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# **University of Southampton**

Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences

School of Psychology

**Exploring young people seeking asylum in the UK's lived experiences of belonging in  
schools and colleges**

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Doctorate in Educational Psychology

28<sup>th</sup> July 2023



### Abstract

Developing a sense of connectedness to school has been linked to better psychological wellbeing in young people seeking asylum, however, what factors and processes support them to develop a sense of belonging (SoB) in schools remain not well understood. This thesis composes of three chapters, i) an introduction to the topic, ii) a systematic literature review (SLR) into experiences of belonging in education for young people seeking asylum (YPSA) in the UK, iii) a qualitative research project exploring factors impacting the SoB of YPSA in schools and colleges in the UK.

After a systematic search of the literature, 14 qualitative studies published between 2005 and 2020 including the views of YPSA were identified and quality assessed using the CASP Qualitative checklist. A thematic synthesis of the data identified four overarching themes across the dataset: i) Experiences of relationships, ii) Barriers to learning, iii) Community inclusion, and iv) Impact of asylum-seeking process. These are explored and relevant research and theory is discussed, with implications and future research suggestions highlighted.

In the empirical study, semi-structured focus groups were held with 10 young refugees and asylum seekers aged 16-25 to understand their lived experiences of belonging in education and the perceived impact. Separate focus groups were held with a total of 5 school staff members who have supported young asylum seekers in education to gain their perspectives on the SoB of these individuals and factors that can influence this. Four overarching themes emerged from the data; i) learning accessibility, ii) perceived inclusion, iii) coping with stresses, and iv) ability to communicate. How these fit with the wider research context is considered. Pupil voice is one of the most important ways of identifying areas where changes could be made to improve the SoB amongst YPSA. In gathering pupil experiences as well as the views of the adults supporting these young people, this research provides practical guidance for educational provisions and educational psychologists as well as highlighting links to psychological research and theory.

*Keywords: Young people seeking asylum; sense of belonging; school belonging; wellbeing; asylum seekers; education; schools; colleges*



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### Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Jessica Clapham

Title of thesis: Exploring young people seeking asylum in the UK's lived experiences of belonging in schools and colleges

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature: .....

Date: 05.06.2023





## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my thesis supervisors Jana Kreppner and Julie Vullnetari for their help navigating the thesis maze, and also my personal tutor Tim Cooke for his never-ending support, particularly in times of stress or crisis.

Additionally, I would like to thank my placement partner Sophie-Jane and my problem-based learning group 'CHAIR', Gracie, Lizi, and Soraya, for their reassurance and support as we tackled the thesis process alongside each other over the last three years and to be able to voice our worries and share in our successes together.

I would also like to thank my family for encouraging and believing in me, in particular my mum Nikki, sister Charlotte, and mother-in-law Catherine for proofreading my papers. Lastly, I would like to thank my husband Tom for being my biggest supporter, caretaker, and shoulder to cry on throughout this process.



## Definitions and Abbreviations

CASP ..... Critical Appraisal Skills Programme

EP..... Educational Psychologist

PRISMA..... Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

SLR..... Systematic literature review

SoB ..... Sense of belonging

UK..... United Kingdom

YPSA ..... Young people seeking asylum



**Exploring young people seeking asylum in the UK's lived experiences of belonging in schools and colleges**



## **Introduction to the topic**

### **Aims and rationale**

The overarching aim of this thesis was to understand the lived experiences of young people seeking asylum (YPSA) in the UK and to explore the factors that can impact their sense of belonging (SoB) in education. My interest in this thesis project was significantly influenced by being part of a family who fosters and have supported a number of unaccompanied YPSA both when they first enter the United Kingdom (UK) and further into their asylum-seeking process. This enabled me to see first-hand some of the difficulties experienced by these individuals as a result of their experiences in their country of origin and migration; including trauma (Salvo and Williams, 2017), family separation (Hampton et al, 2021) and post-traumatic stress (Said and King, 2020), as well as in starting a new life in the UK; including age assessments (Cemlyn and Nye, 2012), language barriers (Astington, 2004), and accessing education (Salvo and Williams, 2017). Living with individuals trying to manage these stresses also highlighted how many of these difficulties are exacerbated by the lack of relevant support for these individuals in the UK, particularly prior to their asylum claim being approved.

What I learnt through my experiences was how little I had known about the needs and experiences of these individuals prior to fostering YPSA, and this made me realise that there will be others who also may lack awareness of the everyday lived experiences of YPSA. This may, in part, be related to the under- or misrepresentation and stigmatisation of these individuals in politics and the media, which can shape the way in which they are viewed and understood by many of the people and professionals they encounter (Khan, 2013). What is needed is open-mindedness, a deeper understanding of these individuals and their experiences and a trauma informed approach to supporting them across education and other areas of their lives.

As I began to research further into this thesis topic and the difficulties faced and support available to YPSA, I realised that these struggles were not limited to unaccompanied YPSA placed into foster care by the local authority. YPSA who migrated with their families may be equally disadvantaged and their parents are often also dealing with the trauma and uncertainty of seeking asylum and therefore not be able to give the YPSA the support that they need (Beiser et al, 2003). My research into the area quickly highlighted how psychological research into YPSA is still developing and helped me to identify scope for a research project focusing on the sense of belonging and wellbeing of this population in schools and college, which have the potential to be a source of support, safety and security for these individuals who have experienced such a high level of uncontrollable change.

I chose to undertake detailed qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of YPSA in education; an area they should legally have equitable access to (Gateshead Council, 2016), but in reality, it is not always that simple and access can be restricted by a number of factors such as poverty (Childhood Trust, 2023) as well as age (Maurice, 2020). This thesis is important because a better understanding of the experiences, views and needs of YPSA is needed to be able to implement positive changes in education to support this vulnerable group.

Within my systematic literature review I explored the research question ‘How do young people seeking asylum view their experience of belonging within the UK education system?’ by reviewing the existing research base. I conducted this research enquiry using a three-stage thematic synthesis approach, drawing on data from 14 qualitative research papers identified through a systematic literature search. From this, I drew out implications for schools and Educational Psychologists as well as identifying links to psychological theory.

My empirical research built on this, gaining the views of YPSA directly and exploring their lived experiences, as well as the views of school staff member who support YPSA in education, to explore how these align. The empirical study explores the research question ‘What factors do asylum-seeking young people and staff who work in schools to support them, consider as important to shape a SoB?’. Within this research, five semi-structured focus groups and were conducted with ten YPSA from three charitable organisations, and five school staff members from two secondary schools in South England. Reflexive thematic analysis was used, drawing out overarching themes and highlighting implications for schools and Educational Psychologists’ practice.

## **Epistemological and ontological position**

### ***Systematic literature review***

In chapter two, my systematic literature review, I aimed to understand the views and experiences of participants and to create new meaning by synthesising data from existing research. For this paper, I understood that knowledge and truth can be generated through interactions with others and experiences of the world (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), this fit with the constructivist epistemological perspective I adopted for this paper. Throughout my systematic literature review, I therefore recognised and accepted how my own interactions and experiences influenced my interpretation of the data and enabled me to develop a unique narrative through the interaction of my own understanding and experience with the dataset.



***Empirical paper***

In chapter three, my empirical research, I aimed to explore the views and lived experiences of participants. Throughout this research I recognised that whilst a true reality exists, the personal experiences, perceptions and beliefs of participants will impact the way in which they interpret this reality (Sims-Schouten, Riley and Willig, 2007; Pilgrim, 2020), which aligns with the critical realist ontological stance I took for this research. For this paper, I also adopted a post-positivist epistemology, seeking objective knowledge whilst recognising this is ultimately impossible because researchers and participants will influence each other (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Bisel and Adame, 2017). In line with this, a reflexive approach to thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the data. This enabled me to create codes, categories and themes from quotes within the dataset, offering a representation of participants' voices whilst also acknowledging and reflecting on the influence of my own values and culture on data collection and analysis.

**Dissemination plan**

I have written the two research papers within this thesis with the intention to publish them in relevant peer-reviewed psychological journals. Therein, each paper has been written in the style required for submission by the journals currently being considered.

***Systematic literature review***

I am aiming to publish my systematic literature review in the journal 'Educational Psychology Review'. This journal offers open access and adopts a double-blind peer review process which means the author remains anonymous during the peer review process, limiting the potential for bias based on the author's attributes or affiliations (Shoham and Pitman, 2020). The journal is open to submission applications from review articles, thematic issues, reflections or comments on previous research or new research directions, interviews, and research-based advice for practitioners related to the field of educational psychology. If accepted for publication, this article is therefore likely to reach Educational Psychologists, schools/school staff, and researchers and academics through publication in Educational Psychology Review. Searching the journal's database, I was able to locate 163 research articles focused on SoB, 15 focused on migration, and none focused directly on individuals seeking asylum. This highlights that my research will be a valuable addition to this journal is accepted. The word limit for the journal is 12,000 words including relevant appendices but excluding references.

***Empirical paper***

I am aiming to publish my empirical research project in the journal 'Social Psychology in Education', which offers open access. Being open access allows research articles to reach a wider audience, and research published in this article will likely be able to reach Educational Psychologists, schools/school staff, and researchers and academics, all of whom the research and implications will be relevant for. Social Psychology in Education aims to publish studies exploring topics including student cultures and interactions, teacher- student relations, and concerns for gender, race, ethnicity and social class. This journal was selected as it accepts submissions from qualitative research studies and feels relevant to my paper which focuses on both educational experiences and sense of belonging, which is a social construct. The journal has no official word limit and states that they accept 'full length articles'. A quick search of the journal highlighted that there are currently 275 research articles focused on SoB, 61 focused on migration, seven focused on individuals seeking asylum, and only two linking YPSA and SoB both of which explore teacher experiences. This highlights to me that my topic is of interest to this journal and will help to strengthen the research base around YPSA and sense of belonging in education.

I also plan to present my empirical research project at the University of Southampton Postgraduate conference which is taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2023. This presentation will include an overview of the details of the study, highlighting the results found through exploring the lived experiences of belonging in schools for young people seeking asylum, and the implications and recommendations built from these.

Finally, I want to create a poster of the key results, findings, and implications to share with the schools, charities, and young people who were involved in the research, as well as any other schools that express an interest. This will allow me to disseminate the key messages in an accessible and clear way to the people they will impact the most.

**Ethical approval**

Prior to conducting the research, ethical approval was sought and obtained from the University of Southampton Faculty Ethics Committee. Procedures for setting, procedure and informed consent were established at research onset.

## **How do asylum-seeking young people view their experience of belonging within the UK education system; a systematic literature review.**

In 2022, approximately 103 million individuals worldwide were forcibly displaced due to natural disasters, conflict, war, or persecution (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022). This number is ever-increasing, meaning that as the population of individuals seeking asylum grows, it is crucial to better understand their needs, to ensure the correct support can be put in place (Maurice et al, 2019).<sup>1</sup> The vast majority (68%) of refugees and asylum seekers are hosted by countries in the developing world (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022), with only a comparatively small number reaching European Union countries and the United Kingdom (UK). Direction of travel is often linked to colonial legacies and post-colonial migrations (Mayblin, Wake, and Kazemi, 2020), including Britain's role in some of the 'modern' day conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2022, some 63,089 Individuals sought asylum in the UK (Home Office, 2022), many of whom were under the age of 18. According to Pinter (2021), of all asylum claims made between 2010 and 2020, young people seeking asylum (YPSA), under the age of 18, made up almost a quarter (23%) of UK asylum applicants and dependents, with 6% of these being unaccompanied.<sup>2</sup> One of the opportunities open to YPSA when they arrive in the UK, is the right to access free education (Gateshead Council, 2016), although in reality this may not always be straightforward. Research suggests there are barriers to accessing appropriate education such as uncertainty, poverty, or financial insecurity (Childhood Trust, 2023). As YPSA progress through education, barriers increase and opportunities become more scarce (Maurice, 2020).

Educational settings such as schools and colleges are often one of the first community-based institutions that young people and their families seeking asylum in the UK encounter. In what has been an unsettling, uncertain and disrupted journey, schools and colleges are often a source of stability and offer these individuals opportunities to make connections within the local

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<sup>1</sup> A refugee is described as an individual who has fled their country of birth or habitual residence due to war, violence, conflict or persecution, and has been granted legal refugee status in a host country (UNHCR, 2007). Asylum seekers are like refugees, but whose claims for refugee status are awaiting decision (UNHCR, 2010). These are both legal terms which give access to a different set of legal, human and social rights in different host countries, although the experiences of individuals in both categories are often similar or the same.

<sup>2</sup> The legal category of young people seeking asylum is individuals under 18 years of age who seek refuge in a host country either with family or guardians, or unaccompanied. This is the age group referred to by the acronym 'YPSA' throughout this paper. This age group was selected as they have the right to access free education and training within the UK upon arrival (Gateshead Council, 2016).

community (Kohli, 2011). Importantly, developing a sense of connectedness to school has been linked to better psychological wellbeing in refugee students (Kia-Keating and Ellis, 2007). However, the factors and processes which enable YPSA to develop a sense of belonging (SoB) in schools remain poorly understood. The focus of this systematic literature review (SLR) aims to develop a better understanding of the issues and influences facing YPSA, as they seek to find their place, whilst navigating the education system.

Psychological research describes SoB as feeling included in, connected with, and accepted by, members of a group (Hagerty et al, 1992). For an individual to feel a SoB, they must feel socially supported, valued, and respected by those around them (Strayhorn, 2012). Psychological theory proposes that seeking to belong through building attachments and relationships is an innate aspect of human nature that is adaptive and essential for survival (Ainsworth, 1989; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Lambert et al (2013) propose that having a strong SoB can predict, and impact, an individual's perception of the level of meaning in their lives. It is also important to consider the impact of moving to a different social and cultural environment and the way in which individuals might be viewed or the assumptions made about them in their new environment (Narkowics, 2023). For example, research by Phoenix (2009) gathered the narrative accounts of Caribbean individuals who arrived in the UK as children, and identifies the racialisation of Black children, seeing many of them as having low cognitive ability or as troublemakers, and therefore not encouraging them to pursue for higher education and academic results. Parker (2020) reports that asylum seekers interviewed in their study identified that often accompanied with their migration, was a loss of their sense of purpose, which could leave them feeling disoriented and seeking something to be a part of and belong to. In the context of the UK, this can be related to the long waiting periods involved with seeking asylum. The limited control over asylum processes, can lead to asylum seekers feeling anticipation and anxiety, as though their lives have been put on hold (Rotter, 2016) providing limited opportunity to build meaningful relationships and community connections.

An individual's social capital – the quality of their relationships within the community and the proximity of their family and friends (Carpiano and Hystad, 2011), is reported to be associated with an increased SoB. Social capital is proposed to be partially accountable for the relationship between belonging and a person's physical and mental health (Carpiano and Hystad, 2011). The social identity perspective suggests that a SoB can arise from group homogeneity – when an individual perceives themselves as having similarities to other group members (Easterbrook and Vignoles, 2013). However, Rainey et al. (2018) completed a mixed methods study with college students in America, highlighting that underrepresented groups, who may feel less similar to majority group members, are less likely to report feeling a high SoB.

The SoB a young person experiences in schools and colleges can impact them in a multitude of ways. A secure SoB helps to build self-efficacy and can have positive behavioural outcomes in school (Korpershoek et al, 2020). In school, a SoB is pivotal to emotional wellbeing, motivation, attendance, and academic attainment (Cartmell and Bond, 2015). A relationship has been proposed between SoB and mental health in college students (Corbière & Amundson, 2007). Developing this idea, a large-scale study (n=58,017) found a SoB to be related to positive mental health and reduced levels of depression and stress in university students by helping them integrate and contribute to the school community, and to feel needed and valued (Stebbleton, Soria, and Huesman, 2014). Beyond school, the impact of a poor SoB has been found to impact student's interest in different careers or further education opportunities (O'Meara et al, 2017).

Previous psychological research has investigated the SoB of children and young people in schools and what can impact this. Factors that have been found to support the development of belonging in young people at school include, a school culture that is inclusive, drawing from the strengths of parents, families, and the wider community (Riley, 2019), perceived academic achievement and skill mastery (Korpershoek et al, 2020), the presence of caring and supportive relationships (Cemalcilar, 2010; Dukynaitė and Dudaitė, 2017; Allen et al, 2018), and low exposure to bullying (Allen, Gallo Cordoba, Parks, and Arslan, 2022).

A meta-analysis of individual and social factors across America, Australia, and New Zealand identified the following key factors that influence belonging in education: academic motivation, emotional stability, parent support, peer support, teacher support, gender, race and ethnicity, extracurricular activities, and safety (Allen et al, 2018). The study highlighted that teachers play an integral role in building belonging in their students (Allen et al, 2018). Indeed, Anderman (2003) collected survey data that found teachers can help forge a SoB for young people by building meaningful relationships and promoting interpersonal classroom environments, and that they are well placed to do so because of the time they spend with the young person. Other ways teachers can encourage belonging is by providing individualised support (Allen, 2020), establishing a perception of fairness (Lenzi et al, 2014), encouraging positive relationships amongst peers (Kemple and Hartle, 1997; Flanagan, 2007) and creating community-building and inclusive activities (Osterman, 2000; Gillies, 2017). Additionally, the strength of the teacher's SoB in school was found to be a key indicator of the SoB of their students (Allen, 2020). Positive teacher-student relationships have also been found to help build self-confidence and create a sense of security for the student in school (Dukynaitė and Dudaitė, 2017). Further research proposes that social relationships in school are the biggest predictor of SoB in education, followed by the school environment (perceived quality, safety, and availability of resources) (Cemalcilar, 2010).

In addition to teacher relationships, a sense of school belonging can be influenced by several further components: assistance of teachers, provision of opportunities for self-realisation, extra-curricular activities available, opportunity for students to contribute to school activity, school attendance, and feeling positively evaluated by teachers and peers (Dukynaitè and Dudaitè, 2017). The school climate and environment can also impact young people's SoB in school (Pendergast et al, 2018). Environmental factors identified as impacting belonging include, school age range (Dukynaitè and Dudaitè, 2017), socio-economic status (SES) (Cemalcilar, 2010; Allen et al, 2022), and perceived level of stimulation and safety (Cemalcilar, 2010). Both social contextual factors and environmental factors play an important role in determining the SoB of young people in school, and can enhance their educational experience (Cemalcilar, 2010). It is important to consider how the relationship between different factors and SoB can be mitigated by other factors for example; the impact of both social relationships and environmental factors on SoB varied across students attending schools in different SES areas (Cemalcilar, 2010).

In understanding what fosters a SoB for young people in schools, it is important to gain their views and lived experiences (Lewis and Porter, 2007). Research exploring student views has highlighted that young people in schools experience an increased SoB when they experience reciprocal caring relationships with teachers, have positive peer relationships, and are involved in extracurricular and school-based activities (Bouchard and Berg, 2017). The views of young people with additional learning needs highlighted how they feel included and accepted as part of the class when their teacher recognises their needs and provides individualised support (Rose and Shevlin, 2017). In their qualitative meta-syntheses of adolescents' views and experiences of school belonging across a number of countries, including the UK, Sweden, America, and Australia, Craggs and Kelly (2018) found that positive interactions and forming attachments with peers was fundamental to the construction of a SoB. Similarly, through individual interviews with 24 American highschool students, Hamm and Faircloth (2005) suggested friends and peer groups are a central and important community for adolescents in schools. In a thematic analysis investigating the views of secondary school pupils, Shaw (2019) proposed that familiarity with the environment and identification with others help foster a SoB.

An integral part of healthy adaptation to new social contexts is to be able to make connections and to feel part of the community (Dattilo et al, 2017). YPSA are often exposed to a variety of stressful experiences during forced migration and resettlement, and these can impact their mental health and ability to feel connected to their host countries (Turrini et al, 2017). Feelings of discrimination have been highlighted as negatively impacting an individual's feelings of social satisfaction and inclusion (Slonim-Nevo, Regev, and Millo, 2015). Similarly, lacking a strong social network, and having limited opportunities for social integration have been highlighted as negative predictors of social wellbeing (Teodorescu, et al, 2012).

Belonging can be seen to represent the ways in which individuals and groups perceive their place in the world through the interaction of resources and relationships (Gilmartin, 2008). This is particularly prevalent when considering the SoB experienced by displaced individuals. Cartmell and Bond (2015) found, in the context of the UK, that YPSA and other newcomer's SoB was impacted by both, within and between, child factors including positive emotions, personal development, feeling understood, fitting in with new context, respect, and support from others. Additionally, an Australian study found that interactions, group membership, stability, and routine helped refugees feel a sense of happiness and togetherness (Chen and Schweitzer, 2019). In contrast, Guo, Maitra, and Guo (2019), identified from the views of young refugees and their parents in Canada, that experiences of bullying and racism were detrimental to building a SoB and could lead to feelings of rejection and seclusion. A case study investigating the perspective of a young asylum seeker has highlighted the idea that school belonging is more than just learning English and that consistency was important, as well as neighbourhood and community connection (Picton and Banfield, 2020). Similarly, feeling a part of something bigger and having a space to practice religion amongst others with similar beliefs, was highlighted as an important aspect of building a sense of belonging both in schools and the wider community (Chen and Schweitzer, 2019).

How asylum-seekers and refugees are often presented in mainstream media can lead to an underrepresentation of their views (Khan, 2013). Additionally, the experiences of YPSA can differ depending on their country of origin, and political discourse can influence public animosity and undervaluing of asylum seekers (Taylor and Sidhu, 2009). For example, the war in Ukraine was publicised in a way that sympathised with Ukrainians, impacting the way in which they are viewed, and leading to widespread support that other YPSA may not receive (Machin, 2023), and it is likely this will be reflected in school settings too, impacting on school belonging.

Understanding the views of refugees and asylum-seekers can help move away from a negative view of migration and can impact many aspects of refugee life, for example, education, employment, and social integration (Esses et al. 2017). Considering existing evidence which has demonstrated that a secure SoB is associated with increased academic outcomes and strengthened social and emotional development at school (Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012), helping YPSA to develop a SoB in school could be a tool to help develop a sense of purpose, develop skills, and improve pathways to professions where ethnic minorities are marginalised (O'Meara et al, 2017).

Research into the SoB asylum-seeking young people experience in education is relatively minimal with much yet to be explored, in particular the voices of asylum-seeking young people. While some research has been completed looking at the struggles faced by YPSA in host countries, sometimes including elements of SoB such as mental wellbeing (Tribe, 2002) and

racism (Schuster 2010), what is missing is a review of the findings across these studies to develop a systematic understanding of the information available, find overarching themes across the studies, and identify areas where further research is required.

The research question for this SLR is, ‘How do asylum-seeking young people view their experience of belonging within the UK education system?’. To help answer this question most effectively, it has been broken down into three more specific research questions which are, ‘what does belonging in education mean for asylum seeking young people?’, ‘What factors do young asylum seekers report as impacting belonging in education?’, and ‘What does the literature tell us about SoB as an indicator for wellbeing?’.

Methodology

Systematic review search strategy

All tasks undertaken in the identification and selection of papers were completed by the researcher. Search terms (see Table 2.1) were identified using the Population, Interest, Context (PICO) framework (Higgins and Green, 2011), which has been recommended as appropriate for SLRs of qualitative data (Stern et al, 2014). The systematic search was conducted in September 2022 across two databases: PsycINFO and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), following the steps outline by Boland, Cherry and Dickson (2017). This search identified a total of 84 studies. Searches were then completed a second time by the researcher to check the reliability and replicability of the search terms. Further studies of relevance identified included; 29 studies identified through Google Scholar’, three studies identified through experts in the field, and two studies identified through citation searching. 11 duplicate studies were removed prior to screening. In total, 107 studies were screened for relevance.

Table 2.1  
Initial search terms – systematic literature search

	Search Terms
Population	asylum seek* or refugee* or immigrant* or asylum-seek* or migrant*
Location	UK or United Kingdom or Britain or Great Britain or England or Wales or Scotland or Northern Ireland



Outcome	sense of belonging or belonging or belongingness or feeling belonged or social connectedness or social-connectedness or social belonging or resilience or wellbeing or well-being
Setting	education or school or learning or classroom or education system or college or apprenticeship or sixth form or university or high school or highschool or high-school or secondary school or pupil* or student*

### ***Screening and selection***

The researcher screened all titles and abstracts. Full-text papers of any titles and abstracts that were considered relevant were obtained, two studies were excluded at this stage because the full texts were not available, and a further two studies were excluded as the full texts were not available in English. After title and abstract screening of the studies identified, 30 were highlighted as 'relevant', six were marked as 'unsure', and 82 were excluded at this stage (see figure 2.1). After full text screening of the 'relevant' and 'unsure' studies, 14 studies remained to be included in this SLR (see Appendix B).

### ***Inclusion and exclusion criteria***

The relevance of each study was assessed according to the inclusion criteria stated in table 2.2. Studies that did not meet the criteria were excluded from the SLR and their reason for their exclusion was recorded (see figure 2.1). Studies where the researcher was initially unsure were sent to supervisors for review. There were no discrepancies.

**Table 2.2**

### ***Inclusion and exclusion criteria***

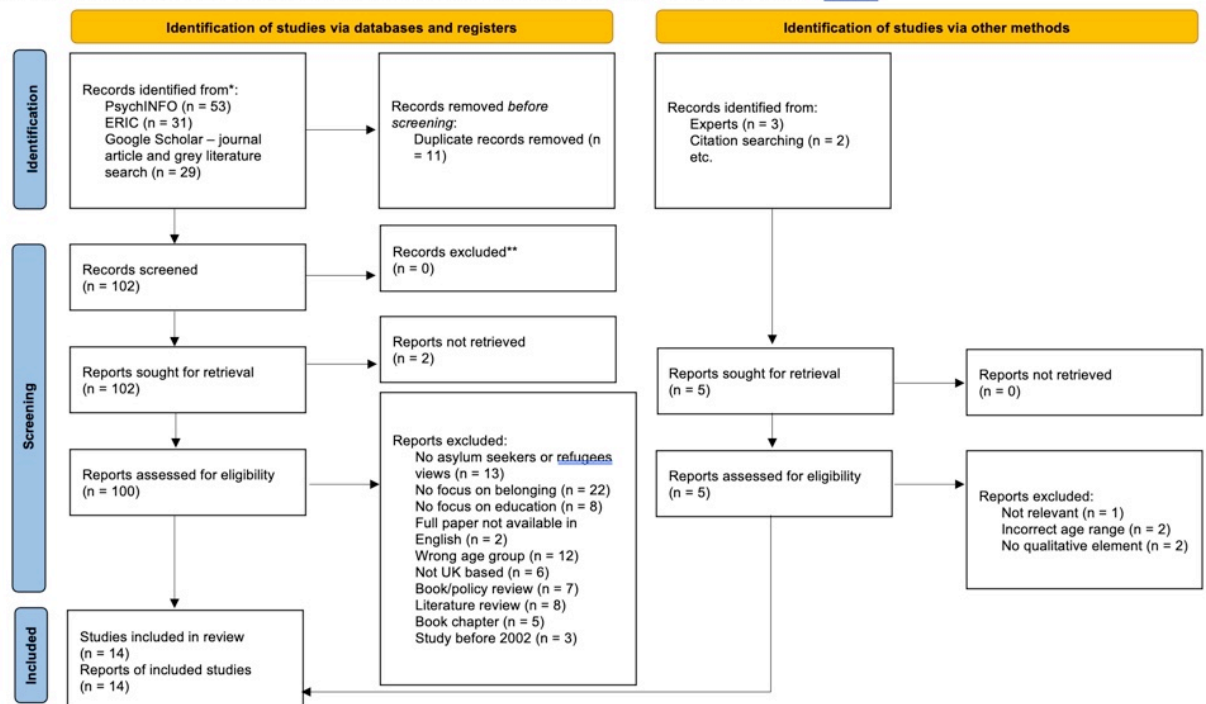
Study item	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	UK based YPSA aged 18 years and under	Participants from countries other than the UK

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		Views of other key stakeholders such as parents or teachers
Interest	Educational experiences and SoB of YPSA	<p>Educational experiences of other groups</p> <p>Other experiences outside of education (that don't impact SoB in education)</p>
Study design	Qualitative studies including the views of the YPSA (mixed methods studies were also included, but only the qualitative elements were reviewed).	Literature reviews, book reviews, book chapters, secondary data, or quantitative studies with no qualitative element.
Context	Educational provisions within the UK; mainstream or specialist infant schools, primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges.	Educational provisions outside of the UK (studies were included looking at multiple countries, but only data relating to the UK was reviewed)
Other	<p>Full text available in English</p> <p>Studies published after the Education Act in 2002</p>	<p>Full text not available or not available in English (to ensure the researcher was able to fully understand the context and produce new data)</p> <p>Studies published before the Education Act in 2002</p>

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Figure 2.1

**PRISMA Chart**PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for new systematic reviews which included searches of databases, registers and other [sources](#)

\*Consider, if feasible to do so, reporting the number of records identified from each database or register searched (rather than the total number across all databases/registers).

\*\*If automation tools were used, indicate how many records were excluded by a human and how many were excluded by automation tools.

From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ* 2021;[372](#):n71. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n71. For more information, visit: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>**Data extraction and quality assessment**

The following data were extracted from the 14 studies identified for this SLR: author, article title, research question(s) and aim(s), publishing context, methods (design, data collection, and data analysis), and a summary of results (see Appendix B). Data was extracted from all studies by the researcher.

The quality of each study was assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) qualitative studies checklist to help recognise their relative methodological rigour (see Appendix C). Only one study scored below 50% on the quality assessment checklist, and after investigation this study was deemed to still be relevant to the SLR. Therefore, no studies were removed at the quality assessment check stage. The quality assurance scores of each article did not affect the weight given to them throughout the synthesis. The weight given to each article was instead moulded by the thematic synthesis process in which data that helped to answer the research question guided the development of themes.

### ***Methods of data synthesis and extraction***

The 14 studies were analysed using *thematic synthesis*, chosen for its suitability for both inductive and interpretative analysis methods (Boland, Cherry and Dickson, 2017). This SLR adopted an inductive approach which enabled ideas and concepts to be developed from the data, however, the researcher's experiences and prior knowledge of the research area likely framed the interpretation of the quotes available in the literature. The research aims and designs of the studies being reviewed differed, allowing the researcher to apply an interpretative approach to identify and develop overarching concepts linked to the research question. Thematic synthesis allows for individual interpretation which fits with the researcher's constructivist epistemological perspective, which understands that an individual's truth is constructed through their experiences and interactions with the world (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). The researcher was responsible for interpreting data and completing the thematic synthesis, constructing concepts through interaction with the data.

Guided by the work of Thomas and Harden, 2008, participant quotations and author interpretations within the results sections of each included study were analysed, and information was stored and coded using NVivo12 software. As the researcher read through the relevant information in each study, they recorded each sentence under one or more codes to capture the meaning. The initial coding process resulted in 196 initial codes which were scanned for duplication of meaning and reduced to 87. Next, these codes were explored and grouped into categories (descriptive themes) based on similarities. This was an iterative process that involved revisiting the initial codes and regrouping until the researcher felt confident that they had identified the overarching concepts across studies. This process resulted in 15 categories being identified. Finally, these categories were further examined and grouped into four overarching analytical themes which aim to answer the research question; 'How do Asylum Seeking young people view their experience of belonging within the UK education system?'.

### ***Synthesis overview***

The studies included in this SLR were published between 2005 and 2022. Across all studies, 330 participants were included in the research between the ages of three and twenty-four. Where identifiable, only data from participants under 18 was included in the review, with individual study participant numbers ranging from six (Hastings, 2012; Fuller and Hayes, 2019) to fifty (Valentine, Sporton, and Neilsen, 2009). These participants were all YPSA who attended primary schools, secondary schools, or colleges in the UK. Twelve studies gathered data via semi-structured interviews, four through focus groups, and three through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Two studies collected additional data through surveys or

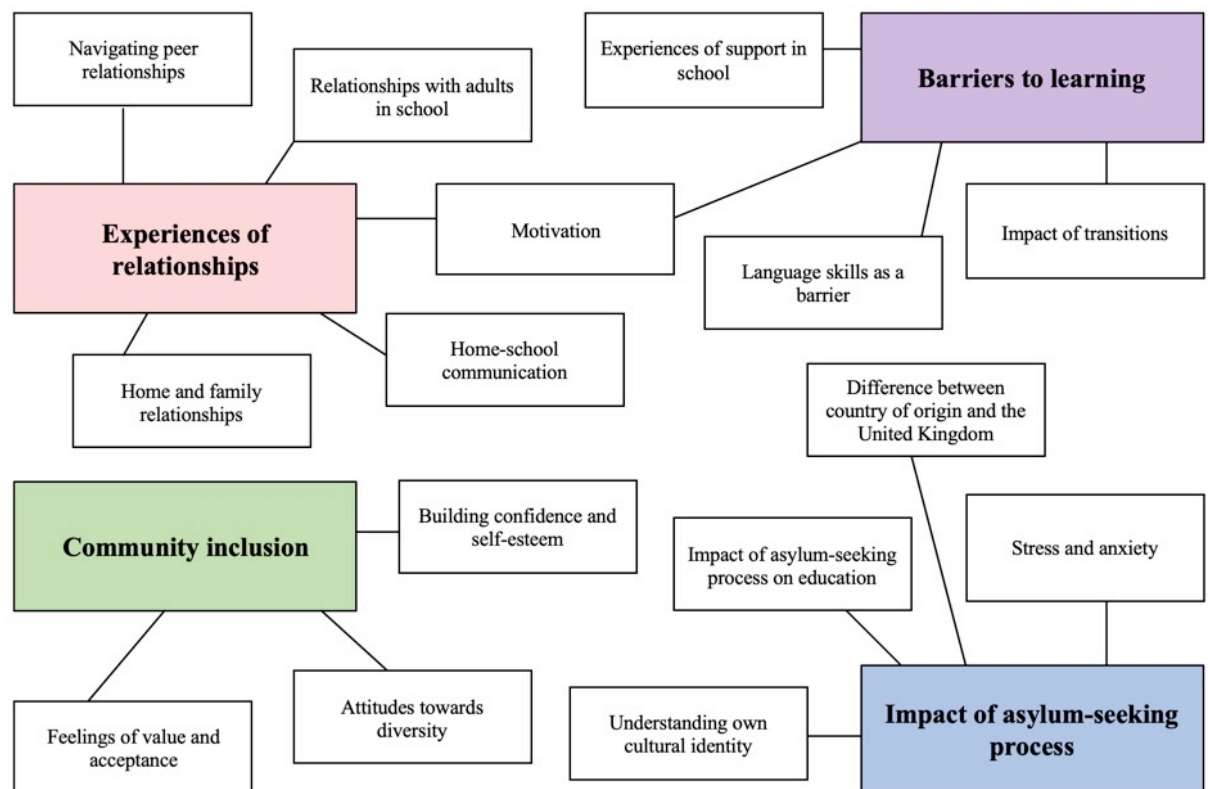
questionnaires. See appendix 2.1; data extraction table, for a full list of the studies and key information.

Four overarching analytical themes were developed (see figure 2.2) to answer the research question: ‘How do young people seeking asylum view their experience of belonging within the UK education system?’. These were: i) experiences of relationships, ii) community inclusion, iii) barriers to learning, and iv) impact of asylum-seeking process.

## Results

**Figure 2.2**

*Thematic map*



### *Experiences of relationships*

Across all studies, the impact of the relationships asylum-seeking young people experienced was identified. Many individuals reported feelings of isolation upon arrival in their UK educational provision, “When you first come to England and you don’t speak English you don’t have anyone to talk to, no friends or anything and you’re like really, really lonely and by yourself” (15-year-old Kurdish young woman, Hek, 2005). This was furthered by experiences of bullying and discrimination from their peers, “some of them are like really racist, we don’t know why they don’t like us, swearing at us, like they say to us ‘go back to your own country’” (Secondary school

pupil in rural Northern Ireland – no age, ethnicity or gender information presented, McMullen et al, 2020), highlighting experiences of being ‘othered’ and socially rejected, which research suggests can lead individuals to feel inferior and as though they must hide their true self in order to fit in (Jackson, 2010). Whilst some young people felt that they could confidently discuss instances of bullying with their teachers (Hastings, 2012), many felt that their experiences were not taken seriously or dealt with appropriately, which led to feelings of worry, loneliness, and anxiety (Newbigging and Thomas, 2011; Sobitan, 2022). It is possible that difference is related to the length of time the YPSA have spent in the school and in the UK, because as an individual becomes progressively more settled and able to express themselves in English, they may feel more able to disclose experiences of bullying, particularly when there is low pressure to do so (Mishna, Weiner, and Pepler, 2008). Racism can vary in severity and is often widespread across schools, with individuals such as YPSA being most vulnerable, as the majority come from non-white countries (Trent et al, 2019). Children’s beliefs and understandings are influenced by exposure and experiences, meaning a young person who is racially abused may begin to believe they do not matter or that they will never feel accepted (Berry et al, 2021). The impact of these experiences, as well as previous life experiences, led some young people to experience difficult and overwhelming emotions; including feeling suicidal “Too many times I was thinking that I want to, you know, end myself, but I didn’t” (Secondary school pupil in urban Northern Ireland – no age, ethnicity or gender information presented, McMullen et al, 2020). Further to this, some young people felt that to avoid racism they needed to change school, adding further levels of disruption to their already chaotic lives (Robb et al, 2007; Hastings, 2012).

As some asylum-seeking young people became more settled in school, they began to form relationships through identifying similarities or shared experiences with peers, which helped them to view their time at school more positively “I’ve got quite a lot of friends there, yeah I think that makes such a difference as well, they shape how you feel about college and school” (Female Eritrean unaccompanied YPSA, 18-years-old, Fuller and Hayes, 2019). Once these friendships were established, many individuals reported that these helped them begin to feel happy, loved, and comfortable (Robb et al, 2007; Ritchie and Gaultier, 2020). In cases where friendships were made with peers who do not share the same home language, interactions also supported English language development (Hastings, 2012; Fuller and Hayes, 2019). This aligns Chapdelaine and Alexitch’s (2004) research into international university students, suggesting building relationships with different-language peers supports the development of English language and cultural understanding, both of which are needed to communicate effectively.

The perceived relationships with adults in school was identified as impacting the SoB and acceptance YPSA experience in school. Most young people described an overall positive experience of adult relationships and the support they received, highlighting how they felt school

staff were kind and went above and beyond what was expected, “When I asked for help they never ignored me. After school, during the lunch time, before morning time .... And they still proud of me” (Male secondary school pupil in the UK, no information on age or ethnicity presented, Hastings, 2012). There were, however, accounts which reported distrust in adults with young people feeling their difficulties were dismissed or overlooked by adults. One young person reporting that when they try to share their concerns with the teacher “I am always told to put on make-up and be happy, so I don’t feel I am being taken seriously.” (Female secondary school pupil, no age or ethnicity information presented, Newbigging and Thomas, 2011). Although outcomes differed, all accounts of adult relationships in school highlighted potential impacts of these relationships, including the effect on their language development, academic development, and feelings of inclusion within school (Sobitan, 2022). This aligns with research highlighting the importance of schools building positive and constructive relationships with YPSA to support their integration and development of SoB (Eliyahu-Levi, 2022).

A key factor identified as impacting the educational experiences of YPSA was the school’s efforts to facilitate the language needs of their families (Hek, 2005). Some students found themselves pressed into acting as the translator for their parents within school as well as in the community (McMullen et al, 2020), whereas others described a more positive experience where school provided translation services, making the parents feel welcome and building feelings of inclusion for both the parent and young person in school (Hek, 2005). This builds on research by Zengin and Akdemir (2020) that highlights the importance of schools meeting the needs of the family, such as language support, as well as the young person in order to increase feelings of value and important for YPSA.

Individuals across several studies discussed how their home and family relationships impact their wellbeing, including how one member of the family would support them by taking on the roles of other individuals who were not available. “My mum had to be a mother, father and friend, plus teacher, because everything I know, it will start from my mum.” (062 male, Robb et al, 2007). Parents going to this extent to create a supportive environment for their children highlights the impact of family separation not only on the YPSA, but on their caregivers as well. Young people felt that the level of support they received from their family impacted their engagement with, and enjoyment of, school.

Young people who experienced family separation tended to find it harder to settle in school and reported higher levels of distress or worry, and feelings of overwhelming loss, adding an additional barrier to the development of their SoB, “Where family bonds are significantly disrupted, a child’s readiness to adjust to an unfamiliar school culture may be delayed” (Hamilton, 2013). This may be a result of the trauma responses and anxiety often linked to forced family separation (Hampton et al, 2021). These responses are reported to in turn reduce educational and

social engagement (Alisic, 2012). For some YPSA, however, the experience of loss or separation fuelled a desire to do well and create a life for themselves that their families would be proud of (Hek, 2005).

### ***Barriers to learning***

Motivation tended to be a barrier for young people across a number of the studies identified. Young people found themselves feeling unmotivated, lost, and distressed at the difficulty of their workload when not given adequate support (Hastings, 2012; Bradby et al, 2019). Both temporal and geographical factors can impact the support available to YPSA in schools, for example inner city schools are often not as well equipped to offer support as schools in wealthier parts of the country (OECD, 2012). In terms of time, cuts to educational funds have a great toll cumulatively over the years, which will have been felt more strongly in recent years (Social Mobility Commission, 2020). Moreover, these needs are often most pressing for YPSA in the first weeks and months after arrival. A small number of young people felt that their learning in school was difficult, and support was inadequate, some feeling as though they would make more progress trying to learn independently, at their own pace (Fuller and Hayes, 2019). Other individuals felt that school provided opportunities, but that they needed more resources such as extra lessons, personal tutors, or textbooks to support their learning (Fuller and Hayes 2019; Oddy et al, 2022). Wider research exploring the motivation of secondary school students in the UK suggests that motivation is impacted by praise and a growth mindset (Lambert, 2014). This builds on research by Reakes (2007) who, through semi-structured interviews with school staff, highlighted that motivation is a key factor in determining the academic and employment outcomes for YPSA.

For individuals in the studies being reviewed, motivation was focused around improving their English language ability to help build friendships, do well in school, and lead to better future opportunities within the UK (Hastings, 2012; Fuller and Hayes, 2019). This echoes wider research identifying that improved language abilities can lead to more academic success (Oliver et al, 2012) and create increased employment opportunities (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). Similarly, individuals across the studies identified the impact of language on their learning and feelings of confidence in their academic ability, “On the first day I spoke to the teacher in Polish, but she couldn’t understand. I couldn’t understand what people were saying or what I was supposed to do” (female Polish YPSA, 7-years-old, Hamilton 2013a). While this is focused on language, the quote also suggests a sense of helplessness and feeling lost, worried and confused. Research suggests that YPSA often experience a great deal of stress, confusion, and worry and therefore need school to provide safety and stability (Kohli, 2011).



Across the studies reviewed, limited language skills also acted as a barrier to both learning and relationships within school. “Basically, it was frustrating, very hard .... Because you don't know how to speak you know, you don't know how to communicate.” (Male 18-year-old unaccompanied YPSA, no ethnicity information presented, Fuller and Hayes, 2019). Language difficulties were described as a source of isolation and discrimination in school and the community for many young people involved (Hamilton, 2013; Sobitan, 2022). Individuals discussed how English ability was closely linked to building relationships and poor language skills acted as a barrier to socialisation with peers and could lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Further to this, as English language abilities increased, so did opportunities to socialise and build friendships. In their paper discussing the views of YPSA, Fuller and Hayes (2019) stated that “her increased independence and proficiency in English, and the fact that other students started at the same time, allowed her to make friends” (discussing a female Eritrean unaccompanied YPSA, 18-years-old, Fuller and Hayes, 2019). This quote also suggests that, a sense of not feeling singled out as the only newcomer and having something in common with others (for example, starting at a new setting), can create a sense of inclusion or affiliation with these individuals, that impacts positively on building friendships.

Many of the young people whose views were discussed reported that despite their traumatic background and the difficulties in school, they were driven by a desire to get an education and secure a good future for themselves.

I've come from a poor background, so it's kind of, my life has been ups and downs. And when I moved to this country, I was just looking for a better future and I think, if I was to study medical, then it would be a good choice. (Male Eastern-European YPSA attending an inner London secondary school, 16-years-old, Robb et al, 2007).

Their more short-term motivation was also driven by development of confidence in their own abilities through positive praise from trusted adults (Sobitan, 2022).

Research reveals that a key factor of belonging is the feeling of being valued and included (Ayala et al, 2021). Several individuals across the studies reported experiences in school where they felt underestimated and labelled as low ability, without being given support to show their true potential. These experiences led them to feel unvalued as a member of the class and could result in subsequent underachievement (Robb et al, 2007). In Oddy et al (2022)'s interpretation of their results, they explained how one young person, “likened progress in the educational system to ‘a game of snakes and ladders’, thus diminishing their confidence and engendering feelings of being hated by the society they sought refuge in” (no young person

information presented). This quote suggests an element of luck and a lack of confidence in the education system and feelings of unfairness or discrimination that could overshadow any positive experiences. It appears these experiences became less common when individuals had positive relationships and felt supported by adults in school. Some studies in this SLR suggested resources young people found helpful, included additional lessons or tutoring to help them catch up with their peers (Fuller and Hayes, 2019; Oddy et al, 2022), provision of interpreters to support learning and language development (Hamilton 2013a), and an adaptive learning environment that moves from high levels of support to opportunities for more autonomy in learning, in line with the young person's development (Fuller and Hayes, 2019).

Students highlighted that when they felt safe and nurtured in school with appropriate adaptations to support them, school helped build resilience through stable routines (Robb et al, 2007; Ritchie and Gaulter, 2020). Adaptations that young people highlighted as finding useful included, higher one-to-one support and increased use of non-verbal communication techniques, such as pulling staff or peers by the arm (Hamilton, 2013a), as well as clear explanations of tasks and employing staff who speak the young person's home language (Hek, 2005).

An area of frustration for many individuals was the impact of transitions. For young people in college, much of the concern stemmed from the reduction in support experienced in college compared to secondary school, "Nobody said to me or talked to me if there's anything I need help with." (Male Afghani YPSA, 18, Fuller and Hayes, 2019). This quote also seems to highlight a level of loneliness or isolation that may be prevalent amongst young people who transition to a new provision. In one instance, the young person felt so unsupported and dissatisfied at college that he dropped out of a number of courses, with another student dropping out altogether and enrolling as an independent candidate for his A-levels (Fuller and Hayes, 2019), which is likely limiting their social engagement and wellbeing as well as impacting on their academic outcomes. The political context in which schools and colleges operate, and the funding available, will be contributing to the limitations in what support they are able to offer students (Brooks, 2012).

While all young people take on a new level of independence in college, it is particularly important to ensure support is in place for the more vulnerable individuals who may have an additional level of need. YPSA who have experienced trauma or may have significant periods of missed learning, may need additional support to enable them to reach their full potential and access positive educational experiences (Salvo and Williams, 2017). This aligns with migration research emphasising how YPSA are often underinformed about educational systems, meaning they are unaware of how to access support and are therefore unprepared for transitions (Koehler and Schneider, 2019).

Transitions such as moving between schools (Hamilton, 2013a) or a change in teaching staff (Fuller and Hayes, 2019) have been shown to cause students to experience periods of fear, loss, and sadness. These findings build on research which suggested that ethnic minority children often found periods of transition more difficult and took longer to settle into a new educational setting (Topping, 2011). A further element of transition to consider for YPSA, is the current system by which they can be moved from one local authority, or place, to another without much notice (Home Office, 2022), resulting in any relationships or support networks that have been built being severed.

### ***Community inclusion***

Many young people feared they might be viewed negatively because of their asylum-seeking status or appearance, which often led them to feel apprehensive about sharing their story. Hek (2005) recognised in their interpretation that YPSA “did not feel comfortable identifying as refugees and felt that they could not easily discuss the circumstances of their flight and backgrounds in school”. This suggests an embarrassment or sense of inadequacy around their status as an asylum-seeker in the UK, leading them to try to conceal elements of their identity to minimise the fear and possibility of judgement (Le Forestier et al, 2022). This likely stems from the prejudice and scapegoating of asylum seekers and refugees in the public discourse; the way in which politicians and mainstream media refer to these individuals (Cooper, Blumell and Bunce, 2021), as these views can seep down into the everyday relations across communities such as in schools.

Contrastingly, some young people identified feeling accepted and valued as a member of the community;

I think that the people in here are like really nice to each other and they don't really like pick on each other. Like when you go on the street they are smiling to you. They are like helping you even if you are not from here and I really like that (YPSA attending a rural primary school in Northern Ireland, gender, age and ethnicity information not presented, McMullen et al, 2020).

The individual went on to describe feeling as though they were treated fairly, their voice was heard, and their interests were explored. This appears to highlight that YPSA who experience acceptance and feeling valued, are more likely to adapt to life in the UK, which is known to increase feelings of self-efficacy and social acceptance (Grant and Gino, 2010).

Making a contribution through taking on a responsibility and getting involved in extracurricular activities was reported to help YPSA develop their SoB. In Hastings' (2012) paper, while talking about the experiences of YPSA, the author stated that;

There was a sense that as their knowledge of school increased, so too did their ability to make a contribution to this setting, for example by helping other new arrivals, and that this functioned to support their adaptation and SoB in secondary school and beyond (Hastings, 2012).

This builds on research which suggests that responsibility can increase positive attitudes towards school (Beck and Malley, 1998) and commitment to school (Abdollahi and Noltemeyer, 2018). It is likely that these responsibilities will have also helped YPSA to feel valued and as though they are an integral part of the school. This idea fits with research suggesting that finding your place helps build feelings of value and builds SOB (Lambert, 2013). Building on this, Sobitan, 2022, interpreted from their data that YPSA "expressed that contributing in some way to the school was important to his school belonging".

Some studies highlighted how YPSA did not feel valued or understood; "Work experience, my teacher picked it for me, so he put me through to it. Hairdresser in Mayfair. And I didn't go for two days because it is not my type of thing' (16-year-old female Eastern European YPSA attending a secondary school in inner London, Robb et al, 2007). This quote is an example of young people feeling as though they are not valued or understood by those around them. It also seems to reflect underlying preconceived gendered and racialised notions by adults about what certain groups, such as YPSA, are able to do and their future prospects, which could be damaging for the young person's beliefs and self-efficacy (Dinther et al, 2011).

Similarly, experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment can impact mental health and the way in which a young person views themselves (Williams, 2018). This was not limited to individual peers but was sometimes on a much larger scale;

One young woman described the difficulties arising from not having received a decision as to whether she could stay and therefore not being allowed to apply for university, at a time when her peers were planning their futures. For asylum seekers, this had an impact on their confidence and self-image, contributing to a strong sense of being treated less fairly than those with refugee status or their British peers (Author interpretation, Newbigging and Thomas, 2011).

While this has been construed as impacting on self-image, looking at this issue in the wider context of data, it appears to also reflect the idea that uncertainty can play a prominent role in YPSA's lives, which could limit their SoB by leading them to feel different from their peers and to perceive themselves as having limited control over their situation (Cemalcilar, 2010). This quote also illustrates how, although YPSA have a right to access education, once they become 18 it becomes unclear as to what they can actually access, as university education is often inaccessible because of their lack of status (Maurice, 2020).

In addition to the actions of individual staff members and peers, the whole school attitude towards YPSA was found to be an important indicator of how they are treated in schools and can therefore impact their SoB. "Even though they don't like my religion, they still respect my opinion, and they asked me about the God of Muslims and stuff" (female 14-year-old YPSA attending secondary school in the UK, has been in the UK for four years, no ethnicity data provided, Sobitan, 2022). This quote is interpreted to highlight that YPSA experience safety when their cultural identity is accepted and respected, even if it was not shared, drawing back to the importance of feeling that your beliefs have value, further supporting the positive impact of this on SoB (Cook et al, 2012). The community exposure of schools to diversity or international peers could further impact the SoB of YPSA, as the more culturally diverse an area the more likely YPSA are to feel included and as though they fit in amongst a diverse group of peers (McIntyre and Hall, 2020).

One idea that was prevalent across a number of the studies reviewed was the idea that belonging is a two-way process and that building a SOB relies on both the impact of the world on the YPSA and the impact of the YPSA on the world (Hastings, 2012). This could suggest that predictors of SOB include the encouragement and acceptance of YPSA in school and their motivation to learn English, school rules, and about life in the UK.

Confidence and self-esteem were highlighted as predictors of belonging; "Well, anything is achievable, you just have to work for it. So it's up to me really. I think I can achieve it. That's my target so I have to work for it" (male 16-year-old Caribbean YPSA attending an inner London secondary school, Robb et al, 2007). Factors highlighted as impacting confidence varied across studies and included academic competence, knowledge of school, language ability, and adult praise. Adult praise was identified in multiple studies as a key contributor in school enjoyment "I like my teacher and I have lots of friends. It makes me happy when my teacher says I have done good work" (female Polish YPSA, 7-years-old, Hamilton 2013a). Pro-social acts being praised within school encouraged acceptance and enabled the individuals giving and receiving the compliments to feel good (Hastings, 2012). This highlights the impact of relevant praise and good, supportive teachers on the SoB of YPSA.

The authors of one study involving dance classes interpreted that “Without experiencing enjoyment the migrant pupils in our study might not have connected with others, felt safe or engaged in the process” (Ritchie and Gaultier, 2020), highlighting the impact of these factors on the SOB experienced by participants.

### ***Impact of asylum-seeking process***

YPSA in some studies spoke about their sense of loss and missing family and friends from their home country. Hamilton (2013) recognises that when arriving in a host country, young people are often put into schools very quickly and are not given the time or support to grieve their loss appropriately.

We don’t even know what has happened to my dad and the rest of them. Well, I think we know they were killed, we know they were killed, and people try to say that they were not, but they were. We’re just waiting now (female 15-year-old Albanian YPSA, Hek, 2005).

The emotional impact of this situation can be construed through the young person’s words, leading the reader to empathise and recognise the difficulty of the experiences she is going through. This quote also seems to highlight a level of uncertainty that comes alongside leaving family members and the presence of hope making it harder to grieve the loss. Uncertainty and loss can be all-consuming (Hobfoll, 2001) and can impact the individual’s own sense of safety (Fazel et al, 2012) and vulnerability (Davis et al, 2010). These feelings can prevent them from feeling understood (Limberg and Lambie, 2011) and can restrict their ability to be fully present and engage in learning or relationship building (Bethell et al, 2014), all of which can impact their SoB in school.

Young people discussed the differences between their home countries and school in the UK; “When I first came there were lots of new things to get used to—a home, friends, shops, school and language” (10-year-old Polish YPSA, no gender information presented, Hamilton, 2013). This quote also identifies feeling unsettled or lost while trying to navigate a new environment. Research has shown that belonging develops with familiarisation with the people and places in an area (Inalham and Finch, 2004), which it may take YPSA time to build (Groark et al, 2010).

The impact of external factors on school belonging was discussed in a number of studies, including healthcare (Bradby et al, 2019), and accommodation, family disruption, and the asylum-seeking process (Fuller and Hayes, 2019). The Asylum-seeker process seems to be particularly

disruptive in developing a SoB in school as it was both a source of stress and uncertainty and appeared to negatively impact on the young person's motivation to work hard or build relationships at school. "Sometimes when I'm doing education, studying some lessons, I don't know if my asylum case, am I getting sent back to my country? Why I have to learn?" (Male 18-year-old Afghani unaccompanied YPSA, Fuller and Hayes, 2019). This appears to highlight how the context and importance of learning can be lost for these individuals who have many additional overwhelming stresses and uncertainties in their lives. This aligns with research suggesting the reactions to distress and adjustment can impact mental health and engagement (Groark, 2010).

Contrastingly, some young people found that education actually provided a focus for them and was something stable amongst the uncertainty they were experiencing (Hek, 2005; Fuller and Hayes, 2019). While this was not linked to SoB by the author, in keeping with wider research, stability is identified as a key indicator of school belonging (Allen et al, 2018), and can impact young people's experiences at school (McMahon et al, 2008). Across some research, a sense of journey and progression arose, where young people felt through their experiences in school in the UK, they had developed their resilience (McMullen et al, 2020), adapted to UK customs (Hastings, 2012), and developed their English abilities quickly which had aided their social and academic inclusion (Robb et al, 2007).

A further area that was highlighted through research as important was the YPSA's understanding of their own identity and cultural background. Young people discussed how they were unaware of the full extent of why they fled their home country and a desire to learn more about their culture and background.

I couldn't remember ... why we moved [from Somalia], what is the reason we moved here [to UK] ... 'cos usually your family, they don't tell you, they don't want to upset you and they ... just make everything, [they say:] 'everything's alright, don't worry (Male 18-year-old Somali YPSA living in Sheffield, Valentine, Sporton and Neilson, 2009).

More widely, this seems to suggest that when seeking asylum in a family group, families can withhold information in attempt to protect YPSA, however this does not appear to eradicate feelings of worry and can lead to confusion and a limited understanding of why they have had to uproot their lives. Although these worries cannot be eradicated, schools can support children to manage them by building a sense of belonging, which creates feelings of safety and connectedness (Sargent et al, 2002).

For some individuals, it was difficult to talk about their background and experiences because they include difficult memories that can be painful (Hek, 2005; McMullen et al, 2020) and

they felt they were asked to repeat and relive their experiences each time they met new professionals (Bradby et al, 2019).

In my last year [teacher] asked me to go to their classroom and talk more about Syria and the refugees and things. I found it kind of hard to talk at the back, old, harmful memories. And like I actually don't want to talk about it (YPSA attending an urban secondary school in Northern Ireland, no gender, age, or ethnicity data presented, McMullen et al, 2020).

While this quote focuses on the emotions of the young person, it also highlights a lack of understanding from professionals supporting the YPSA about how these experiences may impact them, and how positive intentions to help the school learn about YPSA may not be implemented in a way that takes the emotions of the YPSA into consideration. Young people went on to describe feelings of fear and worry across several studies. The source of worry varied and included starting school or a new life in the UK (Hastings, 2012; Hamilton, 2013), loneliness (Hastings, 2012), home country situation (Hek, 2005), academic achievement or falling behind (McMullen et al, 2020), and deportation and safety (Sobitan, 2022).

