A NARRATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE RETURNED TO MAINSTREAM EDUCATION FOLLOWING PERMANENT EXCLUSION
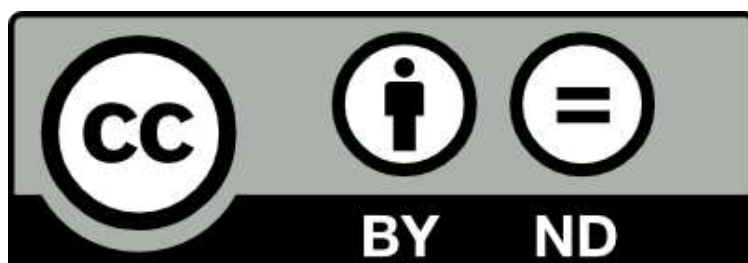
by

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ABSTRACT

Many children and young people experience permanent exclusion from school, for a number of reasons. The practice of permanently excluding pupils is associated with a number of negative outcomes and disproportionately affects minority groups and pupil views regarding this practice have been widely sought. Some children and young people who are permanently excluded are subsequently reintegrated to mainstream education, meaning they join a new school, usually following time spent attending an alternative provision setting. Whilst previous research has also sought to explore the views of reintegrated children and young people regarding their reintegration, there has been less focus on how children and young people experience the overall journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration.

In this study, participants who had experienced a reintegration to mainstream education following permanent exclusion from school were recruited and semi-structured interviews were used to explore their stories. Narrative inquiry was employed in order to capture the meaning that participants gave to their experiences through their educational journeys.

Key themes within each participant's narrative were generated, highlighting the experiences they deemed to be most significant in their stories and the meaning they gave to these experiences. The study also explored how reintegrated young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors they perceive to support them in achieving this, as well as how the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affected their perceptions of their futures.

The findings of this study provide rich insight into the unique lens and perceptions of young people who have reintegrated to mainstream education following permanent exclusion. These findings are discussed in the context of previous literature and are used to inform a consideration of the implications for the practice of professionals who work with excluded and reintegrating children and young people, including school staff and educational psychologists.

DEDICATION

To Shardinay, Lenny and Mohammed, who shared their stories with me.

It is a privilege to be trusted with your stories. Thank you for making this research possible. I wish you all the best for everything you do in life.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Alternative Provision
BPS	British Psychological Society
CYP	Children and Young People
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
LA	Local Authority
PEX	Permanent Exclusion/Permanently Excluded
RQ1	Research Question 1
RQ2	Research Question 2
RQ3	Research Question 3
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explored the experiences of pupils who have experienced a permanent exclusion (PEX) from, and subsequent reintegration to, mainstream education. The study was carried out during my final year as a trainee educational psychologist, whilst on placement in an Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in the West Midlands.

In order to understand the experience of school exclusion, it is important first to consider the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion and how these are applied within the context of the education system, through the lens of inclusive practice.

1.2 Defining inclusion and exclusion

Within recent decades, the concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion have become more prevalent in public policy (Mascareno & Carvajal, 2015; Booth, 2016). Inclusion and exclusion are socially constructed phenomena, meaning that there is no singular definition of their meaning, rather they are constructed differently by different people, organisations and governments (Millar, 2007). Davey and Gordon (2017) suggest that a factor commonly used in the construction of inclusion is the idea of participation. For example, social inclusion has previously been defined as "full participation in all aspects of life" (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 12). This conceptualisation therefore implies that social exclusion relates to the experience of not being able or allowed to participate in social life (Davey & Gordon, 2017). A lack of participation in social life, as a result of social exclusion, has been construed to involve limited opportunities for the building of social relationships, including community, limited access to resources in order to meet the individual needs of the excluded individual, limited future opportunities and diminished personal agency (Pilgram & Steinert, 2003). Whilst there are other conceptualisations of social inclusion and exclusion, the factors considered within this conceptualisation is relevant to inclusion and exclusion in the context of education (Hansen et al., 2020).

1.3 Inclusive educational practice

Whilst the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion have become more prevalent in wider public policy in recent decades, there has also been an increase in the influence of the idea of inclusion on educational policy (Lambert & Frederickson, 2015). The conceptualisation of inclusion applied in most educational policy is similar to that described previously, whereby inclusion is seen to mean the maximisation of participation of all children and young people (CYP) within mainstream education (Lambert & Frederickson, 2015).

In educational policy, inclusive practice is perceived to be the mechanism through which the participation of CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in particular can be promoted (Shepherd, 2014). In order to achieve inclusion, schools have been guided to introduce inclusive values and practices in order to meet the needs of CYP with SEND within mainstream education (Hornby & Hornby, 2014). An early conceptualisation of inclusion in educational policy was that of 'full inclusion' whereby inclusive practices would allow for all CYP to be educated in mainstream classrooms (Evans & Lunt, 2002).

Over time this conceptualisation of inclusion has changed, shifting towards an understanding that for some CYP, it may be more inclusive to be educated outside of mainstream education, where needs can be met, and participation can be promoted, more effectively (Hornby & Hornby, 2014). McSherry (2012) argues that whilst specialist education may be more inclusive for some pupils, it is contestable whether this practice supports the inclusion of CYP with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and, in particular, those who display behaviour which schools deem to be challenging. It has been suggested that educational policies and school practices often leave CYP with SEMH needs, or those whose behaviour is perceived to be challenging, at risk of being excluded (Thompson et al., 2021). This can be seen in schools' responses to the behaviour of their pupils, discussed further in Chapter 2, which often results in a removal of the CYP from mainstream education. Ongoing school exclusion practice has brought many to question whether the current education system is indeed inclusive for all CYP (Thompson et al., 2021).

1.4 Structure of the study

Following the overview of inclusion and inclusive practice offered in this chapter, Chapter 2 explores the practice of school exclusion, outlining the different forms of school exclusion, as well as who is affected by school exclusion and its effects. Also provided in Chapter 2 is a review of the literature which has explored CYP's views regarding PEX, alternative provision and reintegration to mainstream education, leading to a justification of the research questions posed in the current research. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the research, including an overview of the philosophical position taken, as well as the data collection and data analysis methods. The findings of the research are presented in Chapter 4. Following this, the findings are then discussed in relation to previous literature in Chapter 5. Finally, in Chapter 6, a conclusion to the research is provided, including a consideration of the strengths and limitations of the research, and implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter firstly outlines the perception of behaviour in schools and the exclusive practices used by schools in order to manage such behaviour. Literature regarding who is affected by school exclusion and the effects that school exclusion can have on a CYP is considered. As this research explored the journeys of CYP who have reintegrated to mainstream education following PEX, reintegrative practice is also considered. Following this, the views of CYP regarding each stage of the PEX to reintegration journey are reviewed.

2.2 The construction of behaviour in schools

Whilst many areas of need in pupils, such as learning difficulties, are understood by the education system and schools as requiring of support, pupil behaviour appears to be construed differently. As discussed in Chapter 1, inclusive practices are encouraged throughout the education system in order to meet the specific needs of CYP. However, this ideology does not always extend to pupils who exhibit behaviour which is deemed to be challenging or inappropriate (Thompson et al., 2021). Whilst there is an ongoing shift in educational practice towards a relational understanding of and response to pupil behaviour (Billington et al., 2022; Vasilic, 2022), behaviours which are deemed to be challenging still appear to be largely construed by educational policymakers and schools as a problem which requires management, as opposed to an indication that support may be required (Sohbat, 2003; Lewis, 2008; Nash et al., 2016; Bodfield et al., 2023). This is evidenced in the responses available to schools in the management of such behaviour which largely centre around exclusive practices, especially when support is seen to have been ineffective in creating change. This construction of pupil behaviour which has informed the exclusion practices which are discussed throughout this chapter.

2.3 Managing behaviour in schools

The behaviour of pupils in schools in England has long been an area of interest for those involved in education, including educators and policy makers (Shaughnessy, 2012; Porter, 2014; DfE, 2022), as well as being held to regular scrutiny from the media (Visser, 2011; Shaughnessy, 2012; The Guardian, 2023; The Independent, 2023). When considering the behaviour of pupils in schools, it is disruptive behaviour in particular which is seen by educators, policy makers and the media as the problem to be managed. This continued focus on disruptive behaviour and its negative effects in the classroom and wider school environment have led to schools and educators facing increasing pressures to manage such behaviour (Johnson & Sullivan, 2016).

There are a number of strategies available to schools and school staff to be used in the management of disruptive behaviour, increasing in impact relative to the significance or frequency of the pupil's behaviour. Guidance for managing behaviour from the Department for Education (2022) states that any sanction imposed by a school should be proportionate to the behaviour observed and that removal from a classroom should be considered a serious sanction. Therefore, it is expected that initial and minor occurrences of disruptive behaviour are managed by teachers and school staff through the use of classroom behaviour management strategies in order to reinforce appropriate behaviour and challenge and reduce occurrences of undesired behaviour (Hart, 2010; Parsonson, 2012). Where these strategies are deemed to be ineffective, or in instances where it is deemed the severity of the behaviour warrants more significant sanctions, there are further options available to schools which centre around the removal of the pupil from the classroom or school environment. These strategies range from a temporary removal of the pupil from the classroom, suspension from school for an agreed period of time or a change of placement where the pupil is educated away from their mainstream school as the result of a managed move or permanent exclusion (De Friend et al., 2020). The Department for Education (2023a) describes the latter of these options as a "last resort" which may be necessary in order for schools to maintain an environment where "children and young people are protected from disruption and are in a calm, safe, and supportive environment that brings out the best in every pupil".

Despite government advice that permanent exclusion is to be used as a last resort, following the unsuccessful implementation of all other available interventions,

statistics provided by the government suggest that the number of school exclusions, including permanent exclusion, are continually rising in schools in England. In a review of school exclusions commissioned by the Department for Education, Timpson (2019) found there has been a steady increase in the number of permanent exclusions since 2013/14. Subsequent to Timpson's review, instances of permanent exclusion fell significantly. However, this period coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic and national restrictions upon the number of CYP regularly accessing mainstream education in schools. The available government statistics suggest that, following the removal of restrictions relating to the pandemic, permanent exclusion rates continue to increase at a similar rate as that observed pre-pandemic (DfE, 2023b).

2.4 School exclusion

School exclusion can take a number of forms (Power & Taylor, 2020; Martin-Denham, 2021). This section outlines four forms of exclusionary practice, relating to the removal of the CYP from the classroom environment or a change of educational setting.

