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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Education

**‘Another brick in the wall?’ An Investigation into Resettlement Education
for Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.**

Volume 1 of 1

by

Gavin Michael Tucker

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focused on the education of young people in the youth justice population, who were going through resettlement. Resettlement is the period after a young person is released from prison. It is a complex time of transition, containing both risks and opportunities. The resettlement population comprises young people with a significant range of needs, including a high prevalence of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This prevalence is recognised through provisions in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2014), which mandates appropriate education, health and care support for young people during resettlement in England. However, there is limited research about the educational experiences of the resettlement population, including the perspectives of professionals who support resettlement, such as education providers and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). Therefore, this research investigated the role of these agencies in resettlement and explored the lived experiences of two young people transitioning through resettlement, to address the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of young people with identified SEND engaging with resettlement education provision?
2. How do YOTs and education providers work to facilitate resettlement education provision, and what factors impact on this work?

This research utilised a qualitative case study methodology involving three local authorities. In-depth semi-structured interviews with professionals (n = 30) across three local authorities, and unstructured interviews with young people (n = 2) in one local authority were conducted and analysed using thematic analysis.

The analysis generated a range of themes that shed light on the nature of education provision and support during resettlement, including the roles of inclusive pedagogy and stigma against the resettlement population, who are a marginalised group. Collectively, these themes brought to light sources of good resettlement practice and barriers to progress during resettlement. The thesis concludes by drawing together the findings into a discussion of the complex myriad factors that shape the experiences and provision of education during resettlement.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Gavin Tucker

Title of thesis: 'Another brick in the wall?' An Investigation into Resettlement Education for Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is 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: 5/2/2024

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Main Abbreviations Used

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
CFA 2014	Children and Families Act 2014
CiC	Child in Care
CoP	The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
DfE	Department for Education
DoH	Department of Health
DTO	Detention and Training Order
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ETE	Education, Training and Employment
IPW	Interprofessional Working
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SaLT	Speech and Language Therapist
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SENCO	Special Education Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
STC	Secure Training Centre
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJS	Youth Justice System
YOI	Young Offenders Institution
YOT	Youth Offending Team
YP	Young Person

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Youth Justice System

This doctoral thesis is about education and the Youth Justice System (YJS) in England. In its current form, the English YJS came into being in the year 2000. Formerly overseen by the Probation Service, responsibility for supervision of young offenders was passed to Youth Offending Teams (YOT), which were created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. YOTs are responsible for supervising young people in the community, aged 10-17, who have been convicted for a criminal offence. Every local authority in England has a dedicated YOT. YOTs are multidisciplinary teams, including education workers, police officers, mental health professionals and social workers (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

The other aspect of the YJS is the custodial estate (also known as detention or prison), which comprises a mixed range of secure facilities catering for young people who have committed serious offences. The average monthly size of the youth custody population, as it is measured, has reduced significantly, from just under 3,000 in 2009 to under 500 in 2022, because of changes in youth justice policy (Ministry of Justice, 2023). Most young people in custody are sentenced to a Detention and Training Order (DTO), a type of legal disposal whereby the first half of the sentence is served in custody and the second half is served in the community, supervised by YOTs (Ministry of Justice, 2018). The second half of the sentence is an example of the period of *resettlement*, that is release from custody, which is the central focus of this research. DTOs are the most common form of resettlement window, although other legal disposals are also potentially relevant (Ministry of Justice, 2023). Section 91 orders of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 refer to the most serious offences and mostly involve a sentence greater than the two-year maximum sentence allowed for by DTO orders. Many young people sentenced to Section 91 orders will be released in adulthood (Ministry of Justice, 2023). Young people may also serve time in custody

on remand, awaiting a plea hearing or sentencing for an offence. Young people released from time on remand may also be subject to a community sentence and require YOT resettlement support. Thus, YOTs are major stakeholders in the resettlement of young people leaving prison.

Resettlement is an important, but precarious, period of change that offers both opportunities for rehabilitation and the potential for risk. As the literature review (Chapter 2) will consider in more depth, the delicate life transition that is resettlement requires considerable support and intervention, by services, for young people to successfully rehabilitate, including desistance from offending. Education is a central element of resettlement support.

The custody population represents a small percentage of the overall YJS. For the period of March 2021 through to March of 2022, the most recent statistics available, 13,800 children were cautioned or sentenced. Of that total, 8,000 were first time entrants to the YJS, mainly serving short community sentences. By comparison, in the same period through to March 2022, an average of 450 children were in custody at any given time (Ministry of Justice, 2023). Since records began in 2000, reoffending rates for young people released from custody have been higher than any other offending group including the adult population (Ministry of Justice, 2018 and 2023). Of the children released from custody in 2020/21 (n unknown, but the average size of the custody cohort was 560/month in that year), a total of 62.9 per cent reoffended within 12 months of release in the year 2021/22. In the same cohort, 71.8 per cent of children who served a sentence greater than six months and less than twelve months reoffended. This was the highest rate of recidivism in the YJS for that time. By comparison, 28 per cent of first-time entrants (n = 8,000) reoffended (Ministry of Justice, 2023). Authors on the subject argue that the high level of need in the youth custody population, combined with limited resettlement support, accounts for this high reoffending rate during resettlement (Gray, 2011; Taylor, 2016; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2019; Day, 2022b). The high levels of need of the resettlement population

are essential considerations in this research, as the next section will outline.

1.2 Introduction to the Research

'Education must be at the heart of the youth justice system.' (Taylor, 2016, p.1).

Charlie Taylor, chair of the *Taylor Review on Youth Justice* (2016) and former Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) head teacher, is one of many policy makers to extol the importance of education to rehabilitation. This is because of a long-established link between poor education outcomes and involvement in criminal offences (Bryan and MacKenzie, 2006; Hurry and Rogers, 2014; Taylor, 2016; Hazel and Bateman, 2021). This PhD thesis is the output of a 7-year project, focusing on resettlement. More specifically, this project has examined education provision and related support available during resettlement. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is endemic to the resettlement population and this is a vital area of need that has to be addressed, to prevent reoffending and improve life chances for a vulnerable cohort of young people. My focus in this research is the lived experience of and professional support available to young people with identified SEND. The provision of community resettlement education to young people has not been extensively explored in the literature, as Chapter 2 (the literature review) will reveal. This gap in the literature offers impetus to this research, as does my own professional experience.

As a former social worker and manager in a London YOT, I saw firsthand the vulnerability of the resettlement cohort and the wide range of SEND exhibited by those attempting to move on from a custodial sentence. Having also worked in the child protection system, with older and younger children, and with homeless adults, I was always struck by the high level of risk faced by young people who served a custodial sentence. In many ways, they were the most vulnerable group of service users I worked with

as a social worker. My experience revealed that young people who actively engaged with education upon release tended to achieve improved outcomes, including reduced reoffending. Understanding more about the link between education and rehabilitation for the resettlement cohort has been my main motivation for undertaking this research. Other developments have given the research added relevance.

In particular, the wide-ranging Children and Families Act 2014 (CFA 2014) was designed, in part, to reform the SEND system. A key outcome of this legislation is the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (Department of Education and Department of Health, 2014), hereafter referred to as the 'CoP' (DfE and DoH, 2014). An important section of the CoP focuses on the educational needs of young people who spend time in custody and are resettling back into the community.

The reforms triggered by the CFA 2014 and implemented in the CoP are a response to the complex needs of the custodial population. Young people detained in custody are, as a group, extremely vulnerable. When compared with the overall child population, aged 10-17 years, this group has a higher incidence of mental health problems and substance misuse (Chitsabesan et al, 2006; Bateman and Hazel, 2021); they tend to come from abusive family backgrounds (Carr and Vandiver, 2001; Jacobson et al, 2010; Snow and Powell, 2012); are significantly more likely to be in the care system (Jacobson et al, 2010; Day et al, 2020); and also exhibit a far higher prevalence of SEND (Hughes, 2012; Council for Disabled Children, 2015; Hughes and O'Byrne, 2016; Ministry of Justice and Department of Education, 2016; Day 2022b). The custodial experience is itself highly traumatic and further amplifies many pre-existing vulnerabilities (Hazel and Bateman, 2013; Gray, 2015; Little, 2015).

All of these issues must also be understood within the context of wider structural inequalities. While the links between offending, complex needs

and structural inequalities are multifaceted, and debated, the research literature offers a strong evidence base about the relationship between criminality and structural factors. Social deprivation, inequality and poverty are strongly associated with the youth justice population and the crimes they are involved in (McAra and McVie, 2015 and 2016). In the past decade, there has been increased recognition of the intersection between youth justice involvement, structural disadvantage, and complex developmental needs. This has led to calls to focus on securing what Dowd (2018, p. 79) has referred to as 'developmental equality' for the youth justice population, ensuring they gain access to support that promotes positive development and developmental potential.

In England, structural disadvantages operate at all stages of the justice process, from first arrest, through to court hearings and eventual imprisonment (Robertson and Wainwright, 2020; van den Brink, 2022). Certainly, in my own experience (discussed in section 1.4), the majority of young people I worked with came from a disadvantaged background. In the custody and resettlement population, essentially one and the same population, issues of structural inequality and deprivation are most pronounced. Young people from ethnic minorities are significantly overrepresented in the prison population in England and the wider globe, as are children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds from all demographic groups (YJB, 2021; van den Brink, 2022).

The phenomenon of ethnic minority overrepresentation in the youth justice system has been labelled as 'disproportionality' by HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021, p. 1). The Inspectorate undertook a thematic review of this issue in 2020, inspecting a sample of YOTs that had the most disproportionate overrepresentation of minority groups on any YOT caseload in England (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021) – this review will be discussed below. National statistics back up this concern over disproportionality. Most significantly, in the year ending March 2020, 41 per

cent of the youth custody population came from a Black or mixed heritage background – an ethnicity comprising 2.9 per cent of the English population during the same period. Furthermore, over the same period, 35 per cent of the remand population were from a Black or mixed heritage, an increase of 14 per cent since 2010 (Ministry of justice, 2021). In another significant statistic, boys of Black Caribbean heritage were twice as likely to be excluded from school compared to White academic peers in the school year 2019/2020 (Office of National Statistics, 2021). This issue of school exclusion taps into wider issues of disproportionate intersectionality. In their thematic study of 9 YOTs with the most disproportionate caseloads, including interviews with young people (n = 38), HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021) found young Black men on YOT caseloads displayed significant levels of SEND and adverse childhood experiences, which in many cases had long gone unidentified but been responded to in punitive terms, including school exclusion. The Inspectorate raised concerns about the surfeit of support from mainstream services, including schools, in not identifying and responding to these issues earlier in childhood. The issue of mainstream support will be an on-going feature of the findings' chapters.

In addition to ethnicity, SEND itself is associated with structural inequalities. Poverty occurs at a higher rate for the SEND population, including family poverty that is unable to meet costs associated with complex needs (Mabon et al, 2023). Poverty itself exacerbates the characteristics of the SEND it is associated with (Adjei et al, 2022). Findings from Scotland revealed the poorest 20 per cent of families exhibited a rate of social, emotional, and behavioural needs six times higher than the rest of population (Mabon et al, 2023). This higher prevalence expressed itself in the form of school exclusions, which are four times greater, per 1,000 pupils in Scotland, when compared to pupils from the most affluent 20 per cent of the population (Mabon et al, 2023). Given this complex mix of factors, offending in the most socially deprived 20 per cent of the Scottish population was significantly higher, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds approximately five times more likely to offend

than children from families in the top 10 per cent of the income distribution (Mabon et al, 2023). Young people in the custodial estate are even more likely to originate from a disadvantaged background. As Gibson (2020, p. 41) observed: ‘... put bluntly, it is generally the poorest and most socio-economically disadvantaged children who enter the secure estate.’ Intersection with other forms of inequality, such as ethnic disproportionality, serve to exacerbate this link between offending and structural inequality (Robertson and Wainwright, 2020; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021; van den Brink, 2023).

These structural inequalities and the overrepresentation of minorities in the youth justice system contradict the basic tenets of the Equality Act 2010 and the need to support certain protected characteristics, such as race or disability. Indeed, in line with the Equality Act, sentencing guidelines for England mandate that judges and magistrates consider protected characteristics, needs and vulnerabilities when imposing sentences (Sentencing Council, 2017). Yet, consistent with other forms of inequality, young people from a Black heritage are significantly more likely to receive longer custodial sentences than White peers, for the same crime (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021). These issues of inequality, especially ethnic overrepresentation, has been acknowledged by the Ministry of Justice who have collected data from and undertaken thematic reviews of YOTs to better understand ethnic disparities in youth justice involvement (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021). Furthermore, David Lammy MP chaired an independent review, commissioned by then Prime Minister David Cameron, into the racial disparities evident in the youth justice system. His findings confirmed bias, discrimination and inequality are structural features of the English youth justice system. David Lammy concluded also that many of the causes of disproportionality, especially the overrepresentation of young Black men, lay outside the criminal justice system. He linked causes to systemic poverty, with young Black men more than twice as likely to grow up in poverty compared to White peers, among other systemic factors (Lammy, 2017). However, as this interwoven issue

of structural inequality will highlight through the thesis, responses are possible by practitioners, that address inequality.

This is not to deny that those from more advantaged backgrounds are capable of criminality, but their offending profile tends to be different in nature and often not criminalised in the same way as socially deprived groups by current legal codes (Ilan, 2018; Case and Hampson, 2019). Young offenders from deprived groups tend to be involved in what is colloquially referred to as *street crime*, for example burglary and violence against an individual. These forms of offences tend to be more subject to criminal sanctions than deviant behaviour evident in the social elite, such as disorder in the banking system or the prosecution of wars illegal under international law. It has long been found that those from disadvantaged backgrounds have more contact with the police and are subject to more state surveillance than individuals from affluent backgrounds (Lawther, 2010; Ilan, 2018). This socially constructed difference has long been argued for by criminology, especially the long-established Marxist tradition influential in criminology, which casts crime as being a socially constructed act that changes in meaning over time based on evolving ideologies that adapt the law to strengthen class domination (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1977; Fionda, 2005; Robertson and Wainwright, 2020). These debates about the socially constructed nature of crime notwithstanding, the role of structural inequalities is evident in the experiences and actions of those involved in youth offending.

Despite the established link between structural factors and youth offending, the history of youth justice policy is noticeably absent of measures, laws and policies that offer meaningful solutions to address the macro factors of deprivation, adversity and inequality that beset the lives of many young people in the justice system. For many commentators, this reflects the socially constructed nature of crime and its association with an undeserving underclass (Fionda, 2005; Ilan, 2018; Robertson and Wainwright, 2020).

Responses to structural issues, where they exist, tend to be about mitigation, working at an individual level and establishing processes that purport to address deficits in meso-level processes, such as interagency working at the local authority level (Case and Hampson, 2019). For decades policy, guidance and legislation in the youth justice system has been inherently politicised and been subject to the capriciousness of political agendas and public opinion, which has undermined its ability to address structural factors at a macro level. Case and Hampson (2019, p. 29) have described this policy history as ‘stochastic’ and often about policy-based evidence rather than evidence-based policy. Given the contested terrain that is youth justice, this research project has also endeavoured to look at policy and guidance significant to the outcomes of young people – in particular the CoP, the relevance of which is introduced here. The efficacy of the CoP, as a policy instrument, will be covered in depth in a later chapter (see section 9.7).

Based on assessments and Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs), the CoP makes explicit statutory requirements to ensure joined-up and continuous education provision for young people with identified SEND who are in or leaving prison, including three main duties for local authorities and custodial establishments:

- (1) A single local authority should be designated as responsible for a young person’s education provision where SEND needs have been identified, both in custody and during resettlement;
- (2) There should be continuous and appropriate SEND provision when a young person is in custody; and,
- (3) Suitable education provision needs to be available and reviewed when a young person is released from custody, in order to aid resettlement (DfE and DoH, 2014).

The resettlement phase in requirements (1) and (3) provides an important statutory frame for this research. The CoP indicates that all relevant agencies must work closely together in all aspects of commissioning, assessment,

planning and provision of education during resettlement (DfE and DoH, 2014). Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, YOTs have a statutory responsibility to assist in the provision of education, while not acting as education providers in their own right (Ministry of Justice, 2013). Therefore YOTs, the long-established hubs of resettlement support at the local authority level, are integral to the joined-up working required by the CoP. Indeed, YOTs are identified by the CoP as the nodal point for communication and oversight, during and after a young person's time in custody, for all matters (DfE and DoH, 2014). The central aims of the CoP present an opportunity for the main agencies involved in resettlement to work together to support a marginalised group. In this sense, the guidance is a positive development. However, section 9.7 (chapter 9) offers a literature-based conceptual evaluation of the CoP and reveals many inherent challenges in the guidance and its processes, linked in part with its failure to address structural factors. Supporting this conceptual evaluation, the findings from all three case studies reveal a mixture of good practice and challenges to joined-up working, as mandated by the CoP, suggesting a realisation of its aims is complex in practice.

Structural issues about SEND and youth justice have also gained international currency over the past 30 years. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified by the UK in 1991, acknowledges the prevalent issue of structural inequality in justice systems across the globe, focusing in particular on discrimination and overrepresentation of minority groups in almost all countries. It compels signatories to respect and ensure the rights of all children, including those involved in criminal justice systems, without discrimination based on race, religion, social status or other differences. The principle of *non-discrimination* is formally encoded in the convention as one of its four general principles (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Yet, discrimination is evident among signatories to the UNCRC including the UK, as the above discussion of structural inequality suggests (van den Brink, 2022). This principle of non-discrimination and youth justice has been picked up more recently, by the UNCRC general comment number 24

issued in 2019, about the rights of children in justice systems across the globe. One main point raised by the general comment was the prevalence of SEND in the global youth justice population and the need to respond to SEND through support rather than criminalisation (UNCRC, 2019). A range of research, both domestic and international, supports the position of the UNCRC and the rationale for the CoP. Some of this research is introduced here to help set the wider scene for the research project.

The Ministry of Justice and the Department of Education (2016) undertook a joint statistical analysis of millions of records contained in both the Police National Computer and the National Pupil Database in England and Wales, to better understand the SEND needs of the youth justice population, specifically for the whole young offender cohort who reached the end of key stage 4 in 2012/13. The analysis of this data found the majority of primary SEND types for the young offender population fell into the *Behavioral, Emotional and Social Difficulties* (BESD) classification in use at that time. 76% of this population (n = 1717) had a BESD classification. Significantly, for this research, 84 per cent of young people sentenced to less than 12 months in custody had a primary BESD SEND type, this is from a custodial population of 146 who reached the end of key stage 4 in 2012/13. This compares to 31 per cent of the whole pupil population (n = 632, 676) at the time, who were identified with a primary BESD type (Ministry of Justice and Department of Education, 2016). These findings further demonstrate that SEND is widespread and disproportionately prevalent within the YJS, especially amongst the resettlement population.

Related to the prevalence of BESD, the youth justice population also has a high identification of *communication disorders*, which is an important area of SEND. Communication disorders are the most studied area of need relevant to my own research, and also a main category within the CoP. The available literature reports a prevalence rate of communication disorders ranging between 60-90 per cent in young people serving custodial sentences in England and Wales, based on an average monthly custody

size of over 2,000 in the period 2005 - 2010 (Hughes et al, 2012; Ministry of Justice, 2023). More recent studies support this prevalence in the YJS, suggesting over half the custodial population at any one time in the past decade had a communication disorder (Hughes et al, 2017; Turner, 2019). These prevalence rates are reflected in the community youth justice cohort. Gregory and Bryan (2011) found that a group of 72 young offenders involved in an English YOT over 12 months exhibited a communication disorder prevalence rate of 65 per cent, with 20 per cent experiencing severely delayed language skills. Consistent with research in England, approximately 50 per cent of Australian incarcerated young offenders had a clinically significant, but long unidentified, communication disorder (Snow and Powell, 2008, 2011a and 2011b). Communication disorders may impact on emotional self-awareness, the ability to express emotions and the ability to feel empathy (Snow and Powell, 2008). Such needs may result in maladaptive social communication leading to, for example, challenging behaviour that results in offending, prosecution and disciplinary exclusion from school (Gregory and Bryan, 2011; Snow and Powell, 2011a; Hughes and O’Byrne, 2015).

This body of research on the SEND of the YJS is still relatively small and is largely drawn from professional and researcher perspectives. The literature offers limited insight into the lived experience of young people, especially about the support they received during resettlement. This is a significant gap in the literature. In light of this research gap, the remainder of this introductory chapter will set out the context, rationale, research problem and research questions that have guided this research.

1.3 Research Problem, Research Objectives and Research Questions

As introduced above, SEND is high in the youth prison population and must be supported during the period of resettlement under the provision of the CoP. YOTs are a main stakeholder in this resettlement process, together with education; and both have a legally mandated part to play in resettlement SEND provision. Resettlement is a complex window of

transition, evidencing high reoffending rates. Within this context the research problem can be stated in the following terms: *the nature and quality of resettlement education is not well understood*. A limited literature exists, but the factors determining both effective and ineffective resettlement education have not been considered sufficiently to fully understand the problem in the small body of evidence available about this topic, as the literature review will highlight. The experience of professionals and, in particular, the voices of young people, about resettlement education, are not represented in depth by available research and merits further exploration to better understand resettlement education practice. This research problem translates into a set of research objectives and two research questions.

Specifically, my research objectives, from early in the project, have been to:

- Investigate the experiences of young people receiving resettlement education support;
- Focus on the role of three YOTs in facilitating resettlement SEND education at a local level;
- Understand the role of education providers and education professionals, in supporting young people and working with YOTs during resettlement.

Following these objectives, the research questions (RQ) for this study are:

RQ1: What are the experiences of young people with identified SEND engaging with resettlement education provision?

RQ2: How do YOTs and education providers work to facilitate resettlement education provision, and what factors impact on this work?

The two research questions will be a constant touchstone throughout the thesis, to bind it together. Both questions act as a bridge between the research problem

and the research methods. RQ1 is about the lived experience of young people accessing resettlement support. RQ2 is about understanding professional perspectives on resettlement education. Together, the RQs lead to a qualitative interview approach, centred on understanding and interpreting a complex phenomenon through subjective experience. These interviews are organised into three case studies. Each case study is an English local authority, which contains both a YOT and education providers working in the area of resettlement. Thirty professionals, from YOT and education providers, were interviewed across the three local authorities, using a semi-structured approach. In addition, in one of the local authorities, unstructured interviews were undertaken with 2 young people who had experienced resettlement and had identified SEND. My research involved creating a tapestry of qualitative data that sheds light on how education works during resettlement. This included looking at good practice and barriers to education progression from the perspectives of professionals, and the lived experience of young people themselves.

1.4 My Own Background and Motivations

Section 4.5 in chapter 4 considers my positionality, related to my professional background, in some depth. This section foregrounds that discussion, by offering a brief professional biography that will help clarify the context of this research project.

Currently, I am a social work academic and senior lecturer in social work at Solent University in Southampton. This is the third university I have worked at, in an academic career spanning a decade. Before my academic career, I was a practising social worker. My career in social work practice began as an unqualified residential worker in 2002, in a local authority children's home. In this role, I worked with young people in the care system who had experienced trauma and faced the on-going, and potentially traumatising, challenges of the care system. These challenges included exclusion from school and involvement with the youth justice system – many of the young people I worked with engaged in low level theft or were recruited by local criminal groups to undertake illicit

activities, including transporting drugs between drug dealers and drug users. This would be classed as exploitation and trafficking, under current government legislation, but was not recognised in those terms at the time (Crown Prosecution Service, 2022).

Following qualification as a social worker, several years later, I worked for 18 months as a child protection social worker. As the only male working in the team, I tended to get allocated cases involving teenage boys as it was felt they benefitted from a male worker and role model. Many of the young men I worked with had experienced abuse and were either living in abusive home environments or were in the care system. Again, similar to my residential experience, many of those young men experienced different forms of marginalisation, including school exclusion and were involved with the youth justice system.

My experience in child protection convinced me that I was effective at working with young men who presented with challenging behaviour and were involved in offending. I moved on from local authority child protection practice to working in the youth justice system. This included managing a voluntary sector project, which worked to break inter-generational cycles of offending through systemic based approaches, based on ideas and techniques drawn from family therapy. During this time, I became part qualified as a family therapist, although I never fully qualified in this profession. This role gave me a strong systemic frame, for understanding risks and working with strengths. From this role, I moved into a London YOT, working initially as a social worker and later as an operational manager, line managing a team of youth justice professionals. Both roles, in the voluntary sector and a YOT, presented similar themes, risks and issues to my earlier career in child protection and a children's home. Namely, offending behaviour set within a context of extreme risk, vulnerability, exploitation, and marginalisation.

One of my main responsibilities, in the YOT, was working both with young people in prison and young people released from prison, experiencing the

resettlement transition. The vulnerabilities, risks and marginalisation I witnessed throughout my career were most sharply evident in this group. I witnessed firsthand and worked with all of the risks associated with the resettlement population, summarised in section 1.2 of this introduction. This included SEND related difficulties, especially communication needs and challenging behaviour, that resulted in disrupted support and exclusion from school. This was a complex practice context, that required a proactive and joined-up response from all the main agencies involved, including education services.

The time I spent as a YOT social worker and YOT manager taught me there is no 'magic bullet' in rehabilitation from offending, especially for the resettlement population. The closest to a magic bullet, in my own professional experience, was positive experience of and engagement with education. I found young people who benefitted from education, across the spectrum of the youth justice system, tended not to reoffend. This was especially noticeable in young people who had spent time in custody. Yet I never fully understood the link between education and criminal desistance when in practice, which has driven my curiosity in understanding this phenomenon further as a researcher and social work academic. Attempting to understand this link, through collection and analysis of my own data, was the principle intellectual motivation for pursuing this field of inquiry. Especially as little research had been published on the links between resettlement, recidivism and education support, as chapter 2 will explore further. My own professional values also motivated this research.

My professional identity as a social worker and my identity as a researcher are motivated by my values, which are drawn from the field of anti-oppressive practice (AOP), itself a value-base derived from social work. Curry-Stevens (2016, p. 1) defines anti-oppressive practice in the following terms:

'The simplest directive for AOP (in social work) is to minimize power hierarchies, by assisting to build the power of those who hold a marginalized identity and/or reducing the unfair power of those of privileged status.'

This quotation offers a summary of my value-based approach to social work practice and youth justice. When a practitioner, I was firmly of the belief that the paramount duty of YOTs and related agencies was to protect the public. But the most effective way to achieve this, in my experience, was to promote a culture of inclusion and challenge the marginalised status of young people in the youth justice system, many of whom experienced complex intersecting challenges, such as abuse and educational exclusion. A large part of my role was to advocate for young people, to reduce power hierarchies between children and services that often refused services through stigma towards those with the 'young offender' label. The importance of advocacy and the role of stigma will become important themes throughout the remainder of this thesis, evident in both the literature review, findings and discussion.

In a youth justice context, advocacy and the wider anti-oppressive value-base sit firmly with the *rehabilitative* or *social justice* school of youth justice practice. A rehabilitative approach is essentially person centred and strengths based. It involves working to empower in order to achieve positive change (Mears et al, 2015). This has long been a part of youth justice practice in England. Yet, at the heart of the youth justice system is a tension, between the need to rehabilitate and the need to punish (Smith and Gray, 2018). The English common law system is *retributive*, punishment takes priority in responding to offending. This is a deep-set feature of the English justice system, as much a facet of culture as jurisprudence (Martin, 2014). Offenders, in English society, are marked for punishment and there is a long history of demonising young people who offend. They are often cast as the deviant 'Devilish Child', contradicting mainstream cultural stereotype of the 'Angelic Child'. The twin concepts of the angelic and devilish spring from Fionda (2005, p. 3), who studied moral panics related to deviant childhood identities.

The rehabilitative-retributive dynamic is a source of tension in the youth justice system (Mears et al, 2015; Smith and Gray, 2018). This tension is evident in the work of those who attempt to support and rehabilitate; and those who value punishment and challenge the need to support young offenders through service

provision, evident in the stigma and marginalisation that is a recurrent feature of this research project. Both the effective practice and marginalisation evident in the findings are an expression of the competing discourses of retribution and rehabilitation. The *youth at risk* discourse, the propensity to stigmatise, inclusive education, social capital, resilience promoting support and strengths-based practice, all essential elements of the literature review (chapter 2) and the discussion (chapter 10), bring to light these competing philosophies in multifaceted ways. This tension guided my own motivations for undertaking this research. I wanted to create an evidence base that put forward the need to rehabilitate over the need to punish, reflecting my complex professional experiences of working with resettlement.

My professional experience and anti-oppressive values translated into my later identity as a researcher and academic. I knew from early in my academic career that I wanted to research a youth justice topic and the publication of the SEND CoP at the same time helped focus my research topic onto the combined fields of education and resettlement. This focus resonated with my own experience, working with young people during resettlement and attempting to gain access to essential education support as a form of rehabilitation. This synergy between my social work and academic identity created a platform for the research. My anti-oppressive values were and still are the motivator for pursuing this path, as I associated the research process and the publication of research outputs as another form of advocacy, by bringing to light the lived experience of young people and investigating the complex practice terrain of resettlement. My overarching aspiration is the outcomes of this research will support practitioners and policy makers in their approach to working with the resettlement population.

This research exists at the interface between education and social work. The research problem is focused on education provision for a group with complex needs. It is therefore logical to approach the problem from an education perspective, which played a significant part in my decision to pursue an education PhD. Equally, given the complex lived experience inherent to resettlement, holistic or pastoral support aligned with social work is equally

important as any pedagogic strategy. It is not possible to provide a nurturing and empowering environment for learners with complex needs without considering sources of risk, social systems of support, psychological resilience and the impact of wider societal forces, which the social work knowledge base offers a considerable resource for understanding. In particular, the essential role of YOTs exist in the social work practice space. As this thesis will reveal, social and systemic factors structure educational provision. The response of educators to this complex context is important to understand, and the realm of education research offers an equally rich platform for understanding the field of resettlement education. Both social work and education perspectives reinforce each other in this complex practice space, providing complimentary perspectives that enrich my ability to understand the research problem. For these reasons, I felt an education doctorate offered a natural synergy with my social work background.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

This chapter has outlined the context, focus and rationale of my research. The following chapters will consider these issues in more detail. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature. The main themes reviewed include an in-depth discussion of resettlement as a transition, together with what works in resettlement support and education. Barriers to effective resettlement provision are also considered. Chapter 3 sets out the theoretical framework, which is composed of two main theoretical paradigms: social capital and resilience. Both paradigms act as an *a priori* framework for analysing the findings. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology, including research ethics. Following on from the research methodology, Chapter 5 details the data analysis strategy. Chapters 6 – 8 report the findings, organised thematically around each of the three case studies. Chapter 9 synthesises these findings as a cross-case comparison. Chapter 10 is the discussion, analysing the meaning of the findings utilising the literature and the theoretical framework. Labelling and stigma are introduced and applied to the findings in this chapter, as a third theoretical paradigm that emerged from the interviews. Chapter 11 will conclude the thesis, including offering recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review provides a wider perspective on the research topic and demonstrates the research relevance of my study. It creates a broad-based foundation of discourses and norms that play a part in structuring the resettlement process. The chapter has a funnelled approach, starting with broader topics and then narrowing down to more specific subjects. The themes and literature addressed in this review unpack the concepts contained in the research questions and research objectives introduced in Chapter 1. This chapter begins with Section 2.1, which offers the most broad-based topics drawn from the literature.

2.1 Youth, Risk and Transition

2.1.1 The Complexity of the Resettlement Transition

Life course transitions have been of interest to the social sciences since the 1970s. Although no unified theory of the life course exists, a wide consensus has developed that life course transitions are socially constructed phenomena and separate from biological notions of the lifespan (George, 1993; Kagan and Neuman, 1998). A myriad of factors, such as gender, culture and social status shape the life course and determine the nature and significance of life transitions (George, 1993).

Within the industrialised west, the transition from childhood to adulthood, including from school to work, has become more complex since the emergence of neoliberal globalisation in the 1970s, including the uncertainties of an unstable labour market and growing inequality (Thomson et al, 2004; Woodman and Wyn, 2013; Pollard 2014). From the purview of the post-modern research conception of transition, there has been a sustained questioning of the binary division between normative and

non-normative transitions – although this division is still evident within services such as education, which can struggle with the nuanced complexity of individual lifeways divergent from the perceived norm (George, 1993; Aalton, 2013; Smith and Dowse, 2019). There is also a growing recognition that different transitions overlap, adding to an overriding sense of complexity within transition (Storo, 2016; Smith and Dowse, 2019).

Understanding the nuanced complexity of this overlap is a challenge for academia, policy makers and practitioners. In research with young people identified with additional needs, including disability, Smith and Dowse (2019, p. 1341) found that young people did not frame transition as a linear event, instead participants experienced transition as ‘... moments characterized by certain experiences, such as chaos, overwhelm and sometimes clarity, which could be on-going or returned to.’ This idea parallels the wider biographical literature, which states that biography is understood episodically by young people (Harding, 2006), rather than chronologically. This further reinforces the challenge faced by young people and practitioners negotiating the inherent uncertainty of resettlement and the need to understand the complexity and contradictions of this transition. Helping young people grapple with risk-infused and uncertain lived experience is a challenging but essential task for both YOT and education professionals (Beal, 2014). The complexity and uncertainty of life transitions, especially those associated with complex needs such as resettlement, has brought the notion of *risk* to the fore in life course studies (Riele, 2011; McGregor et al, 2017; Smith and Dowse, 2019).

As Beck (1992) prominently theorised, risks are unevenly distributed socially and are largely borne by the marginalised and disaffected. For marginalised and disaffected students, education constitutes a complex and precarious pathway of transition from childhood to adulthood. Various researchers have found that disaffection is often conflated with non-

conformity by professionals, which feeds into the construction of deficit-saturated narratives about young people by education and youth justice authorities (Aalton, 2013; Lanskey, 2015; McGregor et al, 2017; Day, 2022b). The focus in this regard tends to be on the transgression and deviance of *offenders* rather than the strengths and needs of *young people*, which can further fuel disaffection (Halsey, 2006; McGregor et al, 2017). Such disaffection is especially evident for students involved with the criminal justice system (Gray, 2011; Day, 2022b), although the construction of students as *disaffected* should be treated with some caution.

Disaffection potentially places disengagement onto the individual, as an emotional state, negating the impact of school cultures and wider structural disadvantage that may compromise student engagement with learning (Gray, 2011; Riele, 2011; Aalton, 2013).

Wider neoliberal narratives and their competitive impetus create barriers to learning; excluding students not conforming to wider notions of employability, which is central to the policies of many industrialised economies (McGregor et al, 2015; McGregor et al, 2017). Neoliberal discourses have fed into a more punitive approach to schooling, which has stimulated a shift towards disciplinary exclusion of deviant students, especially those cast as *at risk* who do not conform to normative life paths (Riele, 2011). Viewed through this lens, disciplinary exclusion can be conceived as a form of disrupted transition, with parallels to the disruption caused by imprisonment (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002; Giroux, 2009; McGregor 2016 and 2017). Young people with criminal records are often subjected to disciplinary exclusion and the disruption that brings. Periods of time in prison compound this disruption, adding to the experience of marginalisation brought about by youth justice involvement (Gray, 2011; Oswald, 2021; Day 2022a and 2022b).

While on the surface educational segregation, such as alternative placement in PRUs, can be interpreted as a pragmatic approach that can

act as a protective measure for all, it can introduce students to chaotic learning environments that amplify pre-existing risks and reinforce a sense of disaffection (Solomon and Rogers, 2001; Pirrie et al, 2011). The consequent impact of this may be exposure to violent and chaotic school environments that do not meet educational needs and may be criminogenic in nature. Longer-term disrupted education can lead to no qualifications, greater risk of unemployment and increased reliance on state intervention (Riele, 2007; Gray, 2011). These are risks faced by many in the resettlement population (Gray, 2011; Bateman and Hazel, 2013; Bateman and Hazel, 2021).

Biographical transitions are synonymous with risk because of the inherent uncertainties involved in change (Beck, 1992; Gray, 2011; Standing, 2012). Young people involved with criminal justice services are perhaps the most visible aspect of this transitional risk paradigm, experiencing complex and uncertain transitions throughout their lives, including between custody and the community. Resettlement is arguably the most complex and risk-laden transition evident in the youth justice systems of England and other western comparators, including Germany. In a biographical study of young German adult males in custody, Bereswill (2004) identified imprisonment as a source of tension in biographical pathways, provoking severe crises of social integration during subsequent resettlement, built on transitions involving both social exclusion and state surveillance. This form of exclusion can undermine the positive potential of social capital (see Chapter 3, section 3.2). As Bereswill (2004) further argued, the custody-community resettlement transition is a risk-infused form of precarious freedom. Halsey (2006, p. 159) elaborated on this, reflecting on the destabilising effect of release from custody:

'It is not unreasonable to think that juveniles emerging from long detention orders ... may experience a fleeting or possibly sustained period of spatial vertigo in a world largely bereft of the totalising

architectures of correctional environments.'

These points relate to Bury's (1982) concept of *biographical disruption*, based on research with adults experiencing debilitating health problems. Bury (1982) framed illness and other trauma as a mechanism in disrupting and changing biographical arcs. This is now an established concept in the literature, which has been broadened out to reflect the wider uncertainty of post-industrial youth transitions (Bray et al, 2013).

The response of powerful professionals to transitions experienced by those who are classed as deviant, in particular how professionals construct the identity of those experiencing transition, is a powerful mediator of outcomes and the impact of risk. Young people involved in the criminal justice system, especially at the higher end of complexity inherent in resettlement, experience identity reconstructions by professionals that focus on the risk they are perceived to present (Bateman and Hazel, 2021; Day, 2022b).

Being constructed, or labelled, as a *youth at risk* is conceived by many professionals as an act of beneficent identification, that holds out the possibility of future intervention to correct individual deficits (Riele, 2007; Mosen-Lowe et al, 2009; Gray, 2011; McGregor, 2017). Risk in this sense is broadly defined as incorporating a spectrum of students, including those who present a physical threat to others and students who are viewed as being disaffected and non-engaged. Criminal offending is a key aspect of this youth at risk discourse, evident in debates about effective provision in responding to the needs of this group. At risk youths are conceived as the *other*, united by their association with educational failure (Gray, 2011; McGregor, 2017). This can produce a potentially paradoxical response: disciplinary exclusion and segregation of those deemed at risk, who may already feel disaffection and an ingrained sense of exclusion (Riele, 2007; Mosen-Low et al, 2009). Such risk-focused practices fall within the 'neo-

correctionalist' philosophy that that has recast risk as an individual issue and been dominant since the modern youth justice system was created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Case et al, 2020, p. 217). This philosophy was and is part of a longer tradition of punitive youth justice practice, dating back to at least the early 1990s, which assuages public concern about wayward and risky youth (Case et al, 2020; Goldson, 2020).

Critical of the dominance of this risk paradigm, many in the academy have argued an overriding focus on risk leads to structural inequalities and socio-economic factors being framed as risks, at an individualised level. This can create a rationale for more restrictive interventions that do not address the wider structural factors that influence criminal and offending pathways (van den Brink, 2022). Risk-based practices, when based on deficits and individualised at the expense of social-ecological factors, can entrench marginalisation by reframing identity in negative terms that can prohibit access to opportunities such as education (Case et al, 2020). This is most evident in young people from Black and mixed ethnicity backgrounds. An analysis of risk assessments completed by YOTs, undertaken by the YJB, found that young Black men in particular were assessed at higher levels of risk than White offenders involved in similar offences (YJB, 2021). Of all ethnic groups, those from a Black ethnicity were assessed at the highest level of risk in terms of offence severity and risk of reoffending. This acts to further entrench structural disadvantage, especially as YOT assessments play a key role in sentencing decisions, which suggests one reason for the harsher sentencing of young men from a Black ethnic background (YJB, 2021).

The youth at risk discourse can be placed within a wider *War on Youth* in the industrialised west, where youth is increasingly problematised and criminalised (Pollard, 2014). Youth at risk are a constituency of Standing's (2012) *precariat*, an underclass characterised by a precarious existence based on insecure employment, exclusion from political actions and deemed unworthy of support by increasingly diminished state services.

Standing (2012) highlights segregation in various guises, a form of disrupted transition, as a factor determining the lived experience of those who find themselves in the precariat.

These themes in the literature emphasise that resettlement must be understood through a multi-dimensional interplay between the individual, the social context of the individual and the institutional infrastructure which shapes individual agency. The lived experience of young people resettling must be examined from not only their own subjective standpoint, but also the social context surrounding that resettlement transition, including professional responses to resettlement and the wider social forces shaping those interventions. The following sub-section drills down further into the complexity of transitions, offering a focus on epiphanies and turning points, that adds depth to the broader themes addressed in this sub-section.

2.1.2 Epiphanies and Turning Points

Turning points, as a concept, have a long history in criminology and desistance studies. Sampson and Laub (1993) conceived turning points as an event that ends a criminal career, for example gaining employment or moving house. This has set the tone for subsequent criminological literature (Newburn, 2017). Examining desistance from the perspective of the transition literature, turning points as conceived by Sampson and Laub (1993) are somewhat atomised and reduced to discrete events. The complex temporal change involved, before and after an event, is not fully captured by the authors. They do not explain the changes that motivate desistance or offer windows of opportunity. Drawing from wider sociological literature, I argue that the concept of *epiphany* offers a more nuanced understanding of change during important life transitions, such as resettlement.

Denzin (1989a) conceived the idea of the epiphany as a conceptual tool for understanding complex life transitions. Denzin (1989a, p. 47) defined the concept of epiphany as ‘... interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on

people's lives.' In the same work, Denzin built a typology of epiphanies that take on four forms: 1. Major epiphanies, impacting on every aspect of life; 2. Minor epiphanies, which represent a change in understanding based on major life epiphanies; 3. Cumulative epiphanies, that are conscious responses to change or experiences that have been occurring over a period of time; and, 4. Relived epiphanies, which are turning points that may arise in the retelling of life events, including in the course of research interviews.

Epiphanies can be understood in terms of externally imposed change, the impact of that change, and individual responses to epiphany-based experience (Denzin, 1989a). Factors such as social capital and resilience potentially come into sharper relief at such moments (Denzin, 1989a; Goodey, 2000; Thomson et al, 2004), providing a point of intersection with the theoretical framework (Chapter 3).

Goodey (2000, p. 481) used the concept of epiphany as a frame for understanding the role of biography in criminology, concluding the concept of epiphany provided a mechanism for examining '... 'the personal', through subject-led epiphanal (sic) revelations, in the wider context of 'the social.' The 'social' in this quotation refers to the role of broader societal trends and social networks in promoting change at an individual level. This social-individual interplay is also a pillar of the secondary desistance paradigm, considered in section 2.2 of this chapter.

Most researchers and theorists who have considered the role of epiphanies have also acknowledged that transitions carry risks and complexity. Goodey (2000) developed epiphanies as dynamic and non-linear realignments in personal biographies and identities, which carry existential risk through the complexity of change. Similarly, and returning to the individual-social dynamic of biographical change, Wienhausen-Knezevic (2019) suggested that the psycho-social risks and opportunities of desistance through transition must be understood as a challenge to

personal agency, which is corralled by wider environmental and social factors.

Bereswill (2019), drawing on similar conceptual terrain, placed professionals and interventions at the centre of the psycho-social risks inherent in desistance-related transition. Expanding upon this as *biographical discontinuity*, Bereswill (2019) argued that the complexity and uncertainty experienced by many offenders aspiring towards desistance was often an artefact of the inconsistency and tensions of institutional interventions. For offenders released from prison, Bereswill (2019, p. 69) concluded that biographical discontinuity ‘... is compounded by a concomitant high level of psycho-social stress derived from the transition from a closed institutional environment into an often unstructured situation on the ‘outside’’. This points to the important role of linking social capital, introduced in section 3.2.2 of the following chapter.

Resettlement, including resettlement education, needs to be understood within the inherent complexity of the custody-community transition. The two research questions aim to capture the individual-social interplay at work during resettlement, through the experience of professionals offering support and interventions, together with the experience of young people receiving interventions that may support biographical change. The following section offers additional conceptual scaffolding for this, unpacking further the practice dimensions of resettlement that determine the social aspect of the individual-social dynamic that shapes this transition.

2.2 The Practice Dimensions of Resettlement

2.2.1 The Challenge of Resettlement

Resettlement is a brief and important window of opportunity, requiring

planning from the first day of imprisonment (Bateman and Hazel, 2013; DfE and DoH, 2014). Early planning is the central message of the CoP (DfE and DoH, 2014), which requires planning for post-detention SEND needs as soon as they are identified during a custodial sentence.

Despite a growing evidence base, research on resettlement is still not extensive (Taylor, 2016; Goldson, 2018; Bateman and Hazel, 2021). In particular, a paucity of research exists regarding the provision of community education during resettlement and the role of YOTs in supporting this (Hurry and Rogers, 2014; Bateman, 2015; Taylor, 2016; Day, 2022a and 2022b). Current research highlights that timely needs assessment by both YOTs and education providers is essential for young people serving custodial sentences and resettling back into the community (Nellis, 2006; Bateman et al, 2013; Elwick et al, 2013; Oswald, 2021; Day, 2022a). This is an important segue with the requirements of the CoP (DfE and DoH, 2014).

Research on custody-based education is more extensive than its community-based counterpart and has found that provision in custody is generally poor, in terms of the quality of the provision, its integration with other support in custody and outcomes for young people, including high reoffending rates (Little, 2015; Stephenson, 2017; Case and Hazel, 2020). In a review of evidence and policy, Case and Hazel (2020) argued that custodial provision is not future focused and does not offer a strengths-based praxis for fostering skills and positive outcomes. This suggests, from a community perspective, that young people are not prepared for education upon release, a conclusion supported by the small literature available on community-based youth justice education (Lanskey, 2015; Oswald, 2021; Day, 2022b).

Since 2006, the youth custody population has reduced significantly in number but increased significantly in complexity of need (Taylor, 2016;

Bateman and Hazel, 2018; Day, 2022b). Young people in custody tend to be more entrenched in offending behaviour, coupled with a complex range of SEND (Bateman, 2015; Taylor, 2016; Bateman and Hazel, 2018), which increases the challenge of achieving successful resettlement outcomes. This emphasises further the importance of effective education opportunities. Research suggests education is important for creating positive life chances, building resilience and increasing a sense of self-esteem, especially for young people with SEND (Bateman and Hazel, 2021; Oswald, 2021). Positive education experiences can promote the increased sense of personal agency essential to rehabilitation from offending (Beal, 2014; Fitzpatrick et al, 2014; Rogers et al, 2014).

Personal agency has been linked by several authors to personal narratives, which are an on-going focus of rehabilitation research. Bateman and Hazel (2018), in a thematic literature review, framed resettlement as a time for shifting personal narratives about past, present and future selves. Positive self-narratives, supported by appropriate interventions, can promote engagement in activities such as learning, that support positive change away from offending. Conversely, negative narratives about self-worth and self-efficacy can entrench self-perceived criminal identity (Bateman and Hazel, 2018). This strongly resonates with the concept of biographical epiphany and transition, reviewed above. During resettlement, which is a sensitive period of biographical transition, shifts in personal narratives can be a cornerstone of change and engagement with support, including education (YJB, 2018 and 2020).

A focus on personal narratives and identity shift has been at the heart of recent resettlement policy in England. The policy of *Constructive Resettlement* is based on the premise that desistance from offending requires a *pro-social identity shift* (Maruna and Farrell, 2004) by young people, away from pro-criminal personal narratives that fuel offending (YJB, 2020). The strength of the policy is its foundation on a wider set of literature, about the concept of *secondary*

desistance (Oswald, 2021), which has found through research, especially in the adult population, that a shift in personal scripts or narratives and a related shift in identity towards pro-social sensibilities is central to meaningful desistance from crime (Maruna and Farrell, 2004). Constructive resettlement offers a policy and practice framework that elaborates upon secondary desistance and applies it to youth justice. While change in personal narrative is the central premise, the focus of the policy is on the professional and community support structures that can facilitate pro-social identity shift i.e., the linking social capital around the young person (Chapter 3, 3.2.2). The core values espoused by constructive resettlement include working in partnership with children and focusing on their strengths to move beyond pathologising risk discourses that potentially entrench criminality (Day et al, 2020; YJB, 2020; Hazel and Bateman, 2021).

Constructive resettlement finds support not only in the criminological literature about secondary desistance, but also in sociological research about the centrality of epiphanies to transition (Denzin, 1989a), and the efficacy of strengths-based approaches, touched upon at various points throughout this chapter. Constructive resettlement was a live policy during the data collection phase of this research, but has since been withdrawn (YJB, 2020). Consequently, it now occupies an ambiguous policy position, seemingly absorbed into the wider *Child First* policy of the YJB, which advocates that children at all levels of the youth justice system need to be supported in a strengths-based and inclusive way (YJB, 2021). While the broader principles of the child first policy, in my view, are welcome and consistent with the evidence reviewed in this chapter, the complexity of the resettlement cohort justifies the unequivocal retention of constructive resettlement as a related standalone policy instrument fostering good practice. The reality of this policy ambiguity finds support from Day (2022a), who posited that recent developments in youth justice policy are marked by contradictions and conflict. Such policy contradictions are representative of challenges replete within the resettlement transition, which find expression as barriers to desistance and rehabilitation that are discussed further in the following sub-section.

2.2.2 Barriers to Positive Resettlement

The literature indicates that community provision of resettlement education can be rendered ineffective by a complex array of barriers, such as poor joined-up working and planning between custodial establishments and community-based agencies (Elwick et al. 2013; Bateman, 2015; Monahan et al, 2011; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2015 and 2019). Other barriers come from education provision that is often ill equipped to meet the complex needs of this cohort, including teaching and pastoral staff lacking suitable training (Bryan and MacKenzie, 2006; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2015 and 2019). Perhaps most fundamentally, young people and their families have traditionally been excluded from decisions and planning (Monahan et al, 2011; Beal, 2014; Council for Disabled Children, 2015; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2019) meaning that provision is not informed by their views, needs and preferences.

The statutory requirements of the CoP represent a possible way forward in mitigating these barriers through the provision of EHC assessment and planning, together with associated partnership-based working between all relevant stakeholders including young people and parents/carers (DfE and DoH, 2014). Indeed, the CoP mandates that children and young people must be involved in educational decision-making. From the perspective of the theoretical framework, the CoP is a potential driver of linking social capital (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.3). However, at the time of writing and to the best of my knowledge, there is currently no research that reports on whether and how such decision-making is taking place for young people resettling from custody. Therefore, my research endeavours to understand these involvement issues further, including barriers where they exist, and explore the role of YOTs in promoting the involvement of young people in education. These are themes reflected in both RQs. The perspectives of young people will provide essential insights into processes and experiences, including educational decision-making. Involving young people in decision-making, by promoting their buy-in to support, offers a way to

manage the multidimensional risks involved in resettlement (Hazel and Bateman, 2021). Risk management is an important pillar of youth justice, which brings to light wider system-level and cultural challenges to positive resettlement, as Day (2022a) found.

Day (2022a) studied the challenges of working in youth justice, through semi-structured interviews with a cohort of youth justice practitioners and operational managers (n = 14). The focus of the study was inclusive of the wider youth justice system but had a resettlement emphasis. The participant cohort came from a constructive resettlement pathfinder study and so the themes emerging from this study help to contextualise the challenges and barriers presented by the resettlement transition, when examined through a youth justice policy shift towards strengths-based approaches.

In the paper, Day (2022a) found that managers and practitioners struggled to find a balance between strengths-based approaches – constructive resettlement - and the need to manage risk. In essence, risk still took a priority for operational staff. This provoked a tension with the wider need for strengths-based practice, advocated for by literature that suggests this is what works in resettlement (Bateman, 2016; Bateman and Hazel, 2018; Oswald, 2021).

Most importantly, Day (2022a) found this tension between risk and strengths-based constructive resettlement provoked anxiety and a perception of greater workloads for participants. Confusion arose from this tension, especially as existing practice frameworks, based on the risk paradigm, still guided practice. This research suggested that while the policy principles of constructive resettlement were robust, the implementation of them in practice was more complex and required more concrete guidance to navigate the inherent tensions of working in a practice domain that has an overriding priority to ensure public

protection. These findings further underline the sense of ambiguity that surrounds constructive resettlement's position in the contemporary policy space.

While Day's (2022a) study is small, the use of semi-structured interviews is an approach utilised and endorsed by my own study. It offers methodological rigour that provides a rare insight into the working practices of resettlement from those tasked with implementing it, which is an under-explored theme in the literature. The findings offered give an authentic sense of the barriers inherent in working with resettlement, reflecting the challenges apparent in the wider literature on the complexity of life transitions, including the support around those transitions. Day's (2022a) findings also intersect with Bereswill's (2019) concept of biographical discontinuity, which argues that inconsistencies and tensions in institutional interventions act as a barrier to positive resettlement.

The findings of Day (2022a) suggest a cultural risk aversion built into the youth justice system that has the potential to inhibit practice, exacerbating barriers to progression for young people – exposing a negative dimension of the individual-social interplay at work in life course transitions. From a different perspective, Lanskey (2015) reached a similar conclusion, about barriers to education for young people in the youth justice system.

Lanskey's (2015) study gathered qualitative data through interviews with young people (n = 32) deemed at varying levels of risk; and professionals (n = 18) involved with a YOT and education providers in the community. Interviews were conducted alongside classroom observation and documentary analysis based on Stake's (1995) case study approach, over a two-year period. A minority of the young people interviewed had identified SEND, and this theme was not addressed in depth.

Lanskey (2015) found that mainstream education provision could act in

exclusionary ways to young people involved in the YJS, including those assessed as both high risk and low risk. The risks associated with young offenders by education providers could engender a reluctance to admit them into schools and colleges. This provides evidence for the role of the youth at risk paradigm in fostering exclusion, considered in section 2.1. Lanskey (2015) found that YOTs tended to adopt a more inclusive focus than education providers, with YOT staff acting as *brokers* attempting to advocate for the access of young people to education. This is a finding and theme that will be elaborated upon further in the discussion chapter (Chapter 10).

Lanskey's (2015) findings must be set within certain methodological limitations, most pertinently the small-scale size of the project confined to a single YOT. This lacks the power of a comparative approach between different YOTs and local authorities. The type of interviews utilised, with both professionals and young people, were not specified. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Lanskey's (2015) approach does bear methodological parallels to my own study, including offering a platform for young people to share their views and experiences.

Offering a more extensive research design, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) (2006) commissioned research looking at barriers to service engagement for young people involved in the YJS. The research involved a quantitative analysis of the national data compiled by the YJB's Asset assessment tool. As a follow-up, 50 young people were interviewed who served a range of sentences, from lower-level community sentences through to custodial sentences for serious offences. In addition, 41 YOT managers completed questionnaires and 54 YOT practitioners and custodial staff participated in interviews.

The triangulated findings of the research, based on the mixed methods of quantitative analysis and qualitative interviews, found that more complex

need was associated with non-engagement in education (YJB, 2006). This was especially noteworthy in the custody cohort of the study. Young people who had been in both the care system and custody had more significant literacy or numeracy difficulties and were more likely to not be in education or employment. The research found that *stigma*, on the part of schools and education authorities based on labelling, acted as a barrier to education provision of all kinds, supporting Lanskey's (2015) findings and underlining the power of youth at risk discourses that construct deficit saturated identities. Young people interviewed reported that where provision was made available, it often did not fit with their needs and did not include robust employability support.

A further systemic barrier to positive resettlement outcomes is the *disruption* faced by many young people throughout their career in education, echoing the biographical disruption literature reviewed in section 2.1. Challenging behaviour, disciplinary interventions and permanent exclusions are common experiences of the custody and resettlement population (Snow and Powell, 2012; Hughes and O'Byrne, 2016; Taylor, 2016). A growing literature surrounds the recognition of a link between disrupted school histories and offending, including imprisonment. A particular focus has been the link between permanent school exclusion and youth offending. Concluding their thematic literature review on school exclusion and offending behaviour, centred on the United States, Arnez and Condry (2021, p. 87) surmised that:

'... school exclusion has been recognized as an important risk factor in the development of youth offending and the 'school-to-prison-pipeline' has been perceived as a fast-track trajectory driven by punitive responses to some young people's transgressions.'

The 'school-to-prison-pipeline' they highlight tends to be a prominent feature of the American youth justice system but is also a clear trend in the

English custodial population (Taylor, 2016; Sanders et al, 2020). Arnez and Condry (2021) singled out punitive school practices as a factor in the disrupted biographical transition from school to prison, echoing other findings noted in both this chapter and Chapter 3. This conclusion is based on their reading of the literature. However, as they go onto argue, the causal link between school exclusion and offending is unclear.

For Arnez and Condry (2021), distilling a clear explanation of the link between offending and school exclusion was not possible. This was because the pipeline metaphor was too linear for them; and it does not capture the multidimensional nexus of causality that shapes the experience of many young people caught up in western justice jurisdictions, including England. Arnez and Condry (2021) instead argued that the exclusion-offending interplay can only be understood within the context of wider structural disadvantage, which intersects with offending and school practices in a complex way. This resurfaces the individual-social dynamic central to biographical transitions. They nonetheless concluded that the evidence shows that challenging behaviour in schools is a common factor that leads to school exclusions and contributes to the biographical path towards offending behaviour.

In another thematic review of the links between offending and school disruption, Hughes and Chitsabesen (2015) take the issue a stage further, arguing that challenging behaviour tends to mask underlying SEND that are often not identified, or identified biographically late, by schools and other professionals. This late or non-identification acts as an amplifier of need and risk, exacerbating the cycle of challenging behaviour and exclusion leading to offending.

As Arnez and Condry (2021) note, despite the call for further investigation into the causal link between school exclusion and offending, little recent

research has been published on the subject. An exception to this is Sanders et al (2020), who offered a primary investigation of the link between school exclusion and youth justice involvement. As part of a wider study on youth transitions in New Zealand, the authors worked with 107 high school age students who had experienced both school exclusion and youth justice involvement. The main data collection method was a structured survey, completed with a field investigator, which allowed for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Inclusion criteria for participants were based on a range of adversity-based indicators, including significant involvement with health and social care services, as well as a history of challenging behaviour in schools. Data was collected based on self-reporting i.e., participants self-reported any experience of school exclusion. Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis the investigation revealed a significant link between school exclusion, subsequent increased low-level delinquency, and criminal justice involvement, including imprisonment. Consistent with Arnez and Condry (2021), Sanders et al (2020) established a clear correlation between school exclusion and offending but could not offer a theory, or evidence, of causation. Nevertheless, their qualitative and quantitative analysis suggested the intersection of a range of influential factors, including non-inclusive school pedagogies and neighbourhood factors such as high crime rates. This again highlights the centrality of the interplay between the individual and the social.

Taken together, the literature on barriers to resettlement suggests a *risk averse culture* is at work, and that this is the central underlying meta-barrier to resettlement. This culture manifests in systems that create disciplinary education exclusions and pathologising professional narratives, compounding the vulnerabilities of an already marginalised population. Organisational and systemic cultures are difficult to capture both qualitatively and quantitatively (Jung et al, 2009; Day, 2022a). This may account for the lack of understanding of how factors involved in offending intersect and may, or may not, cause school exclusion. My own research questions, in particular RQ2, have the potential to explore cultural issues

that emerge as factors influencing the support of YOTs and education providers. Effective practice is an equally significant factor in resettlement and offers balance to the negative issues already addressed.

2.2.3 What Works in Resettlement?

The *Keeping Young People Engaged* (KYPE) initiative, first piloted over 15 years ago (Cooper et al, 2007; YJB, 2011), is an example of a national strategy that attempted to cater to the needs of young people going through resettlement. The KYPE programme was designed to target tailored educational resources at high-risk young offenders resettling into the community. The sole evaluation of KYPE (Cooper et al, 2007) involved interviews with 81 practitioners, 22 managers and 23 young people. Quantitative outcomes data was gathered from YOT Asset assessments across five different YOTs for all the young people interviewed. The findings revealed improved levels of confidence, motivation and knowledge in young people because of the *person-centred* nature of the support received. However, in most cases this did not bring about longer-term quantifiable gains in terms of educational or employment outcomes. Cooper et al (2007) could not provide a definitive explanation for this lack of longer-term gain but their data suggested a lack of longer-term support following the end of sentence or transition into adulthood could have impacted on outcomes.

Overall, I would assess their evaluation as robust based on its mixed methods approach and a relatively large sample drawn from several YOTs. This gave the study comparative integrity, utilising a cross-section of YOTs reflecting a wider national project. The major limitation of this study was a lack of longer-term follow-up research on a programme that is now discontinued.

From a more local perspective, Wright et al (2012) and Hazel et al (2012) evaluated two regional resettlement consortia involving several YOTs,

education services and employers engaged in more intensive joined-up working. Wright et al (2012) evaluated a consortium in the Southwest of England and Hazel et al (2012) evaluated a consortium in the Northwest of England. Both evaluations involved the same researchers and adopted the same methods, between 2011 and 2012. They reviewed many aspects of the consortia, including education and employment, examining how resources were used, the scope for innovation and the consistency of approach between the diverse agencies involved, including YOTs, the custodial estate and local employers. The mixed methods utilised provided good validity, based on a quantitative analysis of case files of young people, other documents, and wider regional outcomes compared to a different comparison group of young people not involved in the consortia but engaged in resettlement in the same areas a year before the consortia commenced. Feedback from young people was also collected via a structured survey.

