, just to make sure that they were OK. They knew that they could come and talk to anyone if they were worried. So, they are quite aware here of things. But whether the students take it in, some go and sit in assembly and won't even listen to it all won't even know where Ukraine is.

SONIA: I think what P2 talked about. I don't, I think with some students does not much understand. They'll just dismiss them, ‘Ohh, You know he treats women like this’, but they don't know that in their culture and that must influence.

R: Yeah, I think with a lot of people, you can hear something, but not necessarily understand it.

ZARA: Yeah, and the impact that might have for asylum-seekers. People say they understand what's happening in Ukraine, but they might not think about the impact that that has for people that are coming across with reference here to specific students.

MARYAM: Yeah.
R: (47mins 20seconds) Okay, we will take a just a break because I know that it is our break time, yeah. Please remember you can help yourselves to coffee and snacks. And we will come back together in around 15 minutes. Welcome back
ZARA: Sometimes don’t find it and their parents can't help them. That's the other thing. There is even things like parents evening. For lots of them the parents aren't confident enough to do the parents evening, so I'll phone them and try and chase it up. If they haven't understood. But even if they don't want to do the parents evening, we do, we get their reports and printer often sit student down, explain their report to them and then they can go home and translate their parents. So it's all that kind of thing that I guess, yeah.

R: You take the provincial well if you. Yeah. And I think that makes sense. You kind of they need somebody, don't they in school, don’t they, that is that link person. And it sounds like you guys are probably the best place people to be that for most people

SONIA: Otherwise, zero. If they don't have much English like how do I even I remember

ZARA: And they’re going to a school that’s got 300 students per year. So they like P2, her office has never got nobody waiting.

MARYAM: Yeah, from the minute it opens in the morning until they go home. There's some problem or some issues.

R: Okay, I guess that you say that's the impact then of having this specific area that is actually just for EAL pupils.

ZARA: It’s really important, I think. And the students have a choice, but because of the sensitivity of it, we offer home language GCSE so that they can get extra GCSE

R: So, for example, they could take Ukrainian?
ZARA: We don’t have Ukrainian, but we do have Russian.

R: OK.

ZARA: Some of them didn't want to do it. Because of what's going on at the moment and were very adamant. And that was fine. But one of them is doing Russians as a GCSE, so it will give him an extra qualification.

R: That’s lovely, yeah.

SONIA: Working here, It's been amazing. And I used to work with P1 anyway, before. I'm really. Yeah, she's, she's great as a line manager and just very understanding. Very empathetic. Because it’s like she said initially everyone's like, yeah. Yeah. You know they [the asylum seeking students] get given sheets in Ukrainian, and but after a while teachers just assume that's it. And I didn't have that much English and be it's not like they're learning English here, they're learning MacBeth, or they have to write a paragraph. And how do you write a paragraph with someone who can't even construct a basic sentence? So, it's kind of, yeah, it's very interesting too to see how they progress. And obviously some of them make progress faster than others because they’re natural language learners, the most studious, they pick it up. So the girl from Afghanistan, because a lot of the culture is oral.

R: okay,

SONIA: So she understands, her comprehension, is really, really good, though when it comes to reading and writing, obviously much slower.

R: And that's just that difference in culture?

SONIA: We’re pushing the reading because writing, but I said to her is really important for you to be able to read what's on the board.

R: Yeah.

SONIA: Because initially it was like, man. And obviously their sounds system. Everything is so different.

R: I think reading is so important, even if you don’t go into an academic job it even just in life like being able to.

SONIA: Reading labels, reading on an Internet page to book a doctor's appointment or to fill out your Universal Credit form. My daughter's, well, you're never fully bilingual because her father is English is and because she was born here. So, I speak to her in Polish, but obviously her English is much better. Her range of vocabulary, etcetera, etcetera. But, and I was never bothered about her writing, but reading I pushed. There were moments when she would throw a book and say no, I don't wanna do it. So I stopped because I thought, well, we'll just pick it up some other time. And she, she's a voracious reader, but when she reads in Polish, it will be stuff for probably, so she's 15, for 8 year olds because obviously it needs to be shorter sentences and that, but at least she's picked up that skill.

R: Enough to get by?