## Discussion

School belonging is a significant contributor to students' attainment and psychosocial functioning (Allen et al, 2018), yet little is known about the factors influencing the SoB for asylum-seeking young people in schools. Through a thematic synthesis of the literature four overarching themes were identified within the data: experiences of relationships, barriers to learning, community inclusion, and impact of asylum-seeking process. It is important to remember that while some studies mentioned SoB, none were solely investigating belonging and they each had a different primary focus such as behaviour, settlement, or social and emotional needs. For this reason, some studies carry a heavier weight in particular themes that were more relevant or similar to their primary focus (see appendix B).

Stemming from Bronfenbrenner (1994)'s framework and work by Baumeister and Leary (1995), previously identified factors impacting school belonging in psychological literature included individual factors such as motivation, emotional stability, gender and ethnicity, and additional factors such as parent support, peer support, teacher support, extracurricular activities and environment. This SLR highlights how these factors also appear to impact the SoB of YPSA, though research does not consider elements of YPSA' lives that may differ from the general population and potentially make it harder for them, such as disrupted relations, language barriers



and cultural barriers (Warfa et al, 2006). More recent research has identified the immigration-related diversity of their settlement area, previous experiences of diversity, and social location (race, gender, religion, and language) as also impacting the SoB of migrants within the UK (Wessedorf, 2019).

School belonging can moderate the impact of negative social experiences (such as discrimination) on motivation, academic outcomes, and wellbeing (Kumar et al, 2018). However, connections between school belonging research and migrant belonging research are sparse in educational research. The results of this SLR identify this overlap and begin to explore the gap in the understanding of school belonging for YPSA.

The impact of reduced SoB for YPSA who have often experienced stressful or traumatic life events can be a sense of learned helplessness; a prolonged exposure to stressful situations over which an individual has no control leading to a belief that they are unable to make changes even when opportunities arise (Maier and Seligman, 1976). YPSA's level of control over their lives is restricted by both their asylum seeker status and being legally considered a child (McCarthy and Marks, 2010). The prejudice towards individuals seeking asylum stems from a foundational level, involving limited social, legal, and educational or employment rights, preventing them from wholly participating in social and cultural life (United Nations, 2016). Additionally, an individual who feels they do not fit in, cannot build relationships, and struggles to access or attend to their work in school, may feel as though changing this is out of their control, further reducing their sense of autonomy, and leading them to feel as though there is no point in trying to change the situation (Williams, 2009). Feeling well supported by adults in school is important as it can act as a mediator between young people and learned helplessness (Raufelder, Regner, and wood, 2017) and key adult relationships should, therefore, be developed in schools as a priority.

Similarly, being underestimated or labelled as 'low ability' can lead young people to believe this is all they will ever achieve, leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which the young person feels less motivated to try to work beyond this (Merton, 1948). For YPSA, it is therefore imperative that they are in an environment allowing them to show their academic abilities outside of the constraints of, and not held back by, English language. It is also important for teaching staff to recognise the difference between academic ability and language ability.

Deci and Ryan (2000)'s self-determination theory suggests that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are the key factors required for motivation. While relatedness is closely linked to SoB and forming connections with those around you (Kanat-Maymon et al, 2015), the results of this SLR also indicate that a level of autonomy or control and feelings of academic competence help to build a SoB in school (Hek, 2005; Sobitan, 2022). This echoes research identifying a reciprocal relationship between SoB and motivation; an increase in one construct can lead to an increase in the other (Allen et al, 2022).

While motivation was not its own theme, elements were identified within the themes ‘experiences of relationships’ and ‘barriers to learning’ across the majority of studies. Across the studies included in this SLR, the data suggests a relationship between motivation and SoB and that as a YPSA’s social and academic motivation increases, so too does their SoB.

This SLR emphasises how in addition to possible traumatic experiences in their country of origin, throughout displacement, and during their migration, many YPSA continued to experience trauma in the form of bullying (Hastings, 2012; McMullen et al, 2020), racism (Hek 2005; Hastings 2012; Sobitan 2022), and prejudice from peers, teachers, and government restrictions (Taylor and Sidhu, 2009). Schools are faced with the challenge of balancing the need to provide worthwhile learning and the reality that many students need help in dealing with traumatic stress to enable them to attend and engage in education (Ko et al, 2008). Vaghri, Tessier, and Whalen (2019) suggests that school staff can have limited understanding of the experiences of YPSA and often underestimate the impact of trauma. Trauma informed practice is the understanding that anybody could have experienced trauma and so everybody must be treated sensitively (Thomas, Crosby and Vanderhaar, 2019), and should be employed to support these individuals effectively in education. For this to happen, school staff need to be fully trained to understand what trauma is, how trauma can present, and the physiological, social, emotional, and academic impacts of trauma and adversity on children (Walkley and Cox, 2013).

### ***Strengths and limitations***

A strength of current SLR is that it adopted a systematic search strategy identifying all relevant data across a number of different settings which decreases opportunities for bias. This approach allows the researcher to explore a wide breadth of data and a number of participant voices, triangulating information across sources by drawing links across different contexts, timescales, and environments and considering interpersonal, intrapersonal, and environmental factors. As the researcher, I completed all steps of the systematic literature search and data extraction processes independently. If repeating this research, I would like to have a second person checking my search process to reduce the possibility of bias and increase reliability.

The body of research reviewed was varied across different locations within the UK, covering North England, South England, and Northern Ireland. 13 out of 14 studies reviews held individual interviews to gather data, although some of these studies used other methods in conjunction. Although the age range for young people was wide (three to 24 years), a high percentage of the participants were between the ages of 16 and 18 meaning that the views of younger students are not as well documented in the results and the implications may therefore be more tailored to the needs of older YPSA.

The use of secondary data presents a number of limitations. These include that as the secondary researcher, I was inevitably only able to work with the written statements of individuals and did not have the opportunity to engage with the additional elements of discussion such as body language or non-verbal communication. In attempt to overcome this, I analysed the full results sections of each paper, including author interpretations and situational information. A second limitation to the use of secondary data is that the data sets were not collected with the aim to answer my specific research question (Hammersley, 2010) relating to belonging, and although I have drawn links evidenced with data, it is possible that my searching for meaning related to belonging has identified factors and links that the participants were not intentionally describing and did not realise their data would be used to consider this topic. This impacts the extent of this research as although the views shared begin to give an insight into the SoB of YPSA, it likely does not give a comprehensive overview, and further primary research focusing on SoB is needed to better understand the factors influencing SoB for YPSA in schools.

An additional difficulty with this research, as with all qualitative literature reviews, is the complication around using quotes from individuals who were involved in the studies I reviewed in a way different to that which they gave informed consent for. Quotes are all anonymised by the original authors and found in published research articles meaning that permission for further use is implied (Tripathy, 2013). However, I find it uncomfortable that the information gathered was not intended to discuss sense of belonging, and these individuals may not know their voices have been used to explore this topic.

### ***Implications and future research***

Relationships are identified as a key factor likely impacting the SoB of YPSA. It is therefore important for the adults supporting these individuals to build deep and meaningful relationships that offer them support and a sense of safety. Educational psychologists (EPs) will be well placed to facilitate and provide knowledge and tools to support these relationships to flourish and remain effective.

EPs and school staff should work together to identify the barriers to learning impacting the belongingness experienced by each individual YPSA and work together to combat these with the relevant language support or differentiation. It will be important for schools and EPs to include YPSA in discussions and decisions made about how best to support them. EPs may also be able to support schools to foster a whole-school ethos that promotes acceptance, celebrating inclusion and diversity, and creating a welcoming environment for all.

EPs should work with schools to promote wider community engagement with YPSA and their specific needs, including multiagency work with school nurses, speech and language therapists, social care services, and other professionals. This will be particularly important when a YPSA has experienced trauma, reduced emotional wellbeing or has safeguarding needs.

The impact of asylum-seeking process appears to impact YPSA’ ability to engage with education, making it more difficult for them to build relationship or develop their academic skills; two factors closely linked with SoB. This problem is twofold and while educational psychologists are well placed to inform policy and guidelines for schools supporting YPSA and government at both a local and national level, schools should also work to understand the processes and experiences the young person is going through, and to provide motivating and engaging opportunities for social and learning development at the young person’s pace.

This systematic literature has identified an under-researched area in the sense of school belonging experienced by YPSA, and a need for further research into this to develop an understanding of the factors that influence belonging in education for this population. This could perhaps consider if, and how, some of the challenges they face that may differ from their peers can impact their SoB.

**Table 2.3**  
**Implications for schools and Educational Psychologists**

Implications for Schools	Implications for Educational Psychologists (EP)s
Build deep and meaningful relationships with YPSA that create a sense of safety and support.	Provide knowledge and tools to support the relationships between school staff and YPSA to flourish and remain effective.
Work with EPs to identify the barriers to learning impacting the belongingness experienced by YPSA and combat these with the relevant language support or differentiation. It will be important to include YPSA in the discussions and decisions made.	Work with school staff to identify the barriers to learning impacting the belongingness experienced by YPSA and combat these with the relevant language support or differentiation. It will be important to include YPSA in the discussions and decisions made.
Work to understand the processes and experiences the YPSA is going through, and to provide individualised opportunities for social and learning development.	Support schools to foster a whole-school ethos that promotes acceptance, celebrating inclusion and diversity, and creating a welcoming environment for all.

Promoting wider community engagement with YPSA, including multiagency work with relevant professionals to meet the needs of YPSA, particularly those who have experiences trauma, poor emotional wellbeing or have safeguarding needs.

Inform policy and guidelines for schools supporting YPSA and government at both a local and national level.

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**‘College is like a home’; An exploration into the sense of belonging of asylum-seeking young people in education in the UK.**

To belong is a fundamental human need and forms interpersonal behaviour (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Belonging is defined as the need to connect with others and feel supported and accepted as part of a group (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992). Building a sense of belonging (SoB) has been linked to improved resilience and mental wellbeing across students in the UK (Roffey, 2013, Morris, 2021), whereas a lack of belonging can lead to loss of identity, reduced social engagement, and psychological wellbeing (Shochet et al, 2011).

The extent to which a person feels they belong is impacted by several factors. Firstly, their perceived experiences of social inclusion (Jaremka et al, 2022) and discrimination or social rejection (Greenberg and Kosloff, 2008). Secondly, factors in organisational settings have been identified which foster or prevent the development of a SoB among members in their community. Promotive factors include open communication, encouragement, common values, shared objectives, and the structure of leadership while limiting factors include adverse atmosphere, lack of common time, organisational structure, competence, and leadership problems (Lampinen et al, 2018). Thirdly, Jaremka et al (2022) propose that changes in social circumstances, for example loss of job, socioeconomic status, or health difficulties can further impact an individual’s SoB.

A SoB in schools, or school belonging, refers to the extent to which students feel they fit in and are valued in their educational setting (Slaten et al, 2016) and is a key predictor of educational engagement and success (Drezner and Pizmony-Levy, 2020). Many secondary school students, however, report that they do not feel they belong or are accepted in their school (Allen, 2022). Factors identified to impact students’ sense of school belonging include their background, engagement with learning, integration with peers, and the level of diversity within the school (Maestas et al, 2007). In addition, research suggests that students’ sense of school belonging develops through academic motivation, emotional stability, personal characteristics, support from adults and peers, gender, ethnicity, extracurricular activities, and environment (Allen et al, 2018; Cena et al, 2021). Developing a SoB in school is particularly important for young people seeking asylum (YPSA) because these individuals who are in a new and unfamiliar environment, have experienced adversity, and have often lost relationships and sources of belonging from their previous lives (Douglas, 2010).

Over 103 million individuals have been forcibly displaced worldwide (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022), with 63,089 seeking asylum in the UK in 2022 (Home Office, 2022) of whom 5,152 were unaccompanied YPSA (Refugee Council, 2023). People seeking asylum

are individuals seeking refuge in a foreign country to escape persecution or because of war in their home country and who are awaiting a decision from the host country's government as to whether their refugee claim will be accepted (Chin and Cortes, 2015). Asylum seekers whose applications are refused lose their right to remain in the host country and may be deported to their country of origin (Chin and Cortes, 2015). When individuals under the legal age of 18 fleeing war or persecution arrive in a host country without a parent or guardian, they are classed as unaccompanied YPSA (Wernesjö, 2011). These individuals have a right to access free educational settings such as schools and colleges, with a legal obligation for the local authority to arrange a placement within 20 days (Gateshead Council, 2016). Many YPSA arrive in the UK in situations of uncertainty, poverty, or financial insecurity (Childhood Trust, 2023) which can restrict or their access to education (Salvo and Williams, 2017).

With respect to accessing education, YPSA likely face several challenges; including language difficulties making it harder to access learning or communicate with those around them (Aston, 2004). Whilst schools may work hard to meet the needs of the individuals they support, the UK educational system tends to expect students who struggle to access learning to adapt, rather than adapting the environment to meet their needs (Roffey, 2013). The adaptations required of schools through Education Health Care Plans often include environmental changes, however these plans are not in place for all young people and knowledge about them is not always widespread (Ahad et al, 2022). Through their research with adolescents in the USA, McClure et al, (2010) found that when an individual struggles to communicate effectively it can result in their peers and teachers not responding or responding negatively to their needs, impacting their self-esteem and educational outcomes.

Changes or threats to belonging can produce emotional responses that can impact overall wellbeing (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). For example, an individual may feel anxious when a social connection is in danger or lonely when their social connections are not available (Allen et al, 2022). There is likely to be a change in belonging and lost social connections for people seeking asylum who arrive in the host country having fled their home nation (Van Liempt, 2011). The legal processes around seeking asylum means that until an individual has their asylum application approved, there is a level of insecurity around their future in the host country which can impact their emotional wellbeing (Griffiths, 2014). These worries can also make it difficult for YPSA to focus on issues like education or social integration as they are often preoccupied by their ongoing safety needs (Henry, 2020), and can lead to increased feelings of loneliness, isolation, and mental health difficulties within this population (Chase, Knight, and Statham, 2008).

When YPSA arrive in their host country, educational settings are a central community in their daily lives (Kohli, 2011; Horswood et al, 2019), meaning that developing a SoB in schools is an important way to support these young people manage stress, experience increased happiness,



and to discover and develop their social identity in the UK (Baldwin and Keefer, 2020). YPSA are often a minority in the classroom which can reduce their SoB as having peers with shared experiences and language can support development of safety and belonging (Brodsky and Marx, 2001). School belonging can, therefore, be enhanced when individuals feel they are understood and accepted (Allen and Kern, 2017), for YPSA this likely means experiencing an acceptance of their individual identity and finding their place within the educational environment (Picton and Banfield, 2018).

Research proposes that SoB for YPSA in schools can also be developed through opportunities to make positive contributions to the setting (Hastings, 2012), and developing feelings of competence and success (Crawford, 2017). Bartlett et al (2017) explored YPSA's experiences of education in New York and found that feelings of safety and success helped reduce worry and increase optimism. However, YPSA are often dealing with high levels of external stress which can reduce their working memory capacity, making it difficult for them to engage or learn in school (Tine, 2013). However, the factors and processes that support YPSA to develop a SoB in schools are not well understood, and western psychological frameworks of belonging often do not cogitate fundamental aspects of YPSA (Nwoye, 2018).

Further factors that have been identified as having the potential to limit the development of SoB for YPSA in schools include perceptions of visible differences such as skin colour or dress code (Pinson and Arnot, 2010), experiences of bullying (Besic et al, 2020), lack of staff training in supporting YPSA (Allen and Kern, 2017), and negative teacher relationships (Bešić et al, 2020, Sobitan, 2022). To gain a better understanding of the barriers and facilitators to YPSA's developing a sense of school belonging, their experiences, views and perceptions need to be captured.

Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) conducted interviews with adolescent Somali refugees in the USA to discuss their educational experiences and found increased school belonging was associated with lower depression and higher self-efficacy, irrespective of previous traumatic experiences. In their study, Horswood et al (2019) discuss the importance of understanding the factors of the school environment that impact refugee wellbeing to enable governments and schools to channel their resources to appropriately support these individuals.

Temple and Moran (2006) suggest that research with refugees should explore the views and experiences of participants to support them to have greater influence over the research outcomes. The current study investigates YPSA's views on the factors that influence their SoB in education, as well as the views of school staff who work with YPSA. The research aims to contribute to a better understanding of barriers and facilitators to building a SoB in schools amongst this population, and by doing so, to help inform the development of suitable interventions to support YPSA in educational settings.

## Methods

### *Researcher perspective*

The ontological perspective taken for this research aligns with critical realism and the recognition that one true reality exists independently of individual understanding, but that personal experiences, interactions, and perceptions will impact how this reality is interpreted and understood (Sims-Schouten, Riley and Willig, 2007; Pilgrim, 2020).

### *Research questions*

This research aimed to gain insight into the factors that impact SoB of YPSA in schools and colleges, from the perspectives of both the YPSA themselves and staff who work in educational settings. The main research question was ‘What factors do asylum-seeking young people and staff who work in schools to support them, consider as important to shape a SoB?’ In the discussion with young people and school staff, the impact of culture and identity, relationships and learning experiences were explored and their role in developing a SoB in educational settings.

### *Participants*

Fifteen participants took part in this research study, of whom ten were YPSA living in England and five were school staff who support YPSA in an educational provision. This included nine males and one female YPSA aged 17 to 23 (n=10), of which 9 arrived in the UK unaccompanied, and five female who were school staff, aged 29 to 54 (n=5). Pseudonyms have been used throughout this paper to protect the participants’ anonymity; participants were given the option to choose to select their own pseudonym so that they could identify themselves in the data, or to be allocated random pseudonyms. Further participant information can be found in table 3.1 and 3.2.

Participants were recruited through non-probability, purposive snowball sampling in which schools and asylum-seeking charities within the South of England were sent a recruitment email. Snowball sampling was used because it is cost-effective approach appropriate for qualitative social research (Parker and Scott, 2019) and is reported to help recruit within populations that can be difficult to access (Naderifar et al, 2017). When a school or charity expressed interest in the research, a school staff member or charity worker was asked to act as a gatekeeper and agreed to identify participants who met the inclusion criteria and invite them to take part. This is because it was felt that YPSA might feel more comfortable discussing participation with the gatekeeper who they know and trust. Working in collaboration, the

researcher and gatekeepers arranged focus groups at venues within the gatekeeper's organisation. The inclusion criteria for YPSA were that individuals must be a refugee or YPSA living in the UK, 16-25 years old, enrolled in an educational setting within the UK or have attended one within the last 12 months, have conversational level English language ability, live in South England, and have the mental capacity to give informed consent. The inclusion criteria for school staff were that they must be over 16 years old, live in South England, support YPSA within an educational setting in the UK or have done so within the last 12 months, and have the mental capacity to give informed consent to participate.

A disadvantage of using snowball sampling and gatekeepers is that the researcher was not able to monitor the full recruitment process as participant selection was made by gatekeepers. Their selection may have been influenced by their preconceptions about which individuals best fit the inclusion criteria, had relevant experiences to share, or were most likely to agree to participate. This could have influenced who was approached and who was ultimately included in the research and contributed towards the findings, potentially limiting the representativeness of the sample (Parker and Scott, 2019).

Response rates were low (2 responses out of 5 charities emailed, and 2 responses out of 65 schools and colleges emailed), and it is likely that those who chose to become involved may have done so because of a predetermined interest; for example, both schools who responded had specialist EAL departments and may have felt like they had something to offer the study; meaning that the sample is likely not representative of provisions and school staff across South England.

Table 3.1

***Young people seeking asylum demographic data***

<b>Age</b>	<b>Months in UK</b>	<b>Asylum-seeking status</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>	<b>First language</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Area of UK</b>	<b>Educational provision</b>
22	>24	Waiting for decision	Afghanistan	Pashtu	M	Poole	College
21	>24	Waiting for decision	Afghanistan	Pashtu	M	Bournemouth	College
21	>24	Do not know	Iran	Kurdish	M	West Sussex	University
23	12-24	Waiting for decision	Russia	Chechen	F	Chichester	College
18	>24	Accepted	Sudan	Arabic	M	West Sussex	College
20	12-24	Accepted	Sudan	Tama	M	Chichester	College
17	12-24	Waiting for decision	Afghanistan	Pashtu	M	Bournemouth	College

18	12-24	Waiting for decision	Afghanistan	Pashtu	M	Poole	College
17	12-24	Waiting for decision	Afghanistan	Pashtu	M	Bournemouth	College
17	12-24	Waiting for decision	Afghanistan	Pashtu	M	Bournemouth	College

Table 3.2

*School staff demographic data*

Age	Nationality	Area within South England	Months working with YPSA	Job role	Educational provision
54	British	West Sussex	>24	EAL Co-ordinator	Secondary school
29	British	Chichester	>24	Teacher	Secondary school
48	British	Poole	>24	EAL Officer	Secondary school
43	British	Poole	>24	Head of year	Secondary school
42	Polish	Poole	>24	EAL Co-ordinator	Secondary school

*Design and procedure*

Qualitative research data was gained through semi-structured in-person focus group discussions (FGDs) which took place between February and April 2023. Focus groups were chosen because participants do not need to be randomised for this method, allowing gatekeepers to organise a group of individuals within their organisations (Brown, 2015). Focus groups also enabled the participants to build on each other’s ideas in a way that might not have been possible through individual interviews and to reflect the social realities for YPSA (McLafferty, 2004). Furthermore, the qualitative nature focus groups allowed the researcher to move beyond the facts and figures gained through surveys and to explore the lived experiences of YPSA, taking into account non-verbal communication such as body language (Fok-Han Leung, et al, 2009). A practical challenge when using focus groups in research is the difficulty of recognising each speaker when transcribing, this was managed by transcribing each FGD as soon as possible after completion (within one week), transcribing only one FGD at a time. Another challenge sometimes faced when using focus groups is how the group dynamic and environment can impact what

information is shared. The researcher worked to help participants feel comfortable sharing information by building rapport and reminding them that the FGD is confidential, meaning information discussed should not be shared outside of the group.

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Southampton Faculty Ethics Committee. Gatekeepers were provided with information and consent forms to share with participants prior to focus groups, and these were read through by the researcher in the introduction period of each focus group to ensure understanding and gain informed consent. Participants were made aware that FGD would be audio recorded, but that any names or identifiable data would be removed from the transcription. Participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw at any stage up until one month following the focus group. A planned break was included halfway through each FGD, and participants were made aware that they could access the 'coffee corner' provided in each FGD to use as a break space at any time or to subtly remove themselves from any discussion they found uncomfortable or that triggered traumatic or stressful memories. Participants were given debriefing information including who to contact if they felt negatively impacted by the FGD and were given the choice between a £20 Amazon or Love to Shop voucher for their participation.

A total of five FGDs were conducted, organised by the gatekeepers at their location and facilitated by the researcher (3 FGDs with YPSA and 2 with school staff). All focus groups were conducted in English and participants were required to speak a level of English that would enable them to participate in the research, it is possible that this may have impacted who chose to be involved and limited the range of experiences explored. FGDs were intended for three to six participants. However, two groups contained only two participants due to participants not arriving or deciding last minute that they would prefer not to take part, these two groups could be considered semi-structured discussions as they do not meet the minimum participant numbers required for a focus group. A separate topic guide was prepared for FGDs with YPSA (see appendix E.1) and focus groups with school staff members (see appendix E.2), each with prompts to explore factors relating to the SoB experienced by YPSA, with opportunities for participants to express their thoughts and ideas. In addition to this, participants were provided with Post-It notes to share ideas in a written or drawing format, or to make notes to remind themselves of something they would like to share verbally. These were then collected in at the end of each FGD and analysed alongside transcriptions. FGDs lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, with an additional a ten-minute introductory period, fifteen-minute break, and a five-minute debrief. Audio from FGD was recorded both using a dictaphone and Microsoft Teams, and the researcher took notes within focus groups that were triangulated with the recording to improve accuracy. Following the focus groups, transcriptions of discussions were written up and checked over by the researcher.

## ***Analysis***

Reflexive thematic analysis (TA) (Braun and Clarke, 2020) was selected for this research as it allows themes to be identified inductively throughout the dataset, capturing both latent and semantic meanings and a mixture of descriptive and interpretive accounts of the data. The flexibility of TA allowed it to be informed by existing theory while remaining focused on voicing the lived experiences of YPSA. TA allowed me to consider how my social positions and privileges shape my experience and interpretation of the data (Wilkinson 1988). TA also allowed me to reflect on the decisions I made throughout this research, considering why I made them and any underlying assumptions or expectations I held.

Following the steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2020), I began by familiarising myself with the data by listening to and transcribing the recordings. Once transcription was complete, I further familiarised myself with the data by reading each transcript twice, thinking and making notes about key discussion points. During this process, I felt I was able to pay attention to the discussion more deeply than I had in each FGD as I was able to focus on the content without making sure the discussion did not stray from relevance or preparing the next discussion point.

Once I had developed a good understanding of the data, I worked through each transcript on NVivo software, coding any ideas relating to the SoB of YPSA that were discussed by either YPSA or school staff in FGDs. This process led me to identify 285 codes, some of which upon further investigation identified micro-differences that were then clustered, leaving me with 181 codes found across the dataset. I then sorted these codes into 21 initial categories under five initial themes. A few days later, I revisited and regrouped these themes to help to capture the narrative of the data more accurately. Once groupings were finalised, 17 categories and four themes were identified and labelled to represent the data within; 'Learning accessibility', 'Perceived level of inclusion', 'Coping with stresses', and 'Ability to communicate'. As I began writing up my data, I noticed additional relationships between categories which is illustrated in figure 1 (thematic map).

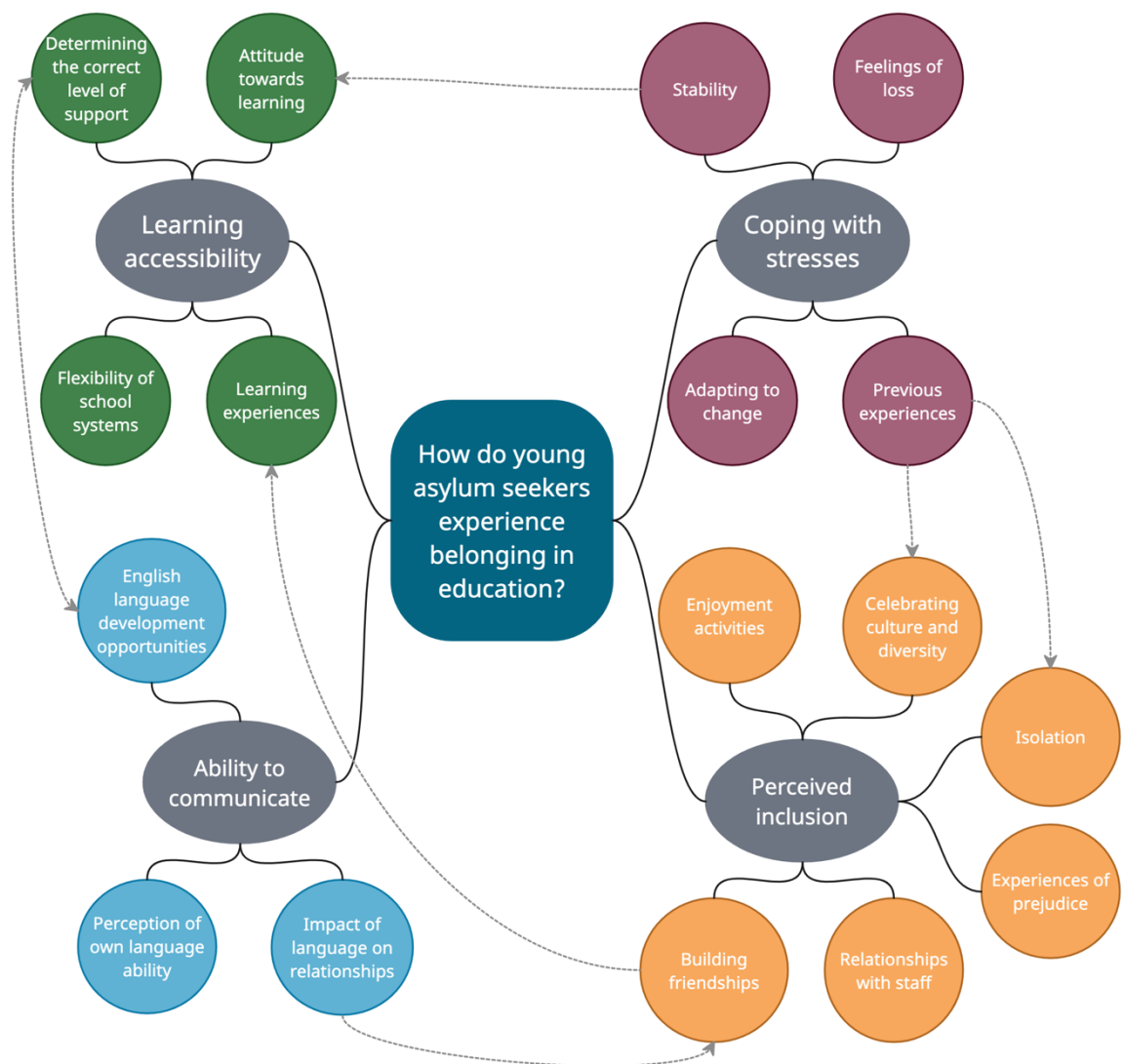
In this paper I followed the steps of thematic analysis as outlined in Braun and Clarke (2020), which recommends that the results and discussion be combined to better describe the flow of the data. However, as the journal that I am aiming to publish in requires a more traditional layout, I decided to include a mixture of quotes, interpretation, and further research in my results sections, and to separate these from the theoretical underpinnings, strengths and limitations, and implications, which are recorded in the discussion section. The codes, categories, and themes were created from the primary data, and additional research was brought in where relevant to support them. Having the quotes, interpretation and further research combined can lead to a

level of blending between these sections. To try to minimise this, I have attempted to provide first a quote or description of the data, followed by my interpretation of its meaning and then highlighting where it aligns with research in the field. I have also worked hard to make it clear when another researcher or author's work is being referenced and have used citations throughout.

## Results

**Figure 3.1**

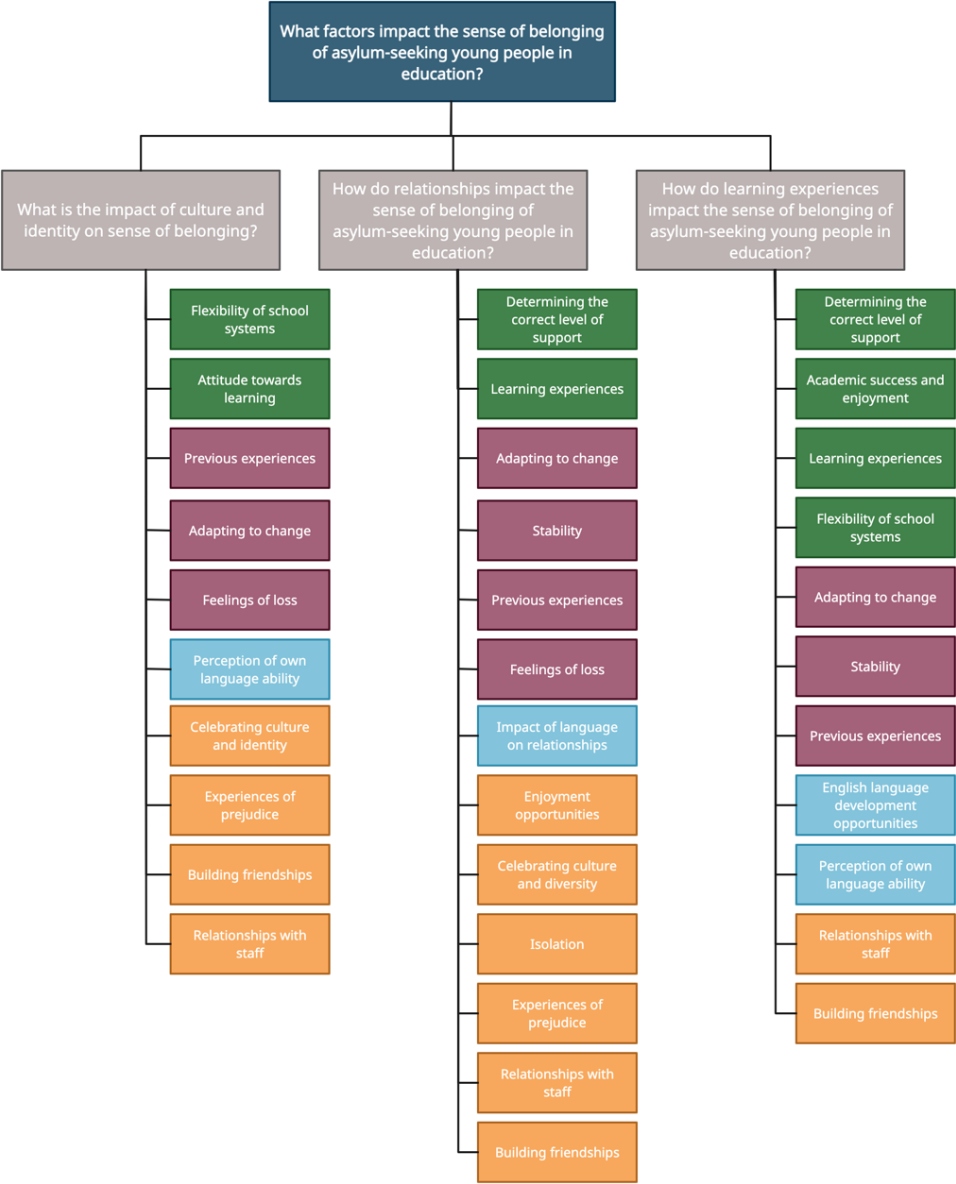
*Thematic map*



This thematic map provides a visual representation of the themes and categories identified through the data and highlights directional links between these. The categories within each theme are represented in the same colour, and these colours are continued in figure 2 below to show how the categories, and therefore themes, contribute to the research question.

Figure 3.2

Theme and category contributions to research questions





***Learning accessibility***

School staff described a relationship between YPSA's perceived ability to remain in the UK and engagement in education. They highlighted that when young people lack security or stability in their lives, they can find it difficult to engage with their surroundings.

You've got a confused child who's between their heart and their head. Not knowing whether they are coming or going and not knowing what they really want. And then, so, I think the easiest thing [for the child] to do is push everyone away and give up (Gina, 29, British teacher in a secondary school in Chichester).

YPSA built on this, reporting that as their time in the UK progressed, they began to feel increasingly settled and able to express their desire to engage in education and improve their English ability. "And now we live in the UK, so, our first focus, umm, to learn English because there is the first language was the UK is English, so, I would like to learn" (Sam, 17, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth). The contrast between the above sentiments highlights the impact of stability on the young person's attitude towards learning and builds on the notion that individuals' ontological security, sense of self regardless of time or place, stems from stability, routine, and predictability (Giddens, 1991). A sense of security is linked to building bases and relationships (Mitzen, 2006), therefore, support from school staff can be crucial for supporting YPSA to develop a SoB in college. Across YPSA focus groups, teachers were reported to recognise where additional support was needed and provided this in an appropriate way, such as simplifying explanations.

Rahim: They were helpful, and yeah, they were great,

Abdul: Yeah, the teachers okay. It was very helpful. Especially that they know who needs the help, especially the language at school was difficult for us, so they were more trying to help us to understand, yeah, I noticed this thing there.

The view of support expressed by Rahim (22, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Poole) and Abdul (21, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth) was positive overall, however, the views of school staff were mixed. They noted that teachers can at times underestimate students' academic abilities because of their language skills and can therefore find it difficult to know what support should be prioritised. This adds to prior research suggesting that staff may lack understanding and inaccurately judge a young person as needing language support if they are non-white, even when their first language is English, or they were born in the UK (Welply, 2023). The following extract is from one of the conversations with two members of staff,

Sonia (42, Polish EAL co-ordinator in a secondary school Poole) and Zara (48, Polish EAL officer in a secondary school in Poole):

Sonia: 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.

This view builds on the understanding that a SoB can develop from both social acceptance and academic performance (Davis, Hanzsek-Brill, et al, 2019), and indicates a struggle for school staff to strike a balance between offering language support to develop YPSA's academic confidence and restricting opportunities for friendship development. Despite these difficulties, school staff highlighted a number of positive supportive methods currently in place in their schools, such as the opportunity for YPSA to gain additional GCSEs in the home language, with options including Arabic and Russian. Though this opportunity was not mentioned by the YPSA participants.

If your child speaks another language at home and they would like to do a GCSE in their language and that option exists in that language, we will endeavour to do.

We can't teach really a language. We don't have resources, but we will work with EMTAS to find specialist speakers (Monica, 54, British EAL Co-ordinator in a secondary school in West Sussex).

The pathways available to YPSA within their settings can be limited, though were seen by some YPSA as helpful for developing English language and a gateway to more opportunities in the UK. "So we need to get 100% comfortable in English. So, you said I understand English, I can speak, I can write, I can read. So, after that, we need to focus on our future" (Sam, 17, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth). These pathways were also seen as enabling learning in an environment with relatable peers and discussions that create opportunities for both socialisation and learning simultaneously. "I'm not a social person, but still, I enjoy talking big, well, deep discussions. So, that was really fun because we did have a lot of things to talk about. And I enjoyed that because I could be open" (Ivan, 21, unaccompanied Iranian asylum-seeker in West Sussex).

Other YPSA had differing views, sharing how they felt the pathways underestimated their ability, limited future opportunities, and were unmotivating, slow and frustrating. Similarly, school staff discussed the experiences of young people who were restricted in learning because their language skills limited their ability to demonstrate their understanding. This supports research suggesting YPSA cannot have equal opportunities until their prior experiences are examined, understood, and accepted (Bunar, 2019). Adding to this, because of their life trajectory, YPSA enter the education system often already somewhat more mature than their non-refugee peers (Chase, Knight, and Statham, 2008). It is, therefore, important that education values their experiences and designs stages whereby people can move through a range of pathways with more tailored approaches to learning (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). The impact of the current system is that many YPSA consider leaving education in search of alternative paths. This echoes broader literature that recognises YPSA face both individual and systemic challenges accessing, advancing, and remaining in education (Ott and O'Higgins, 2019), and that YPSA are entitled to an equal and meaningful education (Bunar, 2019).

I knew many of people from different countries, Sudanese and different nation, they are less, less motivated to move to the high level, not because they're not want to study, but because of the years [it takes]. For example, if you are new, probably start with entry level one, entry one, and then you need entry 2, 3, and then level 1 and level 2. This is about five years. Five years and then you, you still haven't got your GCSEs. So they say "Ohh, come on, I'm not gonna spend like, five years at college to, to move to level 2" (Julius, 20, unaccompanied Sudanese asylum-seeker in Chichester).

Teaching staff also highlighted the importance of tailored approaches, discussing how YPSA succeed in subjects requiring less language and with visuals to support their understanding. "I don't know what they were, Avocado. So, teachers they can give pictures, so they work hard with these things" (Sam, 17, unaccompanied Afghani asylum-seeker in Bournemouth). This resonates with the idea that visuals and technology can promote linguistic development by creating a shared understanding (Vulchanova et al, 2019).

School staff also discussed how some teachers within schools are reluctant to differentiate work, possibly stemming from a limited understanding of the impact of language barriers, trauma, and previous experiences on learning accessibility. Further highlighting the need for improved teacher understanding, a discussion from one focus group focused on the context and relevance of the learning. "The topics in college for me, yeah, it's difficult for because we

didn't know nothing about vegetarian, we, we all eat meat, and so the topic was not relevant to the culture" (Ada, 23, accompanied Chechnyan asylum-seeker in Chichester). If an individual's emotions and experiences are not understood, relationships can be superficial (Lazarus, 2006), and without emotional connection, motivation to differentiate learning to accommodate individual needs is reduced (McDiarmid et al, 2021).

### ***Perceived level of inclusion***

The importance of building friendships shone through in the data with participants discussing friendships that developed both in and out of school through shared interests and opportunities for group membership. Similarly, research highlights that friendships in all contexts can support adolescents' social inclusion (Witkow and Guligni, 2010).

We play sometime together in the garden and we was doing some stuff and watching TV. Uh, yeah. If you had a friend, friend, a good friend with you. So, it's, it's helpful, yeah. Especially when you come to home and you had the friend (Abdul, 21, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth).

Some participants discussed a preference for socialising with other YPSA as they felt more relatable, and interactions required less language or cultural understanding. The experience of feeling different and unable to relate to many of their peers is likely difficult and isolating, and it is hard to imagine the impact this could have for these young individuals who have already been subjected to high levels of disruption, uncertainty, and discrimination. This also aligns with research by Thelamour, et al (2019) who conducted a mixed method study that found ethnic minority students often build deeper relationships with individuals of the same ethnicity, and that such friendships can affirm racial identities. Participants who have become more confident in language and cultural understanding felt more comfortable integrating with English-speaking peers. Research suggests that integration with individuals from the host country supports social and cultural development (Rivas, et al, 2019), suggesting that while it may feel intimidating for YPSA to mix with English-speaking students initially or raise fears over feeling othered, integrating may help their development and SoB overall if they are met with compassion and respect.

This raises an ethical dilemma around making YPSA who are likely to have experienced stress and trauma feel initially uncomfortable because of the knowledge that it will benefit their SoB in the long run, as opposed to helping them feel secure in friendships with other asylum-seekers, even if this isolates them from the wider school community. However, this need not be a

dichotomy, as both relationships with same-language and wider peer groups can coincide to support engagement, if carefully managed and facilitated by staff.

Social connectedness plays a supportive role for young people, especially those more frequently victimised (McLoughlin, et al, 2019). Extracurricular activities such as sports clubs can provide opportunities for building connections (Buckley and Lee, 2021) and YPSA participants voiced a desire for increased social opportunities; “It’s been two year in \*\*\* college, and I didn’t see any enough activity. So yeah, I really like this kind of activity, yeah, would be nice if they had that” (Abdul, Afghani). School staff in one focus group considered a group of secondary school children from Afghanistan who were unable to partake in extracurricular friendship-building activities, making it difficult for them to build connections with their peers.

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 (Zara, 48, British EAL officer at a secondary school in Poole).

This extract hints at cultural differences playing a part for these YPSA, however there are other reasons why parents may be cautious in allowing children to attend sleepovers or social events, such as safety concerns or medical concerns (Knibb et al, 2019), as well as worries around separation or behaviour concerns (McDonald, et al, 2019).

While experiences of bullying were not discussed amongst most the participants in the present study, it is possible that they may have felt uncomfortable discussing such a personal topic in a group setting with an unknown adult present. Research suggests that YPSA are often subject to bullying and prejudice (Fazel, 2015), sometimes with severe consequences for their physical and mental wellbeing (Trent et al, 2019). School staff mentioned how they recently discovered an Afghani YPSA was upsetting newly arrived Ukrainian students within the school, as illustrated by the extract from the discussion with Zara (48, EAL officer at a secondary school in Poole) and Sonia (42, Polish EAL co-ordinator in a secondary school Poole) below:

Zara: 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 belongs to Russia'.

This quote acts as a reminder that the term 'asylum-seeker' covers a wide range of individuals with an even wider range of experiences (Aspinall and Watters, 2010). There are likely differences in this YPSA's experience of being born into a war-torn country and the experiences of young people for whom war was a new and very sudden occurrence, and this could have led to a limited compassion and understanding of the newcomers' situation.

Further experiences of racism can come from individuals outside of the educational environment, as highlighted in the one-on-one encounter between Julius and an elderly woman he met through a college community outreach program.

She start asking me straight away questions like 'where you from?' like it a normal question, then I say I am from Sudan. And then, 'why you're here?', I said, 'to study', now she say, 'I mean like why did you come to the UK?'. I said to her, 'I have war in my country', and then she didn't stop for this one, she asked me, 'how did he come to UK?' I said 'ohh, I came by for Libya. Chad, Libya, Italy, France and here'. And she said to me, 'why didn't you stop and stay in France instead of coming here to, to the UK?'. I was fed up and I said, 'now is enough' (Julius, 20, Sudanese unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Chichester).

It is clear that this encounter had a lasting emotional impact for Julius; after giving a statement to the college, he did not receive a response and does not feel his experience has been taken seriously. The impact of racial discrimination on wellbeing can be adverse and long-lasting (Trent et al, 2019; Njoroge et al, 2021), and while a strong social support network can act as a buffer (Lu and Wang, 2022), it is not enough to combat the silencing of YPSA by overlooking racist behaviours (Wong et al, 2021). Building on this, social networks in the form of family or friends may already be exhausted because they too are dealing with trauma, insecurity of legal status in the UK, and discrimination in everyday life (Beiser et al, 2003).

One participant shared that he was asked personal questions by strangers in college that he did not feel comfortable answering; "Sometime when they are asking like that and they wanna know, they want to know what do you wanna live here? And why you're here for?" (Ekon, 18, Sudanese unaccompanied asylum-seeker in West Sussex). Ekon discussed his worries that these questions might be an attempt by college to gain information about him. Individuals who have experienced mistreatment may find it harder to build trust, because negative experiences can impact future adjustment and understanding of social situations (Coie, 2004). Many refugees

come from places where there is a deep distrust of authority, which shapes their ability to trust others, feeling that even innocent questions have negative intentions (Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway, 2007; Raghallaigh 2014). Moreover, they can be equally distrusting of immigration systems and the Home Office (Griffiths, 2012) and so questions such as those asked of Ekon may be perceived as intended to impact their asylum-seeking application. Therefore, the entire environment can be one of doubt and isolation that must be tormenting for a young person, hindering them being able to make lasting friendships. Building on research that has found level of trust to be an indicator for relationship development (Apostolou and Keramari, 2020), school staff discussed the importance of consistency of adults and approaches in support for creating trusting relationships between staff and YPSA.

School staff appeared aware of the distress invasive questions could cause, and therefore avoided difficult topics. This emphasises the importance of understanding an individual's situation, and recognising the potential trauma, loss, and distress YPSA face (Groark, et al, 2010). A disadvantage of not broaching distressing topics is that staff may miss opportunities to support YPSA and help them feel listened to and accepted (Fejes and Dahlstedt, 2020).

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 (Sonia, 42, Polish EAL co-ordinator in a secondary school Poole).

Supporting young people around delicate issues is important and requires close and continuous engagement (Anttila, Siljamäki and Rowe, 2018). It may take time, but with constant interaction and a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings, supporting these issues is possible (Björnborg, 2011). This highlights the importance of having staff who are empathetic or can relate to experiences of trauma, for example staff with a refugee background (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Block et al, 2014). "Having people that are like, understanding of, of me and some of the differences" (Rahim, 22, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Poole).

Further adult support includes getting to know the young person or offering support beyond the classroom, for example supporting the family as well as the individual. "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" (Zara, 48, EAL officer at a secondary school in Poole). It is important to consider, however, that the level of support received can differ for individuals from different countries, perhaps shaped by government policy towards

different groups. For example, many Ukrainian refugees received higher and qualitatively better support in the UK than arrivals from other nations, meaning schools gained additional resources they might not have received to support other arrivals (Machin, 2023).

Below, Ada highlights the necessity of practical support, particularly when initially starting education to increase access to education and remove additional stress and worry. This includes support to get to and navigate the school environment, find the correct rooms and learn where the facilities are. The need for practical support likely extends more broadly to understanding and navigating life in the UK (Devenney, 2020), and can be as important to individuals seeking asylum as educational support (Hopkins and Hill, 2010).

I think it would be better if the, if the college, uh, provides information, uh, important information such as travelling, finding there, and because many people didn't know how, I don't know how, were not able to find some information and, uh, they don't, cannot ask, not able ask the teachers, 'cause they have barrier language (Ada, Chechnya).

School staff discussed opportunities provided for individuals to practice and share their culture with others. “Two Syrian girls in this little breakfast club are going to do a whole school assembly with the head and the sixth formers and present what Ramadan is” (Monica, 54, EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in West Sussex). Feeling as though other people are interested and respectful of your culture increases feelings of acceptance and positivity (Jasin, et al, 2018). Participants built on this, sharing how they feel culture and religion are respected and celebrated where possible.

It's like you're in there is a respect for everyone. Respect for religion. Respect for yourself. Respect for your skin. Not like they say, 'you black, I white', nothing like this. 'You're Muslim, I'm Christian', not like this. 'I no Like your friend', No. No. Like everyone have respect for everyone (Omar, 17, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth).

As illustrated in the above quote from Omar, some young people spoke about feeling accepted and respected in college, echoing school staff's description of treating all young people as individuals, rather than one of many. This aligns with previous research suggesting fairness is



achieved through equity (each individual getting the support needed to create meaningful equal opportunities) rather than equality (everybody being offered the same support) (Gorard, 2012).

Another factor highlighted by YPSA as impacting SoB was for their preferences to be taken into consideration across the whole school, beyond the classroom. Julius explained that he cannot bring a lunch from home, so because of the lack of culturally appropriate, halal, or vegetarian food being served in the canteen in college, and is only able to eat chips each day. “Umm, I think college should make survey like every year. They should ask student what they want to, to eat it in college and what, what food they like to see in the in the canteen” (Julius, Sudanese). We can see in this extract that Julius wanted a way in which all students could make their food preferences known to the college so that they could be accounted for.

### ***Coping with stresses***

Emotional responses to previous experiences, uncertainty around asylum applications, and adapting to life in a new country are all factors that contribute to the immense level of stress experienced by asylum-seeking individuals (Kirmayer et al, 2011). Increased levels of stress can reduce an individual’s working memory capacity and increase their cognitive load (Plass and Kalyuga, 2019), this is compounded for young people (Tine, 2013) leading them to become overwhelmed more easily (Fraser et al, 2015).

In line with previous research, school staff demonstrated an understanding of the challenges and stresses faced by YPSA and their families when discussing their uptake of the activities and extracurricular opportunities offered to them. “It's also very overwhelming being offered something extra. And it's keeping everything in your mind and remembering it all as well. It's just there's a lot, a lot to process for them at the moment” (Monica, 54, British EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in West Sussex). School staff understood that offering these opportunities was important, even if attendance is poor, because activities can evoke meaningful change and provide choice for YPSA who have had limited control over their lives both in the UK and their country of origin (Tripe and Jalonon, 2021).

We're already working with people who've lost so much control and power and autonomy and place in society and identity, and you come to a new culture and then people make assumptions; often very caring assumptions, about what people want or how they feel or who they want to be, or what they like doing (Monica, 54, EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in West Sussex).

A lack of control can be detrimental to wellbeing and contribute to loss of identity (Burchett and Matheson, 2010). Finding ways to express themselves through opportunities to interact with people with common interests, have fun, forget about stresses, and relax was highlighted as important by YPSA. This echoes previous research suggesting that asylum-seeking individuals' health and wellbeing is impacted by previous experiences, stress and underlying trauma (Burnett and Peel, 2001), and builds on research by Drigas and Mitsea (2021) emphasising the relationship between uncontrollable stress and mental wellbeing, and the need for relaxation as a form of stress management. "After lessons and after college just been out and, umm, meet with friends. Been to like a park or these things, yes. Take dinner together and also take some fun, that is very good of our time" (Sam, 17, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth).

Discussions with school staff identified a loss of self and YPSA having to rediscover themselves; learning how to live in a new country, discovering where they fit into society, and how others view them. In addition, the young people discussed are undergoing tremendous physical, mental and emotional changes as part of transitioning into adulthood at a biological and socio-cultural level (Osgood, Foster and Courtney, 2010; McDonald, 2016), in an unfamiliar and unsettled context. In their framework, Shore et al (2011) propose that a distinctive sense of self and uniqueness supports the development of a SoB. Further research builds on this, explaining how identity crises experienced by YPSA can lead to decreased mental wellbeing and behaviours such as self-harming (Gargiulo et al, 2021).

Memories of home countries were explored as part of the research, and while these were mostly positive memories, these serve as a reminder of what the YPSA has lost. These memories came with a sense of worry about the people and places left behind and an inability to detach themselves from the situation. "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" (Sonia, 42, Polish EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in Poole). This quote is a reminder of how these young people's memories, communities and places are destroyed, and the experience lived everyday trauma of feeling not just the loss, but also the guilt of surviving and the inability to change the situation (Clayton, 2019).

Emotional trauma is prevalent amongst asylum-seeking individuals often resulting from physical violence, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, family separation, or other experiences (Silverstein et al, 2021). A variety of additional stressful and traumatic events can occur in transit to the host country (Vukčević Marković et al, 2023), further impacting their wellbeing and likelihood of development of post-traumatic stress disorder (Blackmore et al, 2020). In the current study, Julius shared parts of his experience and highlighted the emotional impact that it continues to exude.

Took me 3 years from Sudan to come here and even now I don't know where is my family. So, when someone come and sit with you and ask you about family and ask you about that. So, it's kind of bring emotion back to you (Julius, 20, Sudanese unaccompanied asylum seeker in Chichester).

How other people perceived the previous experiences of YPSA impacted how understood the young people felt and their sense of inclusion in college. The discussions suggest that often people make judgements based on their own predisposed ideas or prejudices rather than learning about an individual. Not taking the time to understand the individual and their circumstances can be damaging for their wellbeing and SoB, leading them to feel misunderstood or excluded (Leary, 2015). "There are lots of interesting dynamics in that particular little group. A lot of power games and people echoing their parents" (Monica, 54, British EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in West Sussex).

School staff discussed the additional stress and difficulty relaxing experienced by YPSA who assume adult responsibilities at home. YPSA taking on additional responsibilities is linked to their increased exposure to English language and social networks through education, and can include acting as translators, and engaging with medical professionals, lawyers, and social services (Ottosson et al, 2016). This can create an additional layer of trauma by engaging with parents' traumatic events and emotional responses that parents would generally shield their children from but have to reveal in these cases, such as abuse or the stability of their asylum application (Wood et al, 2020).

Eltokhy (2020) explored factors influencing YPSA's sense of stability and identified instability of legal status in the UK as preventing the development of relationships and planning a future, both of which can impact SoB. Another important factor was accommodation; some YPSA were placed in foster care or host families upon arrival, and these relationships were described as pivotal to feelings of security and stability. Reading this, it is easy to see the struggles these young people face when trying to build security and feel safe, how these can impact their emotional wellbeing, and how elements that they do not have any control over can have such an influence their lives and ability to settle. Previous research suggests that a stable living situation reduces stress levels and increases social and educational engagement (Lewis, 2006). "I think that the relationship with the host family again will impact everything else. Because if it's going well and you think, OK, this is my home, I'm gonna be staying here. That's something that's stable" (Gina, 29, British Teacher at a secondary school in Chichester).

Education is crucial to helping YPSA settle because it creates a sense of normality and predictability and can support their emotional and social wellbeing (Guo et al, 2019). The current

study recognises that consistency and structure in schools enables feelings of safety and stability to develop. “I think all we can do as a school is just be this constant, constant, reliable, repetitive, open minded for them” (Monica, 54, British EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in West Sussex).

### ***Ability to communicate***

English language ability was described by participants as important to both their learning and friendship development, agreeing with research identifying language as needed in almost all parts of UK life, including accessing and achieving in education (Lamb, 2001). These views emphasise the importance of effective communication and highlight the necessity of appropriate language support on SoB. Language is recognised as an important part of communication (Hennick, 2008), which helps develop trust and belonging (Allen et al, 2021).

Building on this, participants discussed opportunities to develop language both within and outside of the educational setting, including language classes, interpreters, extracurricular activities, and social events through charities or youth groups. While many opportunities were discussed, one young person explained how English lessons often teach aspects of English that do not feel relevant to YPSA. “If you study English, okay, you study grammar rules, but in real life you'll not be able to communicate with other people, you know.” (Julius, 20, Sudanese unaccompanied asylum seeker in Chichester).

What came across most strongly, however, was the importance of interacting with individuals of a different language and practicing English language regularly. Which demonstrates that while young people can lack confidence in their English ability, motivation to develop their language skills can build their confidence over time and support them in all aspects of life in the UK.

I came by myself so didn't speak to each other and was not comfortable, but I feel very brave because English is not my first language. So, when with some friends from another country and talk to English so I feel very brave. I say, I can do it. I can speak English, so I'm, I'm perfect (Jon, 17, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth).

“I do not speak with too much people, yeah. Just my like, some, like, Arabic friends and some like Albania, no English people. Because I am shy so that's why I don't speak too much” (John, 18, Afghani unaccompanied asylum seeker in Poole). As in this quote, some YPSA described the impact of nervousness on their interactions with English-speaking students. This came across

as a reciprocal relationship where English ability impacts interaction with English-speaking individuals, but limited interaction with English-speaking individuals reduces practice and English language development. Other ways identified that support language development include radio, television, magazines, mobile phone applications, and social media use (Kuning, 2020).

Views shared by YPSA explained that understanding people can be particularly difficult on the phone and when individuals speak fast or have an accent. This likely feeds the inclination to build friendships with same language peers, and to seek out individuals similar to oneself (Riley and White, 2016), as this can increase self-esteem (Morse and Gergen, 1970). In line with this, YPSA suggested that building friendships with same language peers can help build an initial SoB to a group but slows language development and SoB to the wider community. "I think, it wasn't helpful you not to speak in English when you see someone else from your country. Yeah, you need to speak in your own language, yeah, but it was hard speaking English, so yeah" (Rahim, 22 Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Poole).

Many of the YPSA involved in this study were not confident in their English language abilities and felt uncomfortable interacting with English-speaking individuals because they perceived their spoken English or understanding as inadequate. "Trying to work in English language is like the torrent with crocodiles and currents and rocks and floods and waterfalls, and you're just getting the core keywords key vocabulary. It's like finding steppingstones across the torrent" (Monica, 54, British EAL co-ordinator at a secondary school in West Sussex).

There was a general understanding across participants that while schools can speed language acquisition, all individuals will develop their language abilities with time and exposure. This emphasises a positive mindset, showing that despite the barriers and setbacks faced, YPSA feel a sense of hope, perseverance, and possibility for the future. "We learning English as well as learning for school. Learning is, wasn't easy in the start and I remember I, I, couldn't read anything, but I with the time I, I, I learn a lot of things" (Abdul, 21, Afghani unaccompanied asylum-seeker in Bournemouth).