Extensive samples of young people were involved in the quantitative aspects of both evaluations: 168 young people in the consortium cohort versus 104 in the comparison group in the Northwest; and a consortium cohort of 82 in the Southwest, versus a comparison group of 58. This is a very large cohort size compared to the wider literature on resettlement that has been reviewed above. Extensive qualitative methods were also involved, adding to the rigour of the research, including semi-structured interviews with young people and professionals. Specific sample sizes for the qualitative research were not made available but appeared much smaller than the quantitative sample as might be expected.

Compared to the comparison group, both evaluations found generally improved outcomes for young people and reduced recidivism because of the enhanced *joined-up working* between stakeholders in the consortia. Wright et al (2012) found the Southwest resettlement consortium produced largely improved involvement in education, training and employment (ETE) for the cohort, relative to the comparison group. 76 per

cent of the consortium cohort in the Southwest were engaged in education during the support offered, compared to 47 per cent of the comparison group. This suggested the multi-agency arrangement of the consortium made a significant difference in promoting engagement with ETE. However, the authors found that arrangements for education, employment or training were often delayed upon release. Almost half of the consortium cohort had no form of ETE arranged upon release, pointing to mixed but positive results overall. In comparison, the Northwest consortium reported 69 per cent of young people were involved in ETE during support from the consortium, compared to 47 per cent in the comparison group (Hazel et al, 2012). These are similar findings to the Southwest consortium, again supporting the contention that robust multi-agency arrangements produce better resettlement outcomes.

Hazel et al (2012), for the Northwest consortium, revealed better provision immediately upon release compared to the Southwest counterpart. The majority (exact number unknown) of the cohort had access to ETE upon release or close to release, with fewer delays than evidenced in the Southwest consortium. The difference appeared to be a result of greater use of ETE advisors through the now defunct Connexions service, in forging stronger links between the custodial estate and community partners, which ensured proactive planning for community ETE provision. Connexions advisors were reported to proactively attend all meetings, including planning meetings in custody. This highlighted the important role of ETE workers in securing positive outcomes for resettlement education, based on proactive involvement with the planning process.

Supporting Wright et al (2012) and Hazel et al (2012), Gray et al (2018) noted that both resettlement consortia were essential to joined-up inter-agency working in part because pro-active senior management buy-in to these programmes raised the profile of resettlement as an important aspect of need and provision. One area of joined-up working effectively promoted by both consortia was between custodial establishments and

community agencies such as YOTs, which demonstrated enhanced collaborative relationships. This aspect of partnership working supported continuity of provision for young people, which facilitated engagement with support when young people moved back into the community. This parallels the aims of the CoP, which are linked to continuity of planned support between custody and community (DfE and DoH, 2014). Wider literature found that interventions in custody have limited success unless they are aligned with community interventions and prepare young people for the challenges they face upon release. Joined-up working between custody and community is essential to achieving rehabilitative preparation for release (Abrams et al, 2008; Little, 2015). This consistent finding about the importance of multi-agency working further reinforces the importance of bringing linking social capital into resettlement, for both planning and provision (see Chapter 3 and 10 for further discussion).

To date, KYPE represents the only nationwide initiative to specifically tackle low educational engagement among young people resettling after custody. Most initiatives are based on localism, such as the resettlement consortia, reflecting local-level political and budgetary priorities (Hazel et al, 2012; Wright et al, 2012; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2015; Gray et al, 2018; Olaitan and Pitts, 2020). A thematic analysis by the Probation Inspectorate highlighted that many effective local education resettlement projects exist but information on them is limited (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2015). The respective evaluations of the regional resettlement consortia further suggest that effective provision exists in localised pockets (Hazel et al, 2012; Wright et al, 2012; Gray et al, 2018). The central dimensions of good practice offered by both the KYPE programme, and the resettlement consortia are robust inter-agency working and person-centred support for young people. The evident localism of good practice makes a strong research argument for exploring good practice at a local level through case study research. The following section will expand upon this theme of good practice, from the standpoint of education.

2.3 Understanding the Concept of Good Practice in Education

One aim of this research project is to better understand what constitutes good practice in relation to resettlement provision, as the previous subsection highlighted. Aside from isolated studies reviewed previously, there is a curious lack of research on what constitutes good practice in the YJS, especially in relation to education. Problems with, and shortcomings of, provision are more evident in the reported data. It is not clear if this reflects the reality of provision or a more deficit-based focus in the framing of the research conducted. Based upon the opening section (2.1) of this literature review, it can be stated that young people resettling from custody fall into the domain of marginalised students whom professionals and agencies deem to be at risk. The CoP (DfE and DoH, 2014) espouses the need for inclusive education for young people in the resettlement population but does not define what inclusive education means for this cohort.

Current evidence from the international literature emphasises that access to child-centred and inclusive education is an essential protective factor for offender rehabilitation across the spectrum, from low level offending to serious offending involving custodial sentences (Carr and Vandiver, 2001; Hayden, 2008; Lanskey, 2015 and 2016; Day, 2022b). A growing evidence base suggests that many young people themselves, when interviewed for research, strongly perceive education and related access to employment as being key to preventing reoffending and promoting personal agency, thereby provoking essential shifts in personal narratives discussed in section 2.2. (Beal, 2014; Rogers et al, 2014; Day, 2022b). For the complexity of the resettlement transition, effective services are essential if meaningful personal agency and related desistance is to be realised. Literature from the field of inclusive education provides some further insights about what may constitute good practice in this arena.

2.3.1 Ingredients of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education research provides insight into good practice with disaffected students, including young offenders in some studies. Indeed, aspects of this literature touch directly upon the lives of young people engaged with the youth justice system. Several studies will be highlighted to illustrate the principles of good practice that are applicable to my own research study.

The main arena of education provision for the youth justice population in England is in the alternative education sector, including PRUs and other specialist education providers (Caulfield et al, 2021). Historically and to the present, most of the alternative education cohort have been permanently excluded from mainstream school (Gill et al, 2017); and most of this cohort have SEND: 81 per cent based on the most recent available data for 2018 – 2019 (Office of the Children’s Commissioner, 2022). Several research studies offer details about what works in the alternative sector.

Attwood et al (2003) studied alternative pre-16 provision at a Further Education (FE) college in England. They conducted 26 interviews with young people deemed ‘success stories’ from an alternative education programme at the college. The young people involved had experienced mainstream school breakdown and the programme in question was designed to provide tailored vocational learning opportunities for the cohort, to help them move into employment or additional FE. Young people were identified as successful where they had attended most of an academic year or returned after completing one full academic year, without formally dropping out of the programme.

Participants identified problematic relationships, with both peers and teachers, as being a major cause of previous school breakdown. Difficulties with teachers were cited as being especially pivotal to school disruption. A lack of fit between the school curriculum and student needs or

interests was also another common feature of disengagement. These findings reinforce the challenges faced by young people in the YJS who have experienced disrupted educational transitions, reviewed earlier in this chapter (see section 2.2). Attwood et al (2003) concluded that person-centred alternative education provision, built on close and supportive *staff-student relationships*, was integral to the success of the students participating. This points to the importance of relationships in effective resettlement support, built on curricula inclusive of need, aspiration, and interest.

Attwood et al's (2003) interview methodology used a type of semi-structured interview approach, based on a funnelling technique whereby planned open-ended questions were asked followed by a more specific question about the education programme, in response to which respondents were asked to select answers from prompt cards. Attwood et al's (2003) method attempted to be inclusive of both unprompted responses (open questions) and allow for comparison between answers using the same prompts. This was an interesting approach, that contained both child-centred and researcher driven elements. It could be argued that the technique was more researcher-driven but the use of open questions enabled more freedom for respondents. The use of prompts was a way of achieving rigour across participants, providing credibility to the findings.

Drawing on a larger cohort of participants, Lumby and Morrison (2009) interviewed 186 student participants involved in alternative education at several sites in England and Wales. They utilised individual interviews and focus groups. Most participants, aged 15-16, were not expected to attain 5 GCSEs at grade C or above, and a significant minority had either been suspended or expelled from previous schools. Lumby and Morrison (2009) explored the participants' experience of alternative education and found very similar themes to Attwood et al (2003) in terms of what constituted a positive learning experience for them. Specifically, positive relationships

with teachers were seen as a central factor to engagement with learning. Similarly, the participants described the importance of a curriculum that aligned with their own choices and needs. They also valued involvement in decision making and a chance for positive socialisation with peers. These findings appeared to be the ingredients of an inclusive learning environment for the participants and align with other evidence. For example, positive socialisation with peers has been identified as a variable in reduced offending behaviour by the criminology literature, offering an opportunity for interaction with pro-social peer role models (Shapland and Bottoms, 2011).

Respect was another important concept that emerged in this study (Lumby and Morrison, 2009). Feeling respected appeared to promote engagement and engendered positive self-esteem in students. Perceived respect was found to be especially apposite for vulnerable students who already felt disaffected. A use of humour in the classroom was also seen as a reification of respect and inclusion for students. This supported positive peer and teacher relationships through the realisation of a person-centred learning ethos. Another integral factor to an inclusive environment in this study was *small class sizes*. Participants viewed small class sizes as essential to building positive relationships and having access to learning that fitted their needs (Lumby and Morrison, 2009).

These findings translated into an overarching need for education provision to focus on strengths and capacity and a move away from the deficit-saturated discourses that students were accustomed to, especially in mainstream provision. Lumby and Morrison (2009) found strengths-based approaches had the potential to mitigate the wider *youth at risk* discourse discussed in the opening section (2.1) of this literature review.

Teachers themselves acknowledge the importance of developing positive relationships with students. Mills and McGregor (2014) interviewed a

cohort of 33 teachers and administrators in five schools that openly and actively espoused an ethos of social justice based on working with strengths, rather than deficits. These schools were a combination of state and independent schools, in the United Kingdom and Australia. The interviews found a conscious commitment to social justice in teaching staff, that reframed learner needs holistically – incorporating both the academic and pastoral needs of students. The five schools were constructed as communities of learning, based on principles of learner participation. The schools rejected conventional testing models. The teachers across the sites actively engaged students in discourses about social justice, rights and social responsibility. Disagreement and critical debate were embraced as a pedagogic strategy that could enhance confidence. Teachers felt respected in this climate and better able to meet the needs of students because they also felt included. All the research sites reported students positively achieving a wide range of outcomes, including good academic performance. The teacher perspective revealed by Mills and McGregor (2014) crystalises inclusive themes explored through this review, including a holistic connection with students, a move towards a strengths-based perspective and a commitment to participation.

The idea of *second chance* provision adds further value-based depth to what works in alternative education. Second chance schooling, a variant of alternative education, is supported by research on youth transitions, which highlights that unidimensional school pathways based on normative child developmental models fail to embrace the complexity of youth transitions. Second chance schooling acknowledges transitions are fluid and require flexibility in terms of leaving and re-entering education (Ross and Gray, 2005). This reflects findings noted elsewhere in this review (section 2.1), identifying that young people leaving custody experience complex transitions and require roll-on, roll off provision operating outside of the traditional academic year (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2015). Riele (2011) offers insight into second chance provision that accommodates young people on less orthodox education pathways.

Riele (2011) conducted a study in a single second chance school in Western Australia based on the triangulated case study method (Stake, 1995), incorporating a small but intensively studied learning environment. Riele (2011) conducted interviews with staff (n = 9) and students (n = 13), as well as classroom observation and documentary analysis pertaining to the 13 students out of a total school population of 90. Riele's (2011) focus was on the experience of students who had dropped out of mainstream school and were in the early stages of transitioning to second chance education. Students identified many strengths of the second chance programme, versus their experience in mainstream provision. Instrumental outcomes, in terms of employability, were a priority focus of the programme but they were couched within a more holistic focus on student wellbeing.

The programme focused on identifying aspirations and strengths, rather than correcting deficits. Education was conceived as improving quality of life, in a wider sense, but also gave students qualifications suitable for employment (Riele, 2011). A significant but unspecified proportion of all the students involved in the programme had a criminal record. Both staff and students reported that an outcome of this programme was desistance from offending behaviour. This was related to improved education outcomes and a greater sense of belonging to the local community, suggesting increased social capital (see Chapter 3), although this was not a theoretical focus of the study.

The school also included a significant number of young people without an offending history. As identified elsewhere (Shapland and Bottoms, 2011; Fitzpatrick et al, 2014; Hurry and Rogers, 2014), integration between offending and non-offending peers can be beneficial as it allows young offenders to re-configure their identities by exposing them to peers engaged in different lifestyles. An important focus of the second chance programme was the development of pro-social skills (Riele, 2011) through direct social skills training and peer role modelling, reinforced and made possible by the integration of offending and non-offending peers. The

emphasis on nurturing social skills appeared to be a core feature of what worked in the school. Considering the importance of social capital to resettlement, introduced in Chapter 3 and applied to the discussion (Chapter 10), social skills training offers a mechanism for facilitating positive access to the resources offered by social capital.

Summarising the section thus far, learning environments that encourage self-worth are important to meaningful and inclusive education, challenging socio-economic disadvantage. Taken together, these studies highlight several features of potentially effective and inclusive education provision for resettlement. Firstly, education should not involve groups of high-risk young offenders in fully segregated settings; there should be some form of integration with non-offending peers, based on small group class sizes. Second, person-centred provision tailored to specific need is important, consistent with the complex and varying needs evident in the resettlement population. Third, the ethos of education should be strengths-based and avoid pathologising narratives. Finally, provision should have a strong employability focus, offering a tangible outcome leading to opportunities. Implicit to these features is a focus on quality as opposed to quantity of provision.

The consistent trend in this section on good practice is the importance of the teacher-student relationship. This appears to be a transcendent feature of good practice and effective service provision in alternative schooling. In contrast, the inter-subjective quality of practitioner-young person relationships is not widely explored in research on YOTs, although the importance of the relationship between YOT workers and young people is touched upon in some papers (Drake et al, 2014; Lanskey, 2015). Wider literature from psychotherapy, youth studies and social work also reveals the importance of strong practitioner-service user relationships, above and beyond the modality of interventions or programmes (Ruch et al, 2010; Hatton, 2016; Goldson, 2018).

Drake et al (2014) is an example of a study that considers in-depth the YOT practitioner relationship with young people, positioning this relationship as a touchstone for examining wider youth justice policy. Based on a small-scale study of YOT practitioners (n = 7) from a single locality, utilising semi-structured interviews, Drake et al (2014) explored the importance of relationship-based practice in a YOT. The authors found that warm and supportive relationships were a key quality of effective YOT interventions. They also concluded the essential professional contribution to this form of relationship was based upon the ability of practitioners to bring knowledge of and access to local service resources, built on the power of the professional position. This is relevant to, but does not address, the concept of linking social capital considered in the next chapter. This form of resource facilitation could promote a range of positive outcomes, according to participants, including increased personal agency in young people, which parallels research by Fitzpatrick et al (2014) on the importance of education to recidivism through the enhanced personal agency education engenders.

Similarly, *trust* was a central element of relationship-based practice identified by the professional participants in Drake et al., (2014), supporting findings from the inclusive education literature reviewed earlier. Advocacy was noted as a key skill by participants, reinforcing Lanskey's (2015) finding about the importance of YOT workers acting as brokers in relation to education provision. While this was a small-scale study that lacked young person input, the alignment of this study with other research on inclusive education lends validity to Drake et al's (2014) findings. The study demonstrates a commonality in features of good practice between education and YOT.

This final section has offered balance to other sections of this literature review, developing the core qualities of good education practice that can help young people navigate the complex resettlement transition towards

positive personal and educational outcomes. This reinforces the need to understand both young people's experience of good practice (RQ1) and the position of professionals on what constitutes good practice (RQ2).

Conclusion to the Literature Review

In this concluding section, I offer a rationale for the two research questions, based on the literature reviewed in this chapter.

RQ1: What are the experiences of young people with identified SEND engaging with resettlement education provision?

The literature on resettlement and life course transitions more generally offers a picture of complexity and uncertainty that is at the core of the experience of young people released from prison. This experience exists in the interplay of the individual and the social, between the lived experience of young people and the context of support and challenges surrounding them following release from prison. The literature highlights that children in this situation can experience barriers, risks, opportunities and success. Research from constructive resettlement and secondary desistance also argues that resettlement is a time of identity change, partly shaped by interventions and support. These are factors that influence the response of young people to support offered and shape their journey towards desistance. Given this complexity, together with the role of barriers and good practice, the experience of young people provides an essential dimension of data, drawing from lived experience, that offers insight into resettlement education from a largely neglected perspective within the current literature. This experience also offers a point of comparison and contrast with professional perspectives, providing the potential for nuanced analysis of resettlement education and support.

RQ2: How do YOTs and education providers work to facilitate resettlement education provision, and what factors impact on this work?

The literature on resettlement education and related YOT support is not extensive. This research offers a contribution to that gap, providing a platform for investigating the nature of professional support during this delicate life transition.

The review has demonstrated that barriers exist that inhibit the work of YOTs and education providers; and scope for good practice is also evident. Taken as a whole, the literature demonstrates that professionals and the institutions they represent can have a profound impact on the life course of young people, which makes the involvement of education and YOT professionals in this research very important.

A comparison between the perspectives of young people, professionals in different local authorities and professionals from different disciplines offers the potential to construct a tapestry of data that not only tells us about professional interventions, but the contextual factors that impact on those interventions. This offers insight into the social side of the individual-social interplay at work in resettlement, given the power of professionals to shape identities and life trajectories that are socially constructed.

The following chapter will build on points raised in this review, from the perspective of the theoretical literature on social capital and resilience.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter outlines my core theoretical framework, which is composed of social capital and the resilience paradigm, respectively. The literature review established the nature and the challenge of the research problem about SEND, education and resettlement. This chapter establishes the theoretical tools that will be used to help better understand the research problem. In terms of structure, social capital and resilience are considered separately, before the final section of the chapter looks at the relationship between the two paradigms.

3.1 Social Capital

3.1.1 Defining Social Capital

Social capital has been variously defined and contested over the past four decades. I will not attempt a singular definition here, which I believe is an overly simplistic approach. Instead, the core concepts of social capital are reviewed and then applied to youth justice to highlight their theoretical utility. Social capital was first developed by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber in the nineteenth century (Tzanakis, 2013). Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) provided the two modern theoretical reference points for social capital, which has influenced subsequent literature. Bourdieu (1986) gave the first developed outline of social capital. He argued that social capital can be distilled into two essential elements. The first element constitutes the social relationship between individual actors, facilitating access to social resources of various kinds possessed by associates in a network, including economic capital, knowledge acquisition and employment opportunities. The second element relates to the nature and quality of those resources, including how well they support social advancement.

Coleman's (1988) prominent paper developed the concept of social capital further. In this development of the theory, social capital reflects the wider social structure within which it operates. Social capital facilitates the actions of actors within any given social circumstance, including the acquisition of resources as defined by Bourdieu (1986), such as access to social knowledge and opportunities. Coleman (1988) also added the development and maintenance of social norms to this functionalist emphasis. Using the concept of *closure*, Coleman (1988) stated that social capital relies on the existence of sufficient social bonds between individual and corporate actors to ensure adherence to norms, foreshadowing the later idea of linking social capital (see next subsection). Observance of norms paves access to socially advantageous resources based on membership of a social grouping or network. Coleman (1988) placed the family at the centre of social capital. He argued that cohesive family structures accrue greater social capital that may offset wider deterioration in community social capital, again foreshadowing the later development of bonding social capital discussed below.

Based on Coleman (1988), Putnam (2000) developed the most prominent contemporary treatment of social capital. Putnam (2000) emphasised the benefits of social capital, citing networks and norms as the basis of cooperative social cohesion. Putnam (2000) shifted the emphasis away from individuals and defined social capital as a property of communities and nations. This version of the theory presents social capital as both a cause and effect of wider socio-economic trends and has received criticism for its circularity and diminishing of personal agency (Portes, 2000). This relates to wider criticisms of the Coleman (1988) school of social capital. Namely that Coleman's positioning is driven by a variety of ideological interests, including uncritical acceptance of the beneficence of political institutions; and the centrality of mothers to the development of social capital, built on older notions of gender relations and the nuclear family (Portes, 1998; Ferragina and Arrighi, 2017). Critics have also pointed to Coleman's (1988) and Putnam's (2000) confusion between interpersonal trust and the role of institutions in fostering social capital (Coradini, 2010), creating ambiguity about the place of the individual in social networks.

A further challenge of social capital is how to measure it. Social capital is the sum expression of micro and macro interactions between a wide variety of social actors; it has an inherently subjective and unpredictable quality (Tzanakis, 2013; Ferragina and Arrigoni, 2017). Reviewing the work of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, Tzanakis (2013) argued much of the available evidence for their ideas is characterised by a theoretical opacity, especially research based on Putnam's work. In particular, Tzanakis (2013) argued that Putnam's confusion between the cause-and-effect role of social capital renders it difficult to apply in research and policy. The review concluded that social capital has a far from secure application in research. Tzanakis (2013) also cautioned that we should avoid seeing social capital as a simplistically additive concept: more does not mean better and social capital can be negative. This again points to the subjectivity of social capital, as a concept, which will be considered further in the next section.

Perhaps most significantly as a critique, Portes (1998 and 2000) criticised Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) for not acknowledging the potential negatives of social capital. That is, social capital can also exclude and marginalise, producing poor individual and collective outcomes. The empirical evidence for the negatives of social capital is most evident in health research. Uphoff et al (2013), in a systematic review of the literature, argued that social capital can be both a buffer to poverty and a source of inequality and social exclusion, leading to poor health outcomes. The authors found the economic gradient between health and wealth - those of higher economic status generally display better health - has a psychosocial dimension. Reviewing a large volume of papers on the psychosocial dimensions of health, Uphoff et al (2013) argued that multi-measures of social capital reveal its determining effect on health. For example, their review found that individuals who did not complete high school were more likely to experience hypertension as a result of more limited social networks because of less exposure to the bridging capital of further and higher education, especially when compared to individuals who had completed more education. Most significantly, the Uphoff et al (2013) review demonstrated that poverty leads to lower level of social capital, leading to poorer health outcomes.

This was most evident in recently established immigrant communities in western countries, who were less likely to have cohesive networks of social capital and limited access to knowledge or social resources, that could support engagement with health services in the context of migrant communities who were more likely to experience poverty and less able to afford or access medical treatments. Uphoff et al (2013) found this to be especially pronounced in countries with fully privatised health care systems, such as the United States.

Furthermore, social capital can lead to the exchange of resources that lead to negative outcomes. This later point was taken up by Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi (2017) in relation to the negative health outcomes of social capital related to individual and group behaviour. The main negative health effect noted was the spread of misinformation through social networks, that could lead to the development of harmful behavioural norms. For example, a norm that binge drinking is acceptable and not physically harmful. In the paper, this form of negative effect was labelled under the theme of *social contagion*. From this review, Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi (2017) argued we should take an *agnostic* stance towards social capital. That is, not assume its de facto benefits but instead be open to both the positives and negatives of social capital, in part driven by the mobilisers and context of social capital. This analysis is relevant to wider critiques of social capital, for example Uphoff et al's (2013) conclusion that social capital is both a poverty buffer and a source of social inequality.

3.1.2 Different Forms of Social Capital

Building on my own *constructivism* research position (see Chapter 4), I advocate for the subjective quality of social capital as a strength of the concept. This is contra to criticisms noted at the end of the previous sub-section. Human relationships are complex and attempting to quantify them, I believe, is a straw man argument. For this reason, social capital is useful as a heuristic tool for understanding qualitative research that is built on a subjective understanding of a complex phenomenon. Methodologically, this framing leads towards the use of qualitative research methods, as a way of understanding subjectivity in social

phenomena and their underlying relationships, drawing from the philosophy of constructivism (Miller and Crabtree, 1999).

Putnam (2000), despite criticisms of tautology, provides a potential bivariate framework for capturing this subjectivity in an organised way, and also offers insight into the causality of social capital in different relational structures. Specifically, influenced by Gittel and Vidal (1998), Putnam (2000) identified two forms of social capital: *bonding* and *bridging* social capital, that characterise the subjective qualities of social networks.

Bonding capital refers to relations between close and often small networks, distinguished by individuals with shared norms and closely aligned world views, often within a limited geographical space. Bonding capital is built on homogeneity and exclusivity. Families and peer networks are the most fundamental example of this type of capital (Putnam, 2000). *Bridging* capital is about connections between individuals from diverse backgrounds. It is built on heterogeneity and inclusion, between individuals with divergent world views and links to a wider array of social resources. FE colleges and employers, with a wider geographical catchment, are examples of sites where bridging social capital can operate. *Linking* capital is a third form of social capital (Woolcock, 2001) which addresses relationships between individuals with differing levels of access to power, knowledge and resources. Woolcock (2001) framed linking capital specifically in terms of the relationship between individuals and institutions, including public services. Linking capital can be understood most concretely for this research in terms of how professionals representing services relate to individuals using those services, including YOTs and education. This again points to the importance of relational subjectivity to social capital, built on more hierarchical power relations in the form of linking capital. The role of power is an important contribution of linking capital to the wider field of social capital, which can treat power more implicitly (McGonigal et al, 2007).

Power offers a core ingredient of my qualitative research methodology, which includes interviews with professionals to understand how they use power and facilitate resource access (RQ2). Equally relevant is how young people experience the power of linking capital, through their lived experience of institutional support from YOTs and education providers (RQ1). Linking capital brings into focus the importance of relationships between professionals and young people, including the ability of young people to contribute to decision making, which is a central value of the CoP (DfE and DoH, 2014). Linking capital also dovetails with the literature review, which devoted considerable space to relationship-based practice. McGonigal et al (2007) posited that the concept of linking capital is essential to understanding how children and parents are involved in decision making networks related to education provision and other institutional support. The latter point highlights that bonding capital is also important to decision making and institutional access since it is often within the family that such decisions are made (McGonigal et al, 2007).

Linking capital is interwoven with bridging and bonding capital. It potentially offers support essential to the cohesion of family and peer networks, which underpin bonding capital, for example through child protection and family support (Kerri et al, 2013). When effectively mobilised, linking capital serves to maximise child and parental involvement in important decision making (McGonigal et al, 2007). Linking capital also helps facilitate the opportunities offered by bridging capital, for example through the education advocacy of YOT professionals (Lanskey, 2015). Although linking capital as a concept has not been considered explicitly in the youth justice literature I have reviewed, it occupies a more implicit conceptual space, which makes a further argument for its relevance to my own research. Thus, the resources of professional networks help young people utilise their bonding and bridging capital, where linking capital works effectively to promote inclusion and positive outcomes.

While the positives of bonding, bridging and linking social capital have been emphasised in this section, their positive effects should not be presumed, in line with Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi's (2017) position that we should be agnostic

about social capital. However, research that critiques the three discrete forms of social capital is poorly represented in the literature. The most widely researched type of social capital is the bonding variant, although a paucity of relevant literature exists focusing on its negative effects. Nonetheless, research suggests bonding networks can be negative, for example where child abuse is evident in families, which is a direct risk to children from supposed bonding networks (Jack and Jordan, 1999; Ferguson, 2006). This link between bonding (family) social capital and child welfare challenges Coleman's (1988) thesis that the family is a de facto site of social cohesion through the development of pro-social norms. At no time in his work does Coleman (1988) factor in risks such as parental abuse or family instability. McPherson et al (2014), in a systematic review of the links between social capital, parenting and child mental health, found that several studies demonstrated that authoritarian parenting styles based on harsh discipline could adversely impact the mental health of children, leading to depression, anxiety and reduced self-efficacy. This was found to be a negative consequence of norms within bonding social capital networks that favoured more punitive forms of parenting.

Research on the negative effects of bridging capital is less visible than bonding capital, with a wider assumption in the literature that bridging capital is inherently positive. Remarkably, Claridge (2018, p. 4) argued that bridging capital has 'few, if any, negative effects.' However, a multi-case qualitative study of several North American elementary schools by Murray et al (2020) found that bridging capital does not just occur but needs to be proactively developed or negative outcomes may ensue. The study found schools that did not invest in promoting cross-cultural communication between the diverse communities they served could stoke racial tensions. In one school involved in the study, tensions between White, Black and Latinx parents became pronounced because no resources were directed to promoting bridging networks between parents from diverse backgrounds. No money was invested in school-wide events or the parent-teacher association. Instead, a focus was on individualised engagement with parents, focused on test scores, without wider attention being given to community relations and building bridging networks between parents. At another

school in the study, the bonding capital of wealthy White parents led to a monopoly of parent-teacher association resources, to the exclusion of Black and Latinx families. This again stoked racial tensions. In this school, teachers and school leaders failed to disrupt the power of White parents and instead passively explained the issue in terms of wider societal underrepresentation. Proactive steps were not taken, such as creating a more representative parent-teacher committee. The central message was that sites of bridging capital, in this case schools, can be sites of division and tension when bridging capital is not mobilised effectively. This highlights the importance of formal agencies, such as alternative education providers and YOTs, in building social capital resources through the linking social capital they can bring to bear.

Of the three forms of social capital, linking social capital is the least researched and its shortcomings the least understood. The main identified negatives of linking social capital, where it tends towards dysfunction, is the potential for corruption and nepotism in formal social networks that control access to resources (Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). The under-exploration of linking social capital and its more negative aspects was noted by Lo and Fan (2020) in their investigation of the role of linking social capital in the utilisation of government resources to reconstruct three Taiwanese villages following Typhoon Morakot in 1999. They concluded that the essential downside of linking social capital is the propensity of social elites and powerful professionals to dominate the social resources embedded in linking social networks. They found that linking capital needed to be surrounded by strong accountability structures to ensure equitable distribution of social resources from government agencies.

Resonating with Lo and Fan (2020), Szreter and Woolcock's (2004) analysis of the British welfare system and the availability of linking capital points towards an elite domination of formally governed social resources. Dominant social classes according to the authors, including politicians and professionals, tend to guide the channelling of resources through values and ideals that may be detached from those of lower socio-economic status. One outcome of this in Britain was 'the profusion of poorly designed housing estates for the poor' (Szreter and

Woolcock, 2004, p. 662). The limited channelling of resources, Szrete and Woolcock (2004) argued, is a manifestation of *symbolic violence* against the poor by political and professional elites who control linking capital. At a practice level relevant to this research, direct critiques of linking social capital, explicitly through the social capital theoretical lens, are not available. This remains a conceptually underdeveloped aspect of social capital theory, which largely accepts linking capital as an inherent good (Lo and Fan, 2020). Despite this, the control of resources by professionals is evident in the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis. Specifically, the challenges of acquiring resources and support through the resettlement planning process are manifestations of the withholding of linking capital by powerful professionals. In the discussion chapter, this is considered theoretically through labelling and stigma directed towards the resettlement population, which supports Szrete and Woolcock's (2004) argument that social resources are channelled through value-based filters that may deny social capital to marginalised groups through symbolic violence.

3.1.3 Social Capital, Education and Offending

Social capital has been associated closely with education for the past three decades (Dika and Singh, 2002; Gamoran et al, 2021). A particular theme within the education literature has been an exploration of links between school completion and social capital, with consistent research findings pointing to a strong positive link between the two (Celik, 2017). In Coleman's (1988) conception of social capital, education is framed as an arena for transmitting social norms through the development of school based social networks embedded in wider cultural and policy milieus. It can be argued that adherence to norms in a school setting is a major feature in the relationships between young people and schools that determines levels of inclusion or exclusion, thereby having important implications for school completion. Social norms have a major bearing on the experience of education provision, where issues such as challenging behaviour are important features of the life course development of young people deemed deviant from school norms (McGregor et al, 2015).

Confronting these issues from a similar conceptual perspective, Raffo and Reeves (2000) conducted interviews with young people aged 15-24 (n = 31) to explore the role of social capital in important youth transitions, including between school and work. They found that knowledge exchange, facilitated by social capital, is a central aspect of educational progression because greater knowledge supported decision making, emotional resilience to change, and personal agency within a less certain labour market. These are ingredients, I would suggest, important to all transitions including the resettlement transition. Raffo and Reeves' (2000) interviews with young people to understand the role of social support in key life transitions, lends credence to the inclusion of young people in interviews as part of my own research methodology. Interviews have the capacity to capture the lived experience of important variables on resettlement (RQ1), including issues such as inclusion in education and completion of schooling. Such issues are apposite as disrupted education histories are a common experience in the youth justice population (Hughes et al, 2012; Bateman and Hazel, 2021).

Supplementing the youth transition perspective, Grenfell (2009) drew links between education policy and social capital, arguing that well-constructed education policy has the potential to promote social capital through instilling trust and joint working between all stakeholders. Certainly, it could be argued this is a potential benefit of the CoP, which is designed to promote greater inter-agency working and involvement of young people and their carers in decision making (DfE and DoH, 2014). In this sense, the CoP is a potential source of linking social capital as conceived by Woolcock (1998 and 2001). Grenfell (2009) noted implicit aspirations towards social capital in a range of education policies, particularly with a greater focus on inter-agency working under the New Labour government of the early twenty-first century. Inter-agency working, as a facet of linking social capital, has a strong bearing on the practice of YOTs and education providers. The importance of inter-agency working was significant in my decision to involve both YOTs and education providers in this research (RQ2) rather than a sole focus on YOTs, which had been my original intent. Interviews with professionals, a central pillar of the methodology, offer the potential to better

understand inter-agency working and the policies that promote professional collaboration. This again brings in the relevance of linking capital, not just the role of individual agencies or institutions, but also the relationships between agencies as an enabler to accessing social resources (Woolcock, 2001).

Despite the heuristic potential of social capital across several relevant domains such as inter-agency working, questions about the veracity of the concept persist. Dika and Singh (2002) reviewed the first two decades of education research involving social capital and cautioned the term had become something of a catch-all concept that diluted original definitions based on social networks and resources. This critique echoes Tzanakis' (2013) concerns about the difficulty in measuring social capital, in particular the idea that social capital cannot be uncritically accepted as positive.

The desistance literature has advocated that increasing social capital levels is essential to rehabilitation from offending (Farrall et al, 2011). More recently, authors on the subject have argued that offending behaviour is not about levels of social capital per se but instead about the source of social capital, whether illicit or licit. Prolific offenders, for example, may have an abundance of social capital drawn from criminally inclined social networks (Kay, 2022). The focus in the literature has shifted to considering how licit forms of social capital can be enhanced to promote desistance (King, 2014; Wilson, 2014; Kay, 2022). Peer networks, as a basis of bonding social capital, can structure and influence decisions to engage in crime (Deuchar, 2009; Boeck and Fleming, 2011; Barker, 2013; Little, 2015). Kay (2022, p. 1247) has referred to this aspect of social capital as 'anti-social capital' or the "Artful Dodger' complex', named after the Charles Dickens' character in *Oliver Twist*. Similarly, Loughran et al (2013, p. 6) referred to the negative potential of social capital as 'criminal capital'.

While there is a tradition of exploring the negative potential of social capital in the desistance literature, this is an area of research that is under-explored and theoretically under-developed (Barker, 2013; Kay 2022). Nonetheless several

studies do exist, which shed light on the negative role of social capital in the development of criminal behaviour. In a Canadian study, involving surveys completed by 170 high level young offenders in British Columbia, Descormiers et al (2011) found access to social capital that offered economically lucrative criminal opportunities was the central variable in decisions to participate in serious offences. Social networks of offenders, largely built on trust and collaboration, structured the decisions of young offenders, and had the potential to encourage reoffending where monetary gain was a benefit. This study also found alienation from pro-social networks was a push factor towards offending.

Supporting the findings of Descormiers et al (2011), Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi (2017), in their systematic review of the links between social capital and health, noted that one essential negative effect of social capital is *social contagion*. That is, the development of negative social norms from the information and resources that flow through social networks. Several studies have found social contagion to be a feature of youth peer networks. Takaura (2015), in a study of youth peer networks such as sports clubs and schools, found that misuse of substances such as alcohol, which could lead to anti-social and criminal behaviour, was often a result of social contagion across peer networks. Takaura (2015) identified *trust* and *role modelling* between network members as the two main mechanisms for the social contagion that could result in greater use of illicit and harmful substances within close peer networks. In particular, this study found that networks with higher levels of individuals prone to criminal behaviour led to higher average levels of substance misuse in social arenas such as schools. This finding was supported by Seid et al (2016), who argued adolescence and early adulthood is an especially sensitive period for negative social contagion to arise, because of peer pressure and behavioural modelling in networks. Significantly, the findings chapters and the discussion chapter highlight the important positive influence of professional social networks through trust and specific approaches such as mentoring, in supporting the resettlement population, including through linking social capital. Social contagion, as described here, demonstrates similar relational aspects of social

capital can also operate in negative ways, further reinforcing the need for an agnostic stance towards social capital (Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi, 2017).

Kay (2022) offers the most recent and the most relevant empirical study of the criminal potential of social capital. This study involved 20 young males, aged 18 – 25, who were supervised on Intensive Community Orders by the probation service, in an English city. Many of the participants had been through the youth justice system, with 13 years being the average age of first-time conviction in the sample. Kay (2022) conducted two narrative interviews with each of the participants, spaced 6 to 8 months apart. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with probation officers (n = 10). Kay's (2022) research objectives set out to specifically explore the potential of social capital both as a promoter of desistance and a driver for criminal behaviour. The main findings were that participants, all high-level offenders, had an abundance of social capital that encouraged and facilitated offending behaviour, echoing the research of Descormiers et al (2011). The balance in participant social networks favoured offending and did not include strong desistance-promoting support structures. Criminal actors exerted a greater influence over the agency of participants than probation staff or pro-social family members. Participants tended to have long established pro-criminal networks and lacked a history of pro-social capital. Although not discussed by the author, I would argue this study highlighted the important role of pro-social capital in promoting desistance at an early stage, when offenders are still in the youth justice system, given the average age of first conviction in the cohort was 13. The focus of professional interventions, in the study, was on providing support and opportunities that had pro-social qualities, promoting agency and decision making that moved away from the maintenance of an offender identity. This latter finding was consistent with the secondary desistance paradigm reviewed in chapter 2. Adding further depth to these findings, Kay (2022) found both networks and the interactional qualities of those networks, between individuals, structured pro-criminal or pro-social pathways for participants. Anti-social capital, that offered a greater sense of agency, inclusion and decision making could powerfully influence criminal involvement. The same dynamic held true for pro-social support, where it was influential and relevant to

the lives of participants. This finding underlines the importance of both linking social capital and the strengths-based, trusting relationships with professionals discussed in the literature review (chapter 2). High quality trusting relationships will be a recurring feature of good practice across the findings chapters. Equally, the discussion chapter will reveal that mentoring and brokering, as two forms of pro-social relationships, are essential mobilisers of linking social capital (see section 10.2).

Boeck and Fleming (2011) offer further insight into the positive potential of social capital. Acknowledging problems with the social capital theoretical literature and wanting to better understand the role of social capital in crime and desistance, Boeck and Fleming (2011) interviewed and conducted focus groups with a cohort of young people (n = 77) experiencing varying degrees of involvement with a YOT who accessed a community project designed to strengthen social networks of support. Professionals associated with the project were also interviewed. The size of the total participant sample was unspecified. The research focused on the roles of bonding and bridging capital. The researchers worked in close partnership with the young people involved and listened to their views through qualitative methods in order to put in place support relevant to their lives through action research. The aim was to promote increased social networks and aspirations.

Boeck and Fleming (2011) found that social capital was a necessary precondition for personal resilience and desistance from crime when built on positive relationships with family, friends, teachers, and employers. They concluded that enhanced bridging social capital improved available emotional and social support, enhancing participants' positive outlook on the future in a way that supported personal resilience. Specifically, Boeck and Fleming (2011) found that education was an important element of strong social networks that injected greater levels of bridging social capital into the lives of young people, preventing further reoffending through increased access to opportunities and other social resources such as contact with non-offending role models. This highlights the potential for support and positive outcomes during resettlement, offered by

effective education provision as a form of bridging capital. Boeck and Fleming's (2011) findings were a product of qualitative research which triangulated professional and youth perspectives to offer a cohesive analysis of the role of social capital in rehabilitation from offending and was formative in my own thinking about the role of social capital in my research. Boeck and Fleming's (2011) robust findings convinced me of the combined potential of both youth and professional perspectives in my own research using qualitative interview methods.

As suggested by Boeck and Fleming (2011), social capital is an essential factor in individual resilience. Supporting this, Hjalmarsson (2008) found that incarceration during the school year provokes social exclusion and undermines social capital through absence from the school curriculum, which impacts on individual wellbeing and resilience, further propelling involvement in offending. This suggests the importance of resilience as a variable in resettlement, which will be considered in the next section.

3.2 Resilience

3.2.1 Introducing the Core Concepts of Resilience

Resilience is aligned with social capital in many ways, as section 3.3 will address. This section will focus on the meaning of resilience, as a paradigm that contains several conceptual elements relevant to this research. Richardson (2002, p.308) defined resilience as '... the process in coping with adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, fortification and enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors.' This definition offers an opening about what resilience is, when considered in terms of individual coping strategies in response to adversity. Other authors, acknowledging the role of individual adaptation to adversity as an expression of resilience, have questioned what causes individual variation in responses to adversity. Cairns and Cairns (2016), in their role as both social workers and foster carers, have noted that children

exposed to the same experiences can exhibit profoundly different responses. Furthermore, they also observed that the same child may respond differently to the same challenges at different points in their life. This has led them to frame resilience as a dynamic concept, consistent with ideas developed by Ungar (2011), discussed in 3.2.3, referring to the complexity of resilience and its potential to fluctuate.

For Cairns and Cairns (2016), an essential factor in resilience is how children construct and *ascribe meaning* to their experience of adversity and the support of others. The nature of the meaning children create will determine their resilience. For example, children who blame themselves for the abuse they experience will have impaired resilience. Cairns and Cairns (2016) argue that children who are supported to create constructive meanings about their life experience, that engender creativity and learning, are more likely to develop resilience. While presenting important truths that psychotherapy has reported for over a century, Cairns and Cairns' (2016) framing of resilience is open to critique, being focused on the *individual* child as a mobiliser of resilience rather than the role of environmental factors in determining resilience levels. Richardson's (2002) definition can similarly be criticised for its focus on individual coping strategies. Ungar (2012a, p. 14) succinctly encapsulates the need to move away from individualised constructs of resilience:

'This discourse of individualism embodied by western psychological sciences ... is changing as evidence gathers for a more contextualized understanding of human development... Studies of individual qualities limit our understanding of psychological phenomena to a fraction of the potential factors that can explain within and between population differences.'

In this quotation, Ungar (2012a) offers a powerful critique that in essence extols both professionals and practitioners to move beyond individualised constructs of resilience, and human development more widely. He further argues, both in this source and elsewhere (Ungar, 2011) that individualised framings of resilience are akin to a form of victim blaming. This is a critique that I fully endorse and is

why the environmental conception of resilience is central to how resilience is deployed in this research. Nonetheless, as the literature review highlights in chapter 2, the dynamic between the individual and the social is complex – the role of individuals cannot be discounted when set within a broader social context.

Cairns and Cairns (2016) present one factor, individual meanings, as a mediator in the expression of resilience. Certainly, as the findings will highlight, the two young people who participated in this research demonstrated that constructed meanings of their life experience, during complex phases of transition, played a role in their response to adversity, including their adoption of criminality and challenging behaviour as coping strategies. This offers a point of intersection with Richardson's (2002) focus on coping as a hallmark of resilience. In this sense, the findings and discussion reinforce the linked factors of coping strategies and meaning making, set within wider social environments that render resilience as a multi-dimensional phenomenon most visible at the interplay between the individual and the social.

As an important milestone in resilience research, Rutter (1987) offered the first step towards a contextualised environmental understanding of resilience, which finds its most visible modern interpretation in the work of Ungar (2011 and 2012). Rutter (1987) argued that resilience is not about atomised individual traits that predict resilience under stress and adversity. Instead, Rutter (1987) posited resilience as a *process* of reducing the effects of risk exposure over time. Rutter (1987 and 2006) in particular, emphasised the importance of enhancing *self-esteem*, as an expression of increased resilience, through professional support and interventions. This is conceptually aligned with the important role of self-efficacy and personal agency in desistance from offending, discussed in the literature review. While self-esteem can be understood at an individual level, Rutter (1987 and 2006) considered it an aspect of positive mental health that could only be nurtured by a supportive environment. Again, this echoes the basic tenets of constructive resettlement, discussed in chapter 2, which promote the

need to engender individual change through networks of support and intervention.

Rutter's (1987) central contribution to resilience research was not only to take it in a more environmental direction but also to frame it as a paradigm of related concepts, that together create a sufficiently nuanced understanding of how resilience is manifest in human development. In particular, Rutter (1987 and 2012) introduced the twin factors of *risk* and *protection*, which are essential to reifying resilience.

Rutter (2012) posited that *risk* factors are those characteristics of the person or the environment that are associated with an increased probability of maladaptive developmental outcomes and increased vulnerability, which undermines resilience. This is a concept supported in the wider literature. Daniel and Bowes (2011), for example, linked the concepts of risk and *adversity*. Adversity is a concept that Daniel and Bowes (2011) related to a range of environmental challenges that inhibit the potential for children and young people to achieve positive developmental outcomes. Adversity related environmental challenges include abuse or structural inequalities such as poverty, among other multi-dimensional factors. While framing adversity as a form of environmental risk, Daniel and Bowes (2011) distinguished the concepts of adversity and risk, as qualitatively different phenomena. In this model, adversity is a source of environmental risk that can undermine resilience. *Risk*, as an inter-related but distinct causal category to adversity, is the process that translates adversity into negative developmental outcomes. In this model, risk is a process or mechanism that enhances vulnerability to adversity (Daniel and Bowes, 2011). Examples of risk factors or processes are professional interventions that fail to safeguard children from environmental adversity, such as abuse. Other risk factors include poor inter-agency working that undermine the ability of professionals and services to act as protective factors and prevent further harm. This interconnected dynamic between risk and adversity sits firmly in the contextual arena of resilience pioneered by Rutter (1987) and extended by Ungar (2011). It reinforces the notion of resilience and risk as a complex dynamical process, intertwined with development pathways and outcomes. The role of the

environment is at the centre of Daniel and Bowes' (2011) adversity-resilience binary. Professional support and interventions, where they are ineffective, act as a risk process that enhances the impact of adversity, leading to negative outcomes. Consistent with this binary framework, the negative potential of ineffective practice is a recurring feature of the findings and discussion chapters, acting as a risk factor in the resettlement transition and translating into poor outcomes for young people attempting to rehabilitate after custody.

Protective factors interact with sources of risk, in such a way that they reduce the probability of negative outcomes under conditions of high environmental stress and promote resilience (Rutter, 2012). Gilligan (2009), exploring the concept of resilience and protective factors in relation to looked after children, found the most important protective factor for looked after children was the relationships they had with professionals and foster carers, who were the most important source of stability in their lives. Gilligan (2009), influenced by Rutter (1987 and 2006), argued resilience is an *interactional* process, with important elements of the child's environment including professional support. This reinforces the importance of professionals in enhancing resilience through the relational support they offer, and parallels related practice frameworks that have resilience enhancing potential, such as strengths-based approaches and inclusive education (see chapter 2).

In a review of the literature on resilience and protective factors, Meng et al (2018) found protective factors played a significant role in promoting resilience at individual, familial and societal levels for children experiencing various forms of maltreatment, including physical and sexual abuse. The influence of protective factors was consistently shown to promote a range of positive outcomes for both children and adults who had experienced child abuse, including improved mental health and a range of measures that indicated improved adaptive functioning, for example more stable employment and successful completion of academic courses. Like Gilligan (2009), Meng et al (2018) found positive relationships at all levels (individual, familial and societal) were the common denominator in protective factors that enhanced adaptive functioning. Societal relationships, in

this review, referred to informal and formal social networks, including local neighbourhood support – this suggests social capital as a protective factor, although this is not discussed in the review.

Brooks (2006), in a review of the literature, focused on the resilience building potential of schools. The themes that emerged from this review highlighted that inclusive learning environments had the greatest protective potential to enhance resilience in children at a range of ages. Supportive and meaningful relationships, between students and staff, were found to be at the core of resilience enhancing school environments. Other protective factors were also important to the promotion of resilience in schools, including mechanisms for facilitating student participation in decision making and staff encouraging high aspirations in children. This further underlines the importance of principles of inclusive education, explored in depth in chapter 2. The consistent importance of positive relationships as a protective factor, across the literature, is also evident in the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis. Relationships built on support and trust, will become evident as promoting positive educational outcomes for young people transitioning through resettlement.

Rarely does a single risk factor provoke psychosocial problems and maladaptive development. Indeed, the total number of compound risks is a clearer predictor of negative outcomes (Howe et al, 1999). Arditti et al (2010) described this as *cumulative disadvantage*, based on the dynamic interaction of diverse risk factors that exist within environments of socio-economic adversity. Like many authors, Ardetti et al (2010) cautioned against a simplistic adding of disadvantages to understand risk and resilience, instead focusing on the interplay of both protective and risk factors in an individual's environment as shapers of resilience. From my own professional perspective, addressing risk, promoting resilience, and enhancing protective factors are central to positive rehabilitation from offending. Education has the capacity to be an essential protective factor in this regard during the resettlement transition, which offers a potentially high level of risk.

The aforementioned protective potential of services to enhance resilience is widely recognised in the literature (Ungar, 2019). This protective potential, and the possibility of barriers to protective interventions, in part shaped the development of RQ2. The second research question considers how services act as protective factors during the precarious window of resettlement. This translates into the content of interviews with professionals to explore these issues further; and interviews with young people, to understand from their lived experience how services may or may not act as a protective factor.

Although widely supported in the literature, resilience and related concepts remain contested in their details. Like many concepts in the social sciences, including social capital, definitions and applications remains diverse and subject to ambiguity (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013). As already noted, earlier research can be legitimately criticised for its focus on the individual level, to the detriment of understanding wider structural factors that shape human development. A move towards an environmental understanding of resilience is the most consistent feature of literature published this century (Gartland et al, 2019). While this is a clear shift towards an improved understanding of resilience, measurement and definition of resilience, as both a concept and wider paradigm, remains a recurring issue.

Resilience as a field of research has been subject to a high volume of literature and systematic reviews (Lou et al, 2018; Gartland et al, 2019). All of the reviews consulted suggest that resilience has a problem with both definition and measurement consistency, making comparison between studies difficult. As Meng et al (2018, p. 457) observed:

‘Even though many studies had been carried out to research the conceptualization of resilience, which has been measured by various approaches, most often using various scales, no consensus on an operational definition has been reached.’

The lack of an operational definition has led to considerable variation in how resilience has been framed and measured. This has practice as well as research implications. Southwick et al (2014), interviewing a range of professionals and teachers, found considerable variation in understandings of resilience that led to inconsistent and potentially contested responses to supporting the needs of young people.

As Meng et al (2018) noted in the above quotation, resilience measurement scales are a common feature of the research literature. Windle et al (2011) undertook a methodological review of resilience scales. The authors analysed the 15 most widely used scales at the time and concluded they varied considerably both in quality and what they purported to measure. Some scales claiming to measure resilience in fact measured resources and support necessary to facilitate resilience, without offering insight into resilient outcomes. Other measuring scales were configured based on adult psychological data but were used in childhood studies; and a sub-set of scales took an individualised approach, with an explicit or implicit emphasis on personal agency to the detriment of understanding the role of environmental factors. Windle et al (2011) cautioned against overreliance on scales, concluding that numeric measures, while useful, do not capture the nuanced totality of resilience as a paradigm operating at multiple levels. This points to the value of qualitative data, not reliant on numeric scales, that can capture the lived experience of resilience enhancing support and outcomes. This is a strength of using conceptual frameworks to understand resilience, such as Ungar's (2011) social ecology of resilience considered in section 3.3.

3.2.2 Risk, Resilience and Offending

The main finding of the *Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime* (McAra and McVie, 2010) was that persistent and violent offending is associated with vulnerability and social adversity, through a variety of risk factors. Violent offenders are more likely to be victims of crime themselves, exhibit a range of SEND, have serious mental health problems, come from abusive family backgrounds, experience disrupted education histories and have been exposed to social deprivation. This makes resilience a central issue for rehabilitation and resettlement.

Carr and Vandiver (2001) also noted the high vulnerability evident in the youth justice population. Based on their study of young offender case files in the United States, they found that enhancing protective factors in young offenders' life situations was integral to preventing reoffending. The authors found that young people who had desisted from offending behaviour had experienced protective factors that addressed risks, reduced their vulnerability, and enhanced resilience. School-based resilience was central to this, providing a strong sense of self-worth and personal competence, together with resilience-enhancing positive teacher relationships. This finding echoes themes relating to inclusive education discussed in the literature review, (Chapter 2, section 2.3). This also aligns with the findings of Rogers et al (2014) and Fitzpatrick et al (2014), who found a positive link between education and personal agency. Similarly, Solomon and Rogers (2001), through interview-based research, found that an appropriate curriculum for disengaged students built motivation and self-esteem within PRUs. This underlines the importance of considering the experiences of young people (RQ1) related to personal resilience during resettlement transition, and the role of relevant professionals in supporting young people engaging with education at this delicate time (RQ2).

Further protective factors explored by Carr and Vandiver (2001), included a positive home environment, good relations with at least one adult outside the family, and robust friendship networks. This suggests the importance of social capital, although this was not explicitly mentioned in the paper. Personal, familial, social, and academic protective factors were found to discriminate between non-repeat and repeat offenders. Available research, while not extensive, also highlighted that YOT workers are perceived as a source of protective support by young people, including high risk young offenders (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011; Drake et al, 2014; Lanskey, 2015).

Carr and Vandiver (2001) identified that unsupported or unidentified complex developmental needs and familial abuse were core risk factors in undermining resilience and associated with prolonged offending behaviour in the absence of protective factors (also McAra and McVie, 2010). As highlighted in Chapters 1

and 2, the child prison population exhibits high levels of risk and vulnerability related to SEND (Hughes et al, 2012), thereby emphasising the importance of promoting resilience in this population. By interviewing professionals as part of my research design, my aim was to understand what interventions work most effectively from their experiences and perspectives in reducing risk and enhancing resilience in the face of these complex needs, including the efficacy of education during resettlement. To help me analyse the efficacy of these interventions and understand the wider place of protective factors and resilience in resettlement, I have adopted Ungar's (2011) social ecology of resilience model which is discussed next.

3.2.3 The Social Ecology of Resilience

Previous sub-sections of this chapter have emphasised the importance of understanding resilience through an environmental and contextual lens. This sub-section will build upon the concepts already discussed, by introducing a conceptual framework for resilience that will play an important role in the discussion chapter. Social ecology and environmental factors are essential to understanding resilience (Gilligan, 2019; Ungar, 2019), with professional support a major feature of this social ecology (Bottrell, 2009; Ungar, 2011; Ungar et al, 2014). Reinforcing the role and importance of professional and agency support to my own research (RQ 2), Ungar et al (2013) explored the relationship between patterns of service use, individual needs, and contextual factors in vulnerable adolescents, related to the promotion of resilience in Canada. 497 young people, aged 13 to 21, completed self-reporting surveys on their experiences of social service support. Survey respondents who reported life-long involvement with multiple services did not show improved outcomes such as pro-sociality and enhanced school engagement. However, better experience of service provision, rather than quantity of agencies involved, had a positive impact on individual markers of resilience, such as self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. Better experiences included having positive perceptions of professionals and involvement in decision making, which has relevance for linking social capital. This finding resonates with the literature on school inclusion, which highlighted the importance of individual teacher-pupil relationships to positive education

outcomes (see literature review, section 2.3). Experience of service provision and its perceived quality, by young people, is a key dimension explored through RQ1, in unstructured interviews.

SEND is a resilience variable requiring ecological protective measures such as effective education provision that can help change internal working processes and immediate social environments, including classroom relationships. From a related standpoint, Bateman and Hazel (2013) argued that custodial sentences provide a window of opportunity for young people to reassess their lives and develop *creative agency*, as they term it, when supported to do so. Such creative agency is about positive change and can promote a shift in identity and aspirations, consistent with constructive resettlement (YJB, 2018; Hazel and Bateman, 2021 – see section 2.2.4 of the literature review). Bateman and Hazel's (2013) stance on creative agency is more a lament about the missed opportunity that custody often represents. They highlight in the same work and elsewhere (Hazel and Bateman, 2021) that custody broadly does not work. Custody, in its current form in England, amplifies existing trauma and needs, without offering meaningful preparation for resettlement, for most of the population (Bateman and Hazel, 2013; Hazel and Bateman, 2021). Bateman and Hazel (2013) argued for a different penal philosophy, that promotes meaningful change and new agentic identities. This lamentation for the unrealised potential of custody has been picked up by others (Steinberg et al, 2004; Taylor, 2016), and has been a driver to create the first secure school in England based on a rehabilitation model (Ministry of Justice, 2022). At time of writing, and after nearly a decade of planning, the secure school was still being built but will offer an important site of future research and may offer a rehabilitative space that enhances rather than diminishes resilience.

Creative agency, as a concept, accords with an analysis by Steinberg et al (2004), who concluded that relevant agencies need to support a healthy developmental transition for young offenders during resettlement to enhance personal agency and resilience. The need for a positive resettlement transition emphasises the need for EHC plans to focus on aspirations and education

provision in order to foster personal agency during resettlement, which in turn can enhance resilience. This is a theme explored in interviews with professionals. Collectively, current resilience research considers as central the interface between individual need and surrounding social environments (Ungar, 2019), which is relevant to the individual-social dynamic discussed at various points in Chapter 2.

Ungar (2011) offers a robust model for understanding this dynamic interface and provides the most nuanced model of resilience relevant to the theoretical framework: *The Social Ecology of Resilience*. This social ecology model was intended as a riposte to older, more simplistic research on resilience, where the onus was placed on the child to adapt to an adverse environment. Accordingly, Ungar (2011) does not frame resilience as an individual trait, but rather attributes it to the social and physical environment of the child, including social resources and available services. Therefore, Ungar (2011) positions the child as a less active agent in this developmental process, drawing an implicit segue with social capital in his argument through the importance he places on ecological networks of support. In this model, social ecology shapes personal agency, which is itself mediated by service support.

According to Ungar (2011), an individual's resilience is not fixed. Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that levels of resilience and vulnerability fluctuate, tempered by new experiences and contexts such as changes in schools and relationships (Crittenden, 2006; Ungar, 2011). Transition phases, such as resettlement, are periods of time that enhance or degrade levels of resilience and vulnerability in a complex and ultimately non-linear developmental trajectory, set within diverse social parameters. For Ungar (2011), this makes attributions of causality to resilience highly complex, influenced in part by the services and resources offered by professionals acting as protective factors. Building on the ecological role of services in a later study, Ungar et al (2013) cautioned against homogenised interventions that are divorced from the needs of the child, including their identity and culture. Interventions need to be socially and culturally relevant to be effective at promoting resilience. The centrality of

services in this ecological model reinforces the need to understand professional perspectives through interview (RQ2).

The importance of tailored interventions, the complexity of non-linear developmental transitions, and the primacy of the social ecology surrounding young people, are central principles of this resilience model. These offer a frame for understanding the nuances of resettlement and the complex inter-play between personal agency, social ecology and professional support. Ungar (2011) offers a model firmly grounded in professional practice that embraces complexity and provides conceptual tools for understanding this complexity.

3.3 The Relationship between Social Capital and Resilience

In terms of the relationship between social capital and resilience, my central position is the two concepts represent *separate but related* paradigms. That is, social capital and resilience, on their own, offer powerful lenses for understanding complex social and psychological phenomena. Equally, both paradigms reinforce and support each other as linked analytical frames. This position, of both separateness and connection between the paradigms, guided my thinking when utilising these concepts. As previous sections suggest, there is a correlation between social capital and resilience, but this link is not always explicit in the literature, emphasising the separateness of the two paradigms. For example, Ungar (2011 and 2013) did not address the link between social capital and resilience in his model, but social networks are integral to his ecological analysis.

Surveying the wider literature, Bernier and Meinzen-Dick (2020) argued the relationship between social capital and resilience is under-explored and under-theorised. Nevertheless, there are some examples of research that has directly investigated the link between resilience and social capital. For example, Celik (2017), studied education outcomes for poorer children in Turkey, using the twin lenses of resilience and social capital, arguing that:

'The empirical research on social capital has shown that it may actually work as a buffer to the adverse effects of disadvantage, and that social capital and resilience may be indicators of each other...' (p. 1009)

This quotation highlights that social networks and the resources they bring are an aspect of the social ecology of resilience that Ungar (2011) theorised. Celik's (2017) paper suggested indirectly that social capital is an omission in Ungar's otherwise strong model of resilience. This omission of social capital in an important resilience model reinforces the need for me to consider resettlement education and support from both theoretical positions.

Reinforcing this standpoint, Pinkerton and Dolan (2008) argued that resilience and social capital are essential conceptual tools for interventions that support marginalised youth engaged with the justice system. In a study of three community support centres in the Republic of Ireland, the authors studied family support interventions for 172 young people on the cusp of serious or escalated offending, who had a background of offending and anti-social behaviour. The authors found considerable adversity, risk and vulnerability in the lives of the cohort, which required social support from services in order to promote resilience and mitigate risk. The work of the three community centres was tied together under an overarching programme called the Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP). The NYP explicitly included the principles of resilience enhancement and the building of social capital in its intervention philosophy. Among the suite of approaches offered by the NYP, there was provision of activities that promoted positive group activities, an emphasis was put on social skills training and psychotherapy was available. This package offered tailored interventions that were meant to enhance social networks and support the development of resilience, including improved mental health.