SONIA: Yeah.
ZARA: But it in reality, in school, it's impossible because they can't produce the work that they need to be in the upper sets.

SONIA: Especially in English.

R: Do you find that they move up sets as their English Ability gets a little bit better?

SONIA: Some of them have already, especially maths and science.

ZARA: Yeah.

SONIA: Because English, I don't think any of them have.

ZARA: It's so, the content is so different and they haven't got the prior knowledge. So they haven't studied any of the technical- so even things like Christmas Carol. We all know the story because we watch it every Christmas. No, a lot of them won't have ever seen it. So they don't know the story. They don't know the characters, you know, it's just.

R: Yeah
ZARA: MacBeth, I think Shakespeare. Its just impossible. You know, for them to. You know, just an impossible mission.

SONIA: Actually, \*\*\* just told me this, but actually it's not a bad idea - Graphic novels in the library, so I'll get one from start and we'll just have a look at pictures. I’ve shown her lots of pictures already.

ZARA: The language [in English literature], you know, it's it's so difficult even for our students. So

MARYAM: I think every everything even, like you say, your maths and science, you're doing, you know it's numbers but it's still involves a lot of language.
ZARA: It does. The word –

SONIA: Well, it’s easy to see with \*\*\* for example. Because he will understand words like ‘envy’. But sometimes he doesn't know how to use the past tense correctly. Because he's been exposed to all that language here he's kind of doing it backwards. First the difficult words that he means for English or chemistry, whatever.

R: And then the more conversational things?

SONIA: Yeah. Because his comprehension is amazing, now is really.

ZARA: He's a really interesting case though. He came in from Poland. Really, really angry. Didn't wanna be here at all. Came because his parents had jobs here and wouldn't speak, took months for him to say anything and he's now, he came in at the end of year nine and he's in year 11 doing his GCSEs and he's come on massively. He's still they are going back to Poland after he's finished his GCSEs, but he's gone from saying I just wanna be in Poland to -
SONIA: ‘I hate it here’

ZARA: Yeah, he hated it here, and he wouldn't, he wouldn't accept that there was anything good about being here. But I actually think if he was honest now, there's quite a lot of things that he likes here and his English has come on amazingly, hasn’t it?

SONIA: Yes, because he said they are staying for the summer, ‘cause he'll be working with his mum. because initially it was “as soon as I take my GCSE’s I’m going”

R: Ohh, and now he's staying this summer?

ZARA: Yeah, now he's staying for the summer and he’s he's much happier and he’s come out of his shell. He actually said that he used to be really naughty in Poland. He was in an awful lot of trouble all the time. And that it’s done him good coming here because he doesn't get in trouble at school at all. And he's got better relationship with Mum.

R: That sounds likes great progress and some lovely positives.

R: Okay. Is it okay to revisit something that was discussed in the break? About the environment of the school. We talked about how the room we are in has the different flags up and also having different sort of things in the room that make it feel welcoming. And I guess just a really quick point maybe about how you think that might impact well young people?

ZARA: Well it does, they definitely like coming in here. We try and do things at Christmas to - even the Afghans we had them writing in their own languages on the window, happy New Year. So and and even though they're quite cultural in that when they first came, they were saying he was saying ‘ohh I you know you don't believe in the real God’ and things like this. Actually, they were quite excited about Christmas in the end, loved it and really enjoyed decorating the window.

SONIA: Chocolates. Sweet.

ZARA: Yeah, they love chocolate. But we try, but I've got a display for Eid that can go on the window. Um, because they've got Ramadan this month, well in March. And we do try and sort of include them in things like their celebrations as well.

SONIA: And last year, a student in year 11 who I supported who was Muslim. So, I spoke to a couple of teachers because Ramadan affected his ability to concentrate.

ZARA: Yes.

SONIA: So. So you do know this, but you sometimes teachers need to be reminded because he was nodding off in a lesson because of the sugar level dropping, obviously.

R: I see
SONIA: And they up all night praying.

ZARA: Yes. So they getting up really, really early. And they’re going to bed really late. So we do have a function on our emails where we can e-mail ‘teachers of …’ and it will go to every teacher that teaches them or comes into contact with them during the day. So, if there's anything specific culturally that we think they need to be aware of, we will e-mail all of their teachers and let them know

R: I'm sure, the fact that you do things fall like you say, Ramadan, and for Eid is probably going to be something that's really helpful.