## **Discussion**

The objective of this research was to explore the factors impacting the SoB experienced by YPSA in schools and colleges in South England. Four overarching themes were identified that were felt to narrate the story of the data; learning accessibility, perceived inclusion, coping with stresses, ability to communicate. However, overlap links were identified between categories and themes, illustrated in figure 1.

The theme 'Coping with stresses' stems from discussions with school staff about the experiences of their students, as FGDs with YPSA did not highlight sense of self as impacting on SoB. This is cause for consideration as to whether it is not recognised as an important factor by YPSA, or whether something prevented them from sharing their thoughts and experiences around this topic. For example, it could be that the relationship between researcher and participants was not deep enough for them to feel comfortable sharing, or YPSA may have protected their wellbeing because of the possible retraumatisation or distress of expressing these emotions.

YPSA seemed more inclined to give a positive view of educational experiences and tended to minimise negative elements or experiences. It is possible that because these individuals have often come from difficult situations where they have experienced trauma, distress, or uncertainty, they feel very appreciative of the safety and support they receive in the UK and they are hesitant to sound ungrateful. Additionally, YPSA might have felt able to be more open in individual interviews than a group discussion with peers, especially as focus groups were organised by schools and charities that supported them.

Many of the factors identified through this research align with research into trauma-informed practice, such as the importance of trust, stability, self-esteem, and autonomy. Trauma-informed practice is a strengths-based approach that works to build resilience (Nicholson et al, 2019). The key principles in trauma-informed practice and building trust through reliability, helping individuals feel safe, empowering them to build their self-esteem and sense of autonomy, providing choice, and working collaboratively (Miller et al, 2019; Levenson, 2020).

The findings of this study highlight the importance of feeling safe, relationships, stability of housing and asylum status, and self-efficacy and sense of competence on SoB. This aligns with Maslow (1943)'s theory of human motivation which suggests that physiological, safety, belonging, and esteem needs must be fulfilled for an individual to experience self-actualisation. Maslow (1943) organises these needs into a hierarchy leading to self-actualisation which was not apparent through this research. The hierarchy of needs has been criticised for inaccuracy and lack of scientific research, and it has been proposed that these needs can be responded to simultaneously (Hill and Tisdall, 1997) and for some people, inability to meet a need can help them identify their life goals and work towards self-actualisation (Henwood et al, 2015). The findings of the current research also fit with the ideas presented in Self-Determination: that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are needed for an individual to reach optimal motivation and engagement in education (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

The results of this study reflect the key concepts of theory of belonging which highlights that individuals have an innate need to build and maintain lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). To maintain these relationships, Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that individuals require consistency of interaction and

emotional connection. In addition, the current research identifies that YPSA's belonging needs relate to previous research suggesting that shared beliefs, supportive environments, self-esteem and interaction can influence SoB (Ma, 2003). Further research suggests that belonging is impacted by motivation, emotional stability, individual characteristics, parent support, peer support, teacher support, gender, race and ethnicity, extracurricular activities and environment (Allen et al, 2018). Through the current study, an additional layer of intrapersonal and environmental factors is identified that may be more relevant to specific groups of individuals, including YPSA. These include ability to manage distressing emotions in relation to past experiences, ability to trust others and accept support, sense of autonomy, and perception of own abilities. Additionally, feelings of safety and permanence both in the UK and in school were identified as factors impacting belonging for YPSA. This means there are many individuals with additional belonging needs that are not currently recognised in belonging theory.

### ***Limitations***

TA is a flexible approach that enables the generation of new ideas and concepts derived from the data, making it an accessible approach and allowing detailed exploration of the data. The flexibility of TA allows the researcher influence over how data is interpreted and what is perceived as important, meaning that this thesis represents one of many ways in which the data could have been interpreted, though portrays this interpretation of the data in great detail (Nowell, et al, 2017) and the results were not limited by existing theoretical knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a critical realist, I recognise that my interpretation of the data will have been influenced by my own bias and experiences (Holloway and Todres, 2003). Coming from a family who fosters YPSA, it is likely that my experiences will have created underlying preconceptions of the needs and difficulties of these individuals.

What makes qualitative data so in-depth is the opportunity to gain insight into the experiences and perspectives of individuals, however the question must be raised regarding whether the themes that emerged are likely to be an accurate representation of the opinion of the target population, due to the small sample size (ten YPSA and five school staff) and underrepresentation of certain groups; including female YPSA and male school staff. It is also important to recognise that six of the ten YPSA participants were from Afghanistan, and as asylum-seekers are such a diverse group of individuals their experiences may vary considerably (Chin and Cortes, 2015). The use of focus groups, along with the limited sample, may have led to insights or experiences being missed or unexplored, limiting the implications of this research (Hajian-Tilaki, 2014).

***Implications and future research***

Four areas were identified in which practical changes could be made in educational settings. The first is to provide access to higher numbers of teachers with experience teaching English as an additional language to help them to understand how the young people learn, and support language development alongside academic development.

Secondly, more practical support could be provided initially upon starting education to increase YPSA's access to education and remove additional stresses, including providing; documents YPSA can translate prior to beginning education, school maps marking key areas such as toilets, travel information, and lessons and extracurricular activities timetables. Additionally, providing access to additional extracurricular activities could enable YPSA to build relationships with a wider range of students and to relax and have fun with a reduced reliance on English language.

Finally, more choice and autonomy in education would enable YPSA to influence their own experiences, which can improve achievement and feelings of safety, particularly for individuals who have experienced trauma or anxiety (Ghorbandordinejad and Ahmadabad, 2016). Choices offered could range from the food they would like in the canteen to the subjects they study.

Implications for Educational Psychologists (EPs) include opening discussions with schools around the support they offer YPSA, ensuring they are provided with the academic, emotional, and social skills to be actively engaged in education, and promoting the inclusion of YPSA in decision-making processes facilitating enjoyment and engagement in learning. EPs can also build and promote trusting relationships that encourage open communication and constructive relationships within the school and communities surrounding the YPSA. Further implications include providing training and development opportunities for school staff to support them to meet the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of YPSA. Furthermore, EPs are in an optimal position to inform policies at both a local and national level regarding interventions and support for YPSA, including involving the results identified through this study.

This topic remains under-researched in educational psychology, and more broadly, and future research should continue to explore the SoB experienced by YPSA in education. Research could work to gain insight into the experiences of YPSA from different backgrounds and settings, for example, research into gender or geographical differences in SoB experienced by YPSA in education.



## Appendix A Search Syntax

Database	Syntax
PsychINFO	(asylum seek* OR refugee* OR immigrant* OR asylum-seek* OR migrant*) AND (UK OR United Kingdom OR Britain OR Great Britain OR England OR Wales OR Scotland OR Northern Ireland) AND (sense of belonging OR belonging OR belongingness OR feeling belonged OR social connectedness OR social-connectedness OR social belonging OR resilience OR wellbeing OR well-being) AND (education OR school OR learning OR classroom OR education system or college OR apprenticeship OR sixth form OR university OR high school OR highschool OR high-school OR secondary school OR pupil* OR student*)
'Education Resources Information Centre'	(asylum seek* OR refugee* OR immigrant* OR asylum-seek* OR migrant*) AND (UK OR United Kingdom OR Britain OR Great Britain OR England OR Wales OR Scotland OR Northern Ireland) AND (sense of belonging OR belonging OR belongingness OR feeling belonged OR social connectedness OR social-connectedness OR social belonging OR resilience OR wellbeing OR well-being) AND (education OR school OR learning OR classroom OR education system or college OR apprenticeship OR sixth form OR university OR high school OR highschool OR high-school OR secondary school OR pupil* OR student*)

**Appendix B Data Extraction Table**

Author (year)	Article title	Research questions/aims	Publishin g context	Participant characteristics and context	Methods (design, data collection and data analysis)	Summary of results	Additional notes
Ritchie and Gaulter (2020)	Dancing towards belonging: The use of a dance intervention to influence migrant pupil's sense of belonging in school.	To examine whether dance might influence the wellbeing of migrant pupils, in particular their sense of belonging (SOB), given evidence linking this basic human need to positive educational outcomes.	Publishe d in 'International Journal of Inclusive Education', which is a peer reviewed journal.	13 female migrant secondary school pupils from a school in a socially deprived area in the South East England. All were between the ages of 11 and 15.  Convenient sampling (pupils identified by school as having migrated to	Dance intervention: 6 x 60- minute hip hop dance classes (hip hop chosen by pupils).  Qualitative methods used to explore their experiences and the impact of the classes. Semi- structured focus groups of up to 6	Key themes highlight that participation in the dance intervention fostered opportunities to build sense of belonging by:  1. Connecting with others	Interviews were also held with staff from the school, and researcher field notes were kept – these are helpful though do not give us the CYP views.  Also include:

				the UK in the last 3 years).	participants. These included photo-elicitation methods (shown photos of dance sessions).	2. feeling safe to build confidence 3. engagement  Findings have been cross-referenced through all data collection to ensure robustness and validity	Context of the research – country - Educational settings  Epistemology – can note if not provided
Welphy (2015)	Re-imagining Otherness: An exploration of the global imaginaries of children from immigrant backgrounds in primary schools in	To explore the global imaginaries of young immigrant-background children in a way that allows their voices and multiple	Published in 'European educational research journal'. This is a peer reviewed journal.	34 participants aged 10 and 11 and attending a primary school in a low-income area either in the UK or France (17 from each – only data	Semi-structured group and individual interviews including questions, games, and drawings.	French school themes: 1. Otherness as belonging 2. joint-cultural creation (with other CYP of	

	France and England.	interpretations to be heard.		<p>regarding those in the UK were included in this review)</p> <p>In the UK – 7 Second generation immigrants and 10 British CYP.</p> <p>In France 11 second generation immigrants and 6 French.</p> <p>Nationalities of origin include Hmong, Laotian, Indian, Moroccan, Algerian, Turkish,</p>	<p>The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and coded thematically using NVivo</p> <p>Diaries for CYP to write about their experience of school.</p>	<p>different nationalities).</p> <p>3. Global imaginaries, intersecting spaces (impacted by school, local environment, TV, etc).</p> <p>UK school themes:</p> <p>1. Constructing the other (children described otherness as a basis for separation between peers)</p> <p>2. Points of imaginary</p>	
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				Cambodian, Bangladeshi, Russian, Italian, and Portuguese		encounters (future aspirations built on knowing friends from different places)  3. Transcending local separations (current separation based on otherness, but future projections of belonging to the world and inclusion).	
Hamilton (2013) A	It's not all about academic achievement: Supporting the social and emotional needs of migrant worker children.	1 To identify whether migrant children have access to inclusive educational and social opportunities.	Published in 'Pastoral Care in Education', a peer-reviewed journal.	40 Eastern European CYP from schools in North Wales aged 3-11. 23 boys and 17 girls. Nationalities: Polish (28),	Semi structured interviews with open-ended-free-sequence questions. Interviews were digitally recorded for practitioners and	Key themes:  1. New things to get used to – initial adjustment	

		<p>2 To ascertain whether migrant children are making successful transitions within their new school environments.</p> <p>3 To gain insight into the lives of migrant children beyond the school setting.</p>		<p>Lithuanian (5), Slovakian (3), Latvian (1), Estonian (1), Rumanian (1) and Bulgarian (1).</p> <p>Other participants included 37 teachers, 8 EAL teachers, 9 Eastern European parents, and 6 community practitioners</p>	<p>manually recorded for parents and CYP.</p> <p>Other data collection methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation</li> <li>- Documentary analysis</li> <li>- Questionnaires from additional schools who did not provide participants</li> <li>- Analytical process</li> </ul>	<p>2. They started talking to me – peer attachments</p> <p>3. I thought Miss might shout at me – pupil-teacher relations</p> <p>4. My parents are always working – changing roles and family structures.</p> <p>In a climate preoccupied with raising academic attainment and in communities where there has been significant</p>	
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						cultural change, the holistic needs of individual migrant learners may not be fully recognised.	
Oddy, Harewood, Masserano, and Lounasmaa (2022)	Experiences of forced migration: learning for educators and learners: a report.	To explore the importance of the student's voice as a culturally sustaining pedagogical approach to strengthening trauma-informed teaching approaches	Published in 'International Review of Psychiatry', a bi-monthly peer-reviewed journal.	8 students considering/starting university at University of East London – no ages, genders, or ethnicity information given.	Interviews – participants were provided with questions about their experiences and any suggestions they might have for future teaching, which they could respond to while recording themselves on camera or audio. However, they were also encouraged to use the questions as guidelines and go off script if they wished	Key themes identified:  1. Welcoming environments (impact of having/not having).  This included Having voices heard/not heard, feeling liked/hated, any race/gender bias, pastoral support, how 'grouped' they	

					to discuss additional issues in ways the questions did not cover. <sup>3</sup> The data were transcribed, documented using excel and jointly analysed by the four authors of this paper.	feel with other minorities, opportunities to mix with other students.	
Sobitan (2022)	Understanding the experiences of school belonging amongst secondary school students with refugee backgrounds	<p>Aim: To understand how secondary school refugee students experience school belonging in the North East of England</p> <p>Research question: What are the experiences of school belonging</p>	Published in 'Educational Psychology in Practice', a peer-reviewed journal.	<p>IPA sampling strategy was used to recruit homogenous participants, who may share similar experiences of the phenomenon being studied.</p> <p>7 participants aged</p>	<p>Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which looks at how experiences impact how a person perceives something. IPA is not limited to simply analysing data but influences how researchers design their research and develop questions.</p>	<p>Four superordinate themes were discovered in the data, which could support an understanding of how refugee students experienced school belonging in the North East. These are</p>	<p>Critical realist approach - suggests that natural and social reality exist independent of human knowledge (Bhaskar et al., 1998).</p>



		amongst secondary school students with refugee backgrounds (UK)?		<p>11-16 years (3 female, 2 male)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asylum seekers and refugees</li> <li>- Attended secondary school</li> <li>- Good understanding of English and communication skills</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p>Recruited through local authority organisations</p>	<p>Semi- structured interviews via Zoom used to encourage free and open discussions.</p>	<p>1. agency - the extent that participants feel in control of themselves, their environment and their future.</p> <p>2. participation - participants' desire to contribute to school life and take part in extra activities beyond the classroom.</p> <p>3. safety - feelings of acceptance and their relationships with teachers and peers.</p> <p>4. separation -</p>	
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						<p>highlighted how negative experiences caused participants to internalise feelings of separation and difference.</p> <p>Participant s indicated that positive relationships with teachers, such as receiving support and encouragement when needed, made them feel like they belonged.</p> <p>Participant s described</p>	
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						<p>enhanced belonging when the various aspects of their identity and experiences were respected and affirmed within the school, contributing to their feelings of safety.</p> <p>participant s expressed a desire to engage in after-school sports and other extracurricular activities as a way of experiencing school belonging.</p>	
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						<p>Participant s from this study identified that negative relationships with teachers contributed to a lack of safety and were considered barriers to their school belonging.</p> <p>Participant s stated that the COVID-19 restrictions curtailed participation in school activities and restricted access to additional support, which impacted</p>	
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						their agency and created a barrier to school belonging.	
Fuller and Hayes (2019)	Matthew Fuller and Ben Hayes (2019): What are the experiences of education for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in the UK?	To ascertain the experience of educations for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people	Published in an international, peer-reviewed journal: 'Child: Care, Health and Development'.	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people aged 18 and 19 living in the UK.  5 males 1 female  Countries of origin include Eritrea, Afghanistan and Iran.	Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data  interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data.	Key themes:  1. Education facilitating socializing  2. Education and English proficiency leading to a better life in the UK  3. The impact of transitions  4. The impact of external stressors	

				3 at college and 3 at secondary school.		5. A desire for additional resources to learn at one's own pace	
Hek (2005)	The role of education in the settlement of young refugees in the UK: The experiences of young refugees	This is an article based on a small-scale qualitative research project which aimed to gain the perspective of young people about what helped them settle and achieve in school.	Published in a peer-reviewed journal 'Practice' which has a strong focus on social work practice.	Participants were refugees who attended either a mixed comprehensive or a boys comprehensive school in an area of the UK that is predominantly working class.  9 males and 6 females between the ages of 13 and 17, and from varying ethnic backgrounds but	Semi-structured interviews (topics pre-determined with space for interviewees to raise additional issues or comments)  No information on what analysis tools were used to create themes	Themes discussed: 1. settling in school 2. friends 3. the whole-school attitude towards refugees 4. bullying and the anti-bullying ethos 5. teacher's attitudes 6. Links with home	Specific ideas given for what would be most helpful in initial stages of joining a school.

				have been in the UK at least 1 year.		Quotes included	
Valentine, Sporton, and Neilsen (2009)	Identities and belonging: a study of Somalian refugee and asylum-seekers living in the UK and Denmark	To understand how young Somalis negotiate and discursively position themselves within hegemonic social narratives that are not of their own making and which define what it means to be Somali, Muslim, or British/ Danish, social narratives that are racialised and gendered.	Published in 'Environment and Planning D: Society and Space'. This uses both a peer reviewed journal and an editor reviewed companion website.  Focus on social struggles over access to and control of space, place, territory, region, and resources.	Purposive sampling.  Participant s from Sheffield, UK, or Aarhus, Denmark.  50 Somali asylum-seekers and refugees aged 11-18.	Same methods and research questions used in both UK and Denmark: observation in Somali community spaces, interviews with Somali asylum-seekers, and interviews with key stakeholders  No information about data analysis or how themes generated	Themes identified:  1. Being Somali: memories and practices  2. Being Muslim: communities and regulation  3. Being British/Danish: belonging to the nation  Quotes included	

McMullen et al (2020)	‘Sitting on a wobbly chair’: mental health and wellbeing among newcomer pupils in Northern Irish schools.	Therefore, the aim of this study was to learn more about the mental health needs of newcomer pupils in schools in NI, according to newcomer pupils themselves and those who work most closely with them, specifically school staff and youth workers.  The research questions were: 1. What are the challenges and opportunities	Published in Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, a peer reviewed journal.	Sampling was purposive.  Two primary and two post-primary schools in urban settings participated as well as two primary and two post-primary schools in rural populations (n = 8 schools).  39 pupils in total aged 9-18 years.	Participant views and lived experiences were explored through questionnaires, online surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions.  Semi-structured focus groups of 4-6 participants to explore what the newcomer pupils liked most and least about being a young person in NI, any challenges they have faced and how these issues made them feel, and their	Results suggest that, while many newcomer pupils have adapted well and display average levels of emotional well-being, many have experienced a range of adversities that may negatively impact mental health. Recommendations are made that relate to the emergent themes: to consider pre-existing stress and trauma (especially among refugees); respect socio-cultural differences	
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		<p>facing newcomer children and young people with respect to mental health and wellbeing? 2. What recommendations could be made to schools, youth services and communities in order to contribute effectively in supporting and enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of newcomer pupils.</p>			<p>experience of school and other organisations outside of school.</p>	<p>and perspectives; foster relationships and collaboration; and empower and support schools.</p> <p>4 themes:</p> <p>1. Pre-existing Stress and Trauma (in particular among refugees)</p> <p>2. Difference and Discrimination (felt safer in NI than home country, though experiences of bullying and abuse discussed)</p>	
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						<p>3. Family and Friendships- Isolation and Relationships (parent mental health difficulties such as depression were often present in children also, stress of translation for family, loneliness and isolation. Better when larger support network)</p> <p>4. The Impact of School (pupils were intentional in their studies and motivated to succeed, children praised the</p>	
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						schools and particularly the strategies and support they received from individual teachers).	
Bradby et al (2019)	Visibility, resilience, vulnerability in young migrants.	Aims not discussed.	Published in Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine, a bimonthly peer-reviewed healthcare journal.	24 care-leavers aged 17-24.  11 UAS – 8 male, 3 female  (where identifiable, only the views of young people aged 18 and under were included in the review)  Recruited through Children's	Interviews – 5 group and 16 1:1.	Some felt well supported while others described feeling vulnerable, anxious, angry or sad. These experiences, if linked with the insensitivity of even one professional, could lower young people's expectations of healthcare to the	

				Services within a LA		<p>extent that they avoided contact with service providers. In supporting young migrants' resilience to meet everyday challenges, friendly support from peers, carers and professionals was important. They needed determined advocacy at key moments.</p> <p>Themes from interviews:</p> <p>1. Trust and uncertainty in</p>	
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						<p>health and care services</p> <p>2. visibility and vulnerability</p> <p>3. key contacts</p> <p>Our scoping review found very little research on young unaccompanied migrants' own experiences of, or priorities for, health and social care services. Our study of young migrants addresses a gap in understanding the</p>	
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						needs of this group.	
Hamilton (2013) <i>B</i>	Including migrant worker children in the learning and social context of the rural primary school.	<p>This article seeks to close this gap by outlining the experiences of Eastern European children who settle into unfamiliar education systems within the UK.</p> <p>This article arises out of a 3-year qualitative study that focused on identifying the experiences of stake-holders</p>	Published in Education 3-13 - International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, a peer reviewed journal.	Same as Hamilton (2013) <i>A</i>	Same as Hamilton (2013) <i>A</i>	<p>The progress made by migrant pupils is influenced by an intricate web of factors that stem far beyond individual schools and classrooms.</p> <p>Themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adjusting to an unfamiliar education system</li> <li>2. Pedagogy (certain factors are making</li> </ol>	

		<p>3 main aims:</p> <p>1 To identity whether migrant children have access to inclusive educational and social opportunities.</p> <p>2 To ascertain whether migrant children are making successful transitions within their new school environments.</p> <p>3 To gain insight into the lives of migrant</p>				<p>it difficult for teachers to personalise the learning environment and eliminate obstacles which exist within the educational and social context for migrant learners. Consequently, some children might be at risk of underperforming.)</p> <p>3.</p> <p>Supporting migrant children beyond social fluency (This study has identified certain factors within the school environment which</p>	
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		children beyond the school setting				may impede second language learning – e.g., learning spaces for older children are less visual).	
Hasting s (2012)	The experience of male adolescent refugees during their transfer and adaptation to a UK secondary school.	This research aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how male adolescent refugees experienced their transfer <sup>1</sup> and adaptation to a secondary school in the UK.  It is hoped that this research might bring the reader closer to	Publishe d in 'Educational Psychology in Practice', a peer- reviewed journal.	The study took place in a non-selective, non- denominational community school for boys aged 11 to 16. The school was ethnically diverse and located in an inner city with high rates of poverty and deprivation.  Purposeful sampling was	The research used a qualitative design, it was idiographic and the approach adopted was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, enabling the author to be sensitive to the diversity of experiences and cultural backgrounds of each participant, whilst at the same time allowing commonalities	The data generated three superordinate themes which reflected the participants' sense of being in need of help during the early stages of their transfer, their process of adapting to school and developing a sense of belonging in this context, and their overriding need for safety.	Can support by:  1. providing a “holistic mentor” in school  2. help CYP learn to know people, places and rules  3. create opportunities to make positive contributions  4. use a family framework



		understanding and relating to the experiences of refugee children.		<p>used to recruit 6 male participants who had refugee status, had experienced transferring into a UK secondary school, had level 3 English speaking and listening, were aged 12-16, and attended the selected school.</p> <p>Participant s were from Afghanistan, Somalia, and Turkey.</p>	<p>between accounts to be acknowledged.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions.</p> <p>Main topics:</p> <p>1. the experience of transferring and adapting to secondary school in the UK</p> <p>2. the experience of a sense of belonging during this time</p> <p>3. the role language played during their transfer</p>	<p>Themes:</p> <p>1. Needing and getting help (All participants identified needing help to begin with, The way help was given mattered, protection from bullying as well as learning support, peer/ teacher/ family support)</p> <p>2. feeling safe and secure (Feelings of fear and loneliness were particularly prevalent during the early stages, bullying by peers</p>	<p>to understand and support learning at home</p> <p>5. highlight positive impact of using and developing child's first language at school.</p> <p>6. record, monitor, and address bullying targeted at refugee pupils</p> <p>7. support the inclusion of refugee children in secondary schools</p> <p>8. Use IPA with children</p>
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					and settlement into secondary school	as a barrier to safety)  3. Adaptation and belonging (a sense of the journey they had made as they came to adapt to life at school and in the UK, expectations vs reality of school, motivation to learn English, sense of belonging and getting to know and be known by others and their environment.)	who are learning English
Robb et al (2007)	Looking for a better future: Identity construction in	To explore who aspires to enter (or not to enter)	Published in Social Science & Medicine, a peer-	Schools were recruited from a database of 'partnership'	Interviews that were tape recorded transcribed,	Five influences on the development of academic identity	

	<p>socio-economically deprived 16-year olds considering a career in medicine.</p>	<p>higher medical education and why.</p> <p>Research questions:</p> <p>1. What are the characteristics of 16-year olds living in socio-economically deprived areas of London who have so far achieved well academically and who seek to apply to medical school?</p> <p>2. What insights can be gleaned from these motivated</p>	<p>reviewed academic journal covering social science research on health, including anthropology, economics, geography, psychology, social epidemiology, social policy, sociology, medicine and health care practice, policy, and organization.</p>	<p>comprehensive schools in deprived parts of inner London. Participants withing schools were selected from those who met the minimum academic criteria using the Index of Multiple Deprivation.</p> <p>45 16-year-olds living in a deprived area who expressed an interest in studying medicine. These young people were considered by their pupils to</p>	<p>and then thematically analysed.</p> <p>In the data analysis, sections of text were assigned preliminary codes; these were refined by discussion and reading of the literature, and then grouped into broader themes.</p> <p>Researchers also took account of the principles of narrative analysis, in which the story as a whole is analysed for 'literary' features such as key characters, emplotment,</p>	<p>and medical ambition were identified:</p> <p>1. The private sphere (Bourdieu's 'family habitus'), especially a family meta-narrative of immigration to secure a better future and of education as the vehicle to regaining a high social position previously held in the family of origin.</p> <p>2. The school (Bourdieu's 'institutional habitus'), and especially the</p>	
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		<p>and successful students that might inform efforts to prevent disaffection and promote fulfilment of potential in socio-economically deprived children more generally? 3. What insights might inform a strategy to increase the proportion of medical students from groups that are currently under-represented (i.e. notably White and Black males from lower</p>		<p>have high academic ability.</p> <p>40 recruited from 2005 summer school</p> <p>(38 interviews transcribed – 1 withdrawal and 1 faulty technology)</p> <p>7 recruited from 2006 summer school</p> <p>Forty-three of the 45 students attended an inner city state school with a</p>	<p>metaphors and imagery.</p> <p>Students from the 2005 cohort were interviewed at their school and those from the 2006 cohort at UCL.</p> <p>The main focus of the interview for the purposes of this study was the question: “tell me about your life so far”. The study collected data in the form of a biographical life narrative.</p>	<p>input of particular teachers who inspired and supported the student.</p> <p>3. Friends and peers, many of whom the student had chosen strategically because of shared aspirations to academic success.</p> <p>4. Psychological resources such as maturity, determination and resilience.</p> <p>5. Past experiences (especially</p>	
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		socioeconomic groups)?		traditionally low application rate to higher education.	<p>In 2006 cohort progressive focussing was used.</p> <p>Each student also submitted a one-page personal statement as part of their application, responding to the question “Please tell us a bit about yourself and why you are thinking of studying medicine”. These were analysed the personal statements using quantitative content analysis</p>	<p>meeting the challenge of immigration, changing school, or dealing with illness or death in a relative), which had proved formative and strengthening to the individual's developing ego.</p> <p>Suggests that academic success depends on the construction of a coherent identity, and that a psychological perspective on identity (i.e. considering the</p>	
				<p>17 male</p> <p>28 female</p>			

						individual's inner resources) adds value to the sociological perspective (considering how the self is presented to others) more usually taken by educationalists	
Newbigging and Thomas (2011)	Good Practice in Social Care for Refugee and Asylum-seeking Children	To identify key components of good practice in social care services for safeguarding refugee and asylum-seeking children.	Published in Child Abuse Review, a bimonthly peer-reviewed academic journal with a focus on child protection, including research findings, practice	20 participants (8 male and 12 female) took part in focus groups  Participant s ranged in age from 10-20 years (where identifiable, only data from participants aged	The primary research data collection consisted of three elements: (1) two focus groups with children and young people to explore definitions and indicators for good practice in social care from their perspective;	Four key themes emerged in relation to the social care response to young asylum seekers and children:  1. Language and communication, with a consensus that it is essential	

			developments, training initiatives and policy issues.	<p>18 and under was used in this review).</p> <p>Participant s were recruited via a refugee organisation.</p> <p>The location was a city with a long history of immigration and the focus groups took place at the base for the refugee organisation.</p> <p>Participant s included both unaccompanied</p>	<p>(2) a national survey of relevant organisations including local authority children's services in England and Wales and health and social services boards in Northern Ireland to explore indicators for good practice for asylum-seeking children and young people;</p> <p>(3) follow-up visits or telephone interviews to gather more details on the good practice examples.</p>	<p>that services establish what languages someone speaks and are able to communicate with young asylum seekers in order to understand individual needs.</p> <p>2. Attitude and trust. Being kind, friendly and open were identified as important attributes, and understanding and acceptance as key to good social services.</p> <p>3. The role of family was seen as central, with the impact of</p>	
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				<p>minors and young people in families, with eight countries represented.</p>		<p>uncertainty about status and parental well-being, particularly poor mental health, having an impact on the whole family.</p> <p>4. Emotional wellbeing, both for the young people and where relevant other family members, was identified</p>	
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### Appendix C CASP quality assurance checklist

The Critical Appraisals Skills Programme (CASP, 2018) qualitative checklist was used to evaluate the quality of the studies in this systematic literature review.

	Section A: Are the results valid?						Section B: What are the results?			Section C: Will the results help locally?	
Study author and date	1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	10. How valuable is the research?	Scores
Ritchie and Gaulter (2020)	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	Useful for planning interventions	7/9

Welphy (2015)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	Future research and improvement suggestions in line with policy	8/9
Hamilton (2013) A	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	Focus on social and emotional needs which is closely linked to SoB	8/9
Oddy et al (2022)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	CAN'T TELL	NO	YES	Improvement suggestions for specific course, no discussion of generalisation	6/9
Sobitan (2022)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	Gives implications for EP practice	8/9
Fuller and Hayes (2019)	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	NO	CAN'T TELL	CAN'T TELL	YES	Discusses elements of sense of	5/9

										belonging. No future research or implication information	
Hek (2005)	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	NO	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	Relevant findings, clear conclusions, and recommendations made.	6/9
Valentine, Sporton, and Neilsen (2009)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	Focus on sense of belonging/ identity. Hard to follow and seems to be based on preconceptions	7/9
McMullen et al (2020)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	Makes recommendations to support pupils in	8/9

										schools related to themes.	
Bradby et al (2019)	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	CAN'T TELL	CAN'T TELL	Detailed information, but no discussion of limitations, recommendations, or future research suggestions.	5/9
Hamilton (2013) <i>B</i>	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	Has some implications and recommendations	8/9
Hastings (2012)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	Detailed implications for practice. Not solely focused on belonging, though is covered	8/9

Robb et al (2007)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	YES	YES	The focus is not fully belonging, though an element is covered	8/9
Newbigging and Thomas (2011)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	CAN'T TELL	CAN'T TELL	CAN'T TELL	YES	Highlights best practice and some limitations.  Detailed input from young people and supporting adults	6/9

### Appendix D Systematic literature review thematic synthesis coding manual

Theme	Category	Code	Example quote
Experiences of relationships	Navigating peer relationships	Experiences of bullying and racism	‘. . . the students swearing at me . . . Nigga, and like this . . . get the fuck out of here . . .’
		Dangers of only mixing with limited peers	Although the daily activities linked to Catholicism may help children to develop an immediate connection and sense of identity, there is a danger of migrant learners circulating predominantly within their shared heritage groups
		Feeling alone or isolated	When you first come to England and you don’t speak English you don’t have anyone to talk to, no friends or anything and you’re like really, really lonely and by yourself
		Feeling different	Regardless of what they chose to reveal about themselves, some described feeling that they were treated in a different way from UK-born young people
		Feeling rejected	When I was playing they were saying, “You can’t even play with other people, you can’t even speak English”.

		Building relationships based on shared experiences	Shared experiences created through the dance intervention provided a space to make connections and may have helped to sustain and strengthen the friendships beyond the sessions.
		Feeling happy, loved, and comfortable around friends	I'm really happy, it's really funny and you're go home when happy. It's because you're friends.'
		Peers aiding language development	First it was the teachers that helped me learn, and then it was one of my English friends, well it was my best friend who was helping me with English and giving me help so that I'm going to do my best.
		Friends shape how you feel about school	But I've got quite a lot of friends there, yeah I think that makes such a difference as well, they shape how you feel about college and school
		Enjoyment of activities helps build relationships	Without experiencing enjoyment, the migrant pupils in our study might not have connected with others, felt safe or engaged in the process.
		Importance of friendships and social support	Every student in the study stressed the importance of their peer group. Friends shaped and validated each other's attitudes, values and self-image; they helped each other stay on course academically; they discussed and planned their future.

		Seeking out peers with similarities	I know this girl . . . she is from Africa, she's got black parents . . . we can talk to each other about our parents. It's different from white people. It's nice to talk to someone who is like me, if that makes sense?'
		Identifying with peers who speak home language	But there were Polish children in my class and they started talking to me. I stopped feeling scared and thought school is cool. Miss is nice. I like helping her when new Polish children arrive
		Support of other asylum-seeking young people	So, I was part of that team and I used to help others like other Eritreans, some other foreigners, some unaccompanied children who studied there so we used to help each other out
		Constructing a sense of belonging through otherness	Andre's global imaginary is not just a narrative of freedom and mobility in isolation, but builds on intercultural exchanges and friendships. These imagined global connections participate in constructing a sense of belonging through Otherness
	Relationships with adults in school	Difficulties being dismissed or overlooked	A negative experience with a teacher, which he believed contributed to his anxieties, ' . . . he told me to write down, and I told him I can't understand you. And he say no, you can understand . . . he angry with me . . . I think he hate me. I didn't know why, I didn't do anything to him
		Enjoyment of praise from teachers	Feedback from teachers was the single most significant influence on students' confidence. Many described how a teacher had 'believed in' them and rewarded them



			with high grades, moving them to a higher set, putting them on the 'Gifted and Talented' register, giving extension work, and praising them.
		Feeling understood and valued	Experience of having a supportive teacher who ' . . . knows more of my story, so he's like more careful what he says to me and stuff'.
		Impact of teacher support	Thank god I had a nice teacher, you know, I still love her, she kept an eye on me, I didn't even know how well she protected me and she saved me, you know what I mean, all those days.
		School staff support going above and beyond	protecting them from bullying; providing advice; raising their aspirations; listening to and finding solutions to personal problems, and providing directions to places inside and outside of school.
		Language support from adults	First it was the teachers that helped me learn, and then it was one of my English friends, well it was my best friend who was helping me with English and giving me help so that I'm going to do my best.
		Student-teacher relationship	I was feeling like I'm having the best teacher in the world, thanks god, I was feeling really happy about it.

	Home-school communication	Interpreters provided to aid parental involvement	Most said that the main reason their parents feel welcome and understand the school set-up is because teachers are helpful and there are interpreters available
		Needing to support family – particularly in translation	Maybe your parents rely on you because they cannot speak English and you have to help them all the time because you got to the point you are OK . . . It gets a wee bit annoying
		Positive parent-school relationship	Where the school had policies on promoting contact with parents, such as home-school liaison and making interpreters available, the students felt more positive and able to consider themselves part of their school. They also clearly felt that school gave them and their families the chance to be part of the wider community in a new place.
	Home and family relationships	Needing to support family – particularly in translation	Maybe your parents rely on you because they cannot speak English and you have to help them all the time because you got to the point you are OK . . . It gets a wee bit annoying
		Support from family	He [brother] teach me more things than the teacher. How to write, he start me A, B, C, D and how words come together.

		Wanting to make family proud	I really feel it's an injustice that he [father] has so many degrees and he doesn't have a fixed hob. I want to do justice for him as well, get myself a good degree and do well for myself so that he can be proud of me
		Feeling unsupported or experiencing difficulties at home or with family	Parents might be consumed in trying to financially provide for their families, so may not be in a position to fully appreciate how their children are coping with such change.
		Family separation/staggered migration	The war happened and I got lost from my family. I don't know where they are. Some people found me on my own and they just brought me here, they left me and then I went in a children's home.
	Motivation	Having positive role models	Where each individuals existed, they were very significant role models, convincing the student that 'someone like me' can go to university, and serving as a valuable source of support and practical knowledge
Barriers to learning	Motivation	Need for an adaptive learning environment	A careful balance is essential as children who are unable to access the curriculum, or those not challenged enough, may become distracted and disengaged.

		Difficulty of workload without adequate support	Coping with these differences and learning a new language, whilst trying to engage with the required school work, all contributed to children feeling isolated, stressed and lacking confidence during the initial period of transition into life.
		I don't understand or know what to do	I used to get angry .... A headache .... Because you have to work and you don't understand.
		Feeling as though they could learn better alone at home	He repeatedly uses some variant of the phrase 'I can do it by myself' and describes how he wanted the teacher to guide his own learning.
		Impact of education struggles on health	One participant described how this sense of not knowing had an adverse effect on his emotional and physical well-being
		Motivation to do well	I'd like to be an engineer and when I started here, I was thinking about this and if I improve my English here I can continue to university and continue my education and touch my future. I was thinking about this.
		Language and education can lead to	Many of the participants perceived their education as a way of learning English and progressing academically, which would lead to a better future in the UK, often characterizing their education as a journey with steps.

		a better future in the UK	
		Desire for additional learning resources and opportunities	He felt that his experience of education would be enhanced by more differentiated learning experiences and more autonomy in his learning. He frequently emphasized how this would allow him to learn at his own pace. described how the school days in Afghanistan were much longer; there were less holidays and more homework. When describing his experience in the UK, his accounts focussed on how he wanted a faster pace of learning.
		Developing confidence through praise and academic rewards	Felt more confident after receiving achievement points from her teacher for moving to a higher set
		Having positive role model	There's another girl in my year and she just works so hard, you just think, 'How do you do it?' She must be a machine. And she's really down to earth as well and you just think, 'Wow'. I love the way she is. I'm close to her as well. But it's nice to have that chat with someone when you admire them. It just makes you want to work.
		Being made to feel like a failure impacts confidence	When students had experienced failure, put-downs by teachers or friends, or the inability to 'win through' in a particular situation, their confidence had taken a substantial blow.

		Vigour and trying your best	Pupils discussed their experience of vigour, though not using the word, when describing the energy they used and their resilience when participating in the dance sessions. 'You have to try' one student said, emphasising her effort.
	Language skills as a barrier	Difficulties with English language	Basically it was frustrating, very hard .... Because you don't know how to speak you know, you don't know how to communicate.
		Discrimination based on language ability	he told me to write down, and I told him I can't understand you. And he say no, you can understand . . . he angry with me . . . I think he hate me. I didn't know why, I didn't do anything to him
		Language skills impact relationships	Klaudia remained virtually silent for an entire year, she found other ways to communicate, but this involved physical contact with other children which intimidated and annoyed her peers, resulting in Klaudia initially being rejected by her classmates.
		Impact of language on learning	Degree of stress he felt trying to meet the demands of the A-level curriculum and keep up with the other English students when he transitioned from ESOL to A levels.
		Lacking language needed to ask for support	The first day I come to here I don't know where I am. I don't know where the toilet is. P2. Yeah same! P5. I was like that! P1. Me too! P4. I didn't know anything. P3. I don't know where is the toilet and I can't speak English and I go home and crying because I don't have friends and I can't speak English and I don't know where is the room.

		Use of non-verbal communication	Many of the participants recounted an initial period where socialising was largely facilitated through nonverbal communication due to their class not having a mutual language.
	Experiences of support in school	Impact of COVID-19	The restrictions affected his grades, ' . . . I had improved by two grades . . . because of the pandemic we couldn't write the GCSE exams, when I was given the predicted grade, I got a grade 3
		Learning in a safe and nurturing environment	Some participants described having a positive nurturing environment in their first setting
		School as a source of resilience	Schools can be a source of resilience for migrant children, providing a stabilising routine
		Adaptations and differentiation to support newcomer pupils	Higher levels of one-to-one adult support and an emphasis on learning through play, which was beneficial for second language learners.
		Extended connections with peers are made through social	The environment was welcoming and [BUT] also you know there wasn't any you know processes that were put in place whereby all the students would have their chance to relax it down and get to know each other, you know probably designate one day

		opportunities provided by school	whereby we all sit, and we just talk, we have a general discussion just to figure out who we are. If they were able to put these systems in place, it would be beautiful’.
		Education is like a game of snakes and ladders	Students have likened progress in the educational system to ‘a game of snakes and ladders’, thus diminishing their confidence and engendering feelings of being hated by the society they sought refuge in
		Being underestimated and labelled as low ability	Work experience – my teacher picked it for me, so he put me through to it. Hairdresser in Mayfair. And I didn’t go in for two days because it’s not my type of thing. I did not want to go, because it was like standing around, holding hair and watching people dye hair and – because it’s definitely one of the last things I would want to do.
		More individualised support and resources needed	So many of us have come from different circumstances that are not the same like other people, so I think if they can consider that and try to feel us, I think they can help us a bit more. I think it will be a bit of a different kind of approach for them because it won’t be just teaching, it will be the same as helping them out with a lot of things
		Level of support impacts access to learning	The impact of this drop in support meant that Asmara dropped out of college and decided to apply as an independent candidate for his A levels.
		Would like more autonomy in learning	Don't like this one, give me like four lessons now and the next week I'm asking you. I can prepare for that, I have dictionary, I can translate to my language



	Impact of transitions	Feeling unprepared and unsupported at college	When I went to college, I realised college was really different to school, like they are not really linked
		Feelings of fear, loss and sadness	Moving to a different setting was typically associated with a degree of sadness, loss and stress.
		Impact of school flexibility	A planned and flexible induction can reduce the impact of the transitional challenges encountered by children
		Older children struggle with adjustment	Older pupils were more likely to struggle with adjustment, perhaps because of having a stronger sense of cultural identity and firmly established social anchors in the home country.
		Support being withdrawn before the student feels ready	When I was first here I went to [support teacher] the whole day but then last year I only got two periods and then this year he said 'no you can't come any more
Community inclusion	Feelings of value and acceptance	Making a contribution	During my primary school years I was given the responsibility to translate from [ethnic language] to English to parents that had difficulty with the language. I asked the school if I could have that responsibility as I believed this will grow my confidence in speaking English. The school thought it was a great idea.

		Helping other young people	When our class has new boy I ask can I help them, can I sit next to them and help them?
		Experiences of feeling listen to, valued, and supported	Even though they don't like my religion, they still respect my opinion, and they asked me about the God of Muslims and stuff'.
		Extent to which students feel able to be themselves	Feeling he had very noticeable dark shadows under his eyes because of anxiety and lack of sleep, a young man used 'loads of make-up to hide it' because otherwise he felt he 'would scare the people in college if I go like without'
		Worries about being viewed negatively	One young woman did not mind her teachers knowing she was 'in care' but felt the other students would judge her negatively.
	Attitudes towards diversity	Experiences of discrimination, othering, and unfair treatment	I think people look at me and I've got [physical disability] and they think, they think to themselves oh sorry, like, you're not supposed to feel sorry for me, just it's quite ridiculous behaviour and I don't like it to be honest, you know, like why you feel sorry for me?
		Not feeling valued or understood	he told me to write down, and I told him I can't understand you. And he say no, you can understand . . . he angry with me . . . I think he hate me. I didn't know why, I didn't do anything to him

		Whole school attitude towards refugees and asylum-seekers	The young people interviewed talked about this in terms of the ethos of the school. They said that where staff and pupils were encouraging towards them, this allowed them to identify as refugees and feel that their experiences and contributions were being valued; this helped them to gain a sense of belonging more quickly.
		Belonging is a two-way process	The process of adaptation and developing a sense of belonging emerged as a two-way process; it was both as a result of the participants' impact on the world around them and the impact of this world on them.
	Building confidence and self-esteem	Enjoyment of adult praise	I like my teacher and I have lots of friends. It makes me happy when my teacher says I have done good work
		Building confidence in own strengths and abilities	Well, anything is achievable, you just have to work for it. So, it's up to me really. I think I can achieve it. That's my new target so I have to work for it.
		Impact of enjoyment in learning and activities	Time goes really fast. Every single session that I've been to I was like, it seemed like 5 minutes or something like that' and another contributed 'Yeh, when you like something, you don't understand where the time has gone.'
Impact of asylum-seeking process	Difference between country of	Navigating a new way of life	Described how the school days in Afghanistan were much longer; there were less holidays and more homework. When describing his experience in the UK, his accounts focussed on how he wanted a faster pace of learning

	origin and the United Kingdom	Missing things from country of origin	I like living here and don't want to go back, but I miss my grandparents very much
		Feelings of safety in the UK	Some children talked about feeling safer and more secure in NI than in their country of origin.
	Impact of asylum-seeking process on education	Disruption of uncertainty	He felt badly affected by his own uncertainty and fear about how his appearance might lead to hostility in public.
		Education as a distraction from other stressors	So being in school really helps you because you kind of lose that feeling and you focus on a good thing
		Education is like a game of snakes and ladders	Students have likened progress in the educational system to 'a game of snakes and ladders', thus diminishing their confidence and engendering feelings of being hated by the society they sought refuge in
		Sense of journey and progression	I would say I am in a good stage right now because I went through the bad stage. I think that shaped me into who I am today and I would not change my experience at all. So I am just really proud of myself and everything that I have been through
		Non-school related struggles	I don't have for example asylum case, they would not give us like a flat. It should be a shared house ... I have stress about this at the moment, when I turn 18 where should I go and live? And all of them has some effect on my education and learning.

		surrounding young asylum seekers	
	Understanding their own cultural identity	Discomfort talking about past experiences	A young man linked his acute mental health problems to his uncertain migration status and the pain of having to explain himself to professionals. He described an intense pain in his chest 'that wants to blow and it's like grenade'. He found the pain alarming, as he 'couldn't find the difference between a physical pain or an emotional'. When admitted to hospital he described being looked after by two people overnight in a way that was 'really, really friendly'. But he found repeating his story to each new professional distressing.
		Wanting to learn more about their culture and background	It was my parents who know why we left. They were like, very frightened and they told me we had to leave. I don't know why, but before we left we weren't allowed to go to school on our own anymore, we had to go in a taxi because it wasn't safe. Then we didn't go to school at all. That's all I know about it.
	Stress and anxiety	Feelings of fear and anxiety	Feelings of fear and loneliness were particularly prevalent during the early stages of their transfer
		Stress and PTSD symptoms	The experience of being bullied in his secondary school had been identified as triggering posttraumatic stress disorder.

## Appendix E Topic Guides

### E.1 Topic guide for focus groups with young people seeking asylum

#### Topic guide

#### Young people semi-structured topic guide: How do young asylum seekers experience belonging in education?

**School Belonging: how accepted, respected and included you feel at school.**

**Belonged: feeling as though you have a good sense of school belonging.**

#### Introduction (10 mins):

- Welcome participants to the group. Go over the participant information sheet and consent form and give space for participants to ask any questions about the project.
- Remind all about the importance of confidentiality and highlight that we cannot guarantee 100% anonymity and confidentiality due to the nature of focus groups.
- Make sure participants know where the toilets, 'coffee corner', and exits are. Let participants know that we will have a scheduled break 30-45 minutes into the discussion, however they can use the bathroom or use the 'coffee corner' at any time. They can also leave the discussion at any point if needed.
- Remind participants of where to find follow-up contacts if they want to talk through any of the issues raised, and mental health support if they find any of the content upsetting.

#### Main question:

1. What impacts your sense of belonging at school? Try to illustrate with examples as much as you can.

#### Follow up prompts if necessary:

#### **Background:**

1. Let us start by sharing some of the things you enjoyed about learning when you were younger, if you feel comfortable to do so. (Jess to hand out post it notes to participants if desired, or to capture key words mentioned on post it notes herself) Remind participants that any written reflections on these notes will be included in the data analysis and that the discussion will be recorded. Remind them that they can write, sketch, doodle—anything they need to express their ideas.
  - Education
  - Relationships
  - Community

**Culture and identity:**

2. Let's think about some examples of how you feel you can be yourself at school.  
(Researcher to check participants understanding of 'being yourself').
  - Let's discuss how you feel that different cultures are viewed and valued (by children and adults) and what is the impact of this on your belonging
  - Let's discuss how you feel that speaking in other languages is viewed at school and the impact of this
  - Let's talk about how you feel you are able to express your cultural identity and the impact of this
  - Let's talk about how you feel that differences are viewed and the impact of this
  
3. Let us discuss times when you may have felt understood or misunderstood in the class environment. What factors might make them understood, or misunderstood? It might be useful to think about instances/cases when misunderstandings have taken place.
  - Asylum-seeker labels
  - Understanding different cultures and life experiences
  - Feelings of acceptance at school
  - School protocols

**Relationships:**

4. Thinking again about your time at school, let's discuss the relationships that you have experienced, and how these might impact their sense of belonging?
  - Depth of relationships
  - Dispersal policy of the Home Office
  - Impact of poverty/low income (e.g., parents' inability to work as AS)
    - Cost of maintaining relationships (birthdays/outings/etc.)
  - Others understanding of their perspective/experiences
  - Language barriers
  - Impact of peer relationships at school
  - Impact of adult relationships at school

**Learning experience:**

5. What was your experience of learning like, and how could this have impacted your sense of belonging at school?
  - Adults' expectations and understanding of how you learn
  - Peers' expectations and understanding of how you learn
  - English as an additional language (initial schooling in first language?)
  - Your understanding of how what you learn in school is relevant and useful (may feel trivial following previous experiences)
  - Feeling capable in your learning

- Your experiences outside of the UK

**Free time:**

6. Next, let's discuss how you spend your free time and how this impacts your sense of belonging?
  - Break and lunch
  - With their friends
  - After school / outside of school
  - In the community

**Other:**

7. What could school change to help you to feel more belonged?
8. We have some time now to discuss anything else that you would like to share.

**Wrap-up (5 mins)**

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today and to share your views and experiences. It is important that everything discussed in this focus group needs to remain confidential, so I remind you not to share any of the information discussed with anybody outside of this group. Please also refer to the information sheet given to you for contacts if you feel you would benefit from some support following our discussion today. You can also contact me via the email address on this form ([j.l.clapham@soton.ac.uk](mailto:j.l.clapham@soton.ac.uk)) if you have any questions.

- Researcher to hand out physical gift cards/voucher codes and/ or collect email addresses if the participant would prefer the code emailed.



## E.2 Topic guide for focus groups with young people seeking asylum

### Topic guide

**Teaching staff semi-structured topic guide:** How do young asylum seekers experience belonging in education?

**School Belonging: how accepted, respected and included you feel at school.**

**Belonged: feeling as though you have a good sense of school belonging.**

#### Introduction (15 mins):

- Welcome participants to the group. Go over the PIS and consent form and give space for participants to ask any questions about the project.
- Remind all about the importance of confidentiality and highlight that we cannot guarantee 100% anonymity and confidentiality due to the nature of focus groups.
- Make sure participants know where the toilets, 'coffee corner', and exits are. Let participants know that we will have a scheduled break 45 minutes into the discussion, however they can use the bathroom or use the 'coffee corner' at any time. They can also leave the discussion at any point if needed.
- Remind participants of where to find follow-up contacts if they want to talk through any of the issues raised, and mental health support if they find any of the content upsetting.
- Give participants 5 minutes prior to beginning the discussion to think about and reflect on the last asylum-seeking young person that they supported. Hand out post-it notes to participants to aid them in this time, and remind them that any written reflections on these notes will be included in the data analysis and that the discussion will be recorded. Remind them that they can write, sketch, doodle—anything they need to express their ideas.

#### Main question to discuss (90 mins):

What are the factors that impacts the sense of belonging at school for the young asylum seekers that you support? Try to illustrate with examples as much as you can.

#### **Culture and identity:**

1. Let's think about some examples of how the asylum-seeking young people that you work with are themselves at school. (Researcher to check understanding of 'being yourself').
  - Let's discuss how you feel that different cultures are viewed and valued and what is the impact of this on belonging (By children and adults)
  - Let's discuss how you feel that speaking in other languages is viewed at school and the impact of this

- Let's talk about how you feel individuals are able to express their cultural identity and the impact of this
  - Let's talk about how you feel that differences are viewed and the impact of this
2. Let us discuss how young asylum seekers may feel understood or not in the class environment. What factors might make them understood, or misunderstood? It might be useful to think about instances/cases when misunderstandings have taken place.
- Asylum-seeker labels
  - Understanding different cultures and life experiences
  - Feelings of acceptance at school
  - School protocols

### **Relationships:**

3. Thinking again about your experience of being in the classroom, could we discuss the relationships the asylum-seeking young people have experienced, and how these might impact their sense of belonging?
- Depth of relationships
  - Dispersal policy of the Home Office
  - Impact of poverty/low income (e.g. parents' inability to work as AS)
    - Cost of maintaining relationships (birthdays/outings/etc)
  - Others understanding of their perspective/experiences
  - Language barriers
  - Impact of peer relationships at school
  - Impact of adult relationships at school

### **Learning experience:**

4. How does learning experience impact belonging at school of the young asylum seekers you support?
- Adults' expectations and understanding of how they learn
  - Peers' expectations and understanding of how they learn
  - English as an additional language (initial schooling in first language?)
  - The young person's understanding of how what they learn in school is relevant and useful (may feel trivial following previous experiences)
  - The young person feeling capable in their learning
  - Let's think about how the young person views their experiences outside of the UK

### **Free time:**

5. Next, let's discuss the way in which the young asylum seekers you work with spend their free time and how this might impact their sense of belonging?
- Break and lunch
  - With their friends

- After school / outside of school
- In the community

**Other:**

6. What could school change to help the students you work with to feel more belonged?
7. We have some time now to discuss anything else that you would like to share.

**Wrap-up (5 mins)**

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today and to share your views and experiences. It is important that everything discussed in this focus group needs to remain confidential, so I remind you not to share any of the information discussed with anybody outside of this group. Please also refer to the information sheet given to you for contacts if you feel you would benefit from some support following our discussion today. You can also contact me via the email address on this form ([j.l.clapham@soton.ac.uk](mailto:j.l.clapham@soton.ac.uk)) if you have any questions).

- Researcher to email the voucher codes to the school gatekeeper immediately following focus group.