Pinkerton and Dolan (2008) measured the efficacy of the NYP by using a range of evidence-based psychological assessment tools, including the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona and Russell, 1987), self-completed by young people participating in the study. These tools were completed at several points over the nine-month duration of the NYP. Based on a triangulated analysis of these self-completed tools, participants reported the programme enhanced pro-social network membership, with increased perceptions of positive support from services. Respondents also reported an improved relationship with parental figures. Resilience markers also showed a significant increase in the cohort across the nine-month involvement in the NYP; for example, respondents consistently reported improved self-esteem.

The authors also followed up the use of assessment tools with semi-structured interviews, involving a randomised sub-set of the participant cohort. Interviews confirmed the findings of the assessment tools used in the research, noting consistently across interviews that perceived emotional support from staff delivering the project helped improve participant emotional wellbeing and widened social networks. Interviewees were able to identify emotional wellbeing and enhanced social networks as intertwined improvements. An important outcome throughout the participant cohort, was reduced involvement in anti-social behaviour that could escalate into serious offending (Pinkerton and Dolan, 2008).

This study underlines the utility of social capital and resilience as both distinct and inter-related frameworks. Pinkerton and Dolan (2008) also revealed that both resilience and social capital are central factors in addressing complex needs such as mental health and reducing the potential for reoffending. This positions both paradigms as important conceptual frameworks for understanding the complexity of resettlement and all its attendant factors.

Boeck et al (2008), drawing from the same research study as Boeck and Fleming (2011), explored the role of social capital in helping young people

navigate important life transitions. They explored the concept of social capital in assisting young people, in the youth justice system of England, to become *risk navigators* as a pathway for desisting from offending. The resilience paradigm was also an important guiding framework in their analysis. In the study, Boeck et al (2008) reported two distinct groups of young people, in relation to the social networks they had access to. The first group of young people they described as 'homophilous' (p. 5), following Lin's (2001) description of bonding social capital. The second group were found to be 'heterophilous' (p. 6), again following Lin's (2001) terminology which referred to bridging social capital. The homophilous sub-group drew their social networks and support from bonding capital and were found to be experiencing *risk stagnation* by Boeck et al (2008). That is, their reliance on bonding networks did not offer sufficiently diverse social resources, opportunities or knowledge that allowed them to escape lives characterised by criminality and social marginalisation. Young people in this sub-group were less equipped by social opportunities to take positive risks, that allowed them to break marginalised lifestyles. The homophilous group displayed less self-efficacy and agency, which was constrained by their reliance on bonding social capital. Consequently, this group displayed more negative outcomes, in terms of desistance and educational achievement, compared to the heterophilous group. The homophilous group were less effective at risk navigating important life transitions, such as leaving school. Most significantly, the responses of youth participants in the homophilous group highlighted constrained levels of resilience. They reported low levels of self-esteem and low perceived self-efficacy, as a result experiencing high levels of social anxiety that negatively interacted with resilience. This finding suggests, supporting Ungar (2011), that resilience draws from the environment and not from the individual – in this case bonding social capital constrained levels of resilience (Boeck et al, 2008).

The heterophilous group, in Boeck et al's (2008) study, had broader social capital networks built on bridging capital. They were able to access a much wider range of social and economic opportunities; and received support and knowledge that promoted social advancement. In this sub-group, bridging social capital empowered young people to be active agents and risk navigators, more

equipped to desist from offending and exploit opportunities made available to them. In comparison to the homophilous group, young people from the heterophilous reported much higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy that corresponded to higher levels of resilience and reduced levels of anxiety when navigating life transitions. This study is significant on several levels. Firstly, it offers insight into the relationship between social capital and resilience, within the English youth justice system. Secondly, it shines a light on the interrelated role of social capital and resilience during delicate life transitions. While not directly referring to resettlement, Boeck et al (2008) do offer conceptual scaffolding for understanding resettlement as a key life transition. Finally, the study demonstrates, again, that social capital has negative and positive implications, reinforcing the need for an agnostic stance towards social capital discussed earlier in this chapter.

In a separate paper on social capital, resilience, and youth marginalisation, Bottrell (2009) came to opposite conclusions to Boeck et al (2008) about the relative importance of bonding and bridging capital. Bottrell (2009) undertook ethnographic research within a youth centre, on a council estate in Sydney, Australia. Utilising participant observation within the youth centre and based upon semi-structured interviews with 12 teenage girls, Bottrell (2009) found bonding capital was an important protective factor and source of resilience. In this research, a bonding network of girls became evident, who offered support and protection to each other, including support from their respective families, to navigate the adversity and risks presented by the high crime levels on the housing estate where the girls lived. Despite high levels of crime, social exclusion, substance misuse and family dysfunction in the neighbourhood, the girls reported strong levels of resilience and self-esteem. Participants felt the girls' network they belonged to offered emotional support, practical assistance and close friendships that mitigated wider adversity. Based upon this, they felt confident to take a pragmatic and problem-solving approach to risks they faced.

All the girls involved in the study identified school as a risk factor (Bottrell, 2009). They understood and identified wider problematised risk discourses about

youths from the estate, which they believed were manifest in the local high school, where they said they experienced no support and discriminatory attitudes from staff. They felt excluded from the curriculum at the high school and believed the school undermined their aspirations, reducing self-esteem and related resilience markers. Their response to this was to fall back on the support offered by their bonding social network and to regularly truant from the school. This response to school, as Bottrell (2009) noted, suggested bridging social capital at the high school was not working for the girls and was actively excluding them because of their problematised social status. Unlike Boeck et al (2008), bonding capital was the source of resilience and bridging capital the source of adversity for the girls. Their bonding network helped them navigate risks and truanting was an atypical coping strategy (Ungar, 2011) to bridging social capital that was not working for them. This study again highlights the positives and negatives of social capital, together with the link between resilience and social capital. Bottrell's (2009) study will be returned to in section 10.3 of the discussion chapter, when resilience is used to analyse the findings.

Barker (2012) offers a powerful study that illustrates the complex and potentially difficult relationship between social capital, resilience and homelessness. Reporting on findings from 18 semi-structured interviews with homeless youths in Canberra, Australia, aged 15 – 25, Barker (2012) found that homelessness was a product of failed social capital. The author found that the pathway to homelessness was shaped by abusive, rejecting and dysfunctional family relationships. Youths often experienced multiple episodes of leaving and returning to their families before homelessness became a permanent state of being for them. Linking these findings to resilience, Barker (2012) found that negative family bonding capital was the primary source of adversity that undermined the resilience of homeless youths, again supporting Ungar's (2011) social ecology of resilience model. The mental health problems and substance misuse prevalent in the population Barker (2012) studied was a manifestation of the compromised resilience of this population. In this study, youths were found to have complex and nuanced relationships with their families. Despite being deemed indefinitely homeless and with permanently severed family

relationships, participants continued to attempt to forge relationships with parents and other family members, seeking support and validation that often led to further rejection and experiences of familial abuse that continued to undermine resilience. This highlights that failures in bonding social capital are complex and nuanced, a process that may compound risk and adversity.

The failure of familial social capital, Barker (2012) argues, is something that has long been under-theorised in the literature. He pointed to the de facto acceptance of the positives of family life by much social capital research as an expression of the ideals of the family within wider societal discourses which struggle to incorporate the failure of families to protect children. Certainly, the evidence that does exist focuses more on the benefits of social capital for essential markers of resilience, including mental health. There has been research in the literature about the positive effects of social capital, including bonding capital and professional support networks, on the mental health of children (Magson et al, 2014; Morgan et al, 2021; Rava et al, 2023). Research on the negative effects of social capital, whether bonding, bridging or linking, on resilience is less prevalent and some of the more notable studies have been referenced here. In reviewing the literature about the links between social capital and mental health, without directly referencing resilience, Magson et al (2014) concluded that social capital's main contribution to mental health is a sense of *belonging*. Feelings of belonging, through social integration and support, promote positive mental health. An absence of belonging, they argue, brings about 'isolation, despair and depression' (p. 204), which underlines the negative potential of social capital, where it is not functioning in a positive way. Belonging is analogous to *inclusion*, which finds social capital a common ground with the importance of inclusive education and support to the outcomes of young people. This conceptual link between belonging and inclusion brings the theoretical framework back to the literature review, which offers a concluding point to the discussion of the theoretical framework.

Concluding the Theoretical Framework

This chapter has offered an outline of the paradigms of social capital and resilience. Both paradigms, during the early phase of this research project, were important for understanding the research problem and developing the research questions. The importance of understanding young person and professional perspectives through interviews, was underlined by the theoretical messages contained in both social capital and resilience research. Both paradigms offer a separate but related framework for understanding the complex research problem of education and resettlement. They have not only influenced the methodology but are crucial as a deductive framework for data analysis, discussed in chapter 10. The thesis will now move onto considering the methodology of this research in the next chapter, followed by the data analysis approach used (Chapter 5).

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter focuses on how I collected data to better understand the research problem and answer the research questions. The chapter discusses various aspects of my research methodology, which is built on a case study design focusing on the education experiences of young people and the perspectives of professionals. I will begin by stating my research paradigm, before discussing research ethics and my case study methodology.

4.1 Research Design and Research Paradigm: A Summary

At this juncture, it is helpful to restate the research questions:

RQ1: What are the experiences of young people with identified SEND engaging with resettlement education provision?

RQ2: How do YOTs and education providers work to facilitate resettlement education provision; and what factors impact on this work?

The research design for this study can be summarised as a case study approach with nested educational biographies. Interviews are the main data collection method. The 'case' is each of the three local authorities where interviews were conducted. The experiences of two young people form the nested biographies within one of the local authorities (Case Study A) and also offer the data to answer RQ1. The young people are referred to with the pseudonyms 'Luke' and 'Danny' throughout this chapter and later in the thesis. I used unstructured interviews with both young people to gather data including creative graphic elicitation. Professionals, including YOT and education practitioners, were interviewed using a semi-structured approach. These interviews were designed to answer RQ 2.

For the two leading exponents of case study research, Stake (1995 and 2006) and Yin (2018), case study research is based on *constructivism*. In essence, constructivism is a theory of knowledge, built on the sociological premise that the

nature of knowledge and the expression of knowledge is constructed through social interactions and shaped by wider societal discourses and cultural factors, including phenomena such as discrimination and imprisonment (Fosnot, 2005). Miller and Crabtree (1999, p.10) succinctly defined the constructivism paradigm as recognising:

'... the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn't (sic) reject outright some notion of objectivity. Pluralism not relativism, is stressed...'

Pluralism in this sense refers to the potentially diverse perspectives and biographies upon which social reality is constructed. The quotation highlights the centrality of subjective human experience, relevant to collective social phenomena such as imprisonment. Therefore, the depth of the case study approach allows for subjective, pluralistic perspectives to be captured through different methods, drawing on varying data sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018); including interviews, which are inclusive of diverse experiences, in particular more marginalised perspectives such as those of children who have been in prison.

4.2 Case Study Research

Many definitions of the case study approach exist, and it has been criticised as a conceptually ambiguous approach (Thomas, 2012; Yin, 2018). This ambiguity is in part a reflection of the flexibility and wide applicability of case study as a methodology. Case study is in the gift of the researcher to define (Simons, 2009). Nonetheless, clear themes exist in terms of how case studies can be conceptualised. Foremost is rigour in terms of how cases are defined. All proponents of case study research argue that cases must be clearly defined, both inherently and relative to their wider context. The opening line of Simons (2009, p. 3) makes a clear statement in this regard: 'Case study is a study of the singular, the particular, the unique.' Similarly, for Stake (1995), the case must be both unique and bounded to ensure its essence as a case study. Local authorities offer bounded entities that constitute clearly defined case studies

open to comparison, given that all local authorities have the same role within the English political landscape. The nested use of young person biographies offers a point of comparison, shedding further light on the complex role of local authorities in youth justice.

Set within these bounded cases, I am working from a constructivism paradigm that aims to understand research participant perspectives in an explicitly subjective and pluralistic way. My data is life experiences, based on the perspectives of young people (RQ 1); and analysis of that experience within broader meso and macro-level processes, drawn from professional perspectives (RQ 2). The nature of the cases investigated will now be considered.

4.2.1 Defining the Case Studies in this Research

This research centres on resettlement education and support in three local authorities. Each of these local authorities is a case study. The two educational biographies of young people are an important nested feature of one local authority case.

Several schemata have been devised to categorise the nature of the case being studied to help clarify focus (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008). I have adopted Stake's (1995) schema of both *instrumental* and *intrinsic* case studies, as I believe this dual focus best captures the purpose of this study, which is to understand both the unique and the general. Instrumental case studies look to produce understanding beyond the situation of the case, to promote generalisation to the wider phenomenon under study (Stake, 1995). Studying several local authorities, and the experience of individuals within those institutional settings, gives the case an instrumental quality within Stake's (1995) typology. I utilised the triangulated findings of interviews across several local authorities, through comparative data analysis, to shed light on the wider lived experiences of young people experiencing the complex resettlement transition, which encompassed commonality and uniqueness. Consequently, to maintain a respectful stance towards the uniqueness of local authority case studies, and to preserve their integrity, I also adopted an intrinsic stance.

Stake’s (1995) use of intrinsic case study focuses on learning from the uniqueness of an individual case, respecting that case for its intrinsic worth. In this sense, working with two young people who come from marginalised backgrounds, this study must first and foremost respect the intrinsic worth of learning from participants willing to give their experience. Ethically, young people must be related to as active participants, not as passive objects for study. Equally, many vulnerable participants want their experience to have wider significance and application, a common motive for research participation amongst so-called vulnerable groups (Liamputtong, 2007; Bhopal and Deuchar, 2016; Taylor et al, 2016). Given this, I believe it is justifiable to occupy a dual intrinsic-instrumental research position guided by the two research questions, implemented through data collection (see section 4.8); and finally realised thematic data analysis (see Chapter 5).

This research involved a range of professionals, whose perspectives and experiences gave the case studies instrumental qualities, which were open to contrast and comparison with each other. Equally important, each local authority was unique, and I interviewed a unique constellation of professionals in each. Given this, each local authority has deep intrinsic value, offering an opportunity for learning about the challenges and opportunities of resettlement support in each locality. Table 1 gives a cross-section of the professionals involved in each case study area, offering a transparent rendering of the interview sample, and thereby giving further insight into the nature of each of the case studies.

Table 1: Professional Participants by Role and Case Study Area

Type of professional	Case Study A	B	C	Totals
Education – Manager/Headteacher	4	3	3	10
YOT – Manager	2	2	3	7
YOT – Practitioner	3	5	2	10
Other Professional –	1	0	1	2

Manager				
Other Professional – Practitioner	0	0	1	1
Totals	10	10	10	Grand Total: 30

The three case study areas have similar profiles of participants which offers a basis for cross-case synthesis and generalisation. Perhaps most striking is the strong representation of managers, who were also gatekeepers to participants across the three areas. The education managers included headteachers and specialist administrators, for example inclusion and SEND managers. No current teachers or other practitioners, such as learning support assistants, were available for this research. This points to both a strength and a limitation. Education managers, across all three case studies, were able to provide strategic oversight of the services available for resettlement in their areas. Three of the managers were also headteachers of specialist providers, directly engaged in working with children in schools. However, a picture of practice in the classroom from a current teacher's perspective was not available because teachers were not included in this study, as none were available for interview. Education managers were willing to avail themselves for interview but unwilling or unable to involve their teaching staff.

YOTs provided a larger sample than education providers, almost twice the size, with a more balanced range of practitioners and managers. Aside from area C, practitioners outnumbered managers as a proportion of the interview sample. YOT managers came from different levels and responsibilities, including overall service leads and more specialist education managers. The YOT practitioners were diverse, including social workers, education workers and Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs). YOT practitioners offered information about classroom pedagogy they had observed, especially in the alternative sector, where YOT practitioners tended to have good links. Staff from outside of YOT and education also played a part in this research including: a violence reduction manager from area A together with a voluntary sector manager and specialist

advisor from the care leavers service, both in area C.

This section has already considered the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental case study related to generalisation (Stake, 1995). The following section will expand upon this, related to the broader methodological meaning of generalisation.

4.3 The Place of Generalisation

Generalisation is perhaps the most contentious aspect of case study as a research methodology (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2018). This is a problem that brings into focus the challenge of generalisation across qualitative social science research. The particular challenge for case study research is to understand how individual subjectivity, whether a young person or a professional, is an expression of more widespread discourses and processes (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). This point is related to McAdams' (2008, p.246) premise that 'Life stories mirror the culture wherein the story is created...'. The complex currents of culture, politics, society and individuality feed into case study research, which is an aggregation of individual experiences into a cohesive whole (Stake, 1995; Simmons, 2009; Yin, 2018).

For Stake (1995), generalisation does not need to be new in substance, and rarely is. Instead, most generalisations can be considered a modification of current knowledge. The experiences of a single child, two children or a group of children, can be used to modify our understanding of a wider population by studying the socio-cultural forces that shape individual biography within current dominant paradigms of childhood, especially marginalised childhood (Stake, 1995; Wengraf, 2000 and 2002; Merrill and West, 2009). Professional perspectives, through interviews, give depth to the experience of the child. Professional perspectives provide insight into the role of practice and process, giving space to the role of institutions in shaping individual experience (Smith, 2001). As considered in the previous section, the professional participant profiles across all three local authorities offer scope for comparison and cross-case synthesis, in turn creating the potential for generalisation of findings and analysis to other local authorities who share similar processes and similar institutional

arrangements.

Cross-case synthesis presents its own opportunities and strengthens the validity of my research and is explored further in Chapter 9. Overall, the challenge of generalisation is to build validity through triangulation and strong data analysis, based upon rigorous research design and robust methods (Scheff, 1997; Wengraf, 2002; Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2012). My own biography is a feature of the research design and will become the focus of the next section.

4.4 Research Ethics

This section details the research ethics process I followed with participants, with a focus on informed consent. This research was approved by both the faculty level Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of Southampton and the Research Integrity and Governance team (the central and most senior ethics committee of the University of Southampton). This is the highest level of review and scrutiny in the university, because of the involvement of vulnerable young people leaving prison in this research. Approval was first granted in 2019 (Category Submission ID: 49350), with further approval to conduct online interviews granted in 2020 in response to Covid-19 (Category Submission ID: 49350.A1). Appendix 1 contains direct evidence of ethical approval for this research. All reference to participant contributions in this thesis has been anonymised. Consent forms and interview recordings, which include identifying information, have been stored securely in-line with the University of Southampton's data protection and data management policies.

Professionals

Interviews with professionals provide their own ethical challenges that are not fully acknowledged in the literature. Most of the literature consulted did not provide details of ethical practices with professionals, beyond cursory disclaimers (Lancaster, 2017). This masks genuine ethical challenges. Available research, reflecting on ethics and professional participants, highlights the concept of *professional vulnerability* (Lancaster, 2017). This term refers to a reluctance to participate in research or anxiety provoked

by the potentially negative exposure of the professional interviewee's viewpoint through publication of research.

In practice, I encountered no professional vulnerability. Participants were willing to disclose information and appeared forthcoming throughout all interviews. No participants declined to answer questions nor said they felt uncomfortable. Professionals treated the interviews as a discursive space and appeared to appreciate my own YOT background (discussed further in section 4.6). The foundation of this was *informed consent* – I prepared a comprehensive Personal Information Sheet (PIS), which allowed participants to understand the nature and purpose of the research (see Appendix 2 for the PIS). Gatekeepers were helpful, explaining the research to their teams and then putting me in contact with individual participants by email, who expressed a desire to participate. At this point, I shared the PIS and answered any questions participants had, in follow-up emails. All professionals I contacted directly participated in interviews, and said they understood the commitment entailed in interviews when we met. I reassured them throughout email correspondence and at the beginning of interviews that their identity would be kept confidential in the presentation and write-up of data. They appeared reassured by this. Professional interviews presented no ethical challenges, but I was aware of those possible challenges, as the opening paragraph of this section highlights. Interviews with young people presented more ethical considerations and required a more gradual approach to ensure informed consent as discussed next.

Young People

In preparation for the unstructured interviews with young people, I prepared two types of PIS in three adapted formats: plain English, Easy Read and using Widgit Symbols (see Appendix 4). The two types of PIS used were one for gatekeeping professionals to introduce the research initially, with young people; and a further PIS I used directly with young people, at the beginning of interviews. All three adapted formats in both versions contained similar

information, covering who I was, the purpose of the research and the right to voluntary participation. I used these adapted formats to prepare for the potentially diverse range of communication needs in the youth justice population. Informed consent with young people is still an evolving area of ethics and methodology (Bengry-Howell and Griffin, 2011; Parsons et al, 2015). There is no consensus, in the available literature, on how informed consent should be operationalised. As Parsons et al (2015) discuss, consent should be tailored to the understanding of young people and this was my rationale for making the PIS available in different adapted formats. The gatekeeping YOT workers for Danny and Luke reviewed all three forms intended for their use, and in both cases advised the plain English version was most suitable.

Parsons et al (2015) also advise informed consent should be treated as a *process*, rather than a one-off event. This acted as another guiding principle in my approach to gaining Danny and Luke's consent. This followed several steps. Booth and Booth (1994) and Deucher (2016), among others, advise that the starting point in achieving informed consent, with participants identified with complex needs, is to arrange for a known individual such as a professional to introduce the research to get agreement for participants to be contacted by researchers. For both Danny and Luke, their YOT worker agreed to initially introduce the research and confirm agreement for me to contact them. The YOT workers confirmed with me that Danny and Luke had both agreed for me to contact them. In Danny's case, this was through his key worker at the custodial facility. In Luke's case, he asked me to contact him direct by email.

Parsons et al (2015) suggest showing a video of a participant being interviewed during data collection as a potentially useful tool for informed consent. Following agreement for me to contact them, I then sent Luke and Danny (via his key worker), two videos, which explained the research further. I asked them to watch the videos. These were videos I produced,

specifically to ensure informed consent. The first video involved a short outline of the research, which I presented in just over six minutes. The second video was a mock role play of an interview with a young volunteer. Links to both videos are available here, via YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUCIHzPi8RI&t=6s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV0vOjZgw1E&t=4s>

I asked Danny and Luke, after they watched the videos, to confirm they understood the purpose of the interview and agreed to participate. I did this through a survey application, which asked two questions in plain English: the first question was about confirming they understood the purpose of the research, and the second question confirmed their agreement to participate. They then signed their name digitally on the application. I used Southampton University's iSurvey software for this purpose. This followed Parsons et al's (2015) recommendation that written consent can be obtained in a simplified form via digital applications.

The resettlement and prison population have a lot of complex needs, including a common experience of trauma (Hughes et al, 2012; Gray, 2015). The central ethical message from research on trauma is: *beware the potential for re-traumatisation* (Gray, 2015). This message brings with it the need for researchers to plan for potential trauma during interviews. Participatory strategies and meaningful informed consent are both approaches for addressing the potential for trauma. Researchers also need to be reflexive about their role and not attempt to turn research into psychotherapy (Gray, 2015).

As well as the potential for trauma, I wanted to counter the potential for oppression, when interviewing young people. This is guided by my own social

work values, in particular anti-oppressive practice, which was introduced in section 1.4 of the introduction. Lena Dominelli, the pioneer of anti-oppressive practice in social work, made the following link between anti-oppressive practice and social work interviews. For Dominelli, the purpose of interviewing is:

'... to open discursive spaces in which clients can develop their own interpretive story, that is, one that gives meaning to their experiences and to understand how dominant discourses operate to suppress this story.'

(Dominelli, 2002, p. 86)

While applied to the practice of social work, the principles contained in this quotation are equally relevant to qualitative research interviews, especially with vulnerable participants. My unstructured interviewing method segued with the anti-oppressive approach to social work, especially giving space for young people to express their own story in an authentic way, based on their lived experience and their own construction of the social world, which links to my own constructivist research position. The interviews with Danny and Luke exposed the role of dominant professional discourses in their lives, because a substantive discursive space was offered by the unstructured approach. The role of dominant professional discourses will be returned to in the findings' chapters and the discussion.

I was also conscious of the potential to enforce my own professional discourses onto Danny and Luke's narrative. This concern was informed by my anti-oppressive value base and my reflexivity, which offered safeguards to this form of oppression through the unstructured method. The anti-oppressive approach, while not explicit in the methodological literature, certainly finds analogues that send the same message about the potentially oppressive role of the researcher. Research is by its nature an invasive process, when investigating the private lives of participants (Sque, 2000). Goffman (1963) refers to such invasive practice, when experienced negatively, as *mortification of self*. This refers to a

process whereby personhood is fundamentally changed and disenfranchised, identity has been invaded or re-made against the will of the participant. Research should avoid stereotyping participants, the most prevalent mortification of self, especially more vulnerable participants (Liamputtong, 2007). Researchers need to be circumspect about their own value base; and how participants are represented in research to avoid reinforcing inaccurate and stigmatising stereotypes (Paradis, 2000). This highlights the importance of my anti-oppressive value base. My use of adapted formats, to ensure meaningful informed consent, was a further reification of anti-oppressive practice in the research design, complementing the inclusivity of unstructured interviews. In view of the potential for distress, oppression and re-traumatisation, consensus in the literature highlights that support from relevant services should be available, either in person or via the telephone, if a young person needs further support as a result of topics covered in interviews (Mowat, 2016). Danny had support from staff at the custodial facility and I interviewed Luke in his supported accommodation, where staff were on shift.

At the beginning of my first interview with both Danny and Luke, I talked through my version of the PIS, in the plain English format. I also gave both Danny and Luke an opportunity to read the PIS. Following this, I gained final agreement to proceed with the interview. I then checked in throughout the interviews, to ensure neither young person was distressed. This was the final active stage of the research ethics process.

4.5 My Biography, Positionality and Sampling

Interviewing involves co-construction of narrative, by both interviewer and interviewee (Salvin-Baden and Van Niekerk, 2007). Locating the self as researcher in all qualitative research is an important epistemological position, further emphasising the impact of identity on the research process (Erben, 1998; Gowland-Pryde, 2016). Choosing a topic for research often lies in the personal and/or professional biography of the researcher (Merrill and West, 2009). My experience as a social worker and manager in a London YOT is the basis of this research, and my interest in the research topic stems from my time in practice.

This made me reflect on my own professional experience and motivation. I have not been a practicing social worker for nearly a decade, having spent the intervening time working as a social work lecturer. Nevertheless, I certainly remember the frustration of working as a social worker and the anger I felt at times because of the challenges I encountered. However, the affective dimension of that experience has dimmed over the years. I no longer feel any sense of anger and have a clearer sense, in hindsight, of the considerable positives I also experienced. My emotional response to practice has now been replaced by the curiosity of the researcher. My professional experience provides me with a valuable level of insight, utilising my own lived experience as a practitioner in guiding the focus of the research design.

When I was a professional YOT worker, I was an insider within the youth justice system. In my current role as a researcher on the youth justice system, my core identity has shifted from being an insider to an outsider. As Bukamal (2022) and Rahman (2023) both argue, an outsider role confers a greater sense of impartiality through distance, less driven by emotion. My distance from practice and my shift to being an outsider, starting in the years leading up to the commencement of the PhD (2014/2015), drove me to audit my understanding of youth justice, which was further motivated by teaching about the subject. This made me identify what I saw less clearly as an insider, namely the importance of education and the neglected voice of young people on this and related issues. My power as a professional, in a sense, gave me less clarity and distance for identifying these issues impartially or reflectively. As a researcher, my professional distance has driven me to understand the importance of the perspectives and lived experiences of young people regarding their education during a particularly complex period of resettlement transition. As a social worker and manager in a YOT, my professional persona and priorities meant I never fully addressed the lived experiences of young people themselves.

This reflection on my role as an insider, and development towards an outsider, frames my positionality in and to the research. Throughout the duration of this PhD, I have associated both the literature and my experience of interviews with my prior role as a youth justice professional, through the lens of research, and

concluded I am not a pure outsider. Instead, I would surmise I am an outsider with some insider traits drawn from my past experience. This brings into focus the work of cultural anthropology, which considers in depth the *emic* (insider) and *etic* (outsider) role in ethnography (Kottak, 2006). Morris et al. (1999, p. 781) defined the emic position in anthropological terms:

*'...Emic knowledge and interpretations are those existing within a culture, that are 'determined by **local** custom, meaning, and belief' and best described by a 'native' of the culture...'* (Emphasis added).

In my own research, I am studying the local, through case study and interview. The relationship inherent in interviews, set within a localised context, establishes a discursive space that creates a synergy of co-creation and a form of intellectual intimacy, especially when discussing neglected topics. This can lead to the researcher becoming an insider for the duration of an interview (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). The temporary insider status of the interviewer is evidenced in the rich data that emerged from my own interviews and the relational element of the qualitative interviews I experienced. One young person's excitement at completing an educational timeline and tears shed by more than one professional interviewee, discussed elsewhere in this chapter (4.6), point to my temporary position of researcher-as-insider in meaningful research encounters. My own subjective experience of interviews also points to this. For example, I grew to like all participants I interviewed, even in a short space of time, because of the connection forged through discussion of topics important to both of us. My identity as a former insider, somebody from the emic, enhanced this.

Through the negotiation and communication necessary for research access, my status as a former YOT professional was important to giving me credibility. This was evident in interviews as I was able to empathise with professionals who faced practice challenges similar to my own experiences. I used this empathy,

reflecting back to professionals, disclosing I understood the experiences they were sharing from my own background. This helped forge the relational element important to qualitative interviews. As one professional remarked at the end of an interview, 'It was good speaking to a fellow traveller.' I was able to build trust because my researcher persona was backed by qualities of the professional insider. This was most important when interviewing Luke and Danny. My confidence from having worked with many young people, as an insider, gave me the confidence to build rapport with both young men. Luke's very active approach to interviews, walking and talking at the same time (discussed in 4.6), did not phase me because I had worked with young people communicating in a similar style before. Similarly, he appeared comfortable talking to me. Both Luke and Danny used profanities throughout their interviews, this was normal to me and did not present any challenges and I accepted it as their medium of communication, again based on similar past experiences. I was also conscious of the way to use language and phrase questions, to use simple and jargon free expressions. This helped me engage with both young people. This was the advantage of having been an insider.

Another advantage of having been a former professional was how I selected the three case study areas. I had contacts, mainly former colleagues, in several local authorities. I approached these contacts, early in the research design phase, to enquire about involving their employer local authorities in the research. From this first step, I had initial contact with gatekeeping managers in five local authorities. Two of the local authorities declined involvement quickly, because gatekeepers decided their services did not have the capacity to engage with research due to lack of resources, including low staff numbers. Three other local authorities did engage with the project, after a process of gatekeeper negotiation, and became the three case studies.

My de facto participant sampling strategy was *purposive*, I set out to recruit professionals and young people with resettlement experiences. Drawing on participants with particular experiences or attributes is the hallmark of *purposive sampling* (Etikan et al, 2016). As Campbell et al (2020) outline, purposive sampling is complex. It involves negotiation, barriers and continued interaction

with gatekeepers. It is, at heart, relational. Like the relational dynamic of the interview, where the researcher may become the emic, purposive sampling is shaped by the identity of the researcher (Campbell et al, 2020). Occupying both the insider and outsider role creates opportunities and challenges.

My initial gatekeeper engagement snowballed to managers and professionals in other services, highlighting that snowball sampling is also a part of purposive approach (Etikan et al, 2016; Campbell et al, 2020). This helped me gain access to interview participants, because of the credibility my prior insider status brought. Equally, being an outsider from a university also gave me a certain status and credibility – the gatekeepers I contacted appreciated my YOT background but also drew credibility from my independent role in a university.

This process of engagement also came with the challenges of being an outsider as I was never a priority for gatekeepers. It took persistence to book meetings and get responses to emails. All gatekeepers I spoke to were concerned I would also be a burden, distracting professionals from their work. In response to this, drawing on my YOT background, I empathised as a former YOT manager and used this to assuage concerns about my research being a potential burden. It is important to note that all gatekeepers also became interview participants. Thus, my purposive sampling and my dual status as insider and outsider were variables in a complex process of negotiation that took over two years to gain access to all agencies who became involved in this research. That I was able to successfully negotiate with gatekeepers in this way, leading to the involvement of all three local authorities, was one of the most important learning processes of the whole research project. It reinforced a sense that research is not just about data gathering but exists in a socio-political context. My interaction with gatekeepers involved both personal engagement and the need to interface with the wider socio-political priorities of all three local authorities, mediated through the power of gatekeepers. While presenting challenges, I believe my commitment to using research as a tool of empowerment, to bring to light important practice issues and neglected discursive spaces, resonated with gatekeepers. It forged a connection between my own professional identity, based on anti-oppressive values of inclusion and empowerment, and the

professional values of gatekeepers committed to providing effective support to young people. This at heart highlighted the importance of my dual position as insider-outsider. I shared the values of gatekeepers, but I also contributed an independent perspective to the work of each of the local authorities.

Despite my claimed dual status, my emic status is and was subordinate to my etic status. My transition from practitioner to academic and researcher has been cemented. Coming from an etic position was essential to my ability to derive an analysis that synthesized findings together, into themes and cross-case comparisons, ultimately resulting in the discussion chapter. My distance as a researcher was integral to my efficacy; it gave me a perspective that allowed me to critically analyse the data, encompassing a range of themes and issues, including challenges, difficulties and positive practice. My status as a former insider helped make this happen, including the data collection methods I employed.

4.6 Data Collection Methods

The two main methods of data collection used for this research were unstructured interviews with young people for exploring their lived experiences of resettlement support (RQ 1); and semi-structured interviews with professionals, designed to answer RQ2. This section describes how both methods were employed and justifies their usage, building on the positionality and research philosophy already presented.

4.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with Professionals

Semi-structured interviews are designed to provide a space for the expression and creation of subjective meaning, explicitly linked to themes central to research design through the questions posed (Miller and Crabtree, 1999). The flexibility of the semi-structured approach allows for additional and unexpected lines of enquiry to emerge, giving depth to the data collected by providing an inductively influenced discursive space, while also allowing for deductive themes to be discussed (Silverman, 2010). My semi-structured interview schedule can be found in Appendix 3.

Given its complex nature, resettlement provision is open to interpretation and a diversity of professional meaning. A semi-structured interview approach provides a flexible but rigorous method for understanding the complexity of this meaning, capturing the pluralism systematically (Silverman, 2010). Professionals, through their knowledge and experience, provide a potentially macro-level perspective, while also being anchored in local meaning and practice. Through professional interviews, I was able to understand more about the interplay between barriers and inclusive practices that shaped the provision available to young people accessing resettlement education.

Specifically, I was able to gain insight into professional perspectives on resettlement education provision and YOT support (RQ2), to help understand the support networks relevant to social capital and the potential protective factors that could promote resilience (Chapter 3). Professional experience was a rich data source about the nature of post-custodial provision and the factors that drove it, as well as the barriers that inhibited resettlement intervention. The literature review revealed that provision of education in this context is contested, subject to both risk-averse and inclusive practice (Lanskey, 2015). Throughout the interviews, professionals offered insights into this contested space and the reality of practice and provision for young people resettling from custody.

Biography was especially relevant to case study A, which involved the interviews with Danny and Luke. Professional perspectives offered a powerful grounding to these nested biographies. Apitzsch et al (2004) argued for the importance of biographical methods to professional interventions, suggesting that we can only understand professional interventions by factoring in the biographies of both service users and professionals who co-create interventions in the public sector. In this sense, I wanted to know something of the professional biography of participants such as social workers and teachers and so this was touched upon in my line of enquiry.

For example, the potential influence of professional biography accounted for my opening question to all professional interviews, which followed this format, 'To

help set the scene, please could you tell me about your career history to date?’ This question produced varying answers, some short and to the point, in a curriculum vitae style, while other participants provided more unexpected responses about the impact of their role on emotional wellbeing and how their professional values have changed over the course of their career. Differing emotional responses were evident in these diverse responses to this opening question; several participants were initially surprised by the question, offering a short but neutral answer focusing on the facts of their career alone. Other participants used this question as a confessional or cathartic space, almost a therapeutic opportunity, which in one case brought a senior education professional to tears as they felt able to celebrate their achievements during the stress and uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Circumstantially, the adaptive nature of semi-structured interviews was put to the test by Covid-19. I completed the first semi-structured interview for this research in January 2020, in person with an education professional. Subsequently, four further interviews took place with professionals in person, before lockdown commenced in March 2020. This led to a six-week hiatus of uncertainty and a collective adaptation to the challenges of Covid-19, including an ethics amendment to allow interviews to take place online. Following ethical approval, I began online interviews using MS Teams in May 2020. My initial expectation was that interviews would be less rich, lacking the power of in-person rapport and the reading of visual signs. My expectation was misplaced. In hindsight, my overall conclusion, based on my own subjective experience, is online interviews were just as effective as in-person interviews. In many ways, online interviews offered advantages as they could be more flexibly planned and did not require any travel. At one point, based in South America, I was able to continue undertaking interviews with professionals in the UK. My unstructured approach with young people also demonstrated a comparable level of flexibility, in different ways.

4.6.2 Defining Unstructured Interviews with Young People

Unstructured interviews were utilised to build an educational biography of young people, centred on their education experiences during the custody to community resettlement transition. As the literature review highlighted, biographical factors are essential to understanding complex transitions, including resettlement. The term 'unstructured' is something of a misnomer but also contains an essential truth. Interviews of this type do contain a form of loose structure, built on informed consent and pre-identified topics of interest but without any planned questions (Booth and Booth, 1994; Bagnoli, 2009; Bray et al, 2013). My description and reflections about the interviews with Danny and Luke, summarised in this and following sub-sections, draw from interview recordings and post-interview notes I made.

Unstructured interviews are organic and responsive to the dialogic context of the research encounter, often built on a period of prolonged engagement that can produce unexpected outcomes over several interviews (Booth and Booth, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985), in their seminal work, identify prolonged engagement as a threshold for valid qualitative research, built on the development of rapport and participation. Several writers on the subject have noted that prolonged engagement is essential to working with vulnerable participants (Miller and Tewksbury, 2001; Booth, 2003; Bray et al, 2013). My approach to engagement was mixed. Danny, at the time I interviewed him, was in prison and consequently I was not able to engage with him in a gradual way, instead his YOT worker did this engagement work for me. The timing of the prison daily cycle also determined how and when we met, online and in the evening. I explored the possibility of a second interview, through Danny's YOT worker, but he declined to be involved further for reasons unknown. I respected this without question, in line with my ethical stance discussed in section 4.2.

With Luke, there was a more gradual process of engagement. His YOT officer met with him to discuss the research, he then agreed to communicate with me to find out more about the research. Following this, there was a process of email exchange between us over several weeks. Then I met Luke for an interview. We both felt by the end of the first interview that more themes could be covered, and

he willingly met me again, for a second interview. Luke chose not to meet for future interviews due to other commitments, but many themes were covered in the two interviews that took place. From start to finish, this process of engagement with Luke occurred over a timespan of more than two months.

In relation to young people in the criminal justice system, Halsey (2006, p. 148) notes: '... juvenile offenders have been rendered by experts (read adults) [sic] as immature, unreliable and incapable of truth telling...' The central ethos of my approach was to treat young people with respect, as active and expert research participants who could offer insights into their own life story. This runs contra to the youth at risk discourse reviewed in Chapter 2. While all areas of the methodology needed careful consideration, unstructured interviews with young people were the aspect of the methodology that required the most careful planning, both methodologically and ethically. A superficial approach to unstructured interviews would belie the potential complexity of implementing this approach with vulnerable young people.

Unstructured interviews are a method for exploring and understanding subjective experience, consistent with my constructivism paradigm and offer the potential to co-create individual biographies (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Gillham, 2005). Literature concerning unstructured interviews advocates their use with participants who are considered vulnerable (Bray et al, 2013). In this sense 'vulnerable' indicates groups or individuals who have complex needs, are at risk of poor health and social outcomes or are marginalised in some way (Liamputtong, 2007). As the earlier chapters of this thesis indicate, young people who are going through the process of resettlement are extremely vulnerable due to a range of complex needs, including SEND; and they are a group who are marginalised due to their perceived criminal deviancy (Gray, 2011; Hughes et al, 2012; Day, 2022a and 2022b). This marginalisation lends itself to unstructured interviews, offering a platform for marginalised narrative.

Qualitative research, including unstructured interviews, can '... enhance the discursive power of silenced voices' (Ungar and Nicholl, 2002, p.137). The youth justice cohort are poorly represented in available research, judging by the limited

evidence base available (Gray, 2011; Bateman, 2015; Goldson, 2018 – see Chapter 2). Young people who have been in custody are a derided group subject to negative labels and stereotypes (Bateman and Hazel, 2013). I used the openness of unstructured interviewing as an approach that could unlock the silenced voice of this group through two of its representatives (Gray, 2011; Bateman and Hazel, 2013; Little, 2015). Unstructured interviews allow young participants to direct the course and flow of the interview, giving them power in this dynamic to tell their story. In this sense, unstructured interviews are a form of narrative inquiry (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000; Clandinin, 2013).

Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) argued the narrative quality of the unstructured interview is about eliciting a less imposed and therefore more valid rendering of the informant's perspective, minimising the influence of the interviewer. Creative techniques, as I found with Luke, helped to elicit this silenced narrative.

From my own experience as a professional YOT practitioner, I found giving young people scope to tell their story was an empowering experience, allowing them to create meaning that promoted a sense of control during professional encounters. The constructivist nature of the unstructured interview allows for active meaning creation by young people (Mishna et al, 2004) that replicates the sense of control over meaning I have witnessed professionally. Participant-led meaning during research interviews helped me reconstruct, with both young people, their experience of education during the important resettlement transition but also drew on wider biographical life experiences as part of the qualitative interview approach.

By exploring subjective experience, unstructured interviews ask participants to share intimate details about their lives, perhaps for the first time. In this sense, unstructured interviews invite the sharing of new information. This has the potential to create a confessional scenario that can present challenges to the interview situation (Dickson-Swift et al, 2007). Several authors highlight that the perceived impartiality of the researcher can encourage disclosure of sensitive information, including behaviour deemed illegal or socially deviant (Corbin and Morse, 2003; Gillham, 2005). This can result from the so-called *delusion of alliance*, where boundaries in the research relationship are not clear (Shaw, 2008). Such disclosures are quite possible from young people who have been

involved in illegal behaviour resulting in a custodial sentence. This necessitated a proactive approach to informed consent, considered more in the ethics section (4.4). My own experience, from interviewing both Danny and Luke, was that neither treated this as a confessional space in that no illegal or concerning information was disclosed. My general sense, from interviewing them, was that they felt confident to respond to the questions I posed, judging by the rich narratives evident in Chapter 6 (case study A).

The physical place of the interview is another variable, when considering the feasibility and rationale of unstructured interviews. Curtin and Clarke (2005), together with Stalker and Connors (2003), advise that interview venues should be guided by young people within practical consideration. For example, Curtin and Clarke (2005) met young people at school and at home dependent upon stated preferences. On a practical level, I believe these are decisions that can be negotiated with young people as part of the informed consent and engagement process. In Danny's case, neither of us had a choice about location. I enquired about meeting Danny in person at the secure establishment but was informed by his YOT worker this would not be possible. For Luke, he stated a meeting at his home, which was a supported living setting managed by a third sector organisation, was his preferred meeting place. Furthermore, he asked to meet in the games room, a space he felt comfortable in. For both Danny and Luke, the physical setting offered an important context for the interview techniques used and are explored further below.

4.6.3 Participatory Approaches to Unstructured Interviews: Graphic Elicitation with Luke

This section focuses on my two interviews with Luke, who I used graphic elicitation techniques with. Participatory interview approaches with young people encompass a broad spectrum of techniques, including mobile research using guided walks by participants (Trell and Van Hoven, 2010; Robinson, 2015); and photo elicitation (Gibson et al, 2013). I was open to using all of these techniques before commencing interviews with Luke, but proceeded based on Luke's preferences, including locating the interview at his home rather than a

mobile interview.

Many participatory interview approaches centre on visually based graphic methods that can employ digital media, drawings and other arts-based creative methods, that are accessible to young people who are often literate in the use of technology and craft-based approaches (Aldridge, 2007; Copeland and Agosto, 2012; Nind et al, 2012). Utilising the proficiency of participants moves beyond deficit narratives linked to SEND (Aldridge, 2007; Shepherd, 2015). Use of graphic modes of elicitation can provide alternative dimensions of experience, expressed in idiomatic terms meaningful to the participant and relying less on verbal capacity (Lomax, 2012). With respect to this latter point, Bagnoli (2009, p. 547) argues: 'The inclusion of non- linguistic dimensions in research, which rely on other expressive possibilities, may allow us to access and represent different levels of experience.' This is especially important with young people who may experience communication barriers, including SEND. Eisner (2008), linking arts-based knowledge to wider epistemological issues, posited that arts-based knowledge moves beyond the constrictions placed by the scientific method on social research. For Eisner (2008), arts-based research represents a new insight into alternative dimensions of knowledge, including emotion and empathy. Providing an important caveat, Cole and Knowles (2008) remind researchers that arts-based research is a social science method that is informed by the arts but not part of the arts per se.

From the perspective of epiphanies, discussed in Chapter 2, Denzin (2008) argued that arts- based research has considerable relevance to biography. Denzin (2008) stated that arts - based approaches provide a novel way to understand the multi-layered nature of biographical epiphanies. He viewed epiphanies as a performative act, mirrored in the act of research-based knowledge creation employing diverse modes of evidence. For Denzin (2008) creative methods offered depth and validity to triangulation with other methods, including semi-structured interviews.

The potential inclusivity of graphic elicitation corresponds to Percy's (2005) conclusion that participants with additional learning needs respond positively to

visual research methods that encourage their involvement as active contributors. Underlining these key principles, Shepherd (2015) referred to interviews involving graphic elicitation as *interrupted interviews*, because the involvement of visual tasks dilutes the intensity of social interaction, that young people with a range of needs may find difficult.

As an example, *drawings* may be produced by both the participant and/or researcher but fit firmly within the participatory research paradigm (Bagnoli, 2009), such as the eco-maps or timelines outlined below. When completed by or with participants, drawings and other graphic forms can be minimally structured by the researcher; and ownership given completely over to the participant to find their own forms of expression and organisation (Bagnoli, 2009). Drawings can act as a concrete outcome of an interview, a data point in their own right, and are particularly helpful to children as an aid memoir for future interviews (Scott, 2000). In this sense, graphic elicitation not only acts as its own data but also has the potential to stimulate open questions and answers as a talking point within unstructured qualitative interviews (Bagnoli, 2009; Bray et al, 2013).

Drawings bring into focus the techniques I used. Across my two interviews with Luke, I completed a relational spider diagram, an education timeline, and an eco-map. All three techniques involved a combination of words and visual elements. These research artefacts, completed with Luke, are included in Chapter 6, aside from the relational spider diagram that was omitted for reasons of confidentiality. Chapter 6 offers an extended concentration on the findings derived from these techniques. In this sub-section, a justification for use of these techniques will be offered, and insight into the interview process with Luke will be provided. In both interviews, and for the use of all three techniques, I completed the diagrams based on Luke's responses and narration, constantly checking in with him by showing Luke what I had drawn or written. This was based on Luke's preference; he had no difficulties with literacy but struggled to stay in one place for any length of time, which corresponded to his identified SEND. Instead, he walked around the room as I asked questions and completed the drawings, often circling back to view the diagrams. He appeared comfortable with this approach, offering expansive and animated answers, always appearing

good humoured. The environment we were in, a large games room he was familiar with, supported Luke's contribution.

In the first interview with Luke, the initial technique used was a relational spider diagram (see Figure 1 for an example). Bagnoli (2009) utilised this approach in participatory research with young people, because it gave young people the opportunity to represent relationships with important peers, family and professionals in a relatively simple visual form. Bagnoli (2009) also suggested this approach was helpful for rapport building, as a type of ice breaker. Luke stated he did not want to go for a mobile interview but said he enjoyed visual learning, having been more successful in art and graphic design subjects while at school. He did not state a preference beyond this but agreed to a relational spider diagram being completed first. Luke chose the medium, I chose the technique and Luke dictated the content through his answers to open, unstructured questions.



Figure 1: An Example of a Relational Spider Diagram (Bagnoli, 2009)

The spider diagram helped set the scene for subsequent discussion and the use of a timeline (Figure 2) in the same interview. When asked about his relationships with teachers, while completing the spider diagram, Luke began offering me a chronological narrative suited to an educational timeline, which he agreed for me to complete in real time to record his personal history of education, which offered a form of educational biography. This stimulated open questions and responses, as Luke walked around the room. Of the three diagrams completed, he showed most interest in the timeline because he had never seen a timeline of his life before. He was most stationary in this task, watching the completion of the timeline most closely. My own observation, of his attentiveness, was that the linear representation of his education history offered a reflection of his experience he had never considered before, as he described a largely challenging school experience, despite reporting he was generally happy. The timeline, again based on my own observation of Luke's answers and demeanour, appeared to offer Luke a sense of control over his life history because as I completed the timeline and wrote key words in Luke's language

around it, he often exclaimed ‘yes, that’s right!’ when reflecting on his education experiences.

O’Connor et al (2011) utilised a personal timeline as a visual method for interviewing children with behavioural and emotional difficulties, highlighting their potential where participants have identified SEND. This offered the main conceptual inspiration for my own use of a timeline with Luke. An example taken from their paper is below (figure 2). As they argued, the timeline technique provides a tool for mapping experiences of complex transitions, which allowed O’Connor et al (2011) to collect information about wider life experiences and emotions. In my own interview, I was able to gain insight into Luke’s early education experiences and how these fed into later challenges. The timeline completed with Luke also mapped his education experience onto his criminal justice involvement, including resettlement. This incorporated the strengths of the approach as reported by O’Connor et al (2011).

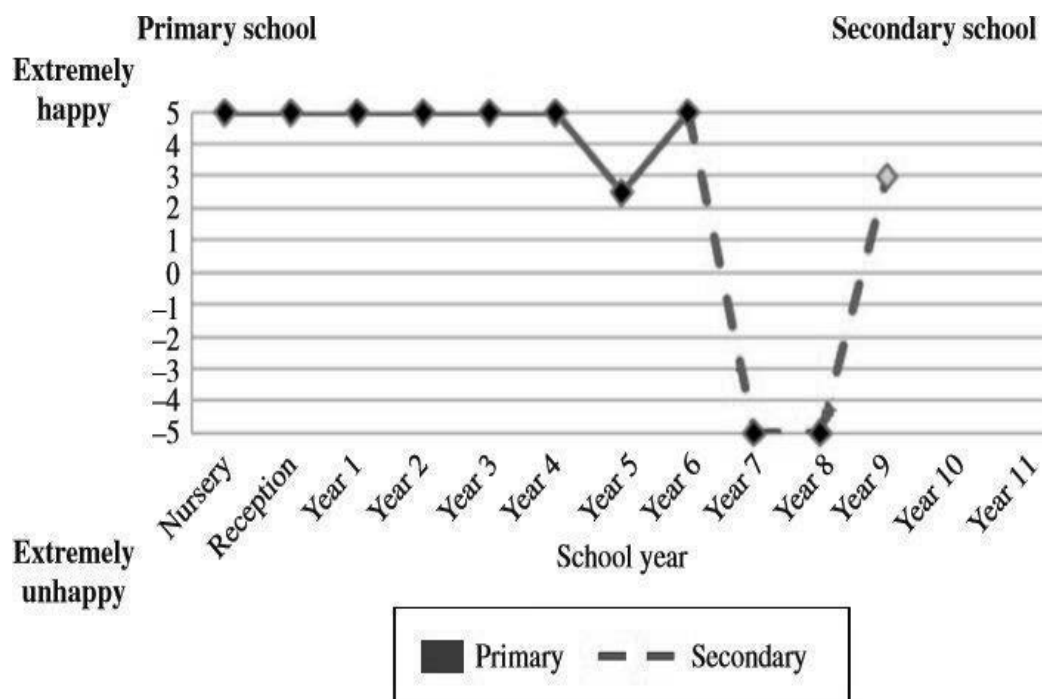


Figure 2: Example of a Timeline (O’Connor et al, 2011)

I also used the affective dimension of O'Connor et al's (2011) timeline with Luke, differing from their paper by using visual scaling of emotional on a scale of '1' (very unhappy) to '10' (very happy) to help gauge Luke's emotional experience of school. Luke set the parameters, naming the two ends of the scale as 1 – 10. This was the one aspect of the technique I believe was problematic. Luke gauged all his academic years at a 9 or 10 on the scale, suggesting he was very happy. Yet his description of those academic years suggested challenges and difficulties out of sync with the affective scores he put forward. While I cannot draw any absolute conclusions from this, I do believe the linearity of the timeline reached its limits at that point. Emotions and chronology did not mesh for Luke, perhaps because we had moved too far away from the knots of meaning that are more conducive to understanding the lived experience of young people (Harding, 2006; Smith and Dowse, 2019 – discussed in section 2.1 of the literature review). I did not attempt to address this directly with Luke – it felt like a confrontational act. Instead, the next technique used helped mitigate this issue.

Psychology and social work provide an array of visual assessment tools, that sit firmly in the domain of graphic elicitation when used in research interviews. In my practice as a social worker, I used *eco-maps* to understand relationships between individuals, social networks and agencies. Eco-maps are simple and can be adapted in various creative ways. They visually summarise complex data about perspectives on systems of support that directly map social capital, including linking and bridging social capital (Rogers, 2017). An example, Figure 3, has been included below. Eco-maps can capture varied relationships, including peer, family and professional, from the participant perspective, that shape the resettlement transition. In this way they help to address the relational experience and support suggested in RQ 1, resonating with concepts of resilience and protection. The visual output offered by eco-maps is more akin to the episodic knots of meaning that usually guide young people's understanding of their past, present and future (Harding, 2006). Eco-maps are also able to capture the affective domain of relationships and experiences, based on different representational lines, such as a jagged line that offers a visual image of stressed relationships (Hartman and Laird, 1983). In my own experience, eco-maps can appear confused as recorded by pen and paper, but realistic in their

reflection of the complex reality of young people's lived experience of relationships. In a sense, they can offer a palimpsest of the overlapping and enmeshed relationships young people find themselves in, especially when a network of agencies is involved in their lives.

The construction of an eco-map was the focus of the second interview. The second interview followed a similar format to the first, I completed the eco-map while Luke walked around the room and regularly returned to view it. We began the interview by reviewing the relational spider diagram and timeline. I asked Luke what he wanted to discuss. He said a lot of the previous interview had been about his past, but he wanted to talk more about his present and future. I suggested an eco-map, showing Luke an example similar to Figure 3. He had completed an eco-map with his YOT worker before, he understood what it was about and agreed this would be the focus of the second interview.

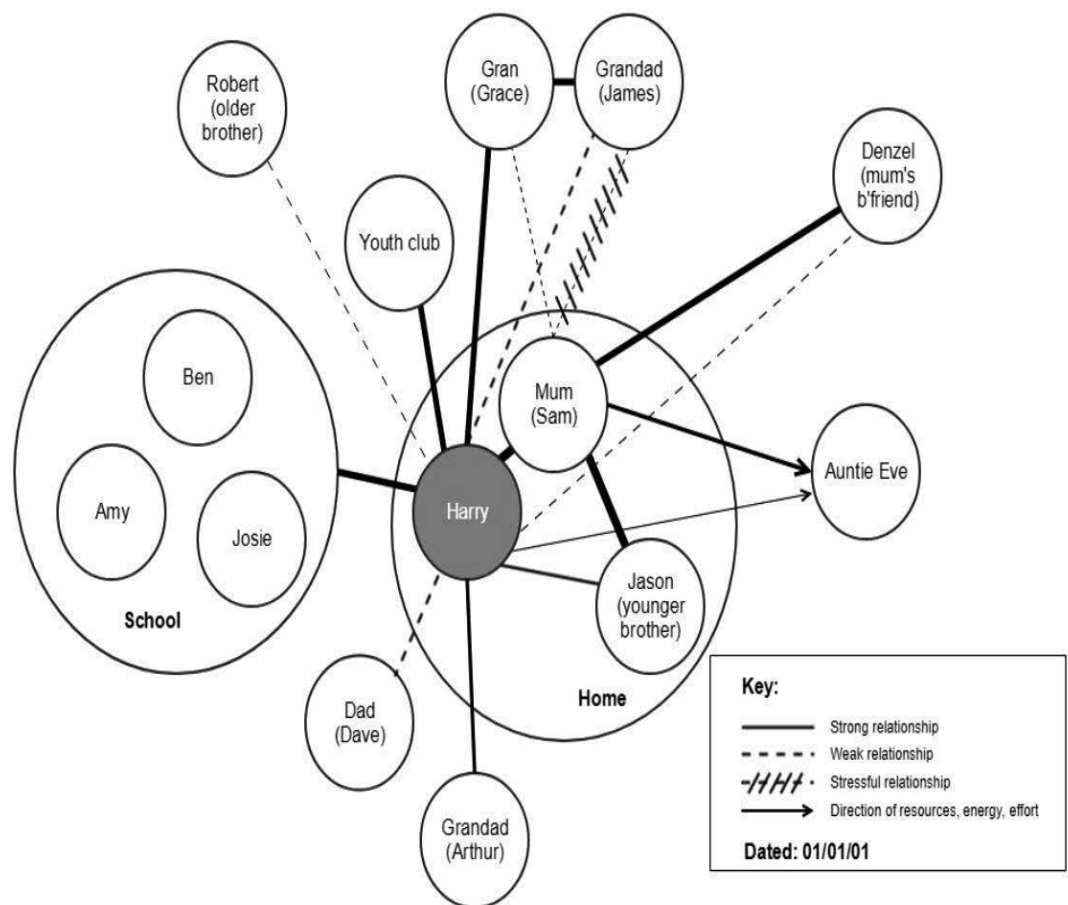


Figure 3: Eco-Map Example

(Source: <https://safeguarding.network/content/ecomaps/>).

Throughout the completion of the eco-map, Luke appeared good humoured but also reflective. He said he enjoyed doing the eco-map, he identified he was at an important turning point away from his criminal past and the eco-map showed the progress he had made. At one point, he also told me, 'This is more fun, because you're not a fed.' Expanding upon this, he explained he felt comfortable talking to me because I was not in a position of authority over him and he had control over the process. This powerfully points to the participatory potential of graphic elicitation. Again, I used unplanned open questions based on Luke's responses to the completion of the eco-map, giving the interview its unstructured quality. Luke was able to explain his various relationships with important individuals and services, focusing mainly on the present but also including aspects of the past and his hopes for the future with his apprenticeship. He was able to explain his emotions towards significant others, describing positive emotions or stressful emotions. The eco-map, in this way, appeared to record the affective dimension of his lived experience better than the timeline, perhaps because the eco-map did not introduce a more constraining linear parameter. Out of this eco-map emerged a strong perception of Luke's support network and his biographical change. Important protective factors came out of this interview, located in Luke's social network.

Towards the end of the interview, through the eco-map, discussion centred on Luke's apprenticeship. It became clear that Luke had positive hopes and aspirations because of his training opportunity. This was important for Luke, something inconceivable for him only a year before. He used this as a point of celebration in the interview and became more animated, pacing the room more as he spoke about this. It offered, in my view, an empowering conclusion to the interview. Bagnoli (2009) argued that graphic elicitation techniques can be used to project beyond the present and utilise the future to gauge aspirations and motivation for change. Adding relevance to this, Fitzpatrick et al (2014) have identified aspirations as a key agency-based factor in recidivism, which education plays a part in promoting. Luke's focus on aspirations added legitimacy to the relevance of discussing the future in relation to resettlement. This was the final topic discussed in our second interview.

The previous sub-sections have explored Luke's interviews and related topics in depth. The next sub-section will focus on my interview with Danny.

4.6.4 Danny's Interview

There has been considerable focus on Luke's interview because it involved and showcased the use of graphic elicitation. Danny's interview was equally powerful, but also was more constrained and these limitations are considered below.

At the time of the interview, Danny was living in a secure unit, following a serious violent offence. The interview was online and limited to 45 minutes by the secure unit. Throughout the interview, there were connection problems with the internet. Attempting to use some of the same techniques utilised in Luke's interviews, I familiarised myself with the Miro application, which is a platform that allows creative online interaction, including the joint completion of diagrams over MS Teams. Unfortunately, there were also technical issues with Miro, linked to internet problems, meaning this approach to creative elicitation could not feature in the interview. Given this and the internet problems, Danny agreed to answer open questions which were, as with Luke, unstructured.

To begin the interview, I asked about Danny's experiences before and during his time in the secure unit. He understood I was interested in his education experiences, and he chose to focus on his time in mainstream schooling and, mainly, his experience of attending a PRU. The PRU was especially important to Danny, and I reciprocated by focusing questions on the PRU. These were mainly follow-up questions to the narrative Danny built. I kept questions to a minimum as Danny was very eloquent and emotional about the PRU, which he in part blamed for his incarceration. Danny displayed a level of anger at his experience in the PRU. Given this emotional dimension, I checked in with Danny if he felt comfortable discussing this issue, and he stated 'totally, no other fucker has asked me about this. I'm just getting warmed-up!' This quotation gives a glimpse of the interview's tone, Danny became less angry about the PRU experience after this and instead displayed what could be called dark humour.