ZARA: Yeah, I think it just adds to those feelings of inclusion, hopefully.

R: So then the next one I've got was just about the learning experiences. So I think we've touched it a little bit about the sort of difference and how they might they might be used to learning and how maybe teachers would expect them to be able to learn. And then yeah, sort of also maybe around their understanding of the relevance of what they're learning for them, and maybe the impact of how important they feel like it is, I'm throwing these things out. There might be nothing, but just wondering.

ZARA: So, for example, religious studies, I've heard a lot of complaints from the Ukrainians saying ‘why are we learning this? We don't need to learn about other religions’, because we don't just learn, we learn about all religions here and a few of them have said ‘I don't understand. We don't do this in our country.’ ‘Why do I need to know about Buddhism?’ or ‘Why do I need to know about Islam?’ You know, they think they’re never gonna use this. We do it here because they take it a year earlier and it's just an extra GCSE that they get out of the way and it's quite easy. So. But they haven’t really been -

SONIA: But the detention is a very big issue.

ZARA: Ohh, yeah.

SONIA: Because, yeah, it's not common. It's the same in Poland because I very often compare because there are very similar, Poland and Ukraine, in terms of education system, but detention for lack of homework doesn't really exist - we've got other ways or you can give an extra homework, for example, parents are called so here detention was a big issue.

ZARA: Yeah, and we do have quite a strict behaviour system here and most of the time our students, umm, the only thing they tend to fall down on is homework, isn't it really? Because they're usually fairly well behaved in class and teachers do tend to give them a bit more leeway with speaking in class and things because they need to translate

SONIA: Their attendance is very good

ZARA: Attendance is generally very good. It's just, yeah, homework detention. And they gave them leeway at the start, but obviously they've been here a year now, they expect them to do the same.
SONIA: And a lot of teachers are quite understanding and saying I don't expect them to do 100%, but as long as I see everyday that it's been attempted and not just copied, but even instead of a paragraph writing a sentence or two, that's good enough. But I need to see this because otherwise I'm not fair on other students who are doing it.
R: And do you think it's from, like, a language barrier perspective that it's not being done or potentially from a difference in what was expected?

SONIA: I think mainly the language

ZARA: Yes, probably the language, but I think also yes, because now they know what the consequences are. So, they will sometimes come in and ask us for help if they do, if they haven't understood something will come in here and say, could, you know, I don't understand what we can you help us with homework.

SONIA: Sometimes we’re a bit limited because I find - I've already spoken about it - one of the teachers frustrating for the Afghans students because I've already raised it so many times that the homework is too difficult. The content is too difficult, but I can only do so much.

ZARA: We do have issues, and we've brought it up lots of times, with teachers not understanding that students need things differentiated and we've had several, we've sent we have an end of day email system and we've put things on there so many times, we've sent them ideas of how to differentiate because, we, our jobs effectively are teaching assistants, and we're supposed to go in and sit next to the student and help them, but we're not supposed to actually prepare work for them, and we don't often know what their scheme of work is.

R: I see, and you said earlier you are quite often the ones that are differentiating, is that right.

ZARA: Yes, on the spot as well, because we don't have time to do it in advance and we don't see what they're doing in the lesson in advance. It seems some teachers are better than others.

SONIA: Some teachers are brilliant

ZARA: And some translate whole PowerPoints or give them handouts, and they've even bought copies of books in in their language themselves, not through the school, you know, which is really nice. But, you get others that I think see it as just as extra work and ‘ohh they've got someone with them so I can ignore that student because it's easier for me not to engage with them’.

R: Do you see a difference in the young people and the differences in the lessons where they've got a lot of differentiation and the ones where their teachers leave it to you?

ZARA: Interestingly, yes. Yeah. So we've been doing learning walks and we did them last term. I've done a few last term, where we go in and look at our students when they've got support. So when they've got one of us with them, and when they have nobody with them and the different levels of support that the teachers give them in terms of translating, and there's a huge difference. So when they've got a teaching assistant with them, umm, the teacher will ignore them more, but they're getting the support they need so it's not, yeah, too bad. But there are some lessons, unfortunately, where the students in the lesson and is totally ignored.