2.4.1 Internal exclusion

Following attempts by teachers to manage disruptive behaviour within the classroom environment, internal exclusion is seen by many schools as the next step in behaviour management to be used before exploring options involving a change of placement (Mills & Thomson, 2018). Internal exclusion is the practice of removing a pupil from the mainstream classroom and placing them in a separate environment, isolated from their peers. The strategy of internal exclusion has also been referred to in schools as 'seclusion', 'the isolation room' and 'the inclusion room' (Jones et al., 2023). Whilst this strategy is at times referred to using the term 'inclusion', it remains a form of exclusion where a CYP is isolated from their peers.

Mills and Thomson (2018) found that there is ambiguity in what exactly constitutes internal exclusion, as well as variance in how it is used by schools. The behaviour

management strategy can be used by schools as a punitive sanction or as a perceived supportive measure aiming to meet the individual needs of a pupil (Mills & Thomson, 2018). Schools are not obligated to record or report their use of internal exclusion (Jones et al., 2023), and the Department for Education (2014, p. 12) states that "it is for individual schools to decide how long a pupil should be kept in seclusion or isolation, and for the staff member in charge to determine what pupils may and may not do during the time they are there".

2.4.2 Suspensions

Suspensions, also referred to as fixed-term exclusions, are recognised in legislation as an exclusion from school for a fixed period of time (DfE, 2023a). Legislation stipulates that a pupil can be suspended for the maximum of 45 school days in the academic year, across one or multiple fixed periods (DfE, 2023a). Schools are required by law to continue to provide an education for the suspended pupil through the setting and marking of work (DfE, 2023a). Legislation does not allow for the extension or conversion of a suspension into a permanent exclusion, however the Department for Education (2023a, p. 12) recommends that suspensions can be used to "show a pupil that their current behaviour is putting them at risk of permanent exclusion".

2.4.3 Managed moves

A managed move is another option available to schools in managing disruptive behaviour. Managed moves initiate a process of transferring a pupil from their school to another mainstream school on a permanent basis (DfE, 2023a). Managed moves can be used by schools as a final form of intervention aiming to prevent the permanent exclusion of the CYP (Mills & Thomson, 2018). Whilst efforts to prevent permanent exclusion and maintain education in a mainstream setting may be seen as more inclusive practice, Cooper (2008) suggests that a CYP's attachment to and sense of belonging in their school are key to inclusion and so transferring a pupil to a new, unknown school can still be viewed as exclusionary.

Managed moves are regulated by Fair Access Panels, to ensure that schools are not able to refuse to place a CYP because of previous behaviour (DfE, 2021). They should be voluntary and agreed between all parties and should only happen when in the pupil's best interests (DfE, 2023a). However, Timpson (2019, p. 97) found there to be instances of parents and carers agreeing to the managed move of a CYP "under the threat of an exclusion". Timpson (2019) suggests that poorly used managed moves can result in a CYP's education being disrupted as they are moved between educational settings, in line with policy and legislation, whilst their needs are not properly addressed.

2.4.4 Permanent exclusion

Along with suspensions, permanent exclusions are the second type of exclusion recognised in legislation (DfE, 2023a). When a permanent exclusion (PEX) occurs, a pupil is removed from the roll of the school they have been excluded from. This means that the education of the CYP is no longer the school's responsibility. Instead, the LA is required to identify a new, alternative educational setting for the CYP.

Government guidance states that PEX should only be used as a last resort, in response to "a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy" and where the CYP remaining in school would "seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others such as staff or pupils in the school" (DfE, 2023a, p. 13). Guidance also recommends that schools and LAs do not adopt a 'no exclusion' policy, suggesting that this may prevent CYP who require alternative provision from accessing it (DfE, 2023a).

2.4.5 Who are excluded and why?

There have long been concerns that school exclusion in England disproportionately affects certain minority groups (Parsons, 2008; Parkes, 2012; McCluskey et al., 2016; Black, 2022). The most recently available exclusion data from the Department for Education shows that concerns around disproportionality remain relevant. Specific pupil characteristics which increase the likelihood of exclusion from school

are identified by the Department for Education (2023b), including: gender (males), free school meal eligibility (acting as a proxy for socioeconomic status), pupils with identified special educational needs (SEN; in particular social, emotional and mental health difficulties), pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), age (secondary school aged pupils) and ethnicity (Black Caribbean and pupils of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller heritage).

The most common reason reported by schools for excluding pupils is 'persistent disruptive behaviour' (Timpson, 2019; DfE, 2023b). Other common reasons given for the exclusion of pupils include physical assaults, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour, and drug and alcohol related incidents (DfE, 2023b).

Whilst the recorded reasons for exclusion offer insight into specific behaviours which may have contributed to a school's decision to exclude a pupil, it is argued that studying exclusion solely through this lens offers a narrow, behaviouristic understanding of exclusion and its causes, centred around the behaviour of individuals (Atkinson, 2017). Many researchers argue that to better understand why CYP are excluded and why there is such disproportionality in exclusion data, exclusion must be considered in a wider context (McCluskey et al., 2016; Atkinson, 2017; Nashat & Rendall, 2018; Graham et al., 2019). Rustique-Forrester (2005, p. 10) offers a construction of school exclusion as "a complex, systemic phenomenon, reflective of local school decisions and influenced by external factors, such as national policies." She argues that factors such as a school's organisational context and national policies critically influence how teachers respond to the behaviour and needs of their pupils (Rustique-Forrester, 2005). Similarly, Parsons (2007) argues that the disproportionality of minority ethnic groups in school exclusion data can be understood through examining the structural, systemic racial inequalities at national, local and school levels, rather than focusing on the behaviour of individuals. These arguments highlight the importance of viewing school exclusion in wider contexts, beyond the specific behaviours of individuals, when considering the questions of who are excluded and why.

2.4.6 The effects of school exclusion

The practice of excluding CYP from schools has significant impacts at multiple levels. At the individual level, there are both immediate and long-lasting effects of school exclusion. The immediate effects of exclusion include a potentially significant impact on the mental health of the excluded CYP (Arslan, 2018; Ford et al., 2018; Tejerina-Arreal et al., 2020) as well as feelings of social isolation (Wright et al., 2000), rejection and shame (Harris et al., 2006). Alongside these social and emotional consequences, excluded pupils are likely to underachieve educationally in comparison to their peers who have not experienced school exclusion (Timpson, 2019). The effects of school exclusion on the individual have also been found to continue after the CYP has left education, into adulthood. Long-term individual consequences include reduced employment opportunities (Timpson, 2019) and an increased likelihood of involvement with the criminal justice system (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2019; Rosenbaum, 2020).

School exclusion also has consequences at a societal level. The use of exclusion as a behaviour management strategy in practice requires additional resources, including professionals, agencies and provision, therefore incurring a significant economic cost to society (Parsons & Castle, 1998). The continuation of individual effects of exclusion into adulthood, such as limited employment opportunities, mental health difficulties and increased risk of involvement in crime, also expend national and local resources, adding to the economic cost of exclusion (Madia et al., 2022).

Madia et al. (2022) argue that, in order to begin to reduce the negative consequences of school exclusion, both at an individual and a wider, societal level, intervention and change in exclusion policy and practice is required.

2.5 Where are excluded pupils educated?

Once a CYP has been permanently excluded from a school, it is the responsibility of the LA to arrange suitable, full-time education for them, which must begin no later than the sixth day of exclusion (DfE, 2013). In order to meet this requirement, excluded pupils are placed into alternative provision (AP), which is defined by the Department for Education (2013, p. 3) as:

"…education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour."

As highlighted within this definition, AP takes a number of different forms, catering for CYP with a range of needs. AP may be therapeutic in nature, offering educational settings for CYP with significant social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties or physical health issues, for example (Tate & Greatbatch, 2017).

One frequently used form of AP for excluded pupils are Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). PRUs provide education to CYP who are at risk of exclusion, suspended from school or have been permanently excluded (Tate & Greatbatch, 2017). This therefore means that pupils can attend both their school and a PRU on a part-time basis, or in the case of PEX, register solely with the PRU.

AP, including PRUs, are required to offer timetabled educational activities in an environment separate from mainstream school and staff (Taylor, 2012). Pillay et al. (2013) state that PRUs should be used to provide education for a short period of time, should aim to support a CYP in developing skills to support their educational journey and life after education and can be a tool for preparing a CYP for reintegration to mainstream education. Jalali and Morgan (2018) suggest that the main purpose of AP, wherever appropriate, should always be to enable the reintegration of a CYP back into mainstream education.

2.6 Reintegration

2.6.1 What is reintegration?

The Oxford English Dictionary (2023) defines reintegration as the "re-establishment or restoration of a previous condition" and "restoration to a state of wholeness, completeness or unity". In the context of school exclusion, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2004) defines reintegration as the efforts made by LAs, schools and other stakeholders to return CYP to mainstream education following

exclusion. This is also the definition of reintegration taken within this research. Where pupils have been suspended from school, reintegration involves a return the school environment from which they have been excluded. In the case of PEX, reintegration requires a return to mainstream education at a new, suitable setting on a full-time basis (DCSF, 2008).

2.6.2 The benefits and challenges of reintegration

As seen in Section 2.4.6, there is a breadth of research which outlines the negative effects of PEX on a CYP. Furthermore, experiencing PEX has been associated with a number of negative outcomes which can persist into adulthood (Moran, 2010; Madia et al., 2022; Obsuth et al., 2024). It may therefore be assumed that reintegrating an excluded CYP is essential in negating these effects and promoting positive outcomes (Moran, 2010). Hall-Lande et al. (2007) suggest that the reintegration of an excluded pupil can act against the known risk factors of exclusion and promote more positive outcomes for CYP through their education and into adulthood.

In addition to the benefits associated with negating the outcomes of exclusion, researchers have considered the moral rights of CYP in the context of exclusion. Tillson and Oxley (2020) argue that the use of PEX by schools in England may violate the rights of children as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and suggest reform of policy and practice to consider these rights. Booth and Potts (1983) argue that CYP have a right to be included in their communities and assert that the reintegration of excluded pupils can in cases be a moral responsibility in order to ensure this right is met.