My approach, due to technical problems, deviated from the plan to use Miro for graphic elicitation. Consequently, my interview interlinked techniques of *open questions* and *active listening*. Active listening, also called reflective listening and empathic listening, is an established technique both within qualitative research and the helping professions, such as social work and psychotherapy (Rogers and Welch, 2009; Weger et al, 2014). Weger et al (2014, p. 14) define active listening as: ‘... restating a paraphrased version of the speaker’s message, asking questions when appropriate, and maintaining moderate to high nonverbal conversational involvement.’ Questions are a component of active listening, as are non-verbal cues, such as nodding. It is a skill I support social work students to develop, as the academic lead of a module on social work communication skills. Active listening is a skill I used working with young people and other vulnerable service users throughout my career in social work practice. I therefore felt confident using this as a standalone approach in Danny’s interview. I consciously nodded and smiled throughout the interview, to try to communicate non-verbal listening, which has been cited as an important adaptation to online interviewing (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021). I also employed paraphrasing as a form of summarising at relevant times, to ensure I understood the points Danny made. The limitations of non-verbal communication online placed increased emphasis on the questions I used, to help elicit a dialogue and narrative. Other limitations will now be considered, in the following section.

4.7 Limitations of the Methodology

In the interests of transparency and providing a complete account of the research, it is important to document the methodological limitations of the approach I took. This section also offers an opportunity to defend the approach I took despite limitations. The three main limitations are: the length of engagement with both Danny and Luke, the size of the sample of young people and the absence of carers in this research.

The first limitation was the length of my engagement with Danny and Luke. Several authors have stated that prolonged engagement is essential to working with vulnerable research participants, including young people and participants with learning disabilities, for example (Miller and Tewksbury, 2001; Bray et al,

2013). Bray et al (2013) go further, arguing prolonged engagement should include up to approximately six research interviews. I cannot claim to have reached this level of engagement with Danny and Luke. My single interview with Danny, using precarious technology, would be described as a high stakes interview by those who advocate prolonged engagement, something to be avoided (Booth, 2003).

I accept these broad research standards and, again, my professional experience was about prolonged engagement with marginalised young people. I believe I evidenced a prolonged level of preparation and engagement with Luke, which resulted in meaningful rapport building. From an ethical standpoint, I fully respected Luke's right to withdraw from further participation. Other research on interviewing vulnerable participants highlights that no panacea is available for research in this area and any ethical research should work with participants on an individual basis, without expectation of any fixed level of engagement (Liamputtong, 2006). This suggests Bray et al's (2013) argument for six interviews is arbitrary. My engagement with Danny was more limited, one off, online and with the participant in custody. These conditions and Danny's withdrawal after one interview is a more unequivocal limitation, which I must acknowledge here.

The sample size of two young people is also limited. I could not recruit a larger sample, as originally planned, because professional gatekeepers told me young people were either not available or not interested in taking part. Despite a prolonged period of communication with all three YOTs, no more young people were forthcoming. I cannot attribute this to Covid-19, but believe it is the consequence of attempting to engage young people who have a common experience of marginalisation. The limited sample of young people also reflects the complexity of purposive sampling as I was attempting to recruit from an already small population through complex stakeholder negotiations. While my previous status as an insider was an asset, my power to negotiate the myriad variables recruiting from a small and complex group was limited.

Related to this, and reflecting my commitment to pluralism and social

constructivism, I intended to recruit caregivers into the study, at least one parental figure for each one of the young participants from each case study. My recruitment of two young people set a further limitation on this. Due to Danny's difficult family situation, I was advised by his YOT worker that it would not be possible to recruit his parents into the study. Luke spoke effusively about his mother and said he would speak with her. This possibility did not transpire after Luke's discontinued involvement in the research. The absence of caregivers is a significant limitation of this study and is certainly an area for future research.

Finally, the practical limitations of this research are important to note. I was a sole researcher working on a very limited budget, with no funding from a research body, while working full-time in a different role. This imposed certain constraints around time and budget that perhaps contributed to the limitations already described, for example in the time available for attempting to recruit and engage with more young people.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on my research philosophy, positionality and data collection methods. In addition, I considered the limitations of my approach. Given the importance of young people to this study, the small sample size is, I believe, the main limitation of this research. I have, nonetheless, chosen to offer considerable word space to my interviews with Luke and Danny in both this and subsequent chapters where relevant. I believe this is important to the wider project. Shining a light on their marginalised voices and the broader marginalised population they represent, includes offering a detailed showcase about how I worked with them. This is a complex area of research practice, demonstrating how I approached and mobilised participatory principles is essential to justifying my credibility as a researcher. I have also devoted considerable words to professional interviews, occupying a more orthodox research space, which I believe demonstrates my versatility as a researcher. The next chapter directly follows on from topics covered here, giving an account of how I analysed the data I collected.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis Framework

Introduction

The previous chapter considered research positionality and data collection. This short chapter follows on from those topics, considering how meaning was made from the data collected. The chapter is structured around Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework for thematic data analysis, which is the approach I used in analysing the data. The outcome of this analysis is presented in the Findings chapters (6 – 8). The cross-case synthesis (Chapter 9) used a related but different approach, which is summarised in that chapter.

5.1 Core Principles Guiding Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 6) define thematic analysis as a '...method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your (sic) data in rich detail.' Themes capture an important dimension of data, relevant to research questions and provide a patterned response to complex qualitative information.

Data analysis was not left to the end of data collection, it began after the first interview as an on-going process. This included coding all the transcripts three times, across three cycles, until saturation had been reached on the third cycle and no further codes were identified. The emphasis of my data analysis, including the coding cycles, was *inductive*. I used the raw data as the main driver of my analysis. I do not claim a purely inductive approach. My analysis of the data was also influenced by the literature and my *a priori* theoretical framework (social capital and resilience). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021 and 2023) acknowledge inductive and deductive analysis is a continuum, rather than a strict divide.

The main data source analysed was unstructured and semi-structured interviews. These included transcripts and interpretive analytical memos I wrote about interviews, usually directly after they took place. I also thematically analysed the graphic outputs from Luke's interviews. *Nvivo 12* was used to organise and code the data thematically (see Appendix 5 for a full list of themes and codes identified using Nvivo).

I also used Braun and Clark's (2021 and 2023) more recent *reflexive* work on thematic analysis as a further guiding lens for the analysis and write-up. My own professional biography, discussed in the previous chapter, is significant here. It has shaped my personal and analytical truths, guiding how I made meaning from the data, which is an axiom of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021 and 2023). As an outsider, influenced by my prior insider professional experience, I was firmly focused on the interpretative truths of resettlement practice, drawn from interview participants. At its core, my own professional biography led me towards trying to understand what good and bad practice is. This need to understand good and bad practice is evident across the themes that were constructed from this analysis and are discussed at length in Chapters 6 - 8. I will now consider each stage of the analytical framework in turn.

5.2 Part 1: Becoming Familiar with the Data

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) first part, I immersed myself in the interview data. I listened to the recordings of the interviews, re-read the transcripts, and reviewed my own analytical memos, written about each of the interviews. I searched the data for meaning and patterns and made further memos to record my reflections and meaning making, noting both unexpected meanings and interpretations that already fulfilled prior understanding. This stage provided a foundation for coding.

5.3 Part 2: Generating Initial Codes

Codes represent the most basic unit of qualitative analysis (Saldana, 2016). Braun and Clarke (2006), deliberately, do not provide a prescriptive definition of codes. Instead, they state a code is an interesting segment of information contained within raw qualitative data. Codes are the building blocks of themes. Codes can be drawn from interview transcripts and graphic-based research artefacts (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2016). Multiple codes can be assigned to the same segment of information, which prevents data fragmentation (Miles et al, 2013; Saldana, 2016). This is the approach I took, assigning initial codes to transcripts on Nvivo.

I was open minded in this initial coding process, allowing a range of different meanings to form codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that open-mindedness is an essential aspect of this part of the process. The researcher should read the data holistically and actively identify as many potential codes as possible, which is something I did. A continued reading of and familiarisation with the data, including contrast and comparison between interview transcripts, formed a coalescence of codes in this stage of the analysis, which created the conditions for thematic identification.

5.4 Part 3: Identifying Themes

This part of the analysis occurred when all of the available data had been initially coded, which was at the point of saturation during the third coding cycle (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Miles et al, 2013). Codes were collated into themes at the end of cycle 3. This thematic structure was collated and recorded on Nvivo – Appendix 5 provides a record of this part of the analysis. Relationships were identified between codes and between themes. Some themes formed a linked hierarchy of main themes and sub-themes, something that influenced the organisation of the case study findings chapters.

5.5 Part 4: Reviewing Themes

All the principles of theme formation discussed in part 3 are equally relevant to this stage of the process, which is about theme refinement. The themes were reviewed and challenged for cohesion and integrity during part 4. Themes were discarded for lacking purpose or integrity at this stage, for example a theme about systemic school leadership did not address issues of leadership in any meaningful sense upon review. My use of reflexive analytical memos helped test the cohesion of each theme, in particular when labelling arose as a prominent theme within interviews I read between the data and the labelling literature, to ensure labelling was the issue consistently being discussed by participants. Other themes were included because a majority of participants, in one or more of the case study areas, discussed issues relevant to the theme. Late planning for release was an example of a consistent theme across case areas. Other concepts were also included after review despite being raised by a small number of participants, for example disguised learning in area A, because they introduced a novel idea or new interpretation.

The themes identified in part 3 are referred to as *candidate themes* by Braun and Clarke (2006). This part of the analysis required a review of the data supporting candidate themes, to begin finalising them. Equally important, as part of the test for their cohesion, valid themes were found to have both internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, they did not merge ambiguously into other themes as I compared them. Testing for homogeneity and heterogeneity is a core task of this fourth part (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I did not review the themes until all three cycles of coding were completed. This allowed a comparison of all candidate themes as part of the homogeneity/heterogeneity test.

Triangulation is a key component of the case study method, to address issues of validity (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Triangulation, as an outcome of the heterogeneity/homogeneity test, was also built into this part of the analysis. From my experience of completing the analysis at this stage, based on

constructionism, this was about triangulation of diverse perspectives through theme comparison. Pluralism was the essence of data analysis as I reviewed the themes, including between the perspectives of young people and professionals. Out of this, cohesive case studies emerged. After reviewing the themes, the final check was to ensure they could be clearly defined and named.

5.6 Part 5: Defining and Naming Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide some broad guidelines about this part, which again involved cross-checking themes back with the raw data of transcripts. In terms of the process I followed, this part required checking each theme reflected the data as collected and was relevant to the research questions. Defining and naming themes ensured each theme transparently narrated the data, pinpointing and analysing what was meaningful in relation to potential understanding and knowledge contribution. The conceptual essence of each theme and its relevance needed to be defined and articulated clearly. A detailed audit needed to be completed for each theme, based on a concrete definition of that theme. Homogeneity and heterogeneity of each theme was conclusively established at this point. I checked each theme's function was clear within the wider context of each case study and its findings, to ensure the themes built a cohesive picture of each case. The beginning of Chapters 6, - 8 each include a table naming and defining the themes, reflecting this part of the analysis.

5.7 Part 6: Presentation of the Findings

This part involved the writing-up of the data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) are explicit that this stage is not a write-up only but also an integral part of the analysis, that should draw the themes together to create a valid understanding of the phenomenon studied. I approached this stage, first and foremost, as about case study construction and used the major case study texts as a guide to structure my presentation (Stake, 1996; Simmons, 2009; Yin, 2018), which involved structuring the chapters thematically, as a direct consequence of this analysis.

Part 6 of the data analysis framework concludes this chapter. The findings from this analysis will now be presented in the following chapters.

Chapter 6: Case Study A Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from interviews conducted in case study A. Case study A (hereafter referred to as area A) involved ten interviews with professionals from YOT and education; and interviews with two young people. The perspectives of both young people are integral to this chapter; the first theme addresses their biographical experience before prison, which offers context to the other themes. As voices that are typically unheard and marginalised, it was important to give prominence to these rare accounts by young people and to compare their experiences. Following this initial theme, the rest of the data from area A is presented thematically, involving contributions from both professionals and young people. Table 2 lists the participants interviewed from area A, including brief biographical details; and Table 3 provides a summary of the themes explored in this chapter.

6.1 Profile of Area A

To contextualise the findings a brief overview of area A is first presented here. To preserve confidentiality, statistics included about area A (and the other two case studies in subsequent chapters) have been approximated and taken from local sources less than 3 years old. All statistics are recorded in the present tense. In places, local statistics for each case study are compared to the national picture – national and local data come from the same time period for each socio-economic metric discussed, but the exact time period they refer to is not cited to further safeguard confidentiality. Where data is taken from local sources, this has not been fully referenced to maintain confidentiality.

Area A is a medium sized city of >250,000 people. The population is over 70 per cent white-British. The council is organised as a unitary local authority, which employs >3,000 people and operates on a budget of more than £200 million. Area A is in the top 20 per cent of most deprived local authorities, based upon

the average deprivation rank for England. It is more deprived than comparator cities (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). Linked to this, just over 30 per cent of school age children are eligible for free school meals, above the national average of 23%, putting area A into a higher bracket of socio-economic deprivation. Unemployment in the area stands at over 4 per cent, similar to the national average of 4.8 percent, with an economy based on logistics and several service sectors. Business density (the number of businesses per 10,000 of the working age population) is much lower than the national average, standing at <470 versus the national average of >670 during the same period – this is an indicator of wider economic functioning. The area has more than one university, with over 45 per cent of the working age population achieving an NVQ 4 or higher, broadly consistent with the national average.

The YOT in area A is small by national standards, employing between 15 and 25 staff, with a single area office in the centre of the city (Personal communication with 'Rob', YOT Service Manager, February 2021), and an operational budget of over £800,000. The YOT is the lead agency for managing resettlement in area A, supporting and coordinating the work of other services. The crime rate for area A is >120 crimes per 1,000 people, above the national average of 84 crimes per 1,000 people (Office for National Statistics, 2020). In its most recent inspection, by HM Inspectorate of Probation, the YOT in area A was rated *good*. The overall reoffending rate for young people involved with the YOT is over 35 per cent, slightly greater than the national average of under 34 per cent for the same period. Custody rates are recorded regionally, but a strategic plan for the YOT revealed its custody rate is over 0.12, when measured as the number of custodial sentences given per 1,000 young people in the local authority. This is significantly higher than the contemporary national custody rate of 0.05. The ethnic background of the young people who go to prison from area A is unknown, data on this is not published at a local authority level. However, regional-level data is available. The region containing area A also includes area B. Young people from all ethnic minority groups in the region are significantly overrepresented in the custodial estate, as are young people from the region

containing area C (Ministry of Justice, 2021). In both regions the single most overrepresented group are young men from a Black ethnic background (Ministry of Justice, 2021). This is unequivocal evidence of the issue of disproportionality discussed in section 1.2 of the introduction.

The annual mainstream education budget for area A is over £12 million and its children’s social care budget is over £40 million. Spending on SEND education and related support services totals in the region of £6 million. Area A has over 60 schools, with <20 rated outstanding by Ofsted. The majority are rated good, with a small minority judged inadequate or requiring improvement. The child social care department in the area is rated *good* by Ofsted. Over 42 per cent of pupils achieved a 5 or above in English and Mathematics, which is below the 49 per cent national average during the same period. In the most recent available figures, 20 per cent of the pupil population have identified SEND, compared to a national average of just over 17 per cent. As a proportion of that SEND population, just over 2.5 per cent of pupils have an EHCP, a rate similar to the national average. Of pupils with an EHCP, 39 per cent are in mainstream schools, 42 per cent attend special school provision and 16 per cent are in a post-16 placement. Just over a third of children with identified SEND, in area A, have a need falling under the SEMH classification.

Table 2: Participants from Area A

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender		
Young People			
Danny	Male	A 16-year-old male, currently serving a prison sentence.	

Luke	Male	An 18-year-old male, currently living in supported accommodation in the community.	
Education Professionals		Role	Participant Profile
Brenda	Female	Head teacher of a SEMH school in area A.	A teacher of nearly 40 years' experience, with most of that time spent in school leadership roles. Brenda had devoted all her career to working in specialist schools or alternative provision, including PRUs.
Bill	Male	Local authority education and inclusion manager,	Bill had previously been a youth worker, including working with young people involved in offending. His youth work career transitioned into inclusion work with disaffected students, before becoming manager of the same service in his current role. In the inclusion manager role, Bill was responsible for organising SEND placements and school transfers. This included transfers between mainstream schools and the PRU in area A.
Janice	Female	Virtual school head teacher	Janice had some 25 years' experience in education, including approximately the first decade working in mainstream

			schools as a teacher. She had spent the latter 15 years working as a teacher or school leader in PRUs before becoming the virtual school head in area A.
Francesca	Female	PRU head teacher	Francesca had originally been a mainstream schoolteacher but enjoyed working with children at risk of exclusion due to challenging behaviour. This led her to becoming a teacher in area A's PRU. From there she moved up in the school hierarchy, to become head teacher.
YOT Professionals			
Rob	Male	YOT strategic manager	Previously a probation officer working with adults, Rob left the probation service to become assistant manager in a different YOT to area A. He then moved across to area A, to become the YOT's lead strategic manager with overall responsibility for the service.
Karen	Female	YOT Social Worker	Karen had previously worked in child protection and with looked after children as a social worker. Given the high level of offending and criminalisation of looked after children, she became interested in YOT work. This was her first role in a YOT. The social worker role involved undertaking

			interventions, with young people, to reduce reoffending, including work on victim empathy and consequential thinking. She had been working in area A's YOT between 3 and 5 years. Among her YOT responsibilities was taking the lead on working with looked after children.
Charlotte	Female	YOT SaLT	Employed fulltime by the National Health Service, Charlotte had been working as the link SaLT with area A's YOT for over a year, at the time of interview. YOT work constituted half of her case load, the other half involved working in schools. Charlotte had been a qualified SaLT for over a decade.
Gill	Female	YOT education lead	Gill had spent all her 30 plus year career working in careers guidance, including with young people in both schools and FE colleges. She had been the dedicated education lead at the YOT for over 5 years at time of interview. She had no line management role, instead doing careers guidance work directly or brokering education provision for young people, including the resettlement group.
Debby	Female	YOT Social Worker	Debby had been a social worker for between 5 and 10 years. She

			had always worked in area A's YOT. Debby was the lead for working with cases involving a child protection concern, for young people still living with their families.
Gary	Male	Violence reduction manager (not YOT affiliated)	Gary had previously been a senior police officer, for over 20 years. He had been in the violence reduction role for 1 year at the time of interview. His role focused on allocating funding for violence reduction projects, conducted by the YOT and other services. He also sat on the YOT's strategic board.

Table 3: Themes Presented for Area A

Theme Name	Summary	Sub-theme
Danny and Luke's biographical experience before prison	This theme considered nested biographical vignettes of Danny and Luke's educational experience, especially mainstream education.	N/A
The positive pedagogy of alternative provision	The theme focused on a consensus among professionals, that alternative provision offered the best exemplar of education delivery and support to the resettlement cohort.	<i>Sub-theme: The centrality of positive staff-student relationships in education</i> A component of positive pedagogy was meaningful staff-student

		relationships. Positive relationships were found to be an enabler of positive education experiences.
Education as a negative environment	While positive pedagogy was a feature of area A's alternative provision, negative learning environments also existed. In this regard, the local PRU was singled out as being especially challenging.	N/A
Barriers to Further Education	Further Education was found to be largely inaccessible to the resettlement cohort. This inaccessibility was multidimensional. Stigma and stereotypes were found to operate in local colleges. Another pertinent factor, argued by participants, was the lack of college readiness evident in the resettlement population, which acted as a further barrier to access.	N/A
The importance of proactive release planning	Participants highlighted that proactive release planning, early into custodial sentences, was central to offering bespoke support that met the needs of young people upon release.	N/A
'Reactive rather than proactive':	Delays and barriers to effective resettlement	N/A

Ineffective planning for release	planning were identified as a common experience among professionals. Barriers and delays led to missed opportunities in providing support to young people.	
'She went above and beyond': Trusting relationships with YOT staff	The nature and qualities of trusting relationships between YOT professionals and young people were explored in this theme.	N/A

6.2 Danny and Luke's Biographical Experience Before Prison

6.2.1 Danny

Danny was 16 years old at the time of interview. He was several months into a long custodial sentence for involvement in a violent offence. Before this sentence, Danny lived with his family and had been involved with the YOT in area A for several years. Danny came from a Black ethnic background, he had grown up in a poorer part of area A and had some experience of living in care. He did not have an EHCP and was not subject to an EHC assessment. Nonetheless, Danny had been identified as having an emotional need consistent with the SEMH classification in the CoP.

At Danny's instigation, the focus of the interview was largely upon his negative experience at the local PRU, which will be considered in the later theme called 'Education as a Negative Environment'. Danny's reflections on his time at the PRU prompted consideration about his time in mainstream schooling, which he also felt was negative:

'... in the school, they isolate you and give you no chances if you misbehave like I did. Isolating me didn't work. I tried to say my bit about it not working and they would never listen. They would punish me but that would make things worse. I'd get really, really angry and behave worse, getting punished more. But then they would punish me again with more isolation.'

Danny's disrupted school experience amplified considerably when he transitioned into year 7, the first year of secondary school. Danny was able to acknowledge his negative experience in mainstream school was, in part, the result of challenging behaviour he exhibited in the classroom. He also demonstrated insight, identifying his own needs, long unidentified, as the core reason for his challenging behaviour and negative experience:

'I always knew I could be my own enemy at school. I was a problem kid. A bit mixed-up. I caused problems, I know it. But they made it all so much worse by the way they treated me. Always on my case. Being harsh.'

Danny felt the punitive response of his mainstream school, in particular repeated use of isolation, amplified his behaviour and the long-term impact of this was his placement in the PRU. He could not identify, when asked, any teachers or professionals he considered trustworthy in mainstream school.

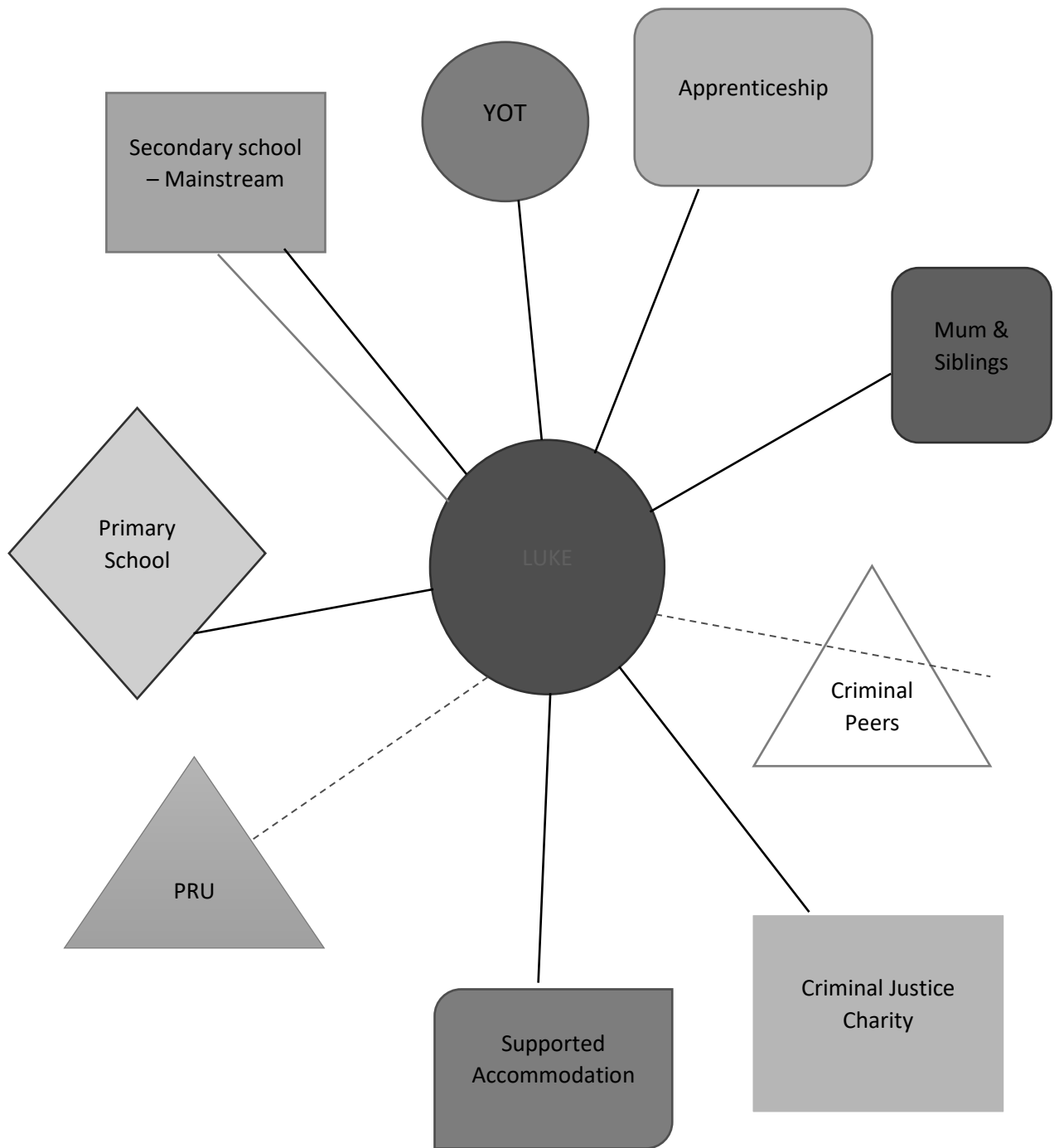
Danny believed his path towards criminality began in mainstream school, identifying the punitive use of isolation as a factor in pushing him away from mainstream provision:

'Crime starts off with small misbehaviour, like in school. Then gets worse. Bunking off from school was a start for me. Isolation in school was part of it too. When you're there you're not doing anything, just being isolated. I


wasn't learning much. Just time wasting, getting bored. Your behaviour just gets worse and you bunk off more, getting into more trouble outside.'

For Danny, his experience in mainstream school was a criminogenic factor, highlighting the importance of the school experience in shaping his life path. His punitive experience of school appears to have been a source of alienation and disaffection, pushing him away from a potentially positive environment and onto a path towards criminality. Luke, the other young person involved in this research, described a similar but more mixed experience below.

6.2.2 Luke



KEY – Relationship Strength

Strong 

Stressed 

Weak 

Figure 4: Luke's Eco-Map

At the time of interview, Luke had very recently turned 18 years old. He was from a Black ethnic background and had grown up in a less affluent part of area A. Luke had grown up in area A, going to school there. He came from a large single parent family, the oldest of more than 5 siblings. Luke was the only one of his family to have become involved in the YJS. Luke's offences were all drug related and he had served one prison sentence, which ended over 12 months before the interview. Upon release, Luke had moved into supported accommodation for young people aged 16 and over, run by a third sector provider. He technically became a Looked After Child at this time, subject to the care of the local authority. Before this, Luke had always lived with his mother. Luke had a professionally identified SEND, linked to the SEMH category. No further details about this were available.

Over both interviews, Luke was willing to talk about both his schooling and youth justice experience, seeing both as firmly in the past and something he had 'gotten over'. Luke's retrospection was aided by his own favourable living situation at the time of interview. He liked his supported accommodation, finding it a very positive environment and he had very recently secured an apprenticeship, involving a role with the local council. For Luke, his life had moved on considerably during the previous months of resettlement. His relationship with his mother had also improved over the previous year and he retained a positive relationship with his siblings. Luke's life had changed, 'my life is before and after prison'. This suggests an important biographical turning point for Luke. He saw the difficulties associated with drug dealing as an abstraction, something that was 'a bit like my prehistoric life'. Luke's various descriptions of his life suggested somebody who had reframed their world view and identity in a positive way. Reflecting this change, Luke described his relationship as weak with pro-criminal peers in the eco-map (Figure 4) but strong with the accommodation provider.

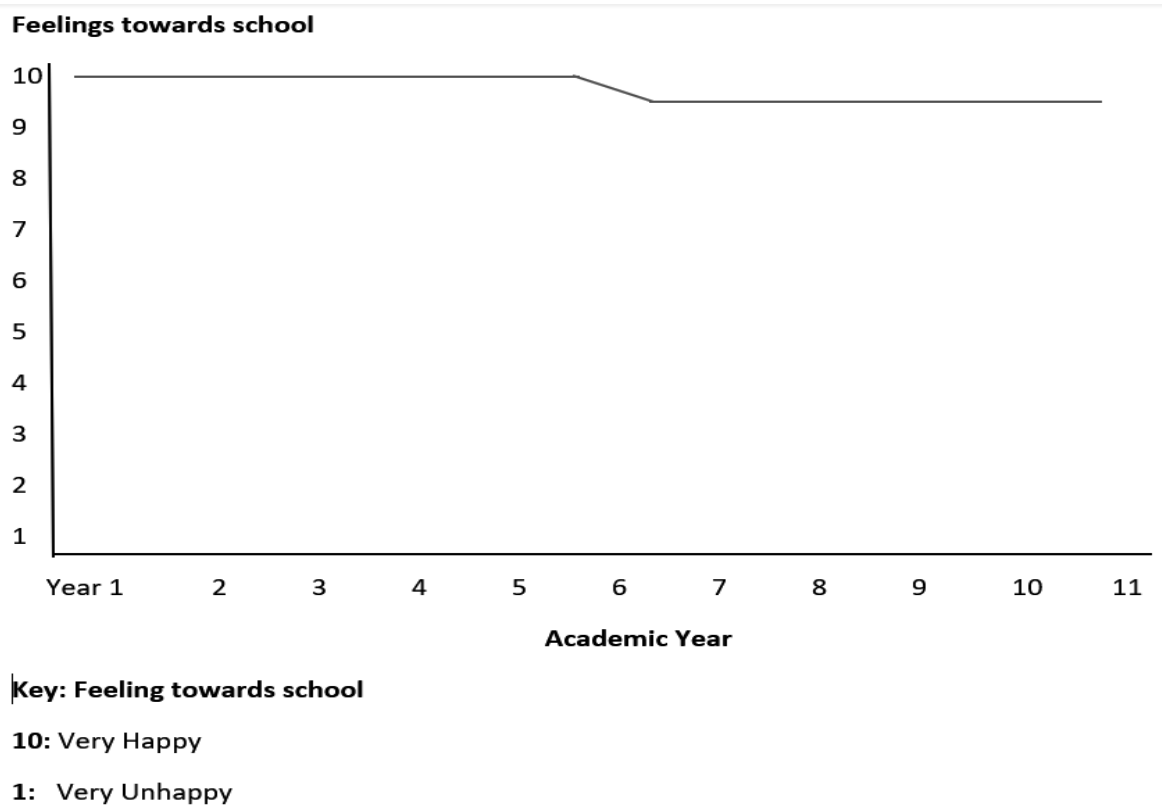


Figure 5: Luke’s Education Timeline

The first interview was largely devoted to Luke’s school career, which is graphically represented by the education timeline in Figure 5. Luke was able to recall most of his school career, from year 1 (the year after the reception stage) through to year 11. The timeline suggested Luke was very happy at school, he scored a 9 or 10 for each academic year. Although it is noticeable there was a slight downturn to 9 on the scale from year 7 onwards. Luke unpicked this very happy emotion, stating his happiness derived from being the designated ‘class clown’, especially in years 5 – 10, which was an integral part of his identity and persona at school. Luke described himself as popular because of this, as his class clown persona was a source of amusement to peers.

The eco-map (Figure 4) expressed a more nuanced and ambivalent view of school, at all levels, both strong and stressed. When constructing the relational eco-map, Luke reiterated his positive experiences of being the class clown, but also opened-up about more challenging aspects of school. Luke acknowledged he was capable of challenging behaviour that led to a multitude of sanctions.

For Luke, his main problems with school started in year 7, his transition to secondary school.

In describing his general behavioural disposition at all school levels, Luke spoke about 'messing around', which had been tolerated at primary school but was treated in a more punitive way from year 7, with an escalation in behaviour related to the use of isolation as a sanction:

'Messing around, that was me. I wasn't a violent kid, I wouldn't fight. Maybe disrupt the class, class clown really. Say I'm pissing about and then get put in isolation, I would go mad about isolation. I would tear up the whole school, go around punching all the walls, flipping things over, flipping chairs and that.'

Luke's pattern of behaviour experienced a downturn at school through years 8 to 9, which was in part linked to increased criminal involvement. He became involved with a local drug dealer, selling drugs and making considerable money from this, which resulted in what he described as a 'lot of great things', including a trip abroad. Luke was never convicted for violence against a person but did see the world as a more threatening place because of his criminal involvement. This culminated in a serious incident at school. Luke was found to have a knife and received a fixed term exclusion. Luke's initial exclusion was followed by a term of attending mainstream school one hour per day, in isolation, which he stated did not help:

'I had a lot of spare time on my hands. I was hanging out with older kids. I was bored, drug dealing paid. Paid big. I used the spare time to do that.'

Luke was then moved to the local PRU, which he never physically attended, instead receiving one hour per day home tuition until the commencement of his prison term. For Luke, this maintained a pattern of minimal school oversight and considerable free time that continued to facilitate his criminal involvement.

Consequently, Luke expressed indifference to the PRU, represented in the eco-map as a weak relationship. This was the same PRU Danny attended.

Luke's school experience revealed what appeared to be a negative spiral, driven by challenging behaviour and increased use of school sanctions. Luke's time at mainstream school, while purportedly happy on the timeline, was not fostering aspirations, he described 'never thinking about the future. I didn't see school that way.' Instead, he experienced frustration at school, coupled in year 9 with involvement in drug dealing, which led to greater threat perception and eventual exclusion due to possession of a knife. Reduced school attendance appeared to feed into this negative spiral, providing scope for more criminality.

Taken together, these biographical vignettes of both Danny and Luke offer striking parallels. Through these experiences, Danny and Luke shed light on their path towards criminality, exposing the criminogenic potential of a negative school experience. Danny and Luke's experience, prior to their transition into alternative provision and later prison, is similar, offering a consistent picture that frames the context for later developments in their lives.

Both had a disrupted education history, involving problems at school. Year 7 was singled out as being a difficult transition for both, which led to a downturn in their school experience, associated with increased challenging behaviour. Both Danny and Luke cited isolation as a particularly negative punitive measure which provoked further problems in school. Furthermore, both experienced exclusion from mainstream school, which acted as an enabler for criminal involvement.

6.3 The Positive Pedagogy of Alternative Provision

Alternative provision was the dominant aspect of this theme, as the central arena of positive pedagogic practice for the resettlement cohort. Interestingly, exemplars of practice from mainstream provision did not feature in any

interviews. Instead, alternative providers, locally, were consistently cited as being effective in providing a supportive learning environment and appropriate pedagogic strategies to young people with a disrupted education history and a disaffected attitude towards learning, for example:

'(training provider) is ideal for our young people rather than a college because it's small classes and it's very relaxed. They can get up and get a drink, you know what I mean? It's the type of environment that our young people need when they've got ADHD or some other SEN needs.'
(Gill, YOT education lead)

This highlighted that the learning environment was especially important, rather than specific teaching approaches per se. Small class sizes were a consistent feature of the environment determining effective pedagogic practice from the perspectives of the professionals. Small classes, at all stages, increased the potential of a nurturing environment being formed, centred on the closer working relationship made possible between teacher and student. The stability of the class composition in small groups, was also cited as important to the effectiveness of small class sizes for young people with SEND in alternative provision, as this quotation illustrates:

'The pupils we work with, they need a predictable and calm environment to thrive. That is only possible, as they have so many additional needs, in smaller classes where they know the other young people and have consistent staff.' (Brenda, Head of SEMH school)

The same students and the same teaching staff in a classroom created a stability and predictability that could mitigate the potential for disruption. This approach was noted as being crucial in year 7, which was highlighted by professionals and young people alike as being especially delicate:

'That first year in secondary education, it can be such a shock to the system for them. Things can go downhill pretty quick if we're not careful. We know primary can be so inclusive for them. So to ease that

transition, we run year 7 like a little primary. Classes no more than 8 in total. The same teacher and assistant. It really works for them, helps reduce behaviour problems.’ (Francesca, PRU Head)

Environment, while essential, needed to be coupled with learning content that offered potential for both progression and academic development. Several professional participants opined that alternative provision needed to offer varying elements of the mainstream syllabus, to provide students a chance to develop knowledge and skills comparable to peers in mainstream schooling. This offered potential for mainstream reintegration and, where not possible, gave students the knowledge resources required for FE and future employment, without putting them at a disadvantage relative to mainstream peers. The need for alternative providers to offer such opportunities to young people in resettlement was important to fostering aspirations and feelings of inclusion in a meaningful learning curriculum. The following quotation offered a model for a type of mainstream-aligned approach to the curriculum:

‘Years 8 to 11 are almost like a mini mainstream where we try and – again, small classes, probably about 8 to 10 children in a class. We try and teach relevant core curriculum that they will need for the future.’ (Francesca, PRU Head).

In addition to a robust academic curriculum, another feature of effective alternative provision, for those resettling, was a strong pastoral emphasis built into the philosophy and delivery of education providers. This pastoral emphasis involved support at all year levels in small group settings that embedded soft skills, including an emphasis on developing social skills. Such an approach was widely argued as being an essential element of the curriculum, especially for young people with complex needs who were also engaged in the youth justice system:

‘Really, if we want to prepare them for work and college, we can’t just teach them numeracy and the like. They need to be the complete package, academic skills but also with those soft skills, that ability to talk

to people. We role model that as staff and we do a lot of work with them. Help them communicate, role play interviews with employers, that sort of thing. They need those soft skills.' (Brenda, Head of SEMH School)

This quotation offered some techniques for developing those soft skills, including role modelling by staff and the use of role plays. Building on this, the idea of being a 'well-rounded citizen', observed by several professional participants, summarised a range of pastoral pedagogic approaches with students otherwise disaffected from learning. Young people who had been in prison and had a range of SEND tended to arrive in education experiencing the anxiety of resettlement and the uncertain transition back into the community, which could manifest itself in challenging behaviour. It was observed that young people in this position tended to benefit from the pastoral support on offer, the focus being on citizenship and learning in small groups, often with a noticeable improvement in behaviour. Integration of pastoral support into the wider curriculum, rather than as a stand-alone programme, was noted by several professionals as essential to avoid, as one professional called it, a 'preachy' tone that could alienate young people. This introduced the notion of the 'hidden curriculum', summarised in the following quotation:

'It's that whole process of being a decent person in society is woven right the way through the hidden curriculum, so yes, we teach maths, English, science, humanities, RE and so on, but there is a much bigger emphasis on the personal, social, health education, careers education.' (Brenda, Head of SEMH school)

The 'hidden curriculum' diffracted issues of positive personal development throughout the curriculum. Professionals suggested that this embedded quality of hidden learning could normalise prosocial behaviour for the young people. This offered conceptual support to the power of hidden learning described by Brenda. Other participants also noted the importance of hidden learning, especially hidden academic learning that in an explicit form could provoke disengagement by educationally disaffected students. In this sense, the hidden

curriculum was also termed 'disguised learning' by another participant, referring to mathematical learning embedded into car mechanics training.

Luke's own experience powerfully illustrated the importance of the hidden curriculum or disguised learning and its role in forging aspiration. Luke did not go into formal education upon release from prison, but he got access to other opportunities. The YOT was able to get Luke involved in a project that he identified as 'part of the turnaround.' Luke's positive home environment gave him the security to, in his own words, 'try new things... I knew I didn't want to be a dealer any more...' This led to Luke's involvement with a youth justice charity, who undertook research and involved young people as advocates for peers. Luke worked as both an advocate and a researcher, co-producing reports. He also spoke to large gatherings of professionals, offering training about working with young people involved in the YJS. This public speaking experience gave Luke much greater confidence and for him was foundational to the turnaround in his resettlement journey:

'... it built my confidence up to even start working and things like that. Even going onto a Zoom call ... there would be not a chance that you would get me to do that before going inside, not a chance... it was a massive education, massive, talking online. At that point, I didn't know that was education. I didn't even know, I was just doing it. Talking to a couple of hundred professionals, I got a lot of confidence.'

Luke's experience as an advocate and researcher, including public speaking, highlights that education comes in many guises. Luke was able to identify this role retrospectively as a form of education, something he did not recognise at the time, conferring many benefits, in particular confidence. This supports the idea of the hidden curriculum or disguised learning, as professionals variously described this concept. Disguised learning, outside of formal education, appeared to be an effective approach to promoting positive change in Luke's biography.

The skills and experience gained with the youth justice charity helped motivate and prepare Luke for his involvement with an apprenticeship in an alternative setting, with the local council rather than through a college:

'The apprenticeship, I've only been doing it a few weeks, but I'm enjoying it. I'm still getting to work with kids, be an advocate and whatever, which I'm good at. But I'm also working in an office. Who would have thought that? Me? The paperwork's a bit harsh, answering those emails. But I can do it.'

At the time of interview, Luke's recent beginning to an apprenticeship appeared to be a culmination and consolidation of his resettlement journey. He described his relationship with the apprenticeship as 'strong' in the eco-map, suggesting a positive start to this experience and the maintenance of a positive biographical arc. He had been able to build upon previous progress and support, including the skills discovered from his disguised learning, which gave him the confidence to pursue an apprenticeship. The apprenticeship itself offering him an environment to utilise existing strengths and develop new skills.

6.3.1 Sub-theme: The Centrality of Positive Staff-Student Relationships in Education

The main theme here offered insight into positive environmental and pedagogic approaches that facilitated a positive education experience for young people. Built into this, as a distinct but integral sub-theme, was the centrality of staff-student relationships.

Throughout most of the professional interviews, close and supportive relationships were emphasised as essential to providing a positive education to young people who may be educationally disaffected, have complex needs and experienced a high level of youth justice involvement. Small class sizes were cited as a driver for developing these types of relationships. The concept of 'trust' was put forward as the most important quality of this type of relationship by several participants, as succinctly expressed here:

'You have to have the trust of the kids that you work with. If you say you're going to do something, you do it. You have to listen to them. You have to respect them.' (Francesca, PRU Head)

'Respect' was another principle of this positive-stye relationship introduced by several participants. A proactive attitude by staff, who were willing to follow through on promises, as just highlighted, was an indicator of both 'trust' and 'respect'. Most participants also noted that this trusting and respectful relationship needed to be embedded in the way schools worked as organisations, including creating the role of a key adult:

'... it is a case that schools need to emphasise the role of a key adult at school. You've got someone who's got your back all the time. Particularly for our care experienced cohort. You haven't got that family background, because we've taken them away from the family. So we have to be that key adult and earn their trust.' (Francesca, PRU Head)

For all professional participants, a trusting relationship was considered central to promoting educational attainment; and could prevent challenging behaviour from young people who had faced wider difficulties that may have impacted on their ability to relate to others. Francesca, expanding upon this, noted that the ethos of an inclusive environment needs to be conceived like a 'family', offering close and consistent emotional and academic support to young people.

Francesca's perspective is noteworthy and merits particular attention here, because it forms a clear juxtaposition with Danny's experience. Danny attended the same PRU led by Francesca, which was the focus of his interview. For Danny, the PRU was a very negative and still fresh experience, as he had attended there for two years, up to the point of his current sentence. This included a period of resettlement education in the PRU, in between his first short sentence and his current multi-year sentence. This quotation offers an overview of Danny's PRU experience:

'GT: How did you find going to the PRU?

Danny: Total shit. It was difficult until I went to (PRU), but then got worse. The people you are around at the school (PRU) are real difficult. You lose all your good friends from before. Putting all the bad behaved kids together in the same place is a bad, bad idea. (PRU) makes life worse.'

Danny's poor experience of the PRU was a recurring feature of the interview. He spoke in an animated and impassioned tone when talking about this aspect of his education, he made his frustration clear and partly attributed his custodial sentence to his negative experience in the PRU. In particular, he highlighted the criminogenic effect of the PRU for him, arguing that his peers at the PRU constituted a negative social network that amplified existing challenging behaviours in the classroom; and created conditions for offending in the community, because of the formation of a new peer network largely isolated from non-offending peers in mainstream schooling. To fit in at the PRU, Danny joined in with group-based challenging behaviours to avoid being bullied and appear 'hard'. For him this was a way to cope, even if it exacerbated his pattern of challenging behaviour at school.

Danny emphasised the dislocation he felt from his previous non-offending peers, who continued in mainstream schooling. This appeared to be an aspect of his frustration and pointed towards intense feelings of alienation. He felt teaching staff did not offer protection from the wider risks of associating with a negative peer group in the PRU. At various points in the interview, he described PRU staff as 'useless' or 'uncaring', stating he had raised concerns about being at the PRU, but these had gone unheard.

The juxtaposition between Francesca's perspective and Danny's experience suggested the PRU experience was nuanced, dependent on the perspective of the individual and the needs of different children, which will inevitably shape the experience of any institution. Luke added to this sense of nuance through the earlier vignette. His experience of the same PRU was very different to Danny but

still largely negative, offering indifference rather than frustration. PRUs will be considered further, below, to expand upon this finding from other participant perspectives.

For Danny, the interview took a more positive turn towards the end. We discussed his time in custody. He described a positive environment, with a supportive focus where he felt safe. Education was a particular feature of this experience. He highlighted his relationship with teaching staff as being at the core of this positive experience. His learning was mainly one-to-one or in small groups. Danny stated he liked his teachers, and this caused him to reflect on the qualities of a good teacher, which he summarised in the following terms:

'I can have a laugh with them, but I know when not to mess around. Even when I can be a bit shitty, they are okay. They are also interested in how things are going, what other stuff I'm doing. I don't get any isolation and I can forget about where I am.'

The line about Danny forgetting where he was living was especially vivid, suggesting positive relations with teaching staff are important to engendering a positive learning environment, and perhaps promoting a better experience of custody altogether. A feeling of being listened to was an implicit feature of this quote, finding common ground with the notions of 'trust' and 'respect'. This quotation also introduced the importance of clear and consistent boundaries in the staff-student relationship, offering a person-centred space that also sets clear expectations about the need for constructive behaviour.

6.4 Education as a Negative Environment

Challenging behaviour was the most discussed feature of negative education environments. From professional participant experiences, challenging behaviour could take many forms, most commonly in the form of persistent verbal aggression from multiple members of a classroom setting, and violence to

property and others, which was less common but still recurrent. Challenging behaviour could also involve bullying between young people that extended beyond the school setting, particularly onto social media platforms. Several professional participants cited challenging behaviour as a daily feature of classroom life, especially in alternative provision such as PRUs. One participant offered the following observation, encapsulating this issue:

'... if your school decides to permanently exclude you, the next stage is going to the pupil referral unit. I've known quite a few kids over the years, straight from prison and still of school age who have been excluded, go into the local PRU. You have young people suddenly they go 'Oh! We're in this room now, with all this mayhem.' Put them in that sort of setting and their more negative behaviours amplify.' (Janice, Virtual School Head)

This quotation was illustrative of most professional participants who discussed PRUs, emphasising a consensus that the PRU environment could entrench and exacerbate challenging behaviour. This also resonated strongly with Danny's PRU experience:

'... if I never went to (PRU) I wouldn't be in prison, I would still be doing other things like playing football. Playing football ended when I went to (PRU) and I lost my good friends from the main school and found new ones that were bad for me. You have to fit in with the bad kids and put on a tough image. You get bullied if they think you are weak in any way.'

Danny's experience challenged him socially and emotionally, he found the environment of the PRU distressing. The feelings of isolation and separation brought about by the experience caused him to move away from his positive interests, in particular football. This again brought into focus the criminogenic effect of negative education experiences.

Most professional participants presented challenging behaviour as a systemic issue both within PRUs and across the education system more widely. Those who commented on PRUs noted the ‘toxicity’ of PRU settings, how they were not healthy settings for prosocial development, as Danny also attested. Based upon this, most professionals argued against the use of mainstream school exclusion, questioning the efficacy and morality of exclusion based on its negative outcomes.

While professionals were critical of the ability of PRUs to meet need, there was also empathy for the challenges and complexity involved. Referring to PRUs, the complexity of need is cogently summarised here:

‘At the PRU... we have got some there with EHCPs. Not currently kids from custody, but in the recent past definitely. It’s very difficult ... They’re dealing with kids that have all got some form of problems ... So you’ve got a huge mixture. Now you need to protect those that are really vulnerable that have got the emotional mental health issues. But at the same time you’ve got to deal with those that have got the behaviour issues.’ (Gill, YOT education lead)

This quotation illustrated a consensus amongst most professional participants, articulating the challenging nature of the PRU environment, which presented complex challenges to staff attempting to meet diverse needs while managing behaviour and safeguarding vulnerable children. This placed into sharp relief the challenges of offering inclusive provision. Danny, together with most professionals experienced in the work of PRUs, painted a picture of a challenging environment that was built on a foundation of complexity: complexity of both need, teaching provision and related support.

6.5 Barriers to Further Education

The previous section focused on the challenges experienced within alternative provision at a secondary level. The earlier vignettes from young people also offered insight into the challenges of mainstream schooling. Barriers to positive

attainment and progression were also evident at local mainstream FE colleges. Barriers to FE were linked to the joint issues of stereotyping, stigma and labelling, associated with offending behaviour and serving a custodial sentence:

'For them (colleges), it's a black and white label. You're an offender. It's overt. The offence is paramount in everyone's head. Stating a young person is transitioning from a youth offending institute leads to a negative response straight away, 'Well we can't have them.' They just get written off, generally by hackneyed stereotypes.' (Janice, Virtual School Head)

For all participants, professional and young person alike, everybody should be given a second chance. Most professional participants argued this belief in a second chance was not evident either in colleges or in the local education authority. This issue was articulated in relation to the example of a young person attempting to access an online college course during resettlement:

'Not long until he's 18. Now a care leaver and been in prison, SEN going on. Has secured an apprenticeship, which is brilliant. Needs to do an online course in preparation but everyone is saying 'I'm not paying for that', but actually someone should. If they don't, he's been set up to fail. Nothing was set up because nobody wanted to pay.' (Rob, YOT manager)

This was an example of systemic exclusion beyond individual colleges by the local education authority, where funding was not offered despite the young person securing an apprenticeship and being a care leaver, both of which should have been enablers to additional funding. Most professional participants argued this form of barrier was a manifestation of negative risk perceptions dominant in colleges, as noted here: 'Colleges are very risk averse, when it comes to our group, especially custody kids.' (Gill, YOT education lead)

Building on this point, several participants were also keen to stress that barriers to FE did not rest only with colleges but also with the readiness of young people

to engage with education and employment at a post-16 level. Limited readiness for college, for most professional participants, was symptomatic of the interrelated issues of limited academic preparation, disrupted school history, the complex needs of the resettlement cohort and the pull of a pro-criminal lifestyle. These issues were crystallised in the following quotation:

'... the majority of young people in custody ... have got SEN needs. They're at college entry level or below ... Way below the level they'd need for say an apprenticeship. Kids who haven't been at school for years ... They know the world of work has nothing good in store for them. So it's so difficult to get a young person to go back to college or to think about a job earning £200 a week when they're earning £300 a night drug dealing.' (Debby, YOT Social Worker)

This quotation suggested the barriers to FE were multi-dimensional, linked to histories of disrupted education and futures without pro-social aspirations. This points to complex issues of culture and worldviews, for both young people and colleges, that conflict and cut off opportunities for potential rehabilitation.

6.6 The Importance of Proactive Release Planning

Several professional participants emphasised the importance of proactive planning for release from prison, as soon as possible into the sentence:

'I think the planning for that kind of initial kind of wraparound support, when they're released is the crucial bit ... I think you just need things to be ready from the day of release.' (Karen, YOT Social Worker)

Use of the phrase 'wraparound support' stood out in this quotation. A similar concept was presented by several participants considering release planning, who variously described it as 'bespoke' or 'child-centred' planning. A unifying feature of these perspectives was the need to tailor support packages, aligned with the needs of the young people being released. This included the support

potentially offered by several agencies, including appropriate educational and YOT support, as well as the work of other agencies, in an integrated way that met the needs of young people. Effective planning, in this sense, was identified as not only focusing on core support such as education, but holistically orientated support that met a wider set of needs in a mutually reinforcing way. For example, one participant highlighted the importance of appropriate mental health support to education attainment, where mental health was a clear need:

'When planning that support, you have to think widely. Their needs are so diverse, really complex. Obviously, education is key. But education is only possible if we look at the whole person. Are they too anxious to progress in a classroom? You know, things like mental health are key. All these services when planned well, they fit together.' (Gill, YOT Education Lead)

All YOT participants underlined that resettlement planning was a fundamental leadership responsibility of the YOT, to manage the process and attempt to integrate services in a wraparound way for young people going through the resettlement transition. Early planning was the most expedient way to this. Participants, both education and YOT professionals, emphasised the criminogenic importance of proactive planning:

'They need appropriate support in place, especially education or training, on the first day of release. If things aren't in place drift happens, then the chances of that young person getting back into their old lifestyle are increased.' (Gary, Violence Reduction Manager)

Furthermore, several participants posited the need to actively involve young people in the planning process, to facilitate 'buy in' and therefore amplify the positive potential of support packages upon release. This was fully consistent with the CoP, which mandates that young people must be fully involved in the planning process. In this spirit, one participant from education argued that young

people should be considered as 'co-producers' of their resettlement plans. Several education participants also advocated for simplicity, at least upon initial release, with timetables of learning activities that were easy to follow and practical to engage with, to prevent confusion or disengagement, for young people who had largely not been in community education for some time.

6.7 'Reactive rather than proactive': Ineffective Planning for Release

As a counterpart to the previous theme, which considered proactive release planning, several participants also described the impact of late and ineffective planning for release. While proactive release planning was an experience common to several professionals, poor planning was a far more prevalent issue. In some cases, recollection of poor release planning provoked clear frustration and a sense that windows of opportunity were missed. One participant offered a representative summary of this frustration, when posed the question 'What is your experience of resettlement?':

'What is my experience? Its convoluted, silo working, different expectations. Unreasonable expectations a lot of the time. I don't often think that the child's voice is properly heard.' (Bill, SEND inclusion manager)

Two factors emerged from this quotation, also voiced by other professionals, related to poor joined up working between agencies and limited or no involvement of young people in the planning process. The importance of involving the perspective of young people in planning, to promote buy-in for resettlement, was explored in the previous theme. The absence of this important aspect of planning removed the knowledge, motivation and aspirations that came with active involvement in planning. Poor interagency working introduced a new factor, which undermined the stated need for wraparound support addressed in the previous theme. An anecdotal experience served to illustrate the impact of poor interagency planning:

'Agencies involved ... failed that young man because the discussions probably happened too late. They were reactive rather than proactive. And everybody's expectation is different. His expectation was different to schools. The YOT thinks get him back with parents. Police said he shouldn't be anywhere near this area ... how they work in their processes and time and everything just did not merge and that young man that came out, came out of prison without a nominated school place, was moved from about five or six kind of temporary accommodations.' (Bill, SEND inclusion manager)

This quotation offered an insight into the negative impact of late planning when it was reactive rather than proactive. Agencies came together too late and were hampered by contrasting expectations and cultures of working. Perceptions and differences were not reconciled. The outcome was a highly precarious situation, with no school and unstable accommodation. Several participants also described similar scenarios, criticising the YOT for not offering coherent and robust leadership in managing interagency relationships and holding professionals to account. This highlighted the need for an assertive approach to facilitating proactive release planning.

Professionals also argued that the stigma associated with young people in custody, already considered in relation to FE, was a factor in ineffective planning. Agencies not primarily involved in the youth justice system, in the view of most participants, struggled to work with the perceived risks associated with young offenders, especially children's social care and accommodation providers, which made planning difficult. This echoed the risk perceptions of FE college. Late and ineffective planning offered a wider context to the issue of access to FE colleges, suggesting the barriers to support for young people resettling were symptomatic of wider systemic bias against this cohort from a range of services. One professional said young people in custody were at the 'back of the line' because many agencies were reluctant to work with them. Once more, this pointed to recurrent situations where wraparound support and the active involvement of young people was not possible.

6.8 'She went above and beyond': Trusting Relationships with YOT staff

The importance of the relationship with YOT staff mirrored the importance of teacher-student relationships already addressed in relation to education. Luke offered the most powerful insight into this. Luke described a positive relationship with the YOT, strong in the eco-map, both during his time in prison and during resettlement. He had been involved with the YOT for several years leading up to prison, during the height of his criminal involvement, but felt indifferent towards them. He associated the YOT with the police at that time. Once he was imprisoned, and especially upon release, Luke saw the value of the YOT and the added support they could offer towards his newfound need to move away from offending. The assignment of a new YOT worker, 'Karen', who was also an interview participant, was an integral part of this turnaround. He described a very positive relationship with Karen:

'If they actually care, and if they actually know what they're doing, that's important in a good worker like Karen, she went above and beyond, know what I mean? Just to help me, which worked. She knew her stuff, lots of knowledge. She fought battles for me, took on her bosses because she cared. She got the change I needed.'

Luke offered an opinion about not only his relationship with the YOT, but also the qualities he perceived in a good YOT worker. His positive opinions of Karen were based on her advocacy role for him, coming into conflict with her own department meaning she went 'above and beyond'. Karen advocated for him to be placed in supported housing after release and this was done in a proactive way. Karen also facilitated his involvement with the youth justice charity and was instrumental in negotiating his apprenticeship with the local council. This advocacy, by Karen, was in Luke's view crucial to his turnaround. Karen's proactive planning and the prospect of release to supported housing aided Luke's prison experience, giving him 'something to look forward to' and provided hope. This again introduced the idea of aspiration, as a positive enabler to a prosocial identity shift.

Relationship-based practice was also highlighted, by several professional participants, as being crucial to the work of YOTs. 'Trust' was again the most oft-cited quality to effective relationship-based practice, also a key principle to working relationships in education. Both YOT and education staff highlighted the importance of the YOT education worker, in particular, who got to know young people and played a central brokering role with education providers. The essential quality of trust with a YOT education worker is described here:

'Trust is a very important thing. Trust and a good working relationship with somebody and consistency and continuity is so important to these kids. I mean I've got a couple that are at school with EHCPs, done some serious things, one has been in prison. And it's so important. Anything that goes wrong, you know... Because this young person, he can have outbursts over something really trivial. And I will go over to the school and say, 'Let me have a chat with him,' or whatever. And that young person trusts me ...' (Gill, YOT Education Lead)

This quotation emphasised the constructive role YOT workers could play in mitigating the potentially adverse impact of challenging behaviour. Several YOT participants explored how trust could be mobilised, in terms of practice strategies. Actively listening to young people, and showing them respect, was highlighted by several staff:

'So they feel listened to and valued, respected, it's key to everything. Respect is so important to them. This idea, it's like a code for many of them. If they don't feel any respect, especially being listened to, they will get angry. They will disengage.' (Charlotte, YOT SaLT)

The idea of lacking respect was an underlying strand of Danny's experience, in particular his punitive experience in both mainstream and PRU provision. Several YOT and education professionals supported this viewpoint, also adding the need for honesty in working with young people going through resettlement, in particular transparency about when mistakes happened, or young people's

preferences could not be met. Trust, respect and honesty were three pillars of positive working relationships with young people, triangulated across both education and YOT. These qualities required listening, as a hall mark of effective relationship-based practice – a facilitator for positive resettlement.

Luke vividly described the power of his relationship with the YOT, built on feelings of trust and hope, which helped fuel his engagement with support and learning opportunities during resettlement. This offered insight into the effective practice of YOT staff, highlighting this as a facilitator to the provision of education during resettlement. The qualities of listening and honesty were essential factors at this level of practice. These qualities were most important in the advocacy role of YOT professionals, which was crucial for facilitating education provision and mitigating the negative impact of other factors, such as challenging behaviour.

Conclusion

The findings from this chapter offered a clear sense of the change, potential and challenge of resettlement. Luke and Danny's experiences gave the chapter a strong biographical impetus. Imprisonment and resettlement were powerful forces, shaping their biographical experience. Both young people had encountered profound disruption in their lives. In Luke's case, a positive turning point had been reached, suggesting a positive biographical arc promoted by professional support and unorthodox education experiences. Danny's life trajectory is more uncertain but there is hope, evident in his positive experiences in custody. Both are united by aspirations to move on, aspirations subject to the support they will receive in the future. The service support available in area A is not unidimensional, it has both positive and negative qualities that facilitate and inhibit resettlement. This painted a complex and nuanced picture, of the multidimensional forces that shape the provision of education during the delicate window of resettlement.

Chapter 7: Case Study B Findings

Introduction

This chapter discusses findings from case study B, known as 'area B' throughout. It was not possible to recruit young people for interview from area B, although professional responses offer a vicarious sense of their resettlement experiences, including challenges and potential scope for empowerment. Most participants came from area B's YOT, with a smaller contingent of education professionals. This puts a greater emphasis on YOT perspectives in this case study, although balance with other perspectives is provided through the themes presented in this chapter. Table 4 introduces professional participants from area B. Table 5 offers a summary of the themes and sub-themes that are the focus of this chapter.