R: Ohh really?

ZARA: Because it's too difficult and the teacher I think thinks ‘Oh my God they don't understand this, I’ll just pretend that I haven't noticed’

SONIA: And they already have 20 other studies.

ZARA: Yeah.

R: Are these the teachers that maybe aren't doing so much differentiation?

ZARA: Yes, they’re not no.

R: And then when you see the other people in the class where there's lots of differentiation, so they get the the PowerPoint in their own language, or a text book –

ZARA: Yeah, they can get on and do some work. And, there's a there's an English teacher in particular, Mr \*\*\*, who's very good. Every time you go, you know, because sometimes I'll go in late, ‘cause I get held up here. And, so, I know it's genuine because I walk straight into a lesson they’re in the middle of. They've got their translated PowerPoints in front of them. And, you know, they've already started writing. You can see he's checking on them. Yeah, he's doing what he should be doing.

SONIA: Yeah. Whereas in English you have got the completely opposite, where a couple of times I had to say this is too difficult, because I'm not an English teacher, I don't know how to explain this to a person who, like that girl from Afghanistan who can't read Pashto, so I can't even translate. Se we literally do MacBeth-Bad, Lady Macbeth-very bad.

All: Laughing
ZARA: Because you have to draw pictures and things, like a comic strip of the story. But it would be very easy for the teacher to create an activity that was a really, you know, even if they just we've said before, even if you just provide four key words that you want that student to learn in that lesson and you can provide, you know, have a picture with a word and a matching activity or something. Then that would be better than them sitting there and not understanding anything at all.

ZARA: And when it comes to exams they are not allowed a translator. And they get no extra time. Interestingly, some exams that they are allowed to dictionary but they don't get extra time Yes, which to me seems unfair because of the time searching, it is an additional need in a way because they they're disadvantage.

SONIA: It’s like even if they had the understanding of what they're being asked to do, the limitations from their their language and from writing ability might mean that they can't show the knowledge that they have of the topic.

R: Yeah. Do you mean that they might understand, so for example if you ask them verbally, then you might get a lot from them, but then when it comes to exams, they might suffer because of writing ability?

SONIA: Well writing is always more difficult. Putting your ideas into paragraphs, you know.

ZARA: But they do really well considering, when you think about what they have to do in an English exam.

SONIA: Some of, some of them, they scored higher than-

ZARA: Yeah, some scored higher than the English students.

SONIA: cause I'm there in the bottom set because of the language ability and two of them are really bright and even the third one. But because he joined so late cause he joined this year with no English and he's in year 11.

ZARA: But he's still going in to do his mock GCSEs at the moment. So.

R: So still yeah, there is that custom that sort of adjusting isn't there, it's just obviously. It's difficult. It's really difficult. I'm thinking back to the young girl you mentioned that did really well in school before migrating and now is not getting so much praise in school. Maybe the impact that that could be having?

ZARA: Well, she went back and she's gone. She went back.

SONIA: But the other one is still –

ZARA: The other ones, we’ve got, there were two of them are ones still here. But she's Ukrainian, is she? Where she from?

SONIA: No, oh, I’m talking about the one with the demanding mum, cause she she's been exactly the same thing

ZARA: Ohh yeah, okay.

SONIA: In her country she was praised a lot.

ZARA: Constantly praised, yeah,

SONIA: And the mum's quite, I think, ambitious. And she is as well and this is the issue that I have with have an English and I have to speak to her because when there was to write the paragraph others are writing and just occasionally looking up words but she because she wants to get it totally right, she spends ages translating whole sentences. And I said to her, it's taking too long. Don't worry. And it stresses you out just. But she wants to -

ZARA: It has to be perfect.

SONIA: Yeah, it has to be perfect. So that's possibly the impact of her mum at home.

ZARA: I think some of them do have incredibly pushy parents, the Ukrainians, yeah.

SONIA: And also, if you were used to being praised and being the best, you feel a bit lost when you are not understanding simple things. And they must be really frustrating because sometimes you've got the content knowledge, you've just don't know how to say it or how to express it. So yeah.
R: But it must be really difficult.

SONIA: It is. They're very brave.