## Appendix F Transcriptions

### F.1 Transcript 1: School staff

Focus group details:

Date, time, location: 27.02.23, 13:00, In person – at their school

Running time: Approximately 90 minutes (including 15-minute break)

Researcher: R

Participant pseudonyms: Sonia, Maryam, Zara

Focus group transcript:

- 1 R: We are here today to discuss what you think the factors are that impact the Sense of
- 2 Belonging at school for the young people that you support in school. It would be really
- 3 useful, where possible, if you can use examples to help me accurately understand what is
- 4 discussed. Would anybody like to start off the discussion?
- 5 ZARA: Umm, for us, I guess we, we have to build relationships with them quite quickly
- 6 and they know that they can come to us. And they do, don't they? For anything at all. I
- 7 know that goes to the year office as well, but they because we're quite a small
- 8 department, we get to know everything about them and they come and tell us
- 9 everything. So we try and make sure that when they first arrive, they spend quite a lot of
- 10 time with us. In fact we shadow them to start with for most of their classes and make
- 11 sure that they know where to go at break time and they're comfortable enough to just
- 12 come in and chat.
- 13 SONIA: yeah
- 14 ZARA: And that's really important. You just start with that.
- 15 R: So that relationship with you guys?
- 16 ZARA: Building the relationships, yeah.
- 17 SONIA: And that ties in with what you said before. What helped them, that induction, that
- 18 was good for them and their families when they first came here, showing them around
- 19 the school. Talking about the rules.
- 20 ZARA: Yeah, so, when the Ukrainians first arrived and we supported them through getting
- 21 their uniform and their shoes and yeah, we gave them a tour together with their families,
- 22 which was nice, which we don't always do anymore. We used to. And then with COVID,
- 23 it's stopped. But with them they all came in and host families as well, which was really
- 24 nice.
- 25 R: Thank you for sharing those insights. What do you think the impact of that support
- 26 might have been for the young people?
- 27 ZARA: I think when they started, they felt, they weren't so nervous about coming because
- 28 they had already met us.
- 29 SONIA: Less terrified of the school.
- 30 ZARA: Yeah

- 31 SONIA: Cause some of them came from smaller towns where the school was literally one  
32 building. One of the students said that today, so combined primary and secondary. So  
33 they're all in one building, and suddenly they're here.
- 34 ZARA: And they said their uniform before or anything like that.
- 35 SONIA: So school meals. Sorted things out.
- 36 ZARA: Yeah.
- 37 MARYAM: Yeah.
- 38 MARYAM: They didn't have a lot of what we would consider school rules [in home  
39 country]. So they were allowed to wear nails, makeup, eyelashes. Earrings. And here  
40 we're not allowed to do that at all. So it's a big change.
- 41 SONIA: That was very different
- 42 ZARA: Massive
- 43 R: Yeah, some massive change for them. And as you say, having you guys as the support  
44 for them is like their most safe space for them to come to.
- 45 ZARA: Yeah.
- 46 SONIA: We did a two week TEFL course with them so we were in a separate room
- 47 ZARA: Yes, so we took them out of their classes and spent time with them just doing pure  
48 English lessons and which really helped their confidence. I think some of them were fine  
49 but you're going into class but some of them were really, really quiet in class and then  
50 when we took them out of class and Justin Pier English, they came out of their shell, you  
51 know, they were totally different in that. Just nice was really nice.
- 52 SONIA: And as you can see on the board. We see quite a lot of them in the morning in  
53 tutor time. You know we do well grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, pronunciation.
- 54 MARYAM: So they get a lot, and a lot of the time it's things like helping them. We've had  
55 two that came in originally from Afghanistan, had never used a computer before. They  
56 didn't even know how to use the mouse and things. So, we'd spend quite a lot of time  
57 with them just doing, you know, this is how you turn it on. This is how you; you know.  
58 She'd never been in education at all, so would quite often get up and walk out of a class  
59 to go to the toilet without saying, you know she just thought she could do what she  
60 wanted all day.
- 61 R: I see what you mean
- 62 ZARA: These big changes, it's things that you wouldn't necessarily think of that that they  
63 don't know how to do so.
- 64 MARYAM: Do you think you've learnt from that, moving forward?
- 65 ZARA: definitely
- 66 SONIA: Ohh yeah, a lot.
- 67 ZARA: Definitely. They I think they were the biggest ones that we learnt from, definitely.  
68 The two from Afghanistan when they came in, because everything was so different for  
69 them. There was no English. They obviously have different culture totally. Their reading.
- 70 ZARA: So the little girl hadn't been to school, so she couldn't read or write in her own  
71 language, so we couldn't even translate anything because she couldn't read it.
- 72 SONIA: No google translate. Only pictures.
- 73 ZARA: It was pictures for everything.
- 74 SONIA: We're still doing MacBeth using pictures.
- 75 R: Oh really? So is it the work that her peers are doing that's been differentiated to suit  
76 her
- 77 ZARA: Yeah, by us.
- 78 SONIA: By us. Because that's another issue; some teachers don't [differentiate] or they do  
79 it initially for a couple of lessons

- 80 ZARA: And then it's it is extra work for them. So, we yeah, we were happy to differentiate  
81 a lot of them materials still.
- 82 ZARA: Yes, it's the cultural side that I think that you learn. And we've certainly learnt a lot  
83 from them.
- 84 SONIA: But I also think it affects their personality, 'cause we've got a couple who I think  
85 they were quite outgoing in their country. But here because there's no friends or they had  
86 to make friends from scratch their naturally more shy.
- 87 ZARA: Yeah.
- 88 SONIA: And then yeah, so yeah, it's their personality as well.
- 89 R: So there's a couple of things that I've picked up from our discussion, which were the  
90 cultural side and the sort of difference in rules from previous schools to coming here. And  
91 you also mentioned the impact of language skills as well.
- 92 SONIA: Oh a lot. 'Cause some of them have, well we have the boy who had no English and  
93 he is in year 11 so suddenly it's GCSEs.
- 94 R: Okay, so would you say that impacts then on their learning?
- 95 SONIA: Well yes because for example some of them sometimes they know the answer,  
96 but, if you put yourself in their shoes, they're afraid to put their hand up because they're  
97 thinking I'm gonna be judged not only on what I say, but how I say it. If I make a mistake.  
98 And obviously the ones who are more confident will put their hands up. But the ones who  
99 are shy, thinking ooh everyone's looking at me, I don't wanna
- 100 MARYAM: Don't want to speak, yeah, they might laugh at me, yeah.
- 101 SONIA: 'Cause a couple of times we were like, 'come on you know the answer'. But no.  
102 And you can't really force them, it's their decision. They'll be ready one day. And, yeah.
- 103 R: Okay, it sounds like what you are saying is that supporting these young people is an  
104 ongoing process, Not just people come in and then we do the things that help and it's  
105 finished, is that right?
- 106 SONIA: Yeah, and there's always something else coming up. Just when you think 'ohh, this  
107 is sorted', there's something else happening.
- 108 ZARA: Yeah
- 109 MARYAM: Yeah
- 110 R: And how do you manage that then when there's lots and lots of different things  
111 coming up?
- 112 SONIA: It was very stressful to begin with
- 113 ZARA: When they first came it was very Stressful
- 114 SONIA: Because there were so many of them
- 115 ZARA: Of the Ukrainians
- 116 SONIA: Yeah, yeah
- 117 ZARA: Yeah, there were there was a lot going on when they first arrived. But the year  
118 office, you must see them a lot as well, do they come to you? (asking to P2)
- 119 MARYAM: Umm ish, I support year 11 so, yeah.
- 120 ZARA: You get parents queries more than us cause we don't get parents.
- 121 MARYAM: No. Well, no because well. CYP's dad is here, isn't he? Not mum.
- 122 ZARA: Yeah, dad.
- 123 SONIA: He doesn't make any contact.
- 124 ZARA: OK.
- 125 MARYAM: Yeah, and the boy.
- 126 ZARA: His mum can't speak English.
- 127 MARYAM: Well, she well, I don't know. She types a lot of emails.
- 128 ZARA: OK
- 129 SONIA: Ohh, the one who misses a lot of school?

- 130 MARYAM: No, CYP
- 131 ZARA: OK. No, his mum does speak English.
- 132 MARYAM: Yeah, so she emails. I don't think I've. That's the only two that I've ever had any
- 133 contact with. But interestingly, yeah, they those two come in a bit, but not, I wouldn't say
- 134 a lot, but I think probably they come to you.
- 135 ZARA: We see them every morning, they pick up translator from here in the morning. So
- 136 we see them. So if there's any issue they quite often say.
- 137 MARYAM: So I think probably you are now everything that might come to me. He comes
- 138 in every now and again if he needs to ask me something, but umm yeah. But they know
- 139 we are there if they need us.
- 140 ZARA: Yeah
- 141 SONIA: But the girl who just knocked on the door, she was the prime example cause
- 142 normally it would be the year office, but
- 143 ZARA: She comes to us for lots of things and you see we get a lot where the parents can't
- 144 do anything. And the parents don't speak any English so the children take on roles that
- 145 the parents should be doing. So, she's asked if we can teach her to use the Internet to
- 146 book doctor's appointments and things because parents can't understand how to do it.
- 147 MARYAM: Yeah, yeah
- 148 ZARA: So, we'll get lots of queries from them about stuff like that.
- 149 R: That's a lot of additional responsibility for a teenager, isn't it?
- 150 ZARA: Yeah.
- 151 SONIA: Yeah. And I think she was very worried and obviously it makes them, I think, more
- 152 anxious because, it's them.
- 153 ZARA: Well, their language isn't very good anyway. So, it's really difficult for them
- 154 because they're then having to teach parents how to do things. And, you know, yeah, I
- 155 don't remember when they came in. I think they've been here just over a year.
- 156 SONIA: Before Christmas
- 157 ZARA: Yeah, just over a year.
- 158 SONIA: Yeah.
- 159 ZARA: And they obviously, she'd not been to school before and didn't have any English.
- 160 So, she's come on loads. And funny enough they those two in some ways have been
- 161 better because they were just the two of them at the time. They've made all their friends
- 162 are English, aren't they? So even when she couldn't speak English, you see her outside
- 163 playing.
- 164 MARYAM: Is that the two from Afghanistan?
- 165 SONIA: Yeah, and chatting, so
- 166 MARYAM: Well I found that, not that I know them that well, their demeanour to be very,
- 167 well certainly the little girl to be very upbeat and very joyous.
- 168 ZARA: Yes, yes.
- 169 MARYAM: Not the same with the Ukrainians.
- 170 ZARA: No, it's a bit more of an attitude, I think.
- 171 SONIA: I think I wonder if [for her] it's also like 'wow, I'm at school'. I actually thought she
- 172 told me she, like, sometimes we walk together, and she says loves being here because she
- 173 can walk on her own. She's got much more freedom [than at home]. Yeah. 'Because we
- 174 take it for granted. But for her, it's like, 'wow'.
- 175 MARYAM: So, I think that's quite infectious, isn't it?
- 176 ZARA: Yeah.
- 177 MARYAM: But that's not the same as Ukrainian.
- 178 ZARA: No, it sounds bad, but they are more difficult. Yeah, they're more demanding. And
- 179 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.



- 230 SONIA: But you, you are right
- 231 ZARA: Like a check in or a reminder for
- 232 MARYAM: Or we say once a month on a Monday in tutor we get all of them with with you
- 233 guys and we just do a massive cheque in, I don't know, but it's very easy and I thought
- 234 'God. Yeah, I don't think I've seen so and so for quite a while', do you know what I mean?
- 235 But it's not on purpose. It's because. Well, the girl that came and went, yeah, was
- 236 difficult. She was in my office a lot because she didn't settle well at all.
- 237 R: She's left the school now, did you say?
- 238 MARYAM: Yes. I don't know. Did they go back?
- 239 ZARA: Yes, did they go back to Ukraine or to Poland?
- 240 SONIA: Umm, Poland first, and then Ukraine. I don't know if CYP is still in touch with her.
- 241 MARYAM: Yes. So, although they paired up, which was good. It wasn't a good
- 242 combination at all. But they were in [our office] quite a lot. Mainly on negative notes, but
- 243 at least you have that contact even though it was a bit spiky.
- 244 ZARA: Yeah.
- 245 MARYAM: Whereas CYP, I see periodically because he
- 246 SONIA: and his attendance is not good
- 247 ZARA: Yeah, we did have a translator in for them though, was it before Christmas?
- 248 SONIA: Uh, It a couple of week ago
- 249 MARYAM: It was just after Christmas.
- 250 ZARA: Seems like ages ago. Err, we got Ukrainian translator in, and we had appointments
- 251 for parents to come in and sit and chat about anything it could be school, it could be
- 252 home. And then we bought the students over at the same time. And the translator was
- 253 from, she was Ukrainian and she was over here because of what had happened. She's had
- 254 a different job in Ukraine, but that was really useful. And we've said we will do it again at
- 255 some point because, well
- 256 MARYAM: That might be quite useful for year officers to attend for their year. So maybe
- 257 just sitting on side.
- 258 ZARA: Yeah, definitely. It was interesting because there were things that came up. So one
- 259 of them – the boy in year 11, the quiet one – his mum can't speak any English at all.
- 260 They're lovely. Really, really is such a nice boy, but very nervy. And quite shy. And his
- 261 mum was having real issues applying for Universal Credit as she couldn't get her National
- 262 Insurance number right, because she's got 2 passports. And so the interpreter just sat
- 263 down with her and we went through all the forms and sorted that out and free school
- 264 meals and things. And that was really, really useful because it was clearly something that
- 265 he was really, well, worried about but couldn't express it.
- 266 MARYAM: That that's not nice, is it?
- 267 SONIA: No, that's not right. That's assuming the responsibility that they're too young for.
- 268 But what P2 also said, some of the students from Ukraine who came here, they were
- 269 quite good students and praised a lot in their schools and suddenly here because they're
- 270 put in bottom sets, not because of their ability or knowledge, but because of their English.
- 271 Because that's what CYP, for example, complained about because she was used to being
- 272 told how wonderful she was and suddenly it was 'Oh, you are in lower set, but only
- 273 because of the English', but I think that also affects their confidence because suddenly it's
- 274 like 'ohh, I actually know more than those people' but they can't express it.
- 275 MARYAM: Yeah.
- 276 ZARA: This is like maths. There was way ahead of their flying there because they're saying
- 277 when we did this, when we were about 10 in in our country.
- 278 MARYAM: Oh right. That's a little embarrassing [for us].
- 279 ZARA: You have.

280 R: Okay, so you've mentioned about the difference between schooling, and trying to get  
 281 used to their experience here, when it is probably quite different what they're used to  
 282 ZARA: The one lesson which has been really good. And it's interesting because when they  
 283 first arrive, teachers are really like, ohh, no, we can't possibly teach them because they've  
 284 not done this subject before, is French. They always do really well in French because it's a  
 285 language and it's new for everybody. We're not very good in England at languages. So the  
 286 students typically are quite low and don't retain it, so ours [asylum seekers], even the two  
 287 Afghans are now like, really, really good at French and they're quite near the top of the  
 288 class.  
 289 SONIA: And quite confident  
 290 ZARA: Quite confident because of the style of the lesson.  
 291 MARYAM: So, in a way that's nice confidence boost for them, isn't it?  
 292 SONIA: Yes it is, because there is a look of whiteboard work and show me tasks.  
 293 ZARA: And games and things like that, so they actually end up doing better in French than  
 294 most of their other subjects. And they're on a par with their peers and their, which is  
 295 lovely.  
 296 ZARA: It's not something you think about, and the teacher's don't either. They're terrified  
 297 when you bring them a new student and you say 'oh they haven't studied French before',  
 298 they said, 'well, we can't have them in here cause these have had two years of French',  
 299 but actually it doesn't take very long for them to catch up.  
 300 R: Ohh that is interesting.  
 301 ZARA: it's nice to see them doing well in it, you know  
 302 SONIA: But even the girl from Afghanistan, I was in with her in maths last year a lot and  
 303 we started from literally 1 + 1 and we had counters. And now OK she's in the bottom set  
 304 but she's actually doing better than some of the other students when I was in maths with  
 305 her the other day. So, looking at the progress she's made and they were doing very basic  
 306 equations. But she could do it and I was like, 'wow'.  
 307 MARYAM: Yeah, probably. The difference is there she didn't. This is a bit of a sweeping  
 308 statement. But, umm, she wants to learn. Where as often in bottoms set she'll have got a  
 309 bit of a mix in there.  
 310 ZARA: Yeah  
 311 MARYAM: Yeah, you've got your people that do just need to support and people that just  
 312 aren't interested.  
 313 R: Okay. We've discussed a lot of stuff there that's really useful. We have covered this a  
 314 little bit, but I was wondering if we could discuss cultural identity and some examples of  
 315 how the young people you support might feel able to sort of express their own culture at  
 316 school. This might include how different cultures are viewed and valued by peers by  
 317 adults in school, or I know you just mentioned about speaking in their own language at  
 318 school, could we talk a little more about how that's viewed by peers and adults?  
 319 ZARA: We encourage it. We never used to. It used to be thought that they should only  
 320 speak English, but actually we do realise that it's really important that they retain their  
 321 home language as well. So a lot of their texts and classes are translated into their own  
 322 language by the teachers. So we've asked them to do that, haven't we? And we translate  
 323 things into their own language as well and with the Ukrainians, they have a choice of  
 324 either Russian or Ukraine, cause some of them prefer Russia and I think.  
 325 MARYAM: Depends which week.  
 326 ZARA: But yeah, they're not discouraged. I mean, obviously they're not supposed to talk a  
 327 lot in class anyway, but they come in here in the morning and they're all chattering away  
 328 and Ukrainian. And it's like we [P1 and P3] both come from language school background  
 329 and there we were always like English only. We were told there that they're never

- 330 allowed to speak their own language because they were only short term usually, so it's  
331 really just coverage there. But here they chat away in their own language and it's nice.  
332 SONIA: And it is natural for them.
- 333 ZARA: It's nice and the little girl from Afghanistan or it's not a brilliant influence that's  
334 found a girl in an older year group. You [other participants] probably know who I'm  
335 talking about, who speaks Pashto as well. And you do see them together sometimes. And  
336 although it's not the best influence, it's nice that she's got another girl to speak Pashto  
337 with, because although her English is okay now, she's not gonna be able to speak about  
338 everything she wants to in English.
- 339 R: Yeah.
- 340 SONIA: And also, in year 11. So, we've got students that I support in English pretty much  
341 every day. So they both Ukrainian but one of them he came with better English; the one  
342 who was absent quite a lot, and he's been here longer, so he translates for the weaker  
343 one.
- 344 R: oh nice
- 345 SONIA: Obviously it speeds things up a bit. Or he explains. So yeah, that that's good
- 346 ZARA: They're very good with each other, actually, aren't they? All of them generally they  
347 look after each other.
- 348 R: Do you find that their sort of initial relationships they make in school obviously apart  
349 from with you and adults are with similar language peers?
- 350 ZARA: The Ukrainian's have all stuck together. Yeah. I think some of them have got friends  
351 from - They haven't really made many friends in their own classes, but they've made  
352 friends that group like some of them go to clubs and things. So, they'll talk to others. The  
353 Afghan girl and boy
- 354 SONIA: she's very sociable
- 355 ZARA: Both of them have integrated with English people. But the Ukrainians have stuck  
356 together as a group, even across age groups. They still -
- 357 SONIA: But that is quite because, for example, the girl who is in year eight. She's got a  
358 brother. She's lovely, but the girls in her class are not so nice. So, they're not necessarily  
359 someone she would be friends with, even if she was English. Yeah. And I do feel a bit  
360 sorry for her cause she doesn't have friends in that class and she is lovely. And they  
361 haven't encouraged, Like no one talks to her.
- 362 I think they do like she said, that they [her family] do because, obviously, there's so many  
363 Ukrainians here now. And she was talking this morning about on Saturday because of the  
364 anniversary of the war started. So, they had the big meeting in Bournemouth. Yeah. And  
365 because there's quite a lot, I think they meet up with other Ukrainian people. Yeah. I  
366 don't think she's made any English friends.
- 367 ZARA: No, I don't think she has either.
- 368 R: What do you think the impact of that might be them for her.
- 369 ZARA: I do feel sorry for.
- 370 SONIA: I do too. I think she feels - it's like even those little bits in the lesson where the for  
371 example doing an experiment and you know they're paired up and the teachers preparing  
372 something. So, they've got time to chat to each other and she has no one, I was with her,  
373 but obviously she was looking at other students and that must feel horrible, but I don't  
374 really wanna ask her, 'Have you made friends?' Because it's putting the pressure on her.
- 375 MARYAM: You don't want to emphasise it
- 376 ZARA: She's a rare kind of really nice, very pleasant, and lovely. You know, she would  
377 never be nasty, and that's quite unusual for girls in that age group here, and especially the  
378 ones in her class, they are not very nice.
- 379 MARYAM: Is it just because, um, there's no chance of there being moved?

380 ZARA: No

381 SONIA: I think as her English improves, but it's quite difficult to move sets now. Because

382 they are just for maths.

383 MARYAM: Hmm, yeah, what year?

384 ZARA: Eight.

385 SONIA: Yes.

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

387 ZARA: Next year it would be good

388 MARYAM: Because obviously then you've got two bottom sets.

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

390 SONIA: The moment they have no, like English split. It's only one at the moment, there

391 still not divided. Yeah, but she's still with her brother who was a completely different

392 character, but so at least she's –

393 ZARA: And they each other at break time. The other students, they got the same breaks.

394 We've only got one lunch break now, which makes it easier. So they're all together.

395 R: So does she talk to the other Ukrainians?

396 ZARA: Yeah. Yeah.

397 SONIA: Yeah

398 MARYAM: You want them to build friendships, but you can't force it.

399 SONIA: But it takes time. It's the same with my daughter, you can't tell them, 'I want you

400 to be friends with this person, not this person'. Well, you can tell them to them, but it's

401 their decision at the end of the day.

402 R: So, do you find that as language skills increase, there's a building of more friendships

403 with English people. Or is it still quite a divide

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

405 ZARA: They've just thrown themselves in and I think the thing is with them they've got no

406 - they don't seem to have any filter of embarrassment about making mistakes, which is

407 really good. They just have just embraced it, haven't they?

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

409 ZARA: Yes, they are.

410 MARYAM: All those your mindset is different as in.

411 SONIA: And the Ukrainians, because they have each other, that kind of hinders

412 developing other friendships. So it's like, is it like a double edged sword really? Because

413 on one hand you've got someone to fall back on, but then it doesn't encourage you to at

414 the moment explore other possibilities.

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

416 ZARA: Yes, she ha

417 MARYAM: Cause you're right. It's not like, yeah, year 11 or 12 where you're thinking

418 you're not going to be in this sort of rigid environment for too long.

419 SONIA: But then hopefully as her English improves, she picks it up really quickly, she'll be

420 put in better sets with nicer people.

421 ZARA: Nicer people, yeah

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

423 gonna be home.

424 SONIA: Yeah, it's like a limbo

425 R: It's hard cause that's not something we can really change, isn't it?

426 ZARA: No, no.

427 SONIA: You know, and then this was the funny thing when they started quite a few

428 teachers said 'Ohh, you know how long they here for?' and I thought 'How long is it a

429 piece of string?'

- 430 MARYAM: But now, obviously, t's been ages, so.
- 431 R: We just have to see what happens faster, ongoing process. So, kind of similarly, but just
- 432 well, we're talking about the sort of. I know we've mentioned a bit about the other young
- 433 people in the class and maybe their attitudes in general. If we're thinking about their
- 434 attitude sort of towards young people coming in from different cultures and towards
- 435 accepting sort of newcomers, is there anything that comes to mind? That might be
- 436 impactful for the asylum-seeking young people.
- 437 ZARA: I think generally here they're quite good, aren't they? We have so many foreign
- 438 students, not just refugees, but it's quite normal.
- 439 SONIA: Or one parent is British.
- 440 ZARA: Yeah. I mean, yeah, I don't think it's a big shock to them when anybody's started.
- 441 We've got a new starter today from Turkey, I think, we haven't seen him yet, but it's
- 442 quite normal for them and in most classes there's somebody that's got a parent or that
- 443 comes from a different country, so.
- 444 R: Yeah
- 445 SONIA: I wonder if it also the younger they are the more but then the student that we
- 446 talked about who hasn't made that manifest, she's in year 8.
- 447 MAYRAM: Yeah. Yes, she was here in year 7, and it didn't really help.
- 448 ZARA: I don't know. Sometimes they're quite interested. You know, when we had CYP
- 449 start and as they all knew, all the girls were quite interested. But he was very shy and
- 450 couldn't speak.
- 451 SONIA: He was terrified.
- 452 ZARA: Absolutely terrified. Didn't speak for about a year. But I think I'm quite - I haven't
- 453 heard, although we tend to hear things cause we sit in a minute in amongst them rather
- 454 than the teacher being at the front. We hear a lot of things going on cause they forget
- 455 you're there after a while and I'm not really heard anything negative towards any of them
- 456 R: Yeah.
- 457 ZARA: What think about? I think I don't know. Do you hear things in the year office about
- 458 any kind of like?
- 459 MARYAM: No. Nothing like that.
- 460 R: And I guess that potentially might have a positive impact on their sort of sense of
- 461 belonging in school is feeling that people accept them, even if those friendships aren't
- 462 built. They do potentially feel quite welcomed by accepted?
- 463 ZARA: Yeah, and they will help them, won't they? They, the other students generally are
- 464 quite helpful in class and things too
- 465 SONIA: Because that's another thing I just thought about, which is the double edged
- 466 sword. Because obviously if we're with them, then they cannot be sat with another
- 467 student.
- 468 ZARA: Yes. Sometimes we probably hinder them.
- 469 SONIA: So because that's how somehow friendships develop. But then we there to help
- 470 them and to give them more confidence and more English. So, and we know in all lessons.
- 471 R: I think it's difficult isn't it because both are important the language in the long run, the
- 472 language will probably help the friendships like yeah, but yeah, it's just I guess you're
- 473 right. Maybe having someone sat there is a bit of a barrier.
- 474 SONIA: And an adult when you're a teenager is like, you know
- 475 ZARA: The interesting thing is that the students that don't have you with them. Ask you
- 476 questions and are quite jealous sometimes, and it's like, well, how come he gets help and
- 477 why aren't you helping me? You know, but the ones that you're with quite a lot of them
- 478 are like they see you coming and even the Ukrainians, you've got one at the moment that
- 479 he said he's like 'I don't I don't need you in here, can you go?'

480 SONIA: Yeah, I I had to say to him, the teacher has specifically asked me to be there in  
 481 your lesson, and he is kind of like Urgh OK.

482 R: But do they engage with you quite well when you are there?

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

489 ZARA: Yeah. Because I think they think when we're there, they have to do more work,  
 490 you see.

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

492 ZARA: If we are not there to help them, they can get away with saying 'Ohh wait, I don't  
 493 understand'.

494 SONIA: Because they're very often sat at the back 'oh you've got your Kindle. OK, OK'. But  
 495 this time, he's the front with me. So he's like, 'urgh'. They're still teenagers, really, aren't  
 496 they?

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

508 ZARA: Before you came, it was talking about how the two, certainly the two boys from  
 509 Afghanistan, now that their dad's not around and can even the girl to some extent a lot of  
 510 being at secondary school socially is to do with things like sleepovers and meeting each  
 511 other in town and things like that. And I think that probably impacts on their friendships  
 512 because I don't think they can do any of those things.

513 SONIA: No, they won't. They won't be allowed.

514 ZARA: So, we know that they prefer being at school than not being at school. In the  
 515 holidays, they're always really upset.

516 SONIA: The only ones who are like 'Ohhhhhh'.

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

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

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

522 SONIA: Especially the girl.

523 ZARA: Especially the girl, because I think she literally doesn't go anywhere at all when  
 524 she's at home. So yeah. I mean, I guess the Ukrainians are lucky because they've got each  
 525 other, so they can speak in their own language to each other and talk about everything  
 526 they need to in their own language, whereas, with the Afghans because of the culture he  
 527 doesn't like, they don't like to be together at all, do they? And to start with, they put  
 528 them in the same class, and he wouldn't help her with anything. He wouldn't translate. He  
 529 used to just pretend he hasn't heard you if you asked him to help. But it's a bit of a sexist

530 thing where he, he's older, he's been back-yearred anyway, and she's a girl, so she's not as  
531 important. So. And they've split them now, but obviously they don't have anybody else at  
532 school really that they can speak their own language to. So even though she plays outside  
533 with other kids, they're not. They have a very superficial level of, yeah, what they can talk  
534 about.

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

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

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

545 MARYAM: No

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

551 SONIA: and their status, social status as well, yeah

552 MARYAM: So do you think that they are bothered that they are not integrating with  
553 English children?

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

557 MARYAM: Its difficult to be. If you put yourself in, their shoes, it would be weird to be in a  
558 environment where you're just speaking to the people that even now and not speaking to  
559 someone from that country.

560 ZARA: That's what tends to happen though, isn't it? I mean, you [P3] you've had that  
561 experience. I've had that experience you. But you [P2] have obviously been here for a  
562 long time, but I used to live in Turkey and my only friends were ex Pats.

563 MARYAM: I see what you mean. Yeah.

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

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

566 SONIA: Yes. Really. Yes. Yeah.

567 ZARA: See, I didn't speak very good Turkish to start with. So it's like, I craved English  
568 company because then you can actually have a proper conversation with people. So.

569 MARYAM: So wonder whether they they can't offload things. I think they're maybe  
570 they're keeping a lot of stuff in because they don't want to meet up with any other  
571 Ukrainian and just offline personal things, whereas you and I may, I might come and find  
572 you out and offload you because you don't really know me. That. Would you see what I  
573 mean?

574 ZARA: Yeah. So what you mean? Yeah

575 R: I think a couple of things I've kind of picked up on from that discussion was maybe one  
576 about support of the community outside of school as well as a sort of facilitator for  
577 feeling like you belong and you fit in. I think like you're saying maybe the Ukrainian  
578 people's have kind of stuck together in school. It sounds like outside of school they've

579 maybe got more support and more from other families than the Afghan asylum seekers  
 580 that have maybe been a bit more in school.  
 581 ZARA: Yeah.  
 582 R: And then also I hear coming across maybe something to do with the social status from  
 583 before they migrated across maybe having an impact.  
 584 SONIA: Cause you can see the differences in education as well.  
 585 ZARA: Definitely and with the two Afghan boys in year.  
 586 SONIA: Ohh yeah, of course.  
 587 MARYAM: I don't know what year they are now.  
 588 SONIA: Nine  
 589 ZARA: We thought when they both - when one of them arrived we thought ohh brilliant  
 590 we've got a friend for him they were like totally one would speak to the other one.  
 591 MARYAM: Oh, okay.  
 592 ZARA: Because they, because ones that Dad works at the university here has come from a  
 593 really wealthy background, was well educated and the other has come from a village in  
 594 the mountains  
 595 SONIA: They are almost like nomads because they're trouble. Yeah. So.  
 596 ZARA: And they're certainly a class divide there, and they don't have any interaction even  
 597 though they speak the same language.  
 598 SONIA: They view them as inferior, or almost inferior. He's not rude because I am with  
 599 them in English. But you can see that he likes to keep his distance.  
 600 ZARA: Yeah, he is very nice.  
 601 MARYAM: I guess it's like throwing two people together from the same country. You  
 602 think, 'Ohh, they're gonna get on just because they speak the same language'  
 603 SONIA: What's like with our Ukraine and some unlikely friendships developed because X  
 604 wouldn't necessarily become friends with Y, but because they're both from Ukraine and  
 605 they're in the same class or set they become, do you know what I mean?  
 606 ZARA: These two haven't though, the Afghans, have they?  
 607 SONIA: And I don't think they will have it.  
 608 ZARA: I guess it depends as well, doesn't it? On the sort of cultural values from that  
 609 they've been brought up with as well. And the difference that sound like we were saying  
 610 about the male female split. I know that's very different in Afghanistan to how it would be  
 611 here or potentially in the Ukraine as well, you know  
 612 SONIA: Cause we have this should of cooked food though.  
 613 ZARA: So yes, he really wouldn't do it.  
 614 SONIA: It's the boy the boy from Afghanistan  
 615 ZARA: Woman's work and then would wash up or help to the washing after  
 616 SONIA: so we were showing him pictures of Gordon Ramsay, and you [P1] found a chef  
 617 from Afghanistan.  
 618 ZARA: He was a man and we were saying that it's, you know, men here are very good  
 619 chefs, It's not embarrassing to be, but he's still didn't really. He didn't engage with that  
 620 very well.  
 621 SONIA: I think he's polite. So now he nods along and he does it at school because he he  
 622 has to.  
 623 ZARA: But he used to throw his food away. Didn't wanna take it home because he had  
 624 made it and it was embarrassing that he'd made it.  
 625 R: I guess that's difficult, isn't it? Because he doesn't want to give up his values. But that  
 626 probably also makes him feel a little bit uncomfortable, but also potentially a little bit  
 627 different to his peers, who are all happy to get involved.



- 628 ZARA: Yeah, he's definitely calmed down a lot. There were a lot of cultural problems to  
629 start with, weren't there? I do think. I don't know if you've ever heard anything.
- 630 SONIA: Ohh that religion wise as well?
- 631 ZARA: Religion, wise views and also kind of inappropriate behaviour towards girls  
632 because.
- 633 SONIA: A lot
- 634 ZARA: Yeah, which we think has calmed down a little bit
- 635 MARYAM: Well it has. But I what I well, I don't know if it winded its way back to the  
636 parents cause he used to pick on a few year Elevens, didn't he? Saying inappropriate  
637 comments and umm, but they actually just used to scream and find it hilarious.
- 638 SONIA: They egged him on
- 639 ZARA: The girls?
- 640 MARYAM: Ohh yeah, I know, I know. Yeah. But I wonder whether if they went home and  
641 said to their parents this boy at school said this to me, whether that would be phone call  
642 the next morning.
- 643 ZARA: Yeah. Some of the girls probably encourage it, don't they?
- 644 MARYAM: Probably yeah
- 645 ZARA: Because that's funny. Yeah. There has been a few.
- 646 MARYAM: There's been that, but it's not. It's not been taken seriously by the girls.
- 647 ZARA: But there was some younger ones that
- 648 MARYAM: That's older girls saying there just laughing it off. But if it's going down school,  
649 that's different, isn't it? Year 11 girls, are practically grown-ups, aren't they these days?
- 650 ZARA: Yeah. So we've had to have conversations. Male staff have had to kind of take him  
651 aside and explain that, you know, what's inappropriate.
- 652 R: It must be quite hard to find a balance between sort of respecting his cultural values,  
653 but also explaining to him those values which are maybe not so acceptable in school or in  
654 UK in general?
- 655 SONIA: Yeah, and his age makes the difference because all his life he's been told or  
656 exposed or taught that women are inferior and suddenly he's here and it's different. So,  
657 it's not gonna just he's not gonna change just like that. Yeah.
- 658 R: I suppose then, do you think there's an impact of other people's understanding the  
659 young people's cultural backgrounds and maybe their experiences that have led to them  
660 seeking asylum?
- 661 SONIA: Some students don't. They have very limited knowledge. Cause I had students  
662 saying to me in year 11 English, 'Miss, where Ukraine, where's Ukraine?' And you know,  
663 it's Europe, so Afghanistan or someone who is from much further away.
- 664 ZARA: He's the worst actually. Though I have to say he's the worst for saying  
665 inappropriate things for the Ukrainians.
- 666 R: Ohh really?
- 667 ZARA: Yeah, and although he knows because he's come from that. He would laugh and  
668 say 'ohh you know, there's a war in your country' and things so he even though he's come  
669 from it, I think he's the only one I have heard trying to kind of wind them up a bit.
- 670 SONIA: 'Ohh Ukraine's not a country'
- 671 ZARA: Yeah and 'no it's not, it's belongs to Russia'. So there's a lot of you know and that's  
672 the only time actually that I've heard any students saying anything in appropriate to them  
673 really
- 674 MARYAM: I mean there's probably a lack there's probably some students that lack  
675 understanding. And they shouldn't be unaware, because everyone has religious studies  
676 lessons all way throughout school. But I would agree it's probably there is a bit of a lack of  
677 understanding from some students maybe.

- 678 R: Okay, what do we what do you think the impact of that is?
- 679 ZARA: Possibly their feelings of inclusion, they had an assembly.
- 680 MARYAM: Yeah, which is quite sad in a way, because she think, well, they've been sitting
- 681 sat through lots of educational lessons.
- 682 ZARA: And they did do this assembly and they had an assembly when it all happened
- 683 before they arrive. Yes, we had an assembly so that the students were aware of what was
- 684 going on. And we are quite good, really. I mean, when there was the earthquake in Turkey
- 685 recently, we went round and checked on all our students that had any kind of Turkish
- 686 background or connection, just to make sure that they were OK. They knew that they
- 687 could come and talk to anyone if they were worried. So, they are quite aware here of
- 688 things. But whether the students take it in, some go and sit in assembly and won't even
- 689 listen to it all won't even know where Ukraine is.
- 690 SONIA: I think what P2 talked about. I don't, I think with some students does not much
- 691 understand. They'll just dismiss them, 'Ohh, You know he treats women like this', but
- 692 they don't know that in their culture and that must influence.
- 693 R: Yeah, I think with a lot of people, you can hear something, but not necessarily
- 694 understand it.
- 695 ZARA: Yeah, and the impact that might have for asylum-seekers. People say they
- 696 understand what's happening in Ukraine, but they might not think about the impact that
- 697 that has for people that are coming across with reference here to specific students.
- 698 MARYAM: Yeah.
- 699 R: (47mins 20seconds) Okay, we will take a just a break because I know that it is our break
- 700 time, yeah. Please remember you can help yourselves to coffee and snacks. And we will
- 701 come back together in around 15 minutes. Welcome back
- 702 ZARA: Sometimes don't find it and their parents can't help them. That's the other thing.
- 703 There is even things like parents evening. For lots of them the parents aren't confident
- 704 enough to do the parents evening, so I'll phone them and try and chase it up. If they
- 705 haven't understood. But even if they don't want to do the parents evening, we do, we get
- 706 their reports and printer often sit student down, explain their report to them and then
- 707 they can go home and translate their parents. So it's all that kind of thing that I guess,
- 708 yeah.
- 709 R: You take the provincial well if you. Yeah. And I think that makes sense. You kind of they
- 710 need somebody, don't they in school, don't they, that is that link person. And it sounds
- 711 like you guys are probably the best place people to be that for most people
- 712 SONIA: Otherwise, zero. If they don't have much English like how do I even I remember
- 713 ZARA: And they're going to a school that's got 300 students per year. So they like P2, her
- 714 office has never got nobody waiting.
- 715 MARYAM: Yeah, from the minute it opens in the morning until they go home. There's
- 716 some problem or some issues.
- 717 R: Okay, I guess that you say that's the impact then of having this specific area that is
- 718 actually just for EAL pupils.
- 719 ZARA: It's really important, I think. And the students have a choice, but because of the
- 720 sensitivity of it, we offer home language GCSE so that they can get extra GCSE
- 721 R: So, for example, they could take Ukrainian?
- 722 ZARA: We don't have Ukrainian, but we do have Russian.
- 723 R: OK.
- 724 ZARA: Some of them didn't want to do it. Because of what's going on at the moment and
- 725 were very adamant. And that was fine. But one of them is doing Russians as a GCSE, so it
- 726 will give him an extra qualification.
- 727 R: That's lovely, yeah.

- 728 SONIA: Working here, It's been amazing. And I used to work with P1 anyway, before. I'm  
729 really. Yeah, she's, she's great as a line manager and just very understanding. Very  
730 empathetic. Because it's like she said initially everyone's like, yeah. Yeah. You know they  
731 [the asylum seeking students] get given sheets in Ukrainian, and but after a while  
732 teachers just assume that's it. And I didn't have that much English and be it's not like  
733 they're learning English here, they're learning MacBeth, or they have to write a  
734 paragraph. And how do you write a paragraph with someone who can't even construct a  
735 basic sentence? So, it's kind of, yeah, it's very interesting too to see how they progress.  
736 And obviously some of them make progress faster than others because they're natural  
737 language learners, the most studious, they pick it up. So the girl from Afghanistan,  
738 because a lot of the culture is oral.
- 739 R: okay,
- 740 SONIA: So she understands, her comprehension, is really, really good, though when it  
741 comes to reading and writing, obviously much slower.
- 742 R: And that's just that difference in culture?
- 743 SONIA: We're pushing the reading because writing, but I said to her is really important for  
744 you to be able to read what's on the board.
- 745 R: Yeah.
- 746 SONIA: Because initially it was like, man. And obviously their sounds system. Everything is  
747 so different.
- 748 R: I think reading is so important, even if you don't go into an academic job it even just in  
749 life like being able to.
- 750 SONIA: Reading labels, reading on an Internet page to book a doctor's appointment or to  
751 fill out your Universal Credit form. My daughter's, well, you're never fully bilingual  
752 because her father is English is and because she was born here. So, I speak to her in  
753 Polish, but obviously her English is much better. Her range of vocabulary, etcetera,  
754 etcetera. But, and I was never bothered about her writing, but reading I pushed. There  
755 were moments when she would throw a book and say no, I don't wanna do it. So I  
756 stopped because I thought, well, we'll just pick it up some other time. And she, she's a  
757 voracious reader, but when she reads in Polish, it will be stuff for probably, so she's 15,  
758 for 8 year olds because obviously it needs to be shorter sentences and that, but at least  
759 she's picked up that skill.
- 760 R: Enough to get by?
- 761 SONIA: Yeah.
- 762 ZARA: But it in reality, in school, it's impossible because they can't produce the work that  
763 they need to be in the upper sets.
- 764 SONIA: Especially in English.
- 765 R: Do you find that they move up sets as their English Ability gets a little bit better?
- 766 SONIA: Some of them have already, especially maths and science.
- 767 ZARA: Yeah.
- 768 SONIA: Because English, I don't think any of them have.
- 769 ZARA: It's so, the content is so different and they haven't got the prior knowledge. So they  
770 haven't studied any of the technical- so even things like Christmas Carol. We all know the  
771 story because we watch it every Christmas. No, a lot of them won't have ever seen it. So  
772 they don't know the story. They don't know the characters, you know, it's just.
- 773 R: Yeah
- 774 ZARA: MacBeth, I think Shakespeare. Its just impossible. You know, for them to. You  
775 know, just an impossible mission.

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

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

781 MARYAM: I think every everything even, like you say, your maths and science, you're  
782 doing, you know it's numbers but it's still involves a lot of language.

783 ZARA: It does. The word –

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

788 R: And then the more conversational things?

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

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

796 SONIA: 'I hate it here'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

819 SONIA: Chocolates. Sweet.

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

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

825 ZARA: Yes.

- 826 SONIA: So. So you do know this, but you sometimes teachers need to be reminded  
827 because he was nodding off in a lesson because of the sugar level dropping, obviously.  
828 R: I see  
829 SONIA: And they up all night praying.  
830 ZARA: Yes. So they getting up really, really early. And they're going to bed really late. So  
831 we do have a function on our emails where we can e-mail 'teachers of ...' and it will go to  
832 every teacher that teaches them or comes into contact with them during the day. So, if  
833 there's anything specific culturally that we think they need to be aware of, we will e-mail  
834 all of their teachers and let them know  
835 R: I'm sure, the fact that you do things fall like you say, Ramadan, and for Eid is probably  
836 going to be something that's really helpful.  
837 ZARA: Yeah, I think it just adds to those feelings of inclusion, hopefully.  
838 R: So then the next one I've got was just about the learning experiences. So I think we've  
839 touched it a little bit about the sort of difference and how they might they might be used  
840 to learning and how maybe teachers would expect them to be able to learn. And then  
841 yeah, sort of also maybe around their understanding of the relevance of what they're  
842 learning for them, and maybe the impact of how important they feel like it is, I'm  
843 throwing these things out. There might be nothing, but just wondering.  
844 ZARA: So, for example, religious studies, I've heard a lot of complaints from the  
845 Ukrainians saying 'why are we learning this? We don't need to learn about other  
846 religions', because we don't just learn, we learn about all religions here and a few of them  
847 have said 'I don't understand. We don't do this in our country.' 'Why do I need to know  
848 about Buddhism?' or 'Why do I need to know about Islam?' You know, they think they're  
849 never gonna use this. We do it here because they take it a year earlier and it's just an  
850 extra GCSE that they get out of the way and it's quite easy. So. But they haven't really  
851 been -  
852 SONIA: But the detention is a very big issue.  
853 ZARA: Ohh, yeah.  
854 SONIA: Because, yeah, it's not common. It's the same in Poland because I very often  
855 compare because there are very similar, Poland and Ukraine, in terms of education  
856 system, but detention for lack of homework doesn't really exist - we've got other ways or  
857 you can give an extra homework, for example, parents are called so here detention was a  
858 big issue.  
859 ZARA: Yeah, and we do have quite a strict behaviour system here and most of the time  
860 our students, umm, the only thing they tend to fall down on is homework, isn't it really?  
861 Because they're usually fairly well behaved in class and teachers do tend to give them a  
862 bit more leeway with speaking in class and things because they need to translate  
863 SONIA: Their attendance is very good  
864 ZARA: Attendance is generally very good. It's just, yeah, homework detention. And they  
865 gave them leeway at the start, but obviously they've been here a year now, they expect  
866 them to do the same.  
867 SONIA: And a lot of teachers are quite understanding and saying I don't expect them to do  
868 100%, but as long as I see everyday that it's been attempted and not just copied, but even  
869 instead of a paragraph writing a sentence or two, that's good enough. But I need to see  
870 this because otherwise I'm not fair on other students who are doing it.  
871 R: And do you think it's from, like, a language barrier perspective that it's not being done  
872 or potentially from a difference in what was expected?  
873 SONIA: I think mainly the language  
874 ZARA: Yes, probably the language, but I think also yes, because now they know what the  
875 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.

- 925 SONIA: Yeah. Whereas in English you have got the completely opposite, where a couple of  
926 times I had to say this is too difficult, because I'm not an English teacher, I don't know  
927 how to explain this to a person who, like that girl from Afghanistan who can't read  
928 Pashto, so I can't even translate. Se we literally do MacBeth-Bad, Lady Macbeth-very bad.  
929 All: Laughing
- 930 ZARA: Because you have to draw pictures and things, like a comic strip of the story. But it  
931 would be very easy for the teacher to create an activity that was a really, you know, even  
932 if they just we've said before, even if you just provide four key words that you want that  
933 student to learn in that lesson and you can provide, you know, have a picture with a word  
934 and a matching activity or something. Then that would be better than them sitting there  
935 and not understanding anything at all.
- 936 ZARA: And when it comes to exams they are not allowed a translator. And they get no  
937 extra time. Interestingly, some exams that they are allowed to dictionary but they don't  
938 get extra time Yes, which to me seems unfair because of the time searching, it is an  
939 additional need in a way because they they're disadvantage.
- 940 SONIA: It's like even if they had the understanding of what they're being asked to do, the  
941 limitations from their their language and from writing ability might mean that they can't  
942 show the knowledge that they have of the topic.
- 943 R: Yeah. Do you mean that they might understand, so for example if you ask them  
944 verbally, then you might get a lot from them, but then when it comes to exams, they  
945 might suffer because of writing ability?
- 946 SONIA: Well writing is always more difficult. Putting your ideas into paragraphs, you  
947 know.
- 948 ZARA: But they do really well considering, when you think about what they have to do in  
949 an English exam.
- 950 SONIA: Some of, some of them, they scored higher than-
- 951 ZARA: Yeah, some scored higher than the English students.
- 952 SONIA: cause I'm there in the bottom set because of the language ability and two of them  
953 are really bright and even the third one. But because he joined so late cause he joined this  
954 year with no English and he's in year 11.
- 955 ZARA: But he's still going in to do his mock GCSEs at the moment. So.
- 956 R: So still yeah, there is that custom that sort of adjusting isn't there, it's just obviously.  
957 It's difficult. It's really difficult. I'm thinking back to the young girl you mentioned that did  
958 really well in school before migrating and now is not getting so much praise in school.  
959 Maybe the impact that that could be having?
- 960 ZARA: Well, she went back and she's gone. She went back.
- 961 SONIA: But the other one is still –
- 962 ZARA: The other ones, we've got, there were two of them are ones still here. But she's  
963 Ukrainian, is she? Where she from?
- 964 SONIA: No, oh, I'm talking about the one with the demanding mum, cause she she's been  
965 exactly the same thing
- 966 ZARA: Ohh yeah, okay.
- 967 SONIA: In her country she was praised a lot.
- 968 ZARA: Constantly praised, yeah,
- 969 SONIA: And the mum's quite, I think, ambitious. And she is as well and this is the issue  
970 that I have with have an English and I have to speak to her because when there was to  
971 write the paragraph others are writing and just occasionally looking up words but she  
972 because she wants to get it totally right, she spends ages translating whole sentences.  
973 And I said to her, it's taking too long. Don't worry. And it stresses you out just. But she  
974 wants to -

975 ZARA: It has to be perfect.

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

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

978 SONIA: And also, if you were used to being praised and being the best, you feel a bit lost

979 when you are not understanding simple things. And they must be really frustrating

980 because sometimes you've got the content knowledge, you've just don't know how to say

981 it or how to express it. So yeah.

982 R: But it must be really difficult.

983 SONIA: It is. They're very brave.

984 ZARA: They are, and it's really easy for us to forget because they've been here for a long

985 time and they're kids, so they do sometimes have attitude and, you know, try it on and

986 mess about a bit. But they, in some ways, that's a good sign because it shows that they're

987 relaxed, you know, when they do. Yeah, it shows that they're comfortable. Yeah, I think

988 they've adapted really well. The ones that we've got left now, there were a few that you

989 could see - there was one girl in particular that never settled.

990 SONIA: She wouldn't speak English.

991 ZARA: She wouldn't speak

992 SONIA: She wasn't eating properly.

993 ZARA: No, she wasn't bringing lunch. She wasn't. And she was clearly really, really

994 unhappy. And I think in when the weight lifted, didn't it when she came in and said, 'I'm

995 going back'.

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

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

998 ZARA: Because we've got a couple who are torn because, for example, they want to go

999 back and be with their friends, but their parents are happy here and quite settled. And

000 then that also creates because one of them said to me, 'I really missed my friends. I want

001 to go back, but my mum wants to stay here.'

002 R: On that note then, we won't know everything that they've been through and their full

003 experiences, but do you think there is an impact on their ability to sort of feel that they fit

004 in and belong here based on what their past experiences?

005 ZARA: We had a lad. He's not here anymore. He was only here for a short time. He

006 shouldn't have been at school, but he was back yearred and he came in from Afghanistan

007 via Syria and Turkey on his own. His parents have been killed in Afghanistan and he

008 travelled all the way through it took think it took, he told us it took something like nine

009 months for him. He kept being placed in different settlements in different countries and

010 he came across under a lorry, the last part, on his own into Poole Quay, and then was like

011 an asylum seeker. But he was 16 and they backed him so he could do some time at

012 school. Couldn't speak any English. Such a polite boy, but he had terrible flashbacks,

013 couldn't sleep. The other students were lovely with him, but he couldn't, he just couldn't

014 integrate because he used to come in here and fall asleep all the time because he'd been

015 awake all night and he had nightmares. And I mean the other two that we've got from

016 Afghanistan, I think, their dads were already working in England. And I think when the

017 war happened, it was a good way of their dad's bringing their family.

018 SONIA: They came here very quick.

019 ZARA: Yeah. And I think it, I think I don't think there were impacted so much by the war. I

020 think it was more right okay, so there is a war, now we can use it to bring them across. So,

021 I don't think they've had the same traumatic experience.

022 SONIA: That's the difference between them and the Ukrainians, because for them,

023 because obviously Afghanistan has been unstable for such a long time, whereas in



- 1024 Ukraine it happened suddenly, it was like, wow, I can't believe this is happening. So, also,  
1025 the attitude towards war. I think it's very different.
- 1026 ZARA: Yeah. So they see war differently. That's why he laughs about, I think. He sees it as  
1027 a normal kind of thing. And he, he does laugh and make jokes when he does, laugh when  
1028 he's uncomfortable
- 1029 SONIA: Yeah, he laugh also when he's uncomfortable. Yeah. So, we noticed that cause  
1030 initially you think ohh you're being really rude but then once you get to know them you  
1031 realise it's a weakness almost.
- 1032 R: So it sounds like these experiences as much as we don't really understand them cause  
1033 it's not saying we've been through sounds like maybe they are impacting relationships  
1034 and potentially engagement in school as well. I'm just thinking about the young boy's  
1035 head, not by choice, obviously, he couldn't engage with school because actually his basic  
1036 needs weren't being met.
- 1037 ZARA: No, no, yeah.
- 1038 SONIA: Yeah, 'cause I remember when I when I went to Poland last Easter and I helped  
1039 my friend works in the refugee centre. And we are also at the train station giving out free  
1040 coffee. And you see all those people. [begins crying] Sorry.
- 1041 R: Are you OK?
- 1042 SONIA: Yes, I am okay. So for me it was very overwhelming, let alone for them, and they  
1043 are kids, so.
- 1044 ZARA: Yeah.
- 1045 R: Yeah, it's a really tricky topic, would you like to take a moment?
- 1046 SONIA: No, it's okay, thank you.
- 1047 ZARA: Yeah. I think for most of us here, it's unreal because we haven't, although we have  
1048 seen them come over. It's just, 'Ohh, there's some Ukrainians coming in', but we haven't  
1049 actually seen, the reality of it, you know.
- 1050 SONIA: Yeah.
- 1051 R: So for us having not had the experiences, we may know what is happening, but it is  
1052 hard to understand?
- 1053 SONIA: Exactly. Well that's for me. When I saw all these people coming out of the train  
1054 and hugging the dogs, cats, everything. So feels real.
- 1055 R: That must have been really difficult. Are you sure you are okay? We can pause or stop  
1056 so that you can get some fresh air?
- 1057 SONIA: Yeah, no, I'm good.
- 1058 ZARA: Yeah, it seems, yeah, I guess it's things like them having to leave their pets behind  
1059 and things and we've got some that have got grandparents still there that can't believe,  
1060 you know, 'cause they're the elderly and yeah.
- 1061 SONIA: Ohh one of them is here. So he is here with his aunt and uncle and his  
1062 grandmother. So his mom and dad are over there. So that's hard.
- 1063 R: How do you think that might impact their sense of belonging in school?
- 1064 ZARA: I feel sorry for them cause I think sometimes we're not very understanding. So, I  
1065 spoke to one of our students, the one you're talking about, who parents aren't here. His  
1066 sister is here and he is keeps being late for school now. We had a tutor notification come  
1067 through here. Ohh, can you please speak to the student because he's late for school  
1068 everyday. So, I sent back an e-mail saying it could he please have some leeway because  
1069 he's here without parents and he's taking his sister to school every morning before he can  
1070 come to school. She's only 9.
- 1071 SONIA: She's in primary school and I see him every morning. So he's doing this.
- 1072 ZARA: I spoke to him and I said, you know, you need to be here because you'll end up  
1073 getting detentions for being late. And he said, 'but my sister's so slow, you know, I'm

074 trying to get her to school and she won't walk fast enough or she won't her shoes on in  
075 time'. And you think this is a like, 14-year-old boy with no parents here, who's trying to  
076 take his sister to school. Personally, I don't think it matters if his late because he's doing  
077 something really important to get his sister to school before he even comes to school  
078 himself, you know. And I think sometimes there's that lack of understanding. And actually  
079 not just that, but his parents are still in a warzone, so you know it, people sometimes  
080 need reminding. I think. I think it comes back to what we were saying: you can  
081 understand what's happened, but you can't understand what people are going through.  
082 You can't just expect people to adjust because actually they're not all going to adjust. And  
083 it's different for everybody.

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

086 ZARA: No, it's different.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

109 SONIA: We always talk about food.

110 ZARA: Yes. Yeah. She bought some food in, didn't she? That she made with her mum. That  
111 was really nice. Exactly. To sort of share her culture and have it accepted.

112 SONIA: She's quite settled, because we often see her with \*\*\* and some other students.

113 ZARA: Yeah, she is. And she's.

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

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

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

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

122 SONIA: And art club.

- 1123 ZARA: One of them, \*\*\*, goes to a basketball club. He's in a basketball team outside of  
1124 school. It's \*\*\* club. I can't remember what it is called, but he's in the, like, A team. So,  
1125 he's found that himself outside of school. A few of the meet up and go cycling at the  
1126 weekends, don't they?
- 1127 SONIA: And then one of them does the art club.
- 1128 ZARA: Yeah.
- 1129 SONIA: Yeah. How about the students from Afghanistan? Do they do any?
- 1130 ZARA: I think they go to homework club and things, because they have been
- 1131 SONIA: Oh yeah, so the girl does the homework club and she needs, but we were kind of  
1132 pushing that because it's good for her because there's a teacher there who can help if she  
1133 struggles
- 1134 ZARA: And she has limited resources at home. They don't always have the Internet.
- 1135 SONIA: But we do provide them with the laptop.
- 1136 ZARA: So if they don't have laptops at home, then we do loan them laptops.
- 1137 SONIA: But obviously there's no Wi-Fi and, and it's [homework club] very beneficial for  
1138 her 'cause she can get help.
- 1139 ZARA: The other students, apart from them, though, they have contact with their friends  
1140 in their own country through gaming. They still do online gaming and things, so a lot of  
1141 them chat to friends that aren't here, that are back there. So they are keeping, so  
1142 maintaining some relationships.
- 1143 SONIA: Lots use the telegram, which is like the equivalent of WhatsApp.
- 1144 R: Ohh okay.
- 1145 SONIA: Yes.
- 1146 ZARA: So yeah, they do have still some contact. The Afghans don't have any contact with  
1147 anybody that's there at all. I think that's just because they can't because it's too difficult. I  
1148 don't know, they've both got phones though, yeah, they came without phones and he  
1149 seems to have mastered like, TikTok and Instagram that quick anyway.
- 1150 SONIA: We take it for granted.
- 1151 R: That's really helpful. Thank you. And I, I guess then, yeah, what do we think that impact  
1152 of going to those sorts of clubs and activities is?
- 1153 ZARA: Good. That's very good. Definitely. A lot of them probably, I think, correct me if I'm  
1154 wrong, but I think English parents generally are really laid back and don't tend to push  
1155 their kids into doing things out of school, and I think in Ukraine they probably do and they  
1156 used to being busy outside of school and doing clubs and things so here the parents were  
1157 asking, 'What clubs are there?', 'What can they do?', You know, 'In Ukraine, they do this,  
1158 that and the other'. And so, I think they were quite pleased when they could realise they  
1159 could sign up for clubs and things after school and they could just go, they don't have to  
1160 pay.
- 1161 SONIA: And they can have more opportunities to meet different, like, friends.
- 1162 R: Thank you. We only have a short time left now, so, is there anything we haven't  
1163 discussed that you think is important or anything that you think could be changed to help  
1164 young asylum seekers feel like they belong in schools?
- 1165 ZARA: I do wonder whether we've got it slightly wrong in this country compared to  
1166 others, where, when we here think that they need to go straight into education in a  
1167 normal school and integrate in all lessons. In some countries like Germany, they have  
1168 centres where they teach them English as a foreign language first. When they first come  
1169 in, they'll have a programme 6 weeks or six and sometimes it's long term.
- 1170 SONIA: Yes, can be long term. The students from Afghanistan did it.
- 1171 ZARA: Yeah. And I do think that might be a better way of doing it because they tend to  
1172 stick together anyway and don't seem to be making friends with English children. It would

173 give them a really good knowledge of the language and then it would help them outside  
174 of school, you know, cause sometimes I think they can cope in school, but when they go  
175 out into the community, can they actually speak to anybody?

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

178 ZARA: Yeah, it is.

179 SONIA: It's like with \*\*\*, he would know what envious means,

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

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

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

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

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

196 ZARA: Yeah

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

198 SONIA: In the long run, yeah.

199 ZARA: Yeah

200 SONIA: 'Cause that English cause that we did with them-

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

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

212 R: So, what do you think is needed?

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

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

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

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

218 SONIA: Vocabulary and how to construct a sentence

219 ZARA: And general conversation. Yeah, it wouldn't take very long. I don't think. Cause in  
220 two weeks we noticed a huge difference.