7.1 A Profile of Area B

Area B is a large county council authority in southern England. It has a population greater than 1 million people. Over 85 per cent of the population is identified as White-British, a representation above the national average. Area B is a wealthy authority, in the top 10 per cent of local authorities in England and Wales in terms of affluence, more affluent than comparator authorities (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). Consistent with this, it has a business density greater than 750 per 10,000 working age people. This is significantly above the national average of 670. The population is also highly educated, over 61 per cent have achieved an NVQ 4 or higher, well above the national average of 45 per cent. Area B has one large university, together with higher education provision in a range of FE colleges. Unemployment is below 3%, less than the national average (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). The economy of area B is diverse, with the service, finance and high technology industries being most prominent. Despite its affluence, area B also has pockets of deprivation located in some of its larger towns.

The local authority has a budget of over £2.5 billion and employs >10,000 people across all services. The YOT in area B leads on resettlement and is large, employing >80 staff across several local area offices. It is rated as *good* by HM Inspectorate of Probation. The operational budget of the YOT is nearly £4 million. The crime rate in area B is <80 crimes per 1000 people. This is below the national average of 84 crimes per 1,000 people (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Reflecting the wider crime rate, the reoffending rate for young people involved with the YOT stands at just over 20 per cent, below the national average of 32 per cent for all YOTs. Similarly, the custody rate is 0.02 per 1,000 young people, less than half the national average of 0.05. The budget for children’s social care in area B is £152 million, and social care is rated *good* by Ofsted.

The total education budget is £960 million. Of this budget, £43 million is spent on high needs placement funding and a further £12 million is spent on additional SEND services, such as specialist pastoral support in schools. Area B has over 500 schools at all levels, most rated as good, a significant minority rated as outstanding, and a small number of schools rated as inadequate or requiring improvement by Ofsted. Close to 69 per cent of pupils achieved a grade 5 or above in GCSE English and Mathematics in the most recent exam round, some 20 percentage points above the national average. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is under 18 per cent, below the national average of 22 per cent. In terms of the SEND profile, 15 per cent of the pupil population are identified with SEND and 25 per cent have SEMH as a primary identified need. Of pupils with identified SEND, 3 percent have an EHCP, similar to the national average. Approximately 60 per cent of young people with an EHCP attend a mainstream school, another 30 per cent of pupils attend special schools and 10 per cent of this group are in post-16 provision.

Table 4: Participants from Area B

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Role	Participant Profile
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YOT Participants			
Mike	Male	YOT Education Lead	<p>Mike came into YOT work from a different employment sector. He had been working in the YOT for nearly 10 years at the time of interview, working in a variety of YOT roles before promotion to the education lead role. This role involved line managing the YOT's team of education workers and being the main management link between the YOT and education services. Just prior to becoming education lead, Mike had been an education worker. He assumed the education lead role approximately 18 months prior to interview.</p>
Tania	Female	YOT Education Worker	<p>Prior to the YOT, Tania had spent her entire career in careers guidance, always in FE colleges. She had been working for the YOT less than 3 years at the time of interview. Like all other education workers, her role involved careers guidance and brokering education placements, including for the resettlement group.</p>

Tony	Male	YOT Education Worker	Tony had previously been a learning support assistant in a school for nearly 5 years, until 2 years prior to the interview, when he became a YOT education worker.
Diane	Female	YOT Education Worker	Diane had previously worked in the private sector, in a careers support role before switching to the YOT education worker role, nearly 8 years prior to the interview.
Gladys	Female	YOT Service Manager	Gladys had previously worked in the probation service working with adults, before becoming an assistant manager in area B's YOT. She then stepped up to the YOT manager role, which she had occupied for nearly 5 years. Gladys had overall responsibility for the YOT.
Christine	Female	YOT Parenting Worker	Christine had previously worked in a healthcare role, including with children and parents. She had also done lifestyle work with younger children, such as healthy eating. This was her first parenting support role. She had been working for the YOT over 3 years. Her role involved working with parents to help them put in place boundaries for their children and manage

			challenging behaviour in the home.
Alana	Female	Youth Worker attached to the YOT.	Alana had been a youth worker for nearly 20 years, always working in the voluntary sector. She had worked for a range of charities and been attached to different services, including schools. This was her first direct role in a YOT, although she still worked for a charity as part of a secondment to the YOT. She had been involved with the YOT for under 5 years.
Education Participants			
Edith	Female	SEND Manager	Edith had originally been a mainstream schoolteacher and SENCO, before working in specialist schools. She returned to mainstream school teaching before becoming a SEND manager in area B, responsible for EHCP oversight and funding. She line-managed all EHC assessors in one sub-district of area B.
Jen	Female	Inclusion Manager	As an inclusion manager, Jen was responsible for organising and monitoring school SEND placements. She had spent much of her teaching career working in mainstream schools, but also had spent some years

			working in a PRU. She had been responsible for inclusion at a school, as a school leader, before becoming an inclusion manager in one of area B's sub-districts, which included working in a town with high levels of deprivation.
Anna	Female	PRU Headteacher	Anna had spent all her career working in PRUs. She had been a teacher for over a decade, before becoming a PRU head in a different local authority. She had been head teacher of one of area B's PRUs for nearly 3 years at the time of interview.

Table 5: Themes Presented for Area B

Theme Name	Summary	Sub-theme
Qualities of Alternative Education Providers	The qualities that constituted effective education provision for the resettlement cohort were highlighted.	N/A
Challenging behaviour: A Barrier to Education Provision	The negative impact of challenging behaviour and environments that enabled challenging behaviour were explored.	<i>Sub-theme: PRUs, problematisation and labelling</i> This focused on the relationship of PRUs, and associated challenging behaviour, with the wider

		problematization of youth at risk.
Further Education Colleges: An Unwilling Institution?	This theme focused on the perceived unwillingness of FE colleges to offer places to young people released from custody. The theme also considered the negative effect of having a criminal record.	<i>Sub-theme: The Role of Labelling and Stigma</i> This sub-theme focused on the role of labelling and stigma in FE admissions.
'It's a real vicious cycle': Challenges and Barriers to Release Planning	This theme referred to the experience of participants regarding late and compromised planning for release.	N/A
The Importance of being 'Out of the Box': Creative Approaches to Resettlement	This theme looked at creative ways YOTs offered and brokered support, including arts-based support.	<i>Sub-theme: Proactive Planning for Resettlement</i> Creative approaches to resettlement required proactive planning for release, including the active involvement of young people.

7.2 Qualities of Alternative Education Providers

Professionals from area B cited several qualities of alternative education that constituted effective provision when working with young people going through resettlement. Alternative provision for young people in the 14 – 17 age group

was the focus of this feedback, including both third sector providers and PRUs located within area B.

Singling out positive qualities common to many alternative providers, participants offered a consensus that small class sizes were the essential ingredient to positive education experiences for a largely disaffected group:

'They need that time and support that only small groups can offer. They get more one-to-one from the staff in the classroom. They get to know their peers better. There is generally less noise and disruption or opportunities to misbehave. That calmness is key to good learning.'

(Edith, SEND Manager)

An appropriate curriculum, set within small class sizes, was also highlighted as important to providing an effective learning environment for young people going through resettlement who may have SEND. Functional skills, including numeracy and literacy, were offered as an important component of a curriculum appropriate to the needs of the resettlement cohort:

'And I think there is a quick win in offering them that functional skills training, something they can cope with that gives them tangible skills like writing and maths. This can really increase confidence and engagement, it's a great way to pass on key skills.' (Mike, YOT education lead)

This quotation, illustrative of other participants, not only offered functional skills as an integral component of effective provision but also brought in the affective dimension of education, highlighting that an appropriate curriculum promoted confidence which supported engagement. Confidence and engagement, as noted by several participants, was also conducive to positive aspirations that helped young people achieve positive outcomes, including desistance from

offending and progression to higher levels of learning. The calmer environment facilitated by small class sizes served to facilitate this confidence and engagement in the view of participants.

Building on this, most participants associated effective provision with a bespoke curriculum, attuned to the needs of individual young people. This involved flexibility, a willingness to work with students and a willingness to involve students in planning for their learning needs. Several participants argued this bespoke approach was most possible in smaller classes or one-to-one learning, focusing on concrete skills and topics, including functional skills. This bespoke learning was highlighted as key for students going through transition, who had prior difficulties in school and may have negative attitudes to learning.

Incentives also offered an important component to fostering engagement and attendance. For example, support with transport, financial bursaries, and perks such as breakfast and extra-curricular activities made all the most effective providers more attractive places to attend for young people, bolstering the environment offered by small class sizes and an appropriate curriculum. In reference to offering incentives, one participant opined that ‘... getting them motivated can be very difficult. Little incentives really help improve the motivation.’

Several participants, reflecting on these varying qualities, noted that engaging and supportive environments, built on small class sizes and bespoke curricula, offered learning opportunities that translated into more intangible qualities, such as an opportunity to develop social skills or manage anxiety. A PRU, within area B, was singled out as exemplifying these qualities and was a common destination for young people leaving custody:

‘I think it's the way they're all so calm with everybody. It's so serene. And the classrooms are so tiny. The actual place has been refurbished, has a

nice feel about it. And they had an outdoor space where they could play football and all kinds of sports even though it's such tiny area. They have chill out areas. They had a staff hall monitor who would also check if anyone walked out a class, supporting them where required.' (Jen, Inclusion Manager)

Small class sizes, and correspondingly small learning spaces, appeared to be a feature of this 'serene' environment, that was supported by more pastoral aspects including a staff member walking the corridors, targeted 'chill out' spaces and the opportunity to participate in sporting activities that acted as incentives for good behaviour. Again, this brought in the importance of the affective dimension of education, in the form of relaxed learning environments that supported the delivery of pastoral support and needs-led curricula.

More widely, partnership working between schools and the YOT was cited as an enabler of effective provision, both as a measure to address reoffending and also to offer more personal, social and health related inputs to pupils. PRUs in area B were singled out as being especially responsive to YOT input in this respect:

'We've got a project happening with the PRUs, trying to work around stuff to do with exploitation, trafficking, county lines, educating the kids as a form of prevention. Because we know that's an area where young people are targeted. And I would say that the majority of those schools have been really open and happy for us to come in.' (Gladys, YOT manager)

This quotation illustrated an essential partnership between education and YOTs in managing risks, set within a pedagogic framework that had the potential to safeguard pupils and teach them about important contemporary social issues. These are all further qualities of effective alternative provision.

7.3 Challenging Behaviour: A Barrier to Education Provision

In contrast to the previous theme, challenging behaviour was pinpointed as a barrier for young people progressing through the education system during the resettlement transition. This applied to direct behaviour and being exposed to the negative actions of others. Participants highlighted the impact of this on the classroom experience, and in the response of both mainstream and alternative providers to challenging behaviour. Most participants identified challenging behaviour as involving some form of disruption, including verbal disruption such as shouting or physically disruptive behaviour, and including violence against others and property, in the school setting.

For participants, such challenging behaviour often led to permanent disciplinary exclusion, from mainstream settings. For young people both resettling and in the wider youth justice cohort, disciplinary exclusion from mainstream schools was a common experience in area B:

'It depends on the individual. Depends on how bad their behaviour is. Quite often the school will try to off-roll them. Schools can't cope where there are behavioural issues and they often off-roll as a result. This is happening to a lot of pupils. Parents agree or are talked into without realising. Once that happens, it's incredibly hard to get young people back into the education system.' (Tania, YOT Education Worker)

This quotation highlighted that exclusion was common and involved a potentially low threshold, which could lead to the off rolling of students from mainstream schools. As several participants noted, this led to a permanent form of exclusion, marginalising young people from any form of provision for a long period of time. Participants unanimously described this type of experience as almost universal across the youth justice population, especially the resettlement cohort. Parents and carers, based upon this quotation, appeared to have limited power in relation to formal exclusion processes. This exposed the reality that schools had considerable power, as expressed by Christine, a

YOT Parenting Worker: ‘... it is quite frightening how much of an influence a school can have on a child’s life, in terms of the decisions that they make for that child.’ The issue of disciplinary exclusion is further considered in the following sub-theme, from the angle of PRUs and the problematising of youth at risk.

7.3.1 Sub-theme: PRUs, Problematisation and Labelling

In area B, the most acknowledged destination for school-age children leaving custody was one of the seven or more PRUs. For young people aged 16 or over, a variety of third sector vocational providers was available, the exact provider dependent upon the location of the young person’s release within area B.

PRUs were identified, in the previous theme, as sites of good practice. This exposed a tension evident in area B’s available provision. Participants, surveying the variety of PRUs in area B, noted that the support and quality of PRUs varied considerably across the large municipality. A common thread across PRUs was the existence of factors potentially conducive to challenging behaviour, despite coexistent positive qualities discussed in the previous theme. Several participants highlighted these factors as a barrier to the progression of the resettlement population:

‘PRUs are melting pots of young people with various issues, they’re trying to manage not just one or two children in class that have got some issues, they’re trying to manage a whole class where everyone’s got issues, especially with behaviour. That can lead to a really disrupted place to learn.’ (Edith, SEND Manager)

The metaphor of ‘melting pots’ painted a vivid picture of challenging environments, where a confluence of behaviour and needs created a space that worked against positive education experiences. Moving on from this point the same participant cited the positive qualities of alternative provision, discussed in the previous theme, as mitigators to challenging behaviour. This

reinforced a nuanced sense of tension across area B, in the types of learning environments that were available, both positive and negative.

The placement of young people in PRUs was linked by several participants to the wider problematisation of youth at risk. As was argued in the literature review, 'youth at risk' is a professional discourse, built on a deficit-led view of young people as requiring often punitive interventions to correct perceived risks to others or risks resulting from lifestyle choices. Several participants observed that this problematisation of youth at risk was manifested in stigma and labelling in education provision, both alternative and mainstream:

'...what it [challenging behaviour] is just labelling cases (sic), like 'you're a risk to us and you can't cope in mainstream let's farm you out to a PRU, it's the best place for you'; and then it's reduced timetables and all those kind of things, which is the only way that sometimes young people can manage in those kind of chaotic environments. But they aren't equipped by this to manage in the workplace or college.' (Gladys, YOT Manager)

For many participants this stigma, when perceived by young people, amplified feelings of disaffection and ill-equipped young people for further provision, including FE (an issue further addressed in the next theme). Exploring this context, several participants lamented that PRUs were largely permanent solutions and reintegration back to mainstream education did not often occur:

'Kids are usually sent to a PRU, during resettlement and exclusions, and quite often families are told that this is a short time, six weeks. And they never come back! They never come back and then they are lost and they are gone, and it is so hard to see it.' (Tony, YOT Education Worker)

This injected a sense of finality into the often precarious and problematised education pathway of young people going through the resettlement transition; and could lead to challenging environments not conducive to learning where young people found themselves 'lost' in the system.

7.4 Further Education Colleges: An Unwilling Institution?

The previous theme established barriers to mainstream FE related to challenging behaviour in school and PRU-based provision. Other barriers to FE were also evident in interviews, linked to FE itself. Both YOT and education participants cast FE as largely inaccessible to young people going through resettlement when applied to the mainstream college pathway. Most participants questioned on the topic offered the view that colleges in area B were unwilling to offer a new or second chance to young people released from custody:

'... it is further education's unwillingness to give that chance, or may be second chance, because they come out perhaps get rejected, maybe again, which puts them back at square one, that exclusion again in a different form. And they've already felt like that for so long it's no wonder that they give up as quickly as they do.' (Jen, Inclusion Manager)

This reframed the concept of exclusion, not just formal exclusion from school, but inherent inaccessibility as a barrier to progression in FE, which compounded a history of disaffection. The idea of a second chance, founded on the notion of rehabilitation, was a common value expressed by participants, who were willing to buy into the rehabilitation narrative. This appeared a common position in professionals who worked with young people with SEND but was less apparent in participants' experience with more mainstream college provision not accustomed to these types of needs. This was also evident in the experience of YOT participants, who argued for the compound effect of both SEND and offending behaviour:

'... there's a double whammy if they've got an EHCP, colleges tend to not like working with EHCPs, feel they don't have the expertise. If you've got an EHCP, we have to consult colleges and ask them whether they're prepared to take them. And, you know, if they're an ex-offender as well,

and we've got an EHCP, then colleges will find thousands of reasons why they don't want to have them.' (Mike, YOT Education Lead)

According to most participants, this compound effect of both SEND and a criminal record manifested in the reluctance of FE colleges to offer a new or second chance, potentially exerting a criminogenic effect. In the face of this it was noted that young people, who had often overcome barriers and were on a difficult resettlement journey, struggled to see a positive future, which could re-surface previous offending patterns. For one participant, this brought to the fore the notion of 'educating the educator' about the needs of young people who may potentially apply to a college; and may be an outlier relative to the wider college population. In explaining the barriers evident in admission to FE colleges, a consensus uncovered the role of labelling and stigma, which is considered as a sub-theme next.

7.4.1 The Role of Labelling and Stigma

The words 'labelled', 'labelling' and 'stigma' were prevalent when participants attempted to explain the unwillingness of mainstream college education to accommodate young people in the resettlement process:

'I think colleges are harder to deal with, colleges seem to me to have a greater stigma and are less likely to take kids than schools are.' (Alana, Youth Worker)

This short quotation is illustrative of a wider experience, in the sense that colleges were more prone to putting in place barriers and had a more distant relationship with services such as the YOT, who were consequently less empowered to broker access for young people going through resettlement. The more distant position of colleges, less attuned to the needs of the youth justice cohort, was cited as a factor that fed into labelling and stigma that became manifest in relationships between FE and wider services. Local education

managers espoused that they could direct colleges to take young people on roll but were reluctant to jeopardise more fragile inter-agency relationships. The fragility of these relationships appeared to provide a fertile breeding ground for labelling and stigma. This stigma was most evident in young people being labelled as an 'offender':

'That label 'young offender' is a real problem. There is real stigma attached to accepting an ex-offender onto your roll, as a college, and even just hearing the way that colleges spoke about those children was disconcerting, feeding into all these 'hoodie with a knife' stereotypes.'
(Jen, Inclusion Manger)

This quotation further implied that colleges had a low threshold for refusing admission of young people who had the offender label. Participants noted that colleges often did not want to know details about risks or offences, the 'young offender' label was sufficient on its own to refuse a place. The YOT had a strategy for managing this as part of their advocacy role:

'We write disclosure letters with young people. So rather than answering questions from an employer or provider, we've already got a letter that they can hand over. If you can prove those crimes are in the past, if you can say it and mean it, it can help stop that automatic 'no'.' (Tony, YOT Education Worker)

This type of approach, described by all the YOT education workers, highlighted the need for honesty and transparency in overcoming the unwillingness of FE colleges to provide places for young people. It offered a sense of hope while introducing a further threshold: the need to prove oneself. This appeared another quality expected in young people going through resettlement, not expected for peers coming from a non-offending background. Where young people were successful in gaining admission to FE, participants reported they still experienced some level of differential treatment:

'Even if they get into college, very rare, we encounter problems along the way. They're more likely to get sent home for little things, less likely to get access to the better qualifications. GCSE is the best many can hope for once in, even if they're ready for higher awards. We try to mediate this, advocate, but our hands are tied.' (Tania, YOT Education Worker)

This offered a sense that stigma and labelling were built into the fabric of local FE colleges, beyond the admissions barriers alone. For YOT professionals, this returned to the negative impact of isolation and exclusion experienced by many young people during their mainstream school career, that could fuel alienation and a sense that opportunities were out of reach. This, as many YOT professionals noted, was a concerning criminogenic factor mediated by the FE experience.

7.5 'It's a real vicious cycle': Challenges and Barriers to Release Planning

Late planning for release was an issue raised by most of the participants as a barrier to effective resettlement. This was an issue flagged, and lamented, by YOT participants, who described planning for release as an often challenging and 'fraught' experience. This mainly related to the resettlement coordination role played by YOT professionals, including the accountability that went along with coordination. Overarching this, YOT participants unanimously experienced the challenge of release planning as being a process of overcoming multiple challenges related to multiple facets of resettlement, including accommodation, therapeutic support, and education. For the professionals who raised this issue, the lack of suitable accommodation in many cases, often up to the day before release, made all other aspects of resettlement precarious, including education:

'Accommodation is often our biggest challenge in the planning process. Everything else, including education, springs from that. Challenging because we're relying on children's services. And sometimes children's

services don't necessarily understand the resettlement process and what that means, and also what our requirements are, and that we need to approve an address.' (Gladys, YOT Manager)

In this quotation inter-agency working was cited as the major hurdle, with other agencies unable to comprehend the risks and needs of the resettlement cohort – most importantly children services, who could arrange for accommodation. Explaining this, YOT participants suggested resettlement was a relatively rare occurrence such that children's services had limited experience, impacting on their ability and confidence in responding to this issue. One YOT participant linked this to children's services being 'outside of their comfort zone.'

The challenge of working with children's services was a common experience for YOT participants and all of them talked about a sense of lacking control over a resettlement process they were responsible and accountable for, associated with potentially high-level risks. All participants discussing this issue identified accommodation as the common reason for planning being delayed close to or after the point of release. This offered an important contextual lens on the planning involved in identifying suitable education provision for resettlement.

Finding accommodation was the clear priority of all YOT staff. But education was also a priority and challenge for YOT education workers, who had responsibility for identifying and planning education placements once an address had been secured. They experienced this as often last minute and, even where accommodation had been identified early on, education placements could be a challenge to secure, often involving young people leaving custody without an identified provision. YOT education workers found the limited buy-in of education providers especially difficult because they were risk averse and often unwilling to accept young people they identified as a potential risk to schools, colleges, and other pupils. For YOT participants this risk aversion was an important barrier in the planning process, exacerbated by the late identification of accommodation, which constrained an already challenging process of identifying education

provision. These challenges were summed-up by one of the YOT education workers:

'The planning before they get out, that's a massive problem. Depends on what their age is, usually between 16 and 17, but school age is also common, often they don't have work experience or a placement straight away until they've proven themselves... That's a massive barrier.'

(Diane, YOT education worker)

This representative quote introduced several issues, common to all the education workers interviewed. Schools and colleges were often unwilling to offer provision, especially vocational work experience, until young people had 'proven' themselves. This again suggested risk aversion and potential stigma (linking with both the earlier sub-theme 'PRUs, problematisation and labelling' and the whole theme of 'Further Education Colleges: An Unwilling Institution?'). This could often lead to provision being unavailable until after release, despite attempts at planning for this, which presented added challenges to fill the period between release and education placements becoming available. This period after release, when young people were expected to prove themselves, was a major concern for all the education workers as it created a challenge to identify short-term opportunities to mitigate the criminogenic potential of young people being in the community upon release with limited opportunities and limited diversions. For all the education workers, this challenge and related risks were exacerbated by a lack of resources in area B, for those outside of mainstream education. One education worker also linked this issue to the accommodation barrier:

'... in regards to resettlement, there isn't a great deal that I can offer in my area. If it's all short notice, children's services haven't been able to identify an address, this makes planning for provision upon release nigh on impossible. Then we often have a situation where they are at a loose end, possibly in an hastily arranged address they may not like, or back in a hostile family environment. It's a real vicious cycle, late planning or no

planning for release, bad address may be, nothing to do. It's no surprise they reoffend, prison is better than this.' (Tony, YOT education worker)

The quotation succinctly ties together the multiple challenges that constitute this theme and how they interlink, to form a barrier to effective education provision, during both the planning process and the initial post-release phase. This reinforced a sense that young people expected to prove themselves, in complex and challenging circumstances, are being 'set-up to fail by lack of service support' as one YOT participant described it.

This dovetailed with a broad consensus among participants that poor or late planning amplified the already precarious and destabilising resettlement process, which could impact young people in multiple ways, not only in terms of securing the right support but also the potential emotional impact of a precarious transition. Young people, 'witness rather than participant' as noted by one YOT worker, often had limited agency in the release planning process in area B. This could often result in young people experiencing anxiety due to uncertainty, which YOT professionals often attempted to mitigate or support:

'So you're sort of managing their anxiety and you feel like sometimes you can't do a lot to allay those fears, because you can't resolve some of the really big things, the basics like accommodation.' (Mike, YOT Education Lead)

Given the disempowerment felt by the YOT education lead, this quotation underlined the potentially profound disempowerment experienced by a young person going through an uncertain transition, tied up with risk, that offered limited or no opportunity for decision making or personal agency.

No area B education professional interviewed identified any of these issues, related to planning for release, inter-agency working and late provision of education placements. This was clearly an issue for YOT professionals who bore accountability for this planning. While not a tension *per se*, the challenges experienced by YOT professionals were not mirrored by education professionals, who appeared to not perceive the same concerns. This suggested

a difference in professional cultures already highlighted between the YOT and children's services.

7.6 The Importance of being 'Out of the Box': Creative Approaches to Resettlement

The previous three themes have painted a somewhat bleak picture, offset by the first theme about effective education provision, which is aligned with this theme in many ways. This final theme switches focus, looking at more positive aspects of resettlement support, suggesting the bleak picture so far presented is more nuanced.

When speaking about direct work with young people during resettlement, the word 'creative' came up across several interviews with YOT staff together with other related words, such as 'child-focused' and 'flexible'. While not explicitly acknowledged, when synthesised together these interviews suggested a culture within the YOT that valued an approach to resettlement work which was open minded, non-formulaic and needs-led, for example:

'... we as a YOT are creative in how we engage people. I've always been completely astounded at how creative our people are, and how they think outside the box.' (Gladys, YOT manager)

The YOT manager in question had previously worked in the probation service, with adults, and the contrast between the more process driven work of probation with area B's YOT practice offered a picture of creative practice, as the expression 'outside the box' suggested. As an illustration of this, all four education workers also highlighted that the YOT played an important role in facilitating access to bespoke creative activities, often provided by third sector organisations, that had a learning dimension, engaged positive behaviour, and offered a diversion from criminal behaviour. Arts-based activities were cited as a particularly notable example of this type of YOT-brokered activity, in partnership with a third sector organisation:

'So we're trying to use art ... be more inventive with our young person plans. There's one thing we've found is that a lot of the kids we work with are not academic achievers necessarily, but they are...they have quite an artistic streak, good with their hands, that kind of thing ... if we think that they're really good at art and we can prove that to the schools, maybe we can get the school to offer more art type stuff.' (Tania, YOT education worker)

All the education workers in the YOT highlighted that an arts-based approach, located outside of standard learning centres, provided a valuable hook for engaging young people in learning, especially those going through the unsettling transition from prison. As the previous quote intimated, this involved both learning and a strengths-based approach, attuned to the attributes of young people which sat outside of normative frameworks of what constituted academic ability. Such an approach, when successful, allowed YOT education workers to broker access to wider learning opportunities in schools, built on a bespoke curriculum. This tied together several identified features of effective provision and put the work of the YOT at the centre of this. Arts-based work offered an interesting point of intersection between the work of the YOT and the work of alternative providers, as it shared many qualities with alternative education; and shed further light on alternative practices that could help address the delays in education provision noted in the previous theme.

This example of practice also illustrated the importance of positive inter-agency partnerships and suggested work with the third sector offered an arena for constructive collaboration. Reinforcing this wider point, the YOT also worked closely with a third sector youth work agency, who employed youth workers specifically to work with young people engaged in offending. Youth workers in this project, while employed by the third sector, were embedded in the YOT and offered flexible, intensive and needs-led support, often one-to-one. They often worked with young people engaged in resettlement on a voluntary basis. This quotation gives an overview of the type of support offered by the youth work agency:

'Well we cover all sorts including group work ... So the last two sessions I did alcohol and it's dangers or effects. Last week, we did just loads and loads of games where they have to work in twos and then fours. All about teamwork and communication. Next week, we might do independent living skills, we might do quizzes, we might do cooking, and we sometimes link it in with our ASDAN stuff so they get like a certificate. Our approach, it's really flexible.' (Alana, Youth Worker)

This quotation illustrated the wider creative ethos of the YOT, which was open to flexible and out of the box ways of thinking. The youth workers offered work around formal issues and risks, such as alcohol use. They also offered social events that the worker, later in the interview, suggested could help improve soft skills, such as communication skills and promote wider wellbeing, through activities that also had pedagogic value.

The worker offered a sense of person-centred and flexible practice, that could be both proactive and responsive to need. The worker explained that she got to know young people well and could act as a form of mentor. Alana argued that this flexible and supportive role was especially important for young people who transitioned through resettlement, as it helped navigate a time of uncertainty and enhanced available support structures. Alana did note, unfortunately, that the uncertainty and 'discombobulation' of resettlement, as she described it, could act as a barrier to engagement with her service, echoing issues raised in previous themes.

7.6.1 Sub-theme: Proactive Planning for Resettlement

The importance of creative partnership also came into focus related to planning for the release of young people. Several education professionals observed that YOT and education services in area B had a positive working relationship that provided for proactive and needs-led planning, offering young people post-release education provision that met their needs. This was based both upon relationships and processes, as noted here:

'... if we ever have a child who needs to get back into education from custody, they'll [the YOT] come to us, we have a good relationship with the Youth Offending Team and they say, 'How can we get someone back into school? And where do you think we should put them? Or what sort of package around them?' And that's really important as you do not want to set a child up for failure.' (Jen, Inclusion Manager)

This quotation, representative of other education professionals, emphasised the positive working relationship between YOT and education. It also intimated robust planning processes were in place, that were proactive. Child-centred practice was also evident in this quotation, working not to set children up to fail, echoing the dangers of poor planning conveyed in the previous theme. This type of planning sat with the bespoke learning approach already described at the beginning of the chapter. This offered an interesting counterpoint to the previous theme, which lacked an acknowledgement by education staff of the challenges of release planning. The creative practice presented in this theme was most effectively mobilised by understanding the needs of young people ahead of release, utilising inclusive needs-led assessment and tapping into a wide range of potential support services.

As the previous theme highlighted, barriers existed to this but more creative 'out of the box approaches', as a number of YOT participants argued, could counteract poor inter-agency working, mitigate delayed provision of education placements and off-set limited resources. This also involved utilising, creatively, the YOT's own resources, such as its partnership with the arts-based charity; and being open to a range of voluntary services that could address need and offer support in different ways. The following quotation summarised the value of a proactive, creative approach and the need to be inclusive of a range of support:

'Resettlement... it's planning relationships and having a really good collaborative plan... it's about getting everybody involved that's important to that young person, sometimes the less than obvious people like a

boxing coach... being young person friendly. This is important because that move out into the community is such a risky period because it throws up so many things about change.' (Gladys, YOT Manager)

This quotation reinforced that the YOT had to be open to working with a range of stakeholders, including family and friends. They needed to be child-centred and open minded. Proactive planning was important to managing the 'risky' period immediately following release. This further highlighted the precariousness of resettlement and the need for effective planning.

Conclusion

Themes offered insights into area B's provision. There was a strong dimension of bespoke support offered by education and YOT, built on positive relationships with young people. There were also challenges, most pertinently the impact of challenging behaviour in the classroom, the inaccessibility of FE and late planning for release. Some threads united the themes, emphasising the importance of a well-planned and creative approach, underpinned by positive inter-agency relationships. Professional perspectives consistently shed light on the precarious nature of resettlement, and the need for an inclusive approach to planning and provision.

Chapter 8: Case study C Findings

Introduction

This chapter will review themes that emerged from semi-structured professional interviews carried out in case study area C. The participant sample from area C contained a mix of professionals from education, YOT and other services, offering a range of perspectives. It was not possible to interview any young people from area C, although professional responses offer some insight into the lived experience of young people going through resettlement. Table 6 lists the interview participants from area C and Table 7 provides a summary of the themes.

8.1 A Profile of Area C

Area C is an inner-city borough, located in a large English city. The borough itself constitutes a municipal local authority, with distinct governance and service arrangements. Area C has a population of over 300,000 and a diverse ethnic configuration of >30 per cent White-British and >25 per cent Black-British, making area C one of the most ethnically diverse local authorities in England. Economically, area C is within the 15 per cent most deprived local authorities in England and Wales (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019); and has an unemployment rate of >8 per cent for the working age population, twice the national average of 4 per cent, reflecting several decades of post-industrial decline. Its business density of <590 per 10,000 working age people is significantly below the national average of 670, evidencing further this economic decline. Although several large multinational firms are based in area C. The number of pupils deemed eligible for free school meals is 20 per cent of the school age population, below the national average of 23 per cent. The free school meals metric for area C is in part a function of the pockets of extreme wealth that exist within its boundaries. Area C has been identified as an area of polarised social and ethnic tensions.

The local authority employs <5,000 staff and has an annual budget in excess of £200 million. The YOT in area C, with primary responsibility for resettlement, is large by national standards, with a single area office employing over 50 staff from a range of professions. The budget of the YOT is more than £3 million. The crime rate of area C is greater than 97 crimes per 1,000 people, above the national average of 84 crimes per 1,000 people (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Similarly, above the contemporary national average of 40 per cent, the reoffending rate, for YOT involved young people, is nearly 50 per cent. The custody rate is also above the national average of 0.03, standing at 0.41 incarcerations per 1,000 young people. The YOT in area C is rated *good* by HM Inspectorate of Probation. The wider child social care service, with a budget of £65 million, is also rated *good* by Ofsted.

The population accesses diverse education opportunities, with 55 per cent achieving an NVQ 4 or higher, above the national average. While not home to a university, area C is part of a larger city that hosts several universities. The mainstream school budget is £14 million and the separate SEND budget is £3.5 million. Area C is home to over 30 schools and several FE colleges. Ofsted ratings for these schools and colleges are mixed, a large proportion of schools are rated good. Area C also has a significant minority of schools judged as requiring improvement. The most recent GCSE pass rate, at grade 5 or above for English and Mathematics, is 55 per cent. This is above the national average of just under 50 per cent. Of the pupil population, 18 per cent are identified with SEND and 22 per cent of the SEND cohort have a primary SEMH need. Nearly 4 per cent have an EHCP, which is in-line with the national average. A breakdown of EHCP by education type could not be found.

Table 6: Participants from Area C

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Role	Participant Profile
Education Participants			

Lea	Female	SEND Director	Lea had overall responsibility for SEND policy and practice in area C. Lea had been SEND director for approximately 2 years prior to the interview. Before that, she had worked in various managerial roles in the education service of area C. Before moving into central management roles, Lea had been the head teacher at a special school and started her career as a teacher in a special school.
Justine	Female	Inclusion Manager	Justine was responsible for all school transfers, overseeing all specialist school EHCPs and monitoring SEND placements in area C. She had originally worked as a social worker, in a special school before becoming pastoral head in a mainstream school. From this role, she moved into an education welfare team before becoming the inclusion manager.
Sandra	Female	SEND Manager	Sandra had been a SENCO most of her teaching career, in mainstream schools. She then stepped into the SEND manager role, less than two years prior to interview. She had managerial responsibility for a team of EHC assessors.
YOT Participants			

Pat	Male	YOT Service Manager	A qualified social worker, Pat had spent his whole career in YOT work, starting in a different YOT as a social worker. He then moved into an assistant manager role in area C's YOT, before becoming the service manager with overall responsibility for the YOT.
Libby	Female	YOT Assistant Manager	Libby was a social worker by background. She had worked in child protection, before moving into YOT social work. As assistant manager she was responsible for all specialist YOT work, including overseeing the education lead role and the work of mental health professionals.
Sharon	Female	YOT Education Lead	Sharon had previously been a teacher in mainstream school and PRU settings. This was her first YOT role and she had been in post for under 2 years. Sharon's role was a mixture of direct work with young people, including careers guidance work, and line managing a small team of education workers.
Max	Male	YOT Social Worker	Max had always been a YOT social worker throughout his career. He had worked in area C's YOT for over 5 years. He was responsible for managing more complex cases involving serious offending, including working with young people in resettlement.

Natalie	Female	YOT SaLT	Natalie worked in the National Health Service, mainly with adolescents. She was seconded part-time to the YOT. Adolescents had always been her professional focus. She had been working with area C's YOT for nearly 1 year but had worked with another YOT prior to this.
Other Professionals			
Jasmine	Female	Personal Advisor to children leaving care.	Jasmine worked for the local care leaver service. She was lead advisor for children both leaving care and in the youth justice system. She was a social worker by background, having worked throughout her career with children in care or care leavers.
Wesley	Male	Manager in a third sector organisation	Wesley worked for an organisation offering creative arts and sports-based interventions to young people, including those in the youth justice system. He had been in his role as manager for over three years at the time of interview. Prior to that, he had worked as a youth worker with children disaffected by education, including working with non-attenders and children in PRUs in a different local authority.

Table 7: Themes Presented for Area C

Theme Name	Summary	Sub-Theme
The Value of Bespoke Learning	This theme referred to the role of bespoke or tailored learning, as a core dimension of effective education practice for resettlement.	N/A
'You're always there no matter what': Trusted Education Staff	Trusting relationships, between education professionals and young people were highlighted as essential to promoting positive outcomes for the resettlement cohort.	<i>The Value of Mentoring</i> Mentors, as trusted and supportive adults, were cited as important to promoting engagement with support and learning, for the resettlement group.
Taking an 'out of the box' Approach: Effective YOT Practice	This theme highlighted the importance of the YOT taking more creative approaches, relevant to the needs, aspirations, and the frame of reference of young people.	<i>Trust</i> Out of the box approaches were found to foster trust, segueing with a wider issue about the importance of trust for YOT professionals working with young people.
Proactive Planning for Release: Facilitating Positive Resettlement	Proactive planning for release was found to be essential to offering hope to young people. Early planning allowed sufficient time for resources and services to be identified for the point of release.	N/A

<p>The Myriad Challenges of the Planning Process</p>	<p>Late or ineffectual release planning could result in negative outcomes for young people, including reoffending, further trauma and diminished mental health.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>'... we call them Harvey Nicks because you're not getting in...': Barriers to Further Education Colleges</p>	<p>Barriers to FE emerged as a distinct theme in area C. Colleges in area C tended to operate a high academic threshold. Added to this, a lack of vocational training existed in area C and surrounding locales. Stigma was also noted as a factor.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

8.2 The Value of Bespoke Learning

In discussing the features of effective education provision for the resettlement cohort, most participants described effective provision as being about offering 'bespoke' or 'tailored' learning and support. Others used analogous language, including 'needs-led' and 'inclusive', which also centred on bespoke learning. Both YOT professionals and education professionals offered insights into this aspect of learning, which focused on the need to tailor education provision for the complex needs of young people who have been in prison and were working their way towards achieving more positive resettlement outcomes. Participants were able to explore this concept and link it to related issues.

Given the prevalence of identified SEND in the resettlement population, education professionals extolled the importance of identifying needs and tailoring learning to be inclusive of those needs. For several participants, this was

strongly facilitated by the completion of an EHC assessment and the availability of a related plan:

'Following an EHCP is key... we don't want them, the children, sort of seeing school as not actually relevant to the overall picture of where they're trying to get to, it needs to make sense and the EHCP is like a map for everyone. Otherwise, behaviour can get worse and attendance drops.' (Sandra, SEND Manager)

The word '*relevant*' stands out in this quotation, highlighting the importance of education support and provision being relevant from the perspective of the young person. The concept of 'engagement' was also discussed by many participants, who cited the importance of active involvement by children and related motivation as being key to positive education outcomes during resettlement. This highlighted that bespoke learning had to be designed to promote motivation and engagement. Engagement brought into focus further concepts, including education aligned with, or capable of promoting, aspirations. Participants were able to identify the importance of education that was based on a clear understanding of aspirations.

Related to the idea of making bespoke learning relevant and aspirational, several participants highlighted the need to understand young people in terms of their strengths. Strengths could be developed and facilitated through a curriculum aligned with what young people '*can do*' rather than solely aligned to SEND, which one participant felt could be '*... negative, focusing on their problems.*' This highlighted that effective bespoke provision moved beyond potentially deficit-led narratives and encompassed skills and strengths, as vividly described here:

'... actually, show them these skills they have, they can use in this particular area of work and 'look at what you can do, do you see what I

mean?’ I just think that once they’ve gone down that road, some really need that hand holding.’ (Justine, Inclusion Manager)

The expression ‘hand holding’ offered the notion that staff had to be proactive in not only working with skills and strengths but also supporting the implementation of those skills. The practitioner in question, together with several other participants, identified that such an approach was essential when working with young people who may have had a difficult and disrupted school history, entailing deficit-led narratives. In addition, when a young person entered more mainstream provision such as college, potentially less equipped for offering a bespoke provision to complex needs, YOT staff were central in liaising with providers to support them in delivering tailored provision:

‘In college they really need individualised support with people that understand where they have come from and what has gone on. I think our YOT is supporting really well where they can, and I think you know as long as colleges are open to that, it is a bit like any kind of special needs, educating the educators about these young people and what they need and can do.’ (Lea, SEND Director)

This offered a clear illustration that bespoke support was not always a given and involved a level of understanding to be developed in college settings, where a young person entered a more mainstream and less differentiated provision. The quotation also highlighted the advocacy role that YOT workers played and suggested the potential of colleges to be inclusive where specialist YOT professionals were able to liaise and advocate, to make adjustments that enabled some form of bespoke provision. The idea of ‘educating the educators’ encapsulated this form of practice, that was supportive to providers but also challenged potential assumptions. This dovetailed well with the concept of not only being needs-led but also strengths-based, as the reference to ‘can do’ at the end of the quotation suggested. It was noticeable the YOT itself did not identify the integral role it played, but it was picked up by education.

Participants also cautioned that the ethos of any provider was important to ensuring bespoke provision was both available and likely to work:

'... the institution they are in has to have a willingness to want to make it work. And it is not going to be a smooth path, and everyone has to realise that. You are going to get bumps along the way, and you just have to ride those really.' (Justine, SEND manager)

This offered a more institutional perspective, underlined by other participants that a culture of bespoke support needed to exist in both schools, colleges, and alternative providers. Robust policies and inclusive leadership by headteachers were cited as essential ingredients to a bespoke learning culture. The above quotation, talking about 'bumps along the way' also evoked that patience and perseverance were important to both teaching approaches and wider school cultures that were able to realise inclusivity of need and offer bespoke support.

Several participants posited third sector alternative education providers were especially equipped to offer bespoke support, that was both needs-led and strengths-based, at all relevant age levels (mainly 15 to 17 years old). One facet of alternative provision in area C, which was argued as being effective, was the use of internships with local employers, for both school age students and at the post-16 level. Internships were also interchangeably described as work placements. This approach was summarised in the following way:

'Placements with employers are really important, the kids get a lot out of them. They can really identify what they're good at and see possibilities. Broaden their horizons, meet new people.' (Sharon, YOT Education led)

This quotation again offered a clear sense that bespoke provision, in this case work placements, could offer opportunities to develop aspiration through the development and identification of skills, which dovetailed with a strengths-based approach. To facilitate placements or internships, local alternative providers were able to utilise a network of local employers who could offer a

range of opportunities catering for a range of aspirations. The YOT education lead flagged that alternative providers played an advocacy role in this respect, in sourcing placements and helping young people engage with placement. Alternative providers were also effective in preparing young people for internship placements, ensuring they had the confidence, knowledge, and motivation to make placements work. Where problems did occur on placement, providers also played a central role in problem solving and mediating problems, to prevent placement breakdowns.

Internships segued with a wider point, made by several participants, that vocational learning was the most effective format for bespoke provision, by developing aspirations and offering environments that supported skills acquisition outside of the traditional national curriculum. As one participant vividly illustrated, vocational learning could be inclusive to students who did not meet traditional curriculum requirements, including young people going through resettlement:

'I'm not averse to, 'Let's do something else,' because if a young person actually is in Year 9 upwards and we can adopt a flexible curriculum at that point and they can do some vocational, go to college early. We've had loads of success with that because the school environment's just not for them. They're not academic but they've got, everyone's got a beautiful strength that you kind of home in on and a dream and you can just try and get them to do something a bit different.' (Lea, SEND Director)

This quotation reinforced other findings from this theme, namely that vocational learning developed skills and promoted strengths as a viable alternative to the mainstream curriculum. This quotation also explicitly suggested the need for providers and planners to be flexible and open minded in their approach to identifying learning opportunities and understanding needs, thereby underscoring the value of bespoke learning.

8.3 'You're always there no matter what': Trusted Education Staff

Dovetailing with the concepts introduced in the previous theme, the importance of the staff-student relationship in education was also argued as central to positive progress and outcomes for young people released from prison, many of whom had deep seated disaffection and difficult education histories. 'Trust' was the recurring word that was used to badge the importance of positive staff-student relationships, through several interviews:

'It's all about trust. Trust and motivation. And the young people I speak to, they all talk about their personal relationship with professionals. Lots of the young people are like, 'Oh you're always there' because we've got quite a consistent staffing across our services. And for those who have been successful, they say, 'You're always there no matter what'.' (Lea, SEND Director)

This quotation unpacks the youth experience of trusting relationships, linking trust to perceived support and motivation to engage. The quotation also emphasised the importance of consistency, with young people working with the same staff over time.

Several other qualities, essential to a positive trusting relationship, could be distilled from education professionals. These included 'honesty', which applied to education staff who were confident in challenging young people and willing to be transparent with them about problems and how these could be addressed. Honesty was cited as a major ingredient of trust. Staff who were willing to form an authentic rapport with young people were also able to build a positive and trusting relationship:

'Staff have got to be nice with the kids, get to know them as people. Be willing to understand the kid's interests but also bring their own interests to the relationship, whether that's what they watch on telly or a sport they play. This, together with humour, goes a long way to building

constructive relationships. And let's not forget, these kids often have been in conflict with teachers in the past, before they even had the ordeal of prison.' (Justine, SEND Manager)

This experience, representative of other participants, illustrated the importance of an authentic relationship, centred on staff willing to invest something of themselves and use their own skills for promoting engagement and outcomes. As the previous quotation suggested, young people were more motivated to work with, and work for, the relationship they had with trusted staff, who they liked and who offered consistency. Building on these points, the role of the mentor further clarified and deepened an understanding of the importance of trusting relationships.

8.3.1 The Value of Mentoring

Mentoring schemes were highlighted by both YOT and education professionals as being conducive to positive education outcomes. In area C, mentoring was accessed from several organisations, offering several mentoring options. This included peer mentoring with other youths, volunteer adult mentors and use of profession mentors, including teachers occupying a pastoral role. Other mentoring support included school-based social workers and mentors provided by the YOT, who themselves operated a mentoring scheme employing independent ex-offenders in a voluntary capacity. As one participant noted about the value of mentoring:

'Mentors are really useful to kids. In schools, they're someone clearly battling for them, on their side. They are like a critical friend, there to support but also use their relationship to challenge young people where necessary. They can make kids see the relevance of school and the need to work with it.' (Sandra, SEND Manager)

Participants were consistent in suggesting that mentoring, in all forms, appeared relevant to mobilising motivation and openness to education support because mentors' relationships with young people could help mitigate negative behaviours. Other participants also highlighted that mentors could help young

people deal with the potential stresses of education, providing affective support and advocacy, where problems arose. They could also support young people to have a voice in on-going decisions around education, supporting a bespoke approach. YOT staff highlighted ex-offenders as being especially effective in the mentoring capacity, as one participant noted:

'Mentors help young people going through resettlement in all sorts of different ways. They can help young people learn from the errors they themselves made and they can spot early where things are going wrong, especially in school. Empathy is really important here and insight into what makes kids tick. The kids trust and respect them because they've been there, done time and moved on. It's a unique learning experience for kids.' (Libby, YOT Assistant Manager)

The last sentence appeared significant, suggesting mentoring of this sort should be classed as a form of learning. All YOT professionals credited the value of this mentoring service and noted it helped reduce challenging behaviours and improved education engagement. As the YOT education lead surmised, 'It's transformative, because it gives them that secure base without all the baggage of being a professional.' Mentors, and ex-offending mentors in particular, offered a unique lived experience and an independent status that transcended the issues young people could have with professionals perceived as authority figures. They also offered unique insights and empathy that could offset or prevent issues; and give young people a secure and trusting relationship that also offered the opportunity to learn from the mentor's own experience. This potentially translated into very positive outcomes, with education singled out as being a particular area of progress. The role of the mentor emphasised the need for empathy and developing understanding for the experience of young people, who through resettlement may have experienced a precarious transition.

8.4 Taking an 'out of the box' Approach: Effective YOT Practice

A consistent aspect of area C's approach to resettlement, overseen by the YOT, was a willingness to use 'out of the box interventions' as one participant described it (Pat, YOT Service Manager). This phrase represented other participant observations, citing the open-mindedness of the YOT to employing what could also be described as creative approaches. A short vignette was put forward to illustrate this point:

'So we had this young man in custody who later came out. Through custody activities and just us listening to him, we found he had a real passion for basketball. So we arranged for him to link in with a local basketball club, including one-to-one work with the club's manager when he got out. This did so much for the lad. He learned focus, discipline, the manager was a real mentor and he got to know other kids not involved in crime. It was transformative for him, he never offended again.' (Libby, YOT Assistant Manager).

This vignette and further elaboration by the participant offered rich data about approaches that worked for resettlement. The use of a basketball club developed the young man's attributes and intangible skills, such as self-control and teamwork. In this sense, it was an educational resource. This, in the participant's view, allowed the young man to develop a mindset and qualities that moved him away from a pro-criminal identity.

The YOT also contracted third sector charities, offering structured support measures to a wide range of young people, including those resettling, that involved creative approaches designed to foster change. An illustrative example is offered by this quotation:

'We work closely with (theatre company) on various projects. One of them I'm involved with is called 'way into work'. We look at reframing, in terms

of their aspirations and also building confidence. Busting myths in a very creative way. The facilitators are very good at drama. So they find very creative ways to challenge beliefs and lifestyles. They help young people identify the lifestyle they want to get to, and how to do it. It's very effective and brings out a lot of unexpected themes. They use role play a lot to build insight and empathy.' (Sharon, YOT Education Lead)

Where the basketball example was clearly bespoke to the needs of an individual, the use of a theatre company evidenced the value of utilising a larger group-based scheme. This scheme was explicitly focused on future employment and helping young people identify related aspirations, including aspirations towards education. It also worked to develop social skills and a sense of self-efficacy through increased confidence, utilising the creative medium of drama. There was also an element of constructive challenge, towards personal narratives and beliefs that underpinned offending behaviour. This was an approach, as the participant later suggested, that helped build motivation and engagement with education or training.

Both highlighted approaches - drama and basketball - offered a clear rationale for more creative interventions that promoted motivation and built confidence. They also highlighted the complexity of the challenge involved in supporting young people with a range of needs, in uncertain circumstances who may also have an identity that inhibited positive change. This emphasised the need to employ a range of approaches, attuned to different needs and interests. Creative approaches, such drama and sport, occupied a clear space in the personal and cultural frame of reference of young people, speaking to their interests. These more creative approaches had been noted as important precursors to engagement by young people, with more formal education provision, through confidence and skills development, as summarised here by the manager overseeing the aforementioned drama programme:

'But their involvement in that theatre scheme has helped them move on, it is like they needed that before they could get into the education side,

or they needed to do that to realise that they have to get some sort of qualification to be able to carry on with a career or whatever. So, some of the things have been like steppingstones.’ (Wesley, Third Sector Manager)

This quotation highlighted that more creative approaches could act as a form of scaffolding for more formal education or training, developing the necessary attributes. The notion of such interventions as ‘steppingstones’ was echoed by YOT participants, who argued that creative interventions often occupied the space between release from prison and delayed provision of formal education support, which in area C was often dependent on progress and criminal desistance for a period of time in the community.

8.4.1 The Relationship with YOT Staff

Creative approaches, for all YOT participants, signalled an investment in young people, which fostered a sense of trust in YOT professionals by young people. This bears resemblance to the importance of trust in education-based relationships (section 8.3) but is distinct within a YOT context. This fostering of trust was noted as an outcome of more ‘out of the box’ approaches. A YOT consensus argued trusting relationships were important to providing a foundation for change, for example:

‘We have a large range of support available. We are the gatekeepers but buy-in from kids can take time. They need to trust us first and foremost. The YOT need to be able to have that trusting relationship with our kids.’
(Libby, YOT assistant manager)

The expressions ‘gatekeepers’, ‘buy-in’ and ‘trust’ stood out in this quotation, as emblematic of both the quotation and wider views expressed by participants. YOTs had potentially life shaping power, but the positive use of that power could only be realised through the development of trusting relationships that translated into buy-in or motivation to engage in support. Another participant noted

relationship-based work was necessary to building confidence and trust in young people:

'Behind all the bluster, of some very serious offenders, is often a vulnerable child. They need reassurance and support from us, as one of the consistent people in their lives. We need to make that relationship work, give them faith in us. That's a core of our practice and a common denominator of when things work.' (Pat, YOT Service Manager)

This highlighted the vulnerability and complexity that YOT workers needed to endeavour with to promote change. It raised again the importance of trust, which was significant for building motivation and was a factor or 'common denominator' in positive change. As the same participant further elaborated later, the importance of trust also underscored that confidence to change began with faith in the supportive professionals who work with young people to bring about that change.

All YOT participants highlighted that trust was built on partnership - the willingness of YOT workers to include and listen to young people in the resettlement journey. Creative 'out of the box' approaches were cited as an effective way to achieve this partnership, by offering a reconfigured space in which professionals worked with young people outside of established power structures. One participant framed this in terms of 'interdependence':

'Everyone is interdependent. We need each other to deal with these risks, make the positives happen. And the young person needs to feel interdependent with their workers in order to feel they are getting support, are being listened to. We know exactly what we need to do and I know how drastic and hard and challenging it can be for workers, especially in this type of environment. That sort of clustering, reciprocating,

transactional trust and bond from a young person is key to everything.'

(Natalie, YOT SaLT)

This was a powerful and loaded quotation, that both reinforced other findings but also challenged traditional notions of professional boundaries, that are conceived in terms of separation, especially within more punitive criminal justice domains. It was perhaps significant that this perspective was expressed by a SaLT, who came from a more therapeutic standpoint. Natalie invited us to focus on reciprocity in the professional-young person dynamic, acknowledging this as essential in the change process. This quotation also emphasised that the resettlement endeavour was difficult, both transactionally and contextually, given the needs and complexity faced by young people going through resettlement, which carried many potential risks. While unique and challenging on one level, this perspective reiterated the need to form trusting relationships.

8.5 Proactive Planning for Release: Facilitating Positive Resettlement

All participants from across education and the YOT commented that proactive planning ahead of the point of release was a necessary factor in successful resettlement, including arranging appropriate education provision. Effective planning offered a sense of hope and security for young people, in the view of several participants, that supported their engagement with support in custody in readiness for release. Relatedly, several YOT participants also highlighted that early planning and identification of support in the community allowed custody professionals to tailor their support and foster a sense of efficacy in young people, who may be buoyed by the plan for their future beyond prison. These issues were framed by one participant in the following terms:

'... as soon as is practical after the young person has settled into their custodial sentence, we should start planning for the release, lots of work should be done about all the agenda stuff around health issues, education issues – that should all be lined up. And, the local authority

should have come up with the address, everything else depends on that.' (Pat, YOT Service Manager)

This quotation represented other participant perspectives, arguing that planning needed to be integrative and inclusive of all dimensions of support, including education needs, health, and housing (mirroring the main dimensions of EHC plans). Related to this, other participants argued that planning should include young people in decisions informed by their progress in custody. This highlighted that all planning needed to be attuned to need and readiness, at the pace of the young person to facilitate a measured and inclusive approach to planning. Other participants also argued a proactive approach, early in sentence, offered time to find support and resources that may be difficult to find in cases of complex need. Supporting this, a YOT Social Worker noted that 'Planning ahead gives us time to research, and tell the young person what is available, giving them options.' This further emphasised the importance of involving young people in planning, to enable needs aligned resettlement support that was built on informed and motivated decisions by the young person themselves.

Provision of appropriate housing was identified as a crucial enabler for effective education, because a supportive and appropriate home environment offered a 'secure foundation', as one participant described it, for all other support. This involved supportive and nurturing care givers, and as several participants also argued, a home address close to area C:

'Where possible we ideally need a local address, unless there are risk issues. They need consistency and continuity in support – they've had the trauma of prison, and release can be just as challenging. An unfamiliar environment can make the disorientation of release worse. Other services can offer consistent support then, including us as the YOT who knows the child and ideally going back to the same school or education placement.' (Sharon, YOT Education Lead).

This quotation described the uncertainty of the custody to community transition, and the continuity of the same service support as a stabilising factor in the potential disorientation of release. Working with the same support services, whether YOT or education, in the view of most participants, was also best as those services were most knowledgeable of needs and had a pre-existing relationship that could enable engagement with support.

The advocacy role of the YOT also emerged as a central dimension of good resettlement planning practice, often dependent on a pre-existing relationship with the young person, understanding of their needs and possessing knowledge of local services. Several YOT participants argued that the YOT's role in resettlement, including helping young people engage with creative schemes, hinged on the advocacy role of the YOT. Young people resettling in area C faced a range of challenges, one of the most important being the reluctance of other services to support (considered in the next theme).

All YOT participants argued it was incumbent on the YOT to act as the advocate of the child to navigate the planning process, using the YOT's statutory power to ensure appropriate support for release in a timely manner:

'We get on with our key partners, but for kids in custody, we have to be really assertive. Argue the toss, make sure services are in place and speak for the young person to get things in place. That often makes the difference when we plan for release.' (Libby, YOT Assistant Manager).

Libby's position on this issue, representative of other YOT perspectives, brought into focus the important role YOT workers play as advocates, even within the context of robust agency relationships.

Education professionals also acknowledged the importance of effective release planning and the right of young people to receive appropriate education support.

For all education professionals, the SEND CoP was a framework for guiding planning:

'The code, it's essential we follow that. All the young people I have overseen in custody, they either have identified or suspected need that often gets confirmed in custody. My role is to identify community education placements. To do my job, I need the YOT to: A. Tell me the young person is in prison; B. I need the YOT to support my getting to know the young person's needs, including monitoring progress in custody; and C. I need to use this information in plenty of time to identify a placement.' (Sandra, SEND Manager).

The quotation clearly set out the process followed in area C and offered an insight into good planning and information sharing in line with the CoP requirements. All education participants identified information sharing with the YOT as essential to planning; and proactive or timely provision of information could mitigate education professionals' own concerns about finding a placement, based on risk perceptions.

8.6 The Myriad Challenges of the Planning Process

As the previous theme argued, good planning was a clear feature of area C's support infrastructure. Conversely, late planning and barriers to planning for release were also evident. Late planning and identification of resettlement support was a common experience of participants, both in YOT and education. The most serious potential impact of impaired planning was reoffending:

'I think you have got to keep young people coming out of custody busy and occupied, hopefully with constructive stuff. Otherwise the chances of them reoffending are very, very high – definitely. Late planning is a factor issue [sic]when it does go wrong like that.' (Pat, YOT Service Manager)

This quotation encapsulates the risks of late or ineffective planning, a consequence expressed by several participants. Late or ineffective planning was not as pronounced when young people returned to area C. However, a lot of young people, the majority released, tended to be resettled into neighbouring authorities and further afield within the wider city or country. These cases presented the most challenges, because of limited or fewer robust inter-agency relationships. This was presented as a 'standing start' or similar language by participants:

'... it is a question of catch-up, so we have got to find the other agencies that are providing the employment, education, substance misuse. So, for us it is finding almost from a standing start what services are available in another area, and making sure, encouraging our colleagues in the local YOT to make those referrals and make sure the young person accesses those services. Much easier if the young person is coming back home...' (Jasmine, Personal Advisor)

This quotation painted a picture of increased complexity in sourcing all provision, noted as 'starting back from square one' by another participant, which created a sense that area C's YOT lacked control of the process when a young person moved authority. Out of area placement thus rendered the YOT dependent upon another YOT, who may not prioritise the needs of that young person given the demands all YOTs faced. This experience suggested engagement with services by young people, in another area, was more complex where there was dependency on another YOT lacking a pre-existing knowledge or relationship with a young person resettling into their area. A powerful vignette illustrated the challenges of resettlement to new parts of the country:

'We've had a case where the young person didn't know where they were going until the day before [release] and we were trying to get them a bed. Planning was impossible up to that point. I remember thinking, this was 'a really unsettling resettlement for him.' He was all over the place with anxiety. He had an EHCP, major mental health needs. He went to the

other end of the country and the place wasn't expecting them. We have got a duty to let them [the other local authority] know about anyone released with an EHCP. They say, 'well we can't do anything, until his EHCP is reviewed', which is completely untrue and in my view illegal, considering what the code requires. But it leads to delay in him getting support. We bit the bullet and reviewed it for them. But this all strained our working relationship with them. That you can't review an EHCP when somebody's in custody is the real problem and it's such a good time for that to happen. The legislation doesn't allow that to happen... the young man in question, moving to a new area was a disaster for him. He knew nobody and didn't have the right mental health support. We did the EHCP, got services in place within two months. But his mental health deteriorated, and he attempted suicide, ending up in a secure mental health unit.' (Libby, YOT Assistant Manager)

This vignette offered a vivid picture of the impact of late planning and out of area moves on the wellbeing of young people. The late planning involved, together with the move to a new area, effectively traumatised the young person and exacerbated the already precarious transition from custody to the community. The delay between release and provision of services created the context for this deterioration, with the young person experiencing a deprivation of support, necessary for the success of education. It also shone a light on the role of EHCPs and the CoP, highlighting that their power (or inefficacy) was in part dependent on those implementing policies in practice. The vignette also highlighted a potential flaw in the CoP, related to no EHCP review in custody. The precariousness of resettlement, made manifest by this powerful vignette, was a recurring feature of interviews. All YOT participants understood the inherent uncertainty of this transition. The impact on education, of precarious resettlement tied in with ineffective planning, could be profound:

'The kids we work with can get so stressed during resettlement, who can blame them? New home, new area, old area, back to the bad old house, nothing in place for them. Boredom, frustration. Mix that in with mental health, learning difficulties, limited or no support. Even if school was

available, how could it work out for them? It's like Maslow, all those fundamentals need to be in place before something like school can work.' (Jasmine, Personal Advisor)

The perspective offered in this quotation crystallised the myriad challenges of transition. It exposed the interconnectedness of need, complexity, and limited support. It identified education as contingent on other factors and support, as the reference to the Maslow hierarchy suggested. Planning was central to marshalling this complex interconnectedness. The absence of effective planning could create disequilibrium, as the earlier vignette suggested.