ZARA: They are, and it's really easy for us to forget because they've been here for a long time and they’re kids, so they do sometimes have attitude and, you know, try it on and mess about a bit. But they, in some ways, that's a good sign because it shows that they're relaxed, you know, when they do. Yeah, it shows that they're comfortable. Yeah, I think they've adapted really well. The ones that we've got left now, there were a few that you could see - there was one girl in particular that never settled.

SONIA: She wouldn’t speak English.

ZARA: She wouldn’t speak

SONIA: She wasn't eating properly.

ZARA: No, she wasn't bringing lunch. She wasn't. And she was clearly really, really unhappy. And I think in when the weight lifted, didn't it when she came in and said, ‘I'm going back’.

SONIA: It was as if she had wings. Big smile on her face.

ZARA: Yeah, yeah, because she just didn't settle

ZARA: Because we've got a couple who are torn because, for example, they want to go back and be with their friends, but their parents are happy here and quite settled. And then that also creates because one of them said to me, ‘I really missed my friends. I want to go back, but my mum wants to stay here.’
R: On that note then, we won't know everything that they've been through and their full experiences, but do you think there is an impact on their ability to sort of feel that they fit in and belong here based on what their past experiences?

ZARA: We had a lad. He's not here anymore. He was only here for a short time. He shouldn't have been at school, but he was back yeared and he came in from Afghanistan via Syria and Turkey on his own. His parents have been killed in Afghanistan and he travelled all the way through it took think it took, he told us it took something like nine months for him. He kept being placed in different settlements in different countries and he came across under a lorry, the last part, on his own into Poole Quay, and then was like an asylum seeker. But he was 16 and they backed him so he could do some time at school. Couldn't speak any English. Such a polite boy, but he had terrible flashbacks, couldn't sleep. The other students were lovely with him, but he couldn't, he just couldn't integrate because he used to come in here and fall asleep all the time because he'd been awake all night and he had nightmares. And I mean the other two that we've got from Afghanistan, I think, their dads were already working in England. And I think when the war happened, it was a good way of their dad's bringing their family.

SONIA: They came here very quick.
ZARA: Yeah. And I think it, I think I don't think there were impacted so much by the war. I think it was more right okay, so there is a war, now we can use it to bring them across. So, I don't think they've had the same traumatic experience.

SONIA: That’s the difference between them and the Ukrainians, because for them, because obviously Afghanistan has been unstable for such a long time, whereas in Ukraine it happened suddenly, it was like, wow, I can't believe this is happening. So, also, the attitude towards war. I think it's very different.

ZARA: Yeah. So they see war differently. That's why he laughs about, I think. He sees it as a normal kind of thing. And he, he does laugh and make jokes when he does, laugh when he's uncomfortable

SONIA: Yeah, he laugh also when he's uncomfortable. Yeah. So, we noticed that cause initially you think ohh you're being really rude but then once you get to know them you realise it’s a weakness almost.

R: So it sounds like these experiences as much as we don't really understand them cause it's not saying we've been through sounds like maybe they are impacting relationships and potentially engagement in school as well. I'm just thinking about the young boy's head, not by choice, obviously, he couldn’t engage with school because actually his basic needs weren’t being met.

ZARA: No, no, yeah.

SONIA: Yeah, ‘cause I remember when I when I went to Poland last Easter and I helped my friend works in the refugee centre. And we are also at the train station giving out free coffee. And you see all those people. [begins crying] Sorry.
R: Are you OK?
SONIA: Yes, I am okay. So for me it was very overwhelming, let alone for them, and they are kids, so.

ZARA: Yeah.
R: Yeah, it's a really tricky topic, would you like to take a moment?

SONIA: No, it’s okay, thank you.
ZARA: Yeah. I think for most of us here, it's unreal because we haven't, although we have seen them come over. It's just, ‘Ohh, there's some Ukrainians coming in’, but we haven't actually seen, the reality of it, you know.

SONIA: Yeah.

R: So for us having not had the experiences, we may know what is happening, but it is hard to understand?

SONIA: Exactly. Well that's for me. When I saw all these people coming out of the train and hugging the dogs, cats, everything. So feels real.
R: That must have been really difficult. Are you sure you are okay? We can pause or stop so that you can get some fresh air?