221 SONIA: Could be a couple of weeks, couple of months, maybe.

- 1222 ZARA: We said culture with them, didn't we? As well, as part of it, British culture, you  
1223 know, and because some of them will come and live here, but they don't know anything  
1224 about it.
- 1225 SONIA: I think that happens a lot when you live in a community that is all very, all from  
1226 one area. Like the Ukrainian students that are all friends outside of school. Quite often if  
1227 you're not exposed to a new culture you continue with the same culture you've always  
1228 had without maybe understanding. I remember I had a student when I was at \*\*\*. It was  
1229 funny then, but it's not really funny, because she went hungry because her, her host  
1230 family went out and they left her a note saying 'tea' is in the fridge. So, she opened the  
1231 fridge - no cup of tea. She didn't realise that it meant dinner. So then yeah, she said 'I had  
1232 no dinner last night', and I said, 'how come?', and she said 'I didn't realise that it meant  
1233 dinner', and things like that. But it's obvious to us, but it's not.
- 1234 ZARA: Yeah.
- 1235 R: Of course, 'cause you got tea, dinner, supper. All different things.
- 1236 ZARA: When I came here I was straight out of uni, so I trained as a teacher of English, and  
1237 I remember one of the girls that I met in the pub and she said the way you speak is like  
1238 reading Shakespeare, cause I didn't know any idioms. I didn't know that tea meant dinner.
- 1239 R: Yeah
- 1240 SONIA: Let alone someone like that. So a lot of it is, yeah.
- 1241 R: Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything else that we wanted to share at all before I stop the  
1242 recording? I feel like we've been through a lot. It's been really valuable.
- 1243 ZARA: I think our students are really, really lucky here. I think that they get a lot of  
1244 support. They, you know that. Like I said, there's not many schools that have a separate  
1245 department for EAL. So they are, they're not only getting support from their year offices,  
1246 but they've got a department which is just for them. So, they are very lucky and the  
1247 school do support us like, \*\*\* the head is very, you know, he sees you, EAL is really  
1248 important within the school so, you know, they are lucky. And I'm, I'm sure that maybe  
1249 they, they don't always realise because they haven't been, haven't had any other  
1250 experiences of school in England. But, like you've said, they wouldn't get if we went now  
1251 study in Poland or Ukraine we just get thrown in and expected to get on with it. So, it  
1252 does support wouldn't be there wouldn't be any EAL support.
- 1253 SONIA: You wouldn't get anyone like us. Because we has a boy from Kazakhstan, and he  
1254 said that to me. 'It is really cool to have you in lessons because in Kazakhstan I and will be  
1255 the same'. And if an English person want to study in Poland, I don't think they would get  
1256 anyone.
- 1257 ZARA: They would be expected to learn the language and just get on with it so yeah.
- 1258 SONIA: I'm gonna say we do quite a lot of pastoral support, yeah.
- 1259 ZARA: A lot job of our job is pastoral now
- 1260 SONIA: And especially when they started there was something every day coming.
- 1261 ZARA: Yeah, it was constant.
- 1262 SONIA: And it wasn't even school. Ohh, 'I don't know how to do this', or you know.
- 1263 ZARA: Or uniform. A lot of the time we're replacing uniform and they come in and they  
1264 say. We've got one that we're washing [their uniform] all the time at the moment or. And,  
1265 you know, food related, we have a lot of like, have you had breakfast? Have you got any  
1266 lunch with you today? OK, well, you know, we sort those things out.
- 1267 R: Yeah
- 1268 SONIA: And the ladies in the cafeteria are amazing because a couple of times, because  
1269 some of the mums or parents didn't know how to sort out the Universal Credit, so they  
1270 were just providing them with lunch anyway.

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

## F.2 Transcript 2: Young people seeking asylum

Focus group details:

Date, time, location: 04.03.23, 14:00, In person – at their supporting charity venue

Running time: Approximately 60 minutes (including 15-minute break)

Researcher: R

Participant pseudonyms: Rahim, Abdul

Focus group transcript:

- 1 R: There are some post it notes here, so if there is anything that you want to make sure
- 2 we cover, or anything that you think of while we are talking, you can write it down and
- 3 we will make sure we talk about it. So like I said, at any point, if you would like a pause or
- 4 want to stop, that's fine, just let me know, we'll stop and you can go on your way and
- 5 enjoy the rest of your Saturday. And obviously, just to remind you that everything that we
- 6 talk about is confidential, which means that we won't talk about it with anyone after the
- 7 discussion. I will use the things that you, you say today in my research and I might look for
- 8 things that you've said that are similar to things that other people say, but nothing with
- 9 your name, your college, or any information that can be linked to you will be in the, in the
- 10 research.
- 11 R: So, today we are going to discuss some of your experiences at school and things that
- 12 you feel impact your sense of belonging in school. Sense of belonging can mean how
- 13 included and respected you feel, or how well you feel you fit in. Is there anything that
- 14 immediately comes to mind?
- 15 ABDUL: Umm, I'm not sure.
- 16 RAHIM: No.
- 17 R: That's okay. So, I suppose, yeah, would it be helpful to start off looking at some of my
- 18 prompts together?
- 19 ABDUL: Yeah, I think, yes.
- 20 R: Okay. The first thing that might be useful to think about is the things that when you
- 21 were younger, were, you really enjoyed about learning? So, if you were at school when
- 22 you were younger. So, this might be even to start with might be even before you came
- 23 into the UK, was there anything that was really nice or helpful?
- 24 ABDUL: Like at the school, or?
- 25 R: Yeah. It could be anywhere, but particularly thinking about school.
- 26 ABDUL: I don't know, it's hard.
- 27 RAHIM: For example, myself like and I'm gonna sound like I haven't been like, to school, a
- 28 lot. Like when I was a child.
- 29 R: OK. And so when you came to the UK, was that sort of the first time that you were in
- 30 regular in school?
- 31 RAHIM: Yeah, because there was, there wasn't the opportunity to go to school, yeah.

- 32 R: Yeah, and what was it like when you first started school, when you came to the UK?
- 33 RAHIM: The UK? Uh, I think I was unlucky because of the Covid-19 started.
- 34 R: Mhm.
- 35 RAHIM: I was one year in lockdown, and after that for college. I went to school actually
- 36 for two weeks, in \*\*\* school. And, yeah, after that uh it was lockdown I think, yeah, for 3
- 37 or 4 months. Then I apply for college, yeah.
- 38 R: Yeah, that must have been difficult coming in, sort of, and then suddenly being in
- 39 isolation in COVID and not being able to see lots of people.
- 40 RAHIM: Mhm.
- 41 R: I guess it might be useful to think about then some of the relationships, maybe the
- 42 adults or the other young people. I mean, either in those two weeks in \*\*\* school, or
- 43 maybe at college, was there anything that was really helpful that the adults or the other
- 44 students did?
- 45 RAHIM: Do you mean at school, yeah?
- 46 R: Yeah.
- 47 [pause]
- 48 R: But also out of school is important, so of course school is really important, but
- 49 sometimes friends outside of school can be equally as important.
- 50 RAHIM: Yeah. OK, it's gonna be helpful if the students are like, to be like friendly. You
- 51 know, like meeting people, yeah. When we're going to school like the first time.
- 52 R: Yeah.
- 53 RAHIM: They need to help them and yeah, like understanding.
- 54 R: Yeah, okay. Could you tell me what you mean by understand?
- 55 RAHIM: Having people that are like, understanding of, of me and some of the differences.
- 56 R: Yeah, yeah. Is that something that you found as well?
- 57 ABDUL: Um, mine is different, and I've I study school in my, my country as well, yeah. And
- 58 it was like not for long time but like seven/six years, yeah. I study umm, and when I came
- 59 here I started college directly.
- 60 R: Okay.
- 61 ABDUL: But, but the different I saw there is little, umm restrictions. There is a lot of
- 62 restrictions there and, and here is not here. Here is is like friendly here.
- 63 R: Yeah.
- 64 ABDUL: And yeah, this is a lot of things, but I just found this is, like, the main thing. Yeah,
- 65 between here and there. Umm, yeah.
- 66 R: Okay, so just to check, would you say that before it was quite, quite strict? And then
- 67 when you came here it was, there was a little bit more bit more freedom?
- 68 ABDUL: Free. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Friendly. Yeah. Yeah, which is nice, uh, it give me comfort
- 69 and I can do a lot of things. Yeah.
- 70 R: Yeah
- 71 ABDUL: Yeah
- 72 R: That's nice. And was that friendly from the adults or the other, other young people?
- 73 ABDUL: Mixed, yeah.
- 74 RAHIM: It is a little, yeah, mixed. Yeah.
- 75 R: Yeah? Lovely. And can you tell me anything about school or college that helps you feel
- 76 like you can, sort of, be yourself? So, some examples could be how other people acted, or
- 77 you're sort of ability to speak your home language in school, or how you think your
- 78 culture might be valued?
- 79 ABDUL: Yeah, here in the UK, yeah?
- 80 R: Yeah, yeah.



- 81 ABDUL: It just like it was difficult in the starting to, to catch up with them. And it was OK.  
 82 And when we a little bit, eh, after the time, then it was, OK. Yeah, but in the start of the  
 83 year, of course it was difficult to catch up with them and understand, like, how to do  
 84 friendship and this kind of thing.  
 85 R: Yeah.  
 86 ABDUL: Yeah. But, well, with the time it was improve, and then we learned as well and  
 87 they understand as well. Yeah. Yeah.  
 88 R: Yeah. Nice, and how did the language barrier impact your learning?  
 89 ABDUL: Yeah, we learning English as well as learning for school. Learning is, wasn't easy in  
 90 the start and I remember I, I, couldn't read anything, but I with the time I, I, I learn a lot of  
 91 things. It's become easy when you when you find the friends and speak with them and  
 92 study as well.  
 93 R: I see.  
 94 ABDUL: It is more, eh, easy to, to learn the language here. Yeah  
 95 R: Yes, that's really interesting, thank you. So you've got to learn at the same level as  
 96 everybody else in college, but also you've got some of that language to catch up?  
 97 ABDUL: Yeah, yeah.  
 98 R: And do you think that learning the language had impacted your building friendships at  
 99 school and college as well?  
 100 ABDUL: Yeah, I think, yeah, it's helpful. Yeah. And when you study [English] together,  
 101 make a friendship as well, yeah. So yeah, it is like, yeah.  
 102 R: And what was your experience?  
 103 RAHIM: At first here, like, I just study English like ah, in \*\*\* [charity] I don't know if you  
 104 know \*\*\*?  
 105 R: Yeah.  
 106 RAHIM: Yeah. I went there like, there was class like every Tuesday, in the morning.  
 107 R: Okay.  
 108 RAHIM: After that. Yeah. At college I studied just English, yeah. And for one year after  
 109 that, I applied for engineering, and there was [students] from different countries. English  
 110 people and foreign, yeah.  
 111 R: Yeah. And how was that? How did you find the difference between the two?  
 112 RAHIM: Between, uh, the ESOL [language course] was like, ah, it was just for language.  
 113 Yeah, it's for - you're learning, uh, just English  
 114 R: Just English, okay.  
 115 RAHIM: But the course, like, when I applied for the engineering like you learned a lot of  
 116 other things. Yeah.  
 117 R: And do you think that having that language course first was helpful?  
 118 RAHIM: Yeah, of course. Yeah.  
 119 R: Do you think there was anything about your sort of friendships and your relationships  
 120 with adults, in the English learning course or the engineering course that helped you feel  
 121 like you belonged or fit in?  
 122 RAHIM: Umm like, it, helped a lot, you know, with my studying with the engineering. The  
 123 other subject [English language] it helped me a lot. Yeah.  
 124 R: Okay, do you mean that it helps you build friendships?  
 125 RAHIM: Build the friendships, yeah. With the other people, yeah.  
 126 R: Thank you. It's really it's really interesting, isn't it? Different experiences that you both  
 127 had. But some of the same things coming through that sort of that when the language  
 128 develops is when the sort of friendships began to develop. Thinking about school, was  
 129 there anything that helped you to feel more sort of understood or misunderstood?  
 130 ABDUL: Like, catch up?

- 131 R: Maybe, but also thinking about how you felt accepted when you came to school?
- 132 RAHIM: Uh, especially when I start my engineering course, they were, like, respectful and,
- 133 yeah, they will ask me about where I'm from and, you know, about the culture. They
- 134 knew everything, I think that they studied in the school about the culture and everything.
- 135 That's especially good, yeah. I think it's good, yeah, that they are teaching the younger
- 136 children it.
- 137 R: So, they were quite welcoming when you came in?
- 138 RAHIM: Yeah, it was good.
- 139 R: It was that similar experience for you?
- 140 ABDUL: Yeah. It was though, though, like, I was thinking they were on a surprise. I was
- 141 thinking they will, like, saying something like 'you are like this' and like this. But, but they
- 142 were very friendly and, and, like, welcoming there they for them it was doesn't matter
- 143 who is there. Yeah. So, it was very nice.
- 144 R: Ohh, nice. Okay, thank you. And was there anything that was really helpful or, or really
- 145 not helpful that adults in school did?
- 146 RAHIM: Uh, the teachers, yeah?
- 147 R: Yeah
- 148 RAHIM: They were helpful, and yeah, they were great,
- 149 ABDUL: Yeah, the teachers okay. It was very helpful. Especially that they know who needs
- 150 the help, especially the language at school was difficult for us, so they were more trying
- 151 to help us to understand, yeah, I noticed this thing there.
- 152 R: And can you tell me about anything else they did that was particularly helpful?
- 153 [pause]
- 154 ABDUL: Like so, anything different for us [than other students]?
- 155 R: Yeah, it could be.
- 156 ABDUL: Yeah, like he was teaching something and we didn't understand. Then he, he tried
- 157 to explain more to us, to, to understand this thing, yeah. Yeah, this kind of thing, yeah. It
- 158 was.
- 159 R: Just to check, do you mean that the teacher gave you some additional explanations?
- 160 ABDUL: Yeah.
- 161 R: Thank you. And how about for you?
- 162 RAHIM: Same, yeah. They make it clear. Yeah.
- 163 R: Thank you. Was there anything they did that wasn't helpful, anything that made it
- 164 more difficult?
- 165 ABDUL: Yes, some teacher is like, you know, they don't realize that we understood or not
- 166 the, the thing that it was [the learning]. But a lot of them they understand, they know
- 167 that we need more explanation for understanding. Yeah. But some is not that much, but
- 168 it's better if, if the teacher knows that what we need to understand things here.
- 169 R: Yeah. And I guess, how they know that is by getting to know you and by sort of building
- 170 that relationship.
- 171 ABDUL: Yeah.
- 172 R: Let's talk about your experiences of learning. So, what you were taught in your lessons.
- 173 Do you feel like there was anything that made you feel more or less like you belonged?
- 174 ABDUL: Yeah, umm, about what did you say
- 175 RAHIM: It might be.
- 176 R: I mean when it came to the actual learning. So, I know you said the teachers were
- 177 really helpful because they, sort of, adjusted it. But I wanted to know whether there was
- 178 anything, sort of, about the content of what you learnt?

- 179 RAHIM: At first. Like, you took a test, like speaking and yeah. Then after that, umm, they  
180 find out which level we are and they put the in different classes that level. So different  
181 sort of level, yeah.
- 182 R: OK. That's useful to know. Thank you. And what about for you?
- 183 ABDUL: Yeah, same for me. There, there had the test. Especially, I remember when I came  
184 it was January and there was starting after the holidays so they already had some classes,  
185 but they said 'we're gonna see in where, where you can fit you'. Yeah. So they took a test  
186 from me and then they, they put me with other class, yeah.
- 187 RAHIM: School is different. You know when you go to school, like you're gonna start like  
188 in year 10 or 11. Yeah, you have to study about the other people like studying.
- 189 R: Okay.
- 190 RAHIM: Yeah. So you go into all of the lessons. Yeah. It was hard. Yeah. I didn't know  
191 anything like. Yeah.
- 192 R: That sounds really tricky. And you mentioned you were only there a couple of weeks  
193 before the COVID-19 lockdown happened?
- 194 RAHIM: Yeah, not long to make friends or [make my] language better.
- 195 R: Okay. In COVID, where you having any education?
- 196 RAHIM: Yeah, we had like a online education.
- 197 R: OK. How was that?
- 198 RAHIM: Of course, yes, my school is pretty uh helpful and that also it was all on computer.
- 199 ABDUL: Yeah, computer. But for me was boring, but it was better than nothing. Just I was  
200 thinking that. But online is I, I don't think it's that much helpful. But, but if you think if  
201 you're doing nothing then that's [online learning] better, yeah.
- 202 R: Yeah. What about the online learning made it feel unhelpful?
- 203 ABDUL: Umm. You know online, well, there's many guys and you, you want to understand  
204 The thing is, is not easy online. Everyone is like making confusion. So, then this is a thing is  
205 difficult and it's not able to learn a lot of things from online thing.
- 206 R: Yeah.
- 207 ABDUL: Specially you have the whole class, yeah. There's just one teacher, so it's there's  
208 not easy. Yeah
- 209 R: Okay, so was it difficult because they weren't able to, sort of, give extra explanations or  
210 break it down to help you?
- 211 ABDUL: Yeah, yeah, that's, that's the thing. Yeah.
- 212 R: And was that similar to your experience online?
- 213 RAHIM: No, I liked. See, I've got my teacher was just strict like everyone was quiet, you  
214 know? Yeah, yeah, it was good. Yeah.
- 215 R: And did you find that this sort of support that you got online and in person has been  
216 different
- 217 RAHIM: Of course, person is different. Face to face is a lot different from online. Yeah.
- 218 R: Okay, but you still find the learning was okay and the teacher quite helpful?
- 219 RAHIM: Yeah. Yeah.
- 220 R: Was there any impact on building friendships [of online learning]?
- 221 ABDUL: Yeah.
- 222 RAHIM: Yeah, yeah, I think so, yeah. When you're listening to the teacher you don't talk  
223 with friends if there's no, like, break time outside.
- 224 R: Yeah. And I suppose, it might useful now to discuss things outside of school that have  
225 helped you feel included and feel like you belong. So was there anything outside of school  
226 that's impacted that?
- 227 RAHIM: \*\*\* [charity] yeah. Yeah, like. Yeah. I used to go like, until like one years ago here.

228 R: Okay, you said that was useful for the language. Was that also helpful for anything  
 229 else?  
 230 RAHIM: Like building friendship yeah. Talking to other people actually nice.  
 231 R: Could you tell me a little bit more about that?  
 232 RAHIM: I don't know, I think, it wasn't helpful you not to speak in English when you see  
 233 someone as from your country. Yeah, you need to speak in your own language, yeah, but  
 234 it was hard speaking English, so yeah, yes.  
 235 R: And what about your experiences outside of school?  
 236 ABDUL: Yeah, that issue, and I I study as with the for the extra time [free time] and we  
 237 had English as well and we had the cooking classes as well. Yeah, I I like cooking. So, I had  
 238 to cooking class as well there. And the other thing they have some, uh, they making the  
 239 activities, yeah, activities to take the guys to somewhere nice. So, we had the this as well,  
 240 yeah, and many new guys I met there and some of them are still I know them. Yeah.  
 241 R: They are still your friends now?  
 242 ABDUL: Still friends now, yeah. So it was, \*\*\* [charity] is very helpful as well, yeah.  
 243 R: Yeah, it sounds like it was helpful for their language and helpful for sort of meeting  
 244 people?  
 245 ABDUL: Meeting people yeah.  
 246 RAHIM: Also, when I came at first like the they showed me the route, like how to get the  
 247 bus and yeah, they we helpful with that as well.  
 248 R: Thank you for sharing that. We don't necessarily think about it when you've been here  
 249 a long time, but at the beginning it must be quite scary having lots of things and not  
 250 knowing how it works.  
 251 ABDUL: Yeah, it is really helpful when someone guide you about the city, especially we,  
 252 we didn't know anything at the start. Yeah. And it was very helpful. Yeah. And there's a  
 253 youth club as well, I've been there many time. Youth club. Yeah. I don't know if it's belong  
 254 to the \*\*\* [charity] or something, I don't know. But I used to go there and when the  
 255 college come then we start online. So we had the quiz competitions, yeah. So, it was very  
 256 nice. Games and things, yeah. So, yeah, I remember that it was very helpful. Yeah.  
 257 R: That sounds lovely, thank you. Was there anything else about your free time, or time at  
 258 home, that you would like to share?  
 259 ABDUL: At home?  
 260 R: Time when you are not at school, for example things you do in the evenings.  
 261 ABDUL: Yeah, it was like. I used to live with the boys and we play sometime together in  
 262 the garden and we was doing some stuff and watching TV. Uh, Yeah. If you had a friend,  
 263 friend, uh, good friend with you. So it's, it's helpful, yeah. Especially when you come to  
 264 home and you had the friend.  
 265 R: That's nice. So seeing friends outside of school is important to you?  
 266 ABDUL: Yeah, and the other thing for the language was uh, I used to live with my foster  
 267 care and she was very helpful for me. Like when I didn't know something I will, I was  
 268 asking her, and she was helping for that. Yeah. So yeah, if you have someone like this it is  
 269 really helpful.  
 270 R: Okay, helpful for learning English language, do you mean?  
 271 ABDUL: Yeah, the language, yeah.  
 272 R: Thank you. Okay, let's think about lunchtime or breaks between lessons at college.  
 273 Let's discuss what sort of things you do that, sort of, impact how included at school you  
 274 feel. Is there anything that comes to mind?  
 275 ABDUL: At the Cornish.  
 276 R: Yeah, so when you have lunchtime or a free lesson.  
 277 RAHIM: Lunchtime. I'm just going to eat, that's it, like.

- 278 R: Yeah, that's okay. Do you eat on your own or in the canteen?
- 279 RAHIM: You're not allowed to eat in the classroom, so yeah I'm going out to eat, yeah, to
- 280 the canteen, sometimes with friends is better. Yeah, it's fun, you know? Good to have
- 281 time with our friends, yeah.
- 282 R: Is there anything that the college could change that would help you feel more like you
- 283 belong, or just be helpful for you?
- 284 [pause]
- 285 R: Or thinking about when you first started at college. If there's anything they could have
- 286 done differently, or that might help more new people when they first start?
- 287 ABDUL: Yeah. I think we say there's a lot of things. And if we, if we are someone ask us.
- 288 Yeah. To do for the guy like, you know, in the back [in my home] country we when I was
- 289 studying, I remember, eh, they making like eh, matches for, for the like cricket matches
- 290 and football message which I, I didn't see here. Yeah. So I think if you have something like
- 291 this it would very helpful. Yeah, it's very, very good. Yeah.
- 292 R: Okay, so having, like, teams at the college?
- 293 ABDUL: Teams at the college, yeah, and doing some sports stuff here, yeah.
- 294 R: Yeah, and what would that be helpful for? Having things that you enjoy.
- 295 ABDUL: For happy, yeah. Which is that I didn't see. Yeah. I started in \*\*\* College and then
- 296 I it's been two year in \*\*\* college, and I didn't see any enough activity. So yeah, I really
- 297 like this kind of activity, yeah, would be nice if they had that.
- 298 R: Okay, could that impact your friendships as well?
- 299 ABDUL: Yeah, with everything is, I think this is very helpful. Make you fresh every time
- 300 you are studying and then if you have something exciting things then make you like fresh
- 301 and yeah.
- 302 R: Some excitement and motivation?
- 303 ABDUL: Yeah, yeah.
- 304 R: I understand that. And how about for you? Is there anything you think college could
- 305 change that could be helpful for new starters?
- 306 RAHIM: There was football, but not like other sport this, you know like no more option.
- 307 R: And anything other than sort of sports teams that you think could be helpful to make
- 308 people feel like they fit in?
- 309 ABDUL: I don't understand what was it?
- 310 R: Yeah, So, like the sports teams, is there anything else that would be helpful for new
- 311 people starting?
- 312 ABDUL: Um, I found that well like in the \*\*\* college, where was doing the and the
- 313 different class was like the coming together with each other. They're talking to each
- 314 other. So, I think this is also helpful- to meet the other classes as well and you, you can
- 315 talk with them and learn from them, and then they ask you something like, you know,
- 316 new things is good to learn.
- 317 R: Yeah
- 318 ABDUL: I think it's a good idea.
- 319 R: We're they other classes within the college?
- 320 ABDUL: Yeah, in the college. Yeah. Yeah. In the college. Even if you sometime if you had a
- 321 two or from the other college or something like this and meet the new people I think it's
- 322 very helpful. Like we, I'm playing cricket so you going to another cities and meeting with
- 323 the new people. And it's very good, yeah, so, you learn a lot of thing. Like we, we learn
- 324 about the tickets. So many kind of place and [unintelligible- maybe bowlers?]. But I think
- 325 this kind of things is also helpful.
- 326 R: Lovely, thank you. And is there anything at all that's been unhelpful in college?
- 327 ABDUL: Unhelpful?

- 328 R: Yeah, is there anything that's made it harder for you in school? You already mentioned  
329 about the language, but is there anything else?
- 330 ABDUL: No
- 331 RAHIM: Umm, no I don't think so.
- 332 R: I mean, that's good. It's nice to hear that you have had a good experience. I just wanted  
333 us to have the opportunity for us to discuss it if there is anything.
- 334 ABDUL: I didn't really notice there's anything.
- 335 R: Okay. Could we talk a little bit more about your friendships?
- 336 RAHIM: Uh, I make friends a mix across countries, yeah, from Europe, Eritrea, yeah.
- 337 R: Okay. It's nice to be able to make friends from different areas.
- 338 RAHIM: Uh, when I change my course, like to \*\*\* college like there's like a lot of English  
339 people as well, yeah. But when I used to study the just the English language, there was  
340 like from different countries there wasn't any English people.
- 341 R: It's nice to have that exposure to different people. We have covered a lot today and it  
342 is really helpful, thank you. Is there anything else, thinking about school and college, if  
343 there's anything else that you wanted to talk about that we haven't discussed yet?
- 344 RAHIM: Yeah we covered it.
- 345 ABDUL: I don't have no.
- 346 R: I mean, we have talked about so much useful information, which is really helpful. I just  
347 don't want to have missed anything that you thought sort of, if there's anything we  
348 haven't talked about.
- 349 ABDUL: No, that's okay, yeah.
- 350 RAHIM: Yeah, no.
- 351 R: Okay, brilliant, thank you so much for your time today, I will stop the recording now.

### F.3 Transcript 3: School staff

Focus group details:

Date, time, location: 06.03.23, 16:00, In person – at their school

Running time: Approximately 90 minutes (including 15-minute break)

Researcher: R

Participant pseudonyms: Gina, Monica

Focus group transcript:

- 1 R: So, to start with, is there anything that immediately comes to mind in terms of maybe
- 2 factors that impact sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion in school for the young
- 3 asylum seekers that you work with?
- 4 MONICA: I could talk for weeks about it. I don't know whether it is better to go through
- 5 your structured questions because otherwise I could just rabbit on.
- 6 R: OK. So let's go through them and then at the end, we will have some time where we
- 7 can discuss anything else that you think is relevant.
- 8 MONICA: Okay.
- 9 GINA: Yeah, that would be good.
- 10 R: So first, let's think around culture and identity, so it's it'd be quite useful if we can to
- 11 try and sort of illustrate with examples where they're relevant, just because that makes
- 12 sure I've definitely understood it the way it's meant. So, let's think about some examples
- 13 of how the asylum-seeking or refugee young people can sort of be themselves at school.
- 14 GINA: What comes to mind for me is celebrations. Like the one recently was Christmas
- 15 and, jumping to Ukraine as we have Lots of students from Ukraine, but they do something
- 16 after Christmas, don't they?
- 17 MONICA: Yeah. Ukrainian Christmas is later. 7th of January.
- 18 GINA: 7th of January and some, not all, participated in that at the school, so there was
- 19 singing and activities. So as a school we allowed them that time to celebrate it. But not all
- 20 of them joined in. I guess across lots of different cultures there are lots of different
- 21 celebrations that are potentially missed or bypassed because we don't know about them
- 22 R: Yeah, I understand that. It's really difficult, isn't it?
- 23 GINA: That is the thing that came to my mind.
- 24 MONICA: Ramadan starts next week. We have students who are Syrian who obviously
- 25 have refugee status and we work closely with the RE [religious education] team. Umm,
- 26 we have a breakfast club, EAL Breakfast Club, that takes place every Monday. There's just
- 27 a few students in it, but it doesn't matter. We just give people lots of different options
- 28 where they feel comfortable being themselves. And even just two people go. That's two
- 29 people who feel they're seen and heard and be able to express themselves. It's largely led
- 30 by a couple of 6th formers and bring their friends along and nominally it's to, you know,
- 31 learn English language. But really, it's about saying how are you checking in? Giving
- 32 people a sense of ownership and then they come up with brilliant projects and as it's
- 33 Ramadan, we've got hold of, advent calendars. They're Ramadan calendars. So, you open
- 34 the window and there's a date or a halal chocolate and it takes to the whole way through

35 Ramadan. So the pastoral head, \*\*\*, she went to the supermarket in \*\*\* and she found  
36 these Ramadan calendars and she said 'what do you think?' And I said 'Yeah, yeah, yeah,  
37 yeah'. Because we trying to think what to do. We also have like a scrapbook for Ramadan,  
38 so each day you fill in something and write something, you talk about your feelings or  
39 something especially for Ramadan. And it's not designed as a teaching aid for those who  
40 are not Muslim, it's actually just what you would have if you were at school in Malaysia or  
41 wherever, or Indonesia or Saudi Arabia or anywhere, this is what you would do. And so  
42 the two Syrian girls in this little breakfast club are going to do a whole school assembly  
43 with the head and \*\*\* and the 6th formers and present what Ramadan is. It's meant to  
44 be a year 7 breakfast club by invitation. There are two year Sevens, one Ukrainian boy  
45 and two Syrian boys there.

46 R: Okay, that sounds lovely

47 MONICA: Last year when it was Ramadan, \*\*\* was in year seven. And she she's very  
48 capable. But, you know, she's been five years in a camp. Yeah, and had to leave overnight  
49 because ISIS were coming into their town. So left in their pyjamas. Pretty much. Five  
50 years, in a camp, very frightening, her parents couldn't afford school for their daughter  
51 and then into a primary school and lockdown and then into straight into year seven, so a  
52 big ask. And you're the only person you are wearing head scarf. And you're Syrian. And  
53 you come from Ultra conservative family. But her form teacher talked to me and we had a  
54 think and we asked her what she wanted to do and she ended up doing a talk to the class,  
55 at the beginning of Ramadan, and then as a surprise he got all this Eid, decorations and  
56 decorated the form in two to time, got food in and they had a party. And that was when  
57 \*\*\* suddenly became this very chatty, bouncy Tigger.

58 R: Yeah, that sounds lovely.

59 MONICA: Having before been so serious and her body language was so closed. I think, you  
60 know, we both work together with students who've been through very challenging times.  
61 You [P7] work with students from all backgrounds, I just do one little slice of the pie, but  
62 some of those have overlapping very big things that they brought with them.

63 GINA: I think that's probably the biggest thing - asking.

64 MONICA: Yeah.

65 GINA: What and how much do they want to celebrate. Like, when they I worked with an  
66 EAL group the other day. So we had the, there was a minute silence to mark the start of  
67 the war in Ukraine last week.

68 MONICA: Yeah, it was on 24th of February, a couple of weeks ago.

69 GINA: A couple of weeks ago. And I had my EAL group coming up to work with me and we  
70 asked and they didn't want to take part in it because they were like, we don't need the  
71 reminder, we live it.

72 MONICA: Yeah.

73 R: Okay

74 GINA: And so I guess talking to them asking what they want to participate in and what  
75 they don't.

76 R: Yeah.

77 GINA: And like, I guess that's

78 MONICA: I think it's incredibly important to be respectful and not overlay our  
79 interpretation of what people want.

80 R: Yeah.

81 MONICA: Because the... We're already working with people who've lost so much control  
82 and power and autonomy and place in society and identity, and you come to a new  
83 culture and then people make assumptions - often very caring assumptions - about what  
84 people want or how they feel or who they want to be, or what they like doing. And as you



- 85 [P7] said, when we had the Ukrainian Christmas celebration it was very much the head  
86 just said, 'would you like to?' And it was very low key and there was no pressure. And we  
87 do get approached by outside organizations, but there are some organizations who want  
88 to give something, but they want to have a reward for giving. And I'm nominally the EAL  
89 coordinator, I'm nominally helping people with their English. But that's just on the skin of  
90 it, isn't it? It's like you're normally doing stuff, but there's so much underneath the skin  
91 that there's not identified, but is
- 92 MONICA: I didn't expect it
- 93 GINA: multi-faceted, umm, approach. So, it's like it's like looking to diamond and you can  
94 look at the diamond through just one facet and then turn it around the other facet. And  
95 there's another facet and they look upside down there's another. So, we get approached  
96 quite a lot by people who say, well, we're gonna give you this because you want this and  
97 isn't it great cause we've got some money because you've got these guys at your school  
98 and now we want this out of it. An awful lot of saying I hear what you're saying, thank  
99 you, but no – and possibly thinking something rather stronger in one's head.
- 100 R: Yeah.
- 101 MONICA: It can be quite testing at times. But one of the absolutely most important things  
102 is to say to people, 'I see you as a person and therefore I see you as a person with choice.'
- 103 R: Yeah.
- 104 MONICA: And sometimes you have to say you're a person with choice, but actually you're  
105 12 and you will turn up to lessons on time. And being Ukrainian doesn't let you off the  
106 hook. Because there are umpty, umpty, umpty students have umpty, umpty excuses, but  
107 they still have to turn up in time, and those boundaries will make you feel better. And but  
108 other stuff is like, I see you, and you really don't have to go and eat Ukrainian Christmas  
109 food and you really don't have to tell anyone about how it feels to be Muslim, or you  
110 don't have to talk about your time in a camp in Burundi. And you don't need anyone to  
111 speculate because you're coming here to learn not to have to sing for your supper.
- 112 R: Yeah.
- 113 MONICA: And I think that's something I feel incredibly strongly about.
- 114 R: I guess, yeah. The impact of that for young people being given the choice like knowing  
115 that the things are there for them, but being given the choice, what do you think the  
116 impact of that is for those young people?
- 117 GINA: For some of them it's., I think two ways. For some of them it's quite hard because  
118 they're like choosing not to take part in something, and I think that's an internal battle  
119 within themselves and yeah, they're choosing not to take part in the Christmas celebration  
120 because they don't want to celebrate. It's bringing up a whole plethora of emotions.  
121 Umm. The fact that they're given that choice definitely builds up and their ability to say  
122 'right, this is who I am, this is what I want to focus on, this is where I'm going, these are  
123 my goals' and that gives them that autonomy. And I guess on the flip side, you've also got  
124 somebody that all of a sudden thinks, 'right, this is part of me, although I'm not in the  
125 same country this will always be part of me, and actually I'm going to celebrate it'. So it  
126 kind of goes in both ways.
- 127 MONICA: And in some ways, students might want to think. And some students are really  
128 made a lot of friends and they don't - There's a student in year 8, and year 8 is quite a  
129 complicated group of students, it's quite a spiky group. And there are lots of interesting  
130 dynamics in that particular little group. A lot of power games and people echoing their  
131 parents stuff. But there is a child in there who when they're with the group of Ukrainian  
132 students they sit in the corner and doesn't want to engage and it's miserable. When  
133 they're in class life and soul of the party, loads of English friends, they just don't happen  
134 to get on with the students who are Ukrainian. But almost you can say 'what a success

story' because they're just being themselves, and they've chosen who they like being with not based on race, colour, gender, or cultural identity. It's just 'I'm this person and this is who I like hanging out with, I really don't like hanging out with the Ukrainian kids in my class'. And there was an incident last term -

GINA: The sandwich incident?

MONICA: Mhm, the sandwich incident. And there was just - It was a bullying incident and it had to be told to be dealt with as a bullying incident and really where people are from was irrelevant. It was just stuff. And again, that's this sort of idea of you come here and you leave behind, umm, the way in which you're viewed by the culture, you come as a refugee and you're just yourself, and that might also be you bring a lot of rubbish with you. Or you bring behavioural stuff. I think sometimes you move countries and it inflates stuff, for some people it's a chance to shed stuff, for some people it's a chance to explore stuff, and I think all we can do is a school is just be this constant, constant, reliable, repetitive, open minded

Forum.

R: Yeah.

MONICA: You come to learn that we don't use the word refugee in school, ever ever, ever, ever, ever, ever. Because it's it then becomes, umm, well, it can be somewhere to hide, it can be somewhere that's very constricting, suffocating, and it it's a label, isn't it? It's been extraordinary experience, hasn't it, The last few years>

GINA: Mhmm.

MONICA: But I mean you [GINA] understand, because you work with children from all sorts of backgrounds.

GINA: So, I'm the head of alternative education.

R: OK.

GINA: So any child that can't access mainstream education, we will kind of work through them. And I also do outreach for lots of different groups for lots of different reasons. And which is where the EAL Group come up.

MONICA: And you've been sort of lifebelt when it all started and you just said, 'look, would you like everyone to come up and do forest school and have support'.

GINA: Even before that, \*\*\* was one of the first [asylum seekers] I was aware of -

MONICA: He was in the jungle, wasn't he?

GINA: Yeah. And came in from Calais on the back of the van. And then I think ended up in \*\*\* [local authority] somehow, \*\*\* [local authority], actually. And whoever took him in chose \*\*\* [this school], he was the first student I worked with in, like, an alternative provision setup where I was just building social skills and building relationship with him to then helping him into classes and to help him with those sorts of things. So, it's started, he was here six years ago, and I think from there it's just been building and building and building.

MONICA: And he's so interesting, isn't it because he came over on his own and he's definitely older than he said he was, significantly, because he came as a child, but probably a late teenage child rather than a young teenage child, and that's not unknown for people coming from the African continent, for a multitude of reasons. Umm, and he's not come with a parent or a family member, or a godparent or an uncle. You know, or an Auntie.

R: So he came completely alone?

MONICA: Completely alone, and he's now the family that Fostered him have now adopted him. And so his English has gone [whistles and moves arm upwards], but he's had to make this enormous change.

GINA: He got English and Maths GCSE, didn't he?.

185 MONICA: I'm actually - he a got eight for Maths.

186 GINA: And then he stayed on to do A-Levels. I think he wants to go to the military, that's  
187 the latest thing.

188 R: That's a real success story, really, isn't it? For somebody that came over with very  
189 limited English, no relationships to then –

190 MONICA: The way he had totally engage. Because he, I mean, he does have a mum back  
191 at home officially, he told students he didn't have a mum, but now he does have a mum.  
192 It's so complicated. And I just feel who are we to judge? I just said to my husband, she's  
193 like, Blimey, I went well. You think about it and if everything was actually dire, you would  
194 just do anything in your power to give your child a chance. Even if it meant losing that  
195 child.

196 R: Yeah. And it's hard, isn't it? Because there's lots of different reasons why people  
197 withhold information. And we we can't know why or what's the right thing to do.

198 MONICA: And we have another student, a venerable student in year 10. Who's from, gosh  
199 I'm trying to think, East Africa. On her papers it says Rwandan but she's actually from  
200 Burundi and she ended up on her own in a camp in Rwanda at the age of 10. And she lost  
201 all contact with her family. And there are a number of theories as to why that happened,  
202 like child trafficking or child slavery, and she's epileptic and that's seen as a sign of  
203 witchcraft. And she's been with us since two days before Easter last year. And she's got  
204 guardians, and you know, she's clean and fed, but she's vulnerable.

205 R: Yeah

206 GINA: Yeah. And we have one intervention which has worked so well for her, so we have  
207 voluntary readers.

208 MONICA: So largely retirees, but actually her voluntary reader - this we started up in the  
209 autumn. Through the local churches and it sort of spread out and then people came  
210 screened and do lots of forms and DBS and da da da da.

211 R: What is voluntary readers?

212 MONICA: Some comes in, so our voluntary reader just finished the library today and  
213 comes in spends half an hour week reading one child in the library and \*\*\* reads with this  
214 lady who I then found out is a theatre director. I was talking and saying, 'gosh, her body  
215 language is changed, she's just so much more confident because she used to speak like  
216 this [quietly] and talk to her feet and very, very fast'. And she said 'Oh yes', and that's  
217 when she told me about the theatre 'I'm teaching her to inhabit her body and I'm  
218 teaching her to look at people, because what was polite in her culture - not to look - is  
219 wrong in our culture'. And you think, gosh, it's so exciting you can have a volunteer  
220 coming in and doing intervention, you would never think of, but she's opened so many  
221 doors for this one person, and she she's such an amazing sponge. She really absorbs so  
222 much and it also she has really connected with a Ukrainian student. And that Ukrainians  
223 student has very high anxiety and I think came over here with a lot of baggage, highly  
224 academic, but huge pressure because, is the case of quite a lot of students, when  
225 everything else is falling apart, you want your child to do well. You gave majorly sacrifice  
226 if your child, your child, has got to do well, and then a child has a huge burden of doing  
227 well. And they're probably also interpreter for the family. So, it's some people fall apart.

228 R: That sounds like a lot of pressure.

229 MONICA: But these two girls have become friends, haven't they? And they really look out  
230 for each other.

231 GINA: One another thing I thought, that in sports the rules are the same across the world.  
232 And, umm, it doesn't matter what's going on with that if I'm like, 'oh, you wanna play  
233 this?' They're like, 'yeah!'. So lots of our students play sports either after school or when  
234 they come up to me and we do at least half an hour. The first thing they do is say, 'Can we

235 play tennis?' or you talk about your favourite sport and they absolutely love it. Umm,  
 236 that's quite cool. Basketball, air hockey, netball, tennis.  
 237 MONICA: You even get them sawing wood, don't you?  
 238 GINA: Yeah.  
 239 MONICA: Do you remember that moment when everyone was sitting there sawing wood?  
 240 And it was one of those cold yucky days, and you were with \*\*\*, and you said 'you're  
 241 really good at this', and he said 'ohh, I always did this with my granddad'. His grandad is  
 242 stuck behind Russian lines. And you think - But there he was so happy he wasn't going  
 243 '[crying noises] ohh I used to do this with my grandad'. So, and that's sort of real zone.  
 244 GINA: I think that's it, isn't it, it's finding what it is for that person to if it's the sport that  
 245 they love that they don't need English language to play, they can understand the rules, or  
 246 if it's the sawing, or the activity that works for them, that's where it comes into building  
 247 those relationships and knowing what each person loves. We played capture the flag for  
 248 two hours last week.  
 249 R: Really?  
 250 GINA: Yeah.  
 251 MONICA: That's wonderful  
 252 GINA: We were supposed to be in the forest and forest school activities, but I said 'I don't  
 253 know if you have ever played this game, capture the flag?' and they were like 'Ohh yeah,  
 254 yeah, yeah'. So we said we would play one game and then we'll go and go and forest and  
 255 then that one game turned into 'OK we want to try and better ourselves on new tactic',  
 256 so I said okay, but after 2 games then it was a draw and they had a break in top 10s, and  
 257 they just played for hours and it was so silly. But they were like, yeah, we've all played this  
 258 played at home, different rules, but –  
 259 MONICA: And that's also it's so lovely because you need to be silly cause, you're living  
 260 with a host, or you just living in a host country, or you might have moved permanently to  
 261 the country if you are from a Syrian family where the whole family has come over. And  
 262 this is it. Umm, and you're sort of on your best behaviour the whole time and the chance  
 263 to be silly and no ones judging your saying. Well, 'that's an 8 for that one', or 'how's your  
 264 English coming?'. Just to be playful.  
 265 GINA: Mhmm.  
 266 R: Yeah.  
 267 MONICA: I was really thinking a lot about the different interventions, infact, Breakfast  
 268 Club we only have two or three students going, but it doesn't matter. And this week,  
 269 especially today, it really hit me hard because we've got a thing where we worked hard  
 270 with the local Cricket Club, to do two cricket taste a days and they're here on a Sunday  
 271 morning last Sunday this coming Sunday and we worked with two other secondary  
 272 schools and said five students from each school, so 15 altogether and cricket coach is  
 273 coming. And then there's a view to one or two students maybe having a bursary to go and  
 274 do cricket because obviously this could be a good thing. We saw Freddie Flintoff program  
 275 all about. Yeah. And so we're gonna give it to go, but I guess I've got used to the idea that  
 276 even if one person does it, that's brilliant. And even if nobody does, it's brilliant. It's just  
 277 the matter they have choice.  
 278 GINA: Yeah, we, we sign them up to lots of activities, don't we?  
 279 MONICA: And then sometimes they come and sometimes they don't come and it's  
 280 absolutely fine.  
 281 GINA: Over the holidays, summer holidays, Easter holidays, Christmas holidays, there will  
 282 be activities that we, well I get sent a lot and I forward them onto you [P6] and then you  
 283 [P6] share them. So the Forest school ran sessions, a farm run sessions –  
 284 MONICA: Christian youth enterprise run tester sessions

285 GINA: Sailing days  
 286 MONICA: And ohh gosh, where does \*\*\* work? Oh yeah, \*\*\* church. They're amazing.  
 287 R: So, these are places that you as a school have links with?  
 288 MONICA: Yeah. And then they offered us saying this is what we can offer for free for  
 289 young people across the school, like it doesn't have to be asylum seekers and refugees, it  
 290 could be anyone. This is open to –  
 291 MONICA: The theatre do something  
 292 GINA: Yeah, umm, and students struggling with anxiety. But I pass them on to Susie. Susie  
 293 passes around the families. And one of the things, \*\*\* church, it's a church down in \*\*\*  
 294 [town], and they've done this huge youth celebration like a basically like a youth festival.  
 295 R: Yeah.  
 296 GINA: And loads of the Ukrainian students went.  
 297 MONICA: And actually, one ended up working as interpreter before she joined us at sixth  
 298 form.  
 299 GINA: We have clergy visit at the \*\*\* - the alternative provision center that I work at. And  
 300 they do clergy visit and they come up once a week. And the guy that ran the youth service  
 301 came up on the same day that the Ukrainian students were there and he walked in he  
 302 was like 'hello!' And literally their faces lit up, it was so cute. Because all of a sudden – he  
 303 hasn't seen them since summer, they haven't seen him since summer, he remembered all  
 304 their names, he went and chatted to them.  
 305 MONICA: He is such a lovely person.  
 306 GINA: It was just all of a sudden, like and all the other kids that are there all the time were  
 307 like, 'how do you know him?' and all of a sudden it got everyone talking about how you  
 308 know this one person. And it all comes together  
 309 MONICA: So it's forging connections. It's forging a network. I always think – I was saying  
 310 to someone again with this cricket thing because the 15 people is 5 people per school, 3  
 311 secondary schools or five people from here, though one got sick, one had mocks on  
 312 Monday and had a panic – he was in year 11. Two came and one's mum took her son to  
 313 the wrong venue because of language and she's just in the middle of moving house and  
 314 she's so stressed she can't think straight. Yeah. And took him to the wrong venue.  
 315 R: Oh no.  
 316 MONICA: And so two out of the five came, but to me, 2 out of five is like whoopee,  
 317 amazing! And from the other two schools nobody came, so they had two people instead  
 318 of 15 people. And I got this rather grumpy e-mail saying 'well, we're not doing it the  
 319 second day of the taste of the next week if only two are coming'. But I wrote back and  
 320 said 'two people coming, just think that's two lives and two people having an opportunity  
 321 to just think do I like this?'. And they said that the two students they had were really good  
 322 and they really loved it, so I think 'how can you let them down by not doing the following  
 323 Sunday when you promised? How could you break your promise?' I really, I'm really upset  
 324 about it because I realize I've got to the point where I don't think any more about how  
 325 we've got 15 places so if we haven't got 15 filled it's not right, I just think we've giving you  
 326 an option, and if somebody likes it, great. And if they don't like it, it's also great. But we  
 327 did it and we have to live up to a promise. We can't walk out half ago. Well, you two  
 328 came, but you two don't count because we want 15 of you, and then we can go tick.  
 329 GINA: And yeah, It's not consistent and stable as it can be.  
 330 MONICA: The one who is ill is desperate to go, and the one whose mom took him to  
 331 wrong address and drove around town is desperate to go too. There will be a guaranteed  
 332 4 from here, probably 5. But we don't know what is happening yet as they emailed saying,  
 333 'What's the point in us doing this? We haven't got 15', but we are like 'each one of them  
 334 is a human'. So, I realize that I've been totally impacted by this school, cause here it is all

about the individual, everybody mattering, everyone being equal. And you can only operate like that if you totally buy into it on every single level and just fall into the embrace of that ethos.

R: Yeah.

MONICA: And so, I'm looking at where it's gonna take place because I'm so upset about it. It's not a case of, well, you two absolutely loved something, but we're cutting it off because the others didn't go and therefore your time wasn't valid. I think this is how this is sort of how we're dealing with it isn't in terms of everything. and it hasn't the fact that. You can't say well, no one else came, so even though you enjoyed it, we're gonna stop it. Because if 15 people had gone, they'd be like, oh, that was a great success. Let's do it again. It's a real success already. Refugee and asylum-seeking families find change very difficult. They find getting from A to B very difficult. They're living under immense strain, and also, just getting paying for a bus fair is very difficult. And It's also very overwhelming being offered something extra. And it's keeping everything in your mind and remembering it all as well. It's just there's a lot, a lot to process for them at the moment.

R: I can see how difficult that must be. We have touched on the sort of next topic as well. I might move on if that's okay?

MONICA: I told you I could rabbit on!

R: It's great, and what we are discussing is really useful for my research and gives me an idea about what some of the additional challenges these young people may face. I would like move on to thinking about your experiences of sort of being with young people, and to discuss how the relationships that they build in school can well in school and how these can impact their sense of belonging? So, this could involve relationships with adults and with other young people.

GINA: So, I think my relationship with the students isn't very strong. I see them once every two weeks. Umm, I know them, but they drip feed little bits of information about themselves, they don't open up.

R: Okay.

GINA: So I know little bits about students, but I wouldn't say I know them very well. I don't think they'll open up to me about something specific. But that's, I guess, that's not why I'm working with them. I'm working with them to give them a place where they can just not have to think about anything and actually learn skills. In terms of relationship building, we have quite a set structure at school where we have a tutor, head of house, then head of Key stage, and they were being encouraged to work on the relationships with all of those and then more specifically, refugee students work with P6 and \*\*\*, so in terms of staff they will see them with regards to anything that they need to discuss as to, I guess, anything really. Mainly pastoral, but I reckon they're probably closest with you [P6] when it comes to talking about their life before coming to the UK, their tutor in their head of house are focused on pastoral, o something's going on there behaviour or they're turning up to lessons late or really anxious, those two were kind of oversee that and they will have quite a strong relationship with both the longer they're here. And then the final one key stage 4, the head of their key stage will have an oversight, so will know all of them and will pick them up and be like 'oh, where you supposed to be now' and support them. But it's again it's supposed to be more like me where we know who they are but we don't necessarily know about them. And so that's the staffing thing that they have available to them, plus all their teachers and stuff like that. But they're the specific staff. And I think the good thing about the house system, is you, you do - students do have that sense of belonging through it.

MONICA: Absolutely. Absolutely.

- 384 GINA: I think more schools should have a house system because straight away you have a  
385 sense of belonging and it becomes competitive. Yeah. And we thought we've got  
386 grandparents who - and it's ridiculous - the grandparent will bring their child to school  
387 and that their grandchild to school and even ask, can they be put in the same house that I  
388 will say when I was there. And you're like, it doesn't work like that, I'm really sorry. But  
389 like, that's what they want, they want that continuation. And they have their head of  
390 house from your seven will go through to you 11, that same pastoral support, that same  
391 person
- 392 R: Okay, so consistency then in their relationships, is helpful.
- 393 GINA: Exactly, and I think consistency of who to go through for what and as well so they  
394 have that consistency which is I think really important for all kids; even more so for  
395 asylum seekers
- 396 MONICA: Yeah, because it is dependable. It's solid ground under their feet. And they  
397 know exactly what happens and you have tutor time every day. So you know that  
398 someone is checking in with someone and you are the focus.
- 399 R: Yeah
- 400 MONICA: 30 of you every single day. So like the teacher doing a surprise Eid party - That's  
401 because they're his tutor group and they matter to him and they are special to him. He  
402 wasn't a whole school thing, it was for \*\*\* and her tutor group. And that was amazing. I  
403 say, amazing, but I'm, I have only been here a few years and I'm not a teacher, and I'm  
404 constantly surprised and overwhelmed by the way it's like lots of little families within a  
405 big family. It's almost quite tribal, isn't it?
- 406 GINA: Cult like? No, I'm kidding.
- 407 MONICA: Yeah, but it's just there is an element of lots of families within a greater whole.  
408 And I think that is a huge safety thing. And then in addition, these interventions, again,  
409 are an opportunity, if you want to, to form a connection. So, one thing that's very popular  
410 with a group about between 10 and 15 students is games Café
- 411 R: Oh, nice
- 412 MONICA: And it is for EAL student, particularly those seeking asylum or with refugee  
413 status. And one or two others for various reasons have come along and three sixth  
414 formers now come and help, and just by chance one is Vietnamese heritage another one  
415 you know, they have something, and it's run by the parents of our head of languages. And  
416 when everything kicked off these just so we want to do something to help and we'd like  
417 to do a club. And I've had a lot of support from the \*\*\* [charity], which is not the \*\*\*  
418 [charity], but it sounds like it is. Anyway, look it up, it's massive thing funded by Einstein in  
419 the 1930s and they now setting up -they've been in the UK for a few years. And they've  
420 actually been very, they do genuinely constructive support rather than me- dare I say,  
421 sort of [indistinguishable word] support, which is what we sometimes get.
- 422 R: Do these individuals give support to you at school, or directly to the families?
- 423 MONICA: To schools, yeah. On how to help people. And so, it's umm, healing classrooms.  
424 It's really interesting you look up \*\*\* [charity] healing classrooms, they are absolutely  
425 brilliant. And they are coming to us at the end of this term to do some training and I hope  
426 you [P7] will be coming, not that I think you would need any training.
- 427 GINA: We have had EMTAS
- 428 MONICA: Ethnic Minority and Travel Advisory Services.
- 429 GINA: Yeah, came in and gave inset training to all of our staff.
- 430 MONICA: EAL strategies in the classroom, EAL strategies for exams and revision, and EAL  
431 and emotional well-being.
- 432 GINA: So that supports the staff but where the staff is more supported, I guess it can  
433 support young people.

434 MONICA: Well, it trickles down, doesn't it? Cause it's very hard in a mainstream class if  
435 you've got somebody sitting there and they don't speak a word or they they're  
436 volunteering me.

437 GINA: We have quite we have quite the kids, just when they're with me, maybe it's me,  
438 when they're with me, but they do just cry. They're so emotional and I think where  
439 they're all of a sudden with me and I'm doing something completely random and they're  
440 just like [deep breath out], and I think that is quite tough.

441 MONICA: Oh because it's all too much. They let go.

442 GINA: But I think if seven or classroom and teacher has a child crying, it's how do they  
443 deal with that whilst trying to deal with everybody else.

444 MONICA: Yeah, not making people feel worse.

445 GINA: But yeah, so I think EMTAS coming in and helping, that was really good.

446 MONICA: And they worked reasonably close with that closely with us and \*\*\*, which is  
447 the Polish lady who's the local, she covers \*\*\* [local authority] and she's very proactive  
448 because she's she gets it, it's her lived experience. But no in terms of games Cafe what is  
449 nice there is it's run by grandparents and it's so obviously grandparents, and you know  
450 Julie comes in and does baking, and it's always involving chocolate because you  
451 discovered anything cheese nobody cares. It's like, 'uhh'. And they've made pancakes and  
452 cookies and cupcakes and more pancakes and more cookies. And that's every Tuesday  
453 afternoon in school because one of our lovely food tech teachers said we could use their  
454 kitchen. And there is gardening, so they've been growing bulbs in the garden in the  
455 summer and clearing the raised beds and and, and also board games so Jenga, Gruffalo  
456 snap, stuff you might play when you're really little, but they're rules are simple and it  
457 brings you back to that sort of security. So, I've been told they have Gruffalos in the  
458 mountains in Ukraine, did you know that? No, they do. We played Gruffalo snap and \*\*\*  
459 said, 'but miss, they have Gruffalos'.

460 R: It sounds really nice to have so many options.

461 MONICA: And that, and that's again a relationship and you know the option is to  
462 everybody.

463 GINA: We love board games, they're such a good way.

464 MONICA: Jenga.

465 GINA: We play at Launchpad, so I've got, this is like with my alternative education stuff. I  
466 have 15 kids that bicker all the time, not big fans of each other, forced friendships cause  
467 they've there's only 15 them and then like today we sat down for Uno, and it doesn't  
468 matter who sat next to you're trying to stitch me up.

469 MONICA: Oh fantastic.

470 GINA: And all of a sudden there's an alliance of all the kids versus me and they're laughing  
471 and they're giggling and they forgot what happened at the weekend and they forgot that.  
472 And they're just trying to beat me.

473 R: [Laughs]

474 MONICA: [Laughs]. Uno is hugely popular with all the things we do and yeah, and Dobble  
475 is another one. Even if you don't have much English, you can still play. Yeah, they love  
476 ganging up on the grandparents. Yeah, and they absolutely adore it.

477 GINA: All of a sudden they have a common interest of beating the person in charge.

478 MONICA: And another things have got this, for example, have just set up based on the  
479 EMTAS EAL training on inset day, one of our teachers set up the lunchtime art club. When  
480 she came, it was set up last week and nobody came, and I just said, 'don't worry, it takes  
481 ages for people to come, and if you don't, one person coming fabulous'. And I, I really  
482 mean that. If just one person has found somewhere they feel comfortable. We have one  
483 Ukrainian student who comes every Thursday, and she came here into your 11 insane



- 484 pressures of expectation from family and host, and she's very bright. But we said she  
485 really ought to be back-classed because she's doing her GCSEs having missed 2/3 of the  
486 syllabus and in a foreign language. But there's such pressure of expectation because she's  
487 got to be the family success story. And she is very capable, but it's brutal. And it was  
488 against the school's best advice. But anyway, she's in the 11, she's doing well, but she said  
489 she said I have no time to make friends. And she's her mum's care because Mom is very  
490 capable but doesn't really speak English.
- 491 R: Okay, so do you mean carer as in a translator?
- 492 MONICA: Translator, communicator, you know, if you get the gas bill or you've got a letter  
493 from the Council about free school lunches or trying to get themselves some shoes, or  
494 booking doctor's appointment. It's endless, and they have so much paperwork. And, but  
495 we've managed to persuade her to go up and do some art on a Thursday lunchtime and  
496 it's so nice because she stopped to think, sitting just chatting. And it's these little victories.
- 497 R: Yeah, but they might feel little, but they're also really big at the same time, getting  
498 something that they can engage in.
- 499 MONICA: So, you talk about relationship building. Yeah. It's like some, I mean, there are a  
500 couple of students who say to me pretty much every day, when am I going to Launchpad?  
501 You know, what P7 does at Launchpad is, it's just so joyous, isn't it? And it's like you  
502 loosened up emotions and you loosened up the person. It's almost like, got floppy joints  
503 cause they just in there and all the sort of expectations and pressures. And I said they will  
504 cry and laugh and squabble and be beastly.
- 505 GINA: There was one boy that was, umm, so very low when he first came over and he was  
506 drawing bombs and swords and dead people and all that.
- 507 MONICA: Very angry, and quite scary.
- 508 GINA: Just so angry, yeah. And you said the first time you saw him smile was when he  
509 came up and was doing the clay and was just working with clay, and somebody made it  
510 something really out of clay.
- 511 MONICA: He thought it was hilarious.
- 512 GINA: He thought, and he was, and you [P6] said 'I've never seen him laugh'. And they  
513 were just laughing at the clay.
- 514 MONICA: I remember sitting around the farm with you, and I just, I have not seen this  
515 child smile. And all of a sudden, it starts in connection.
- 516 GINA: You're just like everyone finds that sort of thing funny now, Willy Willies out of clay  
517 are just the best thing ever.
- 518 MONICA: Keep that in [laughing].
- 519 GINA: [Laughing]
- 520 R: [Laughing]
- 521 MONICA: Yeah, but no, I think you're right. It is just that something that they can connect  
522 with, whether it is a, a clay Willy or whether it is just something else that-
- 523 GINA: It was just so silly and so innocent that same time as being very inappropriate.
- 524 MONICA: But you're [P7] so wonderful because you don't impose expectations, you give  
525 people a place to just let go, but also with the doing something that's universally familiar.  
526 Yeah, play, basketball, sawing wood, melting marshmallows.
- 527 R: Things that can take the language out of it and still be able to do
- 528 GINA: And it doesn't matter if you're from Burundi or you're from East Ukraine, or  
529 whether you're with your family - because there are lots of tensions, cause some people  
530 come with their dad, some people haven't. Some people speak Russian at home, some  
531 people speak Ukrainian at home. Some people's mum might have got a decent job,  
532 because she speaks English. Somebody's mum might be a scientist, but she's cleaning. So  
533 there could potentially be so many tensions. But we've also got this sort of idea that

534 language is not politicized at school. So actually, 2 new students are hoping to join the  
535 school going into 9 and 11, being back-classes, coming next week, possibly.