Adding to the sense of precariousness and the myriad factors that could render planning ineffective, was potential reticence to support young people, based on discourses of risk and stigma. In both area C itself and out of area placements, YOT and education professionals were able to single out reticence and stigma as powerful inhibitors to positive resettlement planning. This was evident at FE level (see next theme) and at school level:

'I think that resettlement is actually very difficult when they are school age because secondary schools are very anxious about having a youngster that has been an offender, very resistant. They just see the risks and not the young person. It is a type of stigma, especially when they've clearly moved on.' (Lea, SEND Director)

This highlighted that risk discourses could potentially shroud the child behind those perceived risks, which had been framed as stigma in this quotation. Young people could struggle to escape their offending history, which most participants suggested was a source of reticence by services and a block to release planning. This issue was also noted by YOT participants:

'... our kids are likely to receive the least enthusiastic services. With offending children, especially custody cases, they're likely to be seen as bad, by schools in particular, across authorities, here and elsewhere.'

They just don't want to know, just knowing we're involved is enough to say 'no.' (Max, YOT Social Worker)

This extended the constructs of stigma and risk perceptions, highlighting their impact on access to school provision. During planning for release, lack of 'enthusiasm' based on the offender status was a real issue, flagged up by several participants and underlined by this quotation. One participant described this as a form of 'dehumanisation' towards young people and an 'abdication of our responsibility to see the child'. Participants noted this form of risk-focused stigma or dehumanisation was often perceived by young people, who asked questions about limited support and the reasons for it. YOT participants highlighted this could exacerbate deep seated disaffection and amplify needs, especially mental health. For young people exposed to this form of barrier to release planning, several participants argued personal deficit narratives were confirmed and buy-in to other identified support could be compromised.

8.7 '... we call them Harvey Nicks because you're not getting in...': Barriers to Further Education

The challenge of mediating bespoke provision in colleges was touched upon in the first theme of this chapter, which involved 'educating the educators'. However, as both YOT and education participants highlighted, very few young people attended mainstream FE colleges during resettlement. FE training and college access was found to be a particularly complex issue, that presented a barrier to young people going through resettlement. There was overlap with the previous theme of ineffective planning, but the complexity of the issues involved merited a separate theme.

The inaccessibility of mainstream FE was widely cited as a distinctive issue in area C, for children from a range of non-traditional education backgrounds, as framed by one participant: '... all of our colleges here are exclusive, we call them Harvey Nicks because you're not getting in there unless you're an A/B student.' (Justine, Inclusion Manager). Colloquially referring to a high-end department store ('Harvey Nicks'), this signalled the high academic threshold of local FE colleges as a barrier to entry for young people going through

resettlement, who rarely achieved A/B grades at GCSE level. This participant and others found that local colleges not only set a high threshold but also maintained a high standard throughout their A-level focused provision, which led to many young people from non-traditional school backgrounds dropping out. For several participants, the challenge of high academic FE thresholds was in part a function of the limited development opportunities offered by schools, to young people with SEND and with a youth justice background:

‘But unfortunately a lot of our SEN young people don’t have great GCSEs or no GCSEs for things like A-levels. So that is a barrier. I had a young person who was really bright but was placed in home tuition for year 11, after release from (prison). This didn’t prepare him for college in any way. He was so angry this wouldn’t even get him onto level 3 functional skills, which stopped him going onto a business course straight away.’

(Jasmine, Personal Advisor)

The quotation pointed to both limited readiness for FE and limited opportunities to achieve the necessary qualifications for FE, linked to the disruption of imprisonment and resettlement. Adding to this, participants lamented that colleges focused on traditional academic qualifications, A-levels, and had dropped many vocational courses due to budget cuts. Locally, in area C, this had deprived young people of access to mainstream vocational training. Senior academic managers interviewed felt this was a political decision, by the local council, enabled by the local independence of colleges. This made vocational training inaccessible to a wide range of young people, ‘... hitting anyone with SEND or additional needs the most...’, as the YOT education lead observed.

The inaccessibility of FE colleges, because of high academic thresholds, limited readiness and/or lack of appropriate provision, offered contextual factors relevant to the barriers faced by young people attempting to resettle in area C. Participants were also emphatic that other factors were also at play. Both YOT and education professionals flagged that many young people going through resettlement, together with the wider youth justice population, wished to engage in vocational FE training. Despite cuts, limited vocational training

was still available in area C and more widely in neighbouring boroughs of the city. Extant vocational provision presented a separate range of barriers to young people attempting to engage in resettlement education.

Related to previous points about A-level provision in area C, where vocational training was available it was mainly in the form of apprenticeships which had similarly high academic standards. For example, a plumbing apprenticeship in area C or neighbouring boroughs required a Grade 5 - 7 at GCSE, equivalent to an A or B grade (local sources, <3 years old). In the experience of several participants, this academic bar was both too high and amplified by the paucity of local vocational opportunities.

Such barriers could create considerable despondency among young people, already disaffected by the education system. YOT participants in particular expressed frustration about the inaccessibility of apprenticeships, noting they were particularly attuned to the interests of young people coming out of prison, who aspired to work in more vocational trades. As discussed previously in this chapter, placements and internships were available through alternative providers and employers, but these lacked the academic weight of apprenticeships.

Stigma, related to offending history, was put forward as the most consistent barrier to FE, above all others. Limited provision and high academic thresholds exacerbated the issue of stigma. As argued by one participant, this was a barrier manifest to both young people and professionals:

'They just can't compete with kids who haven't offended, even with similar school performance. I've learned this the hard way. I've attempted to mediate access to local colleges in the past, for kids resettling, but just my email signature is enough to raise alarm bells in colleges who are averse to enrolling young offenders. This really hampers my role in speaking up for these kids.' (Sharon, YOT Education Lead)

The role of the YOT education lead, together with related professional involvement, had the potential to intersect with wider stigmas around an offending history. As this participant went on to explain, her advocacy role in enabling access to college was hampered by her own professional identity. A broad consensus among participants, both education and YOT, explained this stigma as being about fear for the safety of college students and staff. Within this consensus, it became apparent the nature of the offences themselves; and the rehabilitative journey of young people going through prison and resettlement was often discounted because ‘... all the stereotypes about knife crime, dark street corners, gangs, got in the way. The child is often lost when colleges look at applications.’ (Libby, YOT Assistant Manager). This brief but powerful quotation evidenced the role of stereotypes in feeding fear-based stigma. Linked to this, it was also highlighted by all the YOT participants that criminal records and the process of disclosure to colleges was complex and full of dilemmas. At this point in the admissions process, stigma was most visible to all, including young people. The YOT themselves acknowledged that they had struggled to always provide the necessary support in this sensitive area:

‘Convictions are tricky. A lot of young people don’t know what to say when they’re asked about convictions by colleges. We recognise we don’t have that expertise, so we’ve actually got someone in from (a national charity) to train the whole team on criminal convictions, how you record them. We’ve been failing them a bit, I think, up to this point. It’s depended too much on individual YOT case workers, many of whom didn’t have the right knowledge.’ (Pat, YOT Service Manager)

This further underscored the pivotal role of criminal convictions and the need to manage them in a balanced way, encompassing both transparency but also promoting FE enrolment. The YOT had struggled in this area, a barrier, but a remedial measure had been identified as a result. In part, this issue defined the limits of the YOT advocacy role.

Conclusion

The participants from area C offered a complex picture of resettlement. The findings were a mixed picture of opportunities and challenges that reinforced an overall sense that the resettlement process was both complex and precarious. The landscape of support in area C demonstrated bipolarity across the service infrastructure. There were accessible services, such as creative arts-based enterprises, and there were inaccessible FE colleges. Apprenticeships were out of reach, yet internships were available. Trust' was a factor uniting several themes, highlighting its essential quality across all services. Conversely, stigma was also a common barrier.

Chapter 9: Cross-Case Synthesis

Introduction

All leading thinkers on the case study approach agree that before synthesising or comparing case study findings, it is essential to first consider each case individually, which was the focus of the three preceding chapters (Gerring, 2007; Stake, 2006; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2018). A broad consensus in the literature agrees cross-case synthesis is essential, as a next step from individual case studies. The comparative process offers added depth to individual case findings, exposes patterns, and creates a basis for generalisation (Stake, 2006; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2018). However, there is limited consensus on how to undertake a cross-case synthesis. My starting point was to resynthesise the data, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, discussed in depth in Chapter 5. Rather than following the whole process, I followed parts 3 – 5 of the framework, reading across the individual case themes and the raw data to identify patterns between the cases. To aid the re-synthesising of the data I created a visual table, which can be found in Appendix 6.

Visual tables, varying in type and composition, have been highlighted by several authors as effective for guiding the process of cross-case synthesis (Stake, 2006; Khan and Van Wynsberghe, 2008; Yin, 2018; Cloutier and Ravasi, 2020). For Cloutier and Ravasi (2020), concept-based word tables are an essential tool in cross-case synthesis because they add rigour and transparency to the process, offering further trustworthiness to this form of qualitative research. Visual tables are a flexible tool, applicable to any method or point in the qualitative research process. They are the first stage of the synthesising process, a snapshot of integrated thinking representing a coarse-grained comparative process that is further refined by a repeated cross-reading of the findings during writing (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2020). Appendix 6 contains the visual concept table for this cross-case synthesis, inspired by Cloutier and Ravasi's (2020) recommendations. The patterns identified in this table form the basis of the synthesis that follows in this chapter.

In terms of the structure contained in this chapter, Simons (2009) advises that cross-case findings should be arranged as *propositions* in any synthesis, similar to Stake's (2006) idea of *assertions*. Both Stake (2006) and Simons (2009) frame assertions and propositions as comparative inter-connected themes that make claims to knowledge grounded in cases, aligned to research aims and questions. Following this mode of presentation, the synthesised findings in this chapter are presented as a numbered series of propositions. Each proposition is based on evidence drawn from at least two of the three case studies. Propositions will demonstrate integration between the cases.

The case synthesis was further supported by the macro perspectives of 'Alan' and 'Josh' (both pseudonyms), two participants who have not featured until this point. Alan is a policy advisor working in a relevant central government department. Josh is a policy advisor and researcher for a national education charity. I believe their contribution falls ideally in this cross-case synthesis, as their more national perspective helps compare and contextualise the findings from individual case study areas. To round off this chapter, and provide a bridge to the discussion chapter, the CoP will be evaluated through the lens of the core concepts contained in the propositions. The first proposition will now be considered.

9.1 Proposition 1: Stigma is Part of the Resettlement Experience

Stigma, together with the related concepts of labelling and stereotyping, played a similar role in resettlement across all three case study areas. In particular, these concepts were evident in both resettlement planning and FE. Regarding planning, professionals in the three areas were clear that planning could be delayed and compromised, largely by agencies not primarily involved in the youth justice system, including children services and accommodation providers. Agencies such as these were often reluctant to offer a service because of the perceived risks associated with young people who had been in prison. Many participants associated this with the disapproval of stigma, the 'offender' label and stereotypes associated with young offenders. This stigma translated into

delays in the provision of services upon release, because of the limited buy-in of risk-averse services and the related issue of young people needing to ‘prove’ themselves before getting access to education or housing, the latter of which was crucial to the success of all other support and interventions.

Related to this, and often an inhibitor in the planning process, was the reluctance of FE colleges to offer education and training opportunities. Stigma was most visible in the FE arena, across all three case studies. At the admissions stage, a criminal record could act as a major barrier to entry, built on risk-focused discourses that equated to a form of stigma. Even without criminal record disclosure, YOT involvement could prompt reluctance by colleges to admit young people, compromising the advocacy role of YOTs. Stereotypes about young offenders fuelled a tendency to ‘write off’ young people. Stigma was one of several barriers to FE (see proposition 4, for further discussion of barriers to FE).

Stigma, in planning for release and FE entry, could be visible to young people themselves, which could fuel entrenched disaffection and intersect with other resettlement challenges, making rehabilitation more difficult. Underpinning these forms of stigma were risk and deficit-led discourses, which problematised young people and obscured their status as vulnerable children. This was evident at school level too, for example in area B’s PRU provision, where labelling and problematisation was identified.

Josh, a charity-based education policy advisor, could offer a national perspective that resonated with these cross-case findings. In local authorities Josh had worked with, both the problem and the solution to stigma could be understood through effective practice:

‘In my experience, the best and most inclusive local authorities work at a structural level, to build a risk aware culture. Risk awareness is the

opposite of risk aversion, it is about understanding and working with risk, not discriminating it [sic]. In risk aware authorities, all services are willing to work with resettlement, especially SEND and children services. This risk awareness is all about joint training and open channels of communication. There are shared databases and the YOT sits on local strategic SEND partnership boards. Discrimination, stigma, whatever, it doesn't happen when that risk aware culture is in place.'

Josh went on to highlight those local authorities with a more risk aware culture, in his experience, tended to offer better quality education provision to young people going through resettlement. This included more open FE pathways because YOTs tended to have regular service level meetings with colleges, to promote information sharing and partnership. This resulted in more proactive resettlement planning and more accessible colleges. Conversely, in Josh's view, more risk averse authorities exhibited greater stigma, often related to silo working between YOTs, colleges and other agencies. This latter point resonated closely with the barriers to planning and FE noted in all three case studies. Therefore, a culture of risk awareness and open multi-agency working were among the essential factors required to mitigate the potential for stigma in frontline services that offered support during resettlement.

9.2 Proposition 2: The Relationships between Young People and Professionals are Essential to Positive Resettlement

'Trust' was the most recurrent word used to describe the importance of positive working relationships between young people resettling and professionals supporting them, in both education and YOTs. This principle of practice, a transcendent quality across all three case studies, had several facets. At its most fundamental level, trust was expressed through listening. That is, the ability of staff to meaningfully listen to young people and involve them in decision making. In this way, trust became associated with 'respect' by some professionals. Trust and respect were also important to Danny and Luke in case study A. Trust also needed to be valued at the organisational level, to be embedded in

organisational policies and practices; for example, through a key adult system in a PRU (area B). In this sense, organisational culture, practice environments, and relationship-building skills existed in a dynamic revolving around trust. In the case of schools, nurturing environments based on small class sizes were drivers for establishing and maintaining trusting relationships, which together promoted positive progress.

Built into this fabric of trusting relationships and organisational practice amongst education providers, was the notion of a bespoke curriculum aligned with need in a child-centred way. Trusting relationships and bespoke curricula were integral to each other. This was more implicit to area A, but explicit in areas B and C. Bespoke curricula promoted strengths of the young person by speaking to their needs and interests, providing opportunities for them and sparking their aspirations. This translated into improved motivation and engagement from young people where trusting and relationship-based modalities were practised. This was manifest in strengths-based approaches to bespoke learning, which homed in on attributes and appeared to be based on an innate belief in the child.

A strengths-based approach challenged deficit-led narratives that characterised disrupted school histories, a common experience in the resettlement population. This was evident in Luke's experience of alternative learning that helped him find new strengths; and was an emerging trend in Danny's experience of custodial education. For Danny and Luke, both mainstream school and PRUs acted as a criminogenic factor because of the absence of trusting relationships. Both experienced more punitive relationships that engendered alienation and indifference to learning. This issue was not picked-up by any professional interviewees across all three cases.

In both YOT and education spheres across the case study areas, trust was analogous to concepts such as 'honesty' and 'authenticity', principles of practice that existed within boundaries built on connection rather than separation. These principles appeared to underpin the essence of an inclusive relationship, which

Luke summarised as going 'above and beyond'. Such inclusive relationships seemed to provide a catalyst for involvement with support and decision making by young people.

Relationship-based values such as going 'above and beyond' and strengths-based approaches were expressed through the YOT advocate role. The brokering or advocacy role of the YOT in each area, was a recurrent thread of effective practice in all three case studies. In case study A, Luke's YOT social worker advocated for him, with her own organisation, to promote life changing support. In areas B and C, YOT education workers played important brokering roles, facilitating education support and opportunities during resettlement planning; and working with providers to mitigate challenging behaviour in the classroom, which in turn provided stability to education placements. These advocacy practices were key enablers to a positive resettlement experience, helping to navigate a period of change and uncertainty. That stigma and service reticence were often inhibitors to the YOT advocate role emphasised further its importance. This intersects with Josh's argument in proposition 1, that constructive relationships between YOTs and colleges occurred in risk aware cultures. Risk averse environments stymied the inherent advocacy potential of the YOT, amplifying the potential for negative outcomes.

In area C, mentoring emerged as a strong theme, offering another dimension to effective relationship-based practice. Conversely, both areas A and B lacked a formal mentoring arrangement, suggesting a deficit in the service offer in those areas given the apparent effectiveness of mentoring in area C. Similarly, incentives to attend education were found to promote engagement with support and professionals in area B but appeared absent in the other two case studies.

Based on their national experience of resettlement, both Alan and Josh acknowledged the important advocacy role played by YOTs in promoting positive resettlement education. Both highlighted that the most successful YOTs tended to utilise the expertise of in-house SEND specialists as advocates, often

seconded from other services to draw on pre-existing relationships. YOT SEND specialists included Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and educational psychologists in some areas, who could offer robust advocacy and networking across agencies. Alan summarised the need for this kind of specialist in the following terms:

'So having that SEND specialist, with that in-depth knowledge of those needs and the 2015 Code, they help the YOT form those relationships with education and other services. They are key to fighting the corner for these kids.'

'Fighting the corner' offered an evocative sense of the advocate role, often in a difficult context of stigma as proposition 1 considered. Adding to this, Josh argued that the EHC process helped build supportive teams around young people which, when they worked:

'... give young people a sense that they've got a team working for them, on their side. This perception of support is important, as these kids are often so marginalised, and resettlement is such an inherently difficult process that needs a team including the child.'

This quotation also highlighted the important role perception played in forming and sustaining positive relationships.

9.3 Proposition 3: PRUs can be Negative Learning Environments

Use of the verb 'can' signals a qualified undertone to this proposition. PRUs can be negative sites for resettlement education. However, even in the three cases under review here, variability was evident. In area A, tensions were present in perspectives about the local PRU, especially between the two young people and the headteacher of the PRU. In area B, a much larger authority able to offer a

sample of over seven PRUs, there was noted variability in the quality of education on offer. In area C, PRUs did not feature in the data collected, suggesting they did not present an issue for professionals. Nonetheless, completion of Table 8, and a further close reading of the findings from areas A and B, revealed a convergence in the data: namely the negative learning environments evident in PRUs. Adding significance to this, PRUs were a common destination for young people resettling. Josh supported this proposition from a more national perspective:

'There is a lot of variability between local authorities, PRUs being a prime example. They are a real issue. While I have seen good PRUs, my experience is on the more negative side. PRUs can be hot houses for criminality and disruption. This is where we often put young resettlers [sic], we should be doing better.'

This quotation resonated with a consensus that built up over case studies A and B. Danny's powerful testimony in area A evoked a picture of negative peer networks within PRUs, alienation from pro-social peers, and the criminogenic potential of this form of education. The data collected suggested the negative issues presented by PRUs lay at a systemic or organisation level. Most participants across both case studies A and B cited the inherent difficulties in concentrating a complex group of young people in classroom settings that could serve to entrench need, amplify risk, and lead to problematisation or stigma.

The most visible manifestation of these systemic issues was *challenging behaviour*, which participants argued was a result of the 'melting pot' of need created by the PRU model. In this melting pot, PRUs could serve to create potential new forms of challenging behaviour in young people. The result of this could be criminal behaviour. Danny cited the PRU as a core factor in his journey to incarceration, while Luke felt his inadequate PRU provision gave scope for greater criminal activity. This criminogenic potential was not directly

acknowledged by professional interviewees, who focused more on the disruptive learning impact of challenging behaviour.

PRUs, in a sense, were also seen by participants as an outcome of flaws in the mainstream system, which divested responsibility for young people exhibiting challenging behaviour, instead displacing them to PRUs. For some participants, mainstream schooling could offer solutions to the challenges presented by PRUs, including greater use of mainstream inclusion units as an alternative. Alan, from a central government perspective, related this to the wider policy of *constructive resettlement*:

'When looking at resettlement, all the evidence points to creating that identity shift away from criminality. A big part of that is creating the right environment for that shift. Difficult family homes, tough school environments don't help that shift. So we need to be giving kids a chance, getting them involved with non-offending peers.'

The concept of constructive resettlement was not explicitly raised by any other participant, in any of the cases, despite being a central plank of government resettlement policy (see Chapter 2 for further discussion). Yet, knowledge of the principles of constructive resettlement was widespread on an implicit level. The identity shift that constructive resettlement advocates for lends credence to the notion that negative PRU environments do not work for resettlement. Contact with pro-social peers, touched upon by several interviewees including Danny, was an essential element of creating more positive learning environments that promoted pro-social identity shift and undermined criminogenic factors that could compromise resettlement. Mainstream schooling could offer a fertile pro-social environment for this identity shift.

9.4 Proposition 4: College-Readiness and Academic Thresholds are Barriers to Further Education during Resettlement

A small minority of young people going through resettlement progressed to mainstream colleges in all three areas. The barriers to FE were consistent across all three cases. One barrier was stigma, considered in proposition 1. The other inter-related factors were college-readiness and thresholds for entry. These intersected with other issues, in particular the challenges presented by negative education environments, which ill-prepared young people for FE (see proposition 3).

Both YOT and education participants identified that community school education, including PRUs, did not offer the requisite preparation to make college-level qualifications fully accessible. Often, young people were below the academic entry level for college courses, linked in part to issues around their disrupted education histories. This was despite the many redeeming features of alternative provision, discussed in proposition 2, which nonetheless often fell outside the normative academic pathway required for many FE-level courses. Area C offered an especially acute insight into high academic thresholds, requiring strong GCSE results for apprenticeships, among other qualifications.

One further disruptive factor to college readiness, and achieving academic thresholds, was custody itself. This was not an issue that came up in the three areas - professional interview participants were not aware of the specifics of custodial provision. However, Alan, through his own remit as a policy advisor in central government, identified college as inaccessible for the above reasons; and was able to draw on a comprehensive knowledge of prison education as another barrier to college progression:

'... the current custodial establishments and the current sites are not designed for education ... just moving kids to education every day is really difficult, through the establishments. And if they're going to move a

group of kids through to education, they're going to lock down a whole lot of other wings just so they don't come into contact. That involves delays and disruption. And if a fight breaks out in one group, a regular occurrence, then everything stops, everything goes into lockdown, they end up losing half their education hours. It's all about security. At the moment, within all this, it's really difficult for a young person with SEND to get the support that they need in the secure estate.'

Alan had witnessed these events personally and stated lockdowns and disruptions were endemic to custodial education. This added another dimension to negative education environments but, in Alan's view, the most fundamental outcome of disrupted custodial education was limited learning and development in prison, translating into limited readiness for community education, especially FE, as many of the young people in prison were in the 16 – 17 age group.

Alan also reinforced that SEND is a key issue for the custodial population, elaborating further that custodial establishments lacked the necessary expertise to support SEND:

'... they don't have the depth of knowledge, maybe most of the sites will have a SENCO teacher that comes in from the local college or school and maybe some other staff, but there isn't that level of specialism, that level of knowledge required.'

This added further to a sense of educational hiatus in custody, which Alan argued led to young people:

'... not being ready for the outside. These kids, they've had a bad enough school experience as it is in most cases. Custody just extends that. It's a big reason why they reoffend.'

This demonstrated an interconnection with disrupted school histories common in the resettlement population. The main outcome of limited FE readiness, the hiatus of custody, stigma and high academic thresholds was very limited progression to mainstream colleges. Danny offered some hope here. He described his experience of a positive learning environment in custody, which suggested the negatives described by Alan are not universal to the whole custodial estate.

9.5 Proposition 5: Creative and Unorthodox Approaches are Effective for Resettlement

The experience of the resettlement cohort was often associated with uncertainty and precariousness, most evident in the resettlement transition itself, which many participants framed as uncertain and anxiety provoking. Linked to this, young people who had been through resettlement had life experiences that could be located outside of more normative developmental pathways, involving trauma and disruption. These disrupted pathways shaped identity and often made engagement with services difficult, especially mainstream education. Coexisting with feelings of alienation and social dislocation, these precarious experiences required more creative and less orthodox approaches from services during resettlement. Utilisation of creative approaches was evident across all three case study areas and was a hallmark of effective practice across a range of services.

The nature and hue of these approaches varied somewhat across the three areas, but the essential qualities were similar. Creative interventions tended to use more informal and kinetic mediums, including sport. Interventions like this were also led by the needs of the child to develop a range of skills and attributes, for example social skills. This often involved working with the third sector, who had the capacity to offer more creative approaches to working with young people. Dovetailing with proposition 2, these more creative approaches had a

strengths-based aspect and utilised the relationship between young people and professionals as a key vehicle for change.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of these approaches was their embedded or hidden character. Professionals tended to aim for some form of pedagogic outcome, such as improved social skills or numeracy, but did this in a disguised form through indirect media such as art or drama. Hidden learning was explicitly discussed in area A, as it offered a route to promoting the education of disaffected students, including young people going through resettlement. This form of education was holistic and, in this creative medium, orientated towards wellbeing and helping young people navigate risks. These varying hidden qualities were conducive to navigating the precariousness of resettlement and had the potential to offer preparation for more formal schooling. Creative approaches were often an alternative that could be utilised in the delay between release from prison and provision of more formal schooling, offering a protective diversion that could address the criminogenic potential of delayed service provision.

Both Alan and Josh, from their macro perspectives, identified the need for holistic interventions that fitted with more creative, hidden approaches. Alan linked this to the identity shift essential to positive rehabilitation during constructive resettlement:

'These kids are often so out of it, those formal schooling structures just don't work for them. They have limited aspirations, don't see the point. These are push factors towards further offending. Instead, taking more holistic approaches that fit their interests, that can build that engagement and create those aspiration [sic] which is key to that positive identify shift away from offending.'

Josh also argued that creative approaches can engender a form of constructive challenge that promotes change and progression:

‘Working in a language they understand, like football. It offers more natural opportunities for interacting with young people and offers potential for that gentle form of challenge young people need to rehabilitate.’

This quotation was supported by work undertaken in the case study areas. In area A, Luke found himself challenged by engaging with an alternative form of hidden learning, working as an advocate and trainer for a charity. This was key to his biographical transition away from offending during the resettlement window. In area C, drama was found by YOT and third sector participants to be effective in challenging personal narratives that embraced criminal lifestyles and offered more pro-social worldviews.

9.6 Proposition 6: Planning is Fundamental to Resettlement

Planning was a prominent and consistent theme across all three case studies. Both effective and ineffective planning were present in the findings, reflecting the importance of planning as a catalyst to the resettlement process, including education. Effective planning could be badged as *proactive*, based on collaborative work between agencies and active involvement of young people in the planning process, early into a custodial sentence, to prepare for release and resettlement. Effective planning was needs-led and created wraparound support that was mutually reinforcing, integrating areas such as education and health. YOTs had an important leadership role in the planning process, mandated by the CoP. The advocacy role of YOTs was an essential ingredient of effective planning, as were meaningful relationships with young people across all services (see proposition 2 for further discussion of relationship-based practice). Effective planning and young person buy-in was found to offer young people hope and a sense of efficacy that promoted positive resettlement, most powerfully evocated in Luke’s resettlement story (see case study A).

Conversely, poor planning was equally evident in all three case studies and perhaps more common, based on participant responses. The coexistence of both effective and ineffective planning helped paint a picture of nuance and tension, at a case level. Poor planning was the mirror opposite of effective planning, the absence of the positive qualities just described and the prevalence of barriers, challenges, and uncertainty. Stigma, already addressed in proposition 1, acted as a barrier to positive resettlement planning. Delays were common in planning across all three areas, attributable to limited or reticent buy-in from support services, such as children's services, related to stigma but also limited local resources, poor inter-agency communication and silo working. This was most evident in delayed provision of accommodation leading at times to an out of area placement. Delayed or inadequate planning could compromise the provision of all essential services, including education, leading to reactive rather than proactive planning and provision. The real-world outcome of this, for young people, was trauma, the amplification of complex needs and the resumption of offending within the precarious context of resettlement. Avoiding such outcomes emphasises the importance of inter-agency working and inclusion of young people in the decision-making process.

Significantly the CoP, as a relevant guiding framework for planning, was only explicitly raised in area C interviews. EHC plans and assessments were discussed across all three areas, but the CoP itself was not widely known. This suggested a lacuna in the collective knowledge of professionals involved in the resettlement of young people, especially with SEND, across areas A and B.

Alan and Josh both offered a national perspective on the role of planning. In proposition 1, Josh had already argued for the positive potential of EHC plans and assessments, but he did also suggest caution about the wider planning framework offered by the CoP:

'It's a net positive. It's [the CoP] brought in a structure that has given more visibility to resettlement. But it's not enough on its own. There are still obstacles to that joined up working that means the success of the code

depends on how its implemented locally. In my experience, the application of the code is very patchy.'

Josh's judgement of 'net positive' suggested that the success of the CoP was there, but this success was lukewarm. The 'patchy' application of the CoP, which is essential as a statutory planning framework, was indirectly evident both within and between the three cases, with pronounced themes of effective and ineffective practice. This patchiness evidenced that national planning frameworks are ultimately subject to local conditions.

Planning was a dominant theme in the interview with Alan, who made many pertinent points echoing findings presented here and in the individual case study chapters. Alan's summation was that resettlement planning was generally difficult. One main planning issue for Alan was limited knowledge of the CoP:

'... apart from reading it, when it first came out, a lot of [YOT] education workers are probably not aware of it anymore. Or the detail of it. They've lost the knowledge, the YOTs have lost the knowledge. So, between them, nobody's quite clear who should do what.'

This admission, from a policy advisor with a national brief, offered insight into the apparent invisibility of the CoP in areas A and B. This absence of knowledge signalled a further reason as to why planning could be difficult, as Alan noted, it translated into role ambiguity for planning and delivery. This was particularly relevant given the YOT leadership role mandated by the CoP. For Alan, the challenge around planning was best resolved by resettlement consortia, an area of practice discussed in Chapter 2. According to Alan, resettlement consortia were being further trialled in London at the time of interview (autumn 2020).

Consortia create formal inter-agency networks, coordinated by YOTs, which aim to offer a proactive joined-up service for young people upon release from custody. For Alan, who claimed to represent central government thinking on the matter, the re-emergence of consortia was an acknowledgement that, nationally, resettlement planning was not working without formalised relationships in place, which could overcome many of the barriers presented in this research study. While not a consortium as defined here, a snapshot of formalised inter-agency working was noted in case study B, where the YOT and local PRUs worked together to address the risk of reoffending, including during resettlement. This highlighted again the efficacy of taking a joined-up approach to planning and provision. The importance of the CoP, both in its presence and absence as a planning tool, dovetails with the next section.

9.7 Evaluating the SEND Code of Practice

The CoP (DfE and DoH, 2014) directly inspired this research, giving impetus to the original proposal I completed in 2016. It therefore feels appropriate to bring the cross-case synthesis to a close, by focusing on this important policy document. The CoP was never a central feature of the findings, but it was a recurring thread. Similarly, the CoP bears relevance to the following chapter, through concepts utilised in this brief evaluation of SEND policy. This evaluation is designed to provide a bridge between the cross-case synthesis and the discussion chapter. A summary of the main CoP requirements pertaining to resettlement can be found in section 1.2 of the introduction.

Partly following Lehane's (2018) approach to textual analysis of the CoP, I examined the CoP for the frequency and location of certain concepts. I chose five core concepts that were representative of both this cross-case synthesis and the discussion chapter. The concepts I chose were: *aspirations*, *strengths*, *resilience*, *stigma*, and *challenging behaviour*. Each concept word was searched for, within the text of the CoP, using the PDF search function. Where under ten hits were found for the core concepts, synonyms were also searched for which represented similar concepts, for example *poverty* related to resilience and *violence* related to challenging behaviour. Surrounding text was then reviewed,

to assess the relevance of each concept. Other terms such as *culture*, *ability*, *capacity*, *discrimination* and *economic* were also searched for but subsequently excluded because they were too conceptually ambiguous, legalistic in nature or too broadly used, within the context of the CoP, to be relevant to this analysis. Further concepts were excluded for being too theoretical to be included in a document that had been benchmarked against rules of Plain English (Lehane, 2018), for example, social capital.

The results of this analysis are presented below in Table 8. The top horizontal row refers to the five concepts, with the second row referring to alternative search terms. The vertical columns map the frequency of occurrence for each of these words/concepts against the chapters of the CoP, in order to provide scope for a pattern to emerge. Numbers in the columns refer to the frequency of the core concept words in each chapter. The frequency of alternative search terms are recorded in bold parentheses in each of the columns. Total frequency is included on the bottom row. In the following written analysis of the CoP, core and alternative concepts will be distinguished by apostrophes.

Table 8: A Concept Frequency Table for the CoP

Concepts	Aspirations	Strengths	Resilience	Stigma	Challenging Behaviour
Alternative Search Terms, frequency indicated below in bold parentheses	NONE	Capability/ Capabilities	Poverty	Deviance	Violence
Chapter Number/Topic :	1	0 (1)	0	0	0

1/Principles of the CoP					
2/Information, advice and support	0	1	0	0	0
3/Working together	0	0	1	0	0
4/The Local Offer	1	0	0	0	0
5/Early Years	1	3	0	0	0
6/Schools	2	2	0	0	1
7/FE	3	0	0	0	0
8/Preparing for Adulthood	14	2 (1)	0	0	0
9/The EHC Process	19	1 (1)	1	0	1
10/Specific Circumstances	2	0	0	0	0
11/Resolving Disagreements	0	0	0	0	0
Total Frequency for Concepts	43	9 (3)	2	0	2

‘Aspirations’ is by far the most frequently occurring concept in this analysis, clustered into Chapters 8 and 9 of the CoP. The CoP claims to value the importance of aspirations to achieving positive outcomes for young people in the SEND system. The original Green Paper, which launched the consultation for the CoP, also included the word ‘Aspiration’ in the title (DfE, 2011a). The frequency of the word ‘aspiration’ is perhaps, therefore, not surprising. The high occurrence of the concept in Chapter 8 is consistent with the need to prepare children for impending adulthood. It’s higher occurrence in Chapter 9 is encouraging, demonstrating that aspirations are embedded in the EHC assessment and planning process for all young people, thereby supporting

claims that aspirations are central to the SEND system. 'Aspirations' occurs much less frequently at the three main stages of the education system: early years, schools and FE. In the chapters covering early years and schools, respectively, there is a short section about improving outcomes through high aspirations.

Most significantly for the present discussion, 'aspirations' occur only once in Chapter 10, which is the chapter about custody, resettlement, alternative education and looked-after children. The one reference to aspirations is fleeting and offers no stance or expanded concept about the need for developing aspirations for young people in specific circumstances, such as resettlement. This is concerning, suggesting the concept of 'aspirations' is not linked in any meaningful sense to education for young people resettling or in other disadvantaged situations in the CoP. It could be argued that the chapters on preparing for adulthood and guidance for the EHC process cover children in specific circumstances also, as part of the general SEND population, but no clear linkage is offered to these vulnerable groups anywhere in the CoP.

'Strengths', as a concept, appears with limited frequency or pattern throughout the whole CoP. Where it is mentioned, 'strengths' as a concept is covered briefly and is not defined or instrumentalised as a pillar of good practice, despite the evidence for this in the literature. This limited focus on 'strengths' perhaps reflects the inherent deficit-based premise underlying SEND, which focuses more on individual pathology. Day (2022b) supports this analysis, arguing that we should think more in terms of *neurodiversity*, rather than SEND.

Neurodiversity is a more encompassing concept, focusing both on the strengths of children and their needs requiring support (Mottron, 2011; Day, 2022b).

'Resilience' appears only twice in the CoP. Its first appearance, in Chapter 3, refers to the duty of multi-agency networks to enhance the 'resilience' of children and families. In Chapter 9, the CoP directs that EHC plans should include outcomes relating to 'emotional resilience'. On neither occasion is the concept of 'resilience' expanded upon or guidance offered about supporting 'resilience' in practice. Similarly, 'stigma' is not discussed at all in the CoP. The code does not

overtly acknowledge the 'stigma' associated with SEND more generally, and the offender cohort specifically.

The infrequency of these concepts resonates with wider criticisms of the CoP (Norwich, 2017; Lehane, 2018), which centre on the absence of reference to social inequalities and wider structural factors, including poverty, which shape the delivery and experience of SEND support. Instead, the CoP has been criticised for its within-child framing of support needs and focus on process, without offering insight and guidance about how needs, risks and strengths interact with the wider environment (Robinson et al, 2018; Cochrane and Soni, 2020). For Cochrane and Soni (2020) this has translated into problem-focused guidance, which offers limited direction for working with children and young people's strengths.

'Challenging behaviour' is discussed in some depth in relation to primary school behaviour management strategies in Chapter 9, but no guidance is offered for the adolescent age group. Brief reference is also made to 'challenging behaviour', as well as 'disruptive' and 'disturbing' behaviour, when defining the SEMH category of needs in Chapter 6, with no further discussion of these concepts. Consequently, the CoP does not offer guidance in working with 'challenging behaviour' for young people transitioning through resettlement or in PRUs. This reflects the move from BESD in the previous code, to SEMH in the current code, which has removed behavioural needs from the CoP. Norwich (2015 and 2019) and Lehane (2018) both critiqued the removal of behaviour from the current version of the CoP, suggesting this change removes a lot of young people from receiving EHC assessment and plans, which also saved considerably on the SEND education budget of local authorities.

In a study of how mainstream headteachers' understood and defined SEMH as a category, Martin-Denham (2021) discerned no consensus from the participants about how SEMH could be defined. Nor was there a consensus about how SEMH needs could be supported. This reinforces the sense that a gap exists in the CoP, a gap about the needs of children exhibiting 'challenging behaviour' and associated 'stigma', which has engendered uncertainty in practice. This

ambiguity in policy and practice offers further insight into why schools, both mainstream and PRU, may continue to struggle with 'challenging behaviour' under the current SEND system, offering additional perspective to the themes of this chapter and the discussion, which argues for engaging with the social context of resettlement (see Chapter 10).

Building upon these issues, Lehane (2018), through a more expanded concept frequency analysis of the CoP, raised concerns that no definition or discrete guidance is offered about different strategies for SEND pedagogy. Norwich (2019) presented a similar criticism of the CoP, lamenting the absence of guidance about the specifics of different types of provision, including alternative provision. This again reinforces the conclusion drawn above about the CoP: that it lacks constructive and practical guidance about how to implement SEND education provision. This is an issue effecting the whole SEND population, including the resettlement cohort. Perhaps most significantly 'inclusion', while a main principle of the CoP, is not defined. Instead, it is introduced in legalistic terms that are opaque and refer in more depth to allied legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. In a similar vein to other pedagogic concepts, this means the CoP offers no unequivocal mandate for inclusive SEND provision that can promote positive outcomes for the resettlement cohort.

The absence of a robust practice framework and clear definitions leaves the CoP open to considerable interpretation, despite being statutory guidance in England (Lehane, 2018; Norwich, 2019). This is a conclusion shared by Curran (2019) in a qualitative study of SENCO implementation of the CoP. Curran (2019) found that SENCOs had mixed attitudes about the lack of specific guidance on inclusive practice and multi-agency working. The SENCO participants felt the CoP offered scope for creativity, but they raised concerns that all professionals were implementing their own interpretation of the CoP, which led to conflict and poor joined-up working, where different agencies worked with different understandings of the CoP.

In related findings, Hellowell (2017) found that professionals, especially medical practitioners, struggled to understand the role of goal-centred planning as

promoted in the CoP. Hellowell's (2017) review of the early literature on the CoP exposed different professional understandings of 'aspirations' and how they were implemented in EHC plans. This again points to the lack of specificity in the CoP and suggests a further barrier to joined-up multi-agency working. Consequently, ineffective multi-agency working is apparent in the literature. Tysoe et al (2021), in a different interview-based study with SENCOs, found that poor multi-agency working presented the biggest challenge to effective EHC assessments and planning. In the study, SENCOs criticised the overriding procedural focus of the CoP, and the lack of clear guidance on standards of effective multi-agency working, despite multi-agency working being a statutory requirement. This is consistent with Lehane's (2018) analysis that the CoP offers no clear picture of what good multi-agency working looks like.

These points are significant because multi-agency working is a driver of resettlement, as evidenced in this research. The complex needs of young people navigating the resettlement transition necessitates the pooled resources of a wide range of agencies. The absence of clear multi-agency guidance in the CoP, it can be argued, is a contributing factor to when resettlement planning goes wrong, where a young person has identified SEND. Poor multi-agency working, and ineffective planning, was a recurrent feature of all three case studies. The available literature posits that the CoP is open to interpretation, which my own reading of the code supports, suggesting that diverse local interpretations likely feed into the coexistence of both effective and ineffective multi-agency working in all three areas. A confluence of agency interpretations, or a divergence of interpretations, will inevitably mediate the efficacy of multi-agency networks.

In conclusion to this section, several problems have been found in the CoP, which in part account for the challenges observed in the findings. Despite this, the CoP does contain important redeeming features. For the first time, it attempts to address the issues of SEND, custody and resettlement. Equally laudable, the CoP creates a duty for agencies to work together and to involve young people in decisions. These principles are essential to good practice. The problem is in the details – the CoP lacks important definitions and fails to offer

specific guidance to support important aspects of practice and so there is considerable room for further policy and practice developments. A move towards a standards-based SEND system, founded on a clearer framework of what good practice means, is at the centre of the government's recently published SEND improvement plan (HM Government, 2023), this reform may help resolve the issues that emerged in this section. Related issues, to those identified in this section, will be taken up in Chapter 10.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a cross-case perspective. Reflecting on this process of synthesis, the most striking finding was the degree of similarity between three very different local authorities. This comparative process offered insight into both research questions, resulting in a set of propositions. The importance of the relationship between professionals and young people was a striking comparative feature of the case studies, highlighting the importance of trust to enhancing the experience of young people during resettlement (RQ 1); and acting as an important facilitator to effective resettlement education (RQ 2). YOTs and alternative education providers exhibited the most positive aspects of relationship-based practice during resettlement.

The issue of stigma offered a more negative side of resettlement. This was inherent in the resettlement process, acting as a barrier to the service support essential to resettlement (RQ 2). Stigma, combined with feelings of alienation and disaffection, was also a recurrent feature of the young people's experiences of resettlement (RQ 1). This could delay planning and prevent the involvement of young people in the planning process. An ineffective planning process, linked to poor inter-agency working, was a barrier to positive resettlement and related service support (RQ 2). Various parts of the education system could also act as barriers to the resettlement process. This presented a picture of an education system that offered a gauntlet of barriers to positive progression for young people attempting to reintegrate after prison (RQ 2).

More creative and relationship-based approaches could mitigate the myriad barriers evident in the education system, offering more unorthodox interventions that could engage young people in varying forms of effective resettlement

provision (RQ 2). These creative approaches were potentially empowering for young people, an experience evident in Luke's biographical turnaround during resettlement (RQ 1).

The CoP looms over these propositions. It is a source of both conflict and of creativity, laudable in acknowledging the importance of SEND to resettlement. Above all the CoP, based on these findings, offers a contested policy space that filters through to both the effective and the ineffective dimensions of resettlement practice.

Chapter 10: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter frames the findings deductively, considering the central messages of the findings in relation to both extant literature and theory, aligned with the research problem and research questions. The central body of the chapter will focus on five main analytical themes. These main themes were developed through the thematic analysis (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 5), emerging as themes in parallel to the more inductive themes drawn from interviews. What distinguishes the main themes in this chapter, from those presented in the findings, is their explicit grounding in literature and theory, including the a priori theoretical framework (Chapter 3). The first main theme relates to strengths-based practice and the inclusivity of alternative education. Following this, the role of social capital in resettlement is addressed. Then there is an analysis of the social ecology of resilience (theme 3). The fourth theme analyses the impact of deviancy, labelling and stigma, followed by the final theme focusing on the limited readiness of young people for FE. The chapter then concludes by linking the discussion back to the research questions.

10.1 Main Theme 1: Strengths-based Practice and Inclusive Education

A core objective of this research project was to gain more understanding about what effective practice is and what it means to those giving and receiving it. Inclusive and strengths-based approaches, drawn from both the literature and the findings of this research, are important features of effective practice in resettlement education and support and are discussed in turn below. The synergy between YOT and alternative provision, as arenas for effective practice, will also be explored to conclude this theme.

10.1.1 Strengths-based Practice

Criminality and deviancy are synonymous in wider society and, as such, reveal an entrenched social norm against offending; and consequently, socially

ascribed deviancy is a crucial factor shaping the life trajectories of young offenders (Gray, 2011; McGregor et al, 2017), an issue that will be considered further in main theme 4. This social norm has fed into discourses about *youth at risk* that have translated, over the past forty years or so, into more deficit-led approaches to working with young people who offend, focusing on risk (Riele, 2007; Hazel and Bateman, 2021; Day, 2022b; Oswald, 2022). In response to this risk focused climate, strengths-based approaches in both education and youth justice have emerged, paralleled by a similar trend in child protection (Woodman and Wyn, 2013; Oliver and Charles, 2015; Fortune, 2018; Hazel and Bateman, 2021).

Given the risks inherent to the resettlement transition, a tension exists between managing risks while also promoting strengths that promulgate positive change, including desistance from crime, a shift to more pro-social identities and positive education outcomes (Lansky, 2015; Fortune, 2018; Hazel and Bateman, 2021; Kemshall, 2021). My own findings exposed the tension between strengths-based practice and more deficit-led practice, suggesting a mix of both approaches existed in all three case areas.

Strengths-based practice is about working with existing strengths and developing new strengths of young people, including in an individual's environment, to promote change and sustain progress utilising goals and aspirations as guides. Strengths-based practice is founded on a positive relationship between practitioner and client, often described as a *therapeutic alliance* (Oliver and Charles, 2015). This approach also values principles of self-determination and partnership, to promote the co-creation of change (Bovard-Johns et al, 2015; Oliver and Charles, 2015). Strengths-based practice has gained important ground in work with young offenders over the last decade, as an important facilitator of desistance and positive outcomes, as well as a constructive way to promote engagement (Hazel et al, 2017; Fortune, 2018; Smithson and Jones, 2021; Day, 2022a).

Strengths-based practice was a clear feature of effective YOT resettlement work across all three case studies. It manifested itself most clearly in the importance of *trust* between professionals and young people, most vividly in Luke's account of his support from his YOT worker that was foundational in his move away from offending during resettlement. Other concepts such as *honesty* and *respect* were also indicators of the type of therapeutic alliance that defines a strengths-based approach. The important role of the YOT education worker was recurrent in the case areas as an integral trusting relationship in the resettlement journey, that was about aspirations and promoting strengths. Drake et al (2014, p. 30) also found trust and respect to be a key ingredient of effective YOT practice:

'... relationships based on trust and mutual respect are highly valued by young people and often stand in contrast to other adult relationships in their lives which have led to rejection or negative experiences...'

Approaches focusing on strengths have the potential to break the deficit-saturated narratives that have defined the lives of many criminalised young people (Fortune, 2018). Case and Haines (2020) postulate that this should be framed as *positive promotion*, with tailored interventions focusing on strengths as a way of meeting need and addressing offending behaviour. This particularly resonates with Danny's own deficit-laden experience of mainstream and alternative provision, which offered a deeply negative experience for him that acted as a criminogenic factor.

Strengths-based approaches are espoused across the youth justice literature, built on supportive relationships, as France and Homel (2006, pp. 305-306) suggest: '*... it is not so much programmes and content but a good supportive relationship with an adult who is not judgemental and able to offer guidance...'* This quotation reinforces the findings of this research, that a positive trusting relationship is a vehicle for change when based on approaches that build strengths and aspirations. This was emphasised by YOT practitioners across the case study areas, who argued for the need to build meaningful connections with

young people. The lived experience of these connections was evident in Luke's own account of his relationship with his YOT worker, whom he felt went 'above and beyond' to support him. The importance of boundaries in professional relationships that promote connection rather than division is a growing feature of the social work literature, which argues that strengths-based practice needs to seek points of commonality and intersection, in ways that determine the boundaries of supportive and change promoting relationships (Ruch et al, 2013; Day et al, 2020).

As several authors have argued, while principles of strengths-based practice have gained significant traction over the past decade, how this form of practice is operationalised has not been fully defined and is open to debate, especially about the balance between promoting strengths and addressing risks (Fortune, 2018; Goldson, 2020; Case and Haines, 2020; Hazel and Bateman, 2021). Findings from my research suggest 'out of the box' and creative approaches are effective in mobilising the principles essential to effective practice that engages with strengths and supports aspirations. YOT sponsored programmes involving art and drama were highlighted across the cases as effective in supporting progression for young people navigating resettlement. Sport was also identified as an effective modality of support. Such approaches helped develop strengths, build aspirations, and nurture pro-social skills such as teamwork, as evidenced from the accounts shared in my data. Risks could also be mitigated; for example, in area C a drama programme developed aspirations and challenged pro-criminal personal narratives. This offered an illustration of the need to balance strengths and risks. That these creative programmes were often a product of inter-agency working between YOTs and the third sector, highlights the importance of professional networks, which will be considered in relation to social capital in the next section (Main Theme 2).

At Sandwell YOT in the Midlands, creative methods employed directly by the YOT were found to promote engagement with support and wider progression in desistance (Caulfield et al, 2021). The research report on Sandwell YOT, involving both young people and staff, found a significant increase in the number

of contacts attended by young people involved in creative projects and a consequent reduction in young people breaching their legal orders through non-engagement, preventing further criminalisation. Creative programmes run by Sandwell YOT included painting, photography, and drama, which offered a flexible approach to addressing a range of needs and offence-types. Young people and staff reported improvements in emotional literacy and emotional regulation, further supporting engagement with support across a range of services, including education. The creative projects also, most pertinently for this research, offered a venue for developing skills and realising strengths, which underpinned the progress evident in young people who participated (Caulfield et al, 2021).

A broad international literature offers an extensive evidence-base for the efficacy of creative approaches in working with young people who offend and experience social marginalisation. The efficacy of these programmes is in large part attributable to their ability to promote feelings of acceptance and recognition for young people through trusting relationships inherent to this form of practice (Meekums and Daniel, 2011; Cohen-Yatziv and Regev, 2018; Moss et al, 2022). Tett et al (2016), in a Scottish custody-based study, found that arts-based projects could provide a positive learning experience focusing on skills, that increased self-esteem and enhanced the capacity of young people to trust others, which could support additional interventions including education. The approach described by Tett et al (2016) was able to reframe pro-criminal identities towards pro-social narratives. Trusting relationships with artists involved in the programme were cited as the main factor in this positive change.

Supporting these findings, in a custodial setting in South Africa, Persons (2009) found that art therapy with young males offered a space to explore hopes and fears, develop goals for the future and offered a pro-social environment that facilitated communication skills development. On a subjective level, through qualitative interviews, young people reported a more secure identity, having worked through negative emotions and difficult family histories. The wider literature also found sport and other physical pursuits had similar effects in terms

of skills development, improved outcomes, and desistance from offending. Researching sports-based interventions with young offenders, Chamberlain (2013) found that positive community-based role models, the leaders of sporting programmes, offered young people who offend a sense of containment and belonging that encouraged participation in skills development opportunities. This involved a person-centred approach, built on perceived support, that could encourage desistance from crime and the development of personal strengths, such as discipline and teamwork, leading to improved personal aspirations.

However, creative interventions also present challenges. Chamberlain (2013) cautions that creative approaches such as sports-based interventions should not be used to individualise the problem of offending and mask wider societal inequalities experienced by marginalised young people in the justice system. Sandford et al (2008) argue that any sports-based intervention must be based on the interests of young people, avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach. Poorly matched sporting activities that are found monotonous by young people could reduce pro-social attitudes and provoke disengagement from interventions, potentially exerting a criminogenic effect (Chamberlain, 2013). This observation supports findings from this research, which highlights that interventions should be needs-led and sit within the frame of reference of young people, including their aspirations. I would also argue that these are messages from research that should apply to all types of interventions, including in alternative education.

10.1.2 The Inclusivity of Alternative Education

The inclusive education literature is very extensive, offering clear conceptual overlap with the literature on strengths-based practice. Given this, essential qualities of inclusivity can be distilled from my own research. Alternative education was central to the findings, as a key setting for inclusive practice and positive pedagogy during resettlement. Inclusive education provision was identified as child-centred and nurturing across all three case study areas. It embodied close and trusting relationships between young people and education staff, and delivered a relevant curriculum, involving bespoke, strengths-based

provision and needs-led support. There was also a clear sense that young people were involved in the planning of their learning.

A number of these qualities of alternative provision have already been explored in the literature review, in several studies and so my own findings reiterate their importance (see Chapter 2). A needs-led curriculum built on close relationships was found to be central to progression in an alternative FE programme (Attwood et al, 2003). A strengths-based approach was also an important feature of alternative or 'second chance' education in Australia (Riele, 2011). Furthermore, small class sizes, a running theme in the findings' chapters, were an integral enabler of inclusive education experiences (Lumby and Morrison, 2009).

Continued exploration of the literature further reinforces the research findings of this thesis. Lopez and Louis (2009) argue that strengths-based education is essential to inclusive learning that practices social justice, through the support of marginalised students. Lopez and Louis (2009) see strengths-based learning as a philosophical stance that translates into effective teaching praxis in a variety of ways. Strengths-based education is located on the principle that potential exists in all students. A strategy for realising strengths-based education, in their findings, was to personalise the learning experience. This involved systematically differentiating learning experiences to make them relevant to the strengths and aspirations of young people. This form of praxis also involved spontaneous responses to the strengths and interests of students, to offer flexible learning in the classroom. This resonates strongly with the need for bespoke learning identified across my three case studies. For example, in area B, flexibility was identified as integral to bespoke learning provision, especially for students experiencing uncertain resettlement transition, set within a history of disrupted education.

Small class sizes were noted by many participants in the findings as the main facilitator to bespoke provision. Bosworth (2014), studying class size in the American public school system, found that smaller class sizes benefitted

educationally disadvantaged students, including those with additional learning needs, closing gaps in achievement across the learning cohort. Furthermore, Yonezawa et al (2009) found that an inclusive learning setting, in particular small class sizes, enhanced learning outcomes for all students, especially those with identified SEND. As this study and my own findings demonstrated, small classes provided scope for greater teacher-learner engagement and tended to offer more relaxed learning environments, promoting more positive learning opportunities, and encouraging a strengths-based focus, that could promote learning identities founded on positive aspirations and goals. Tobin and Sprague (2000), in a much earlier study, also found that low teacher-student ratios could reduce violence in the classroom, because of the greater time staff could offer students. This resonates with the nurturing environment discussed in case study A, as essential to positive pedagogy in the PRU there, which also utilised small class sizes.

The dynamic running through inclusive learning settings and practice in all three case studies was the positive relationship between young people and teaching staff. Danny cited his positive relationship with staff in custodial learning, 'having a laugh', as an essential element in his more positive personal trajectory in custody. From a theoretical perspective, literature on the *affective dimension* of learning offers insight into the causal role of positive learning relationships in supporting enhanced outcomes for young people who offend. Mills and McGregor (2016), based on the work of Nancy Fraser, argued that successful alternative education must embrace the affective dimension of learning. Studying alternative education centres in Australia, Mills and McGregor (2016) argued relational work by teachers was essential to promoting inclusive outcomes. A *caring* approach by staff, based on student strengths and challenging entrenched deficit perspectives internalised by students, moved students away from a sense of failure and increased their capacity for sustained engagement in learning (Mills and McGregor, 2016). This involved, first and foremost, ensuring the emotional wellbeing of students through one-to-one work and pastoral support as a necessity for educational progression. This touches on the complex needs of the resettlement cohort, which includes high levels of need and varied

challenges to emotional wellbeing. Danny, certainly, found the affective dimension of his learning in custody to be the essential ingredient of his positive experience.

Mills and McGregor (2016) framed affective learning as a social justice issue, arguing the solidarity engendered by caring staff-student relations was essential for inclusive education that achieved socially just outcomes, including the realisation of potential and access to opportunities in higher tiers of education or employment. For the authors, the ultimate outcome was empowered students who could aim for and achieve a higher quality of life. These are goals shared with resettlement, which is essentially about developing positive life paths that embrace opportunity and realise aspirations.

In a study investigating the experience of head teachers in mainstream and alternative schools, again in Australia, Reid (2009) investigated the roll of *emotional capital* in offering an inclusive environment for young people involved in the youth justice system. Linking the concept to social capital, Reid (2009, p. 618) defined emotional capital as a social resource in the form of ‘... the shared trust, safety and reciprocity that promotes involvement and commitment.’ While constrained by the absence of young people as participants, the head teacher perspective offered school-level insights about affective learning. Emotional capital was able to find a foothold in schools that promoted a safe environment. That is, where schools could act as arbitrators and mediators of student problems, could offer advice and emotional support, and could address the risk students involved in offending were exposed too, including working with other relevant agencies to promote support that offered students improved emotional capital. The outcome of schools invested in emotional capital was inclusive environments that could promote desistance from offending. School leaders acknowledged this involved working closely with students as decision makers, engaging with the risks in their lives but not resorting to punitive measures. This highlights that positive teacher-student relationships reciprocally influence the wider organisational and systemic operation of schools, that must facilitate those relationships and offer an approach that is responsive to risk and complexity.

The punitive measures experienced by Luke and Danny, especially in mainstream schooling, lacked a perceived sense of safety for them and worked against affective dimensions of education that could mitigate risk.

10.1.3 A Hidden Synergy: YOTs as an Inclusive Education Provider

The preceding discussion of both YOTs and education presents an argument that, at a fundamental level, both agencies are doing a similar job. Both have a gatekeeper role to services and support during resettlement. Both YOT and education also play a role in helping young people navigate the uncertainty of resettlement. Perhaps most fundamentally, what counts as effective practice is very similar for both. Effective YOT and alternative education provision work to include marginalised young people through a strengths-based approach that helps reframe identity and focuses aspirations. Both also rely on positive relationships as a vehicle for change – the relationship with young people, in both services, transcends any interventional modality. The need to build trust, with a largely disenfranchised group, is a core principle of practice in both alternative education and YOT.

The alternative pedagogic role of both is also similar. The role of YOTs as learning providers, both discouraged and largely unacknowledged by government guidance (Ministry of Justice, 2019; YJB, 2021), aligns with the work of alternative providers. This alignment is most evident in creative approaches to resettlement. Alternative providers have a long history offering creative-focused education outside the classroom, including drama and sport (Myers and Adams-Budde, 2016). YOTs act as gatekeepers to, and direct providers of, creative approaches, including through third sector partnerships, whether they be arts-based, sports-based or drama-based (Caulfield et al, 2021). These creative approaches involve educational development. Creative YOT approaches develop fundamental skills, including social skills and can develop tangible skills, such as artistic skills, which are traditionally offered by schools (Caulfield et al, 2021). This type of learning, often dressed up in interventions to promote wellbeing and desistance, has an embedded or disguised dimension. This

involves the development of strengths, in a very similar way that small class sizes, bespoke curricula and the affective dimension of formal learning promotes social skills and emotional regulation in inclusive education environments. Among these similarities, both YOTs and alternative education providers share a pedagogy of disguised learning.

Disguised learning, also called covert and stealth learning, is a sub-genre of the inclusive education literature. Sharp (2012, p. 42), referring to disguised learning using games in classroom settings, defines it in the following terms:

'Stealth learning is when an instructor uses clever, disguised ways to introduce learning objectives through non-traditional tools, such as games, to encourage students to have fun and learn.'

Sharp (2012) argues that creative approaches are essential to stealth learning and must have relevance to the interests and needs of learners to be deemed as meaningful by young people. This also touches on needs-led and bespoke learning, evident in alternative providers across the three case study areas but most fully realised in area A. Luke's work with a youth justice charity as an advocate and researcher, during his own resettlement, did not feel like a traditional learning experience to him. It had a disguised quality that did not follow traditional pedagogical practice, allowing Luke to develop and discover unrecognised strengths that have been essential to his biographical transformation. Indeed, Luke's biography can be seen through the lens of Denzin's (1989a) concept of epiphany, discussed in the literature review. The changes Luke has made are consistent with a *major epiphany*, in the sense that he has experienced major changes to his life trajectory. Luke's support from professionals around him, his experience of prison and the course correction offered by his experience as an advocate, brought change that facilitated this major epiphany, changing Luke's worldview and aspirations. Equally pertinent, education professionals in area A also identified disguised learning as an effective pedagogic strategy, including PSHE citizenship topics being embedded

across the curriculum and the example of car mechanics as an effective way to develop functional numeracy skills for students who were otherwise disengaged from formal learning.