Whilst the potential benefits of reintegration from exclusion have been acknowledged in research, and educational policy recognises the need to integrate CYP into mainstream education where possible (Warnock, 1978), the process of reintegration has significant associated challenges. Statistical data suggests that reintegration to mainstream education following PEX is uncommon. Using data provided by the Office for National Statistics, Thomson (2021) found that of all pupils in the 2019 school cohort who had experienced PEX, 30% completed Key Stage 4 in

mainstream or special education. Whilst data separating mainstream and special school returns is unavailable, it can be assumed that the percentage of pupils reintegrating to mainstream education is lower than 30%. This means that the majority of CYP who experience PEX either do not reintegrate into mainstream education whatsoever or reintegrate and are subsequently excluded again.

A review conducted on behalf of the Department for Education (Graham et al., 2019) identified common challenges associated with reintegration. These were found to include school-based challenges, such as refusal from mainstream settings to accept reintegrating pupils, the level and flexibility of support that schools are able to offer to reintegrating pupils, and the age of the CYP and amount of time spent out of mainstream education (Graham et al., 2019). Further research exploring reintegration practice has found the support offered by the mainstream setting to the reintegrating pupil to be central in preventing future exclusions and return to AP (Cole & Pritchard, 2007; Pillay et al., 2013). The perceived inability of mainstream schools to provide adequate support or the withdrawal of necessary support after a time can result in the breakdown of mainstream placements, leading to what Pillay et al. (2013) refer to as the 'revolving-door effect' of unsuccessful placements and further exclusions.

2.6.3 Research into reintegration

The level at which reintegrating placements break down and lead to further exclusion has led to increasing research interest into reintegration practice and what facilitates and impedes a successful reintegration, where a pupil's mainstream placement is maintained (Atkinson, 2017). A large portion of this research has sought the views of adult stakeholders in an attempt to better understand the reintegration process. Lawrence (2011) interviewed staff working in PRUs and mainstream settings to gather their views on reintegration and found that reintegration is perceived to be most effective when the CYP is motivated to return, support is provided by parents or carers and the mainstream setting is seen to be inclusive and supportive. Thomas (2015) also sought the perspective of educational practitioners in aiming to understand the process of reintegration. Here it was suggested that there are generic barriers and supportive factors to reintegration seen across all educational

settings, including support offered by the mainstream school and motivation and engagement of the CYP and their parents or carers (Thomas, 2015). Further to educational practitioner views, the views of excluded pupil's parents have also been sought in order to understand the impact of exclusion and reintegration on the family surrounding an excluded CYP (Lally, 2013; Bagley & Hallam, 2016).

Whilst listening to the views of adult stakeholders is important in building a holistic understanding of the reintegration process, Atkinson (2017) suggests that the voices of the CYP central to the process can be less heard.

2.7 Pupil voice

2.7.1 The rights of the child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) asserts that governments should "assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (Article 12). Informed by this direction, there have been increasing efforts in many countries worldwide to seek the views of CYP in matters concerning them (Lewis & Porter, 2007; Lundy & Cook-Sather, 2016).

In the UK, this move towards valuing the views of CYP can be seen in education legislation and policy. For instance, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice states that "children have a right to receive and impart information, to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them from the early years…" (DfE, 2014, p. 20). As well as this, the Children and Families Act (2014) states the need for CYP to be listened to and involved in the making of decisions relating to them.

2.7.2 Pupil voice in research

There are seen to be many benefits of involving CYP in research which affects them. It is argued that these benefits can include more meaningful findings, greater validity

in the representation of CYP's views, and potentially more successful outcomes when CYP views inform decision making (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Kirby et al., 2003; Lewis & Porter, 2007). Seeking pupil voice in research which explores the needs of CYP, and educational provision required to meet these needs, can also be seen as integral to ensuring inclusive practice (Norwich & Kelly, 2004). Therefore, whilst gathering the perspectives of adult stakeholders remains an important and helpful practice, it is crucial that the voices of excluded and reintegrated CYP are sought in research.

2.8 The views of children and young people

2.8.1 Views on permanent exclusion

When CYP who have experienced PEX discuss their time in school prior to being excluded, they regularly refer to overwhelmingly negative experiences in school, and attribute these towards feelings of exclusion in their mainstream setting and their eventual PEX. These negative school experiences often centre around difficult relationships and interactions with teachers and peers (Edwards, 2004; Loizidou, 2009; Gooding, 2014; Bovell, 2022). Whilst CYP feel that teachers should be the solution to their problems in school, the judgement and conflict which arises from interacting with teachers leads to feelings of anxiety and anger, which CYP feel leads to exclusion (Gooding, 2014). As well as this conflict, feelings of a lack of mutual respect in relationships with staff is also reported by excluded CYP (Bovell, 2022). A lack of positive and supportive peer relationships in school is also perceived as a contributing factor to exclusion. This can include experiences of being bullied (Gooding, 2014) and the breakdown of existing friendships and difficulty in developing new friendships (Loizidou, 2009).

In addition to relationships, negative school experiences reported by PEX pupils can include difficulty in accessing the school curriculum. Here, CYP discuss how teaching strategies used by their teachers may have worked for their peers but did not meet their own learning needs and styles (Trotman et al., 2015), or how the required curriculum is not suited to their strengths and interests, leading to boredom and disengagement (Bovell, 2022). CYP then attribute these classroom experiences

towards feelings of being different to their peers, disruptive behaviour and exclusion (Trotman et al., 2015; Bovell, 2022). These findings are perhaps unsurprising when considering the disproportionality of exclusions in CYP with identified SEND (DfE, 2023b).

Another area discussed by CYP who have been permanently excluded is the experience of emotional and mental health difficulties in school prior to their exclusion. Whilst this experience can at times be linked to the previously discussed difficulties associated with relationships and learning, it can also be its own difficulty in itself. CYP report that before their PEX they struggled with the emotional requirements of school (Bovell, 2022), and have felt that their emotional and mental health needs, which can include perceived stress, anxiety and depression, have been dismissed by staff, leading to feelings of helplessness and isolation (McManus, 2023). It is also reported that when needs are identified, the support offered can feel inadequate and lead to confounding feelings of distress (McManus, 2023). This finding is reflected in school exclusion data which shows that CYP with SEMH identified as their primary need are around 15 times more likely to be permanently excluded than peers with no identified SEND (DfE, 2023b).

A final recurring theme which appears when permanently excluded CYP discuss their experiences of PEX is family. Familial relationships and experiences can prove to be significant stressors to CYP and can be viewed as another factor which contributes towards an exclusion. These experiences can include loss and bereavement (Moore, 2009), chaotic, unpredictable or unsafe relationships with family members (Moore, 2009; McManus, 2023), and feelings of the family system struggling to cope with disadvantages such as ill-health, poverty and inadequate housing (Loizidou, 2009). While the latter of these can be viewed as a wider, systemic factor which may be contributing towards exclusion experiences, again reflected in government data (DfE, 2023b), CYP maintain the attribution of the family and the home towards their experience of PEX (Loizidou, 2009).

2.8.2 Views on Alternative Provision

For many PEX pupils, a change of placement to AP is perceived as a largely positive experience (Jalali & Morgan, 2018; Charles-Nelson, 2020). Where this is the case, CYP often refer to the differences between mainstream education and AP (Gooding, 2014; Warner, 2021; Owen, 2022). One such difference is a feeling of inclusion and belonging in AP which was not present in mainstream education (Jalali & Morgan, 2018; Warner, 2021; Owen, 2022). This feeling appears to be grounded in the relationships developed in AP. CYP report feeling that AP staff seem more interested in them as people and are more willing to spend time in getting to know them personally, as opposed to mainstream school staff who appear disinterested (McCluskey et al., 2015; Cajic-Seigneur & Hodgson, 2016; Warner, 2021). Similarly, staff in AP are seen to engage in more adult-like interactions with pupils, in comparison to the perceived disrespectful adult-pupil interactions that occur in a mainstream setting (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Cajic-Seigneur & Hodgson, 2016; Gibson, 2019; Owen, 2022). As well as relationships with staff, a difference in peer relationships is also reported. Similar, shared experiences with peers in a setting can promote feelings of familiarity and help to build positive peer relationships (Nicholson & Putwain, 2015; Jarvis, 2018; Warner, 2021). It should be noted however that CYP also refer to the difficulty in maintaining friendships outside of the setting due to pupils living in different catchment areas (Jarvis, 2018).

There is also a perception held by some PEX pupils that AP is more able to meet their individual needs than a mainstream school. Included within this perception is a view held by some PEX pupils that AP staff are better equipped to support them with any emotional or mental health difficulties they may face than staff in mainstream settings (Nicholson & Putwain, 2015; Dodman, 2016). CYP have also reported that the curriculum and lessons in AP feel more accessible, supportive, fun and related to their own strengths than in mainstream schools (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Dodman, 2016; Jarvis, 2018; Warner, 2021; Owen, 2022). The curriculum is described as being more useful in supporting them to develop skills for the jobs they feel they will go into in the future (Johnston & Bradford, 2022) and smaller class sizes are seen to support engagement in learning (Nicholson & Putwain, 22015; Trotman et al., 2016). These perceived differences to mainstream schools are accredited by CYP with resulting in an improved self-esteem and sense of self-worth,

as well as increased confidence in their own ability to achieve positive outcomes in the future whilst placed in AP (Warner, 2021; Owen, 2022).

Whilst it is encouraging that CYP have shared positive experiences and views of AP, it is also important to recognise that holding AP in such positive regard can have implications such as an increased sense of mistrust of mainstream schools and their staff (Owen, 2022; Bovell, 2022) and limited motivation to leave the AP setting (Jarvis, 2018; Bovell, 2022), potentially leading to difficulties engaging CYP in the reintegration process (Jalali & Morgan, 2018; Bovell, 2022).

The positive views and experiences of AP discussed here are not shared by all pupils who experience AP following PEX. A pupil's perception of AP is related to their acceptance of the fairness of their exclusion (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Macro, 2020). When the exclusion is seen to be unjust, CYP report feelings of not belonging and a perceived negative impact upon their social identity and sense of self (Macro, 2020). A PEX pupil interviewed by Macro (2020) also reports how the support they received in AP felt different to that received by peers in the same setting who had not been PEX but were placed because of mental health needs. The pupil describes feelings of unfairness and difference, leading to frustration and perceived confinement (Macro, 2020).