SONIA: Yeah, no, I'm good.
ZARA: Yeah, it seems, yeah, I guess it's things like them having to leave their pets behind and things and we've got some that have got grandparents still there that can't believe, you know, ‘cause they're the elderly and yeah.

SONIA: Ohh one of them is here. So he is here with his aunt and uncle and his grandmother. So his mom and dad are over there. So that's hard.
R: How do you think that might impact their sense of belonging in school?

ZARA: I feel sorry for them cause I think sometimes we're not very understanding. So, I spoke to one of our students, the one you're talking about, who parents aren't here. His sister is here and he is keeps being late for school now. We had a tutor notification come through here. Ohh, can you please speak to the student because he's late for school everyday. So, I sent back an e-mail saying it could he please have some leeway because he's here without parents and he's taking his sister to school every morning before he can come to school. She's only 9.

SONIA: She's in primary school and I see him every morning. So he's doing this.

ZARA: I spoke to him and I said, you know, you need to be here because you'll end up getting detentions for being late. And he said, ‘but my sister's so slow, you know, I'm trying to get her to school and she won't walk fast enough or she won't her shoes on in time’. And you think this is a like, 14-year-old boy with no parents here, who’s trying to take his sister to school. Personally, I don't think it matters if his late because he's doing something really important to get his sister to school before he even comes to school himself, you know. And I think sometimes there's that lack of understanding. And actually not just that, but his parents are still in a warzone, so you know it, people sometimes need reminding. I think. I think it comes back to what we were saying: you can understand what's happened, but you can't understand what people are going through. You can’t just expect people to adjust because actually they're not all going to adjust. And it's different for everybody.

R: I agree, it's not the same for everybody, and everybody’s experiences aand how they respond to those can be different.

ZARA: No, it's different.

SONIA: It's a tricky issue asking them about the families, because I occasionally ask them, but I don't wanna be too invasive, because I don't want to put pressure on them. Because what if the answer is no, they're not safe or the building has collapsed or there's no electricity and my grandmother can’t get to the hospital. So it almost like afraid to ask.

ZARA: You don't. It's funny cause at the same time you think you don't want them to think that you don't care either, and that you're not interested in what's going on at home. I mean, the one that's just been bereaved, we do ask is ‘How is your mum?’, ‘How are things at home now?’. Because to start with it was just diabolical and they weren't coping.

SONIA: And because of their culture she can't go out to the shopping, or-

ZARA: But he did actually say last time or no she, she's, she's much better than she was. So, you know at least they know that we are interested you know.

R: Yeah, I think that's what you really can do isn't it it's just make sure they know that if they want to talk to you they can come here.

ZARA: Interesting, the two Afghans that we’ve got here, actually. They've settled really well and their really happy here. She does say, though, when you say, ‘Oh, do you miss Afghanistan?’ She says, ‘yeah. Well it’s my country? You know, it's mine’, and she loves showing you if you go Google Maps or, you know, what's it called? Google Earth. Where you can actually go down. She's so excited to show you where she came from.

R: How lovely that she wants to share that with you. And to show you her affinity to her own culture and country. But the fact that she wants to share that with you shows that there is trust.

SONIA: We always talk about food.

ZARA: Yes. Yeah. She bought some food in, didn't she? That she made with her mum. That was really nice. Exactly. To sort of share her culture and have it accepted.
SONIA: She's quite settled, because we often see her with \*\*\* and some other students.

ZARA: Yeah, she is. And she's.
R: We don’t have too long left, so lets move on to discuss maybe the way in which the young asylum seekers you work with spend their free time and how this can impact their belonging. I know you previously mentioned that there are some asylum-seeking young people that integrate quite well with their peers in break times.

ZARA: They do, the Afghan students. We've also got a few that go to clubs now after school.

SONIA: Because we gave the list of clubs that they could join.

ZARA: So a couple of them joined sports clubs after school

SONIA: And art club.

ZARA: One of them, \*\*\*, goes to a basketball cub. He's in a basketball team outside of school. It's \*\*\* club. I can’t remember what it is called, but he's in the, like, A team. So, he's found that himself outside of school. A few of the meet up and go cycling at the weekends, don't they?
SONIA: And then one of them does the art club.