These approaches, across both youth justice and alternative education, again evidence the similarity between both arenas of practice. This suggests, in the domain of resettlement, that YOTs and alternative education can be treated as nearly indistinguishable – the YOT has a pedagogic role and inclusive education has a role in promoting change that leads to desistance. The shared and mutually reinforcing pool of resources both offer raises questions about the policy that currently guides both in working with resettlement. Linking social capital is a central mobiliser of the types of practice discussed in this theme and will be the focus of the next theme.

10.2 Main Theme 2: The Power of Linking Social Capital

This section examines resettlement support through the lens of social capital, focusing on the role of linking social capital in promoting positive resettlement outcomes. The first sub-section will consider the resources offered by multi-agency networks and the second sub-section will explore two strategies for implementing linking social capital: brokering and mentoring.

10.2.1 Multi-Agency Networks

It has long been understood that networks of social support and related levels of social capital are essential to desistance from crime, positive progression in education and the empowerment of people in disenfranchised social positions (Deuchar, 2009; Grenfell, 2009; Chapman and Murray, 2015; Barker and Thomson, 2015; Albertson, 2021). These complex social issues apply to the life trajectories of young offenders, especially those going through resettlement.

Social support networks, of whatever ilk, have three essential qualities that define them as social capital: 1. they involve a social tie with a group or a person who has access to social resources; 2. networks that exhibit positive social capital offer access to important resources, such as support, knowledge or financial aid; and, 3. trust and shared norms run through social networks (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Barker and Thomson, 2015; Boat et al, 2021). Lin (1999) also contributed the insight that social capital is accessed from resources embedded within networks.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the theoretical framework, bonding, bridging and linking social capital have become dominant heuristic categories for understanding social capital in a variety of domains (Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 2001; Woolcock, 2001; Chapman and Murray, 2015). Based on my own reading of the literature, bonding and bridging capital have been more widely studied and investigated when compared to linking capital, an observation supported by Barker and Thomson (2015) who came to a similar conclusion. Yet, during this research, linking capital was the most visible aspect of social support for positive outcomes during the resettlement transition.

Linking capital is about relationships between individuals and groups with different levels of formal power. Linking capital involves a power disparity between the service user(s) attempting to access formal institutional resources and the representative(s) of that institution(s), who gatekeep(s) resources (Woolcock, 2001). This type of social capital captures the essence of the relationship between young people resettling and the various agencies in their lives, including YOT and education, who constitute multi-agency networks. These different agencies that facilitate the support integral to positive resettlement are a network of linking social capital that the young person resettling must engage to access embedded resources. Shildrick and MacDonald (2008), based on a longitudinal study of youth transitions in northern England, found that linking social capital was essential for navigating critical moments or turning points during delicate youth transitions. This bears relevance for resettlement, as a delicate youth transition.

In terms of the findings reported in my research, effective multi-agency partnership working within the resettlement planning process represented one important dimension of linking social capital during the resettlement transition. 'Proactive', 'joined-up' and 'wraparound' were various concepts that came to the fore from participant accounts. These concepts involved child-centred planning that ensured needs were met by key resources offered by relevant agencies. The same agencies also gatekept those resources and held the power to share them with young people. This involved complementary resources that met the varying complex needs of young people in an integrated way, relying on effective joint working between agencies. The outcome of positive linking capital in the findings was bespoke provision, creative experiences and increased educational opportunities, such as Luke's access to an apprenticeship. In area C, it was noteworthy that alternative providers held the power to access the educational resource of internships, emphasising the transformative change that linking capital can make for resettlement opportunities.

Recent research studies about resettlement consortia across England offer insight into the beneficial effects of multi-agency working that pools the resources of different services and combines their linking social capital to facilitate positive resettlement outcomes. Gray et al (2018) noted that the multiple needs of the resettlement population required the multiple solutions offered by a joined-up network of agencies working in concert, offering integrated support. This directly supports my own findings, which suggest that complex needs can only be met through proactive wraparound support and joined-up planning. In their qualitative study, involving consortium professionals in one part of England, Gray et al (2018) found the opportunities offered by actively involved consortium education services and local employers were the most important resources on offer to young people, together with adequate housing, which promoted desistance. Again, this research message aligns with my own findings, which found accommodation was a mediator to positive resettlement and adequate education support could mitigate the criminogenic potential of the resettlement window. The pooling of resources in the consortium, Gray et al (2018) found, led to better use of agency financial resources; and the

consortium improved communication with the custodial estate, which led to more proactive planning and subsequently better targeted provision of services to support young people when released. This highlighted that joined-up and proactive planning, a consistent theme in my own findings, enabled more efficient use of the collective linking social capital of the resettlement consortium.

Again, supporting my findings, and echoing Gray et al (2018), Olaitan and Pitts (2020) explored collaborative working between agencies during resettlement in England. They found that effective resettlement involved the utilisation of agency resources as a social network of support, built around ‘... “individually tailored”, “wraparound” support, “delivered by partners working together across sectors...”’ (p. 89). These quotes from the practitioners in their qualitative study use remarkably similar language to participants in my own findings. Multi-agency networks such as this liberate linking social capital, ensuring that it is more effectively available to young people requiring different social resources to navigate resettlement. Olaitan and Pitts (2020) described multi-agency networks, when they are effective, as *communities of practice*, that shared similar priorities, goals and consistent modes of working. They argued this involved shared organisational cultures, pointing to shared norms reminiscent of Coleman’s (1988) concept of *closure*, which factors in the importance of shared norms to social capital that promotes cohesion between actors.

Building on Olaitan and Pitts (2019), and again echoing the language of my own findings, Cumming (2018) discusses the role of a *multi-systemic wraparound approach* in effectively meeting the needs of young people resettling. Again, Cumming (2018) argues that sharing of agency resources, in a joined-up way, was an essential ingredient of positive resettlement. Cumming (2018) extends this analysis, stating that multi-systemic wraparound support can only be achieved if agency networks have robust leadership. This segues with my own finding that YOTs have a fundamental leadership role in coordinating integrated wraparound support. This brings to the fore the importance of leadership in mobilising the linking social capital of agency networks effectively.

Lin (1999) postulated that the most important mobiliser of social capital is the *flow of information* in networks, a social resource in itself, that enables decision making and navigation of complex social situations, including the resettlement transition. As my findings suggest, YOTs, as the nodal point in the agency network around resettlement, are a central focus for information exchange, filtered through the linking social capital they bring to bear. This information is refracted through the roles of case managers and education workers within YOTs, who use their knowledge to help access the embedded resources of different agencies. This was evident in Luke's situation where the YOT's knowledge of available resources allowed Luke to access housing and learning opportunities during his positive resettlement transition. These were essential factors to facilitating his biographical epiphany (Denzin, 1989a). Related mobilisers of social capital are brokering and mentoring.

10.2.2 Brokering and Mentoring

In the previous sub-section, linking social capital was considered from a network perspective. This sub-section will focus on ways that linking social capital can be realised in practice, through *brokering* and *mentoring*.

The brokering role of YOTs is an important social capital facilitator in the institutional networks of support around resettlement. This was a strategy evident across all three case study areas, manifested in different ways. In all case areas, the YOT assumed a brokering role to access embedded institutional resources on behalf of young people going through the resettlement transition. The YOT was able to broker housing and education for Luke, institutional resources essential for his biographical turnaround. In area C, the YOT helped broker bespoke support for young people with complex needs who were attending college placements by 'educating the educators'. This exemplified the integral role of YOT education workers, who brokered education placements and played an advocacy role to support the stability of placements, especially where challenging behaviour was causing disruption. This ensured the provision of services central to the linking social capital offered by education providers. In

area A, it was noted that this form of brokering helped solidify effective EHC plans, through utilising appropriate embedded resources that met need. The brokering role was evident in resettlement planning across all three authorities; where planning was effective, this was in part a result of the YOTs' capacity to capture key institutional resources to facilitate positive resettlement.

In a case study of the educational work of a single YOT, Lanskey (2015) found levels of exclusion from schools and colleges reduced where the YOT brokered on behalf of young people. This highlighted that brokering by YOTs could help access the embedded resources offered by education providers, thereby securing linking capital. Lanskey (2015) argued that the YOT in question played a role in securing educational inclusion, as a broker for young people, echoing the role of inclusive practice discussed earlier in this chapter. However, many of the cohort experienced some form of exclusion despite YOT brokering, which Lanskey (2015) concluded was evidence that the more exclusionary forces of state education institutions could overpower the more inclusionary brokering of the YOT. This further underlined the importance of the YOT role in navigating the exclusionary power dynamics inherent in the social capital of powerful institutions. In this case study, Lanskey (2015) found a risk averse culture was in operation in education providers who excluded young people or were unwilling to offer access to their resources. This parallels closely Josh's own analysis of risk averse, and risk aware cultures of practice as reported in the cross-case synthesis chapter, as factors shaping access to and exclusion from services.

A second strategy for mobilising the resources of linking social capital is mentoring. This was a feature of area C's service provision. Claridge (2018) pinpointed mentoring as an effective vertical power relationship for unlocking institutional resources, an observation backed up by my own findings and the wider literature. The mentoring role is built on a power imbalance, between the more experienced and knowledgeable mentor and the less experienced mentee, who benefits from the greater knowledge of the mentor. Mentoring has a long history in both youth justice and education (Newburn and Shiner, 2006; Brown and Ross, 2010).

In area C, the strengths of mentoring were evident in the ability of mentors to offer their knowledge and experience to negotiate the challenges of service engagement and maximise the institutional resources on offer, especially within education. The identified outcomes cited by relevant participants were reduced challenging behaviour and improved engagement with learning. In this sense, mentoring can be understood as a *developmental relationship* (Boat et al, 2021). Developmental relationships enable access to the resources of linking social capital because they offer relevant information and guidance about institutional norms, and help mentees identify goals or aspirations. The sum of these knowledge resources is an enhanced ability to navigate institutional power structures (Boat et al, 2021). Supporting these findings, Morselli et al (2006) argued, from their study of mentoring of young adult males in Canada, that mentors can support mentees to access embedded institutional resources through the contribution of the mentor's own knowledge of available government support systems. In the case of area C, ex-offenders were found to be particularly effective in this form of developmental relationship, offering their own experience to young people resettling, including learning from errors the mentors made in the justice system. This form of knowledge was cited as essential to improved outcomes, in terms of positive utilisation of embedded education resources, as evidenced by reduced challenging behaviour and improved educational engagement. Positive, non-challenging behaviour is a universal expectation in education, a social norm that is essential for students wishing to fully benefit from the social capital offered by education (Hellawell et al, 2017). This echoes Coleman's (1988) thesis that one of social capital's central contributions is the development of socially cohesive norms.

In Christensen et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis of the literature, together with Boat et al.'s (2021) study, a consensus was identified that the most effective mentoring schemes had clear goals and/or a clear focus that could be targeted on accessing institutional resources. The use of ex-offenders in area C, focused on learning from prior experience of similar situations and using empathy as a vehicle of engagement, offered the type of focus cited by Christensen et al (2020) and Boat et al (2021). This appeared to in part account for the

transformative potential of this form of mentoring, identified by area C participants.

Newburn and Shiner (2006) found an indirect correlation between mentoring and desistance. Through a study of New Labour's Mentoring Plus scheme for young people, in the early 2000s, they concluded that Mentoring Plus provoked higher levels of desistance because it fostered educational knowledge and skills, which offered the necessary conditions for mentees to adopt pro-social attitudes and behaviours. This form of mentoring encompassed the adolescent age group, further lending credence to the efficacy of mentoring noted in area C.

Deucher (2009) similarly found that mentoring had an indirect effect on desistance. The author studied a football mentoring programme for teenagers involved in gangs, delivered through a multi-agency partnership, which was able to encourage values of positive citizenship and pro-social behaviour through the trust and role modelling offered by mentors, together with an improved perception of agencies by young people involved in the programme. This led to further involvement with service support, promoting positive outcomes. The multi-agency delivery of the programme supports the position put forward in the previous sub-section, namely that joined-up multi-agency networks offers linking social capital that facilitates engagement with the resources offered by agencies. Deucher's (2009) study also further supports the value of creative approaches in promoting desistance and positive outcomes in resettlement, an issue more fully explored earlier in this chapter.

Drilling down further into the mobilisers of linking social capital, Barker and Thomson (2015, p. 130) make the following observation:

'... the social capital literature glosses over the pivotal significance of the interpersonal and phenomenological aspect of relationships that are vital for any social tie to act as a resource.'

Brokering and mentoring, as modalities promoting linking social capital, offer an inherent argument that interpersonal relations are central to accessing social resources. In their Australian study of 80 adult users of state services, Barker and Thomson (2015) focused on the relational aspect of linking social capital between adult service users and the institutions they accessed for support. The authors concluded that service users felt more supported and better able to access services when they had a self-perceived relational connection with professionals representing state institutions. The most widely reported quality of helping relationships, in this context, was professionals willing to *listen* to service users. Equally, service user participants valued being treated as *individuals*, in a person-centred or needs-led sense. Participants also valued professionals who were *honest* and *authentic* in their approach, in particular workers willing to stretch the boundaries of the system to support service users.

Barker and Thomson (2015) derived similar conclusions to the opening theme of this chapter, which argued that strengths-based and inclusive approaches to support, through relationships, were essential for promoting positive resettlement via constructive engagement with service support. In particular, the findings by Barker and Thomson (2015) on stretching the boundaries of support are reminiscent of Luke's experience with his YOT worker. These are qualities of practice inherent in the potential of brokering and mentoring, as mobilisers of linking social capital. These two forms of practice, together with multi-agency networks, are essential protective factors that play a part in the social ecology of resilience.

Both brokering and mentoring involve accessing wider societal structures, to enhance social capital. In this sense, they are both interventions that can address structural inequality. They do this by offering young people knowledge and access to social resources through the power exerted by linking social capital. Inclusive and strengths-based approaches offer a mechanism for realising the potential of social capital in a way that promotes equality and

addresses inequality. As will be made clear in section 10.4, both Danny and Luke experienced structural disadvantage. In Luke's case, the advocacy offered by his YOT worker helped broker access to opportunities that balanced the scales of equality in his favour. This relationship displayed all the qualities the literature highlights as inextricable with effective practice promoting equality and inclusion, especially a willingness to advocate for young people (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021).

The empowering potential of social capital resonates with McNeill (2018) who argues rehabilitation from offending needs to focus on social networks to address structural disadvantage. Linked to this, Durrance et al (2013) note the limited social resources young men from minority ethnic groups have access to. Durrance et al (2013) argue that strengthening social networks is both a social justice philosophy and a rehabilitative approach. This includes supporting young people to understand and positively express their multifaceted social identities, which Calverley (2013) found to be achievable through creative methods relevant to culture and socioeconomic status. This latter point will be touched upon further in 10.3.3 and builds on the importance of creative approaches discussed in 10.1.

10.3 Main Theme 3: The Social Ecology of Resilience

The social ecology of resilience was first introduced in Chapter 3 (section 3.2). It will be further developed here, as a conceptual frame for understanding the findings. Ungar (2011) offers a resilience typology, for better understanding the complex socio-ecological relationship between resettlement, education and YOT support. Ungar's (2011) main premise is resilience is environmentally determined. He rejects older resilience theory that locates resilience as residing within the individual and argues that children are not the central agent in their own resilience, the source of which resides in the surrounding social ecology of individuals. This typology of resilience contains four parts: *decentrality*, *complexity*, *atypicality* and *cultural relativity*. Decentrality and complexity overlap with earlier sections of this discussion and so will be considered in less depth.

Atypicality and cultural relativity offer novel features especially particular to resilience and these will be discussed in more depth below.

10.3.1 Decentrality and Complexity

Across the literature, resilience is closely associated with social capital, with the latter being able to provide resources to enhance resilience, offering protective factors and mitigating risk (France et al, 2012; Bernier and Meizen-Dick, 2014; Carmen et al, 2022). Navigation of these social resources, to access them, is the responsibility of key nodes of support around the child (Bottrell, 2009; Ungar, 2011). This brings in the concept of *decentrality*, which decentralises change and the source of resilience away from the individual and into the wider social ecology around them. From the standpoint of agencies and professionals (linking social capital), the onus is, therefore, on interventions that offer an ecology of resilience (Ungar, 2011).

In various papers, Ungar postulates that interventions provide protective factors that not only support resilience but also facilitate the capabilities of children to engage with support that allows for the expression of resilience (Ungar, 2011; Ungar et al, 2013 and 2014). Furthermore, Ungar (2011) argues that resilience-decentralising ecological interventions from agencies need to be relevant to need, offer supportive and authentic relationships, and be coordinated inter-professionally to provide the best combination of resources. This includes resources that facilitate the expression of resilience by young people, for example social skills training, and the discovery and development of aspirations. These qualities of resilience-enhancing decentrality have already taken centre stage in this discussion chapter. Strengths-based practice and inclusive education (main theme 1) offer these qualities, through the development of trust, respect, and bespoke curricula. Indeed, the strength of the professional-young person relationship has been a guiding thread of this chapter. Mentoring and brokering also offer mechanisms for accessing linking social capital that decentralise resilience-promoting support. Considering Ungar's (2011) typology, the forms of intervention already highlighted by my own findings can be re-cast as resilience-promoting ecological interventions.

The wider literature, beyond Ungar, supports this ecological position, including the importance of inclusive education. For example, Clements-Nolle and Waddington (2019) found feelings of increased school connectedness, including feelings of belonging, were engendered by support that enhanced resilience. The main form of intervention discussed in Clements-Nolle and Waddington (2019) was the emotional support offered by teachers, echoing the inclusive provision and authentic relationships found in my research. Furthermore, they found greater school connectedness promoted desistance from offending, but did not explore this connection further. Similarly, Morrison and Allen (2007) found inclusive school cultures that developed viable learning goals and gave opportunity for achievement backed by teachers utilising strengths-based approaches, improved self-perceived resilience in young people involved in their research. This was reinforced by a pro-social school ethos, which encouraged student group cohesion through team building and peer support, including peer mentoring. While not addressing offending per se or resettlement, the pro-social ethos of the school, which enhanced resilience, evidences the need for resettlement education environments that offer an alternative to pro-criminal identities and offending risk factors.

Hodgkinson et al (2021) published a systematic review of psychological interventions designed to promote resilience in young offenders. They found the most effective psychological interventions facilitated aspirations and challenged pro-criminal narratives; features of interventions also considered earlier in this chapter. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and other approaches that involved an element of skills training were also found to build social and problem-solving skills that supported desistance through enhanced resilience. Hodgkinson et al (2021) found the literature could not always pinpoint the precise areas of psychological development that improved resilience, and this was a source of debate. However, it could be argued, based on the ecological typology presented here, that a focus on psychology alone centralises change in the child and does not capture the important ecological decentrality of interventions. When the main findings of this systematic review are considered through an ecological lens, change resides in practitioners as agents of institutional resources. Interventions provide an infrastructure for resilience fortification

outside the child, building social networks, offering community reintegration, and developing skills that support children engaging with ecological resources to maximise the expression of their resilience.

Complexity, the second concept of Ungar's (2011) typology, suggests that resilience is non-linear; rather, it increases and decreases over time in response to changing social ecologies and social resource availability. Adversity can become resilience, and resilience can become adversity, depending on the social context of development. Constructs of resilience such as perceived self-efficacy, when examined through this non-linear complexity, are unstable and malleable to decentralised risk and support. For Ungar (2011), resilience-promoting interventions, which could include mentoring for example, are the central buffers to the unstable complexity of resilience. Ungar et al (2014) posit that complexity is most acute at sensitive times of change and transition. Furthermore, in their analysis, interventions are time sensitive, utilising finite windows of change to build adaptive developmental pathways. Resettlement is an example of a time of sensitive complex transition that can change levels of resilience for young people dramatically. Effective (linking social capital) networks of support and interventions help stabilise complexity during transition. This is an embedded feature of this chapter and the findings chapters i.e., interventions that operate in a small window of efficacy and are compromised by delays, for example because of poor planning, can impact on wellbeing and result in maladaptive pathways, including a return to pro-criminal lifestyles.

10.3.2 Atypicality

According to Ungar (2011) the social ecological context will determine the relative efficacy of different resilience-related qualities and coping strategies. In creating the concept of *atypicality*, Ungar (2011) wanted to move away from the binary nature of previous research, which tended to assign factors, behaviours and coping strategies in static good and bad categories, without considering the complex interplay between the social and the individual in determining the utility of varying behaviour strategies and support network qualities. In this sense, all potential resilience strategies are atypical, effective in one ecological context but potentially maladaptive under other circumstances. To illustrate this, Ungar

(2011) offered school disengagement as an example, where school is a distressing experience, as an atypical coping strategy to avoid the risks of adverse school environments. Similar strategies were evident in Danny and Luke's biographies. Danny associated with anti-social peers and assimilated with them through his challenging behaviour in the PRU, to avoid becoming the victim of bullying behaviour. While on the surface this was maladaptive for him, perhaps criminogenic, in the context of adapting to a new and challenging school environment, it became a self-protection strategy – a form of atypicality. Ungar (2011) states that coping strategies, even maladaptive strategies, are fuelled by a human need for self-efficacy. For Danny, appearing 'tough' and avoiding bullying signalled an attempt at self-efficacy in the complexity inherent to the PRU.

Danny's lived experience offered insight into the challenging behaviour, most evident in PRUs, that could invoke socially ascribed deviancy, prompting stigma and leading to adverse social ecologies (Bolton and Laaser, 2020). Bottrell (2009) postulated that social structures compel identity work in individuals, configuring identities in response to the social climate they influence them. This offers parallels to secondary desistance and the role of identity shift in criminality (Maruna, 2001; Maruna and Farrall, 2004; Bateman and Hazel, 2021; Oswald, 2022). Based upon an ethnographic study of teenage girls on an Australian council estate already discussed in section 3.3 of chapter 3, Bottrell (2009) found the social environment could stimulate ascribed problem identities, resulting in assigned deviancy, labelling and experiences of stigma. This could lead to resilience in the form of coping and achievement going unnoticed and unsupported by authorities, which in turn drove social disaffection in participants. This form of environmental adversity can prompt a dialectic of exclusion and resistance, manifest in behaviours that challenge perceived power structures. This idea of resistance finds common ground with Ungar's (2011) atypicality, as a coping strategy in adverse environments. This mirrors the dynamic of challenging behaviour and stigma analysed in PRUs (main theme 4), suggesting the atypicality of resistance is a dimension of challenging behaviour. This highlights the need for interventions that constructively tap into resistance, channelling it into positive directions, such as greater awareness of rights and

social justice through participation, for example in school-student councils (McGregor et al, 2016).

In Luke's case, following his exclusion from school and subsequent heavily reduced PRU timetable, his level of criminality increased. Bereft of school support - a source of linking capital - and with no positive diversions he engaged in a pattern of criminal behaviour that utilised his strengths and led to financial gains. This was a form of atypical coping that gave Luke scope to manage his exclusion from other sources of support. Over the longer term this proved maladaptive, leading to prison, and highlighting that resilience changes in the face of complexity. For Barker (2013) and others (for example Deucher, 2009), in situations like Luke's, negative social capital, especially the bonding capital of pro-criminal peers, offers networks of support, acceptance and opportunity through illicit means. The onus is, therefore, on agencies to counter this through enabling decentralised pro-social networks for and with young people, making positive linking capital more powerful than negative forms of social capital.

For Bottrell (2009), social capital needs to be developed that offers acceptance and inclusivity, to provide social ecologies of support that preclude the need for resistance and criminality. This has relevance to environments, such as PRUs, that breed a culture of dislocation, built on challenging behaviour and labelling. Ungar (2011, p. 11) states that parents, caregivers and educators facing maladaptive coping strategies in children need to '... challenge negative development and promote socially adaptive patterns of coping that ensure the child greater social inclusion.' This again brings into focus interventions that offer a resilient social ecology, not the toxic emotional ecology observed by Bolton and Laaser (2020) in a PRU. This calls for strengths-based practice and inclusive school environments, utilising strategies such as mentoring that promote social cohesion in the classroom. Resilience-building involves the development of bridging capital embracing the heterogeneity of pro-social peers and role models who can build positive change (Boeck and Fleming, 2011; Taylor, 2012); as well as the mobilising of institutional resources that offer the benefits of linking social capital (Barker and Thomson, 2015).

Taylor (2012), through interviews with adolescents involved in graffiti, found the illicit networks surrounding graffiti art offered an acceptance and sense of connection not available in school or pro-social peer networks, from which they were disaffected. Graffiti was an act of resistance to this disaffection. The risks associated with graffiti, as a form of atypical coping, offered a sense of accomplishment and personal expression that bolstered resilience. This made breaking the criminal patterns associated with graffiti especially difficult. Taylor (2012) argued that contact with non-offending peers in inclusive environments, supported by multi-agency networks utilising strengths-based approaches, could encourage school engagement and desistance from criminality – issues considered in main themes 1 and 2. Taylor (2012) also supports Ungar's (2011) concept of decentrality as central to promoting resilience, in this case to address offending. These conclusions echo recurrent findings in this thesis including the role of wraparound agency support and the efficacy of mentoring to change disaffection and social isolation.

10.3.3 Cultural Relativity

It has long been understood that resilience has a cultural make-up. Accordingly, it is well established that wider theories of child development, including attachment, need to be understood through a cultural lens (Ungar, 2011 and 2012b; Sanjeevi et al, 2018; Packer, 2021). For this reason, Ungar (2011) argued in his ecological typology that assessment and interventions to build resilience must have cultural relevance or relativity. Binding cultural relativity indirectly to social capital, Ungar (2011) posited that social networks and resources, including the linking capital of agencies, should offer appropriate resources that are accessible in cultural terms. Considering support from agencies for indigenous communities across the world, Ledogar and Fleming (2008) put forward a similar argument in relation to social capital, emphasising the importance of social capital that is valued within cultures. They note that linking social capital is problematic for indigenous groups who have experienced oppression from governments and may have a history of resistance. In this sense, how individuals and groups engage with institutional support is also culturally influenced. At one level, this requires political input and policy that commissions culturally relevant services. In terms of implementing culturally

relevant social capital, professionals and agents representing institutions need to embed participation in their practice and forge meaningful relationships, as gatekeepers and providers of linking social capital (Ledogar and Fleming, 2008). This again resurfaces the good practice analysed in this chapter and evident in the findings, including the need for authentic and inclusive support.

The issue of cultural relativity has strong relevance for resettlement. Support, from YOTs, education providers and others, needs to be culturally relevant. In area C it was found that to be effective, creative and out-of-the-box approaches needed to be relevant to the frame of reference of young people, including their cultural frames of reference. Creative approaches are amenable to culture, because they draw on art, sport and other experiences that are cultural artefacts. Available literature on creative pedagogies and youth justice supports the adaptability of the arts and sport to cultural frames of reference that promote engagement from young people (Frogett, 2007; Parker et al, 2018; Parker and Morgan, 2020).

These issues around culture intersect with practice that is creative, inclusive, strengths-based and relevant to positive social capital. These are all issues covered in-depth in the first two sections of this chapter. These are also qualities that have resilience promoting potential. Taken together, such culturally sensitive practices not only speak to young people but also have wider structural resonance. Current best practice guidance highlights that interventions should openly acknowledge discrimination and structural inequality, in order to empower young people and promote equality of opportunity (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021). In a similar vein to brokering and mentoring, creative approaches offer, in multifaceted ways, a concrete framework for addressing cultural inequality.

As an example of a culturally sensitive intervention, Frogett (2007) found creative writing offered an alternative approach to engagement with YOT interventions by encouraging young people to explore their offending through personal experience and cultural motifs that allowed them to understand the impact of their offending, and develop victim empathy, without a sense of shame

that could be counter-productive to desistance. Frogett (2007) focused on the experiences of one young offender, who was able to use creative writing to process her own history of abuse and violent family relationships, to better understand her own violent behaviour. While not directly touching upon the theory covered here, the study offers a creative approach that can promote wellbeing and enhance resilience in the face of an abusive history, set within an intervention that can also circumvent feelings of shame and stigma while encouraging desistance. This theme has touched upon labelling and stigma already, as potential inhibitors of resilience, as well as interventions that can mitigate stigma. The next section will focus on labelling and stigma in more depth.

10.4 Main Theme 4: Labelling Theory: The Impact of Ascribed Deviancy and Stigma

Deviancy is a socially ascribed act, based on the judgements of others, fueled by both behaviours and stereotypes, resulting in labelling that reciprocally engenders stigma. This offers a succinct summary of *labelling theory*, which is the focus of this section (Goffman, 1963; Becker, 1973; Uggem et al, 2004; Bernburg, 2019). Labelling theory was not originally part of the theoretical framework but became relevant when it emerged as a consistent theme in professional interviews. As an emergent theory, rather than an a priori concept, it will be introduced in this section for the first time.

Howard Becker and Erving Goffman independently founded the modern paradigm that surrounds labelling and stigma, in the 1950s. Referring to a range of socially defined *outsiders*, as he termed it, Becker (1973, p. 5) stated: 'A less simple but much more common view of deviance identifies it as something essentially pathological, revealing the presence of a "disease".' This disease metaphor was also prevalent in Erving Goffman's work (Goffman, 1963 and 1989) on the social construction of mental illness, which he interpreted through a powerful dynamic of labelling and associated stigma, as defining the identity of psychiatric asylum patients.

Becker (1973) first coined the term *label*, to refer to how a deviant label was placed on behaviour that was construed as socially pathological by significant social actors, including powerful professionals and the media. In his seminal work, Becker was ultimately influenced by Tannenbaum (1938), who found that identifying 'delinquents' by that term was a factor in persistent youth criminality, because the assigned delinquent identity created a self-fulfilling prophecy. This presaged many of the central concepts of later labelling and stigma research, highlighting that youth offending is inimical with the origins of this paradigm.

According to this theory, deviant labels, such as the 'young offender' or similar constructs, act as markers that lead to marginalisation through stigmatisation. This process often limits the agency of the deviant by powerful professionals, termed *moral entrepreneurs* by Becker (1973), who ascribe deviancy and assign negative labels to the person. This is a common experience for many young people who offend and experience stigma (Baldry et al, 2018; Deakin et al, 2022). Labelling is a nodal conceptual point that interacts with a range of other social phenomena, most notably *stigma*. Tyler (2020) traced stigma back to the practice of physically marking slaves as a form of physical and psychological subjugation. Influenced by the work of Robert Pinker, Tyler (2020) distinguished modern stigma from physical slavery, as a form of slow and socially sophisticated symbolic violence, that acts as both persecution and psychological torture. In this sense, stigma and power are interconnected through oppressive means, which Link and Phelan (2014, p. 30) referred to as *stigma power* i.e., the power to control and exclude others. The power of stigma can manifest on multiple levels. Goffman (1963), in developing his original theory, was focused on understanding the *micro-interactive* elements of stigma in different social contexts, that could produce negative labels. Later authors have since extended that analysis, studying the ability of *institutions* to stigmatise systemically (Huckelbury, 2012). Subsequently in this theme, deviancy, labelling and stigma will be

considered through the issues of challenging behaviour and identity management in FE. Labelling and stigma, as a paradigm, have considerable conceptual relevance to SEND (Day, 2022a and 2022b). Labelling emerged as a theme in professional interviews, underlining its relevance to the research topic. The SEND system is built on many conceptual facets that can be analysed through the stigma and labelling paradigm. SEND is a system all about labels, officially sanctioned labels, that refer to behaviour outside of expected norms. While not in its own right a form of deviancy in the sense that criminality is, SEND is subject to the same process of social ascription of difference by powerful professionals. SEND provokes responses and behaviours from others that can shape individual life paths. When intersecting with the issue of youth offending, SEND acts as a further marker of difference that can amplify the deviant identity of young people who fall outside social and educational norms. Given this clear intersection between SEND and youth justice, labelling as a paradigm of interconnected concepts offers a powerful analytical tool for understanding the complex nuances of marginalisation experienced by the youth justice cohort (Day, 2022a and 2022b).

These issues, as evidence for stigma and labelling, are also evidence of the structural inequalities introduced in chapter 1 and interwoven in other parts of the thesis. Both labelling and stigma are evidence of the impact of structural factors on the direct lived experience of young people. They are connected with professional risk discourses that structure youth transition, including resettlement (see section 2.1.1). Labelling and stigma, as will be explored below, represent an inequality of opportunity, where young people are exposed to inappropriate learning environments involving challenging behaviour or are denied opportunities open to their non-offending peers, such as access to FE.

10.4.1 Challenging Behaviour

The complex social dynamics of deviancy and labelling appeared to be at play across the three case study areas and contributed towards the barriers that could inhibit resettlement – an issue already touched upon in the previous two themes. At the secondary education level, it was found, from both YOT and education professional perspectives, and most vividly from Luke and Danny, that mainstream schools ascribed deviancy to young people identified as a problem through their challenging behaviour. In turn, the identification of this ‘problem’ had stigmatising effects. Both Danny and Luke experienced punitive sanctions due to their challenging behaviours that bred alienation from school and in part contributed toward their exclusion to the local PRU. There is no doubt their own actions played a part in this, as they both acknowledged, but the social response to this behaviour was fundamental to their biographical journey.

A cycle of challenging behaviour and punitive responses appeared to amplify the negative behaviour of both, entrenching their deviant status in their mainstream schooling careers. This is the essence of labelling theory: ascriptions of deviancy provoke negative reactions from both self and others (Bernberg, 2019). The punitive responses to Danny and Luke confirmed their deviant status and, in Luke’s case, led to the conscious internalisation of deviancy through his self-ascribed status as ‘class clown’, which contributed to a spiral towards exclusion. This is what Becker (1973) referred to as a *deviant self-concept*. In both Danny and Luke’s cases, deviancy contributed to an identity based on marginalisation from the mainstream, which resulted in the social rejection inherent in labelling (France et al, 2012; Deakin et al, 2020), in their case, from mainstream school. For Danny in particular, this caused deep feelings of alienation, still live at the time of interview, because of both exclusion from mainstream school and also rejection from mainstream peers in education, who he no longer saw after moving to the PRU. Significantly, Danny blamed the PRU (in part) for his current imprisonment based on his negative experience there.

For Becker (1973), deviancy becomes a *master status label* that disrupts everyday routines - going to mainstream school or Danny's love of football - creating a *self-fulfilling prophecy*, through increasingly entrenched patterns of deviancy based on feelings of rejection and alienation. These patterns can trigger or cement a pro-criminal identity shift, especially when acceptance is found from pro-criminal peers, which is a classic pattern of the relationship between labelling and offending (Maruna, 2001; Uggen et al, 2004; Cherney and Fitzgerald, 2015). This pattern was evident in both Danny and Luke's biography where problems at mainstream school and subsequent exclusion were key factors in a biographical trajectory that led ultimately to prison, via association with negative peer groups. This provides an important context, offering insight into factors of identity and desistance that need to be managed by all agencies during resettlement to prevent further negative spirals towards offending.

PRUs, described as 'melting pots of challenging behaviour' by one professional participant and associated with relational toxicity by several other participants, offer a case in point, when attempting to understand the impact of deviancy, labelling and stigma on the resettlement transition. PRUs are a break from the norms of a society which punitively sanctions challenging behaviour, ascribing it as a deviant act that can be labelled in numerous ways, including via problematised labels such as psychiatric diagnoses found in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; DfE and DoH, 2014; Baldry et al, 2018).

PRUs are a *de facto* site of deviancy because they take a largely mainstream excluded population. They have also been heavily stigmatised in the media, in part because of the deviancy outside the mainstream they represent (France et al, 2012; Bolton and Laaser, 2020). In case study areas A and B, the environment of PRUs created a potentially toxic environment where challenging behaviour became a norm in the classroom. In area B, it was found challenging behaviour in PRUs led to the active problematisation of young people that fed into deviant labels. The problem presented by PRUs has been acknowledged in the academic literature, where there is a consensus that the complex needs of

young people are often unmet by PRUs, which can act as an outlet for the negative expression of SEND, including communication difficulties which may manifest as challenging behaviour (McLoughlin, 2010; Snow et al, 2015; Bolton and Laaser, 2020). As McLoughlin (2010, p. 234) records from her ethnographic observations of the PRU environment, challenging behaviour is often the dominant marker of the PRU experience:

‘Rage, fear and distress tend to be directly and instantly acted out through the body. This takes the form of acts of self-harm or aggression towards others... These behaviours are extremely upsetting and frightening to witness... some children will desperately cling to particular members of staff... Others project their intolerable feelings into staff and quickly become seen as unmanageable...’

This gives a flavour of challenging PRU environments, which can fuel behaviour ascribed as deviant and confirm pathologising labels. Echoing this powerful quotation, Bolton and Laaser (2020), also through an ethnographic study of a PRU, found the PRU they investigated was often characterised by an emotional ecology replete in relational toxicity between students, and between staff and students.

Participants in both areas A and B identified that negative formal labelling by professionals was a central feature of the social dynamic in PRUs which, very possibly, fuelled the deviant self-concepts of young people who attended. Certainly, this was an experience described by Danny, who found the challenging environment of the PRU fed into his more negative behaviour patterns, including during the period of resettlement between his prison sentences. Negative feelings and behaviours were reinforced further by staff, who he considered unsupportive and punitive. Danny’s impassioned and disaffected tone during the interview, including about negative staff interactions, indicated the toxic emotional ecology found by Bolton and Laaser (2020). Danny’s experience also signalled a pattern of socially ascribed deviant labels

by professionals acting as moral entrepreneurs through punitive actions (Becker, 1973). In essence, Danny appears to have experienced the deviancy-fuelling mechanics of a common venue for resettlement education. Luke's minimalist involvement with the PRU, while not involving challenging behaviour per se, represented a form of stigma marked by a 1 hour per day timetable. Both education and the youth justice system offer conjoined avenues for labelling and ascribed deviancy.

Danny, as a young Black male, is from an ethnic minority overrepresented in the youth justice system (see section 1.2 for a summary of this overrepresentation). Danny's experience of the challenges of the PRU is emblematic of wider findings about the experience of young men from ethnic minority groups, involved in the youth justice system. For example, HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021), through interviews with young male offenders from ethnic minorities (n = 38), found participant offending and life experience to be intertwined with challenging environments and negative peer groups, which reinforced stigma and discrimination experienced by ethnic minority offenders. In particular, the Inspectorate found young offenders from minority groups often got caught up in challenging behaviour that undermined their relationships with professionals and service support, reminiscent of Danny's experience. 'Choosing not to engage' is a common stereotype about young men from ethnic minorities, involved in the youth justice system (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021, p. 21). Often because of perceived non-engagement, needs are overlooked, communication difficulties not identified and inappropriate levels of maturity attributed to young people uncertain of how to engage with support that may not be attuned with their need or inaccessible to different communication styles (Vaswani, 2014; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021; Mabon et al, 2023). This is a microfacet of structural inequality compounded by systemic discrimination that plays a part in defining the lived experience of young men in overrepresented minority groups within the youth justice system. Barriers such as these prevent access to services that can reduce youth justice involvement, including mainstream education support; and feed into stigmatising labels about young people that can

propel offending developmental trajectories through social exclusion, as Danny experienced when excluded from mainstream school (Mabon et al 2023).

Deakin et al (2022) offer a primary study of labelling, relevant to both the work of YOTs and education providers. They examined the experience of labelling, risk and stigma for young people involved with youth justice systems across England, Estonia, Portugal and Spain - totalling 92 interviews with young people involving creative techniques, such as photo-elicitation, as part of a wider ethnographic study of marginalised youth identities. Stigma, labelling, and discrimination were a widespread experience of many of the young people involved in the study, across all four jurisdictions. Deakin et al (2022) revealed that stigma and labelling were perpetuated through a cycle of daily negative interactions with agencies and professionals, echoing Danny and Luke's experience. Stigma was an early experience of many participants, especially in education, where being labelled as deviant or bad by teachers tended to escalate into punitive responses to challenging behaviour, which amplified that behaviour often resulting in suspension and exclusion from education. Young people found themselves to be stereotyped by their behaviour, which created the self-fulfilling prophecy of formal labelling, propelling this cycle of exclusion. Again, this cycle of escalation was a strong theme of both Danny and Luke's educational biographies.

Based on their analysis, Deakin et al (2022) found this process of education labelling to be criminogenic because of exclusion from pro-social peer networks. This form of social exclusion was a cause of Danny's own deep-seated alienation which he in part attributed to his trajectory towards imprisonment. Many of the participants in Deakin et al's (2022) study found moving on from this social exclusion difficult, with a criminal record acting as a barrier to rehabilitation. This raises issues of identity management, considered in the next sub-section.

Deakin et al, (2022) found the most consistent outcome of negative labelling was adverse impacts on emotional wellbeing and self-esteem, touching issues of resilience, considered in main theme 3. In areas A and B, the role of labelling and related factors in PRUs seemed to create a consistently negative environment that acted as a barrier during resettlement. This consistently difficult experience for young people is antithetical to the strengths-based and inclusive practice discussed in the first theme of this chapter. The negative impact of labelling in the findings included chaotic learning environments, reduced timetables (Luke's 1 hour a day timetable), and Danny's deep-seated disaffection.

Day (2022b, p. 3) offers empirical support to this analysis, through her study of stigma in the youth justice system towards neurodivergent children:

'The isolation, exclusion, and stigmatisation of children permeates both the education and youth justice systems. Poor staff training, limited knowledge, and insufficient assessment and screening tools have contributed to a lack of support and identification of neurodivergent children in both the education and criminal justice systems internationally...'

This quotation offers both a cogent summary of Day's findings and the wider literature (for example, Kirby, 2021). Limited knowledge and assessment are two central findings highlighted in this quotation, which resonate closely with the findings of this thesis. These appear to be common factors that fuel stigma, as evident in PRUs and the mainstream education system in the case study areas. Similar to Luke and Danny's experience, Day (2022b) found exactly the same spiralling dynamic of labelling and challenging behaviour in her own research on the youth justice system, highlighting issues of negative professional perceptions, isolation and alienation are common to the experience of young people in the youth justice system.

Youth at risk discourses, which are socially pervasive and can inform professional approaches to risk, are one factor underpinning the deficit-led deviancy ascribed to young people (Baldry et al, 2018; Deakin et al, 2022). Such discourses engender risk averse cultures of practice identified by several participants in the findings. It could be argued that discourses of deviancy, especially when set against more rehabilitative discourses, disrupt inter-agency working. Certainly, this clash of professional cultures has been identified as a disruptor of rehabilitation, including resettlement (Muncie, 2008; Baldry et al, 2018). Risk averse cultures were identified in children services across all three local authorities, leading to delayed housing provision for resettlement. Education providers, based upon negative risk perceptions, were unwilling to offer immediate education support until young people 'proved themselves' after release. As participants noted, this could result in a form of dehumanisation, where risks supplanted the child status of those resettling. These are further examples of punitive responses, linked by participants to labelling and stigma, that moved beyond the individual sanctions experienced by Luke and Danny, reaching into a more systemic expression of labelling and stigma, operating at the level of organisations and systems. Perry et al (2020) found that organisational level stigma in public services resulted in deviant groups being given lower priority in service provision. Similarly, it was found here that young people resettling, across all three case areas, were a low priority for agencies not directly involved in youth justice.

These issues of stigma and labelling intersect with other structural inequalities and disadvantages. As discussed in section 1.2 of the introduction and in section 6.1 with reference to area A, the youth justice population is subject to intersecting disadvantages, including significant adverse childhood experiences, the pervasiveness of SEND and the disproportionate representation of minority groups. It is perhaps significant that both Danny and Luke, both young Black men, come from an overrepresented minority group that is more likely to be excluded from school and become involved in the youth justice system, including serving time in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2021). Danny and Luke's experience

and lifepath resonates with a wider profile of the youth justice population, including the wider resettlement population (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021). To illustrate this resonance, not only have they both experienced exclusion and SEND, they also come from a personal background that involved considerable involvement with local services that did not result in improved outcomes, but rather a trajectory that included offending and PRU involvement. Added to this, both Danny and Luke come from socially disadvantaged background, including both growing up in a poorer part of area A and coming from an ethnic background significantly overrepresented in the youth justice system. Danny had spent time in care earlier in his childhood and Luke was in supported accommodation at the time of interview. Being in care, or having been in care, as well as growing up in poverty, is a major predictor of youth justice involvement, especially when intersecting with school exclusion and coming from a minority background (Laming, 2015; Jahanshahi et al, 2022). Both Danny and Luke's lifepaths have involved a combination of structural factors that have shaped their involvement in offending behaviour. Reflecting these structural issues, PRUs are an arena of education intimately connected to both exclusion and the youth justice system. Unfortunately, PRUs appear to have entrenched structural disadvantage for both, by offering a learning environment that was both challenging and ineffective for their developmental progression, introducing them instead to environmental risk factors, including stigma and labelling from professionals. This analysis supports the findings of Fergusson et al (2004, p. 956), who found that offending was a life course process '... in which adverse family, individual, school, and peer factors combine to increase individual susceptibility to crime.'

In this environment of organisational stigma and clashing agency discourses, multi-agency networks did not function in the case areas: priorities and values clashed, built on differing discourses of risk and rehabilitation leading to siloed working, young people unheard, and unclear resettlement goals. In essence, linking social capital not working. In all three case study areas, disjointed agency networks disrupted planning and undermined the linking social capital available to young people through professional networks. This was a common experience

for YOT workers, who described the undermining of their brokering role, because of the risk aversion of other agencies versus their more rehabilitative approach. These issues of disjointed multi-agency working could be seen through the related lens of barriers to FE.

10.4.2 FE and the Challenge of Identity Management

The issue of stigma in FE was evident throughout the findings. Professional participants put this down to the aversion of FE colleges to the perceived risks embodied by young people resettling. FE colleges, for the most part, appeared unwilling to offer a second chance to young people released from custody. Colleges subscribed, it seemed, to deviant stereotypes and lacked the knowledge or experience required to work with the needs of the resettlement cohort. This resulted in a low threshold of refusal by colleges, for young people released from custody and the wider youth justice population. A large part of the YOT role, especially for education workers, was liaising and brokering with colleges, often to no effect given low levels of college enrolment by the resettlement cohort in all three areas. The brokering role of YOTs appeared blunted by more distant relationships with FE colleges.

The inaccessibility of FE is a manifestation of structural inequality. Namely discrimination towards young people because of their background and social status, which is in contravention of the UNCRC's principle of non-discrimination (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Theories of equality shed further light on the nature of this structural inequality. Access to FE is a form of *instrumental equality*, that is equality linked to the promotion of a related ideal (Temkin, 2001) – in this case the ideal of access to education that can promote positive change. When considering instrumental equality, van den Beek (2022) argues we must be cognisant of both why equality is important and what equality is being promoted. Equality theory states this most concretely in terms of the 'equality of comparability' (Temkin, 2001, p. 334). This refers to the concept of *fairness* between people in similar situations, including young people of a similar age attempting to enter FE. Temkin (2001, p. 45) frames this issue in the

following terms: ‘... for comparative fairness ... among equally deserving people, it is bad, because unfair, for some to be worse off than others through no fault or choice of their own.’ The inaccessibility of FE suggests an implicit view within the education system, reflecting wider societal values and discourses, that young offenders are inherently undeserving and are at fault for the negative consequences of their actions. In this sense, the inaccessibility of FE is an expression of deficit-led risk discourses, widespread across the professions, about young offenders (Case et al, 2020 - discussed in depth in section 2.1.1). Deficit-led discourses based on risk fuel the precarity of transitions, such as resettlement (Bateman and Hazel, 2021). Denial of access to FE is a form of segregation that is associated with wider societal discourses justifying conceptions of young offenders as the deviant other. This is an extension of disciplinary exclusion, evident in PRUs, by taking exclusion into a pre-exemptive direction.

Therefore, the inaccessibility of FE represents a form of inequality of opportunity that signals discrimination by failing to account for the complex interplay between the individual and the social in offending, instead solely blaming the individual through an *inequality of comparability* with non-offending peers. Stigmatising the aspirational individual attempting to rehabilitate through education neglects the reality of personal agency and the wider structural factors that determine levels of agency, especially when set within deprivation, inequality, and complex needs, as the research literature suggests (Jahanshahi et al, 2022; Bayas and Grau, 2023). Young offenders are deviant from others and the process of labelling itself is a form of negative comparison between the deviant and the mainstream that results in stigma (Becker, 1973).

Sen (1992) suggests that the operationalisation of equality in lived reality, as both a value and political ideology, is often on simplistic terms that do not account for the complex diversity and similarity that exists between individuals and across populations, including between the resettlement cohort and the mainstream population. Consequently, Sen (1992) argues equality judgements by those in power, such as education gatekeepers in FE, focus on the most

important or explicit differences and similarities, which he refers to as the 'focal variable' (p. 2). In the FE arena, offending histories become the focal variable for the resettlement cohort and the source of structural inequality. For Sen (1992, p. 117) equality judgements based on diversity and similarity '... come down to the question, 'What are the most significant diversities and similarities in this context?'' Offending, as a minority activity, becomes the most significant source of diversity in the context of resettlement pathways to FE. Yet, focusing on single or limited focal variables such as offending can diminish the need to establish equality on the basis of other variables, such as the impact of social deprivation, which can result in further inequality, discrimination and exclusion (Sen, 1992), as the findings about FE and resettlement suggest.

These issues of equality are crystalised in the form of criminal conviction disclosures to colleges, which often prohibited entry onto courses. This was a difficult issue for both YOTs and young people to manage. Cherney and Fitzgerald (2015) term disclosure of criminal convictions as *identity management*, based upon a wider literature about how, when and to whom possibly stigma-provoking information is to be disclosed. Cherney and Fitzgerald (2015) offered added theoretical depth to this problem, through their examination of the complexity of *stigma management* and criminal record disclosure. They found that proactive attempts at criminal record disclosure and stigma management were extremely difficult because they involve '... actions that challenge the basis of the discredited label that is attached to an individual or group ...' (p. 19). This involved engaging and tackling entrenched discourses and ascriptions of stigma by actors and institutions who are gatekeepers to the bridging social capital of education and training. Proactive conviction disclosure, something actively supported by YOTs, offers an opportunity for young people to signal their desistance, helping them actively reframe their deviant status (Cherney and Fitzgerald, 2015). For Maruna and King (2009), this form of desistance signalling provided an opportunity to reinforce the *redemption scripts* associated with the identity shift of secondary desistance, a potential mechanism for moving away from deviant self-identification.

Given the issues highlighted by Cherney and Fitzgerald (2015) and Maruna and King (2009), the disclosure of criminal convictions to colleges is a complex endeavour occurring in a contested milieu of deviancy and redemption. This complexity, it could be argued, accounts for the challenges experienced by young people and YOTs, evident in the findings. Disclosing convictions, on the surface a simple act, is a loaded and difficult social strategy. Cherney and Fitzgerald (2015) were not able to offer any practical strategies for identity management in relation to conviction disclosures to colleges, a shortcoming shared by the wider literature that was reviewed (for example, Harding, 2003; Jones and King, 2013). The main message from this body of research was that proactive self-disclosure is most effective. However, findings from my research suggest proactive self-disclosure appears to expedite refusal of entry to college courses. The most widely used guidance on disclosure, including by YOTs, is prepared and updated by Nacro (2016), a national criminal justice organisation. While a useful hub for information on rights and responsibilities in relation to conviction disclosure, Nacro does not offer any practical disclosure strategies other than being proactive. This is an area that requires policy development, to counter the culture of refusal that appears to exist in FE.

The stigma and labelling evident at both the school and PRU level and in FE are a manifestation of the limits of linking social capital, which has already been explored at length earlier in this chapter. As discussed in section 3.1.2 of the theoretical framework chapter, the literature does not offer a conceptually developed critique of linking social capital. The exception is papers by Szretar and Woolcock (2004) and Lo and Fan (2020). In both papers, it is argued that linking social capital can present challenges to marginalised and lower status groups, where elites and powerful professionals withhold or selectively channel social resources, a process referred to as *symbolic violence* by Szretar and Woolcock (2004). This type of symbolic violence, it could be argued, is evident in the stigma young people experience at different level of the education system before and after time spent in prison. This suggests that labelling and stigma acts as a counter to the positive potential of linking social capital discussed in

main theme 2. Stigma and labelling contribute to a climate in which brokering and mentoring, as linking capital mobilisers, become even more important.

10.5 Main Theme 5: Lack of Readiness as a Barrier to Further Education

As noted in the cross-case comparison in Chapter 9, education can act as a gauntlet for young people attempting to resettle, where barriers exist at various levels of the system. Linked to this, challenging behaviour within PRUs contributes to a climate of relational toxicity. As well as offering insight into the role of stigma and labelling, challenging behaviour also inhibits preparedness for FE, by undermining the essential learning opportunities that develop academic skills and result in sufficient qualifications to enter FE-level courses. Several participants reported that young people in the resettlement transition often were academically below college entry level and did not possess GCSEs. Added to this, in area C in particular, tariffs for entry were set very high for FE-courses, including apprenticeships, that held interest for young people resettling. This translated into a small number of the resettlement cohort, across the three cases, progressing to FE.

Equally important was the issue of school curricula that did not offer content that prepared young people for FE. It has been noted in the findings and in the wider literature that many alternative providers, even those with good learning environments, offer academic content that is not academically sufficient for FE. Often young people recognise this, seeing curricula as irrelevant to their interests, aspirations and learning needs (McGregor et al, 2015). Deucher and Graham (2012) and McGregor et al (2015) argued that a meaningful curriculum, aligned to FE, is essential for engaging disaffected young people in the criminal justice system. Otherwise, they state, progression will not be possible. This underlines the importance of bespoke learning, considered in the first section of this chapter, which is aligned with the requirements of FE providers, as well as the strengths and aspirations of learners.

Low level education, as perceived by learners, can disrupt goals and interests, that compromise motivation for engagement, bringing about a disconnect between learners and schools (Deucher and Graham, 2012). This disconnection not only translates into limited preparedness but is also a factor in the resistance and challenging behaviour that occurs in alternative learning centres, discussed in depth in the previous section and offering a concomitant barrier to FE-readiness (Deucher and Graham, 2012; France et al, 2012; Jalali and Morgan, 2018). In alternative settings, young people in resettlement transition are often confined to non-normative education pathways out of sync with FE, that compound widespread histories of school disruption and non-attendance (Hanrahan et al, 2020). This offers a systemic lens on low FE-readiness, which moves outside the pathologising narratives of student failure and offers entrenched structural reasons for non-progression to FE (McGregor et al, 2015).

Custody further adds to a picture of haphazard provision and limited progression. In Chapter 9, Alan (a central government policy advisor) observed that custodial education, in his experience, was inadequate and ill-equipped young people for all forms of community learning. Alan's experience is supported in the literature. Hayden (2008) cites custody as a disruptor to progress, both at secondary school and FE college level, that is very difficult to overcome for already vulnerable young people. Furthermore, Little (2015), in a case study-based investigation of prison education in a Young Offenders Institution, found that the emotional trauma of custody, which has the potential to further amplify other life stressors, made education almost redundant in the lives of incarcerated young people, rendering planning and preparation for community education more difficult. This is lost time that exacerbates the experience of trauma which divorces young people further from the established pathways towards FE.

Adding further complexity to these barriers to FE preparedness, is the additional learning needs that come with SEND. Edwards (2017), in a study of SEMH needs, found the transition to FE for young people with identified SEND is complex and challenging, even without the weight of an offending history. Edwards (2017) found that where young people struggled in FE, this was

because their needs had not been sufficiently supported at secondary level, consequently they were inhibited in their ability to maximise learning opportunities, finding workloads overwhelming and struggling with the more intense routine of FE. This further reinforced the barrier to progress brought into effect by curricula lacking sufficient FE-alignment. Edwards (2017) again underlines the importance of inclusive education that offers pastoral support laying the foundation for successful transitions, in this case to FE. This returns the discussion to theme 1, focusing on positive pedagogy.

The issue of lack of readiness is a manifestation of structural inequality, given the complex interplay of factors that impinge upon education readiness, as this section has already highlighted. As Bayas and Grau (2023, p. 3) postulate:

‘Achieving equality of opportunity in education, such as ensuring similar access to tertiary education across socioeconomic classes, entails not only equal total investment ... in primary and secondary education per child ... but in fact providing higher investment per child to students from disadvantaged background...’

In contradiction to this, the findings suggest that young people experiencing resettlement have not had access to equality of opportunity, but rather have had access to education that offers fewer opportunities for progression than mainstream peers. This is despite the resettlement cohort being from disadvantaged backgrounds that point to the greater investment called for by Bayas and Grau (2023). Lack of readiness is symptomatic of an education pathway, for those in alternative education, that represents limited investment in opportunities to re-engage with mainstream learning, which is compounded by other factors such as the stigma evident at both secondary (PRU) and tertiary (FE) levels, which feeds into issues such as challenging behaviour and curricula not aligned with FE. This again suggests an absence of equality of comparability (Temkin, 2001), for the resettlement cohort. These inhibitors to readiness and progression appear mutually reinforcing in a complex web of causality, further

emphasising the structural dimension of this issue. Readiness for FE is not an issue discussed widely in the literature, but is a focal variable of equality (Sen, 1992), that needs more attention from gatekeepers and policy makers.

Conclusion

This chapter will now conclude with direct reference to the two research questions.

RQ1: What are the experiences of young people with identified SEND engaging with resettlement education provision?

This chapter, extending on the case findings, has offered an integration between the individual and the social. Most fully realised through Danny and Luke's experiences, theory utilised in this chapter has offered a multi-faceted lens on the lived experiences of young people transitioning through resettlement. Young people experiencing resettlement are on a longer-term developmental pathway, where challenges and opportunities exist in an ecosystem of support, risk and hope. No facet of the resettlement transition can be considered in isolation but must be understood as part of a complex terrain of factors, that interweave to shape the past, present and future of the resettlement cohort. Challenging behaviour is a case in point – it is a presenting issue, manifesting more complex dynamics of labelling, resistance, resilience, exclusion, and ecological risk that must be understood and supported in a nuanced and ecological way, to temper wider systems that shape individual challenging behaviour. This involves working with strengths, delivering opportunities, and challenging the pathologising discourses that dominate the life trajectories of the resettlement population.

RQ2: How do YOTs and education providers work to facilitate resettlement education provision; and what factors impact on this work?

The work of both YOT and education has been examined from multiple standpoints. Like the lived experiences of the resettlement cohort, the practice of

these two key agencies can only be understood within a complex social ecology, that shapes every facet of their work. YOT and education are capable of outstanding practice that liberates young people from difficult and marginalised situations. Both agencies are also part of a system that can raise barriers to progression. Practitioners occupy a contested resettlement terrain that must be understood and responded to on multiple levels. Both agencies balance policy, practice, institutional relationships, and wider societal discourses, when attempting to intervene in the complex resettlement transition. The theories invoked in this chapter have offered insights into this complex terrain, highlighting both what constitutes best practice and areas the system of support around resettlement needs to improve. The central message from this discussion is YOT and education must work together to facilitate positive resettlement for young people with SEND. This message will be translated into policy and practice recommendations in the following chapter, which concludes the thesis.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis. The first section outlines the main contributions to knowledge made by this research. The second section makes an argument for generalisation. Following this, limitations are discussed, and the final section will make recommendations for future policy, practice and research.

11.1 Contribution to Knowledge

The bulk of UK resettlement research over recent years has focused on the concept of identity and secondary desistance, in the form of constructive resettlement (Bateman and Hazel, 2021). This is an important area of research. Within this small but growing literature, education has been a feature but not a focus of research. Complementing this literature, my research offers an in-depth and sustained focus on resettlement education that can inform wider research on desistance. Equally, no other research I have reviewed has explicitly linked the issues of SEND, education provision, YOT support and resettlement. The intersection of these contexts and factors is at the core of this original research contribution, offering evidence and analysis that helps us better understand this complex issue terrain.

This research has also taken existing theoretical and practice concepts and applied them in a new way to the issue of resettlement. The related practice frameworks of strengths-based practice and inclusive education have been applied and compared, offering insights into the hitherto unexplored link between YOT support and alternative education provision. This research has also explored the concept of linking social capital in a novel setting. To the best of my knowledge, no published research has attempted to explicitly understand the role of linking social capital in the resettlement transition. Consequently, my thesis offers a new theoretical lens for understanding the multi-agency networks essential to successful resettlement. In addition, I have applied Ungar's (2011)

social ecology of resilience to resettlement for the first time, offering an ecological perspective on resettlement that brings into sharper focus the importance of interventions in creating change that promotes resilience and desistance. This has provided a socio-ecological framework for understanding and interrogating resettlement experiences and practices.

Furthermore, I have considered in-depth the relevance of the related concepts of deviancy, labelling and stigma to the resettlement experience. Within the published literature, this appears to be a new contribution, making explicit the concept of deviancy and labelling for the first time in the form of challenging behaviour in PRU settings and its wider impact on pathways to offending and resettlement. The stigma of FE has also been given an extended analysis, shedding further light on a barrier to progression. For the first time, the concept of identity management has been applied to understand in more nuance and complexity the unique challenge of disclosing offending history during resettlement, highlighting that the solution to this problem lies in systemic change rather than localised practice.