Whilst the more personalised curriculum available in AP is seen as a supportive factor in engagement in education by some CYP, others have described frustration at having limited academic options (Michael & Frederickson, 2013) and at the fact they do not have access to equal opportunities academically compared to their peers in mainstream school (Cajic-Seigneur & Hodgson, 2016). It is also important to note that, stereotypically, the curriculum offered in AP can be perceived as more suited towards boys' interests and aspirations (Trotman et al., 2019). It is possible that this can lead to feelings of difference and exclusion in PEX girls placed in AP (Trotman et al., 2019; Dance, 2022).

2.8.3 Views on reintegration

Much of the research exploring the reintegration of PEX pupils to mainstream education has sought the views of adult stakeholders (Lawrence, 2011; Atkinson,

2017). Where the views of CYP have been gathered, the focus of research has been on identifying factors perceived to support or hinder the reintegration process (Atkinson, 2017; Owen et al., 2021). Hart (2013) notes that research in this area tends to explore the deficits and risk factors associated with reintegration more than the supportive factors and instances of success. It is possible this focus is guided by the often unsuccessful nature of reintegration, as defined by the breakdown of the mainstream placement and further exclusion (Pillay et al., 2013), however understanding pupil views on success and support is equally important in order to develop reintegrative practice (Atkinson, 2017). Lown (2005) found that pupils appear to construe 'successful' reintegration differently to practitioners, focusing more on their feelings of self and feelings associated with their new school, as opposed to the length of placement and whether or not they avoid further exclusions.

Pupils who have experienced reintegration to mainstream education following PEX describe supportive and risk factors at the individual, family, school and systemic levels (Moran, 2010; Thomas, 2015; Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017). Individual factors affecting reintegration can include the motivation of the CYP to reintegrate and a desire for the move to be successful (Levinson, 2016). This desire can be affected by the positive regard developed for the AP setting, in instances where pupils do not wish to leave and so do not engage in reintegration (Pillay et al., 2013). Also discussed at the individual level are factors such as an understanding of the reintegrative process, self-esteem (Atkinson, 2017), self-discipline (Levinson, 2016) and a feeling of belonging in their new setting (Jalali & Morgan, 2018).

Relationships are seen by CYP as integral to reintegration and can act as a supportive or risk factor. This includes relationships with family and in school. Parental support and realistic expectations support the process of reintegration (Atkinson, 2017), but can also act against a positive reintegration when the CYP feels as though there is parental blame and, at times, a lack of accountability (Jalali & Morgan, 2018). In school, relationships with staff and peers are both considered important to reintegration (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Levinson, 2016). Pupils interviewed by Michael and Frederickson (2013) highlight that it is the relationships which affect academic and emotional outcomes which are perceived to be of most importance during reintegration.

Environmental and systemic issues are also identified by CYP as potential supportive or risk factors. These can include the school's ethos, behaviour policy and potential stigmatisation of a reintegrating pupil from staff and peers (Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017). Furthermore, the timing of the reintegration (Atkinson, 2017) and clear communication between the AP and the mainstream setting (Moran, 2010; Thomas, 2015; Atkinson, 2017) are also recognised as important. As with the individual and relational factors described, the absence of systemic supportive factors are perceived by CYP as barriers to their reintegration and can be attributed towards the 'failure' of a reintegration (Atkinson, 2017; Jalali & Morgan, 2018).

2.9 Research questions

The aim of this research is to explore the social, affective and educational narratives of CYP who have experienced PEX and a reintegration into mainstream education. Whilst previous research has sought the views of pupils at each individual stage of this process, offering snapshot insight into experiences of exclusion, AP and reintegration, there is a paucity of research exploring CYP's journeys through the challenging process as a whole.

Much of the research in this area has focused on identifying attributions towards exclusion and supportive and risk factors in the reintegrative process. There has been less attention paid to the stories that CYP tell of this journey. The power of storytelling is widely recognised (Roche & Sadowsky, 2003; Davis & Dwyer, 2017), and seeking to hear the experiences of CYP who have travelled along a challenging and often stigmatised journey will offer valuable insight to the research area. Therefore, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?

2. How do children and young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors do they perceive to be supportive in achieving this?

3. How does the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affect children and young people's constructions of their future?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research aims to contribute to the body of research about CYP who have experienced PEX and a reintegration to mainstream education, and to broaden professionals' understanding of this experience through the exploration of the narratives of CYP. This chapter offers an overview of the methodology adopted within this study. The philosophical approach underpinning the research, methodological approach used, research design and ethical considerations are outlined. Finally, an outline of the data collection and data analysis process is given.

3.1.1 Philosophical approach

The philosophical assumptions made by a researcher underpin all research design, as it is these assumptions which dictate how the research must be conducted (Cohen et al., 2018). Ontology requires us to consider the nature of reality, whilst epistemology asks of us the nature and the limits of the knowledge we can obtain (Della Porta & Keating, 2008).

This research assumes a social constructionist philosophical position, in doing so rejecting realist ontology. This means rejecting the conceptualisation of reality as objective and independent from any observer's consciousness (Bem & De Jong, 2013). Instead, the position taken is that an individual's worldview is constructed through ongoing social interactions and the social structures within which the individual exists (Gergen, 1985). Therefore meaning, the idea that reality exists as an objective and universal 'truth' is rejected (Burr, 1995).

Epistemologically, the social constructionist position maintains that knowledge is not objectively and independently discovered, rather it is created through social interaction and the use of language (Gergen, 1985). Burr (1995) suggests that knowledge is framed within contextual factors such as time and culture and is therefore subject to change, rather than being objective and constant. Because of this, social constructionism argues against the positivist pursuit of objective truth,

instead perceiving research to be a means through which knowledge can be produced through social interaction (Cohen et al., 2018).

Taking social constructionism as my philosophical position governed the research methods adopted within this study. As the research aimed to explore the personal experiences and socially constructed narratives of individuals, an objective, positivist approach was rejected (Cohen et al., 2018). In employing the chosen research design I recognise that differing realities exist, each produced by the personal experiences and interpretations of an individual (Andrews, 2012). I also acknowledge that my own experiences and worldview will have impacted upon the conduct of this research, as well as the narratives shared by participants, as these were socially constructed with myself (Cohen et al., 2018). This is discussed further in Section 3.6 Reflexivity.

3.2.1 Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is an exploratory tool which supports researchers in capturing the meaning individuals give to their own lives and experiences, through listening to the stories that they tell (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009). This is based upon the principle that our understanding of the world is actively constructed through stories and storytelling (Murray, 2003). Within narrative inquiry participants determine which life events are of significance and should be discussed (Thomas, 2016). It is through the telling of stories relating to these events that the narrator makes sense of their experiences, both in relation to their own actions and views, as well as their interpretation of the actions and views of other individuals (Elliott, 2005). In doing so the process of constructing narratives through storytelling therefore helps individuals to make sense of both themselves and the world they exist in (Murray, 2003).

Researchers are able to use a range of methods and approaches to analysis in order to carry out narrative inquiry, however Elliott (2005, p.4) advises three key features of narratives which should be consistent throughout all narrative inquiry:

1. Narratives are *chronological,* meaning they are representations of sequential events.
2. Narratives are *meaningful.*

3. Narratives are *social*, in that they are produced in a specific social context, intended for a specific purpose.

Whilst Elliott (2005) recommends these features across all narrative inquiry, there are differences in the application and focus of inquiry. In capturing narratives researchers can direct their focus towards the structural aspects of the narrative as it is created, or alternatively focus more on the meaning which is created through the process of storytelling (Bold, 2012). As this research was guided by a social constructionist philosophical position, the latter of the two approaches was taken.

3.2.2 Critique of narrative inquiry

All research methodologies are open to critique and narrative inquiry is not without criticism. One criticism offered towards narrative inquiry is that it can be perceived to be reliant on the 'trustworthiness' of the stories told by the participant (Moss, 2004; Loh, 2013), whilst another criticism argues that the positionality of the researcher will impact upon what gets told by the participant, and how (Carter et al., 2014). However, when considering this research was carried out from a social constructionist standpoint, both of these criticisms can be addressed. It is argued that the stories participants choose to share are *their* truth and whilst others may have formed different interpretations of events, the meaning that participants construct through their narratives can only be reached through the telling of their stories, other interpretations are not relevant (Cohen et al., 2018). Secondly, as previously discussed in the outline of my philosophical position, it is acknowledged that my positionality as a researcher may impact upon the stories told by participants, and how they are told. For instance, it is recognised that stories may be told differently to a researcher than they would be to a peer, perhaps with different details included or excluded. However, in taking a social constructionist position, it is deemed that meaning is derived through social interaction and the narratives shared are social constructions themselves (Cohen et al., 2018). These criticisms are grounded in positivist thinking, where the aim of research is to obtain a tangible and objective truth (Bem & De Jong, 2013), however this was not the aim of the present study, meaning narrative inquiry remained an appropriate approach in order to answer the research questions.

As well as these critiques, some have previously cautioned that the use of stories in qualitative research may lend itself to the presentation of narratives where there is a 'happy ending', otherwise referred to as narrative smoothing (Spence, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Spence (1986) advises that this effect is minimised through a trusting relationship between participant and interviewer, as well as careful and thorough analysis following transcription, both of which were ensured within this study. Furthermore, this research did not seek to identify or recruit potential participants specifically with a 'happy ending'. The purpose of this research was to explore the sense that CYP make of their own lived experience, whether this be positive or negative. Narrative inquiry therefore remained an appropriate method through which to capture such meaning, whilst minimising the risk of smoothing (Spence, 1986).

3.3 Research design

This study employed a case study design to carry out narrative inquiry, the objects of study being the three participants recruited (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Semi-structured interviews were used to capture personal experiences that participants deemed to be significant and to explore the meaning they ascribed to these events and their journeys (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The personal experiences discussed were re-storied collaboratively between participant and interviewer into a coherent and structured narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Two levels of data analysis were used in conducting this research. In the first level of analysis, participants' narratives were analysed individually, through the method of analysis outlined in Section 3.5.3. In order to familiarise myself with the data to support analysis, I transcribed and individually coded the interviews myself. The first level of data analysis generated themes from each participant's narrative, which are presented individually in Chapter 4. In order to discuss the research findings in the context of previous literature and to inform the implications of this research, a second level of analysis was used in order to identify themes which were shared within the participants' narratives. Despite seeking commonalities during this level of analysis, I aimed to maintain the individuality of each participant's experiences and the meaning they gave to them.