ZARA: Yeah.
SONIA: Yeah. How about the students from Afghanistan? Do they do any?
ZARA: I think they go to homework club and things, because they have been

SONIA: Oh yeah, so the girl does the homework club and she needs, but we were kind of pushing that because it's good for her because there's a teacher there who can help if she struggles

ZARA: And she has limited resources at home. They don't always have the Internet.

SONIA: But we do provide them with the laptop.

ZARA: So if they don't have laptops at home, then we do loan them laptops.
SONIA: But obviously there's no Wi-Fi and, and it's [homework club] very beneficial for her ‘cause she can get help.

ZARA: The other students, apart from them, though, they have contact with their friends in their own country through gaming. They still do online gaming and things, so a lot of them chat to friends that aren't here, that are back there. So they are keeping, so maintaining some relationships.

SONIA: Lots use the telegram, which is like the equivalent of WhatsApp.

R: Ohh okay.

SONIA: Yes.

ZARA: So yeah, they do have still some contact. The Afghans don't have any contact with anybody that's there at all. I think that's just because they can't because it's too difficult. I don't know, they’ve both got phones though, yeah, they came without phones and he seems to have mastered like, TikTok and Instagram that quick anyway.

SONIA: We take it for granted.
R: That's really helpful. Thank you. And I, I guess then, yeah, what do we think that impact of going to those sorts of clubs and activities is?
ZARA: Good. That's very good. Definitely. A lot of them probably, I think, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think English parents generally are really laid back and don't tend to push their kids into doing things out of school, and I think in Ukraine they probably do and they used to being busy outside of school and doing clubs and things so here the parents were asking, ‘What clubs are there?’, ‘What can they do?’, You know, ‘In Ukraine, they do this, that and the other’. And so, I think they were quite pleased when they could realise they could sign up for clubs and things after school and they could just go, they don't have to pay.

SONIA: And they can have more opportunities to meet different, like, friends.

R: Thank you. We only have a short time left now, so, is there anything we haven’t discussed that you think is important or anything that you think could be changed to help young asylum seekers feel like they belong in schools?

ZARA: I do wonder whether we've got it slightly wrong in this country compared to others, where, when we here think that they need to go straight into education in a normal school and integrate in all lessons. In some countries like Germany, they have centres where they teach them English as a foreign language first. When they first come in, they'll have a programme 6 weeks or six and sometimes it's long term.

SONIA: Yes, can be long term. The students from Afghanistan did it.

ZARA: Yeah. And I do think that might be a better way of doing it because they tend to stick together anyway and don't seem to be making friends with English children. It would give them a really good knowledge of the language and then it would help them outside of school, you know, cause sometimes I think they can cope in school, but when they go out into the community, can they actually speak to anybody?

R: Okay, so the subject specific language they learn is different to conversational language?

ZARA: Yeah, it is.
SONIA: It’s like with \*\*\*, he would know what envious means,

ZARA: And he can do poetry. But he might not be able to go and have a conversation with someone in a shop, maybe. I don’t know.

SONIA: I totally agree with P3. I think you have to learn to crawl before you learn to walk. And it will boost their confidence because once you have a bit of language, even turning around to one of the English kids, ‘Hi, how are you?’ Having a bit of a conversation rather than just.

R: Yeah, I guess how if they had that first say they went and had an English Foreign Language Course first and then came into school, how do you think, maybe, that might impact their feelings of belonging when they attend school?

ZARA: I think they'd be more confident, like P1 said, to actually speak to other students than things because they'd have more conversational English

SONIA: And then put their hands up in lessons because a lot of them know the answer to the question, they just don't know how to say. Once we translate, they don't know how, but they don't know how to how to answer the question because they haven’t got the language, but they know it in the head, like maths equations. Whereas if you have a bit of English, then put your hand up, you become more confident.

ZARA: Yeah
R: OK, so maybe better in their learning and their friendships?

SONIA: In the long run, yeah.

ZARA: Yeah

SONIA: ‘Cause that English cause that we did with them-

ZARA: It was brilliant. But, we can’t always do it. They [school leadership] won’t, like, let us take them out of their normal lessons, see, cause it's supposed to be it fully immersive in all subjects. So, we kind of, they keep asking, don't they? ‘When can we have another course, when can we have another course?’, so we've said we'll do it at the end of the summer term when, you know the exams are finished and lessons have kind of calmed down a bit just before we finish, but ideally, really, they should have that before they start school so that they feel confident.