536 GINA: How many students does that take us up to now?

537 MONICA: Well, it changes every year because some leave got 30 Ukrainians, 4 Syrians – I  
538 say got it sounds awful, doesn't it?

539 R: That's okay, I know what you mean.

540 MONICA: On role is what I meant to say. And then two people have left this term, which is  
541 really tough, isn't it?

542 R: Do you mean left as in they moved to another school?

543 MONICA: One is going to Poland, one has gone back to Ukraine and we just found out  
544 today someone who joined us at the beginning, \*\*\*, is going back at Easter. So \*\*\* and I  
545 will be getting the hankies out. And the one going back to Ukraine is quite concerning  
546 because we know where they live. And then another four or five may be going back, but  
547 then more people come in and sometimes they are going back because Granny's had a  
548 heart attack and somebody needs to look after them, and some people are going back  
549 because they are just in denial about it or some because the child can't cope, or mum's  
550 missing her husband, or they can't find anywhere to live as one family – like one that has  
551 just gone back, his little brother was gonna start with us and the autumn, \*\*\*'s family.

552 GINA: \*\*\*'s gone back?

553 MONICA: \*\*\* has gone back. They gave three days notice. He was a very bouncy Tigger,  
554 very sporty, lovely person, lovely person.

555 GINA: Full of energy.

556 MONICA: And I they wanted to stay here in the circumstances they are going back to are  
557 not ideal, he is from Medessa. But it's so hard here to live, cause the cost living so high,  
558 rental properties are so scarce, and it's the highest - it's the most expensive place to live  
559 in England because of the low salaries and the high accommodation.

560 R: Yeah, it's difficult, really difficult.

561 MONICA: So what do you do to keep slugging away even though you know your child is  
562 happy? But your child also wants to go home because it's like dreamland and they can't  
563 wrap their head around the fact that there's no - you get water once a week and there's  
564 no heat and no light.

565 R: And I'm quite sure there's certain things that parents protect their children from. So  
566 children maybe aren't aware of –

567 MONICA: And then some families were they don't protect them. You can almost pick it  
568 off, you can just go 'that family - they've said we will do the worrying, and you go into  
569 school and this is your this is your school family, get on with it, do your homework'.

570 R: Yeah.

571 MONICA: And then other families, the children come and tell us, 'Well, we might be  
572 moving to Poland. Well, we might be doing this. Well there's no point me learning cause  
573 I'm not staying here. Oh this is all bad. And we hate this'. And you know, some of the  
574 children are just giving you their parents stuff.

575 R: And do you see a difference, then, between those children in school and look how  
576 they fit in in school?

577 MONICA: Yeah massively.

578 GINA: It's their attitude and their engagement.

579 MONICA: Willingness to make friendships.

580 GINA: Willingness to attempt and practice English. The ones who have that little glimmer  
581 of going home, they hold on to it, umm, and then it sets us back. And it doesn't just  
582 happen with asylum seeking students. Any student I find that has an option to be  
583 somewhere else - as soon as they've got that. So, I had one student I'm working with. The

584 mum told them they were gonna be going to a different school and all of a sudden they  
585 were like, 'Well, I'm not listening to you, because you're not going to be my teacher in  
586 two weeks time'.

587 R: Yeah.

588 GINA: And then the child doesn't go into the other school. So, all of a sudden you are  
589 working with the disappointment and the embarrassment and then kind of trying to build  
590 back up that relationship, that they purposely destroyed because they thought it's easy to  
591 push me away and then to be pushed away.

592 MONICA: Absolutely.

593 GINA: And all of a sudden you've got a confused child who's between their heart and their  
594 head. Not knowing whether they are coming or going and not knowing what they really  
595 want. And then, so, I think the easiest thing to do is push everyone away and give up.

596 Which is really tough because –

597 MONICA: And absolutely applies to the students with this status that we're talking about  
598 today. But, you know that's absolutely how it is and it's, it's sometimes really hard work  
599 isn't it because you're trying to engage someone who's discuss saying, 'Well, my parents  
600 say we're going back next month, so this is a waste of time, you can just talk to my  
601 phone'.

602 R: It must be really difficult. For the adults supporting them too I am sure, but it must be  
603 really difficult for these young people just not knowing.

604 MONICA: Yeah, I mean what an exhausting way to live. So, you come home and there's  
605 the dinner table conversation of – I mean its all just very raw, isn't it? It's unfiltered, you  
606 just get your parents stuff.

607 GINA: Some of them do. Some get absolutely everything. Then others yet so little that  
608 they come in again on the other side. They don't get told anything because their parents  
609 aren't talking to them because they've gone to do something and they just want to ignore  
610 it and crack on. They come in and they don't know what's going on. They don't know how  
611 their families doing. They don't - and that is again another set of worries. And so there is,  
612 like, very few students in the middle ground by their like they know enough, but they  
613 don't know too much.

614 MONICA: Yeah, I was thinking about our colleague, \*\*\*, who wasn't able to make it  
615 today. So, she's a secondary school teacher from the east of Ukraine. So, the area is under  
616 the areas under Russian occupation, so it's pretty hideous. It's been a civil war since 2014.  
617 And her nephew's at this school. And you can just see that they've got this the balance  
618 right in this little collective of families that have all come over together and it's like, 'no,  
619 you could only your studies. We'll tell you stuff, we'll do our best, but this is what we  
620 need you to do and you could be here for three years. So, you, you need to work hard,  
621 and you might stay here for university' and, I heard her say the other day, 'Look. We were  
622 saving up to send you to someone school in England, but look you're here anyway, so  
623 that's one thing Putin's done for you. So isn't this fun? So yay for you, because this will  
624 help your career, and you're gonna have this superpower speaking English. And we want  
625 this to be good for you, be, you know, have this as an adventure'. And I think it does  
626 work.

627 R: So is that the view or the way that the parents sort of betray their views to the young  
628 people can impact their engagement. And I get it must be really hard to want to feel like  
629 you fit in somewhere when you don't think you're gonna stay there when you fit in and  
630 you're school in Ukraine or wherever you have moved from.

631 MONICA: Or you fantasise about where you were before, it suddenly becomes the perfect  
632 place. So, one student is going back, possibly. But you know, there's all this sort of game  
633 playing because I know she's talked to her granny about it because her host has told me

and the hosted loves her dearly, but today you need to know. But Sophie will say, 'Oh, no, no, no, no, I'm staying here long term', but it's like a secret and it's all spiralling around. And so, some of you know, and it's also this fantasy world. She thinks 'If I go back to Ukraine, my mom will love me' because her Mum has stayed in Ukraine to be with her boyfriend because it was a choice between boyfriend and daughter.

R: Did she come over with a family member?

MONICA: She came with her granny who doesn't want to be here because Granddad's not well. And Granny said to the host, 'Can you keep her, and we'll go back'. And the host said, 'I don't think that's right'. So she's built this fantasy world where she's going to go back to Ukraine and mum will love her and be there for her and she'll have a friend. Although, she has actually made friends, she is really good friends with \*\*\*. I think the reason I'm bringing that story and is not so much because it is very personal story, but more just as an example of how children cope. I'm sure you [P7] must see this whole time you build this fantasy world of what if-

GINA: They always think that the grass is--well, everyone does always. Like if I if quit and worked at another school, I could get paid more. I could get XYZ. But actually you get there and you're like, OK, I did really like it before, so, I'm gonna go back. So the you, you, you, you, the thing that humans can't do is you can't see into the future and you can't change the past and I think students that we have, lots of students and parents, are split between what's happened and wanting to build for the future that they can't they can't focus on the now and that is really difficult for them.

R: Yeah, I can see that being really tricky.

MONICA: And it's almost easier for the families, for example, from Syria, because the horrendous thing is there's no going back.

R: Yeah.

MONICA: To get refugee status as a Syrian person, they've come from the camps on the border with Syria, they haven't come on the boats. Their situation must be so terrible that they've got refugee status because it's so hard to get it. But it's the way they've had that. It's a path, it's a route forwards, and they have to engage with where they are to survive. But in a way, it's sort of the first rung on the ladder. I mean, it's the great immigrant story, isn't it? Mum and Dad come here with nothing, work like mad – like a huge Hollywood film. That's what I'm saying, that you know, one of these films set in New York, they end up in the backstreets and it's all terrible, but they push forward and then the next generation does this and, you know, you see the children say, well, I'm going to be a dentist, I'm going to be a teacher, I'm going to be a doctor. And like, whoa, that's a lot of pressure. Yeah. But the same point that is that they've gone through that grief cycle and sort of accepted that this is where they have to be, and even though there have been bumps and they be terrible sadness when somebody back home is lost, their building this as a home for their children, whereas if you come and you're a victim of war and your husband's back at home and your granddad and the teachers and the dog.

GINA: Yeah, lots of them talk about their animals.

MONICA: Yeah, still so much.

GINA: Constantly, 'Ohh I had chickens, I really miss them'.

MONICA: And then think of \*\*\* who brought her dog with her.

GINA: Yeah. And then my cat.

MONICA: But they are just being split down the middle because if you're parents haven't bought into being here and are on the phone saying, is Dad alive? Do you think can go back? Oh, look, they might have water next week.

R: It sounds like they have a lot to deal with as well as education

683 MONICA: And you can have a very nice house. Many Ukrainians had very nice houses,  
 684 there's a lot of money sloshing around in Ukraine. Their highly cultured, the have an  
 685 amazing education system. It's not like people are living in without running water.  
 686 GINA: What's the schools relationship with the, umm, the host families.  
 687 MONICA: Very mixed.  
 688 GINA: So does it depend on the host?  
 689 MONICA: Depends on the host and depends on the family and not everyone's with a host  
 690 family because the six months are up.  
 691 R: Yeah, there's some stayed on but some have ended the—  
 692 MONICA: So some are still with the same host and they've just been absorbed into the  
 693 family. Quite often people who are retired, or there are a lot of very wealthy people  
 694 round here. There's also a lot of very hard up people around here. So, you're from an old  
 695 \*\*\* [town] family, you're probably living \*\*\* [suburb] or [suburb] on commuting in  
 696 because you can't afford to live for any longer. But, a lot of stuff people have second  
 697 homes, there is the highest proportion of wealthy retirees in the country.  
 698 R: OK  
 699 MONICA: I used to work in the local paper, so I love all this data. It's all in the local plan.  
 700 And so second homes, annexes, holiday homes, wealthy retirees.  
 701 R: So people with potentially more space to have people?  
 702 MONICA: But maybe there are some hosts, but there are some hosts who, umm, If they  
 703 have a family living with them behaviors, if they have parental responsibility, and they  
 704 legally don't. For some hosts it's— It's really hard, I always say I love my dad, but if he lived  
 705 with me for more than three days I'll be under the table with a gin bottle. Don't quote  
 706 me. But I really would, so six months is a long time when you have different eating habits,  
 707 different sleeping patterns, different cultural norms, you've got miserable, grumpy  
 708 teenagers in your spare room who you know does not the front door or something, or  
 709 forgets to feed the goldfish, or yeah, or you might feel you sort of slightly a sense of  
 710 ownership with our family.  
 711 GINA: I think that the relationship with the host family again will impact everything else.  
 712 Because if it's going well and you think, OK, this is my home, I'm gonna be staying here.  
 713 That's something that's stable.  
 714  
 715 MONICA: But if you're tiptoeing around, you come in. And so, that's another initiative  
 716 that's going on at \*\*\* development trust in \*\*\* [town]. So, there was a remember stuff  
 717 used to be here who has various hats. He is a youth group leader, and he and the team at  
 718 \*\*\* Community development trust have set up an initiative where a youth club for  
 719 students with this particular status and it started off with a pilot with \*\*\* [this school]  
 720 cause \*\*\* and I went, 'Please help us'. Like you've got some funding... Hello!. And it's  
 721 been extended now to secondary school age children called leading those that college  
 722 notes were home schooled to go and have a club or they can go straight after school  
 723 every Wednesday, hang out as most beautiful place, I don't know if you have ever been  
 724 there, it's stunning, it's an architect converted chapel.  
 725 GINA: And it has a little cafe as well.  
 726 MONICA: It's amazing. They got music and spaces and sofas and nooks and crannies. But  
 727 it's incredibly cool and beautiful and it's absolutely stunning. And they give them supper  
 728 and the children now have a say, cause they said 'we'll give you pasta' and Ukrainians  
 729 don't like pasta, they think it is yucky, so they had made borscht and all this sort of stuff.  
 730 R: So they made things that they like things they would be eating back in Ukraine?  
 731 MONICA: Absolutely. And there is a Ukrainian person working with cafe who's a student  
 732 at the university, and so and, umm, it just gives them a space to hang up because we had

worked with \*\*\* who said to us one of the hardest things is that you are on your best behaviour at school and on your best behaviour with your host, so where do you hoof about and be a teenager?

R: Yeah.

P^: Where'd you sort of, you know, sit there strumming a guitar and sing out of tune? Where do you just relax because you can't sort of hoof about in the host house, can you? You can't just lie on a sofa? Especially not at the beginning when you don't know them very well. After a while when they getting irritated with you.

R: Yeah, yeah.

MONICA: Or you play music loudly or you wanna have a friend over you want to see someone outside of school and actually it's a nice place to go and hang out, and friendships are being made with other students. And, and they thought they'd get masses. And the said 'Well, we only got 5' and I said 'No five is amazing, five is a lot!'. Those are five people who feeling better now but, umm, yeah, it's very difficult sometimes with hosts, but I think host it absolutely brilliant. But one or two the wheels have come off - we've had a student who is with the host and it all went pear shaped, because I just think they all had very different expectations of what was normal and then maybe the guest would do something the way that they thought was a thank you and the host would be like 'Oh my God and I've got to eat this'.

R: Yeah. Maybe that comes from a difference in culture.

MONICA: And everyone came in with the best intentions, and when people are under the height pressure, people that are sort of traumatized and stressed and might not always be showing off their best selves or able to adapt to other people in their house. And so, this child was with the host and then they went into temporary accommodation in \*\*\* street, and then they were given a room in a hotel for three months with no access to Internet and kept getting homework detentions, well, then then we found out Mum couldn't afford to pay for Internet access, so school dealt with that.

R: That sounds like so much uncertainty.

MONICA: And now they're finally up in \*\*\*[suburb], it's half an hour on the bus, but they're a much happier child. Eventually. In a hostel they've created for Ukrainian families like lots of little flat-lets in a former hotel in \*\*\*[suburb].

R: So it sounds like they have possibly found somewhere that feels a bit more permanent.

MONICA: So the host thing is tricky, isn't it? Which is another reason why Launchpad is so brilliant. Everyone just goes there, as you said, they feel free, it's not necessarily academic, it's a chance just to do activities. Say you're going to visit your favourite great auntie at the weekend, it would be absolutely lovely and they probably give you a nice cake, but you wouldn't be able to necessarily walk around your PJ's with the headphones and just –

GINA: I also like it that I don't know who they're talking about so they can complain about as much as they want about teachers down here.

MONICA: [Laughing] Yeah.

GINA: So I'm like 'How are your lessons?', and they are like, 'Oh, this teacher...' and I was like, 'alright, I don't know who that is, but it sounds rubbish'.

MONICA: And I don't always come because I'm too flat out all the time to come, but it's quite good. They just they go with you and \*\*\* goes, yeah. And then we also have students doing work experiences at \*\*\* university, which is great.

GINA: One is doing the undergrad for being an Ed Psych right now.

MONICA: She's fantastic. And then another one who's third year SEN and EAL studies.

And we've got one who clearly is just doing time and hates every living minute of it and

783 keeps on going out for a cigarette break out there and saying, 'Oh, I can't come and got a  
784 sniffle'. 'I've got a tummy ache' or 'I'm hungover'. Ohh dear, or nobody answered the  
785 door I think was one when I came at 8:00 o'clock and I was like, OK so. But generally that's  
786 a really good intention.

787 GINA: Do you want to move on to the next bit?

788 R: In just a second, yeah. Just the last bit of this I think is probably useful is about the  
789 friendships these young people make in school.

790 GINA: You'll probably be able to answer this better than I can.

791 MONICA: I think it's sort of. I know like with all kids in varies.

792 GINA: I know that every child, regardless of where they're coming from and who they are,  
793 if they join the school late, they get given a buddy in their tutor group. So every single  
794 student—

795 MONICA: And actually, Ukrainians get two buddies because it's quite intense for the  
796 buddies.

797 GINA: So, they, they have all had buddies with them and they're, they're all encouraged,  
798 like I said, to do sports and activities any after school club. So, we, we run so many clubs  
799 as a school next so many. And on Friday I was down and there was \*\*\* she was playing  
800 football and she's there with all her friends she gets really well with them. Because I guess  
801 friendships are made where you have common interests in something or good friendship  
802 is made when you have a common interest, something. So we do encourage people,  
803 anyone, to go to sports and clubs.

804 MONICA: And the sports department are absolutely brilliant. It's really about sports and  
805 clubs. Yeah.

806 GINA: We just try to encourage as many students.

807 MONICA: Art, music. If you want to when you come over you can have free music lessons  
808 and you can borrow instrument as long as you're here. And that's because- and again. So,  
809 we got someone's doing violin, someone is doing saxophone, another doing drums.  
810 Another few people doing guitar. It's not everybody, but you just happen to be that if  
811 that's who you are, then you want to unpack that and carry on being that person.

812 GINA: I think we tried to force friendship, but that's like, like you can't force friendship.  
813 But forcing people to get together, they have buddies and then they're encouraged to  
814 join stuff and to do things. And then from their tutor and the head of faculty we are  
815 basically given list of students - I know we shouldn't and everyone's different - but you'd  
816 get told like, how many people premium students are doing in activity in your  
817 department? How many EAL students are doing an activity in your student? OK, well,  
818 you've got a huge disparity in the number of English-speaking students and English as  
819 additional language taking part in your art class – what can you do to support that? And  
820 so, there is quite a large pressure on staff to create something not, not in like a I guess it's  
821 positive pressure and like, if you know this information you know that you don't have a  
822 representative from whatever groups is, then what can you do? So at some teachers and  
823 faculties might not do anything but lots of them do try to encourage all students.

824 R: And that brings it really nicely into the next point, which is about their learning  
825 experience. And so let's talk about how learning experiences can impact belonging in  
826 school for young asylum seeking and refugee students.

827 GINA: Now, I don't know if this is true, but one of my students got a letter saying they can  
828 sit some of the GCSE's in her first language. Is that true?

829 R: Oh that is lovely

830 MONICA: Well, there's a letter saying what they called heritage languages, as I  
831 discovered. We're running the initiative, so, so people have studied Latin, French, German  
832 and Spanish. Any everyone has the option to do that at GCSE, but we're also an exam

centre or working with our brilliant examination officer to, umm, be a base where you can take exams in your in your home language. If it's a heritage language, so Arabic, Russian, unfortunately not yet Ukrainian, but Ukrainian and Russian are very close.

R: Oh brilliant, Yeah.

MONICA: And the majority of our students speak Russian at home because their from industrial cities or the east, and also the president speaks to national his first language, so it's not a biggie. Um, Polish. What else have we got? Hungarian. Greek. You know you name it. So, they've got the opportunity. The letter went out to every single child and every single family in the school; you know, parents and carers, saying if your child speaks another language at home and they would like to do a GCSE in their language and that option exists in that language, we will endeavour to do. We can't teach really a language. We don't have resources, but we will work with EMTAS to find specialist speakers. We've got people in the school who speak Russian, people who speak Polish.

GINA: So, my student, she's French and so she's going to be doing her exams in French

R: So does that mean they gonna do all of their GCSEs in French, or an additional French GCSE?

MONICA: So with the heritage GCSEs it is the language, so Polish GCSE, or Russian GCSE, just like you might so Spanish. I didn't actually know about it where you could do all your subjects in some languages.

R: Lovely, okay

GINA: So, I think the questions will be in French, but she will have to answer in English, but would help her understand it.

MONICA: But the interesting thing, one of the huge challenges were having is that at most schools EAL comes under support, because the government sees the EAL is a special educational need, and we argue at this school that it's a gift [banging table]. And that's our view on everything to do with EAL, it is a gift, and we want to share it[banging table], and that we're an International School and I work very closely with \*\* who is head of our international team. And she said everything we do is international at this school. It's universal, so, at the moment, our examinations, obviously, if you are, for example, Syrian student Arabic is your first language your year 11, and you're doing your GCSEs. At most schools you would be SEN, you don't get extra time and you have no extra support. And that's hard.

R: It sounds very hard.

MONICA: And one of our university students who is in year 3 was specializing in EAL was absolutely horrified and said, 'how can this be right?'. So we've got three EAL students with refugee status doing their GCSE's this summer and they won't have extra time. But we're giving them the option not to do things like English lit or RE that are very text heavy and are all about context and analysis. They're very hard to do in a second language.

R: So there is a bit more flexibility about what they do.

MONICA: But there is one student who will do it and she'll absolutely nail it. But she's, she gets that choice. But also, the other thing we're doing I-GCSE English as a second language because that's acknowledging. It's, it's a globally recognised GCSE but it's written for people who don't speak English at home and I just as a way that they can get a high grade.

GINA: Yeah, they got something that key stage four students are expected to just follow the syllabus, sorry key stage 3 so years 7, 8, and 9. They're expected to just follow the syllabus for which would then lead into GCSEs. And the other than the only adaptations in curriculum would be the I-GCSEs.

MONICA: Yeah, and dropping English lit, for example, or RE. The other thing we're doing now is setting up a hybrid sixth form. So, we have a 12 students who are doing a year 14.



- 883 R: Ohh, lovely. And that could be because they're staying on an extra year?
- 884 MONICA: Extra year, language challenges, or whatever.
- 885 GINA: Basically a barrier to learning.
- 886 R: Yeah.
- 887 MONICA: Yeah, people who have sort of, divergence.
- 888 GINA: Yeah, so some of them stay on it and do GCSEs in the first year and then A levels
- 889 second and third year. But there's only there's only extreme cases that they've happened.
- 890 So, like there's some students with extreme mental health and struggles that haven't
- 891 been able to- at the time of their GCSE's weren't able to access. And then others who
- 892 were only here for a year before the GCSE's and then didn't, didn't do as well as they
- 893 wanted or came in year 11 halfway through them and like, no I'm not going to sit them,
- 894 so they get another opportunity.
- 895 MONICA: And then with some of our new EAL students, there's going to be an option to
- 896 maybe knock up a few more GCSEs in what would have been lower sixth. Or maybe do an
- 897 A level and some GCSEs or two A levels because you have to leave with maths and English
- 898 and we feel we- and there funding to keep doing that.
- 899 GINA: You keep, you have to keep studying English and maths until you're 18 if you don't
- 900 achieve a level 2, which is grade C and above. So if they don't get a four, old money C,
- 901 they have to keep studying English and maths until they're 18 and your parents can get
- 902 fined if they don't. And so if, for example, a student leaves school 16, and what's going to
- 903 work, they still have responsibility to then join a college or a sixth form to sit and do the
- 904 English and Maths and to learn it.
- 905 R: So do you find that when young people initially have very little English it impacts their
- 906 engagement in their learning and their lessons?
- 907 GINA: Yeah, and they get to a point where their English isn't very good, but they start
- 908 picking up and they become comfortable with it. All of a sudden, they know enough to get
- 909 by, but not enough to fit in. So, they just stop talking. Yeah, that happened with \*\*\*,
- 910 didn't it?
- 911 R: So they learned enough to say when they need to have something, but not to build
- 912 relationships?
- 913 MONICA: Yeah, we had \*\*\* who came here and had been voluntary mute his primary
- 914 school and he wouldn't- there were other Russian and Ukrainian speaking students in his
- 915 class in year six, but he wouldn't talk to anybody. And he had clearly has a learning
- 916 difficulty, but he comes from a culture where if you had a learning difficulty go
- 917 mainstream education and there was no help unless you paid for it. So there's a horror of
- 918 admitting there's a challenge.
- 919 R: Okay.
- 920 MONICA: But parents are slightly left in there to sink or swim and talking to \*\*\*, she said
- 921 this is probably the first time in his life that he's had all these interventions, all these
- 922 people just determined to help him. He's got the head of English giving him tutoring, she's
- 923 with him in loads of his lessons and she speaks to him in Russian and English.
- 924 R: So does she support him by translating too?
- 925 MONICA: It's not- She doesn't even translate, she just gets him going and she's teaching
- 926 him. And then he also has various interventions. And I think he can run but he can't hide
- 927 almost. And he's like 'woah', he's never had to do that before, so it's very tiring. But it's
- 928 also we're just really want to open the door for him to see what he could do it. But I think
- 929 it's very common, as P7 said, it's extremely common to get to a certain stage or people
- 930 come to us and they sort of pre intermediately done a few years at school in Ukraine or
- 931 wherever and they think they can get by and suddenly get to here and it is like this tidal
- 932 wave of words and it's easier just to close off than admit you can't do it.

GINA: And I know teachers say that they find they don't be patronizing. So, it's working out what the level of, umm, what words do you need to translate to them so they have the translation. Do you just give them a dictionary and ask them to translate the words? How much support how, how much English do they know? Am I assuming they know nothing? Or- and it's really difficult. I was talking to a couple of colleagues who, who did feel that they were patronizing some of the students because they were putting- in terms of ability, you've got a high level student, high ability, clearly very able, but their English language very low. So, they get printing off these very basic, umm, support mats for them that they will be giving the lower ability students. So, they're looking at and just filling in one word, Umm. There must be something in that as well around being a high ability student and being given simple work.

R: So maybe if somebody hashad a lot of success in school then coming into a school in the UK where they know the work but not the language to access the work-

MONICA: Well together with EMTAS, we've been, sort of, saying to staff that actually when you have high ability students it is critical they go into the high ability class because although they don't have the language, the motivation stays.

R: Okay.

MONICA: So I'm not a teacher, I don't have PCCE, but because I'm a journalist I'm used to getting information and passing it on, not understanding thing myself, but just being a channel for it because I'm not an expert on this. But I can tell you what everyone says. And going around stuff and saying no, believe me, trust yourself and put this high ability child in the high ability class, cause otherwise they'll be depressed.

R: Mmm.

GINA: And I think that's what was happening at the beginning, especially. You're gonna go into the bottom set because there's lots of additional support and there's lots of this-

MONICA: And that's really damaging then.

GINA: And then actually they already knew all the information, like they could do the- they could understand every part of the plant they could label it just not in English. But actually, their memory of what it is and what- so if they're in the lesson and you've given the opportunity to translate the words, they can understand it. But it's, it's so difficult.

MONICA: It is difficult. And, and, one, one thing we found very helpful again the \*\*\* [charity] and EMTAS tasks and I've done is to put all the stuff online stuff. Pre teaching. So allow people to - if you are doing something in a subject as a new topic, send out and put everything on the Google Classroom and allow people to look at it. They can use their phone, they can just look at Google Translate and have some naughty words and they're whoopee, you know because it's very iffy. But just to get a taste and also a pre teach key critical vocab so \*\*\* in year eight loves science, and she's really bright. She came here with really limited English but thirst for knowledge and she's so able. And in science, we work very hard with staff, to encourage them to give them a chance to read things when advance so they can learn vocabulary.

GINA: The homework is usually for the next lesson, too.

MONICA: It is just wonderful. So in advance of the lesson she would already have that superpower of these words. Or \*\*\* in geography, I remember she couldn't say the days of the week, so she was dropped into the middle of her geography lesson and they were doing climate. So, the geography team got me the stuff and we, she and I and her supporters at \*\*\* worked on teaching her core vocabulary. And I was sitting in there with her in the lesson and they showed pictures of things because we decide this is the way to make it very even and they ask people what something was and suddenly this hand went up, 'Miss, miss, miss! Anemometer'. She couldn't say Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, but knew anemometer.

- 983 R: So she had learnt some subject specific words? That is lovely.
- 984 MONICA: It was amazing. It was just wonderful and encouraging. Again, I think, I think it's
- 985 like trying to work in English language is like the torrent with crocodiles and currents and
- 986 rocks and floods and waterfalls, and you're just getting the core keywords key vocabulary.
- 987 It's like finding stepping stones across the torrent.
- 988 GINA: It was so funny, last week when I was working with my EAL group, one of the girls
- 989 said 'English is silly'. And I told her I don't know what do you mean, and she was like in
- 990 French you have le or la like male or female, but in England you have anything. I just
- 991 walked off and I was like, 'yeah, you're right, We do'.
- 992 MONICA: Like how lovely! English is silly, though, isn't it silly? Very silly language.
- 993 GINA: It's just strange word to use as well, silly. English is silly, yeah, you're not wrong.
- 994 MONICA: How lovely to have a teacher that you can say that to. But I mean, isn't that
- 995 doesn't just say everything about what P7 does? And we love it. They can just be silly.
- 996 GINA: And then we were just being silly and saying 'le table' and she was like 'La hair'.
- 997 And then we would just being silly and putting 'le' and 'la' in front of everything.
- 998 R: It sounds like that was a nice way to build a relationship with them by accepting what
- 999 they say and listening to them.
- 1000
- 1001 GINA: I mean, I don't get it. I'm dyslexic, so for me I was like, yeah, English is silly. I get
- 1002 that.
- 1003 R: And is there anything we think that schools in general could change that might help
- 1004 increase belonging for asylum seeking young people?
- 1005 GINA: I don't think all schools run many clubs.
- 1006 MONICA: No, I agree.
- 1007 GINA: And I know that in the PE world that you'll go and even in a friendship – like some
- 1008 of my friends have kids, I talk about clubs they've got running here and they're like, 'My
- 1009 child has the option of netball, football and rugby, and that's it'.
- 1010 R: So not many options at all then.
- 1011 GINA: And that's it, because the staff don't want to run it and it comes down to the fact
- 1012 that you don't get paid to run clubs, that's just something that staff are willing and
- 1013 offering to do to try and increase engagement in their subject, but also build relationships
- 1014 with those who need it.
- 1015 R: Yeah.
- 1016 GINA: So, I know lots of schools that don't, umm, because like I said, it's it comes down to
- 1017 money and like commitment, because since the pandemic less and less teachers and staff
- 1018 in schools are willing to give up that time, cause where they've worked from home, and
- 1019 they've enjoyed it, and they've really used to having their time and have realised that
- 1020 actually I don't have to work till 5:00, o'clock at night for free, I can go home at my
- 1021 directed hours. And \*\*\* the head teacher here is a real advocate for it and says if you
- 1022 don't have a reason to be here, go home - well, finish your work at home because, like, I
- 1023 think he doesn't want people to stay here beyond the time that they need to because
- 1024 everyone got families. But I think there has been a decline in some schools in the amount
- 1025 of activities and after school clubs that they do offer.
- 1026 MONICA: Oh, they are so important. Yeah, so brilliant and different age groups, people of
- 1027 different of experiences, all shapes and sizes.
- 1028 GINA: Also like outside of schools as well the connect the- so part of my job is I work with
- 1029 lots of external agencies like loads from farms to fishing companies to work experiences
- 1030 places, to cafes, or therapy sessions, like I work with lots of them, and within my role I
- 1031 also talked to lots of schools and I'm like, 'ohh, have you, have you heard of this?' And
- 1032 their like 'ohh, no'. And then in the outreach, I think more schools need to be confident in

going out and asking for help. Because I think a lot try to do it in hand or in school, and can't cope, and then the only person that's impacted the young person.

R: But if you build those connections and you have like a group approach So you've all the support of everyone around you?

GINA: It's almost like, if I was able to go to \*\*\* Council and say I have a young person that has gone through this, what agencies are out there that can support me starting at £0 and I have a budget of £100 per child. And them say okay, this is the interventions you can get, this is the cost. That would just make life so much easier for schools and for the young people and families.

R: Yeah, that sounds great. It feels like that is a council/government change that would be helpful, rather than a school change.

GINA: Yeah, it should be the council in charge of those sort of things and that, but they're just not, and so schools are responsible for looking themselves. And unless you have a member of staff willing to look, it gets missed.

MONICA: And I think also trickles down from the head. I mean the head from day one and has the attitude that everyone is welcome they are all on a level playing field, everyone matters, and that's a that's permeated the whole school, hasn't it?

GINA: Ohhh yeah.

MONICA: It absolutely has, it's extraordinary.

GINA: And I think even for example, so we had the Ukrainian flag flying and then when the queen died, it came down. But he bought all the Ukrainian students in to explain why he had taken the flag down and why he was changing it rather than just doing it.

MONICA: It's so respectful, isn't it?

R: Yeah, that is very thoughtful.

GINA: And actually. He is really respectful. And I again, I can't speak for other schools and what that's like.

R: Do you feel like that filters into the students as well, that respect?

MONICA: Certainly. Totally. I mean, everyone's— we were very lucky also to have a member of staff who's Lithuanian who's speaks fluent Russian, who's got family in Ukraine and Russia. So when the invasion happened obviously there was stuff but she was absolutely amazing. There was a lot of stuff going on, and I have my stepchildren half Russian, so I wrote to the head and said look, I totally get this, but we have to remember a lot of Russian speaking people at the school and it's an awful police state and these children can't carry the burden of that and their shoulders and we can't make any judgments. And she did the same. And she said right, OK, then you can come and deal with all this. So that would be very typical, I think. And she has been absolutely extraordinary because from day one she said to all the families, 'Look, I don't speak Ukrainian, but I speak Russian so we can all communicate, isn't this great? So on we go'. And but she's very, very direct, which is very typical communication style on that part of the world. And she's so committed and so kind. And she forms – I mean, you talk about relationship building, she is a head of house and she knows every child there and she has formed great relationships because I think the other thing.

GINA: One thing I was going to say is having that- So for the Ukrainian students we have 31 at the moment. We have two members of staff who can speak to them in their in their language.

MONICA: And understands the culture.

GINA: But there are other students that may struggle because they don't have that. Like Syrian.

R: So other nationalities?

- 1082 MONICA: Yeah, I have been banging the drum for so long to get someone who's speaks  
1083 Arabic. We had somebody who was a TA at another school who would have done it, but  
1084 then we have the cultural issue. One family said, 'Well, it's the wrong sort of Arabic' and,  
1085 'They're from that part of Syria'. And you're just like, 'OK'. Whereas luckily with the  
1086 Ukrainians, because we have such an enormous group of Ukrainians, if you started  
1087 playing that game because we have \*\*\*, our Lithuania colleague, at the beginning just  
1088 going 'if you don't like me speaking Russian, get out of yourself because we are all here to  
1089 work together'. And that sounds quite harsh, but it was brilliant because it also dealt with  
1090 the fact we have so many things to do speak Russian at home who were scared and had  
1091 been bullied for it outside of school.
- 1092 GINA: I just wanted to say that in schools, I think that would be, again, something will be  
1093 amazing for all schools - if they had access to, even if it's just short term, something about  
1094 the government initiative that says, right, 'have you got an asylum seeker in your school?  
1095 What language do they speak? This is what we can offer your school for six weeks' and  
1096 like just having at something available for all schools.
- 1097 MONICA: [Participant retracted sentence]. We have less funding for refugee children and  
1098 we get the mainstream children, and I'm so angry. Yeah, but actually, this is something.  
1099 I'm passionate is probably a tactful way of saying it, but we promise one thing, then  
1100 something else, and then what's come through. So, we are having this because of the-  
1101 we're talking about what schools could learn and I think one of the really powerful  
1102 messages we could share with schools is that when children come to \*\*\* [this school]  
1103 that they are given a free school uniform and a laptop stationary and buddies, so from  
1104 day one they look the same. And we had an event, didn't we? In the summer in the  
1105 marquee they had up for the prom and we invited all the Ukrainian families and lots of  
1106 other people from the communities as we are trying to get awareness and somebody  
1107 came and said, 'So, which are the \*\*\* students and which are the Ukrainians?'. And we  
1108 went there all \*\*\* students, and you could not tell because they just had blazers on and  
1109 they all look absolutely the same, you know, teenagers. Yeah, they just look like a load of  
1110 teenagers hoofing around and trying to eat all the cake.
- 1111 R: Yeah.
- 1112 MONICA: And that was great, it was so powerful
- 1113 GINA: That's one I was trying to set up, wasn't I? I Keep trying to set up just, like,  
1114 terminally events with all the families.
- 1115 MONICA: So it gets families involved, gives them all the same starting line, same uniform.  
1116 Notice the buddies. Dictionaries- you not even use it, but it's just basically an-. We found  
1117 one in Ugandan for \*\*\*
- 1118 R: Is this a language dictionary?
- 1119 MONICA: Yeah, you have the bilingual dictionary, it's probably too embarrassing to use in  
1120 class, but it is basically just saying, 'I see you, I acknowledge you'.
- 1121 R: It sounds like you have found a way of helping them access – so, the words that they  
1122 don't understand, they don't have to look at them there, they can go home and look  
1123 them up. So they've got an ability to check out what that means.
- 1124 MONICA: I don't- the other thing I wanted to say is that, I think currently the third lowest  
1125 funding in the country in \*\*\* [county].
- 1126 GINA: So they went through this huge funding thing about schools because we were in an  
1127 affluent area that and because the results of schools was like outstanding, good, and that.
- 1128 MONICA: So your damned if you do and you're damned if you don't basically.
- 1129 GINA: So we got less funding.
- 1130 R: So they give you less help because schools are doing better?

GINA: Yeah. So, there was a huge movement about five or six years ago just saying pay up for like these school's need more, so we were the lowest funded schools in the country. And like it didn't have an immediate impact, but ten years of the lowest funding has, has an impact.

MONICA: And there wasn't an EAL person, this has just grown out of thin air and I spend a lot of time fundraising and so does the head. So, everybody, you know, we're just constantly looking under the sofa cushions. And, I can say it's sometimes really demoralizing because you can see what you need to get, but I've got to fight to get money for people to do just a little something in that can make a huge amount of difference. And you know there's globally things are really tough, and I've got to go out into the community and just beg for something to enable somebody to have shoes or to have a dictionary or to have, you know, the somebody come in and assess their English. And if I was in an inner-city school, if I was in a big city school, I would not have this battle. None of us would have this battle and it takes- I think it removes dignity from- I don't want young people here to realize we're having this struggle, but I think it's really hard. I had a letter from \*\*\* [charity] two weeks ago and I haven't got back to them, I'm seeing the head this Thursday and he and I will do our level best saying can you help us provide, I know I keep saying shoes, but parents can't afford to buy shoes, and it's so humiliating for a child not come in with the right footwear.

R: Yeah.

MONICA: It's so humiliating from parent to have to ask, and it's actually wrong for a school to have to put all their energy to finding shoes when they should be getting interventions, language support, help from a psychologist. And it's, it's sort of like that Solomon's judgment, isn't it? What's more important? And everyday staff are making those judgments about what do I actually think is more important to this child? And I mean, I'm passionately glad that Launchpad and what P7 does is right at the top of the pile, because it's - you just see it straight away. If you went up, you'd just go 'oh yeah.'

R: Yeah, there's some things you can just tell straight away that they are helpful

MONICA: And it has always ripple effects.

R: Yeah

#### F.4 Transcript 4: Young people seeking asylum

Focus group details:

Date, time, location: 10.03.23, 14:00, In person – at their charity venue

Running time: Approximately 90 minutes (including 15-minute break)

Researcher: R

Participant pseudonyms: Ekon, Ada, Ivan, Julius

Focus group transcript:

- 1 R: Okay, so we will start the discussion, but if I say anything too fast or you would like me
- 2 to say anything again, just let me know. So, the main think I wanted to talk about today is
- 3 what you think impacts your sense of belonging in school or college. So, I do have a few
- 4 prompts to help us, but was there anything that comes to mind to start with?
- 5 IVAN: Should I go first?
- 6 R: Alright.
- 7 IVAN: Well, I feel like everyone is, uh, they are friendly to me and I don't, I don't, I haven't
- 8 seen any racism in either college or the university. But of course, there are, well, in every
- 9 place there are good and bad people. So, you know it happens, things can go wrong as
- 10 well. But in a college I, I am treated fairly actually, and the teachers are really friendly and
- 11 helpful, so they don't discriminate between me or the others. And, uh, I think they, they
- 12 give us a lot of opportunity to, you know get beyond what we study, either. Yeah, like
- 13 that.
- 14 R: Yeah, okay. So, it's a bit about the, the relationships with the teachers and also the
- 15 other people that are attending college or university.
- 16 IVAN: Yeah, yeah.
- 17 R: Lovely, thank you. And was there anything that sort of came to mind for anyone else?
- 18 ADA: So you ask - umm can you repeat please?
- 19 R: Yes, of course. So it's what impacts your sense of belonging in school? So, what makes
- 20 you feel like you fit in in school?
- 21 ADA: So, what I like in college?
- 22 R: Yeah, things that you like and that make you feel included.
- 23 ADA: I like my teacher, \*\*\*, yes, he is, I feel really welcome in the college and it's very
- 24 helpful for socialize. And, um, so, yeah.
- 25 R: Thank you. So, it's really good to hear both of you say that they're relationships with
- 26 your teachers is good and that that is helpful for feeling as though you belong. Let's talk
- 27 about before you came to England, when you were in school, was there anything that you
- 28 really liked?
- 29 IVAN: Uh, I have. Well, didn't have anything in my mind because, you know, everything
- 30 was confusing for me. But then now, here I can sort of see my way, but it's still not clear.
- 31 So, it's all weird kind of a situation for me.
- 32 R: Yeah, I can understand that. Thank you for sharing.
- 33 ADA: When you study it in Chechnya, in the college and school. In school, I like learning. I
- 34 like, I don't know, learn new things.

- 35 R: That's nice to hear, thank you. So, it would be useful to think about some examples of  
36 how you feel like you can be yourself when you're at college here or at university in the  
37 UK. Does anybody have anything that they would like to share?
- 38 IVAN: So maybe if we feel like we're comfortable in the UK?
- 39 R: Yeah, being yourself means feeling like you're able to just be you, do what you like to  
40 do, and other people accept that.
- 41 IVAN: Well, at university? Because the, the course was, uh, well, big group and we have to  
42 we are to discuss a lot of stuff. We have to talk and, uh, it was really fun for me.
- 43 R: Yeah.
- 44 IVAN: Although I I'm not a social person, but still I enjoy talking big, well, deep  
45 discussions. So, that was really fun because we did have a lot of things to talk about. And I  
46 enjoyed that because I could be open. Otherwise, I'm, I'm just really quiet.
- 47 R: Okay. So, it gave you the opportunity to be a bit more open and join in discussions?
- 48 IVAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
- 49 R: Thank you. Does anybody else find anything in college at the moment that makes you  
50 feel more comfortable and able to be yourself?
- 51 ADA: Yes, but my course is too easy for me. It's just easy and we learn alphabet, and yeah.
- 52 R: Thank you. So, you said too easy and that you already know a lot of it before. And  
53 what's the impact of that for you, on your sense of belonging?
- 54 ADA: I need to change my level to like the entry three.
- 55 R: Okay, so you would like to move up to something a little bit more difficult?
- 56 ADA: Yeah. Uh, other people in the class move up quicker, so I little bit frustrated.
- 57 R: And do they tell you why you're in the group you're in, or is there a process you have to  
58 go through?
- 59 ADA: I don't know.
- 60 R: Okay, that sounds really difficult for you, not knowing when you might be able to move  
61 to a new class. So while we're talking about college here, do you feel like there's lots of  
62 opportunities to express yourself your own cultural identity in college?
- 63 ADA: Yes.
- 64 IVAN: Yeah, yeah. Well, uh, there is no one to talk to with my own language. But if I will  
65 call someone, there are obviously, I can. But the, the other things like, you know,  
66 celebrations, because there are not so many people from my country there and they are  
67 mostly well from England and we, we don't, we don't do any celebrations there, which is  
68 why, I mean, I don't expect it to happen.
- 69 R: Yeah. So, they don't, they don't do any of the celebrations that they you potentially  
70 would have celebrated before coming to UK.
- 71 IVAN: They do not as far as I can tell.
- 72 R: Okay, and you do you think that impacts how welcome you feel at this at college?
- 73 IVAN: Not, not for me. No, I don't. I don't feel like, you know, something bad because I  
74 don't expect it to happen. And I can celebrate outside [of university] if I want to, of  
75 course.
- 76 R: Okay, that's good to hear. So, I guess let's think a little about how you feel that  
77 differences between students are viewed at college or university. This could be positive or  
78 negative views.
- 79 IVAN: You wanna go first?
- 80 ADA: No, I listening first.
- 81 IVAN: Yeah. I think that I, I cannot, I cannot actually. Well, do you mean like, for example,  
82 what can I say that is positive for me being there? Or did I, did I say anything positive  
83 regarding helping me to study even more?



- 84 R: It could be either. Just your experiences of feeling different and how other people view  
85 the differences.
- 86 IVAN: Yeah. Well, I think that in the in the class. There are some people, British people,  
87 who already really friendly and, you know, we made good friends, but there are some  
88 who well, you know, are not.
- 89 R: Okay.
- 90 IVAN: Yeah, it's a fact, you cannot change that. But the teachers they were, they were,  
91 they were all helpful to me and they all really, uh, helping. If I have a problem, for  
92 example in Maths or anything, I will ask them and they will be like, 'of course we can help  
93 you'. And the, the managers, they are all fine, they help you with everything if you want  
94 to go for a higher course, you can do this. But you have to ask him.
- 95 R: Okay, so they are helpful if you go to them and ask?
- 96
- 97 IVAN: Well sometimes, if they see that you are not able to go for higher course then they  
98 say no. So yeah, they are pretty, pretty straightforward. Yeah.
- 99 R: Okay. I guess it can be nice to have it clear and sort of laid out so you know what  
100 they're thinking. And you know how to ask for help if you need it.
- 101 IVAN: Yeah. Yeah.
- 102 R: Lovely. And for anyone else? Was there anything about how differences are viewed in  
103 college?
- 104 ADA: Umm so, so, so first time I didn't know how to, how to go to the college and what to  
105 do and my friends and teacher can help me with some forms. And secondly, I think it  
106 would be better if the, if the college, uh, provides information, uh, important information  
107 such as travelling, finding there, and because many people didn't know how, I don't know  
108 how, were not able to find some information and, uh, they don't, cannot ask, not able ask  
109 the teachers, 'cause they have barrier language.
- 110 R: Language barriers made it difficult?
- 111 ADA: Yeah.
- 112 R: Okay. That's really helpful, thank you. So, some of the practical things like how to get to  
113 college and how to find different rooms could be better?
- 114 ADA: Yeah, I think so.
- 115 R: Thank you.
- 116 IVAN: I do agree with that because in the in the college or anywhere in England, the, the  
117 numbers of the rooms are kinda by the zigzag, or they go straight, or it's really confusing.  
118 There is not one system.
- 119 R: Okay, yeah. I ca see how that must make it difficult. And was there anything that was  
120 helpful or made it easier?
- 121 IVAN: I will go first, I, I first saw that they are not well organised, yeah, but after, after a  
122 while it's you get used to the, the system and the situation the, the programs work or the,  
123 the lessons work. You get used to it after a while because you, you find your way out. And  
124 if you ask people, they will, they will, they will guide you to go to it. Which is fine.
- 125 R: Okay. So, it's coming back to the people in college that are really good. But some of the  
126 sort of practical things that, maybe, they haven't thought about can be a little bit  
127 difficult?
- 128 IVAN: Yeah, some of the plannings, but uh, it's much better than in my country. OK, I have  
129 to say that.
- 130 R: Thank you. And was there anything either of you wanted to share [P10 and p11]?  
131 Anything that was either helpful or not very helpful in college? Or things that help you  
132 feel like you can be yourself in school
- 133 JULIUS: I understand, they make a good point, yeah.

- 134 R: Okay, and is there any times that you felt really like you have been able to be yourself  
135 in college?
- 136 JULIUS: Yeah, I would say, yes.
- 137 R: That's good to know. Is there anything makes it harder at all, for any of you?
- 138 JULIUS: Umm, talk to people, like, over telephone.
- 139 R: Okay, so having the opportunities to speak to people face to face is better?
- 140 JULIUS: Yes, is really nice.
- 141 R: Thank you. And was there anything that comes to mind for you at all [P10]?
- 142 EKON: Yeah, sometimes got, like, sometimes find, like, feel like you are sad, you go your  
143 room or whatever to the same like them. Sometime. So, not always like to be happy or  
144 not always to be like it's gonna be perfect. So, I mean, sometimes gonna be good.
- 145 R: Yeah.
- 146 EKON: Sometimes to meet new people, to talk to them. And sometime even if you in, like,  
147 a bad situation or whatever.
- 148 R: Yeah, of course, thank you.
- 149 R: Okay, so everybody has mentioned the relationships in school a little bit. So, it might be  
150 good to discuss these relationships a little bit and think about how they might impact how  
151 well you feel like you fit in in school. Does anyone have anything they want to share?
- 152 EKON: Yeah, I've actually got, like, because, yeah, like anyone for this anyone sitting  
153 there, so if you wanna share with them, you can go exchange with them, or to share your  
154 ideas, to give your opportunity or to have some ideas and then to share yourself. And the  
155 other thing just to me, sometimes if you want friend, or whatever, or your friend I guess  
156 opportunity the friend of your friend to meet and then to talk with them on that.
- 157 R: Yeah, okay. So having people that introduce you to new people and building  
158 friendships that way?
- 159 EKON: Yeah exactly.
- 160 R: Lovely. That's really helpful, thank you. Is it the other young people, like your friends in  
161 college, that introduce you to new people? Or the adults?
- 162 EKON: Young people. Yeah. Yeah, it's very useful.
- 163 R: Thank you. And anyone else have anything sort of to build on that at all?
- 164 JULIUS: This is tricky one, because, in terms of culture in, for example, like friendship,  
165 Sudan and here is totally different so. Here you have like school friend and then outside  
166 of friend, so someone might be really good with you at the school and say hi to you and  
167 speak to you, but when you see, when you see them outside and you say hi, no maybe he  
168 not answering to you this is really strange. So in Sudan we don't have, like if you have  
169 friends, they friends inside the school and outside school, even teachers. I remember  
170 when I've met one of my teachers in \*\*\* [UK city], and ohh, I said. 'Hi!', she's, she just  
171 looked at me and I guess like 'What, who is this?'. And then, and then the day after when  
172 we came back to college she said, 'Oh, don't take it personally'. So, it's quite complicated  
173 honestly.
- 174 R: Yeah. And what's that like? That difference when you experience the difference  
175 between Sudan and the UK? How does that feel?
- 176 JULIUS: Hmm, frustrating. But after a while, we have to understand this, here in England,  
177 so, people they meant to have, like school friends, out of school friends and yeah, have  
178 the different.
- 179 R: So you have had to get used to somethings that are quite different.
- 180 JULIUS: Mmm, different dynamics. So when you make friendship with someone so you  
181 have to make sure he's outside friend not at the school so, yeah.

182 R: Thank you for sharing that. And did either if you have anything to add about  
 183 relationships? Anything that been helpful or unhelpful?  
 184 IVAN: About relationships?  
 185 R: Yeah. So, with friendships or with teachers?  
 186 IVAN: Well, uh, I am a friend with one of the managers there at my college and we  
 187 already actually good together. So, we do talk about almost everything and he's been a  
 188 huge, huge help to me. So, he introduced me to another course, a higher one— actually  
 189 double higher one.  
 190 R: Oh wow.  
 191 IVAN: So that was great and he, he's actually amazing person because, you know, he  
 192 helps everyone and goes beyond his, his work, which is really inspiring for me. And I sort  
 193 of look up to it. And it just work for me.  
 194 R: Yeah, yeah.  
 195 IVAN: But any but, but relationships I haven't seen anything until now and I hope that I  
 196 won't see any.  
 197 R: Okay, thank you. How about you, P8?  
 198 ADA: No, I don't have friend in the college. But I have met with many people, with  
 199 teachers and many Ukrainian people. Because language little, yeah, and I'm going to  
 200 college just two months and yeah.  
 201 R: Thank you. And the people that you are friends with outside of college, where did you  
 202 meet them?  
 203 ADA: Oh, umm, some, some trends in from church and yeah, and some from college.  
 204 R: Nice. Okay, so are these people that you spend time with when you are not in college?  
 205 ADA: I go to a, we have a drop in church and I see them here.  
 206 R: OK. Yeah. It sounds like you have people that you speak to outside of college as well.  
 207  
 208 EKON: Mhm, yes. I do too.  
 209  
 210 R: Lovely. So that leads into one of the prompts I wanted to discuss which is about what  
 211 you like to do in your free time. So, when you're not at college or not at work and when  
 212 you've got time to yourself, what kind of things do you enjoy doing?  
 213 IVAN: Umm, sleeping.  
 214 JULIUS: Play computer game.  
 215 R: Computer games, yeah, yeah.  
 216 EKON: And play football with JULIUS  
 217 R: Very nice. Are you good at football then?  
 218 EKON: Yeah [laughs]  
 219 R: Nice. And are those things you do with other people as well?  
 220 JULIUS: Yeah, definitely. We have a team.  
 221 R: Lovely. And P8, what kind of things do you do outside of college?  
 222 ADA: Outside, after college, I'm go to home, look after my children. Yeah.  
 223 R: Very nice. So, you like to spend time with your family?  
 224 ADA: Yeah.  
 225 R: That's really nice. It sounds like you all spend time with other people outside of college  
 226 which is lovely.  
 227 IVAN: I don't really, I just sleep a lot.  
 228 R: That's okay though, some time to relax can be very useful. Let' think a little now about  
 229 the, the learning in college. So, I know, P8, you said that the learning is too easy at the  
 230 moment.

231 ADA: Yeah, the school, it's too easy. Yeah. But maths, maths is good but some words is  
 232 difficult for me, yeah.

233 R: Okay, thank you. How does that impact you? When you find a difficult word what can  
 234 you do that makes it easier?

235 ADA: Umm, I translate with phone. But sometimes when we doing some tests we don't,  
 236 uh, we cannot have to translator and I do it.

237 R: That must be difficult when you can't have the translation. And is there anyone in  
 238 college who can help you?

239 ADA: Yes, my teachers. They trying, uh, translate me. Yeah. Yeah.

240 R: I'm glad that there is somebody to come and help you, but you said that's still  
 241 something that can be quite difficult sometimes.

242 ADA: Yeah. Sometimes.

243 IVAN: There is a functional skills in the college, format, and they, they teach you all the, all  
 244 the words for English if you want to do that. You can learn a lot of words in English for the  
 245 maths and you will do some maths as well.

246 ADA: Yeah.

247 IVAN: It's nice if you want to do that. Yeah.

248 EKON: First thing, yes. Yeah, I do go maths at the moment. But the maths is sometimes  
 249 different, uh, difficult I mean. The teachers they are give you some examples. If you get  
 250 that, if you didn't, if you didn't get it, maybe they give you some more examples and then  
 251 they will see you if you understand that, and make sure you understand that and then the  
 252 4th time maybe you understand that, OK. But if you don't understand that, then maybe  
 253 they can give you opportunity to use your phone in your language to make sure to  
 254 understand the next time when it came back again. It's good.

255 R: So they can give you, give you some support.

256 EKON: Some support and then and some. In our class someone understand nothing in  
 257 English. When they speak their language to speak, their teacher don't understand them.  
 258 The teacher then to give him like, OK, just use your phone, your Google Translate, and  
 259 then to look at in your language, maybe it's gonna helpful.

260 R: Yeah. And is that helpful?

261 EKON: Yeah. Sometimes.

262 R: Okay, and is there anything else that college do that is helpful?

263 EKON: Uh, they gonna give you like, if you wanna like text different to learn something. So  
 264 let them know and then they will choose one day to give you, like, extra lesson to learn  
 265 about that. Yeah.

266 R: Yeah, thank you. Is that the same for you?

267 JULIUS: It's my second year of College in terms for functional scale, both English and  
 268 Maths I think there's not best very accurately for level this kind of mix of level. And the  
 269 resources are also very randomly, there's no very, for example for entry 1 there's no like a  
 270 book or something very specific content to see what you should achieve by the end of the  
 271 year. So, the teachers, they just normally came to us on pick whatever topic like  
 272 vocabulary or reading or listening. That's it. At, umm, beginning of December, no, end of  
 273 December, they have like this exam. If you pass this exam, you, you, you are qualified to  
 274 move to the next level, but you still you have to come to college until June, so you come  
 275 for nothing. I remember last year I passed entry 3 both reading, writing, speaking, and  
 276 listening at end of December and then I have to attend college until June 4. Even I have  
 277 just to come and sit in the class. So, I would say and also as I mentioned earlier, the level  
 278 is really, really mixed. For example, if, if you picked a student from entry 1, entry 2, entry  
 279 3 they are all the same, all three, level 3, level 1, level 2, all the same.