3.3.1 Participant recruitment

Purposive sampling was used in order to recruit participants with life experiences relevant to the proposed research questions. A PRU within the local authority I was placed as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) was contacted in order to help identify potential participants (i.e., CYP who have experienced PEX and a subsequent reintegration to mainstream education). Once schools who had potential participants on roll were identified, the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) of these schools were contacted via letter (see Appendix 1). This letter asked school staff to consider whether the identified pupils currently placed in their setting met my criteria for participation (see Table 1) and may therefore be appropriate for participation in the study. Following a response from schools indicating that the criteria was met, staff were asked to share a participant information sheet (see Appendix 2) with the pupil and a parent information sheet (see Appendix 3) with the pupil's parents. Initial meetings were then arranged with potential participants and their parents in order for them to ask further questions about the research and to build familiarity and rapport between participant and interviewer. Following this, if pupils wished to participate, they were asked to sign the participant consent form (see Appendix 4) and parents were asked to sign the parent consent form (see Appendix 5). All three identified, eligible CYP returned signed consent forms agreeing to participate following this process.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Male or female	N/A
Aged between 8 and 16 years old	Aged younger than 8 years or older than 16 years
Currently attending a mainstream school following permanent exclusion from a previous setting	Not currently attending a mainstream school and/or was not permanently excluded from a setting
Is able to give informed consent and engage effectively in the research	Has specific Special Educational Needs that would significantly affect their ability to engage with the research, including being

	supported by a Speech and Language Therapist
Does not pose a known risk to the safety of the researcher	Poses a potential risk to the researcher because of known recent or regular physical violence directed towards others
Is not known to have heightened emotional needs and is able to respond to general wellbeing questioning	Is known to have heightened emotional needs, as a result of recently becoming a looked after child or mental health diagnoses
No current safeguarding concerns	Current safeguarding concerns such as being the victim or perpetrator of abuse or sexual exploitation

Table 1: Participant inclusion and exclusion criteria

3.3.2 Participants

Three participants were recruited to take part in the study. Each participant's name has been changed and a pseudonym chosen by the participant is used. Table 2 provides contextual information for each of the participants.

Participant	Key contextual information
Shardinay	Shardinay is a Black British female in Year 9. Shardinay's parents are separated and she lives at home with her father predominantly, although she also sees her mother. Shardinay was permanently excluded from school in the summer term of Year 8. She was placed in a PRU in the autumn term of Year 9, which she attended for approximately 3 months. Shardinay was then placed in her current mainstream school in the autumn term of Year 9. At the time of interview Shardinay had been attending her new mainstream school for approximately 3 months.
Lenny	Lenny is a white British male in Year 9. He lives at home with his parents who are divorced. Lenny stays with both of his parents on a rotating basis.

	Lenny was permanently excluded from school in the summer term of Year 8. He was placed in a PRU in the autumn term of Year 9, which he attended for approximately 2 months. Lenny was then placed in his current mainstream school in the autumn term of Year 9. At the time of interview Lenny had been attending his new mainstream school for approximately 4 months.
Mohammed	Mohammed is a British Asian male in Year 11. He lives at home with his parents and is a practicing Muslim. Mohammed was permanently excluded from school in the summer term of Year 8. He was placed in a PRU in the autumn term of Year 9, which he attended for approximately 10 months. Mohammed was then placed in his current mainstream school in the summer term of Year 9. At the time of interview Mohammed had been attending his new mainstream school for approximately one and a half years.

Table 2: Key participant information

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Birmingham ethics committee (see Appendix 6 for application for ethical approval). Throughout the planning and conduct of this research the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (Oates, 2021) and the University of Birmingham Code of Ethics (University of Birmingham, 2022) were drawn upon to ensure all ethical considerations were addressed. A number of measures were applied within the study to ensure that key ethical considerations were addressed (see Table 3).

Ethical consideration	Steps taken to address ethical consideration
Informed consent	• The inclusion and exclusion criteria sent to school staff when identifying potential participants stated that any participant must be able to give informed consent. • Following the identification of potential participants, pupils and their parents were sent information sheets detailing the research (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). The information sheets provided detail regarding the aims of the research and how it would be conducted. • After the pupils and parents had received the information sheets, initial meetings were arranged with myself in order to offer pupils and parents an opportunity to ask any further questions regarding the research or to seek clarity on any area which was unclear. Pupils were informed that they did not have to take part and there would be no consequence for not taking part in the research. Pupils and parents were then asked to sign the corresponding consent forms (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). • Before commencing the interviews, I returned to the consent form with the participants to ensure they still understood and were still happy to proceed, this time obtaining oral consent.
Right to withdraw	• The right to withdraw at any time was made clear within the participant and parent consent forms (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). This included the right to withdraw from the research at any point up until 7 days after the interview, in which case any data would be immediately destroyed. • Before commencing the interviews, I reminded the participants that they could stop at any time and that there would be no negative consequences for doing do.
Confidentiality	• Participants were informed that their names would not be used at any point during the data collection, data analysis or write up process. Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym which would be used instead of their name.

	- No educational settings, including those the participants currently attend or have previously attended, are named in the research. - Participants were informed of the limits of confidentiality. This includes the reporting of information such as the study taking place within a West Midlands local authority and some demographic information such as year group and ethnicity. - Participants were informed that if any information shared raised a safeguarding concern, this would be shared with the appropriate member of school staff.
Avoidance of psychological distress	Avoidance of participant distress: - CYP who were known to have heightened emotional needs, for instance as a result of recently becoming a looked after child or mental health diagnoses, were excluded from participation in the research. - An initial meeting prior to the interview was arranged in order to build familiarity and rapport between participant and interviewer. - Interviews were participant-led and participants were reminded that they did not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics they did not wish to. - Skills developed through my TEP training allowed me to build rapport, actively listen to participants and respond sensitively and empathetically to any issues raised. - I remained vigilant for any distress and planned to offer a break to the participant from the interview if required. A trusted staff member with whom the participant had a positive relationship remained nearby to support with meeting emotional needs if required. - Following the interview, participants were debriefed and offered the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns. Avoidance of researcher distress:

	• University, placement and peer supervision were utilised to reflect on the interviews and my emotional response to topics discussed. • My skills and experience as a TEP supported me in managing my emotional response to any difficult topics of conversation.
Power imbalance	• Reminders were given to the participant throughout the research process of their right to withdraw and their right to decline to discuss topics they did not wish to. • An initial meeting was arranged prior to the interview as an opportunity to build rapport. • As recommended by the BPS (Oates, 2021), I paid attention to the body language of the participant, as they may indicate discomfort or the wish to stop the interview. • For transparency and in an attempt to reduce power imbalance, participants were fully informed of my role as both a TEP and a post-graduate researcher at the University of Birmingham and the capacity within which I was working with them.
Data storage	• Following the interviews, audio recordings were transferred to a protected folder in the University of Birmingham's BEAR Data Share. Recordings were then deleted. • Pseudonyms were used in the transcript and names of educational settings were removed and other individuals were removed. Transcripts were then stored in the protected University of Birmingham BEAR Data Share folder. • Data will be stored for 10 years and will then be deleted, in line with university policy.

Table 3: Key ethical considerations and the steps taken to address them

3.5 Procedure

Following the identification of potential participants, an initial meeting was arranged between the researcher, the participant and the participant's parent, to take place within the participant's school. Participants and parents had already been provided with information sheets which outline the purpose of the research as well as ethical considerations (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). This was discussed further in the initial meeting, ensuring that participants and parents understood the purpose of the research and providing an opportunity to seek clarity on any area of the research which was unclear. Following this discussion, participants and parents were asked to sign the corresponding consent forms (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5).

Once consent had been given by both parties, the researcher provided the participant with more detailed information regarding the purpose of the research and what the interview would entail. This included a brief description of narrative research, explaining that this research is interested in the stories that people tell and the meaning they give to them. In preparation for the interview, the participant was asked to begin to consider their time in education as if it was a story or a book with chapters, as this would provide the structure for the interview.

Following this initial meeting, the interview was arranged for approximately one week later, again taking place within the participant's school. Only the researcher and the participant were present for the interview. The beginning of the interview session consisted of a recap of the consent form to ensure that the participant still wished to take part, brief rapport building through conversation and an opportunity for the participant to choose a pseudonym. Following this, the interview and audio recording commenced. Following completion of the narrative interview the audio recording was stopped. At this point the researcher was able to clarify any areas relating to the chronology of the information provided by the participant if required. This is discussed further in Section 3.6.3 Restorying. The interview schedule used by the researcher throughout the interview session is shown in Appendix 7.

A brief debrief session was then arranged in order for the researcher to meet with the participant again. This session took place up to one week following the interview. The purpose of this session was to offer a space for the participant to reflect on how the interview process felt for them, having had time to consider the process. The

participant was again reminded of their right to withdraw from the research at any point up to 7 days after the interview. As data analysis had not begun at this point, no themes or findings were shared with the participant. As discussed further in Section 6.1 Strengths and Limitations, a further meeting to discuss the research findings with participants was initially planned, however this was not possible due to timescales following recruitment.

3.6 Interviews

3.6.1 Narrative interviews

The term 'narrative' can be assigned to numerous forms of written text or oral discourse (Creswell & Poth, 2016). It can also be referred to as a method of inquiry within qualitative research (Chase, 2005), where the researcher focuses particularly on the stories told by participants and the meaning ascribed to them (Polkinghorne, 1995). A range of research methods exist whereby researchers can capture such stories (Czarniawska, 2004), however Murray (2003) argues that interviews may be the most effective method through which researchers can capture and understand the meaning of other individuals' stories. Other methods available for narrative inquiry include the researcher exploring pre-existing narratives in text and other media and actively seeking spontaneous narratives within naturally occurring conversations (Czarniawska, 2004). It was deemed that neither of these methods of narrative inquiry would answer the proposed research questions and so narrative interviews were considered the optimum mode of inquiry for this research.