SONIA: Yeah. Because here when we do it - again and said double edged sword - because we're giving them English, but they're not in class, so they’re missing out, and especially if you in year like 10 or 11, that makes a huge difference if you miss out on like 2 weeks of content. So.

R: So, what do you think is needed?

ZARA: Something in the middle that they can do as like a first resort that is those basic skills that are needed for school.

R: That’s useful, thank you. It’s very interesting to think about.

SONIA: ‘Cause mastering a couple of tenses. Present tenses. Past tense.

ZARA: Yes. It's their grammar. Their basic grammar and-

SONIA: Vocabulary and how to construct a sentence

ZARA: And general conversation. Yeah, it wouldn't take very long. I don't think. Cause in two weeks we noticed a huge difference.
SONIA: Could be a couple of weeks, couple of months, maybe.

ZARA: We said culture with them, didn't we? As well, as part of it, British culture, you know, and because some of them will come and live here, but they don't know anything about it.

SONIA: I think that happens a lot when you live in a community that is all very, all from one area. Like the Ukrainian students that are all friends outside of school. Quite often if you're not exposed to a new culture you continue with the same culture you've always had without maybe understanding. I remember I had a student when I was at \*\*\*. It was funny then, but it's not really funny, because she went hungry because her, her host family went out and they left her a note saying ‘tea’ is in the fridge. So, she opened the fridge - no cup of tea. She didn't realise that it meant dinner. So then yeah, she said ‘I had no dinner last night’, and I said, ‘how come?’, and she said ‘I didn't realise that it meant dinner’, and things like that. But it's obvious to us, but it's not.

ZARA: Yeah.

R: Of course, ‘cause you got tea, dinner, supper. All different things.

ZARA: When I came here I was straight out of uni, so I trained as a teacher of English, and I remember one of the girls that I met in the pub and she said the way you speak is like reading Shakespeare, cause I didn't know any idioms. I didn't know that tea meant dinner.

R: Yeah

SONIA: Let alone someone like that. So a lot of it is, yeah.

R: Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything else that we wanted to share at all cefore I stop the recording? I feel like we've been through a lot. It's been really valuable.

ZARA: I think our students are really, really lucky here. I think that they get a lot of support. They, you know that. Like I said, there's not many schools that have a separate department for EAL. So they are, they're not only getting support from their year offices, but they've got a department which is just for them. So, they are very lucky and the school do support us like, \*\*\* the head is very, you know, he sees you, EAL is really important within the school so, you know, they are lucky. And I'm, I'm sure that maybe they, they don't always realise because they haven't been, haven't had any other experiences of school in England. But, like you've said, they wouldn't get if we went now study in Poland or Ukraine we just get thrown in and expected to get on with it. So, it does support wouldn't be there wouldn't be any EAL support.

SONIA: You wouldn’t get anyone like us. Because we has a boy from Kazakhstan, and he said that to me. ‘It is really cool to have you in lessons because in Kazakhstan I and will be the same’. And if an English person want to study in Poland, I don't think they would get anyone.

ZARA: They would be expected to learn the language and just get on with it so yeah.

SONIA: I'm gonna say we do quite a lot of pastoral support, yeah.

ZARA: A lot job of our job is pastoral now

SONIA: And especially when they started there was something every day coming.

ZARA: Yeah, it was constant.

SONIA: And it wasn't even school. Ohh, ‘I don't know how to do this’, or you know.

ZARA: Or uniform. A lot of the time we're replacing uniform and they come in and they say. We’ve got one that we're washing [their uniform] all the time at the moment or. And, you know, food related, we have a lot of like, have you had breakfast? Have you got any lunch with you today? OK, well, you know, we sort those things out.

R: Yeah
SONIA: And the ladies in the cafeteria are amazing because a couple of times, because some of the mums or parents didn't know how to sort out the Universal Credit, so they were just providing them with lunch anyway.

R: Thank you for everything you have shared, I can hear how much you care about these young people, and it sounds like as a school you offer a lot of really worthwhile support. OK, I'm gonna stop the recording there, if that's OK?

ZARA: Yep

SONIA: Yeah, thank you.