- 280 R: So, some people are at a higher level but might not be more advanced in English  
281 ability?
- 282 JULIUS: Yeah. But exam are not really actually, honestly. For example, if you have level 1,  
283 someone might be entry 3 maybe better than you, so. I, I don't really understand.
- 284 R: Yeah, it seems very confusing.
- 285 JULIUS: Really, really confusing.
- 286 EKON: I think, yes, quite a little bit. I, I understand that like sometimes depending in your  
287 age, sometimes when your age, you know, even if you should higher place they didn't  
288 give you chance to move you somewhere. And sometimes they are looking for 'when they  
289 came?' 'How, how many years he be here in England?'. You can see that in some kind.  
290 When they saw you like; you are staying a long time and your English is much better or  
291 improve your English, and they're gonna put you higher level and for nothing. When you  
292 came to the direct activities, some people they are making, uh, really want actives or  
293 something like that.
- 294 R: Do you mean activities within the lessons?
- 295 EKON: Activities in the lesson, yeah, so, just like that. And, and sometime they just gonna  
296 get mixed like that and they you are friendly with them or something that they are like  
297 'Okay, he is lovely' they are gonna put your high, higher level.
- 298 R: Yes, it's sounds difficult. So, it sometimes feels like it's not based on how well you do,  
299 it's based on the people that you're friends with or how you how teachers see you?
- 300 JULIUS: Honestly, I, I knew many of people from different countries, Sudanese and  
301 different nation, they are less, less motivated to move to the high level, not because  
302 they're not want to study, but because of the years [it takes]. For example, if you are new,  
303 probably start with entry level one, entry one, and then you need entry 2/3, and then  
304 level 1 and level 2. This is about five years. Five years and then you, you still haven't got  
305 your GCSEs. So they say 'Ohh, come on, I'm not gonna spend like, five years at college to,  
306 to move to level 2'. And then if I want to go to university, I still have to do GCSE Math and  
307 English, and then you need your A levels. So, when they think like that, 'Ohh no, I should  
308 just do something else instead of college'.
- 309 R: Okay, and do you feel like there are there many other options?
- 310 JULIUS: For me on a personal I don't agree with this system. I think for example, if  
311 someone he doesn't know how to read or write at all. They, they, they should be like in  
312 year, for, for the for the full qualification. If you're pass, for example, in January when you  
313 really, really good, maybe they give you a chance to try another year. So, it might be  
314 really helpful for, for many people. Yeah. To have a, a system that's more better.
- 315 EKON: And to get, yeah, to learn that in summer. And then to get the harder to get  
316 another place, you know, to see how the next one like. Last year, when I did that,  
317 [unintelligible], and you know I stop working there because I passed the exam, all of them  
318 like English GCSE and Maths, all of my classes. And they even say to me when I come to  
319 college I move, and then they barred me again. They, they just said at the moment no you  
320 can't [move up a level], who has give you that place?' and then I say to them, 'Alright,  
321 very well', they ask for them and that was good and I was in the right one, so I can't stay  
322 here like entry two or whatever and waste my time and they said, 'Okay, cool. Maybe I'll  
323 see if you can entry 3.' And then when we did the exam, the first mock exam that I failed,  
324 the next one, I did that and I passed and when I passed they said 'OK, you passed. You  
325 speak, read and listen words so you might be stay here until you get you someone place  
326 and then to get you there'. I stayed. I say there still and then, I get my certificate from my  
327 last school there and showed them about that and they accept that. They said OK, they  
328 said to me, they look at my age and they look at when, how many years I have in this  
329 country and they look at that, they say 'nah there's no way for you' or 'You're almost, you

330 have like one year in this country so you not allowed to go like level one or level up', like  
331 that, so. So, they saying do your EASL and then after that when you finish that and then  
332 we'll see. So, I have passed all of them, so, before I was study hard when they, when they  
333 talk to me later about what they say, I say 'Okay, so why I'm gonna waste my time to do  
334 that'. And then, so there's not anything helpful about them. No. It's.

335 R: So, every time you sort of did one thing that you needed to do that was more that you  
336 needed to do.

337 EKON: And another, yeah. And then someone comes to them and talk to them about this  
338 and he was arguing with them and he say ; I'm Just gonna give up one to do something  
339 else soon'.

340 R: Is there anything we think that could be changed about the learning in school that  
341 would make you feel more supported and included? I know you mentioned about  
342 changing the system—

343 JULIUS: Changing the system and also we really need like someone who has an  
344 experience of teaching EASL because they, they are totally different. Most, many of our  
345 teachers, they have like experience of teaching GCSEs rather than EASL and they both say  
346 bit different. Yeah, so.

347 R: Okay, so having somebody that was there that is specifically experienced in teaching  
348 people who English is their second language.

349 JULIUS: Yes, mhm.

350 R: Okay, is there anything else that might be useful?

351 IVAN: I do actually like the, uh, we have an app that we study and, you know, it is online,  
352 it is online learning. So when you go home, you can study on this, uh app, which is called  
353 \*\*\*\*. I really like it because, you know, you can do everything online, you don't have to  
354 write it down, and there are all the assessments that you can do, uh, which is really  
355 helpful both for English and math, physics, everything that you want to do with. Uh, there  
356 was from entry one until GCSE, so it's really good. I quite like that. But, then there's some  
357 sometimes, you know, it changes, like for example you do something, I don't know, but  
358 the answer is not accurate, but it's rarely happens, so not that often.

359 R: Yeah. So sometimes that the system doesn't work as well as it is supposed to?

360 IVAN: Yeah, for example, the answer that you give the system, it doesn't accept it. Well,  
361 it's correct, but it doesn't accept it.

362 R: OK, so does that make it difficult to show that you actually are doing the right thing?

363 IVAN: Yeah, yeah, because it won't let you put it in unless you tell the teacher and they  
364 can see it. This is really good because they can see your progress whether or not you did  
365 well or did your best.

366 R: Okay, thank you. So maybe there is a need for something that's a bit more stable and  
367 accurate so that you can use it to show your understanding?

368 IVAN: Yeah, it's a bit difficult to use it first, when you, when you want to learn it, because  
369 you know it's your, it's an AI system if I am right. It's really, uh, complicated. But then if  
370 you get to know the, the system, you can you can, well, get your way around this. It's  
371 really, really good in my opinion. But for some people it's not useful, they don't like it,  
372 especially the- I heard it from the well, the English younger adults or teenagers who are  
373 doing the GCSEs. They don't like it, I don't know why.

374 R: Okay, so that's a system that's used by everybody across the college?

375 IVAN: Yeah, that is for everybody.

376 R: So maybe they need some alternative options for people that find it more difficult. And  
377 what about in the actual sort of the content of what you're learning itself, is there  
378 anything that school could do to help with making that better for you?

379 EKON: The whole content?

- 380 R: Yeah. So what you are learning in the lessons at college.
- 381 JULIUS: I think, yeah. I don't know the correct thing is, but this way I'm not doing EASL
- 382 now, for the last year now. I don't think they have like very accurate content, they just
- 383 randomly just sometime teaching, sometime go home, sometime you have to watch
- 384 video on YouTube or programme.
- 385 R: Yeah, okay, so, it's not consistent.
- 386 JULIUS: I don't think, no.
- 387 EKON: Sometimes it's good. It's good to develop this skill. So sometimes we have that
- 388 they used to like, we got 'life in the UK' aspect. So, when you do that, you get a little bit
- 389 sometimes they like to take us into the computer and to show you how to use the
- 390 computer and give you some ideas how to understand this technology, very useful. But
- 391 the one things, yeah, I guess when they, they move me into the one class for the mistake
- 392 or for the wrong way, I don't know, and I move that there was only, yeah, the students
- 393 that was born here, I mean, the citizens. And I learnt with them and I found, yeah, I don't
- 394 know why they put them into the higher level and I cannot understand because inside
- 395 them, there is nothing. Cause when the teacher asked the question on something that no
- 396 one can answer, I answer them and then and after that the teacher made me finish in the
- 397 final year. And then yeah, in the final class, she asked me about 'what level do you want
- 398 in reading at the moment?', and she say, 'why they put you only in the EASL?', and I say, 'I
- 399 don't know'. So that I found something when I, when I finish that class I was told, I
- 400 thinking like, 'Maybe they are, they yeah, they must have language. That's why they put
- 401 them in the higher level and for nothing'. And so, so why we are here learning how that
- 402 we do something and why if you can put into whole class higher level.
- 403 R: Do you feel like you possibly should be in a higher level than you've been in?
- 404 EKON: When they class is and I found that out is, you know, there is just nothing for me.
- 405 R: That sounds like it can be quite difficult.
- 406 ADA: The topics in college for me, yeah, it's difficult for because we didn't know nothing
- 407 about vegetarian, we, we all eat meat, and so the topic was not relevant to the culture.
- 408 We know nothing about vegetarianism and not interesting to us.
- 409 R: So, you mean like some of the things that you learn about, maybe you just aren't really
- 410 relevant to you?
- 411 ADA: Yeah.
- 412 JULIUS: Yeah, and for me, yeah.
- 413 R: Was there any choice over what you could write about?
- 414 ADA: No.
- 415 R: So, you had to write an essay on something that you didn't already understand, didn't
- 416 know very well and weren't interested in? I can see how that could lead you to feel quite
- 417 excluded.
- 418 JULIUS: In our class there is option they're gonna give if you want. So, when we learn like
- 419 life in the UK they're gonna say OK if you, if you don't wanna do about here, the weather
- 420 here for example, then you can write about your, about your country. And then they're
- 421 gonna see that and they don't think you not work, yeah.
- 422 EKON: Yeah, there is option.
- 423 JULIUS: Yeah, that is in our class. Maybe not in other class.
- 424 R: That sounds like that's a bit more positive because you get the choice.
- 425 JULIUS: Yeah, we get the choice.
- 426 R: And do you think that is helpful for you?
- 427 EKON: Yeah.
- 428 JULIUS: To be honest, in, in real exam we don't have choice. So, we have to, if there is a
- 429 topic you have to write about it. Because I, I quite ideally agree with this one, because the

language could be about anything. So, we should describe everything, even if you're not interested in so. It might be hard, so for example, I personally interest in football and if there is a topic about football I can write very easily, I know a lot of words probably about it. But if it's about something else, for example, rugby, maybe. I have no idea about rugby or but, yeah, I know it's important because the language could be about anything, yeah.

R: That's really helpful to have both perspectives. So obviously having different topics to choose to write about is really useful, but like you say, also knowing that some of that language might just be needed to write about it. OK, let's take our break now and come back together in 15 minutes.

R: Okay, so thinking back to a little earlier in our discussion, did you say that you are learning in classes with other people from the UK already? Or are there separate classes?

EKON: Separate, separate.

R: Okay, and is that the way you would prefer it?

EKON: I just want to learn, just learn. Now you can learn like perfect English. So here, here or just grammar perfect and vocabulary perfect, and that's it.

R: Okay.

JULIUS: Because when you say like with the, yeah, the people are born here or the people here, sometimes they are using but for language the accent. And the accent is different. Like when someone came from \*\*\* [town] or \*\*\* [town] is different than here. And you confused, you know, about his accent, understand his accent, like, to understand.

R: I see. What you mean is actually, sometimes it can be useful being in the class just with other people that are also learning English. And P8, what about your experiences? Do you learn with English pupils and people from other countries together?

ADA: Just Ukrainian people.

R: Okay.

ADA: Ahh Maths uh so, Scottish people and Afghan.

EKON: Maths we are together.

R: Oh lovely, you are in the same Maths class. How is it different for your learning with other Ukrainians and learning with people from different countries?

ADA: Can you repeat?

R: Of course. Do you prefer to be with people who don't speak English? Or do you like it when there are English people and other people in class?

ADA: It's not important for me, I think.

R: So, you're happy with either.

ADA: Yeah.

R: What is important in the learning then for you?

ADA: Important?

R: Yeah, what makes you either really like a lesson or not like it.

ADA: I enjoying to learning because I need, umm—

JULIUS: To improve your English, yeah?

ADA: Yeah, and I like English language, yeah.

R: Okay, so you like it actually learning new information and getting better at maths and English.

ADA: Yeah.

R: I know we spoke a bit about free time earlier, is that but is there anything that college do that helps you make friends? So, it could be things like if they've got clubs or activities for you to go to.

EKON: Yeah, they go call up football class. So, if you want you just register your name and then they will call you when they got match to go training and to go with them and then to get to know each other.



- 480 R: Yeah.
- 481 EKON: Football and I don't have all the other teams, but yes, we got football team.
- 482 R: Okay, so some sports teams in college.
- 483 JULIUS: For me, honestly, maybe it's hard to share or, every, every activities outside of the
- 484 college, I feel like I'm missing a little bit scared. This happened to like two months ago I
- 485 had really- not bad experience, but something I'm not, not looking forward to it again. We
- 486 had, like, I'm doing health and social care. We had an activity to meet, like an old people.
- 487 It's called 'Generation bridge'.
- 488 R: Okay.
- 489 JULIUS: They came outside from college, and they just want to sit with young people,
- 490 have chat with them so. Hmm, in my class like I'm I am the only one, like, from not British,
- 491 yeah. There's one she is from Macedonia, but so straight or people they notice 'oh he is
- 492 different'. And there was one lady, she start asking me straight away questions like
- 493 'where you from?' like it a normal question, then I say I am from Sudan. And then, 'why
- 494 you're here?', I said, 'to study', now she say, 'I mean like why did you come to the UK?'. I
- 495 said to her, 'I have war in my country', and then she didn't stop for this one, she asked
- 496 me, 'how did he come to UK?' I said 'ohh, I came by for Libya. Chad, Libya, Italy, France
- 497 and here'. And she said to me, 'why didn't you stop and stay in France instead of coming
- 498 here to, to the UK?'. I was fed up and I said 'now is enough'.
- 499 R: Yeah, completely understandable.
- 500 JULIUS: I said 'Sorry, I cannot answer to that question. Can you change the topic, please?'
- 501 And she say 'Oh, sorry, I just want to know, it's not, it's nothing like-', so I said 'that's
- 502 okay' and then I told my teacher. It's like, if the college run a program like this, there's
- 503 there should be like a limit of question, and yeah, they should be monitored. And they,
- 504 they need let us know what, what kind of question they're gonna ask for us. So, [I can
- 505 decide] if I'm happy to share to, to share with, with, with them or not. Not just to, to
- 506 college take me somewhere to sit with people and they gonna ask me about where am I
- 507 from. So, I think that this things, college should be really careful of it, it might hurt people
- 508 who might have experience different things. When I come home, I said, 'oh, this is not the
- 509 course for me, I should do something else' then I said 'no, no, no, no, not all people the
- 510 same' because I really, really has really good experience here as well when I came first
- 511 time, you'd have very good social workers used to live in the shared house with other
- 512 people as well, really good staff as well. So yeah, I received a lot of lots of help, yeah, one
- 513 of my dream is I want to work for a charity for like about 3-4 years, so yeah I know not,
- 514 not all people the same, but college should be really careful of these things. So, even,
- 515 even if at free time in college at lunchtime, there is people work from charity I think, but I
- 516 don't know what kind of charity. Also, they can talk to people if they if you met them or
- 517 not, also they ask the same question, the same question, and they only talk to people
- 518 who are not from here [UK].
- 519 R: That sounds like it was a really difficult experience and I'm really sorry you went
- 520 through that. I will come back to that, I would really like to talk at the impact of that for
- 521 you. But before we do, does anyone else have any experiences of things college offer that
- 522 is helpful for building friendships?
- 523 IVAN: Well outside of the lessons, no, no. Well, I haven't seen anything. But inside when
- 524 you study the teacher always says do it in person, like, for example, if she or he gives you
- 525 an activity they says that do it in person, like to, you know, talk to someone else so you
- 526 don't do it alone. Which is good because you know you will interact with other people
- 527 and you will talk to them. So, it helps it. You share ideas, with each other. But, you know,
- 528 if you do it alone, if you prefer to do it alone, then it is your choice. You know, you can do
- 529 it alone as well.

530 R: So they give you that flexibility. And is, is there anything that you think school or  
531 college could do that would help you or other new people when they start to feel like  
532 they fit?

533 IVAN: Well, I was happy with the college myself, so I, I have no complaints, minors I do, it  
534 always safe. I see something, but then I always say and so far so good with me. I mean, I  
535 didn't have any problems. So it's fine, I like the system, it's a bit slow the system, I can say  
536 that. And the, the exams, the way they go are a bit confusing at first when you do them,  
537 especially the mock exams. But then when you go and sit down on the on the will exams,  
538 they are a bit, a bit painful to understand. But other than that. I have not seen anything.

539 R: Okay thank you. I'm glad to hear that you have had a positive experience so far. And  
540 P8, did you have anything to say? Do you have anything that they help you to make  
541 friends at college?

542 ADA: Uhh, make friends?

543 R: Yeah, do they have any parties, or clubs, or celebrations?

544 ADA: No, just go into college and then you come home, yeah.

545 R: Okay, so, you go in and do your learning and then you go home?

546 ADA: Yeah, I don't have time.

547 R: Yeah, I see. If they had options to meet more young people, is that something that you  
548 would like to do?

549 ADA: Oh, it would be lovely. Yeah, of course. But everyone is going to home because they  
550 all the people have families. But, it would be nice.

551 R: Thank you, P8. P11, I did want to just come back really quickly and say I'm really sorry  
552 that you had that experience that you shared with us.

553 JULIUS: No, that's alright. I know not all people the same, yeah.

554 R: No, but it's still not a nice experience for you.

555 JULIUS: No, it's not nice, yeah.

556 R: Did you feel like the college was supportive afterwards?

557 JULIUS: No, no.

558 R: Is it okay to ask a little more about that?

559 JULIUS: Yeah, I mean, they took my statement and then [said] 'you will receive feedback'.  
560 I said OK. And then nothing, yeah.

561 R: That must be really difficult. I'm really sorry.

562 JULIUS: It's alright. Yeah.

563 R: Thank you for sharing your experience. It can be difficult to discuss these topics, but it's  
564 really useful to understand how they happen, and the impact, so we can highlight ways to  
565 try to make it easier for you and for others going forwards.

566 JULIUS: Of course.

567 EKON: But still more people coming in still asking the question.

568 JULIUS: Yeah, those are coming in for the during lunchtime. Umm, yeah, so, they still, that  
569 one is separate one, but they people volunteer, they're coming from charity. They come  
570 when everyone is there.

571 EKON: Yeah, everyone is there. Sometimes, they used to invite some student if you want  
572 to engage with them is like three or four, and then to, yeah, to engage with them, to get  
573 to know each other by relationship with, umm, Asian people like Korean—

574 JULIUS: like Japan.

575 EKON: Just invite everyone. We can visit them to enjoy and then sometimes they used to  
576 take- before they turn around and he said they said to me, if I want, they gonna take, like,  
577 to borrow their car to take out of city in here to go to work, to show them farm or  
578 whatever. I mean, it's about that, yeah.

579 JULIUS: Yep, yeah.

580 EKON: That's it, that kind of thing. And sometimes they are asking like, ask you as \*\*\*  
 581 said, sometimes they are asking right question, personal question. Yeah. So that is not  
 582 right. It's not something to learn about culture now or something.  
 583 R: Yeah, so there can be personal and unnecessary questions?  
 584 EKON: Yeah, I don't know about this country culture is different, so, when you meet like  
 585 someone to ask personal question in our country is not like that, okay. If your friend, even  
 586 your friend, just gonna to know his name and you he know what is your name, you know.  
 587 But on each other or where about you live, and no, so it's not okay to ask something  
 588 personal there.  
 589 R: Yeah, I see.  
 590 JULIUS: But for me, I, I love talk to people, honestly, yeah. Even if when, when I was in  
 591 Sudan when I was young, I always see my grandma and grandpa talk to them. But, for  
 592 here, for example, if you don't know someone at all, for example, some of they, they lost  
 593 their families, so they don't have family at all. So just came to they came to sit down and  
 594 someone ask you 'did you talk to your family?', 'No', 'Why?'. And they tell you, 'Oh, I  
 595 don't have family', 'Where's your family?'. So you bring that emotion, you don't know  
 596 what that person have been through in his life to this point. So what I realized is they  
 597 don't have, they don't know, they don't have any idea about us and how we came here,  
 598 they think, like every student from Asia—  
 599 EKON: Yeah, or from Africa.  
 600 JULIUS: They think they came for apprenticeship, or they have like, million, million of  
 601 pounds or dollars and they came here to study and to have fun, and then go back home.  
 602 No, it's a bit different. So, if you don't know someone really, really well, you cannot ask  
 603 him like, very, very specific question.  
 604 R: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I know this is a difficult question, and you don't have  
 605 to answer, but what's the impact for you when or you and your peers when some of the  
 606 difficult questions are asked, how does that make you feel?  
 607 JULIUS: For, for me, when these people they come at last time like every Thursday, I feel  
 608 like college sent them to ask us.  
 609 EKON: Yeah, to make show like.  
 610 JULIUS: Because they have the badge of the college and then they return like volunteer,  
 611 but we don't know what kind of volunteer, what their job really is, so.  
 612 R: Oh okay, so you're not you're not sure if there are people from college from the college  
 613 or people that are from elsewhere?  
 614 JULIUS: We sure they're from college, but, when you feel like why, why like only ask us,  
 615 for example, like refugees, why they only talk to refugees? Why they're not talking to  
 616 British people? So, you feel like ohh yeah, something might be—  
 617 EKON: Something around there. Yeah, sometime when they are asking like that and they  
 618 wanna know, they want to know what do you wanna leave here? And why you're here  
 619 for?  
 620 JULIUS: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.  
 621 EKON: Yeah. So that's something like a little bit difficult, like someone talk and want to  
 622 know something before you get there and you want to know what is your plan exactly. I  
 623 can't say with him like that. I'm first of all came here, that so I at the moment, I'm here,  
 624 everyone here. That is good for the everyone. So, when you come when someone came  
 625 here, like, for example, college or whatever, so they just have to learn. First he want to  
 626 improve his English, later he will find like qualification or work experience, and that's it to  
 627 go to do work.  
 628 R: Yeah. So, am I right then it sounds like there are two things coming out there. One is  
 629 that actually some of the questions that are being asked are questions that in your home

630 culture would be completely inappropriate to ask anybody. And the second is that you  
631 feel maybe a little bit like they're singling out specific types of students, in this case  
632 refugees?

633 JULIUS: No, it's not about culture.

634 R: Okay.

635 JULIUS: It's about experience about life experience. For example, for me, took me 3 years  
636 from Sudan to come here and even now I don't know where is my family. So, when  
637 someone come and sit with you and ask you about family and ask you about that. So, it's  
638 kind of bring emotion back to you. So, it's a time maybe you don't want it, so yeah.

639 R: Okay, absolutely. I'm really sorry that you have had these experiences. I can't imagine  
640 how it must feel.

641 JULIUS: Yeah. It's okay, thank you.

642 EKON: And you are in bad situations and you didn't know that exactly. So, you can't ask  
643 him like, like that. Sometimes he's asked you like your culture here in English you already  
644 see that you're here you stay here, and we see what is happening what is, yeah, what will  
645 happen, we see that, so. In our country, we see that it's look different, much different.  
646 Someone gonna ask me about your family and even he has family here, he they don't take  
647 care about his family or his family they don't care, they don't have care or commitment  
648 each other. So, you know, our country and our culture is not like this, if someone to ask  
649 you about your culture or your family or something else, he wanted to share with you or  
650 someone close to you and then to get to know each other. They need to build trust first.

651 R: Yeah.

652 JULIUS: Yeah, trust, that's all, that's all, yeah.

653 EKON: Yeah. But, but people here [at college] doesn't do that [build trust], when someone  
654 ask how old you are, and when you answer you think he get to know and then they're  
655 gonna leave me like that, like something, but then, you know, 'what is your plan?' And I  
656 say, that's it, maybe he will talk to someone else. They say, this, uh, this young person,  
657 his, uh, his plan like that, he will do like that, he don't do that. They share with other one,  
658 so why, why am I gonna tell you.

659 R: Yeah. No, I understand that. So, they are people that you don't know asking personal  
660 questions that actually they're not appropriate to ask in school.

661 JULIUS: Yeah, but I mean with my classmate, yes, teachers we have a lot of fun, I like  
662 them, they like me, so yeah, we got a really, really good teacher. But the problem is when  
663 people come from outside the college, they don't know much, they have absolutely have  
664 zero idea about us. My, my teachers never asked me very specific person question like  
665 that. For maybe half of two years she never asked me a question like that.

666 R: Just to clarify, you like the fact that your teacher is your friend but doesn't push or ask  
667 anything personal?

668 JULIUS: Yeah, unless if I want to share something.

669 R: Yeah, so it's all on your terms at school with teachers.

670 JULIUS: Yeah, yeah.

671 R: That's really useful. Thank you. And it's like I say, I'm sorry there's been some quite  
672 difficult experiences, and I'm very glad that you've got some people around you, your  
673 teachers, and your friends that are really supportive and therefore you. So before we end  
674 today, I would like to discuss what college could change that would help you or others to  
675 feel like you belong?

676 ADA: I would like the levels to be quicker. I don't know, we have lovely teacher, he's really  
677 nice, so yeah.

678 R: So just maybe having more opportunities to move up levels quicker?

679 ADA: Yeah.

- 680 R: And you mentioned earlier having maybe something in place where you can meet with  
681 other people after college?
- 682 ADA: Yeah.
- 683 R: Thank you. And was there anything anyone else thinks that college could do differently  
684 that would be helpful?
- 685 JULIUS: Yeah, it seems they need, they need, like, more qualified EASL teachers, I think.  
686 Yeah. And they should be like a content or for, for each level, and for, for anyone can tell,  
687 yes, this is this is this is level, and that is this level, because as I told you I sat in in  
688 September and then I passed in in yeah in December so it's not a big difference no, but  
689 then had to wait until, until June. June is the end of the year, so wait for another year.
- 690 R: And what were you doing in that time you were waiting?
- 691 JULIUS: Just come to class, have fun.
- 692 R: Okay, so it's nice to see people, but maybe actually you'd already done a lot of the  
693 learning.
- 694 JULIUS: Yeah. For me, like for, for me, it was like waiting nine months and then I moved to  
695 level one. And after that I said no, I don't want to, I don't want to study EASL anymore,  
696 and they said to me, 'oh, you have to'. I said 'no, I don't have to' and then I apply to level  
697 of health and social care, and there is no inter requirement for that course.
- 698 R: So you were able to study that one?
- 699 JULIUS: Yeah.
- 700 R: Brilliant. And so, I guess maybe there's something in there around school needing more  
701 options similar to what P8 was saying, more options to move up.
- 702 JULIUS: To move up, to give this system, for example for someone if you get 2 at GCSEs,  
703 it's better than level two or level one qualification, even if you get like one GCSE, it's still  
704 much better than someone has got level 2, level 2 EASL. So, and also it will give the EASL,  
705 EASL student a chance to mix with other student as well. Honestly at first, I felt really,  
706 really isolated, I asked myself many time, 'Why we are just, like, foreigners in the same  
707 class?', 'Why we not mixing with other with other student?' So, if you, if you study  
708 English, okay, you study grammar rules, but in real life you'll not be able to communicate  
709 with other people, you know. So ,yeah.
- 710 R: So maybe some more options early on—
- 711
- 712 JULIUS: Yeah, more options.
- 713 R: To mix with different people at the beginning.
- 714 JULIUS: Yeah. For someone who doesn't know anything, for example, how to read and  
715 write? Maybe he need more support, more lessons than normal ones on four or five days  
716 a week. Or if you get improved in terms of reading and writing, I think they, they should  
717 move him not through system like entry one, entry two, level one, no. They should move  
718 him straight to the GCSE classes. For me, as I said, if you get one mark out of nine, still  
719 GCSE is better.
- 720 R: Yeah. That's really helpful, thank you. And was there anything that you wanted to add  
721 to that at all, P10?
- 722 EKON: Hmm, last year in my school there and in the college now they are different. It's  
723 not like my other school. My other school they are , they got, like, something where you  
724 must do something, but here it is up to you. Other college they tell you what you must do  
725 and you study hard, and when you finish there and then they're gonna give you  
726 homework, and then they get it back to you sometime, maybe. And the college now, I  
727 reckon, if someone his English is not improve, he come to improve his English, just to  
728 work or to study hard and then when he improve a little bit in English and then to come

here college and then you find more the [unintelligible] at college just like to give you code and then to use it if you don't use it [shrugs].

R: Okay so, you've described to sort of quite different experiences between the two colleges, was there one approach to learning that helped increase your belonging?

EKON: They were different because the way, the way I found it in the other school, if someone did, even if someone come to learn English, and you study there and then you will learn quicker. And then because it's harder. But here, you can relax or whatever just three days a week, and the other days to do whatever sometimes then can forget something relevant, and then when you get back you have to learn then again, again, again, see. I prefer \*\*\* [previous college], yeah, as you learn quicker there. Here, bored and then you gonna waste time to stay and then later, even if you pass, as I said, you gonna stay at the end of the year, and then they gonna move you. So there is not any fast.

R: So, am I right that in your first college in \*\*\*, you felt like you were making more progress? And the college now lets you go at your own pace, but it feels slower to learn?

EKON: Definitely slower, yeah. There isn't encouraging here to do something. To get support in college sometimes they are taking demands, and sometimes you can't talk. Yeah, like for all the class, I'm trying to show up and then to see [everyone] and then to go to together to play football together. [unintelligible], if they don't want go, never mind.

R: It sounds like there is not quite as much motivation at your current college.

EKON: Yeah.

R: Okay. We are quite near the end of our time now, is there anything anybody wanted to share that I we haven't discussed yet?

EKON: I think. Do you know what, yeah, the people who was born here because they are already are grouped together and they don't mix with other people, if I'm gonna ask somebody for, like, cigarette or whatever you want, see if you go like ask them maybe they're gonna share with you together. But the others here, they don't have community with other people. So, others got the country like Ukraine, for example, lots here, also, there is lots of Korean, but they stay that called anyone like group. If you don't have like someone from other countries or like that, you just gonna stay on your own, no-one gonna talk to you. But yeah, like Ukrainian came here and Ukrainian stay with Ukraine or East Europe, they know each other's language and so. So Arab with Arabic, Asian with Asian, English with English.

R: So, it sounds like the language you speak seems to define you into a certain group of friends.

EKON: Even if you got like friend, friend yeah, he has born here, so maybe he will follow you, maybe you are gonna follow him. And then when you stay with his group, always his friend not talking, so just to take your phone and to have them what they are saying or what they will be if he follow you, he's not gonna ask you like to share ideas with your friend or something. So.

R: So, it sounds like it sometimes feels like you can't mix with everybody because they've all got their own group of friends already.

EKON: Yeah, so yeah. If, if I go there today, if I don't have my friends, so I'm just gonna stand alone or go home, or do whatever, or get out, get out the college. You can't meet like someone English, or Ukrainian, or Kurdish, or Korean, or something.

R: Is there anything you think would help people feel like more able to mix?

EKON: For me, I think maybe the teacher they are working like even the teacher, they go team not mix. Yeah, teachers, they're gonna tell all to be friendly with anyone here at the college, to be friendly to anyone. Anyone in the class to talk to him to do something to get

779 to know each other. And even someone came from other countries to find him his  
 780 [unintelligible]when you are getting to him and to get to know each other and then to  
 781 know about his country or something and sometime maybe when you gonna come back  
 782 to go holidays in his country maybe, whatever, so he will invite you into his home to stay  
 783 with him rather than to go at the hotel or to pay someone to take you into the, uh, tourist  
 784 places or something. If he from, for example, if he from Korea or China or whatever, so  
 785 we, you know, we met here together and then we get to know each other, so later we'll  
 786 go his house direct and then he will talk us to show the tourists he country and then next,  
 787 next year we will so plan like we're gonna go our country. So then there, so, I mean that  
 788 came my turn.

789 R: Yeah, I love that. So, it would be really nice from people from different country to mix  
 790 with each other and to have opportunities to share your, your home and your culture.  
 791 That's really lovely.

792 EKON: Yeah, to share. But now you're not gonna get that, like, yeah.

793 ADA: Yeah, to be friendly.

794 EKON: Would be good, because when the money you have to pay to the hotel or to pay  
 795 for someone tourist to take you someplace, you can share to be his house. To invite your  
 796 stay with each other and then to go to came back into his house to build up.

797 R: Yeah. It sounds like it would be great for just building relationships. But like you say for  
 798 travelling for other things.

799 EKON: Even, even later, like if one of you had a business or something to go each other to  
 800 help, for like, just when you get together and then you can do this and then, yeah, you're  
 801 gonna build up like teamwork.

802 R: Lovely. Thank you. But it sounds brilliant. Was there anything else anybody wanted to  
 803 talk about?

804 ADA: Just about provide, uh, how I say? It would be better if they provide some  
 805 information and input information to Gmail or text message. Because many people don't  
 806 speak English, or like me have a little, so I have barrier.

807 R: Yeah. So maybe if they could give it to you before you start college. and you've got  
 808 time to look at it yourself and understand what's gonna happen before you get to  
 809 college?

810 ADA: Yeah, that would be nice.

811 R: I think that would be really helpful.

812 ADA: And maths words.

813 R: Okay, so maybe if a list of key words that you might not understand could be emailed  
 814 whenever they start a new topic. You can look at them and translate them to your home  
 815 language and understand them a bit more. I think that'll be really useful.

816 ADA: Yeah.

817 R: So we are right at the end of our time together, any final comments or experiences to  
 818 share before we end?

819 JULIUS: Did we talk about food?

820 R: We haven't. Would you like to share quickly?

821 JULIUS: Umm, I think college should make survey like every year. They should ask student  
 822 what they want to, to eat it in college and what, what food they like to see in the in the  
 823 canteen.

824 R: Ohh, that would be interesting. Yeah. So, tell me a little bit more. I will have to stop us  
 825 in five minutes though because that will be the end of our 90 minutes.

826 JULIUS: Okay. See, for example, for me, it's like everything with single day lunchtime go to  
 827 the canteen, pick chips, which is not really nice because now they do have like in everyday  
 828 different cuisine, one day Indian, one day Bengali, and then Italian but the, the meat is

829 not Halal meat, so I, I have to eat chips everyday with them, yeah. There not enough  
830 option, no. There should be a survey like food to ask people like what do they want to  
831 eat.  
832 R: Okay, I could see how that could be a great idea.  
833 EKON: Yes, like for example, they our team, as they team and they're gonna pull out one  
834 from Eastern Europe, one from here, one from Asia, one from Africa, and they [canteen  
835 workers] don't know, they don't know each other how to cook, and they, they don't  
836 approach you or, or religion too, so Muslim, Muslim, Christian, Christian, so Muslim food  
837 is Halal, and there is no halal, so just, then really need them to buy, rather than to go,  
838 every day we used to go McDonald's.  
839 JULIUS: Yes. Yeah, we have half of one hour break, for example, and it's on the other side  
840 of town, for example.  
841 R: Yeah. So, it's too far to go in your break. What do you think the impact is of going into  
842 the canteen and feeling like there's, there's no food for you?  
843 JULIUS: There is nothing you you, yeah. Yeah, hmm. We very hungry or, yeah, not able to  
844 focus more in class.  
845 R: Yeah, absolutely.  
846 JULIUS: Yeah. But some, some people that they, they managed to, to get their own lunch  
847 from home, but for me no.  
848 R: But if that's not an option for you having that limit I guess that impacts what you can  
849 eat where you can what you can do at lunchtime, and how well you can concentrate on  
850 your lessons and to feel like you've been included in the school.  
851 JULIUS: They've put an option for us, chips. But, but if you're having to have chips every  
852 day, it's no ideal. No ideal.  
853 R: Absolutely, thank you for sharing that. I'm so sorry, but we have just reached our 90  
854 minutes. Are you all happy for me to end our discussion here?  
855 ADA: Yes.  
856 EKON: Yeah, that's it.  
857 R: Lovely. Thank you so much for coming and giving up your Friday, and for sharing some  
858 of your experiences with me.



## F.5 Transcript 5: Young people seeking asylum

Focus group details:

Date, time, location: 03.04.23, 14:00, In person – at their charity venue

Running time: Approximately 60 minutes (including 15-minute break)

Researcher: R

Participant pseudonyms: Sam, Jon, John, Omar

Focus group transcript:

- 1 R: So, we're here today to discuss the things that make you feel like you belong and you
- 2 fit in at school or college. It might be things that have been helpful and things that made
- 3 it harder. It will be useful to try and use examples where we can. So, the first sort of area
- 4 that I wanted to think about is if you had any schooling before you came to the UK, was
- 5 there anything that you really liked about it?
- 6 OMAR: I can answer?
- 7 R: Yeah, of course.
- 8 OMAR: In my school, I like respect to the teacher, but there is no respect the teacher.
- 9 Because whatever you say for the teacher, like I said, 'Hi teacher', They no like the
- 10 teacher name. They said 'Why? No, tell me in my name' because it one day in my school
- 11 in my class and said the teacher and the student like a fight the teacher say, 'Why you say
- 12 teacher?' students say, 'Why I no say teacher? Because you teacher, your job teacher, I
- 13 have respect for teacher'. But teacher say, 'No, in UK, the teacher name no trouble then
- 14 you can respect. But everyone say, I say it for respect, not trouble. You are my teacher, I
- 15 can't say you name, because I have respect for teacher.
- 16 R: So, the teacher said they wanted their name used?
- 17 OMAR: Yeah
- 18 JOHN: Yes, this is true
- 19 OMAR: They say use for use my name, no teacher, no say teacher. When you say for me
- 20 'Teacher', you say like rubbish or you say like table, 'come here' this here.
- 21 R: Ohh, I see so is that in the UK?
- 22 OMAR: yeah, yes. In Afghanistan is more respect for teacher.
- 23 R: Okay, you liked that there was that respect towards the teachers in Afghanistan. Thank
- 24 you. Does anybody else have anything that they liked about school in Afghanistan?
- 25 S and JOHN: [mumbling]
- 26 R: It's okay if not. Think about the people in the school, what you learned, or any other
- 27 things at school.
- 28 SAM: About the UK or Afghanistan?
- 29 R: The main focus for our discussion is to talk about the UK, but first I would like to know
- 30 about your time in school in Afghanistan.
- 31 SAM: In our country and here we love to study, you know, anywhere, everywhere in the
- 32 UK, in Afghanistan. So, we would like to go to school. We want to learn our language,
- 33 second language. And now we live in the UK, so, our first focus, umm, to learn English
- 34 because there is the first language was the UK is English, so, I would like to learn about

35 this thing. Uh, also I have big respect for the teachers, for everything. The teacher who,  
36 who work very hard with us because, you know, we are Asian people, so, when teacher  
37 learn about English so that's quite different, difficult for us because we don't read English  
38 in our country, our country, our first language is Pashto. So, we learn Pashto books, our  
39 Holy Quran in our schools, these thing let's— these type of things. So, when I come, when I  
40 arrive in UK is so since September, so I don't know, I don't know about the English  
41 language, so every time interpreter help me.

42 R: Okay, so the interpreter is useful in school?

43 SAM: The interpreter help me, yeah. Because I'm Asylum, you know. So when, when I  
44 attend college also I work really hard because, so, I need to learn English.

45 R: Yeah.

46 SAM: Yeah. So after half an hour, no, half a year, regularly I going to college and I speak  
47 with the another, another country boys and also I live with Sudan boy and the name is  
48 \*\*\*, JOHN know him. So our language different, he speak Arabic and I speak Pashto so  
49 when we see each other normally which everyday so we talk English with these things so  
50 now, I'm better with everything, that's right.

51 R: Yeah. So, you feel that your English has really improved?

52 SAM: Yes, thank you.

53 R: So, I noticed that you talked the English being a barrier when you first came to the UK.  
54 Could you tell me a little bit about how that impacted you when you went to college?

55 SAM: So, when I first came here, the government move, the government send me to a  
56 hotel, \*\*\* Hotel. So, after months, some of the council people came and they give me a  
57 flat. Yeah. So. the flat is on \*\*\* [area]. Also, \*\*\* [charity] I have big support of  
58 \*\*\*[charity], so I appreciate for \*\*\*[charity] and they admitted to college. Yeah, because  
59 my age was under 16 so they help me to attend the college.

60 R: When you first started at college, what was it like trying to learn English at the same  
61 time as trying to learn lessons?

62 SAM: I've my big problem of an English is conversation, some of British people is speak  
63 very quickly, so I can't understand. So, when I when I take my first class is into two. So I I  
64 give, erm, exams so I passed and the college give me into two classes. So, my teacher is  
65 from here. My teacher is British, her name \*\*\*. So, he also from England. She, sorry.  
66 Some teacher is from another country. So, our teacher is British so she can be really hard.  
67 So ,she tell me about how to live in the UK. How is the rule, [unintelligible], respect for  
68 her, and these things. So now I study with teacher \*\*\* [new teacher name] in entry two,  
69 so she's also good teacher. Yeah, she also to work with hard with us. Now we done our  
70 exams, yeah, so hopefully I've passed it.

71 R: I hope so. Okay, so, it sounds like although it was difficult, for you it was overall quite a  
72 positive experience with lots of support. Does anybody else have anything to add about  
73 starting college when you're still learning English?

74 OMAR: At time I start college my English is very bad. I know understand English, but no,  
75 I'm good talk English, not like more people. But I want to try and I want to learn formal  
76 education, and everyday I go college because now I have 100 percent attendance at my  
77 college, and the college give me next week, umm next month, one trip to London because  
78 they say as your, uh, attendance is very good in your class.

79 R: Ohh lovely.

80 OMAR: And you want to give the like a gift, this trip like a gift I have been give and go to  
81 London.

82 R: Okay, so there's been a nice reward for going in every day? Very nice. And how about  
83 for you, Jon?

- 84 JON: So, now you learn everyone have a same problem. You know you don't have– the  
85 English is not our first language. So, I came here [to charity] because I also can't speak  
86 English, so. I lived in the town was after months or two months I could move to  
87 accommodation in \*\*\* [suburb] so after that I attended College in also appreciate to  
88 teacher. I have a big, err, respect for the whole college because they're doing very hard  
89 for us. Yeah, and that's fine. And appreciate \*\*\*[charity] because it is very supportive.  
90 Yeah, for me.
- 91 R: Thank you.
- 92 JON: And the moment I don't feel comfortable because my English is not good so but I try  
93 to my best. Yeah.
- 94
- 95 R: Thank you for sharing that, I am understanding you really well, but it is helpful to know.  
96 If you would like a break or to leave, that is okay.
- 97 JON: Thank you, I okay.
- 98 R: Do you have anything you would like to share John Wek?
- 99 JOHN: Yeah. So, OK. Yeah, it's same like, yeah, it's same like me. It's 50:50. I understand  
100 English, but I speak– my speaking is not good.
- 101 R: I think it is better than you think.
- 102 JOHN: Thank you, yeah.
- 103 JC And is there anything that school or college could have done at the beginning that  
104 might have made it easier for you?
- 105 SAM: In our country?
- 106 R: When you first came to England and started college? Is there anything that your  
107 college could have done differently that would have helped you feel like you fit in?
- 108 SAM: Yeah, the college did very better because that's not only one thing we study in the  
109 college to speak better, but to learn some lessons or these things so they have give us  
110 some experience as we went outside and did some volunteer. Now summer start the  
111 teacher say we have; we have some volunteer to go outside to clean the beach.
- 112 R: You will go to clean the beach?
- 113 SAM: Yeah. So, we go to some another, another city, \*\*\*. So, it's has very, yeah, good to  
114 see the museums and that historical things.
- 115 R: Yeah. So, lots of sub opportunities to be outside of the school.
- 116 SAM: Yeah.
- 117 R: Okay, that sounds really lovely. And what are everybody else's thoughts? Is there  
118 anything that college could, could have done better?
- 119 OMAR: And like he say, one time they give me like a option to meet more people like  
120 when they go to \*\*\* [charity] and when they go to the another college and another  
121 student the meeting even more people is better. You can speak a bit and then meeting  
122 the more people are- they learning more words, learning more English. Yeah, I have  
123 people are going to the London, maybe I learn a lot more things because see there is new  
124 people and everything is new then for me.
- 125 R: Yeah. So, it seems like they gave you lots of chances to do new things and new  
126 experiences.
- 127 OMAR: Yes.
- 128 R: Great. So, it sounds like it's been quite positive with college in terms of the teachers  
129 that's come across as a theme that everybody's mentioned teacher that have been quite  
130 helpful. What about the other young people in college? Anything good or bad?
- 131 SAM: Our time been very, very good in the college, because we all friends, we all, umm,  
132 talk friendly. Some of another country be by example Syrian, Kurdish, Iraq. A lot of

133 asylum-seekers in the college. We did really better talk to each other and English, so, try  
134 to our best.

135 R: Yeah. Okay, so you have built some good relationships with other asylum seekers from  
136 across the world?

137 SAM: Yeah.

138 R: Lovely. And what about everybody else's experiences?

139 JOHN: Everyone has same situation, same college.

140 R: Oh right, okay. What about the other young people in college that aren't asylum  
141 seekers, do you spend a lot of time with them?

142 SAM: No, no. We have a separate, uh, how do you say in English? Separate hub.

143 R: A separate area? Okay.

144 SAM: Yeah, for asylum seeker in the college. Yeah. So, the British students and some  
145 other foreign students, for example French or Italian, they come to learn something for  
146 example take a engineering classes, take, umm, chef classes, but they have separately.  
147 We are Asian students. So yeah, we have another hub for asylum to go there.

148 R: Is it just asylum seekers? Or are there also people from other countries learning  
149 English?

150 JOHN: Yeah.

151 OMAR: Yeah.

152 SAM: Yeah. But some British people have get some, get some degree, yeah, like IT,  
153 engineering, or mathematics, or these things they have another hub they have  
154 downstairs. They get another study.

155 R: And do you think that's quite helpful?

156 JOHN: Yeah.

157 SAM: Yeah, we are Asian students, yeah. Our focus is to learn English, not to gets some  
158 degrees. Yeah.

159 R: Okay, so you start with the learning English. Do you learn other lessons at college, like  
160 maths, or only English language?

161 OMAR: Maths and Computers too.

162 SAM: Yeah, Maths.

163 R: Thank you. And do you think it's helpful having your separate space for asylum seeking  
164 students?

165 SAM: Yeah, we are happy. Yeah, because our accent is quite difficult, so some British  
166 people so we can't understand what, what they said. So, when, when we feel comfortable  
167 when go to college. So, we also we have we also have a chance to move through to get a  
168 class from British people. So first we need to learn English, so we need to get 100%  
169 comfortable in English. So, you said I understand English, I can speak, I can write, I can  
170 read. So, after that, we need to focus on our future, you know. So, the college said we will  
171 promote you, we will provide you everything. What do you want? Yeah. Now I want to be  
172 a chef in the future.

173 R: Ohh, lovely!

174 SAM: Yeah. So, teachers say just, umm, just study hard this year and next year will be  
175 moved to a some food hygiene, we will give you some food hygiene. So also the food  
176 hygiene class in the college, so in the kitchen, in the canteen, in the kitchen. Have some  
177 British people also.

178 So, maybe I will try our best next year, I hope so.

179 R: Yeah, okay, that sounds positive. It's nice that you've got that flexibility to say this is  
180 what I want to do and to choose what to learn. And everyone else, what are your  
181 experiences with the other young people and also with what you are learning?

182 JON: I speaking now is little bit better, but the problem is I no understand as much. The

183 speaking English lesson good, but in reading sometimes I little bit reading as speaking  
 184 little bit know too much, I think.  
 185 R: Thank you, so you are currently learning to speak English and to read English as well?  
 186 JON: Yes, is correct.  
 187 R: Great, thank you. And what is your experience of the other people in college?  
 188 JON: Yes, everyone is good, but everyone is coming for study. Yes and we speaking some  
 189 English. Yeah, it's really good.  
 190 R: Thank you, and how do you feel about what you're learning? Happy or not happy?  
 191 JON: Good my English and my Maths as well, yeah. Is good, maths I study is now, yeah,  
 192 for two three weeks. But is good, I like.  
 193 R: Okay, lovely. That's helpful. I'm happy it is going well so far.  
 194 JON: Thank you. And John Wek and Omar Khan, was there anything around the other  
 195 young people that you would like to share?  
 196 OMAR: Yeah, very good.  
 197 JOHN: Very good.  
 198 R: Okay, it sounds like you've all built up some nice friendships.  
 199 OMAR: We go to the college, like, for like a home. For everyone is just one, like, one  
 200 home. Everyone is very friendly and happy for everyone to speak happy for everyone, and  
 201 the same as in the family.  
 202 R: That is lovely, it sounds very positive, thank you for sharing that. Did anyone have  
 203 anything to add about the lessons before we move on?  
 204 JOHN: Yeah, we like it.  
 205 OMAR: Yeah, I have four lessons in college, like, [unintelligible], English, Maths and  
 206 Computers. Yeah, but I really happy, I like the digital, using computer. Umm, I go to for  
 207 every one on time and don't miss no Maths, no [unintelligible], no English. I go to for  
 208 every one but I really like computer.  
 209 R: Yeah, that's nice. It's good to have a favourite subject.  
 210 JOHN: Yeah, for me English is good.  
 211 R: English is your favourite?  
 212 JOHN: Yeah, I don't. I don't like, I don't like Maths. I don't like but I passed my exam.  
 213 R: You passed it? Well done, that's excellent! So Maths is okay, but English is better.  
 214 JOHN: English is better, yeah.  
 215 R: It might be useful to think a little bit as well about how you feel that you can be  
 216 yourself at school. Is there anything that comes to mind?  
 217 SAM: Yeah. Yeah, because that's why I love the UK, because, you know, we, we see  
 218 everything on the same way. We don't say that's he from Afghanistan, he's from here, or  
 219 everyone. The, the rule of law is democracy, and democracy is that we don't feel  
 220 outstanding [outcast/different] or uncomfortable, so when come to college so we feel  
 221 comfortable and  
 222 no one said to us, 'You aren't from this country, why you come here?', yeah, or, 'Why  
 223 don't go back to your country?'. So when I come to college I feel about myself, so I'm  
 224 from Afghanistan and I come to learn English. So talk to each other friendly.  
 225 R: Yeah, thank you. And Jon Wek, what is your experience of feeling you feel like you can  
 226 be yourself at college?  
 227 JOHN: Yeah. But sometimes I am shy. Sometimes, and yeah, I do not speak with too much  
 228 people, yeah. Just my like, some, like, Arabic friends and some like Albania, no English  
 229 people. Because I am shy so that's why I don't speak to much.  
 230 R: Does how people treat you at college make you feel shy or is it that you're naturally  
 231 shy?

232 JOHN: [Laughing] I don't know, I don't know.  
233 SAM: He naturally shy.  
234 JOHN: [laughing]  
235 JON: [Laughing]  
236 OMAR: [Laughing]  
237 R: Thank you, and for you, Jon?  
238 JON: Is the same  
239 R: The same? Okay, so you feel that you can be yourself at school?  
240 JON: So, I came by myself so didn't speak to each other and was not comfortable, but I  
241 feel very brave because English is not my first language. So, when with some friends from  
242 another country and talk to English so I feel very brave. I say, 'I can do it. I can speak  
243 English, so I'm I'm perfect, yeah'.  
244 SAM: He's very good now, yeah.  
245 R: That is really helpful, thank you. And I think you are right, it is very brave. And I think  
246 your English is better than you think it is. And Omar, is there anything you would like to  
247 share?  
248 OMAR: It's like you're in there is a respect for everyone. Respect for religion. Respect for  
249 yourself. Respect for your skin. Not like they say, 'you black, I white', nothing like this.  
250 'You're Muslim, I'm Christian', not like this. 'I no Like your friend', No. No. Like everyone  
251 have respect for everyone. Like, have respect.  
252 R: Yeah.  
253 OMAR: One time I go for pray. Then no people will say, 'Why you pray here? Why you  
254 Muslim? Go to your country, Why you from Afghanistan? Why you come?' they, they  
255 have respect for you coming in UK and that you live in the UK, and they have like a big  
256 hope for you.  
257 R: Yeah. And how do you think that impacts you?  
258 OMAR: Yeah, it good.  
259 JOHN: In France maybe not space Muslim, not in France, but here is more respect.  
260 R: We are over halfway through now, so let's pause for a break. We have done a lot of  
261 talking, and it will be good to pause for a moment.  
262 R: Okay, welcome back everyone. So, we've have been talking about how people  
263 understand you and how you feel you can be yourself in college. Are there any times that  
264 you have felt misunderstood, or that people haven't been very respectful?  
265 SAM: So no, I haven't.  
266 OMAR: I don't have any complaint.  
267 JOHN: Okay, for me same, yeah.  
268 JON: No, it's not.  
269 JOHN: [Laughing].  
270 R: Well, that makes me feel very happy.  
271 JOHN: Sorry for the laugh, yeah, really sorry.  
272 R: That is okay, as long as you're not laughing at people and are being respectful.  
273 JOHN: Yeah, I am. It's just, I'm sorry.  
274 R: That's okay, thank you. So, we've talked a bit about what you're learning in school.  
275 How do you find the lessons? Do you think the lessons are easy, hard, or in the middle?  
276 SAM: So, first time when I went to college because the accent quite different from US  
277 country and UK English. Yeah English and it's called different for example. We know the  
278 English is, is a world country or something that and they used everywhere, but in our  
279 country, some, some books we use and English, so the English accent is uses an accent. So  
280 it's quite difficult so, I, I understand that everything this spring, I came here, umm, when  
281 teacher said the things in English, so I feel very difficult. And was I thinking that was it like

- 282 that, for example aeroplane in US English they say AIR, in UK English say AER, so that's  
283 quite different. This is very difficult. And now when he said when say something, teacher,  
284 they give us three example. How I can give you that example? Say for past and present  
285 tense we use past for example. So, on the past use 'I was worried', these things, so  
286 teacher, with this sentence teacher gave us 3 examples. So now you understand. Its  
287 different in US English and UK.
- 288 R: So there really helpful thing is that the teachers have given you examples the like  
289 aeroplane and airplane, they point them out.
- 290 SAM: And that's, they give us example in English, not in our language. Sometimes  
291 teachers say translate it. So, when the translator on Google so first thing teacher say,  
292 'please translate on the English not in your language because so you come here to learn  
293 English, not your language'. Because some, umm, some language, some words is quite  
294 different though difficult for example 'disgusting', or these things, so I translate it in our  
295 language I understand, but I can't say to teach that what disgusting is in English, English  
296 meaning is done. So, teacher said, please translate in English then you learn better.
- 297 R: Okay. So, something around having all of the knowledge but having to learn how to say  
298 it the right way so that people understand that you've got that knowledge?
- 299 SAM: Yeah.
- 300 R: Okay, that's really helpful. Thank you. And for anybody else, anything around whether  
301 the lessons are good or anything that college could do better?
- 302 OMAR: I have one. About what's in the, like a class. And here in the class, like in same  
303 class six or seven Kurdish, four or three Afghans. Like in my clasSam: seven Kurdish, four  
304 Afghan, and two Brazilian, and two Sudanese, and three in Arabic language. But this one  
305 is not good because the four Afghan they speak Pashto and the same time and Kurdish  
306 they speak Kurdish at same time, they can't try English this one is not good for you like  
307 the subject yeah. One Afghan, one Kurdish, one Arabic, will every time try English, they  
308 can speak English is better, I don't think speaking the same language they can learn  
309 English.
- 310 R: So, you like it better when there's more mix?
- 311 OMAR: Yeah, more mix.
- 312 R: Then you're not tempted to speak in Pashto.
- 313 JOHN: If you don't mind, I can give you a solution to solve the problem.
- 314 R: Of course.
- 315 Omar: Yes
- 316 JOHN: Because in our class some Afghani, some of Kurdish, some of Venezuela, some of  
317 Ecuador. So, different people from different country. So, our teacher have a rule in our  
318 class. You have a rule in our class. So, that rule is that, for example, in our class we have  
319 twelve students, the class is very big, so teacher make 4 tables in the corner of the class,  
320 for example tables is here, here, here, and here [using hand to gesture around the room].
- 321 R: Mhmm. So far away from each other?
- 322 JOHN: Yes, far away from each other. So, when I come and see my Afghani friend we  
323 speak in our language. So, teacher say, 'you can understand his language', teacher say,  
324 'you can't sit here, you can sit with Venezuela'. For example, he's from Venezuela, so he  
325 can't understand your language, you can, you can speak in English language. So ohh, I  
326 have this room for the teacher, so give us the big solution for these things. Because my  
327 friend is very far from me, so if I say in my language 'give me that', or, 'what is that  
328 answer this question?', so teacher said, teacher says teacher says it's not good excuse.  
329 Need to speak in English. So maybe that's good solution.
- 330 R: Yeah, to split everyone up?

331 OMAR: Just I said this, and here in this class is to English for Afghan. But how can English?  
 332 And I have 4 Afghan in my class, they no understand. They want to, I translate for them,  
 333 this one, this one is not good, like, if you are alone in one class you can try every time  
 334 your English.  
 335 R: Yeah.  
 336 OMAR: Not looking for help from more people, but yeah.  
 337 R: Yeah. So it's good to be with the people from other countries so that you have to speak  
 338 in English. Jon, was there anything you wanted to add at all?  
 339 JON: The sentences are quite difficult, but the teacher is telling to us in an easy way, so if  
 340 I'm trying to understand the teacher I show the picture on the Google.  
 341 SAM: For example avocado, the fruit. So, I kind of, I don't know what they were Avocado.  
 342 So, teacher say can give pictures so they work hard with these things for us, so then try to  
 343 learn on the best easy way. So that's good. So every teacher is same.  
 344 R: So it's, it's coming back to those teachers actually breaking it down and giving you  
 345 examples okay. I think that's really helpful, thank you. And it's sounds like there's a lot of  
 346 things they're doing very well at the moment, which is really good to hear. Let's discuss  
 347 now the things that you like to do in your free time both in and out of college?  
 348 SAM: I don't have any big hobbies, so for the lunchtime, break and lunch, so we get a  
 349 lunch, sometimes take a call, or go to beach side to get fresh air.  
 350 JOHN: Yeah, yeah, we both. We got together and see the beach view. It was really good,  
 351 everywhere is green.  
 352 SAM: Yeah, after lessons and after college just been out and, umm, meet with friends.  
 353 Been to like a park or these things, yes  
 354 JOHN: Yes.  
 355 SAM: Take a dinner together and also take some fun, that is our record of our time.  
 356 R: Nice, it's nice to go out and see your friends. Are the people that you meet after school  
 357 the same friends from school as well, or they from different places?  
 358 SAM: They are from different places. Yeah, we have 4 of asylum-seekers so they have,  
 359 they don't come to college, they just came new here like 1 months. They tried to get the  
 360 college, but now the college is full and it is last term, last term of studies. So that's not in  
 361 college.  
 362 R: Ohh OK. And are there any groups that you go to or anything that helps you feel like  
 363 you fit in outside of college?  
 364 SAM: First is cricket, and also I will do the gym to feel fit, yeah, so. Yeah, but the college  
 365 and the cricket been finish, no not really start  
 366 JOHN: Yeah, matches.  
 367 SAM: Yeah, matches stuff, but I don't want to play again.  
 368 R: You don't want to?  
 369 JOHN: Because he is scaring.  
 370 SAM: Yeah. Because I'm not a good player, so I will try to my best. You know, boiling and,  
 371 yeah. But I don't want to go to cricket or go to cricket club.  
 372 R: But you might go and watch some of the matches.  
 373 SAM: Yeah, because he [JOHN] want to start again. Yeah, so when he have a match  
 374 definitely I will go to watch.  
 375 R: And John Wek, was there anything else you like to do in your free time that helps you  
 376 feel like you belong?  
 377 SAM: So, he is every time with me, so.  
 378 R: Oh lovely, you spend lots of time together?  
 379 JOHN: Yeah. Outside of college I like cricket. I'm good in cricket.