When employing narrative interviews, there are a number of approaches a researcher can take. Creswell and Poth (2016) outline five possible approaches: *biographical studies* include the researcher exploring and recording the life experience of another individual, within *autobiographical studies* the subject of the study records and reflects upon their own experiences, *life history studies* explore the narrative of a person's whole life, whilst *personal experience studies* explore a person's experiences of single or multiple events within their life, and finally, *oral history studies* require reflections from an individual on life events and their causes and effects (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Within this study, the autobiographical approach was deemed to be inappropriate in order to answer the proposed research questions. Similarly, the life history approach was not adopted. This was due to the focus and aims of the research centring around the educational journey of the participants. It is acknowledged that actively exploring life history further may have captured interesting and relevant narratives, however as the interviews were led by events participants deemed significant, they were still able to discuss life events if they wished to. An oral history approach was considered as a potentially viable and useful approach to conducting the interviews. However, this research sought more to explore events and the meaning ascribed to them, as opposed to the perceived causes and effects of them. It was decided that as the key research question focused on the experiences of participants, the biographical and personal experience approach was most appropriate and so this was adopted. Within this approach participants were still able to reflect on causes and effects of events if they wished to (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

As well as the differing approaches that can be taken within narrative interviews, Squire (2013) proposes that narrative researchers are able to study narratives either as events or as stories of experience. She suggests that focusing solely on events which have occurred within narrative inquiry neglects the exploration of discourse which is separate to events but nevertheless holds meaning to the storyteller, as well as the co-construction of narrative between storyteller and listener (Squire, 2013). Contrastingly, focusing on experiences allows for flexibility, in finding meaning in narratives beyond specific events, including changes over time, and in an interaction through which narrative is co-constructed (Squire, 2013). As the third research question in the present study considers the change in perception and experience over time, this approach was more appropriate. Additionally, the co-construction of narrative which is given space for in the experience-centred approach is more aligned to the social constructionist position taken within this research (Cohen et al., 2018). For these reasons a focus on experiences, as opposed to solely events which have occurred, was emphasised.

3.6.2 Interview schedule

When conducting narrative interviews, researchers usually employ semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The extent to which interviews are structured varies, with some researchers preferring to use a more structured approach in comparison to a more conversational approach used by others (Squire, 2013). Within this study I chose to employ the latter of these approaches. This decision was guided by my social constructionist position, in an attempt to allow interviews to be led by participants to the greatest extent possible, with discussions focusing on experiences they deemed to be significant. However, when considering that participants would be CYP, likely with little experience of sharing their views and experiences in an interview, it was decided that some structure provided by the interviewer may result in richer and more considered responses.

In order to provide some structure whilst still allowing for a conversational, participant-led approach, an adapted version of McAdams' (1993) Life Story Interview schedule was used. Whilst this interview schedule aligns more with the life history narrative approach when used in full (McAdams, 2005; Creswell & Poth, 2016), it was decided that the focus on creating chapters and considering key life events (such as high points, low points and turning points) would support the research aims. The adaptations made to McAdams' (1993) interview schedule can be seen in Table 4 (see Appendix 7 for full interview schedule). Participants were advised that they could talk for as long as they wanted to, which resulted in interviews lasting between 70 and 90 minutes. Whilst participants were offered a break if required, all interviews were conducted in a single session.

McAdams' (1993) Life Story Interview schedule	Adaptation made
1. Life chapters The participant is asked to consider their life as if it were a book and create chapters.	*1. School chapters* Participants were asked to consider between 3 and 7 chapters in their school life.
2. Key events Participants are asked to consider: a high point, a low point, a turning point, earliest possible memory, an important event in	*2. Key events* Participants were asked to consider: a high point, a low point, a turning point and any

childhood, an important event in adolescence, another important or significant event of choice.	other event deemed important or significant.
3. Significant people Participants are asked to consider the influential people in their life.	*3. Significant people* This was explored conversationally throughout the interview rather than as a discreet section.
4. Future script Participants are asked to consider the next chapter in their life story and their dreams and hopes for the future.	*4. Future script* No adaptations were made.
5. Stresses and problems Participants are asked to consider difficult life experiences.	*5. Stresses and problems* This was removed as participants already explored low points when considering key events and it was deemed that further exploration of difficult experiences could risk psychological distress.
6. Personal ideology Participants are asked to consider personal beliefs and values.	*6. Personal ideology* This was explored conversationally throughout the interview rather than as a discreet section.
7. Life theme Participants are asked to consider a central theme which runs through their life story.	*7. School life theme* Participants were asked to summarise the story of their educational journey.

Table 4: McAdams' (1993) interview schedule and the adaptations made in this study

3.6.3 Restorying

It is of importance within narrative inquiry that the researcher is able to present a story to the reader which may be read with coherence and meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991; Squire, 2013). Ollerenshaw and Cresswell (2002, p. 339) state that "continuity or temporality is central to narrative research" for this reason. Whilst a narrative researcher may seek to present and discuss themes identified within the

data collected, in order to present a coherent story which offers meaning to the reader, the story must also be re-told clearly and chronologically (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991; Ollerenshaw & Cresswell, 2002; Elliott, 2005).

Restorying is the process through which a narrative researcher seeks to firstly understand and then re-tell a story to the reader "for the purposes of re-living" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p. 10). Ollerenshaw and Cresswell (2016) suggest that a narrative researcher takes steps within the research process in order to achieve this. These steps consist of ensuring an understanding of the chronology of information gathered through interview, listening to and transcribing the interview, and presenting the story in a sequential, chronological structure (Ollerenshaw & Cresswell, 2016).

Within this study, the process of restorying began at the point of interview, continued through data analysis and was finalised in the presentation of the stories in this paper. In order to ensure an understanding of the chronology of participants' stories, following the conclusion of the narrative interview, any points of uncertainty with regards to the chronology of events or experiences were discussed between the researcher and participant. This is necessary as although a narrative interview provides a sequential structure for the participant, it is possible that when recounting more recent experiences, information related to previous experiences can be remembered and shared non-chronologically (Ollerenshaw & Cresswell, 2016). The researcher's understanding of the chronology of the stories told was then checked through the data analysis process, carefully listening to and transcribing the interviews to ensure the story was being understood correctly (Ollerenshaw & Cresswell, 2016).

The final step of restorying relates to the presentation of a coherent and chronological story (Ollerenshaw & Cresswell, 2016). Within this study, the use of an adapted version of McAdams' (1993) Life Story Interview provided key events and chapters which could be presented in such a way. In order for the reader to understand each participants' story with coherence and meaning, the re-storied narratives are presented individually prior to the exploration of themes.

3.6.4 Narrative analysis

The data gathered through the interview process were analysed thematically in order to answer RQ1. It was deemed that capturing key themes within each participant's narrative may make clearer the most significant and meaningful aspects of their stories (Riessman, 2008). I decided to analyse each participant's data separately in the first level of analysis, resulting in individual themes for each narrative. This was due to my positioning that each participant is experiencing their own reality and story and seeking comparison across participants would not support me in finding meaning. However, there were similarities in aspects of the participants' stories which appeared through the analysis process. In noticing these, it is possible that my analysis of the data may have been affected. Following the individual analysis of each participant's data, a second level of analysis was conducted in order to generate themes for discussion, focusing on key similarities and differences.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis were used in this study. This was deemed to be an appropriate method of generating themes as it has been applied previously in narrative inquiry (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Bhardwaj, 2022) and it is an approach which recognises and allows for researcher subjectivity, which was necessary when considering my social constructionist positioning (Terry et al., 2017). The steps taken in following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines are summarised in Table 5.

Step	Description
1. Familiarisation with the data	Data is transcribed, read through multiple times and initial ideas are noted.
2. Generating initial codes	Interesting features of the data are coded systematically.
3. Searching for themes	Codes are collated into potential themes.
4. Reviewing themes	Themes are reviewed in the context of the coded extracts and the whole data set.
5. Defining and naming themes	Themes are analysed again and refined, then given definitions and names.

Table 5: Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis

3.7 Reflexivity

Reflexivity relates to acknowledging the role of the researcher within the research. This means a consideration of the identity and values of the researcher and the effect they have on the research process (Creswell and Poth, 2016). As this research was conducted from a social constructionist position, it is important to acknowledge that reflexivity not only affects the process of the research, but the construction of meaning (Noble & McIlveen, 2012). In order to conduct credible research, researcher transparency is therefore required (Noble & McIlveen, 2012). Elliot (2005) recommends that such transparency is sought through a given account of how the researcher's personal and professional experiences may have been influential.

I acknowledge that my personal and professional experiences and beliefs will have influenced all aspects of this research. This will include my values in relation to issues such as inclusion, social justice, advocacy and the importance of listening to listening to child voice. Experiences such as working with permanently excluded CYP within my role as a TEP may have also shaped my viewpoints and furthered my beliefs. My identity as a researcher will have influenced each stage of the research process, including my interactions with the participants at the interview stage and the meaning I have taken from data through analysis. In order to promote transparency, I have included my own words in the interview transcripts in acknowledgement of my role in the co-construction of narratives. Through the research process I also kept a reflective diary in order to capture my own thoughts and reflections and to hold in mind my own positionality.

3.8 Trustworthiness

It is necessary and important to consider the quality of research conducted. When taking a positivist position, this may include an evaluation of validity and reliability, in an attempt to ascertain whether an objective truth has been reached (Elliott, 2005). However, this approach does not align with the social constructionist position taken within this study. As an objective and universal truth is not seen to exist within social

constructionism, evaluation using these criteria may not be appropriate (Cohen et al., 2018). Fossey et al. (2002) recommend that rather than using validity as a criterion for quality, qualitative research should seek to be trustworthy.

Whilst the criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research are subjective (Fossey et al., 2002), Yardley (2000) suggests a number of principles which should be followed by a qualitative researcher in order to achieve trustworthiness. These are "sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance" (Yardley, 2000, p. 215). These principles have guided my practice throughout the process of conducting this research, in order to promote the trustworthiness of the research findings. In addition to this, Tracy (2010) outlines eight criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. The extent to which this research meets these eight criteria is discussed further in Section 6.1.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter overview

Within this chapter, each participant's narratives are presented. For each participant a narrative summary is provided, followed by the restorying of their narrative and a description of the themes derived from thematic analysis. My interpretation of these themes is then used to answer RQ1 (What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?). Following this, RQ2 (How do children and young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors do they perceive to be supportive in achieving this?) and RQ3 (How does the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affect children and young people's constructions of their future?) are answered for each participant, using my interpretation of their narratives.

In order to promote the voice of each participant, direct quotes are given throughout, including in my description of themes and in answering each research question. My interpretations of the experiences discussed are also given throughout, as I acknowledge that my positionality as a researcher will have contributed to the construction of the narratives through the interview and analysis process. Each participant's narrative is presented separately, without seeking comparison, in recognition of the uniqueness of each individual's story and lived experiences.