Taken together, this research offers a bank of knowledge about *what works* in supporting and educating young people through resettlement; and strengthens our understanding of barriers to resettlement. Furthermore, this research sheds light on *why* certain approaches work, and *why* certain barriers exert a negative effect on resettlement.

11.2 Arguments for Generalisation

This section makes two arguments for generalisation: cross-case and analytical. Given the paucity of evidence in the resettlement arena of practice, an attempt at generalisation is a worthwhile endeavour.

Three very different case studies form the bedrock of this research: a small city authority, a large county council and an inner-city borough. All have different municipal configurations, demographic characteristics, and crime rates. Yet,

there are clear commonalities, which form an argument for *cross-case generalisation*. In Chapter 9, the cross-case synthesis revealed several propositions common to all three: the role of stigma, the importance of professional-young person relationships, the challenges of PRUs, barriers to FE, the value of creative practice and the importance of planning. These propositions had relevance to three heterodox cases. This is the essence of cross-case generalisation, exposing interconnected themes that are potentially applicable to other local authorities. Simmons (2009) argued that the validity of cross-case research is based on its ability to identify common issues that can be applied to different contexts. The similar character of resettlement across England, subject to the same policy and practice landscape, with similar challenges, lends itself to this form of generalisation. However, as Simmons' (2009) also notes, this form of generalisation is abstract, its meaning is drawn from the intrinsic qualities of individual cases, it is not a form of statistical generalisation. This is why other forms of generalisation are important to fortifying the argument for generalisation put forward here.

Yin (2018) coined the term *analytical generalisation*, concerning the ability of the case(s) to inform our understanding of theoretical concepts. Yin (2018) referred to this form of generalisation as a level 2 inference, that moves beyond case populations (level 1 inference) and tests the applicability of concepts as meta-constructs. Yin (2018, p. 38) states that one of two criteria need to be met, to achieve analytical generalisation:

'... analytical generalisation may be based on either (a) corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts... or (b) new concepts that arose upon the completion of your case study.'

I make no claims to criterion (b), but I argue criterion (a) has been met, as section 11.1 also suggests. A series of theoretical paradigms have been applied and tested in the novel arena of resettlement. Linking social capital and the social ecology of resilience were both found to be essential systemic qualities for

successful rehabilitation. Strengths-based principles were found to be important dimensions of practice in the resettlement transition. Finally, labelling and related concepts, especially stigma, were found to be real barriers to progression. The applicability of these diverse concepts to resettlement offered corroboration to their conceptual validity, satisfying Yin's (2018) first criterion. Given that resettlement is a new test bed for linking social capital and ecological resilience, it could be argued these concepts have been advanced and their instrumental validity has been verified. All these concepts offered powerful theoretical lenses, a form of conceptual power that presents itself to analytical generalisation.

11.3 Limitations of this Research

Inevitably this research confronts certain limitations. In Chapter 4, methodological limitations were discussed. In this section, more conceptual limitations will be considered, with some methodological overlap. The profile of the participants is the key limitation of this research, in several ways. Firstly, no participants were drawn from FE and could not directly answer the issue of stigma and inaccessibility to FE, a recurring feature of the findings.

Perhaps more fundamentally, this was a participant cohort dominated by professionals. Aside from a small sample of children, the other major absence was from parents and carers. The absence of these voices is most visible in the discussion on social capital. The focus on linking social capital reflects both the validity of the theory but also the preponderance of the professional perspective. When I identified social capital as part of the theoretical framework, I intended to investigate the role of different forms of capital, including the role of bonding capital, centred on family and peer networks. While Danny and Luke offered insights into the negative role of peers - negative bonding capital - insufficient evidence was available to develop an extended analysis of the role of bonding capital from a young person's perspective. Compounding this, the absence of carers meant the role of bonding social capital could not be considered from their pivotal perspective either. Consequently, the inclusion of young people's and carers' voices in future research remains a priority.

Similarly, I anticipated that bridging social capital would be more evident in the discussion, but upon analysing the data this was not the case. This is in-part an outcome of the FE perspective being missing from this research, as an important site of bridging capital. An inclusion of bridging capital would have promoted a more holistic analysis, and allowed exploration of the conceptual relationship between linking, bridging and bonding capital to be explored in depth.

Power relations are also important when considering the participation of young people in the resettlement decision-making process. Participation in decision-making is something mandated both by the CoP and by relevant youth justice guidance (Ministry of Justice, 2019; YJB, 2021). Participation was a feature in the findings' chapters, especially in relation to planning, when professional participants discussed the importance of involving young people in decision-making. Conversely, Danny and Luke did not offer any experience of their own participation. Given these mixed findings, participation has not been developed in the discussion, beyond acknowledging it is an important value of practice. This is an important topic for future research to focus on. Aspects of future research are also considered in the following section.

11.4 Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Research

11.4.1 Practice

The findings' chapters and the discussion revealed the potential relational toxicity of the PRU setting, which can amplify challenging behaviour and exposure to risk. That PRUs are a common venue for resettlement education is a further issue when considering potential barriers to resettlement progression. One response to this issue is to relocate PRUs into mainstream schools, in the form of *inclusion units*. The *Timpson Review of School Exclusion* (Timpson, 2019) recommended mainstream inclusion units as effective for preventing the disciplinary exclusion of young people, linked to wider findings in the report that exclusion from mainstream schools promoted poor outcomes, and interactions

with pro-social peers are important, within a mainstream setting. The report noted that inclusion units negate the need for and the use of exclusionary practices, such as isolation, and reduce the overall level of formal disciplinary exclusions from mainstream schools. As formal exclusion and isolation were amplifiers of Danny and Luke's negative school experience, any environments that reduce such practices also offset their criminogenic potential. This resonates with many of the findings of my research, such as inclusive strengths-based practice; and offers support to the notion of inclusion units for resettlement education.

Mainstream inclusion units are not currently a prominent feature of the national practice and policy landscape, but they do occur at local levels. A review of some local applications of this approach places them firmly within the principles and pedagogy of inclusive education. For example, Buckinghamshire Council (2022) have placed inclusion units on an agenda of essential reforms to support young people with a primary need of SEMH, that helps sustain connections with mainstream schools and the wider learning community. Inclusion units offer young people the opportunity to experience learning in safe inclusive settings supported by specialist teachers, but with a central aim to reintegrate them back into the wider mainstream school. An advantage of inclusion units is that young people are in an environment where challenging behaviours are not the norm, mitigating the possibility for toxic environments that feed into challenging and negative behaviours. These units offer flexibility to meet need in various ways utilising resources both within inclusion units and the mainstream school setting (Mills and Thomson, 2018; Buckinghamshire Council, 2022). The presence of specialist teachers in a mainstream setting also creates a resource for mainstream teachers to learn skills and pedagogic approaches from in situ specialist teachers, a form of 'educating the educators', an aspect of effective practice evident in all three case study areas. A related, and equally important benefit, is inclusion units potentially allow for greater alignment with mainstream curricula, offering young people an opportunity to develop knowledge and skills that will prepare them for progression to FE (Mills and Thomson, 2018).

Use of inclusion units in FE colleges, for SEMH-type needs, was not discussed in the available literature and is not something that appears to have been implemented in any local authorities. Inclusion units, in the Timpson review (Timpson, 2019), are viewed as a way to prepare young people for FE. Yet, given that young people with SEND do not follow linear developmental pathways, something evident in the literature review (chapter 2) and throughout the findings, the use of inclusion units in FE reflects that young people with SEND would benefit from a continuity of support beyond school. The availability of such a provision in colleges, for challenging behaviour and related needs, would offer scope for a culture change in FE colleges, with a move towards greater inclusivity of SEMH and related needs. This would offer a clear benefit to the resettlement population, equipping colleges to meet their support needs and consequently undermining the exclusivity that many FE colleges operate in relation to the youth justice population. This could map onto the existing SEND provision that exists in many FE colleges, all of whom have an established duty to offer provision for SEND (DfE, 2014). The adoption of inclusion units in FE colleges has the potential to bridge the divide between FE colleges and other services. This is something that was noted in the findings, where YOT education workers described a more distant relationship between YOTs and colleges as a major challenge. The use of inclusion units would offer an avenue for introducing more specialist teachers into colleges, trained to work with SEMH, who could, again, 'educate the educators'.

Inclusion units, in both mainstream schools and FE colleges, would also create the potential for wider service links and foster a wider network of linking social capital utilising relevant expertise. This is something evident in existing inclusion units, which also draw in external specialist support for students on a bespoke basis (Mills and Thomson, 2018; Buckinghamshire Council, 2022). Among the external specialists available, are YOT education workers. Their role in supporting alternative providers and acting as a link role between YOTs and education providers was evident in all three case study areas. Inclusion units, in both mainstream schools and FE colleges, provide a natural point of contact

between education providers and YOTs, utilising the expertise on offer from YOT education workers and other youth justice specialists including SaLTs.

Moving on from inclusion units, a consistent feature of the findings was the importance of *creative interventions*. These types of interventions were especially noteworthy within YOTs. These are interventions, where they work, that can utilise strengths-based and inclusive principles that promote perceived support and connectedness, similar to inclusive school environments. Based on this, it can be argued that the pedagogic role of YOTs, their hidden synergy with alternative education, needs to become more explicit as a hallmark of effective practice, for both the resettlement population and the wider youth justice population. This needs to be acknowledged and encouraged by government guidance and policy, which has tended to neglect and discourage the potential of YOT-based education.

While YOTs can never be a replacement for schools, they do offer a complementary venue of alternative provision that can utilise disguised learning, through creative approaches, to develop skills and knowledge that promote positive development and enhance engagement with more formal schooling. Timpson (2019) recommended that central government establish a *practice improvement fund*, to help identify current best practice and innovate new practices to reduce school exclusion. A similar fund could be established, to help identify exemplars of creative pedagogic practice employed locally by YOTs and fund innovation, that can be fed into a national framework of guidance that is evidence-based and offers YOTs, locally, signposts for best practice. Something similar currently exists, called the 'SEND bubble' (Alan, participant, direct communication) which I was able to access in a limited way. This represents a first step in creating a database of good practice in working with complex needs. The SEND bubble would benefit from being formalised into a national strategy, backed by policy and funding. Such a formalised database would need to offer a comprehensive policy-orientated guide to good practice for providing alternative education experiences to young people engaging with YOTs, including the resettlement cohort.

Advocacy and *mentoring* were also prominent themes within the findings and the discussion. Both fulfil the wider potential of relationship-based practice, that can prevent reoffending and promote positive outcomes such as education progression. Advocacy is a common practice in all YOTs, it is a fundamental part of the YOT role. This form of practice was evident in the findings, the literature (Lanskey, 2015) and my own experience discussed in the introduction. However, in no guidance documents or government policy, including the national standards for youth justice (Ministry of Justice, 2019), has the advocacy role been formally linked to SEND. Given that SEND is an endemic feature of the youth justice population, and the resettlement cohort in particular, it could be argued the essential advocacy function of YOTs needs to attain a clearer focus on advocating for SEND support, utilising a relevant knowledge-base and expertise. In section 9.2 of the cross-case synthesis chapter, both Alan and Josh, with their national perspective, observed that the most effective YOTs were working with SEND specialists, such as educational psychologists and SENCOs, who could offer specialist advocacy support. As already highlighted earlier in this chapter, the practice of ‘educating the educators’ was evident in the case study findings, and the use of SEND specialists is a way to achieve this, utilising the credibility and expertise of practitioners such as educational psychologists and SENCOs. This is not a consistent feature of YOTs nationally, and none of the case studies utilised such advocacy expertise. Such a practice should be a national feature of YOTs, not only as an advocacy role but the use of SEND specialists will help foster positive relations between YOTs and SEND services, as both Alan and Josh noted.

Mentoring serves a complementary function to advocacy. Indeed, mentors can act as advocates, and this is built into the nature of the role. Mentoring’s efficacy was noted in relation to area C and its wider utility was analysed in the discussion chapter, as a mobiliser of linking social capital. Mentoring is a source of social capital and a form of emotional support that can promote resilience. As an approach, mentoring can enhance the capacity of young people to navigate uncertainty, which is at the heart of the resettlement transition. Yet, mentoring is not a consistent feature of the YOT practice space and was evident in only one

of the three case studies. Given its potential power, as a source of support and guidance for young people, mentoring merits becoming a widespread feature of YOT support nationally. Similar to all the practice recommendations put forward up to this point, more widespread use of mentoring would require additional national funding and concomitant policy.

Many of these recommendations, discussed so far, also relate to the wider issue of structural inequality, which is a defining feature of the youth justice population. Advocacy, mentoring and inclusion units offer practice frameworks and philosophies that can address structural inequalities and promote opportunity. HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021) put forward explicit recommendations that can address issues of structural inequality at a practice level in the youth justice system. Among them is coordinated and effective joined-up working with the third sector, which was a feature of good practice across the findings. Underpinning this, the Inspectorate also recommended training about structural inequalities for practitioners in all services and the role of professionals in creating inequalities, together with good practice, as an underpinning measure to promote knowledge and confidence in managers and practitioners.

HM Inspectorate of Probation (2021) stated good practice is an area that still needs to be better defined, in terms of how structural factors can be addressed at the practice level. An evidence base does exist for this, including the importance of creative interventions discussed in chapter 10 and throughout the findings' chapters. Shingler and Pope (2018) found that culturally aware and culturally sensitive correctional programmes, delivered by appropriately trained staff, produced better outcomes for offenders, including reduced reoffending. Specific to prison work and preparation for resettlement, Glynn (2014) found that interventions need to be *intersectional*, considering interconnected issues such as poverty, race and masculinity. Glynn (2014) found this promoted better engagement with support, that enhanced preparation for release. These principles point to the use of person-centred approaches, which were found to be effective for all young offenders across the three case studies. Use of tailored approaches and avoidance of interventions with a limited evidence base used in

a formulaic way is a repeated finding of the literature, reinforcing the value of creative interventions (Calverley, 2013). While effective practice is essential in addressing structural inequality, it is important also to be cognisant of the David Lammy review (Lammy, 2017 - discussed in section 1.2), which concluded the causes of structural inequality lie outside the justice system – this brings into focus the role of policy as an instrument that can address structural inequality directly at a systemic level.

11.4.2 Policy

Resettlement consortia crosscut both policy and practice. They provide a framework for facilitating the practice discussed in the previous section. Consortia need to have nationwide coverage but also be attuned to local needs and resources. This requires national policy and guidance, translated at a local level. Several regional resettlement consortia have featured in this research (for example, Gray et al, 2018). Their efficacy, as a network of integrated agencies offering multiple solutions to multiple needs, is established and has been thoroughly researched (Wright et al, 2012; Gray et al, 2018; Olaitan and Pitts, 2020). Yet not all local authorities are involved in resettlement consortia. None of the three local authorities involved in this research were engaged in resettlement consortia, at the time of writing. This emphasises the priority for resettlement consortia to be written into national guidance and policy, that mandates for all local authorities, in configurations suited to local circumstances, to be involved in consortia that promote positive resettlement. As a mandated policy, this would also need to be backed by sufficient resources, although the potential cost savings from efficient use of consortia resources means this is a financially prudent approach (Gray et al, 2018).

In several interviews, I discussed at length changes required in practice and policy, which have in part influenced the recommendations focused upon here. Perhaps the most striking recommendation, suggested by Josh (charity policy advisor and researcher), was to give the equivalent of *looked after child status* to young people in custody and going through resettlement. Under the Children Act

1989, a looked after child is defined as ‘A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours...’ (NSPCC, 2023, p. 1). The implications of this are much broader than a brief 24-hour placement for most children, the majority of whom may be in the care system for much of their childhood. Being in care involves potentially living in a wide spectrum of care placements, including with friends or family, foster care, residential care homes or specialist residential units, such as specialist secure units. Custody fits with these existing forms of care placement, as young people have been placed in secure units on child protection grounds since the Children Act 1989 came into force. Custody is another form of state care.

With reference to the prison system becoming an extension of the wider care system, Josh described this as a ‘meta-solution’, changing potentially the culture of resettlement and the identity of young people. This would apply to young people not already in the care system and intersect with support offered by future versions of the CoP. At its core, this change in status would give local authorities a corporate parenting role, with attendant responsibilities and accountabilities to both young people and wider governance structures. Within current arrangements for looked after children, this creates an onus on local authorities to promote wellbeing and outcomes for young people in care, including the availability of additional support for mental health, SEND and education outcomes.

Young people who leave custody, at some point in their childhood, would also become *care leavers* under this new proposed system. A care leaver is already defined as anybody who has ‘... been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday.’ (Care Leavers Association, 2014, p. 1). This refers to young people aged 16 or over and young adults, aged 18 or over, who need support after leaving the care system. Young people in care are entitled to care leaver support into early adulthood, to support with the transition from care (NSPCC, 2022). The care leaver population, more broadly, is the same age as the resettlement population and the two populations intersect in many individual cases (Office of the Children’s Commissioner, 2022). An

analogous system of support for all young people who have been in custody, where they do not already have looked after or care leaver status, would offer a similar statutory underpinning to service support, which would compel, if necessary, the provision of support by services, including children's services, who may otherwise be reluctant to be involved in resettlement support. Indeed, as looked after children or care leavers, children's social care services would become the de facto lead agency as corporate parents for young people in the care system (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2022).

As this research has repeatedly found, FE is largely inaccessible to young people in the resettlement cohort, and practice initiatives alone appear to be insufficient as a solution. Making FE more accessible will require a wider policy change, consistent with making young people going through resettlement equivalent to looked after children/care leavers, in terms of the support on offer for accessing FE. Care leavers and looked after children are *eligible children* under the Children Act 1989, meaning they are eligible for considerable educational support, including a Personal Education Plan, financial support such as a living allowance and an education bursary. Personal Education Plans, in addition to an EHCP, would also strengthen potential pathways into FE (Care Leavers Association, 2014). This adds support to the notion of assigning looked after child status to all young people serving custodial sentences and resettling back into the community.

The looked after child policy approach would also offer scope to reform the admissions policies of both mainstream schools and FE colleges that act as a barrier to the resettlement population. Under this new looked after child approach, all children experiencing resettlement would be eligible for virtual school support, adding to a wider duty of local authorities to promote the education outcomes of looked after children. This would put an onus on mainstream schools and FE colleges to create admissions processes and thresholds that are more inclusive and less exclusive of the resettlement population. This would include virtual schools holding FE colleges and schools to account for their admissions policies.

Given the vulnerability of the resettlement population, with or without a looked after child status, use of *contextual offers* by FE colleges targeted at this group would be a significant policy development, that tackles structural inequality. Contextual offers are more widespread in higher education but are becoming increasingly common at the FE level, although no national policy guidance exists to regulate FE contextual offers (Office of the Student, 2019). Contextual offers would help overcome the barriers of high admission tariffs, as evidenced by apprenticeship programmes in area C, which required high grades (see chapter 8, section 8.7). An infrastructure of support, such as FE inclusion units, would make contextual offers even more viable as a policy, ensuring young people are not set-up to fail. The CoP, or future versions of it, is an essential pillar of this support infrastructure.

A future CoP can offer improvements on the current version. Reforms to the CoP are potentially the most significant area of policy change for the resettlement population where SEND is endemic. Any future iterations need to define key concepts, such as inclusive practice, based on a clear evidence-base, providing an unequivocal position on what constitutes effective SEND pedagogy, as a framework of principles. Other statutory guidance instruments, such as the *Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System* (Ministry of Justice, 2019) offer a focus for effective practice because they are framed in terms of *standards*. Similarly, the national foster care standards offer clear and unambiguous *child focused standards* that create a practice-based set of guidance, around standards, that is also open to local interpretation and practitioner judgement (DfE, 2011b). A concise standards-based structure offers a more practice focused framework than the current CoP, which conflates commissioning and practice in the same document, in a more discursive style that is not presented in terms of unambiguous standards. Ideas presented in this thesis, such as schools built on cultures of connectivity and strengths-based teaching, offer clear, evidence-based principles for inclusion in a future CoP.

In future versions of the CoP, a chapter on special circumstances could perhaps be absorbed into the wider code, to offset any sense of separation and ensure core principles can be embedded across the education system, for example a focus on aspirations. Future versions of the CoP need to engage with structural issues, for example, creating a duty for FE colleges to make contextual offers or requiring FE colleges to set out clear reasons for rejection, in writing, to help promote a culture of accountability to combat stigma. Most concretely and unequivocally, a future CoP could place a duty on mainstream schools and FE colleges to offer a place to young people who meet academic requirements, without taking into consideration past criminal offences. The CoP offers the most logical statutory guidance for mandating this change in admissions policies, given it already advocates the need to promote inclusion for the resettlement population.

The Inspectorate of Probation (2021) also made recommendations with effect to SEND reform, to offset the structural inequalities and disproportionality evident in the youth justice population. Many of the recommendations already made will help realise this outcome. Furthermore, in their report, the Inspectorate also recommended earlier assessment of SEND in minority groups and for this to be a feature of the Ofsted inspection framework. Related to this, the Inspectorate also recommended the provision of improved guidance about exclusion, to ensure schools more accurately monitor disproportionality in exclusion and the impact of adverse childhood experiences, which speaks directly to importance of promoting resilience.

The published SEND improvement plan (DfE, 2023) is an acknowledgement of the need to reform the CoP. The improvement plan offers an agenda for change up to the year 2025, which is consistent with the main messages that can be drawn from both the literature and this research. There has been a commitment to invest £2.6 billion up to 2025, to fund SEND provision and further pupil places. An additional £3.5 billion has been committed over 2023 – 2024 to core school funding, which will include a £1 billion increase in funding for high needs. The SEND improvement plan also sets out the need for national guidance and

processes that offer consistent EHC planning across England. Also under this improvement plan, local SEND and alternative provision partnerships will be created, to facilitate the buy-in of all agencies. Perhaps most significantly from the perspective of this thesis, the CoP will be reformed, including a move towards a set of national standards, which appears to reflect the current ambiguity in the CoP. This aspect of the reforms, it is claimed, will be evidence-based and offer examples of best practice, including the provision of practice guides (DfE, 2023).

It is still too early to judge what these reforms mean for resettlement and the YJS more broadly – resettlement and the YJS do not appear as a distinct theme within the improvement plan. Alternative provision appears prominently in the improvement plan. This form of provision will be more fully integrated into the SEND system under the improvement plan (DfE, 2023), which may bring about reform relevant to the recommendations put forward here. The direction of travel appears promising. But there is scope for further reforms, specific to the custody and resettlement arena. Alternative education provision should not be the only or even main arena open to the resettlement population. Mainstream schooling and FE should also be a viable pathway for resettlement, as recommendations put forward here argue for.

11.4.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Several areas of effective, or potentially effective, practice and support merit further research. Inclusion units in mainstream schools setting are a recommendation of this chapter. However, they are an under-researched area of provision as research available for inclusion units tends to focus on autism and other needs (Holt et al, 2012). Research on inclusion units for challenging behaviour and SEMH-related needs are sporadic and are under-developed (Ward, 2019). More targeted research is needed, to understand how inclusion units can work effectively with young people where challenging behaviour, SEMH needs, and other related risks are support issues, to mitigate the potential for permanent exclusion into the alternative sector. This would involve exploring

both practices and wider school cultures that facilitate inclusion in mainstream education.

It has been robustly argued that FE colleges are largely inaccessible for the resettlement cohort. The reasons for this have been based on issues of stigma and risk aversion, which are observations from non-FE professionals. There needs to be further research, within FE, about why this risk aversion exists, as a basis for promoting a culture change towards risk awareness. This includes identifying and investigating FE colleges that already practice in a risk aware culture, which is inclusive of the resettlement and wider youth justice population. A component of this would be identifying approaches to identity and stigma management that work. Although, on the latter point, solutions appear to reside more in cultural and structural change rather than practice per se. FE funding and related challenges of providing sufficient SEND staffing support are also pertinent issues that merit further investigation.

Concluding the Thesis

The future focus of the previous section brings this work to an end. After nearly eight years, hundreds of hours of interviews and analysis and thousands of words, this thesis will now draw to a close. I have gone from defining a research problem, through to planning and investigating that problem, and then writing about it. I believe a light has been shone on a neglected area of practice and I am hopeful I can take this forward in the future, with more research. I have learned so much about many aspects of research during my PhD candidature. I think my biggest learning has been about the nuances of research ethics and what this means in practice; in particular, what inclusive research means. By learning about, and implementing, inclusive methods, such as participant information in adapted formats and unstructured interviews, I believe I am better equipped to be an anti-oppressive researcher. This refers back to my anti-oppressive values, which guided the initial inception of this research and my orientation throughout it (see section 1.4 in the introduction). I have also learnt a great deal about qualitative analysis. I feel confident in my ability, in the future, to

undertake reflexive qualitative analysis. My next move is to turn this research into a set of research outputs, including papers on social capital and resilience and conference presentations to different audiences. I am also planning further research, involving young people and carers, investigating further what works in resettlement education, with the aim of ultimately making a difference to the lives of marginalised young people.

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Appendix 1: Evidence of Ethical Approval:

2019 Ethical Approval (first and main ethics application).

Original ethical approval of the research at Research Integrity and Governance team level:

Approved by Research Integrity and Governance team - ERGO II 49350

The logo for the University of Southampton, featuring the text "UNIVERSITY OF" in a small font above "Southampton" in a larger, stylized font, all in white on a black background.

ERGO II – Ethics and Research Governance Online <https://www.ergo2.soton.ac.uk>

Submission ID: 49350

Submission Title: SEND and Resettlement Project

Submitter Name: Gavin Tucker

The Research Integrity and Governance team have reviewed and approved your submission.

You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting specific Health and Safety approval (e.g., for a Genetic or Biological Materials Risk Assessment) or external review.

The following comments have been made:

-

- Dear Gavin,

Thank you very much for providing updated study documents.

I will now approve this application for you, however please note my comments below which you should address.

When it comes to your comments about the feedback provided:

1. Thank you for providing background information about the literacy levels of young participants with SEND. This is very interesting to know. When reading your study documents I spotted a few sentences which could be improved, and gave you some examples of them, but to save time, I did not want to point out every single sentence, and that is why I asked you to proofread your study documents. I fully accept however that informal approach to grammar and syntax might be more appropriate for the participants with SEND.
- 2.
3. When it comes to the use of gatekeepers for the purpose of contacting potential research participants, the example I gave you, is the example of best practice, and therefore the preferred way of using the gatekeeper, which we will always recommend. The University at the moment does not have any written guidance on gatekeepers, however we have been working on the draft guidance, which hopefully will be completed and released at some point in the next few months. If you think however, that the use of gatekeeper as recommended, is not appropriate for your study, this is fine, as long as you will be using gatekeepers as described in your study documents.

Participant Information Sheet for carers

Under 'What information will be collected?' you state: 'Written transcripts will be stored on a password protected computer, where they contain personally identifying information.' Is this correct? As before, I believe that you stated on your other study documents that transcripts will not contain any personal identifying information. If this

is the case, please amend this appropriately. If similar statements are also present on any other of your study documents, they should be also appropriately amended.

PIS for Professionals

At the end of this form you still have very similar (if not identical) information on Data Protection twice. As mentioned before, you may want to ensure that the same information is not being repeated.

Good luck with your research.

2020 Amendment.

Approval to conduct online interviews as a result of Covid-19, at Research Integrity and Governance team level:

Approved by Research Integrity and Governance team - ERGO II 49350.A1

The logo for the University of Southampton, featuring the text "UNIVERSITY OF" in a smaller font above "Southampton" in a larger, stylized font, all in white on a black background.

ERGO II – Ethics and Research Governance Online <https://www.ergo2.soton.ac.uk>

Submission ID: 49350.A1

Submission Title: COVID 19 SEND and Resettlement Project (Amendment 1)

Submitter Name: Gavin Tucker

The Research Integrity and Governance team have reviewed and approved your submission.

You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting specific Health and Safety approval (e.g., for a Genetic or Biological Materials Risk Assessment) or external review.

The following comments have been made:

-
-

*TId: 23012_Email_to_submitter___Approval_from_RIG Id:
251607 G.M.Tucker@soton.ac.uk coordinator*

Appendix 2 Participant Information Sheet for Professionals

Participant Information Sheet for Professionals

Study Title: Moving-on: Young people, YOTs and education.

Researcher: Gavin Tucker

ERGO number: 49350

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others, but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

This research is the focus of my work towards a PhD qualification at the University of Southampton. My PhD is in Education, it is supervised by Professor Sarah Parsons and Dr Michaela Brockman, both from the School of Education at the University of Southampton.

By background, I am a qualified Social Worker. I have experience working in a Youth Offending Team in London including as a practice manager. Currently I am a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Solent University in Southampton. It is also important to highlight that I have an enhanced and up-to-date criminal record check undertaken by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

All of my practice experience, in varying roles, encompassed working with young people involved in the criminal justice system. I found a high level of special education need existed in the criminal justice cohort I worked with. In my experience young people benefitted greatly from education that met their needs, including desisting from offending behaviour. This has prompted me to research education and the criminal justice system further, through a PhD qualification. My focus is on young people resettling after time in custody, who have an identified special educational need or disability (SEND). I am interested in how young people experience education in this resettlement period; and I also want to interview relevant professionals, with a particular focus on how Youth Offending Teams (YOT) support young people engaging with post-custody education provision.

My main research objectives are:

- Investigate the experiences of young people and their carers about resettlement SEND education;
- Focus on the role of a several YOTs in facilitating resettlement SEND education at a local level;
- Understand the role of allied education providers and education professionals, in supporting young people and working with YOTs during resettlement;
- Conduct this investigation through documentary analysis; and through interviews with young people, carers and professionals, in order to produce qualitative data analysis.

Consistent with these objectives, I will aim to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What are the experiences of young people with identified SEND, and their carers, engaging with resettlement education provision?

Q2: How do YOTs work to facilitate resettlement SEND education provision; and what factors impact on this work?

As the objectives highlight, my main research methods will be interviews with young people, their carers and professionals. This research is part-funded by my employer, Solent University, who play no direct role in the research.

Why have I been asked to participate?

Three local authorities are involved in this research, including Southampton. I aim to involve Youth Offending Team practitioners and professionals from allied agencies, including teachers and other school-based staff. I estimate 20-30 professionals will be involved in the research study, across the three local authorities and over a 12-month period. You have been approached because you work in one of these professional roles, in a relevant agency working with young people going through the resettlement process.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to take part in a single interview, lasting 60-90 minutes, at a convenient location for you such as your agency office. The interview will be a semi-structured, meaning some questions will be pre-planned but with scope to explore in depth unique themes you introduce in the course of the interview using unplanned follow-up questions. Pre-planned questions will ask you about your professional experience, your views on the criminal justice system and your own assessment of the education provision available to young people resettling after custody. Pre-planned questions will also cover the practice of YOTs in this area of work, together with allied agencies such as schools. You will be asked about your current knowledge of SEND, including the 2015 SEND code of practice. Your involvement will largely include participation in the interview, and, with your permission, I may contact you by email or telephone to clarify any findings or themes that emerge during the interview. My aim is not to add to your workload and the 60–90-

minute interview will constitute the bulk of your involvement in this research project. I do not expect you to prepare in any way for the interview. With your permission, I will record the interview using an audio device

You will also be asked to sign a consent form at the beginning of the interview, consenting to involvement in and recording of the interview.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

The main direct benefit will be the opportunity to participate in research that intends to inform our understanding of education and related support during resettlement. I cannot guarantee any direct benefit to you personally, but the findings of the research will be communicated directly to each participating local authority, which may influence future service development. I also intend to publish this research in peer-reviewed journals, to inform the wider youth justice sector.

Are there any risks involved?

I do not foresee any risks for professionals participating in this research. Although I plan to discover some information about each participant's professional background, I will not cover any personally sensitive or potentially distressing topics. I will contact you prior to the interview, to confirm involvement. This will provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns you have about the research. You have every right to withdraw your participation at any time.

What data will be collected?

The data collected will be an audio recording of the interview using a portable recording device, that will be subsequently turned into a written transcript. I am the sole researcher involved in this project and I will be the only interviewer involved in each interview. I will collect no personal data about you, such as ethnicity and gender identity. Audio recordings will be transferred from the portable recording device to a password protected

computer. Recordings on the portable device will then be deleted. After a recording has been made into a written transcript, the recording stored on the computer will be deleted. Written transcripts will be stored on password protected computers.

Transcripts will likely be printed in hard copy, but in this format will contain no personally identifying information and will be stored in a secure place. Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym and reference number, which will be the only information included on hard copies. Contact details for participants, keys for pseudonyms and reference numbers will be stored digitally under password protection. Consent forms signed by participants will be stored in a secure and confidential filing cabinet located in my office at Solent University. I will maintain contact details for the duration of the study, to allow for follow-up contact. Following completion of the study, personally identifying information such as contact details and signed consent forms will be retained in electronic format on the secure University of Southampton server for a period of 10-years. All hard copies of information will be destroyed. This is in line with University of Southampton policy.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Only myself and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to identifying data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your identity, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Your views will be referred to in the final written thesis for this PhD project and may be included in subsequent publications. This may be in the form of direct quotes or paraphrasing of your interview. Where you are referred to,

this will be through a pseudonym and any identifying information will be removed.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. You can communicate with me via email and telephone to pose questions about the research. I will also contact you before the interview, by email and/or telephone, to confirm your involvement.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time up to the point I analyse the information collected, two weeks after the interview, without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. You can telephone me or send an email to confirm your withdrawal before or after participation in interviews. You can also withdraw at any time during the interview. Should you withdraw during or after an interview, I will ask your permission to retain any information collected up to the point of withdrawal.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify. All participants will be sent a summary of the research, containing anonymised information.

Where can I get more information?

I can be contacted by email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk , telephone: XXXXXXXX and my website: <http://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog>

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact me via email with any concerns or questions. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project.

Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website

(<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/Is/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the

performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data->

protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering participation in the research project.



Gavin Tucker

Appendix 3: Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Topic Guide

1. Could you give an overview of your career to date?
2. As part of this wider experience, can you tell me more about your experience working with young people in the criminal justice system?
3. Based on this criminal justice experience, what is your experience working with young people who have been in custody? This can include young people currently in custody or in the community.
4. Young people who have been in custody are often referred to as 'young offenders'. Do you believe this is a fair label or would you use different language?
5. In your view, are Special Educational Needs and Disability a common need of young people who have been in custody?
6. What is your understanding of the 2015 SEND Code of Practice, with reference to young people in custody? (At this point I can make a copy of the CoP Chapter 10 available as an aid memoir, at the discretion of the participant)
7. If we haven't already addressed this in previous questions, could you tell me more about your own specific responsibilities and practice in relation to education provision for young people who are resettling from custody?
8. What, to you, is good practice in relation to your professional role? I am referring to working with young people, resettlement and SEND (This can be tailored to specific professional roles).
9. What, to you, is less effective practice in relation to your role?
10. In your view, in what ways does your agency and the wider local authority facilitate education provision for young people with SEND who have left custody?

Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheets for Young People in three Adapted Formats

This appendix contains information adapted in Easy Read, Widgit and Plain English formats available to gatekeeping professionals; and adapted information I used in my initial meetings with young people.

Introductory Meeting with Gatekeeping Professional – Easy Read Version



Gavin Tucker is a teacher working at a university.



A university is like school or college. Gavin works at Solent University



He teaches people about social work. Social workers help people.



Gavin used to be a social worker in a Youth Offending Team (YOT). He wants to know how YOTs help young people



Gavin wants to talk to some young people who get help from a YOT.



Gavin will talk to young people about their time at school. Before and after being in a youth offending institute or secure training centre.



He is doing a degree at university about education.



A degree is like an exam similar to a SAT or GCSE.

Talking to young people is the project for the degree. A project is the work Gavin is doing for the degree a bit like an essay.

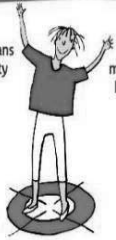


He wants to learn more about school and try to make sure young people get the help they need.

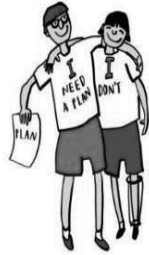
Gavin wants to talk about how YOTs help young people get on at school.

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

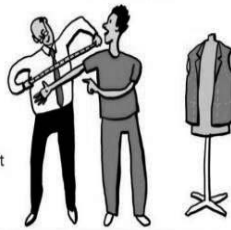
Education, Health and Care plans are replacing Learning Difficulty Assessments and Statements.



Education Health and Care plans are a lot more focused on the individual person and will help young people get the support they need to achieve their goals.



You won't get a plan unless you have significant support needs.



For more info take to one of the specialist information, advice and support services. To find your local service visit www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk. Talk to your family teachers, tutors and support workers. Get in touch with your local authority. You can find their contact information on the GOV.UK website.

Gavin will also ask if he can look at an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and assessment for young people he speaks to.



With their permission Gavin will talk to parents or carers about how school is for young people involved.



If you agree, Gavin can send you two videos talking about the project.



After watching the videos, he will ask to meet with you. And may also meet your parent or carer. He will meet to talk about the project. And ask if you want to take part in the project. You can say no to taking part before, during or after the meeting.



If you agree to see the videos please give the best place to send the video.

This could be an email, Whats-app or Facebook.



If you want to contact Gavin with questions you can send him a text, an email or personal message him on his website.

Mobile number:

Email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk

Website: <https://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog/>

Introductory meeting with gatekeeper – Easy Read version

Information about education project

Gavin Tucker is a teacher working at a university. He teaches people about social work.

He used to be a social worker in a Youth Offending Team (YOT).

Gavin wants to talk to some young people who get help from a YOT.

He is doing a qualification at university. Talking to young people is the project for that qualification.

He is interested in how YOTs help young people get on at school or college.

Gavin will talk to young people about their time at school or college before and after being in a youth offending institute or secure training centre.

He wants to learn more about school/college and try to make sure young people get the help they need.

With their permission, Gavin will also ask young people if he can look at their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and assessment.

With the permission of young people involved, Gavin will talk to parents or carers about school/college.

If you agree, Gavin can send you two videos explaining the project more. After watching the videos, he will ask permission to meet with you and he may also meet with your parent or carer. The meeting will be a chance for him to talk about the project and answer questions. You can say no to being involved in the project before, during and after the meeting.

If you agree to see the videos please give

.....
the best place to send that video. This could be an email, Whats-app or Facebook account.

After seeing the videos Gavin will contact you the same way he sent the video. If you want to contact him with questions you can send him a text, an email or personal message him on his website.

Mobile number:

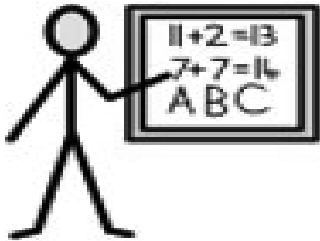
Email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk

Website: <https://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog/>

Introductory Meeting with Gatekeeping Professional – Widgeit version



Gavin Tucker



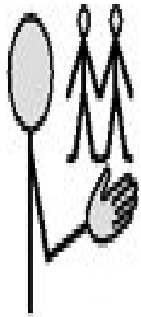
teacher

Gavin Tucker is a teacher working at a university.

SOLENT UNIVERSITY

SOUTHAMPTON

A university is like school or college. Gavin works at Solent University.



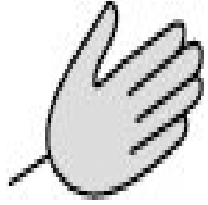
He teaches people about social work. Social workers help people. Gavin used to be a social worker in a youth offending team (yot).

social worker



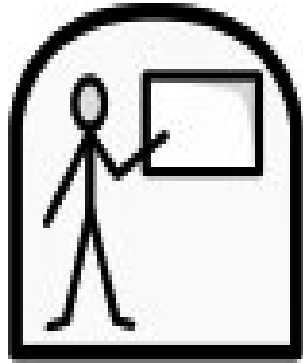
Gavin wants to listen to young people who get help from a yot.

listen



He wants to know how yots help young people at school or college.

help



school

Gavin will talk to young people about their time at school. Before and after staying in a youth offending institute or secure training centre.

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

He is doing a degree at university about education. He is a student at Southampton University.



A degree is like an exam similar to a SAT or GCSE.

a degree



Listening to young people is the project for the degree.

listen



help

He wants to learn more about school and yot and make sure young people get the help they need.

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

Education, Health and Care plans are replacing Learning Difficulty Assessments and Statements.

Education Health and Care plans are a lot more focused on the individual person and will help young people get the support they need to achieve their goals.

You won't get a plan unless you have significant support needs.

For more info talk to one of the impartial information, advice and support services. To find your local service visit www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk. Talk to your family, teachers, carers and support workers. Get in touch with your local authority. You can find their contact information on the GOV.UK website.

Council for disabled children
Department for Education

With their permission, Gavin will ask if he can look at the education, health and care (ehc) plan and assessment of young people he chats with.

ehc plan



If they say yes, Gavin will talk to the parent or carer of young people involved about how school is for them.

parent or carer

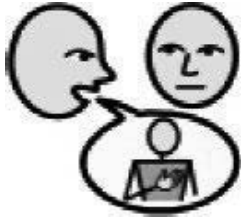


If you agree, Gavin will send you two youtube videos talking about the project.



After watching the videos he will ask to meet with you and may be also your parent or carer for a chat.

chat



chat about feelings

Gavin will meet to chat about the project. And ask if you want to take part in the project. Please say how you feel about taking part. You can say no to taking part.



contact details

If you agree to see the videos please give the best place to send the videos. This could be an email, Whats-app or Facebook.



contact Gavin

If you want to contact Gavin with questions you can send Gavin a text, an email, phone him or personal message him on his website.

Mobile number:

Email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk

Website: <https://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog/>

My first meeting – Easy Read Version



My name is Gavin Tucker. I am a teacher at a university.



A university is like school or college. I work at Solent University.



I teach people about social work. Social workers help people.



I used to be a social worker in a Youth Offending Team (YOT). I want to know how YOTs help young people.



I am doing a degree at university about education.



A degree is like an exam similar to a SAT or GCSE. Talking to young people is the project for the degree. A

project is the work I am doing for the degree a bit like an essay.

If you say yes, I will meet with you about 3 times. You can stop meeting with me at any time you want.



I want to talk to some young people who get help from a YOT.



I will talk to young people about their time at school. This can be before staying in a youth offending institute or secure training centre. And after, which is the bit I am most interested in.



I want to learn more about school or college and try to make sure young people get the help they need.

I want to talk about how YOTs help young people get on at school or college.

I will not talk about the Youth Offending Institute or secure training centre. Unless you want to talk about it.



Please do not feel you have to talk about anything you are uncomfortable with. For example, talking about anything that got you involved with the YOT.



With your permission I will record any meetings. I will not tell anyone else what you have said unless I am worried about anything.

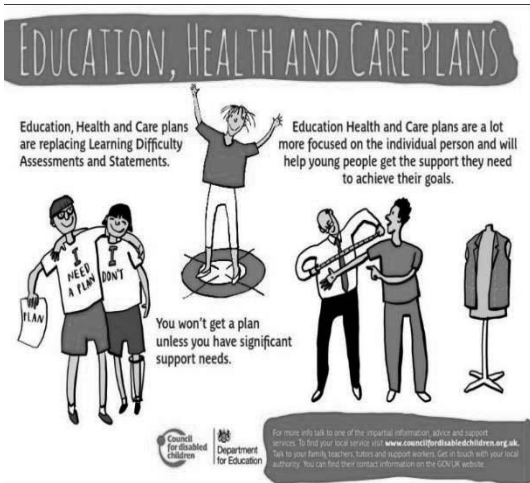
I will not use your name in anything I write about the project and no one else will know what you have said except if a parent or carer is with you.



If I am worried about your safety in any way, I may have to pass this on to other people who may need to know.



If you say yes, I will talk to your parent or carer about what school is like for you.



With your permission, I will ask to look at your Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and assessment.



If you say yes we will arrange our next meeting, where we can chat about school and the YOT.



If you want to contact me with questions you can send me a text, an email, phone me or personal message me on my website.

Mobile number:

Email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk

Website: <https://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog/>

Thank
you!

Introductory My first meeting– Plain English Version

My name is Gavin Tucker. I am a teacher working at a university, called Solent University. A university is similar to school or college. I teach people about social work.

Social workers help people. I used to be a social worker in a Youth Offending Team (YOT).

I am still interested in how YOTs help young people. I want to talk to some young people who get help from a YOT. I am doing a qualification at university. Talking to young people is the project for that qualification.

I will talk to young people about their time at school or college. This can be before staying in a youth offending institute or secure training centre. And after, which is the bit I am most interested in.

I want to learn more about school or college and try to make sure young people get the help they need. I will not talk about the Youth Offending Institute or secure training centre unless you want to talk about it.

I am also interested in how YOTs help young people with school.

If you say yes, I will meet with you about 3 times. You can stop meeting with me at any time you want to.

Please do not feel you have to talk about anything you are uncomfortable with. For example, talking about anything that got you involved with the YOT. Please so no if you do not want to talk about something.

If you are happy to talk to me, I will record any meetings with your permission. I will not tell anyone else what you have said unless I am worried about anything.

I will not use your name in anything I write about the project and no one else will know what you have said except if your parent or carer is with you.

If I am worried about your safety in any way, I may have to pass this on to other people who may need to know. I will let you know if this happens.

If you say yes, I will talk to your parent or carer about what school is like for you.

With your permission, I will also ask to look at a copy of your Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and assessment.

If you say yes we will arrange our next meeting, where we can chat about school and the YOT.

If you want to contact me with questions you can send me a text, an email, phone me or personal message me on my website.

Mobile number:

Email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk

Website: <https://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog/>

**My first meeting – Widgit
Version**



My name is Gavin Tucker.



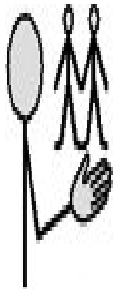
I am a teacher working at a university.

teacher

SOLENT UNIVERSITY

SOUTHAMPTON

A university is like school or college. I work at Solent University.



social worker

I teach people about social work. Social workers help people. I used to be a social worker in a youth offending team (yot).

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

I am a student at Southampton University



a degree

I am doing a degree at university about education.

A degree is like an exam similar to a SAT or GCSE.



I want to know how yots help young people with school or college.

help



listen

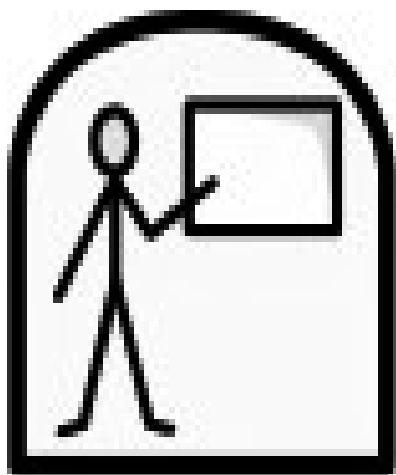
I want to listen to young people who get help from a yot.



Listening to young people is the project for the degree.

If you say yes, I will meet with you about 3 times. You can stop meeting with me at any time you want.

listen



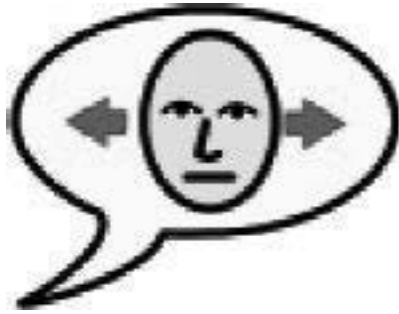
school

I will talk to young people about their time at school. This can be before staying in a youth offending institute or secure training centre. And after, which is the bit I am most interested in.



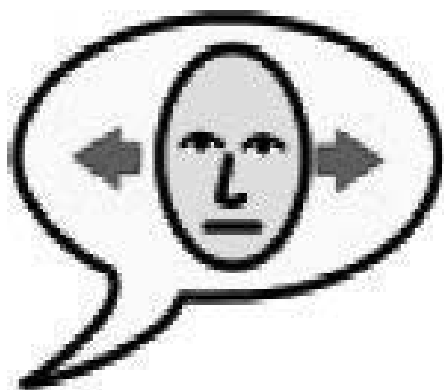
help

I want to learn more about school and try to make sure young people get the help they need.



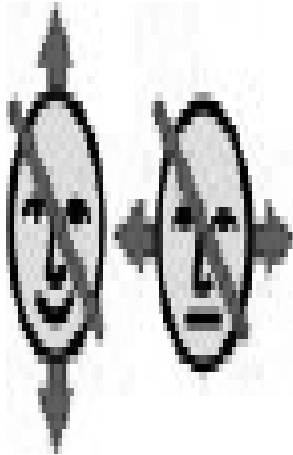
You do not have to talk about staying in a youth offending institute or secure training centre if you do not want to.

say no



say no

**Please do not feel you have to talk about anything you are uncomfortable with.
Please say no if you feel uncomfortable. For example, talking about anything that
got you involved with the yot.**



will not tell

If you are happy to talk to me, I will record any meetings with your permission. I will not tell anyone else what you have said unless I am worried about anything. I will not use your name in anything I write about the project and no one else will know what you have said except if your parent or carer is with you.



feel worried

If I am worried about your safety in any way, I may have to pass this on to other people who may need to know. I will tell you if I have to do this.



If you say yes, I will talk to your parent or carer about what school is like for you.

parent or carer

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

Education, Health and Care plans are replacing Learning Difficulty Assessments and Statements.

Education Health and Care plans are a lot more focused on the individual person and will help young people get the support they need to achieve their goals.

You won't get a plan unless you have significant support needs.

For more information or for the nearest information, advice and support service. To find your local service visit www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk.
 Talk to your family, teachers, tutors and support workers. Get in touch with your local authority. You can find their contact information on the GOV.UK website.

Council for disabled children
 Department for Education

With your permission, I will ask to look at your education, health and care (ehc) plan and assessment.

ehc plan



**If you say yes we will arrange our next meeting,
we can chat about school and the yot**

chat



contact me

If you want to contact me with questions you can send me a text, an email, phone me or personal message me on my website.

Mobile number:

Email: g.m.tucker@soton.ac.uk **Website:**

<https://gavmtuckeruk.home.blog/>

*Thank
you!*

Appendix 5: All Themes Identified Using Nvivo

This appendix documents all themes coded through Nvivo, including those that did not appear in the final version of the thesis. Screenshots have been used for this purpose, to provide an audit trail. This list reflects part 3 of the thematic analysis, when themes were initially identified following a process of coding the interview data. This part of the process involved the highest number of themes and codes. The list of themes in each of the findings' chapters are a record of the final list of themes that emerged from parts 4 – 6 of the thematic analysis, when themes were reviewed, defined, named and presented. It should be noted one transcript, of Danny's interview, was not coded using Nvivo. This is because the quality of the recording made transcription difficult. Instead Danny's interview was coded by repeated listening to the audio recording, using the same themes and codes listed here.

Nodes			
	Name	Files	References
Folders	Aspiration		0
	Aspiration of staff		1
	Lack of self-esteem		2
	Low aspiration		1
	Role of schools		5
	Tension between ETE and aspiration		1
	YP Motivation to Change		9
	Bonding Social Capital		5
	Lack of Family Support		1
	Bridging Social Capital		6
	CiC and Prison		3
	CiC Community		6
	Isolation		0
	College v School		0
	Complex Needs		0
ADHD		4	
ASD		4	

Nodes			
Name	Files	References	
Attachment		1	1
Communication Disorders		8	22
Innovative Practice		11	20
Lack of Training		10	17
Maslow		4	4
Poor Interventions for		2	4
Problems defining complex needs		11	23
SEMH		5	9
SEND and education disruption		13	25
SpLD		1	1
Trauma		12	23
Undiagnosed need		11	19
Vulnerability to criminalisation		7	20

Nodes			
Name	Files	References	
Social Capital		0	0
Embedded resources		2	6
Nature and quality of resources		1	1
SC encouraging pro-social identity and reogniti		2	2
Mobilised social capital		1	2
Expressive actions		0	0
Quality of relationship between individual actor		1	1
Cohesive family structure		0	0
Closure and adherence to norms		0	0
Bonding SC		8	9
Bridging SC		19	52
Linking SC		18	51
Negative SC		12	18
Social exclusion and limited SC		0	0
Links to resilience and labelling		1	1
SC and aspirations		1	4
Sociolinguistics		2	5

> Nodes		Files	References
Folders	Resilience and Risk		0
	Resilience promotion		9
	Resilience during transition		0
	Risk factors		9
	Protective factors		9
	Vulnerability		18
	Family, accomodation and resilience		5
	Social ecology of resilience		0
	Decentrality		6
	Fluctutation of resilience and vulnerability		0
	Atypical resilience and vulnerability		2
	Cultural lens of resilience		0
	Link to SC, labelling and other theories		0

Nodes		Files	References
Name			
Inclusive education		0	0
Inclusivity of unconventional backgrounds		2	3
Structural and institutional factors		0	0
Quality over quantity		0	0
Close and supportive staff relationships		11	21
Feeling respected		1	1
Bespoke curriculum, meets choice and need		9	27
Hybrid of class and work placement		3	3
Involvement in decision making		1	1
Positive peer relations		0	0
Integration with non-offending peers		2	2
Small class size		2	5
Focus on strengths		2	2
Second chance schooling		0	0
Strong employability focus		10	14
Transition and resettlement		0	0
Epiphany		0	0

Nodes		Files	References
Name			
Transition and resettlement		0	0
Epiphany		0	0
SES and transition		0	0
Disrupted transition, uncertain and biography		11	25
Precarious freedom of resettlement		1	1
Self-esteem and personal agency		1	1
Youth engagement with support		2	2
ROTC		0	0
Finding suitable accommodation and related diffic		5	7

		Nodes			
		Name	Files	References	
Folders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Custodial Provision		0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Custody a Missed Opportunity		3	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education in custody		10	37
	<input type="checkbox"/>	STC V YOI		1	3
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with YOTs		10	19
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education - good practice		0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Subjects		0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocacy		1	2
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative education		15	43
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bespoke		6	16
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disguised Learning		2	3
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education - rights based		3	3
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education as protective factor		10	31
	<input type="checkbox"/>	FE		1	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Functional Skills		1	3
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusion Centres in Mainstream		4	13
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Class Sizes		4	10
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support with Work Readiness		5	11
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training		0	0

		Nodes			
		Name	Files	References	
Folders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trusted Staff		4	10
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational Training		8	13
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education as barrier		0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apprenticeship beyond reach		6	10
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lacking qualifications		1	1
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Belittling vocational route		0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Challenging behaviour		7	14
	<input type="checkbox"/>	PRUs		9	18
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Everything left too late		6	13
	<input type="checkbox"/>	FE		9	23
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inappropriate provision		8	19
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of roll on, roll off		3	3
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inclusion centres in Mainstream		1	1
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor relations and lack of support		1	1
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Punitive response		5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Constant moving around		7	17
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overuse of exclusion		7	14

Nodes				
Name	Files	References		
Elective home education		7		12
Having a criminal record		11		28
Reduced timetable		2		4
Set-up to fail		2		2
Standardised		2		2
Systemic factors		6		22
Money and resources		4		5
Work readiness or employability		7		11
EHCP		22		75
CoP		3		4
Funding		1		2
EHC Fundings		5		6
EHC - Empowering Potential		11		15
EHC Timescales		6		7
Challenges and Barriers		12		24
Custody and EHC		3		5
IPW - Poor Practice		0		0
Children services out of death		2		4

Nodes			
Name	Files	References	
IPW - Different Cultures		7	11
Poor communication - IPW		8	16
Lack of trust		1	1
YOT and school		3	12
IPW - Positive		0	0
Communication between agencies		14	37
Proactive rather than reactive		3	7
Training		0	0
Trust between professionals		4	5
Wrap around service		11	18
Labelling		2	5
Medicalised labels		2	2
Negative labelling		14	45
Young offender as child		1	4
Leadership add to systemic factors		2	3
Parents and carers		0	0
Complex needs of parents		9	14

Nodes			
Name	Files	References	
Engagement with YOT		9	30
Parental work during custodial sentence		0	0
Relationship with child		6	10
Relationship with school		10	25
Participation of YP		4	7
Co-production		1	1
PRU		0	0
Resettlement - Barriers		0	0
Coming into the same area		7	10
Cutting services		2	5
Inconsistency		0	0
Late planning for release		13	33
Anxiety and spatial vertigo		7	10
Parental disengagement		0	0
Resilience - general		2	5
Not rely on children's resilience		2	5
Resilience and mental health		2	2

Nodes			
Name	Files	References	
The importance of protective factors		3	9
Risk management		2	4
Resettlement - good practice		0	0
Creative approaches		13	29
Empowerment		1	1
Good training		0	0
Involuntary engagement		2	2
Mentoring		8	16
Proactive release planning		9	26
Structure		1	1
Trusted staff		9	18
The role of the ETE worker		4	46
Use of the voluntary sector		3	5
Whole family approach		2	5
Parental engagement		0	0
YOT as advocate or broker add to trusted staff code just		7	19

Nodes			
Name	Files	References	
Public Health Approach		1	3
Transitions		0	0
Between stage transitions		8	16
Custody to community transition		4	7
New school transition		3	4
Luke Interviews		0	0
Class Clown - Link to timeline		1	1
History of school disruption		1	8
Strengths		1	8
Relationship with YOT		1	5
The turnaround (follows on from YOT involvement linke		1	7
Care Experience		1	3
What makes a good professional - round off vignette		1	6
What could have made school better		1	9
Role of mum		1	1

Appendix 6: Cross-Case Concept Table

The first column of the vertical axis contains concepts identified across the three case studies. These concepts were included because they were recurrent or significant, representing wider related concepts or principles of practice. The horizontal axis refers to the three case studies. The presence of concepts in each case is indicated by a black tick and the absence of a concept is indicated by a red cross. Similar but separate concepts have been included, allowing for some variation in conceptual terminology across cases.

Concept	A	B	C
<i>Sub-grouping: Negative education factors</i>			
Disrupted Education History	✓	✓	✓
Punitive Mainstream School Experience including Exclusion and Off-Rolling	✓	✓	✓
Mainstream Education as a Criminogenic Factor	✓	X	X
Challenging Behaviour including as a Systemic Issue	✓	✓	X
Negative Education Environment	✓	✓	X
PRUs are a Negative Education Environment including being Criminogenic	✓	✓	X
Barriers to FE	✓	✓	✓
Pro-Criminal Peers in Education	✓	X	X
Pro-Social Peers, being cut off from by move to PRU	✓	X	X
Unsupportive Education Staff	✓	X	X
YP Lack of Readiness for FE	✓	✓	✓
PRU to Mainstream Reintegration does not occur	X	✓	X
An Insufficient Timetable for School or College	✓	✓	X
<i>Sub-grouping: Positive education factors</i>			
Positive Pedagogy and Alternative Education	✓	✓	✓
PRUs can be Effective	✓	✓	X

Apprenticeship and internships – Positive Experience	✓	X	✓
Small Class Sizes	✓	✓	X
Alternative Curriculum Aligned to Mainstream Schools	✓	✓	X
Inclusive Approach to Learning	✓	✓	✓
Strong Pastoral Support in Education	✓	✓	✓
Developing Soft Skills	✓	✓	✓
Hidden or Disguised Learning	✓	✓	✓
Bespoke Curriculum	✓	✓	✓
<i>Sub-grouping: Planning for release (effective and ineffective planning)</i>			
Proactive Release Planning	✓	✓	✓
Joined Up Planning and Wrap-Around Support	✓	✓	✓
Leadership Role of the YOT During Planning	✓	✓	✓
YP Involvement in Planning for Release	✓	✓	✓
Poor Release Planning, including Late Planning, Silo Working and Exclusion of YP	✓	✓	✓
Anxiety and Uncertainty of the Resettlement Transition	✓	✓	✓
<i>Sub-grouping: The positive relationship between young people and professionals</i>			
Trust and Respect	✓	✓	✓
Close Relationship with Education Staff	✓	✓	✓
Supportive and Nurturing Environment in Education including Stability/Affective Dimension and strengths-based approach	✓	✓	✓
Boundaries in the professional-YP Relationship	✓	✓	✓
YOT as Advocate or Broker	✓	✓	✓
The Importance of the YOT Education Worker	✓	✓	✓
Mentoring	X	X	✓
<i>Sub-grouping: Stigma during resettlement</i>			

Stereotyping, Stigma and Labelling	✓	✓	✓
Negative Risk Perceptions, including Stigma	✓	✓	✓
Concepts applying to more than one sub-grouping:			
SEND Code of Practice	X	X	✓
EHC Assessments and Plans	✓	✓	✓
Alienation and Disaffection	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Suitable Accommodation a Risk Factor, including out of area placement	✓	✓	✓
Accommodation as a Protective Factor	✓	✓	✓
The Pull of a Pro-Criminal Lifestyle	✓	✓	✓
The Role of Parents	✓	✓	X
Reframing Worldview and Identity	✓	✓	✓
Fostering Aspirations	✓	✓	✓
YP Motivation	✓	✓	✓
Staff Motivation	✓	✓	✓
Indifference to Education	✓	X	X
Out of the Box and Creative Approaches	✓	✓	✓
Constructive Partnerships with the Voluntary Sector	✓	✓	✓
Partnership Working between YOT and School to Prevent Reoffending, including PRU	X	✓	X