- 380 R: Oh are you? I don't know much about cricket. Do you like to bat or to bowl?
- 381 JOHN: Yeah, bowler. I'm batting and bowling, but bowling is quite nice. Bowling is good.
- 382 Bowling is very good. My coach told me, 'focus on your bowling', because my bowl is very
- 383 fast, yeah.
- 384 R: Very nice. Well, good. I'm glad cricket starting up again then so you can go back soon.
- 385 And what about for you, Omar Khan?
- 386 OMAR: Things outside of college. I don't have something. I finish college, go home, and
- 387 for one hour relax and go back just alone my work. I don't, like, meeting more people. I
- 388 just go alone to the beach and sometimes the park and sometimes go back and one hour
- 389 or two reading and computer using computer.
- 390 R: So, for you it's important to have some relaxed time and some downtime outside.
- 391 OMAR: Yes.
- 392 R: Sometimes a break is really useful. I'm the same. When I go home, I like to sit down for
- 393 a little bit first. So we have had a lovely discussion today, but was there anything else that
- 394 you wanted to share?
- 395 Like in holiday times. And there's activities that sometimes \*\*\* [charity] and other
- 396 organisations put on. And also that the college class on a Wednesday.
- 397 SAM: So the month of Ramadan starts. So yeah, you know, yeah, you have to do normally
- 398 I woke up at 9:00 o'clock with this times I sleep till maybe 11 or 12, because just wake up
- 399 early in the morning or to take breakfast, so after 16 or 15 hours we don't eat anything so
- 400 that if we if we take a rest, then maybe that time is going really good [fast], you know.
- 401 Yes, I know, now is the holiday so we sleep later. And I know \*\*\*[charity] have activities
- 402 we can do.
- 403 R: Thank you for sharing that. And thank you everybody so much for coming and for
- 404 sharing your experiences with me today.

### Appendix G Empirical project thematic analysis coding manual

Categories	Categories	Codes	Example quote
Learning Accessibility	Attitudes towards learning	Building confidence	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.
		College helps me find my way	But then now, here I can sort of see my way, but it's still not clear.
		Developing English language is important to me	I have one. About what's in the, like a class. And here in the class, like in same class six or seven Kurdish, four or three Afghans. Like in my class: seven Kurdish, four Afghan, and two Brazilian, and two Sudanese, and three in Arabic language. But this one is not good because the four Afghan they speak Pashto and the same time and Kurdish they speak Kurdish at same time, they can't try English this one is not good for you like the subject yeah. One Afghan, one Kurdish, one Arabic, will every time try English, they can speak English is better, I don't think speaking the same language they can learn English.
		Finding the positives in a difficult situation	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.
		Lack of motivation in college	Here, bored and then you gonna waste time to stay and then later, even if you pass, as I said, you gonna stay at the end of the year, and then they gonna move you. So there is not any fast

		Less nervous or scared when starting school	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.
		Motivation from academic challenge	06.03 we've been, sort of, saying to staff that actually when you have high ability students it is critical they go into the high ability class because although they don't have the language, the motivation stays.
		The young person has goals and aspirations	Yeah. So, teachers say just, umm, just study hard this year and next year will be moved to a some food hygiene, we will give you some food hygiene. So also the food hygiene class in the college, so in the kitchen, in the canteen, in the kitchen. Have some British people also. So, maybe I will try our best next year, I hope so.
		The young person wants to learn	But I want to try and I want to learn formal education, and everyday I go college because now I have 100 percent attendance at my college, there are English people and other people in class?
		Understanding that you can't be happy all of the time	Yeah, sometimes got, like, sometimes find, like, feel like you are sad, you go your room or whatever to the same like them. Sometime. So, not always like to be happy or not always to be like it's gonna be perfect. So, I mean, sometimes gonna be good.

		Understanding who they are and who they want to be	But almost you can say 'what a success story' because they're just being themselves, and they've chosen who they like being with not based on race, colour, gender, or cultural identity. It's just 'I'm this person and this this is who I like hanging out with, I really don't like hanging out with the Ukrainian kids in my class'.
		Young person feels relaxed and comfortable	it just gives them a space to hang up because we had worked with *** who said to us one of the hardest things is that you are on your best behaviour at school and on your best behaviour with your host, so where do you hoof about and be a teenager?
		Young person's attitude can impact their engagement and belonging	P7: And all of a sudden you've got a confused child who's between their heart and their head. Not knowing whether they are coming or going and not knowing what they really want. And then, so, I think the easiest thing to do is push everyone away and give up.
	Determining the correct level of support	Adults being available to support young person's learning	P5: They were helpful, and yeah, they were great,  P4: Yeah, the teachers okay. It was very helpful. Especially that they know who needs the help, especially the language at school was difficult for us, so they were more trying to help us to understand, yeah, I noticed this thing there.
		Adults recognised that	P5: They were helpful, and yeah, they were great,

		additional support was needed	P4: Yeah, the teachers okay. It was very helpful. Especially that they know who needs the help, especially the language at school was difficult for us, so they were more trying to help us to understand, yeah, I noticed this thing there.
		Attendance impacts level of support	But I want to try and I want to learn formal education, and everyday I go college because now I have 100 percent attendance at my college, and the college give me next week, umm next month, one trip to London because they say as your, uh, attendance is very good in your class.
		Balance between offering enough support and allowing independence to build friendships and language ability	P7: And I know teachers say that they find they don't be patronizing. So, it's working out what the level of, umm, what words do you need to translate to them so they have the translation. Do you just give them a dictionary and ask them to translate the words? How much support how, how much English do they know? Am I assuming they know nothing? Or- and it's really difficult
		College provides opportunities to socialise	P9: Well outside of the lessons, no, no. Well, I haven't seen anything. But inside when you study the teacher always says do it in person, like, for example, if she or he gives you an activity they says that do it in person, like to, you know, talk to someone else so you don't do it alone. Which is good because you know you will interact with other people and you will talk to them. So, it helps it. You share ideas, with each other.

		College should encourage all students to mix with each other, not stick to just same nationality	P10: For me, I think maybe the teacher they are working like even the teacher, they go team not mix. Yeah, teachers, they're gonna tell all to be friendly with anyone here at the college, to be friendly to anyone. Anyone in the class to talk to him to do something to get to know each other.
		College try to accommodate student learning preferences	<p>P11: In our class there is option they're gonna give if you want. So, when we learn like life in the UK they're gonna say OK if you, if you don't wanna do about here, the weather here for example, then you can write about your, about your country. And then they're gonna see that and they don't think you not work, yeah.</p> <p>P10: Yeah, there is option.</p> <p>P11: Yeah, that is in our class. Maybe not in other class.</p>
		Complexity of offering support to young people	Yeah, and there's always something else coming up. Just when you think 'ohh, this is sorted', there's something else happening.
		Foreign language teachers can support learning of asylum-seeking young people	P11: Changing the system and also we really need like someone who has an experience of teaching EASL because they, they are totally different. Most, many of our teachers, they have like experience of teaching GCSEs rather than EASL and they both say bit different. Yeah,

		It can be easier to close off than admit you can't do something	But I think it's very common, as P7 said, it's extremely common to get to a certain stage or people come to us and they sort of pre intermediately done a few years at school in Ukraine or wherever and they think they can get by and suddenly get to here and it is like this tidal wave of words and it's easier just to close off than admit you can't do it.
		It can be hard to identify what is the right level of support	I was talking to a couple of colleagues who, who did feel that they were patronizing some of the students because they were putting– in terms of ability, you've got a high level student, high ability, clearly very able, but their English language very low.
		It can be helpful if learning prepares us for exams	P11: To be honest, in, in real exam we don't have choice. So, we have to, if there is a topic you have to write about it. Because I, I quite ideally agree with this one, because the language could be about anything. So, we should describe everything, even if you're not interested in so. It might be hard, so for example, I personally interest in football and if there is a topic about football I can write very easily, I know a lot of words probably about it. But if it's about something else, for example, rugby, maybe. I have no idea about rugby or but, yeah, I know it's important because the language could be about anything, yeah.
		Level of control teacher has over class can impact learning	P5: No, I liked. See, I've got my teacher was just strict like everyone was quiet, you know? Yeah, yeah, it was good. Yeah.

		Level of differentiation impacts learning engagement	P1: 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.
		Over time adults forget the young people need additional support	P3: It is. They're very brave.  P1: 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.
		Practical support to access learning	P9: I do agree with that because in the in the college or anywhere in England, the, the numbers of the rooms are kinda by the zigzag, or they go straight, or it's really confusing. There is not one system. JC: Okay, yeah. I ca see how that must make it difficult. And was there anything that was helpful or made it easier? P9: I will go first, I, I first saw that they are not well organised, yeah, but after, after a while it's you get used to the, the system and the situation the, the programs work or the, the lessons work. You get used to it after a while because you, you find your way out. And if you ask people, they will, they will, they will guide you to go to it. Which is fine.
		School provides incentives	But I want to try and I want to learn formal education, and everyday I go college because now I have 100 percent attendance at my college, and the college give me next week, umm next month, one trip to London because they say as your, uh, attendance is very good in your class.



		and rewards for high attendance	
		Schools can miss opportunities to support asylum-seeking young people	P7: Yeah, it should be the council in charge of those sort of things and that, but they're just not, and so schools are responsible for looking themselves. And unless you have a member of staff willing to look, it gets missed.
		Simplifying explanations if they are not understood	And was I thinking that was it like that, for example aeroplane in US English they say AIR, in UK English say AER, so that's quite different. This is very difficult. And now when he said when say something, teacher, they give us three example. How I can give you that example? Say for past and present tense we use past for example. So, on the past use 'I was worried', these things, so teacher, with this sentence teacher gave us 3 examples. So now you understand. Its different in US English and UK.
		Some teachers are not prepared to put the effort in to differentiate work to support learning	<p>P1: 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'</p> <p>P3: And they already have 20 other students.</p> <p>P1: Yeah.</p>

		Some teachers do not realise that the student has not understood the learning and so does not offer help	P4: Umm. You know online, well, there's many guys and you, you want to understand The thing is, is not easy online. Everyone is like making confusion. So, then this is a thing is difficult and it's not able to learn a lot of things from online thing.
		Supported staff are more able to support asylum-seeking young people	P7: Yeah, came in and gave inset training to all of our staff.  P6: EAL strategies in the classroom, EAL strategies for exams and revision, and EAL and emotional well-being.  P7: So that supports the staff but where the staff is more supported, I guess it can support young people.
		Targeted support around subject-specific language to support learning	P9: There is a functional skills in the college, format, and they, they teach you all the, all the words for English if you want to do that. You can learn a lot of words in English for the maths and you will do some maths as well.
		Teachers can underestimate student's abilities	P1: 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.
		Teachers work hard to support us	<p>JW: Because in our class some Afghani, some of Kurdish, some of Venezuela, some of Ecuador. So, different people from different country. So, our teacher have a rule in our class. You have a rule in our class. So, that rule is that, for example, in our class we have twelve students, the class is very big, so teacher make 4 tables in the corner of the class, for example tables is here, here, here, and here [using hand to gesture around the room].</p> <p>JC: Mhmm. So far away from each other?</p> <p>JW: Yes, far away from each other. So, when I come and see my Afghani friend we speak in our language. So, teacher say, 'you can understand his language', teacher say, 'you can't sit here, you can sit with Venezuela'. For example, he's from Venezuela, so he can't understand your language, you can, you can speak in English language. So ohh, I have this room for the teacher, so give us the big solution for these things. Because my friend is very far from me, so if I say in my language 'give me that', or, 'what is that answer this question?', so teacher said, teacher says teacher says it's not good excuse. Need to speak in English. So maybe that's good solution.</p> <p>P9: So that was great and he, he's actually amazing person because, you know, he helps everyone and goes beyond his, his work, which is really inspiring for me. And I sort of look up to it. And it just work for me.</p>
		Young people do not always realise	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

		or value the support they are getting	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.
		Young person feels that have to do more work when an adult supports the in class	<p>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.</p> <p>P1: Yeah. Because I think they think when we're there, they have to do more work, you see.</p> <p>P3: And he's quite relaxed, let's put it this way</p> <p>P1: If we are not there to help them, they can get away with saying 'Ohh wait, I don't understand'.</p>
	Flexibility of school systems	Ability to take exams in home language	<p>P6: Well, there's a letter saying what they called heritage languages, as I discovered. We're running the initiative, so, so people have studied Latin, French, German and Spanish. Any everyone has the option to do that at GCSE, but we're also an exam centre or working with our brilliant examination officer to, umm, be a base where you can take exams in your in your home language. If it's a heritage language, so Arabic, Russian, unfortunately not yet Ukrainian, but Ukrainian and Russian are very close.</p>

		Access to alternative provision support	And came in from Calais on the back of the van. And then I think ended up in *** [local authority] somehow, *** [local authority], actually. And whoever took him in chose *** [this school], he was the first student I worked with in, like, an alternative provision setup where I was just building social skills and building relationship with him to then helping him into classes and to help him with those sorts of things. So, it's started, he was here six years ago, and I think from there it's just been building and building and building.
		Access to school resources in home language	P8: Just about provide, uh, how I say? It would be better if they provide some information and input information to Gmail or text message. Because many people don't speak English, or like me have a little, so I have barrier.
		Balance between leeway due to situation and keeping a fair system across the school	P3: 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.
		College must agree for young person to be ready to progress with learning	And the, the managers, they are all fine, they help you with everything if you want to go for a higher course, you can do this. But you have to ask him.  R: Okay, so they are helpful if you go to them and ask?  P9: Well sometimes, if they see that you are not able to go for higher course then they say no. So yeah, they are pretty, pretty straightforward. Yeah.

		Enjoyment of freedom in school	<p>P1: So, we know that they prefer being at school than not being at school. In the holidays, they're always really upset.</p> <p>P3: The only ones who are like 'Ohhhhh'.</p> <p>P1: They don't want to be on holiday, because they say they do nothing.</p> <p>P3: It's boring, that's what the boys say.</p> <p>P1: 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</p> <p>P3: Especially the girl.</p>
		Gaining additional qualifications for the young people	<p>But also, the other thing we're doing I-GCSE English as a second language because that's acknowledging. It's, it's a globally recognised GCSE but it's written for people who don't speak English at home and I just as a way that they can get a high grade</p>
		Funding is preventing the necessary support being provided in some cases	<p>P6: And there wasn't an EAL person, this has just grown out of thin air and I spend a lot of time fundraising and so does the head. So, everybody, you know, we're just constantly looking under the sofa cushions. And, I can say it's sometimes really demoralizing because you can see what you need to get, but I've got to fight to get money for people to do just a little something in that can make a huge amount of difference. And you know there's globally things are really tough, and I've got to go</p>

			out into the community and just beg for something to enable somebody to have shoes or to have a dictionary or to have, you know, the somebody come in and assess their English.
		Interventions that have been helpful	She said this is probably the first time in his life that he's had all these interventions, all these people just determined to help him. He's got the head of English giving him tutoring, she's with him in loads of his lessons and she speaks to him in Russian and English.
		It would be helpful to have a central team in each council that can collect information and suggest relevant interventions	P7: It's almost like, if I was able to go to *** Council and say I have a young person that has gone through this, what agencies are out there that can support me starting at £0 and I have a budget of £100 per child. And them say okay, this is the interventions you can get, this is the cost. That would just make life so much easier for schools and for the young people and families.
		Strictness of college can impact learning	P10: Hmm, last year in my school there and in the college now they are different. It's not like my other school. My other school they are , they got, like, something where you must do something, but here it is up to you. Other college they tell you what you must do and you study hard, and when you finish there and then they're gonna give you homework, and then they get it back to you sometime, maybe.
		Support to apply for college	Also, *** [charity] I have big support of ***[charity], so I appreciate for ***[charity] and they admitted to college. Yeah, because my age was under 16 so they help me to attend the college.

		The progression to move to more advanced learning feels slow and unfair	At, umm, beginning of December, no, end of December, they have like this exam. If you pass this exam, you, you, you are qualified to move to the next level, but you still you have to come to college until June, so you come for nothing. I remember last year I passed entry 3 both reading, writing, speaking, and listening at end of December and then I have to attend college until June 4. Even I have just to come and sit in the class.
		The system does not always give the correct academic support	P11: For me on a personal I don't agree with this system. I think for example, if someone he doesn't know how to read or write at all. They, they, they should be like in year, for, for the for the full qualification. If you're pass, for example, in January when you really, really good, maybe they give you a chance to try another year. So, it might be really helpful for, for many people. Yeah. To have a, a system that's more better.
		Unclear differentiation between learning levels	So, I would say and also as I mentioned earlier, the level is really, really mixed. For example, if, if you picked a student from entry 1, entry 2, entry 3 they are all the same, all three, level 3, level 1, level 2, all the same.
		Understanding the school system and rules	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.



		Use of apps and technology to support learning	P9: I do actually like the, uh, we have an app that we study and, you know, it is online, it is online learning. So when you go home, you can study on this, uh app, which is called ****. I really like it because, you know, you can do everything online, you don't have to write it down, and there are all the assessments that you can do, uh, which is really helpful both for English and math, physics, everything that you want to do with. Uh, there was from entry one until GCSE, so it's really good. I quite like that.
	Learning experiences	Enjoyment of opportunities for discussion	P9: Well, at university? Because the, the course was, uh, well, big group and we have to we are to discuss a lot of stuff. We have to talk and, uh, it was really fun for me.
		Experience has been positive overall	Well, I was happy with the college myself, so I, I have no complaints, minors I do, it always safe. I see something, but then I always say and so far so good with me. I mean, I didn't have any problems.
		Importance of reading and writing skills	Reading labels, reading on an Internet page to book a doctor's appointment or to fill out your Universal Credit form.

		Learning focus is on English language ability in college	So first we need to learn English, so we need to get 100% comfortable in English. So, you said I understand English, I can speak, I can write, I can read. So, after that, we need to focus on our future, you know. So, the college said we will promote you, we will provide you everything.
		My ability to learn improved as time went on	Yeah, we learning English as well as learning for school. Learning is, wasn't easy in the start and I remember I, I, couldn't read anything, but I with the time I, I, I learn a lot of things.
		Opportunities to go to new places and learn about them	Yeah, the college did very better because that's not only one thing we study in the college to speak better, but to learn some lessons or these things so they have give us some experience as we went outside and did some volunteer. Now summer start the teacher say we have; we have some volunteer to go outside to clean the beach.
		Use of pictures to support learning	The sentences are quite difficult, but the teacher is telling to us in an easy way, so if I'm trying to understand the teacher I show the picture on the Google.
		Covid-19 impacted the young person's educational experience	P5: I was one year in lockdown, and after that for college. I went to school actually for two weeks, in *** school. And, yeah, after that uh it was lockdown I think, yeah, for 3 or 4 months. Then I apply for college, yeah.

		Differentiated work needed to access learning	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.
		Feeling as though their full potential is not being recognised	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.
		Feeling as though you want to give up	P11: Honestly, I, I knew many of people from different countries, Sudanese and different nation, they are less, less motivated to move to the high level, not because they're not want to study, but because of the years [it takes]. For example, if you are new, probably start with entry level one, entry one, and then you need entry 2/3, and then level 1 and level 2. This is about five years. Five years and then you, you still haven't got your GCSEs. So they say 'Ohh, come on, I'm not gonna spend like, five years at college to, to move to level 2'. And then if I want to go to university, I still have to do GCSE Math and English, and then you need your A levels. So, when they think like that, 'Ohh no, I should just do something else instead of college'.
		Knocked confidence going from	P7: And I think that's what was happening at the beginning, especially. You're gonna go into the bottom set because there's lots of additional support and there's lots of this-

		being a high achiever in home country to bottom sets in UK	<p>P6: And that's really damaging then.</p> <p>P7: And then actually they already knew all the information, like they could do the- they could understand every part of the plant they could label it just not in English. But actually, their memory of what it is and what- so if they're in the lesson and you've given the opportunity to translate the words, they can understand it. But it's, it's so difficult.</p>
		Not able to show full potential due to language barrier	<p>P7: Yeah, and they get to a point where their English isn't very good, but they start picking up and they become comfortable with it. All of a sudden, they know enough to get by, but not enough to fit in. So, they just stop talking.</p>
		Not understanding the context of importance of the learning	<p>P8: The topics in college for me, yeah, it's difficult for because we didn't know nothing about vegetarian, we, we all eat meat, and so the topic was not relevant to the culture. We know nothing about vegetarianism and not interesting to us.</p> <p>R: So, you mean like some of the things that you learn about, maybe you just aren't really relevant to you?</p> <p>P8: Yeah.</p> <p>P11: Yeah, and for me, yeah.</p>
		Not wanting to appear different to peers	<p>And you're the only person you are wearing head scarf. And you're Syrian. And you come from Ultra conservative family.</p>

		<p>Parent expectations can be overwhelming and cause stress</p>	<p>P3: In her country she was praised a lot.</p> <p>P1: Constantly praised, yeah,</p> <p>P3: 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 –</p> <p>P1: It has to be perfect.</p> <p>P3: Yeah, it has to be perfect. So that's possibly the impact of her mum at home.</p>
Perceived Inclusion	Building friendships	<p>Helping young people identify as part of a group and increases belonging</p>	<p>P6: 30 of you every single day. So like the teacher doing a surprise Eid party - That's because they're his tutor group and they matter to him and they are special to him. He wasn't a whole school thing, it was for *** and her tutor group. And that was amazing. I say, amazing, but I'm, I have only been here a few years and I'm not a teacher, and I'm constantly surprised and overwhelmed by the way it's like lots of little families within a big family.</p>
		<p>Building connections through shared interests and likes</p>	<p>But almost you can say 'what a success story' because they're just being themselves, and they've chosen who they like being with not based on race, colour, gender, or cultural identity. It's just 'I'm this person and this this is who I like hanging out with, I really don't like hanging out with the Ukrainian kids in my class'.</p>

		Building long term friendships	And even someone came from other countries to find him his [unintelligible]when you are getting to him and to get to know each other and then to know about his country or something and sometime maybe when you gonna come back to go holidays in his country maybe, whatever, so he will invite you into his home to stay with him rather than to go at the hotel or to pay someone to take you into the, uh, tourist places or something. If he from, for example, if he from Korea or China or whatever, so we, you know, we met here together and then we get to know each other, so later we'll go his house direct and then he will talk us to show the tourists he country and then next, next year we will so plan like we're gonna go our country. So then there, so, I mean that came my turn.
		Friendships help them to feel more confident	P4: Yeah, it was like. I used to live with the boys and we play sometime together in the garden and we was doing some stuff and watching TV. Uh, Yeah. If you had a friend, friend, uh, good friend with you. So it's, it's helpful, yeah. Especially when you come to home and you had the friend.
		Have built friendships from across the world	So after half an hour, no, half a year, regularly I going to college and I speak with the another, another country boys and also I live with Sudan boy and the name is ***, JW know him. So our language different, he speak Arabic and I speak Pashto so when we see each other normally which everyday so we talk English with these things so now, I'm better with everything, that's right.
		It is helpful when other young people are friendly	P4: Yeah. It was though, though, like, I was thinking they were on a surprise. I was thinking they will, like, saying something like 'you are like this' and like this. But, but they were very friendly and, and, like, welcoming there they for them it was doesn't matter who is there. Yeah. So, it was very nice.

		It would be helpful to have opportunities to mix with and learn from a wider range of students	And like he say, one time they give me like a option to meet more people like when they go to *** [charity] and when they go to the another college and another student the meeting even more people is better. You can speak a bit and then meeting the more people are- they learning more words, learning more English.
		Making friends with English students	<p>P11: Hmm, frustrating. But after a while, we have to understand this, here in England, so, people they meant to have, like school friends, out of school friends and yeah, have the different.</p> <p>R: So you have had to get used to somethings that are quite different.</p> <p>P11: Mmm, different dynamics. So when you make friendship with someone so you have to make sure he's outside friend not at the school so, yeah.</p>
		Opportunities to make new friends	And the other thing they have some, uh, they making the activities, yeah, activities to take the guys to somewhere nice. So, we had the this as well, yeah, and many new guys I met there and some of them are still I know them. Yeah.
		Opportunities to socialise with friends outside of school	Yeah. And there's a youth club as well, I've been there many time. Youth club. Yeah. I don't know if it's belong to the *** [charity] or something, I don't know. But I used to go there and when the college come then we start online. So we had the quiz competitions, yeah. So, it was very nice. Games and things, yeah. So, yeah, I remember that it was very helpful. Yeah.

		Other young people accepting newcomers	S: Yeah. Yeah, because that's why I love the UK, because, you know, we, we see everything on the same way. We don't say that's he from Afghanistan, he's from here, or everyone. The, the rule of law is democracy, and democracy is that we don't feel outstanding [outcast/different] or uncomfortable, so when come to college so we feel comfortable and no one said to us, 'You aren't from this country, why you come here?', yeah, or, 'Why don't go back to your country?'. So when I come to college I feel about myself, so I'm from Afghanistan and I come to learn English. So talk to each other friendly.
		Relationships should be built on trust	So, you know, our country and our culture is not like this, if someone to ask you about your culture or your family or something else, he wanted to share with you or someone close to you and then to get to know each other. They need to build trust first.
	Celebrating culture and diversity	Being mindful of questions that could upset students	When someone ask how old you are, and when you answer you think he get to know and then they're gonna leave me like that, like something, but then, you know, 'what is your plan?' And I say, that's it, maybe he will talk to someone else. They say, this, uh, this young person, his, uh, his plan like that, he will do like that, he don't do that. They share with other one, so why, why am I gonna tell you.
		Celebrating all holidays and cultural events in school	But her form teacher talked to me and we had a think and we asked her what she wanted to do and she ended up doing a talk to the class, at the beginning of Ramadan, and then as a surprise he got all this Eid, decorations and decorated the form in two to time, got food in and they had a party. And that was when *** suddenly became this very chatty, bouncy Tigger.



		Having culture and values understood and accepted	OK: One time I go for pray. Then no people will say, 'Why you pray here? Why you Muslim? Go to your country, Why you from Afghanistan? Why you come?' they, they have respect for you coming in UK and that you live in the UK, and they have like a big hope for you.
		Learning and understanding UK culture and life in the UK	Sometimes it's good. It's good to develop this skill. So sometimes we have that they used to like, we got 'life in the UK' aspect. So, when you do that, you get a little bit sometimes they like to take us into the computer and to show you how to use the computer and give you some ideas how to understand this technology, very useful.
		Everybody should be treated equally because everyone matters	It's like you're in there is a respect for everyone. Respect for religion. Respect for yourself. Respect for your skin. Not like they say, 'you black, I white', nothing like this. 'You're Muslim, I'm Christian', not like this. 'I no Like your friend', No. No. Like everyone have respect for everyone. Like, have respect.
		Taking the time to learn about an individual's culture	And so the two Syrian girls in this little breakfast club are going to do a whole school assembly with the head and *** and the 6th formers and present what Ramadan is. It's meant to be a year 7 breakfast club by invitation. There are two year Sevens, one Ukrainian boy and two Syrian boys there.
		Felt welcome and accepted in college	03.04 OK: We go to the college, like, for like a home. For everyone is just one, like, one home. Everyone is very friendly and happy for everyone to speak happy for everyone, and the same as in the family.

	Enjoyment opportunities	Ability to be silly and have fun	<p>P7: Just so angry, yeah. And you said the first time you saw him smile was when he came up and was doing the clay and was just working with clay, and somebody made it something rude out of clay.</p> <p>P6: He thought it was hilarious.</p> <p>P7: He thought, and he was, and you [P6] said 'I've never seen him laugh'. And they were just laughing at the clay.</p> <p>P6: I remember sitting around the farm with you, and I just, I have not seen this child smile. And all of a sudden, it starts in connection.</p> <p>P7: You're just like everyone finds that sort of thing funny now, Willy Willies out of clay are just the best thing ever.</p>
		Activities with universal rules and little demand for language	<p>Jenga, Gruffalo snap, stuff you might play when you're really little, but they're rules are simple and it brings you back to that sort of security.</p>
		Allowing young people to make their own decisions about what to take part in	<p>We're already working with people who've lost so much control and power and autonomy and place in society and identity, and you come to a new culture and then people make assumptions - often very caring assumptions - about what people want or how they feel or who they want to be, or what they like doing.</p>

		Being a part of clubs and sports teams	P4: Yeah. I think we say there's a lot of things. And if we, if we are someone ask us. Yeah. To do for the guy like, you know, in the back [in my home] country we when I was studying, I remember, eh, they making like eh, matches for, for the like cricket matches and football message which I, I didn't see here. Yeah. So I think if you have something like this it would very helpful. Yeah, it's very, very good.
		Enjoyment of sports and physical activities	P7: One another thing I thought, that in sports the rules are the same across the world. And, umm, it doesn't matter what's going on with that if I'm like, 'oh, you wanna play this?' They're like, 'yeah!'. So lots of our students play sports either after school or when they come up to me and we do at least half an hour.
		Free time is used for fresh air and relaxing	Things outside of college. I don't have something. I finish college, go home, and for one hour relax and go back just alone my work. I don't, like, meeting more people. I just go alone to the beach and sometimes the park and sometimes go back and one hour or two reading and computer using computer.
		Learning skills and being distracted from the stresses in life	So I know little bits about students, but I wouldn't say I know them very well. I don't think they'll open up to me about something specific. But that's, I guess, that's not why I'm working with them. I'm working with them to give them a place where they can just not have to think about anything and actually learn skills.

		<p>Opportunities to express themselves and find where they feel comfortable</p>	<p>we had English as well and we had the cooking classes as well. Yeah, I I like cooking. So, I had to cooking class as well there. And the other thing they have some, uh, they making the activities, yeah, activities to take the guys to somewhere nice.</p>
		<p>School working with external organisations to create opportunities</p>	<p>we've got a thing where we worked hard with the local Cricket Club, to do two cricket taste a days and they're here on a Sunday morning last Sunday this coming Sunday and we worked with two other secondary schools and said five students from each school, so 15 altogether and cricket coach is coming. And then there's a view to one or two students maybe having a bursary to go and do cricket because obviously this could be a good thing.</p>
		<p>Understanding that the importance is on giving people opportunities rather than filling up spaces</p>	<p>And from the other two schools nobody came, so they had two people instead of 15 people. And I got this rather grumpy e-mail saying 'well, we're not doing it the second day of the taste of the next week if only two are coming'. But I wrote back and said 'two people coming, just think that's two lives and two people having an opportunity to just think do I like this?'. And they said that the two students they had were really good and they really loved it, so I think 'how can you let them down by not doing the following Sunday when you promised? How could you break your promise?'</p>
	<p>Experiences of prejudice</p>	<p>Access to learning is not always fair</p>	<p>I say there still and then, I get my certificate from my last school there and showed them about that and they accept that. They said OK, they said to me, they look at my age and they look at when, how many years I have in this country and they look at that, they say 'nah there's no way for you' or 'You're almost, you have like one year in this country so you not allowed to go like level one or</p>

			level up', like that, so. So, they saying do your ESOL and then after that when you finish that and then we'll see.
		My religious practices have not been taken into consideration	<p>P10: Yes, like for example, they our team, as they team and they're gonna pull out one from Eastern Europe, one from here, one from Asia, one from Africa, and they [canteen workers] don't know, they don't know each other how to cook, and they, they don't approach you or, or religion too, so Muslim, Muslim, Christian, Christian, so Muslim food is Halal, and there is no halal, so just, then really need them to buy, rather than to go, every day we used to go McDonald's.</p> <p>P11: Yes. Yeah, we have half of one hour break, for example, and it's on the other side of town, for example.</p>
		Cultural celebrations are likely missed unintentionally	But the, the other things like, you know, celebrations, because there are not so many people from my country there and they are mostly well from England and we, we don't, we don't do any celebrations there, which is why, I mean, I don't expect it to happen.
		Cultural values prevent them from engaging with certain activities	<p>P3: Cause we have this should of cooked food though.</p> <p>P1: So yes, he really wouldn't do it.</p> <p>P3: It's the boy the boy from Afghanistan</p> <p>P1: Woman's work and then would wash up or help to the washing after</p> <p>P3: so we were showing him pictures of Gordon Ramsay, and you [P1] found a chef from Afghanistan.</p>

			<p>P1: 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.</p> <p>P3: I think he's polite. So now he nods along and he does it at school because he he has to.</p> <p>P1: 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.</p>
		Experiences of racism	<p>And there was one lady, she start asking me straight away questions like 'where you from?' like it a normal question, then I say I am from Sudan. And then, 'why you're here?', I said, 'to study', now she say, 'I mean like why did you come to the UK?'. I said to her, 'I have war in my country', and then she didn't stop for this one, she asked me, 'how did he come to UK?' I said 'ohh, I came by for Libya. Chad, Libya, Italy, France and here'. And she said to me, 'why didn't you stop and stay in France instead of coming here to, to the UK?'. I was fed up and I said 'now is enough'.</p> <p>JC: Yeah, completely understandable.</p> <p>P11: I said 'Sorry, I cannot answer to that question. Can you change the topic, please?' And she say 'Oh, sorry, I just want to know, it's not, it's nothing like—', so I said 'that's okay' and then I told my teacher.</p>
		Inappropriate or misunderstood behaviour due to cultural differences	<p>one day in my school in my class and said the teacher and the student like a fight the teacher say, 'Why you say teacher?' students say, 'Why I no say teacher? Because you teacher, your job teacher, I have respect for teacher'. But teacher say, 'No, in UK, the teacher name no trouble then</p>

			you can respect. But everyone say, I say it for respect, not trouble. You are my teacher, I can't say you name, because I have respect for teacher.
		People asking inappropriate and uncomfortable questions	<p>P10: But still more people coming in still asking the question.</p> <p>P11: Yeah, those are coming in for the during lunchtime. Umm, yeah, so, they still, that one is separate one, but they people volunteer, they're coming from charity. They come when everyone is there.</p> <p>P10: Yeah, everyone is there. Sometimes, they used to invite some student if you want to engage with them is like three or four, and then to, yeah, to engage with them, to get to know each other by relationship with, umm, Asian people like Korean–</p> <p>P11: like Japan.</p>
		Bullying coming from other asylum-seeking students	<p>P1: He's the worst actually. Though I have to say he's the worst for saying inappropriate things for the Ukrainians.</p> <p>JC: Ohh really?</p> <p>P1: 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.</p> <p>P3: 'Ohh Ukraine's not a country'</p> <p>P1: 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</p>

		Difficulty building friendships	P8: No, I don't have friend in the college. But I have met with many people, with teachers and many Ukrainian people. Because language little, yeah, and I'm going to college just two months and yeah.
		Feeling unable to understand peers and adults	when I went to college because the accent quite different from US country and UK English. Yeah English and it's called different for example. We know the English is, is a world country or something that and they used everywhere, but in our country, some, some books we use and English, so the English accent is uses an accent. So it's quite difficult so, I, I understand that everything this spring, I came here, umm, when teacher said the things in English, so I feel very difficult.
		Separation from British students	S: Yeah, for asylum seeker in the college. Yeah. So, the British students and some other foreign students, for example French or Italian, they come to learn something for example take a engineering classes, take, umm, chef classes, but they have separately. We are Asian students. So yeah, we have another hub for asylum to go there.
		Unable to engage in some friendship activities due to culture or religious boundaries	I 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.



	Relationship with school staff	Adults checking in on young people's wellbeing	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.
		Adults working hard to build relationships with the young people	And came in from Calais on the back of the van. And then I think ended up in *** [local authority] somehow, *** [local authority], actually. And whoever took him in chose *** [this school], he was the first student I worked with in, like, an alternative provision setup where I was just building social skills and building relationship with him to then helping him into classes and to help him with those sorts of things. So, it's started, he was here six years ago, and I think from there it's just been building and building and building.
		Being accepted by school staff without judgement	The way he had totally engage. Because he, I mean, he does have a mum back at home officially, he told students he didn't have a mum, but now he does have a mum. It's so complicated. And I just feel who are we to judge?
		Complications around age and honesty	He's definitely older than he said he was, significantly, because he came as a child, but probably a late teenage child rather than a young teenage child, and that's not unknown for people coming from the African continent, for a multitude of reasons
		Consistency of relationships is important	Yeah, because it is dependable. It's solid ground under their feet. And they know exactly what happens and you have tutor time every day. So you know that someone is checking in with someone and you are the focus.

		Efforts to support English language understanding	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.
		Encouraging involvement in sports, clubs, and activities	So, they, they have all had buddies with them and they're, they're all encouraged, like I said, to do sports and activities any after school club. So, we, we run so many clubs as a school next so many
		Feeling that people are interested in you	We have clergy visit at the *** - the alternative provision center that I work at. And they do clergy visit and they come up once a week. And the guy that ran the youth service came up on the same day that the Ukrainian students were there and he walked in he was like 'hello!' And literally their faces lit up, it was so cute. Because all of a sudden – he hasn't seen them since summer, they haven't seen him since summer, he remembered all their names, he went and chatted to them.
		Have to build relationships quickly	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.

		Helping young people feel comfortable coming to us	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.
		I like my teacher	Yeah, but I mean with my classmate, yes, teachers we have a lot of fun, I like them, they like me, so yeah, we got a really, really good teacher.
		Pastoral and emotional support needed	<p>P3: I'm gonna say we do quite a lot of pastoral support, yeah.</p> <p>P1: A lot job of our job is pastoral now</p> <p>P3: And especially when they started there was something every day coming.</p> <p>P1: Yeah, it was constant.</p> <p>P3: And it wasn't even school. Ohh, 'I don't know how to do this', or you know.</p>
		Positive impact of teachers who have an understanding of what asylum-seeking young people are experiencing	<p>P1: I think our students are really, really lucky here. I think that they get a lot of support.</p> <p>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.</p>

		School supporting the family	<p>And so, this child was with the host and then they went into temporary accommodation in *** street, and then they were given a room in a hotel for three months with no access to Internet and kept getting homework detentions, well, then then we found out Mum couldn't afford to pay for Internet access, so school dealt with that.</p>
	Isolation	Bullying coming from other asylum-seeking young people	<p>27.02</p> <p>P1: He's the worst actually. Though I have to say he's the worst for saying inappropriate things for the Ukrainians.</p> <p>JC: Ohh really?</p> <p>P1: 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.</p> <p>P3: 'Ohh Ukraine's not a country'</p> <p>P1: 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</p>
		Difficulty building friendships	<p>P8: No, I don't have friend in the college. But I have met with many people, with teachers and many Ukrainian people. Because language little, yeah, and I'm going to college just two months and yeah.</p>

		Feeling unable to understand peers and adults	<p>J: So, now you learn everyone have a same problem. You know you don't have– the English is not our first language</p> <p>S: Yeah, we are happy. Yeah, because our accent is quite difficult, so some British people so we can't understand what, what they said.</p>
		Separation from British students	<p>S: No, no. We have a separate, uh, how do you say in English? Separate hub. JC: A separate area? Okay. S: Yeah, for asylum seeker in the college. Yeah. So, the British students and some other foreign students, for example French or Italian, they come to learn something for example take a engineering classes, take, umm, chef classes, but they have separately. We are Asian students. So yeah, we have another hub for asylum to go there.</p>
		Unable to engage in some friendship activities due to culture or religious boundaries	<p>P1: 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.</p>

Coping with Stresses	Adapting to change	Belonging and engagement builds with time	P7: There was one boy that was, umm, so very low when he first came over and he was drawing bombs and swords and dead people and all that. P6: Very angry, and quite scary. P7: Just so angry, yeah. And you said the first time you saw him smile was when he came up and was doing the clay and was just working with clay, and somebody made it something really out of clay.
		Change can be very difficult for people who are in a new environment or experiencing a lot of stress	P6: But they are just being split down the middle because if you're parents haven't bought into being here and are on the phone saying, is Dad alive? Do you think can go back? Oh, look, they might have water next week.
		Differences between school in home country and UK	P11: This is tricky one, because, in terms of culture in, for example, like friendship, Sudan and here is totally different so. Here you have like school friend and then outside of friend, so someone might be really good with you at the school and say hi to you and speak to you, but when you see, when you see them outside and you say hi, no maybe he not answering to you this is really strange. So in Sudan we don't have, like if you have friends, they friends inside the school and outside school, even teachers. I remember when I've met one of my teachers in *** [UK city], and ohh, I said. 'Hi!',

			she's, she just looked at me and I guess like 'What, who is this?'. And then, and then the day after when we came back to college she said, 'Oh, don't take it personally'. So, it's quite complicated honestly.
		Enjoyment of having more freedom in the UK	But, but the difference I saw there is little, umm restrictions. There is a lot of restrictions there and, and here is not here. Here is, is like friendly here.
		It takes time to adapt views and values	P3: 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.
		Level of parental social status or employment in UK	<p>P3: Cause you can see the differences in education as well.</p> <p>P1: Definitely and with the two Afghan boys in year.</p> <p>P3: Ohh yeah, of course.</p> <p>P2: I don't know what year they are now. P3: Nine</p> <p>P1: 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.</p> <p>P2: Oh, okay.</p> <p>P1: 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</p> <p>P3: They are almost like nomads because they're trouble. Yeah. So.</p>

			<p>P1: And they're certainly a class divide there, and they don't have any interaction even though they speak the same language.</p> <p>P3: 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.</p>
		Young person struggled to settle in the UK	<p>P1: 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.</p>
	Feelings of loss	Continuation of relationships from home country	<p>P1: 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.</p>
		Losing their sense of self	<p>P6: To get refugee status as a Syrian person, they've come from the camps on the border with Syria, they haven't come on the boats. Their situation must be so terrible that they've got refugee status because it's so hard to get it. But it's the way they've had that. It's a path, it's a route forwards, and they have to engage with where they are to survive.</p>



		Memories of times in home country	P6: Do you remember that moment when everyone was sitting there sawing wood? And it was one of those cold yucky days, and you were with ***, and you said 'you're really good at this', and he said 'ohh, I always did this with my granddad'. His grandad is stuck behind Russian lines. And you think - But there he was so happy he wasn't going '[crying noises] ohh I used to do this with my granddad'. So, and that's sort of real zone.
		Pride in being from home country	P1: 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.
		Worrying about home country and family	P7: Some of them do. Some get absolutely everything. Then others yet so little that they come in again on the other side. They don't get told anything because their parents aren't talking to them because they've gone to do something and they just want to ignore it and crack on. They come in and they don't know what's going on. They don't know how their families doing. They don't - and that is again another set of worries. And so there is, like, very few students in the middle ground by their like they know enough, but they don't know too much.
		Young people moving back to home country	P7: And all of a sudden you've got a confused child who's between their heart and their head. Not knowing whether they are coming or going and not knowing what they really want. And then, so, I think the easiest thing to do is push everyone away and give up. Which is really tough because –

			<p>P6: And absolutely applies to the students with this status that we're talking about today. But, you know that's absolutely how it is and it's, it's sometimes really hard work isn't it because you're trying to engage someone who's discuss saying, 'Well, my parents say we're going back next month, so this is a waste of time, you can just talk to my phone'.</p>
	Previous experiences	Emotional impact of choosing not to do something relate to home country	<p>For some of them it's quite hard because they're like choosing not to take part in something, and I think that's an internal battle within themselves and yeah, they're choosing not to take part in the Christmas celebration because they don't want to celebrate. It's bringing up a whole plethora of emotions.</p>
		Emotional trauma of previous experiences	<p>But, you know, she's been five years in a camp. Yeah, and had to leave overnight because ISIS were coming into their town. So left in their pyjamas. Pretty much. Five years, in a camp, very frightening, her parents couldn't afford school for their daughter and then into a primary school and lockdown and then into straight into year seven, so a big ask</p>
		Family separation impacts engagement and belonging	<p>But the same point that is that they've gone through that grief cycle and sort of accepted that this is where they have to be, and even though there have been bumps and they be terrible sadness when somebody back home is lost, their building this as a home for their children, whereas if you come and you're a victim of war and your husband's back at home and your granddad and the teachers and the dog.</p>

		Level of information about home country impacts ability to settle	P6: And then other families, the children come and tell us, 'Well, we might be moving to Poland. Well, we might be doing this. Well there's no point me learning cause I'm not staying here. Oh this is all bad. And we hate this'. And you know, some of the children are just giving you their parents stuff.
		No ability to offload stress and worries	P2: 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?
		Other people's understanding of the young person's situation	<p>So what I realized is they don't have, they don't know, they don't have any idea about us and how we came here, they think, like every student from Asia–</p> <p>P10: Yeah, or from Africa.</p> <p>P11: They think they came for apprenticeship, or they have like, million, million of pounds or dollars and they came here to study and to have fun, and then go back home. No, it's a bit different.</p>
		Young people taking on adult roles and supporting their family	P1: 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.

	Stability	Host family relationships as a source of security	P7: I think that the relationship with the host family again will impact everything else. Because if it's going well and you think, OK, this is my home, I'm gonna be staying here. That's something that's stable.
		Difficulty affording to live in the UK leads to further uncertainty	And so, this child was with the host and then they went into temporary accommodation in *** street, and then they were given a room in a hotel for three months with no access to Internet and kept getting homework detentions, well, then then we found out Mum couldn't afford to pay for Internet access, so school dealt with that.
		Feeling confused and unsure about their situation	P9: Uh, I have. Well, didn't have anything in my mind because, you know, everything was confusing for me. But then now, here I can sort of see my way, but it's still not clear. So, it's all weird kind of a situation for me.
		Feeling uncertain about their situation	And the one going back to Ukraine is quite concerning because we know where they live. And then another four or five may be going back, but then more people come in and sometimes they are going back because Granny's had a heart attack and somebody needs to look after them, and some people are going back because they are just in denial about it or some because the child can't cope, or mum's missing her husband, or they can't find anywhere to live as one family – like one that has just gone back, his little brother was gonna start with us and the autumn, ***'s family.
		Knowing they will stay in the UK	P3: 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

		permanently increases engagement	<p>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</p> <p>P1: Because they don't know whether they go back, so they have to keep up with it.</p>
		School needs to be a safe, consistent place	<p>And I think all we can do is a school is just be this constant, constant, reliable, repetitive, open minded for them.</p>
Ability to Communicate	English language development opportunities	As English improves, more opportunities become available	<p>P5: After that. Yeah. At college I studied just English, yeah. And for one year after that, I applied for engineering, and there was [students] from different countries. English people and foreign, yeah.</p>
		College is a mix of English and foreign students	<p>P5: Uh, when I change my course, like to *** college like there's like a lot of English people as well, yeah.</p>
		English language classes are needed before formal education	<p>P5: Between, uh, the ESOL [language course] was like, ah, it was just for language. Yeah, it's for - you're learning, uh, just English</p> <p>R: Just English, okay.</p> <p>P5: But the course, like, when I applied for the engineering like you learned a lot of other things. Yeah.</p> <p>R: And do you think that having that language course first was helpful?</p>

			P5: Yeah, of course. Yeah.
		External organisations can be helpful for language and friendship development	P4: Yeah, and the other thing for the language was uh, I used to live with my foster care and she was very helpful for me. Like when I didn't know something I will, I was asking her, and she was helping for that. Yeah. So yeah, if you have someone like this it is really helpful.
		Impact of limited language ability on school outcomes	But the one things, yeah, I guess when they, they move me into the one class for the mistake or for the wrong way, I don't know, and I move that there was only, yeah, the students that was born here, I mean, the citizens. And I learnt with them and I found, yeah, I don't know why they put them into the higher level and I cannot understand because inside them, there is nothing. Cause when the teacher asked the question on something that no one can answer, I answer them and then and after that the teacher made me finish in the final year. And then yeah, in the final class, she asked me about 'what level do you want in reading at the moment?', and she say, 'why they put you only in the EASL?', and I say, 'I don't know'.
		Interpreter support needed	We don't read English in our country, our country, our first language is Pashto. So, we learn Pashto books, our Holy Quran in our schools, these thing let's– these type of things. So, when I come, when I arrive in UK is so since September, so I don't know, I don't know about the English language, so every time interpreter help me.

		Not having the language skills to express how you feel	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.
		Speaking English in college as much as possible	About what's in the, like a class. And here in the class, like in same class six or seven Kurdish, four or three Afghans. Like in my class: seven Kurdish, four Afghan, and two Brazilian, and two Sudanese, and three in Arabic language. But this one is not good because the four Afghan they speak Pashto and the same time and Kurdish they speak Kurdish at same time, they can't try English this one is not good for you like the subject yeah. One Afghan, one Kurdish, one Arabic, will every time try English, they can speak English is better, I don't think speaking the same language they can learn English.
		Success in lessons requiring less English language ability	P1: 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.
		Support to learn English language	I've done is to put all the stuff online stuff. Pre teaching. So allow people to – if you are doing something in a subject as a new topic, send out and put everything on the Google Classroom and allow people to look at it. They can use their phone, they can just look at Google Translate and have

			some naughty words and they're whoopee, you know because it's very iffy. But just to get a taste and also a pre teach key critical vocab.
		Learning subject-specific language without functional use in conversation	Or *** in geography, I remember she couldn't say the days of the week, so she was dropped into the middle of her geography lesson and they were doing climate. So, the geography team got me the stuff and we, she and I and her supporters at *** worked on teaching her core vocabulary. And I was sitting in there with her in the lesson and they showed pictures of things because we decide this is the way to make it very even and they ask people what something was and suddenly this hand went up, 'Miss, miss, miss! Anemometer'. She couldn't say Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, but knew anemometer.
	Impact of language on relationships	Accents make understanding people more difficult	And was I thinking that was it like that, for example aeroplane in US English they say AIR, in UK English say AER, so that's quite different. This is very difficult. And now when he said when say something, teacher, they give us three example. How I can give you that example? Say for past and present tense we use past for example. So, on the past use 'I was worried', these things, so teacher, with this sentence teacher gave us 3 examples. So now you understand. Its different in US English and UK.
		Building friendships with same language peers	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,

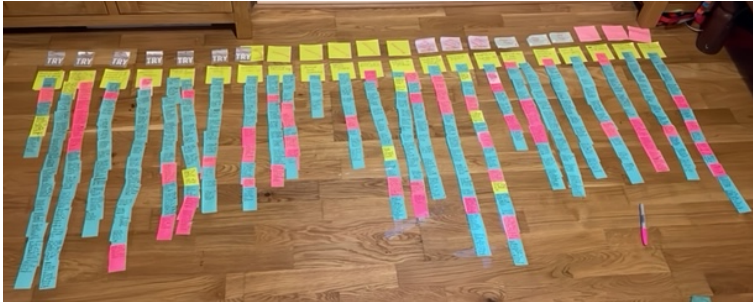


			it's nice that she's got another girl to speak Pashto with, because although her English is okay now, she's not gonna be able to speak about everything she wants to in English.
		Correlation between language ability and building friendships	Yeah. But sometimes I am shy. Sometimes, and yeah, I do not speak with too much people, yeah. Just my like, some, like, Arabic friends and some like Albania, no English people. Because I am shy so that's why I don't speak to much.
		Safety blanket of same language peers helps them feel part of a group but limits integration with wider school	P10: I think. Do you know what, yeah, the people who was born here because they are already are grouped together and they don't mix with other people, if I'm gonna ask somebody for, like, cigarette or whatever you want, see if you go like ask them maybe they're gonna share with you together. But the others here, they don't have community with other people. So, others got the country like Ukraine, for example, lots here, also, there is lots of Korean, but they stay that called anyone like group.
		There is no-one to talk to in my own language	Yeah, yeah. Well, uh, there is no one to talk to with my own language.
	Perception of own English language ability	Better language ability builds confidence	Whereas if you have a bit of English, then put your hand up, you become more confident.

		English language improves with exposure and time	So, after half an hour, no, half a year, regularly I going to college and I speak with the another, another country boys and also I live with Sudan boy and the name is ***, JW know him. So, our language different, he speak Arabic and I speak Pashto so when we see each other normally which everyday so we talk English with these things so now, I'm better with everything, that's right.
		English language is difficult and complex	<p>P7: It was so funny, last week when I was working with my EAL group, one of the girls said 'English is silly'. And I tole her I don't know what do you mean, and she was like in French you have le or la like male or female, but in England you have anything. I just walked off and I was like, 'yeah, you're right, We do'.</p> <p>P6: Like how lovely! English is silly, though, isn't it silly? Very silly language.</p> <p>P7: It's just strange word to use as well, silly. English is silly, yeah, you're not wrong.</p>
		Feeling uncomfortable because of language barrier	So, I came by myself so didn't speak to each other and was not comfortable, but I feel very brave because English is not my first language. So, when with some friends from another country and talk to English so I feel very brave. I say, 'I can do it. I can speak English, so I'm I'm perfect, yeah'.
		I can understand more English than I can speak	Yeah. So, OK. Yeah, it's same like, yeah, it's same like me. It's 50:50. I understand English, but I speak– my speaking is not good.



## Appendix H Extracts from reflective log for reflective thematic analysis

Date	Process	Diary/Reflection
16.04.2023	Code grouping	<p>Today I wrote out all of my themes onto post-it notes and stuck them to the floor of my living room. I found that this really helped me to engage with the data and felt much less restricting than NVivo when I could only see a small number of the codes on screen at any one time so grouping them became overwhelming. Being able to see all the codes with ease helped me to familiarise myself with the data and I felt it made it easier to recognise when a code stood out or I wasn't sure that it was currently placed within the correct category and theme.</p>  <p>Additionally, being able to view all codes at once and physical move them between categories and themes helped to begin to gain a deeper understanding of the data and the emerging narrative that I want to portray in my results. This also prompted me to consider how the narrative I am beginning to identify might be shaped in part by my own knowledge and understanding of the experience of young people who seek asylum in the UK. This is something that I will try to keep in the forefront of my mind and report transparently in the write up.</p>
18.04.2023	Theme generation	<p>I decided to revisit my themes today after a few days away from them and when I looked over them I realised that my initial categorisation had been led by my research questions equally to, if not more than, the data. Many of my codes stayed in the same groupings but when I read them I renamed the theme to better encompass the narrative of the codes within. My themes were reorganised from 5 categories</p>

		<p>into 4. I kept the category around learning, however moved one of the themes out of it (opportunities to have fun) as although many of the opportunities happened within schools/colleges, the key message in these was the enjoyment and ability to make their own choices, which is not in itself related to the location the activities took place. I also broke down my 'relationship' category as it did not feel like it described what it was about relationships that was important. This category was divided into two categories; one around how language and communication impacts relationships (this was combined with 'language abilities' category and is now 'ability to communicate',) and one about how relationships can impact inclusion (combined with 'attitudes to diversity' category, now 'perceived level of inclusion'). I then looked at the final categories around previous experiences and again realised that the key points of the category were around stressful experiences that had been experienced and how these impact them in education today. This was renamed.</p> <p>I then thought I was happy with the final 4 categories and 19 themes, but as I began getting prepared to write my results section I realised that 'ability to communicate' and 'perceived level of inclusion' appeared to have some overlap. This is because there were similar codes in the 'difficulty building friendships' and 'isolation' sub-themes. I thought about these a little longer and reflected on what I thought the difference between these two sub-themes should be. After a while, I realised that 'difficulty building friendships' needed to be more about the language and communication required, whereas 'isolation' was more about feeling alone or different. I had a look at the codes within these two categories again and ended up moving some across to fit within these clearer boundaries I had set. Finally then, I decided to look more closely at the categories 'what helps language development', 'English language difficulties', and 'pride in English language development' again, as there were a few codes that I felt could have fit into multiple categories. I thought about what made</p>
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		<p>each category different and decided to reduce these into two more clearly defined categories of 'language development opportunities' which includes both positive and negative elements discussed by participants, and 'Perception of own English language ability' which again has both positively and negatively focussed codes within. By removing the 'English language difficulties' sub-theme entirely, I was able to better separate codes into relevant themes without focusing on the negative elements of the code as a priority.</p> <p>I am now preparing to write my results section with 4 categories and 17 sub-themes within these. I am happy with the definition of each of these and feel that they have been reorganised in a way that will enable me to better portray the narrative of the data.</p>
21.04.2023	Reflecting on quote selection for results	<p>While writing my first draft of my results, I chose the quotes that I felt best portrayed the messages I was trying to get across. While this was a good method, today I thought about whether or not the focus on representing each key point had restricted me from adequately representing the views of all participants in all focus groups. All participant's views are as important as the others and even if something is raised by only one person, it is a voice and it matters. I feel like this is particularly true for my research in which people shared their personal lived experiences. These experiences may differ, but they are all valid and deserve to be discussed and represented.</p> <p>I therefore read back over my initial draft to ensure that I was happy I had included a range of quotes that covered the views of individuals as well as messages that overlapped across multiple focus groups. I swapped out two quotes for different quotes with similar meanings that were from individuals I felt had been less represented throughout the results.</p>

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