4.2 Shardinay's narrative: *"Good things are coming"*

4.2.1 Narrative summary

A summary of Shardinay's narrative is presented in Table 6. This is my interpretation of the key events and experiences that took place through the beginning, middle and end of Shardinay's story.

Stage of narrative	Interpretation of key events and experiences
Beginning	Shardinay enjoyed her time at primary school. Although she got into trouble a couple of times for her behaviour, she feels that she fit in and was able to manage the expectations of the school. Shardinay found the transition to secondary school difficult, feeling that it was stricter and therefore having difficulty meeting the school's expectations. Whilst Shardinay made many friends at school, she began to get into trouble more for her behaviour in school, being put on different reports and receiving numerous detentions. Shardinay had difficult relationships with many of the staff throughout her time at this secondary school, often feeling unsupported. Following an accumulation of perceived behaviour issues, Shardinay was excluded from school in the summer term of year eight.
Middle	Shardinay joined a PRU at the start of year nine. She was immediately shocked by the behaviour of her peers in the setting, leading her to feel as though she did not belong there and increasing feelings of motivation to return to a mainstream secondary school. Whilst attending the PRU, Shardinay developed relationships with the staff members which felt more supportive. During this time, she felt listened to by the adults working with her. After approximately three months attending the PRU, Shardinay was placed into a new mainstream secondary school in the local area. At this point Shardinay felt determined to succeed at this school.
End	Upon reintegrating to mainstream education, Shardinay initially had difficulty transitioning due to feelings of isolation as her friends all attended her previous school, and difficulty managing the different behavioural expectations associated with a mainstream school. Over time Shardinay made friends at her new school and developed more positive relationships with staff. She feels that staff listen to her more at this school than her previous mainstream secondary school, which is helping her to manage her own behaviour. Shardinay has noticed personal changes in herself, such as feeling like she can now be herself more and feels less pressure to fit in with peers. She now feels more confident and optimistic about her future.

Table 6: A narrative summary of Shardinay's educational journey

4.2.2 Restorying

Some of the key events and experiences described by Shardinay in her interview were not presented chronologically. Therefore, a restorying process was used to create a comprehensible and chronological narrative. A brief summary of Shardinay's re-storied narrative is presented in Figure 1. This includes the key events or experiences of each chapter of the narrative. Where experiences were deemed by Shardinay to be of significance (a high point, a low point or a turning point), this is

identified. The chapters making up Shardinay's narrative were decided by Shardinay prior to the interview.

4.2.3 Themes

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis, themes and subthemes were derived from Shardinay's narrative. A summary of these themes and subthemes, alongside my description of the theme and a selection of quotes related to each theme is presented in Table 7. A copy of the full transcript of Shardinay's interview is shown in Appendix 8. For a description of the coding and theming process, as well as further supporting quotations, see Appendix 9.

Figure 1: A summary of the chapters and key experiences in Shardinay's narrative derived from the restorying process

Chapter 1: Before permanent exclusion

- Difficult transition from primary to secondary school
- Starting to get more behaviour points and detentions
- Time when Shardinay and all of her friends were off report (high point)
- Getting in trouble for witnessing a fight (turning point)

Chapter 2: Time spent in PRU

- Joining the PRU and finding the difference to mainstream school difficult
- Being shocked at the behaviour of peers (low point)
- Building positive relationships with staff (high point)
- Feeling motivated to return to mainstream education

Chapter 3: Following reintegration to mainstream education

- Initial difficulty reintegrating (low point)
- Noticing differences in the school and staff (high point)
- Getting some negative points and detentions
- Noticing personal change and feeling optimistic (turning point)

Themes and subthemes	Description	Example quotations
Relationships with staff - Positive vs negative relationships - Pre-judgements - Power imbalance	Throughout her narrative Shardinay regularly spoke about her relationships with the staff members working at the educational settings she was attending. She described how these relationships could be positive or negative, highlighting that she experienced much more positive staff relationships in the PRU than in mainstream education. Shardinay also discussed how she perceives there to be an imbalance of power between staff and pupils and how, in her experience, staff have continuously made pre-judgements of her.	"…but the teachers at XXX [PRU], it was like they weren't your teachers. It was like they were your friends that you can just talk to. It was like having older friends that you can just talk to" "…but then I actually realised that they're just trying to help. Look, all the teachers here, they care a lot. They're nice." "Some teachers were only there just to do their job, go home and just get paid. Only some teachers actually cared." "I wish that teachers, teachers actually cared" "Say, you was bad in year seven and you move up to year eight, they always think you're gonna be bad" "…always have an impression of me, it's like, I don't know, it was like why? I can't explain it, because I was naughty in year seven doesn't mean, like, if I wanna change, like, it's like they're not letting me change" "…because they think they have the power." "…that's the teacher that just never listened to me and just uses her power to just like, I dunno how to explain, like dominate." "…and then she'll look down on you basically. She'll think she's that person. She'll think she has the power."
Feeling heard	Shardinay discussed experiences of being listened to and not being listened to, and how these experiences either gave her hope and confidence or left her feeling powerless. In particular, Shardinay shared that	"Yeah, and they actually listened, way better than the staff at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]" "I always feel that people won't listen to me, like in meetings and in school. But when they actually do it's just so much better."

	she stammers when she is nervous or excited and that this has further impacted her feelings of not being heard, when staff have not allowed her to share her views. Shardinay also spoke about feeling understood by adults and how this can only come from being listened to.	"…because I have like a stammer and that, they would just be like, don't listen to me, and that would make me a lot more frustrated and that. Because they won't let me talk if you get what I mean." "I wanna explain something but I will keep on stammering and they'll just be like 'go to lesson' or something" "…and then, obviously, when you get to know the teachers, the teachers were more understanding, way better. More understanding and they'll listen to you, they'll understand."
School systems - Behaviour management - Differences between settings	Shardinay discussed the school systems that she sees herself as being part of and how she perceives them to be ineffective and contributory to her own behaviour and feelings. Two key systems Shardinay discussed were school behaviour management systems (for example, reports and detentions) and how they can affect self-perception and the perception of others, and the differences between the educational settings she has attended and the difficulties that arise because of this.	"…and you would get more frustrated and you get put on report and all of this. Cause when you're on report its like everyone's watching you, but if you do one thing wrong, it's like they're all on you over one thing." "In year seven I went on report once. And then I got off it in a week. And then in year eight I went on first report, which is like tutor report so like you only go back to your tutor, form tutor, and then head of house report where you go to your head of house and then leadership report. And I went through all of them." "…and it's like to get off it you have to do two weeks of like, no crosses and loads of ticks and I was always so close to getting off it, and then I'll get one cross, and it'll be, you're starting all over again." "At first it was cause, like primary school's way less, way less strict. So you go to primary school, and then obviously when you come back for year seven, it's like, it's just a big change." "Obviously, I went there [PRU] and it was just, it was just different like. It was no big school. It was just like rooms. Obviously, there weren't many kids in the rooms. Just like, it would be like three, four kids in certain rooms. Or there'd be like one in one and then two in another."
Peer relationships - Friendships	Shardinay regularly talked about the effect peers have had on her journey. She reflected on the positive impact of friendships as	"If I had to pick, I'd probably still go back to XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]. And only because the friendships I made there."

- Comparisons to other peers	well as the potential for friends to be a negative influence. Shardinay discussed how throughout her narrative she has lost connections with friends due to leaving schools. Shardinay also discussed her perception of peers who were not her friends, and how this perception impacted her view of herself and her motivation.	"I liked my experience at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] a lot because in my form, I had friends from primary because I went to two primaries, I had friends from primary. And like my friends from outside school of school." "…so it was a lot, it was a lot harder to be really, like best, best behaved [due to friends]" "…because I have all my friends in there, it will be hard to like, concentrate and all of that." "…and I've built so much connections in that school so it felt really unreal cause I was like I'm never, gonna get back, I'm never actually gonna go back to that school again." "…but at the same time, it was like, if you went through my experience, you kinda wanna see that because you'd be like, I don't wanna be like one of these kids." "I just don't wanna be naughty. I didn't wanna be like *them*, you know like going out, setting fires and that. It's not fun."
Personal changes	Shardinay discussed how she feels that she has changed as a person whilst progressing through her journey. She described turning points where she made realisations about herself and her future, and an increasing feeling of motivation to try her best.	"I would just have fun. I would think year eight is one of the best years, just have fun. That's what I'd be like. And then I'll take it more seriously in year nine or ten. But I realised if you keep thinking that then you're just gonna keep being bad." "…so, like there was always the fear of getting excluded again, and then it will be hard to get a job or something because they'll see I've got excluded again. So obviously I've fixed up now." "I don't wanna be like, one of those kids that just wanna fail." "I was like I'm gonna start at this new school and I'm gonna try my best."

Table 7: Description of the themes in Shardinay's narrative with example quotations

4.2.4 Summary of findings in relation to RQ1: *"What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?"*

4.2.4.1 Relationships with staff

When discussing her educational journey, Shardinay spoke regularly of her relationships with the adults who have worked with her in the settings she has attended. Shardinay described feeling as though staff at the school she was PEX from did not care about her and that they were "only there just to do their job, go home and just get paid." Her perceived relationships with staff changed when she joined the PRU. Here, Shardinay felt that staff "actually seemed like they wanted to help you". Shardinay's perception of the extent to which staff cared about her matches with her desire to succeed and to attempt to meet the behavioural expectations of adults. Following reintegration to mainstream education, Shardinay has experienced more positive relationships with staff members, which she sees to be a supportive factor, especially when meeting expectations can be difficult.

At the beginning of her journey, prior to PEX, Shardinay regularly felt judged by staff members. She described how, because she had at times been naughty in year seven, even though she tried to make changes to her behaviour in year eight, she was seen by staff as a naughty child and so continued to behave in the way which she was perceived, feeling that "they're [teachers] not letting me change." Despite more positive relationships with staff following reintegration, Shardinay believes that this pre-judgement persisted, saying that staff were "iffy" about her, knowing that she had previously been PEX.

Shardinay perceives there to be an imbalance of power between staff members and pupils in school and told me about key events where she felt there was an abuse of power. Before her PEX, Shardinay had a difficult relationship with one staff member in particular, whom Shardinay felt used her position of power to "dominate" her, leaving Shardinay to feel powerless and contributing towards a negative perception of school and limited motivation to succeed.

4.2.4.2 Feeling heard

Related to the negative relationships with staff that Shardinay experienced, she also discussed key experiences of not feeling listened to. She told me that she can stammer when she is frustrated or excited and described instances where she feels she has not been allowed by staff to get her words out, resulting in a cycle of feeling "more frustrated" and creating an environment where she did not feel able to or motivated to behave in a way seen as appropriate by staff.

Shardinay discussed the significant difference feeling heard makes to her. She feels that when staff took the time to listen to her and to understand her point of view, it allowed her to explain her frustrations and work together with staff to solve problems she may be experiencing, therefore reducing the risk of negative experiences in the future. Experiencing feeling heard by staff for the first time whilst in the PRU was a significant turning point for Shardinay and she was relieved upon reintegration to find that some, if not all, staff would actively try to listen to her.

4.2.4.3 School systems

Through her journey, Shardinay has had many experiences of school behaviour management systems. She described being placed on numerous reports designed to monitor her behaviour, prior to her PEX. Shardinay found this system to be frustrating and ineffective in supporting her to change, despite having motivation to do so. She felt that whilst on report, "it's like everyone's watching you, but if you do one thing wrong, it's like they're all on you over one thing". This meant that, during her time in her first secondary school, Shardinay was rarely able to leave the behaviour management system, perpetuating the construction of her as a naughty child, both in the staff that worked with her and in herself. Shardinay said that through entering and becoming stuck in this behaviour management system, her eventual PEX from school was inevitable.

At each transition point in Shardinay's educational journey, she described having difficulty adjusting to the new setting she was joining. For Shardinay, this was particularly significant in moving from primary school to secondary school. She felt unprepared for the change in environment and behavioural expectations. She

believes this was a catalyst for her behaviour change upon joining secondary school and sees her own behaviour as a symptom of difficulty coping with such change.

4.2.4.4 Peer relationships

Relationships and experiences with peers have been significant throughout Shardinay's educational journey. One key aspect of this, which she discussed frequently, was friendships. Some of Shardinay's highest points in her journey have been times spent with her friends, notably when Shardinay and all of her friends were off behaviour reports for a short time and felt happier and freer in school. Shardinay sees her friends as being a supportive factor for her in school, helping her to feel confident and contributing towards a sense of belonging. For this reason, experiencing PEX and being separated from her friends was difficult for Shardinay and losing the connections she built at her first secondary school remains one of her regrets in regard to her journey. Despite Shardinay's positive regard of her friends, she perceives them at times to be a negative influence on her. She sees her own behaviour partly as a product of her friendships, meaning that she sees changing her own behaviour as difficult, as it would mean isolating herself from those who she feels she belongs with.

Shardinay also discussed experiences with peers who she did not identify as her friends, particularly whilst attending the PRU. A key experience and turning point for Shardinay was witnessing the behaviour of some peers in PRU and realising that she did not "wanna be like one of those kids". Whilst experiencing belonging with her friends, Shardinay did not feel like she belonged in the PRU with the other pupils in attendance, hence causing a shift in how she viewed herself and her aspirations for the future. Shardinay believes that without this experience, she may have never desired to significantly change her own behaviour.

4.2.4.5 Personal changes

Throughout her journey, Shardinay has experienced a number of personal changes. She describes much of her behaviour as a result of her own motivation, or lack

thereof. Therefore, turning points described in other themes which contributed to an increased motivation to succeed were significant for her in beginning to feel motivated to make change. She described a "fear of getting excluded again" and a desire to be in mainstream education, which prior to her PEX was limited. This resulted in Shardinay actively trying to alter her own behaviour upon reintegration in order to meet the expectations of her new school and avoid further exclusion. Through the realisations that Shardinay made on her journey, her perception of her own behaviour appeared to align more with that of the adults who have worked with her, with regards to what is perceived to be acceptable and unacceptable. As Shardinay's perception of her own behaviour shifted, it seems to have become easier for her to manage.

4.2.5 Summary of findings in relation to RQ2: *"How do children and young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors do they perceive to be supportive in achieving this?"*

Shardinay felt that what makes a reintegration successful is not necessarily measurable factors such as reduced behaviour incidents, the avoidance of further exclusion or academic success. Instead, her construction of success related to herself as a person. She described to me that success for her meant feeling able to be herself. Following her reintegration, Shardinay shared with me that she feels she is no longer "trying to be centre of attention, trying to be funny, trying to get people to like [me]" and instead she can be her true self in school. In feeling more able to do so, there has been a reduction in behaviour deemed by school staff to be inappropriate, suggesting that previous behaviour may have been driven by a desire to fit in or be liked by peers, but for Shardinay this is of less importance.

I asked Shardinay whether her reintegration has still been successful, despite getting into trouble on occasions in her new school, to which she offered a pragmatic response. For Shardinay, these occurrences do not lessen the success of her reintegration, stating "you're not gonna be perfect right? It's not gonna be all good… but it's just… I'm better now than I was back in XXX [PRU] or XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]." This highlights that for Shardinay, success is a matter of personal growth and improvement, as opposed to a concrete and measurable construct.

When discussing success as a construct measured by a feeling of being able to be oneself and personal growth, Shardinay noted that she believes this is only possible in an environment which supports such change and with the support of people around you. She feels that if she had reintegrated into a school more similar to the one from which she was PEX, this success would not have been possible.

Whilst Shardinay cited a number of supportive factors throughout her journey, including friends, feeling listened to, and positive relationships with staff at her school following reintegration, the factor she deemed most significant was the staff members at the PRU she attended and the support they offered to her during her time at the setting, stating "they're the people that actually got me here".

4.2.6 Summary of findings in relation to RQ3: *"How does the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affect children and young people's constructions of their future?"*

Shardinay's perception of her future has changed with each chapter of her narrative. Prior to her PEX, Shardinay described her perception of her own future as uncertain. She stated that "I just was doing what I wanted, so I didn't really know what was in the future", suggesting that at this time she was giving little consideration to her aspirations or how to achieve them. Her construction of herself in the future was not negative, rather it was not something which seemed important to her. This changed when Shardinay was PEX: "when I got excluded, I had a fear that I weren't gonna get anywhere. I'm gonna be stuck in a provisional centre all the time." My interpretation of this is that when Shardinay was excluded, where her future had been of little concern previously, it now became more significant to her. She was worried that she would fail, perhaps due to witnessing peers in the same setting whom she deemed to be failing. This acted as motivation for Shardinay to begin making the changes previously discussed, with her future in mind. She described the experience of finding out she could return to mainstream education and how this gave her feelings of optimism towards her future. When Shardinay reintegrated to mainstream education and experienced a more supportive school environment which allowed her to be herself, her optimism about her own future further developed.

Whilst Shardinay felt at times over her journey that her "future's gone", she believes her journey has been positive with regards to her future, stating that "I'm gonna look back on this and be like, that actually helped… I feel like good things are coming."

4.3 Lenny's narrative: *"A bumpy road"*

4.3.1 Narrative summary

A summary of Lenny's narrative is presented in Table 8, including the key events and experiences that took place through the beginning, middle and end of his story.

Stage of narrative	Interpretation of key events and experiences
Beginning	Lenny regularly got into trouble at primary school for perceived behaviour difficulties. This began when a peer joined the school who Lenny became friends with. He feels that this was a catalyst for his behaviour in school worsening. When Lenny transitioned to secondary school he continued to get into trouble for his behaviour and received numerous reports and detentions as a consequence of this. Throughout this time Lenny experienced arguments at home and different expectations from his parents, who are separated. He feels that this contributed towards his emotions and behaviour. Following joining secondary school Lenny began smoking weed and vaping because his friends did it and it helped him to manage the boredom he felt. He often felt angry and struggled to regulate his emotions. After a period of not using substances, Lenny started smoking again and was caught by his dad who reported this to his school. Following an investigation into this alongside other perceived behaviour issues, Lenny was permanently excluded from his school in the summer of year eight.
Middle	Lenny joined the PRU at the beginning of year nine. He was shocked by the behaviour of his peers at the setting and felt like he did not fit in there, particularly because of his academic ability. Although Lenny got on well with the staff at the PRU, he felt as though his academic progress was being affected through missed learning in the setting and felt motivated to return to a mainstream school. Following approximately two months in the setting, Lenny was placed into a new mainstream secondary school.
End	Upon reintegrating to mainstream education, Lenny realised that he knew many of his peers and had a number of friends at his new school, which helped him to feel like he belonged and gave him confidence in settling in. Over time, Lenny began getting in trouble more for behaviour issues, leading to being isolated from his peers for a day. However, he feels more supported by staff at his new school because he feels that they listen to him and are giving him more of a chance. Moving back into mainstream education has helped Lenny to

	feel more confident that he will succeed in his future. He realised that he would like to pursue a career in a trade following his time in school and this has motivated him to achieve academically and to avoid any further school exclusions in the future.

Table 8: A narrative summary of Lenny's educational journey

4.3.2 Restorying

Lenny's re-storied narrative is presented in Figure 2. This includes the key events or experiences of each chapter of the narrative. Where experiences were deemed by Lenny to be of significance (a high point, a low point or a turning point), this is identified. The chapters making up Lenny's narrative were decided by Lenny prior to the interview.

4.3.3 Themes

A summary of the themes and subthemes of Lenny's narrative, alongside my description of the theme and quotes related to each theme is presented in Table 9. For a description of the coding and theming process, as well as further supporting quotations, see Appendix 10.

Figure 2: A summary of the chapters and key experiences in Lenny's narrative derived from the restorying process

Chapter 1: Before permanent exclusion

- Getting in trouble at primary school
- Joins secondary school and begins vaping and smoking weed
- Summertime with friends and girlfriend (high point)
- Becoming bored (turning point), starting to smoke and vape again and getting caught, leading to PEX (low point)

Chapter 2: Time spent in PRU

- Joining the PRU and noticing the difference to mainstream school
- Negative experiences of PRU including being searched and peers' behaviour (low point)
- Feeling like he was missing out on learning and feeling motivated to return to a mainstream school (turning point)

Chapter 3: Following reintegration to mainstream education

- Joining and knowing lots of peers at the new school (high point)
- Behaviour worsening, leading to isolation (low point)
- Feeling confident about the future due to being back in a mainstream school

Themes and subthemes	Description	Example quotations
Self-regulation	Lenny discussed how he perceives himself to have difficulty regulating his emotions and behaviour. He talked about how he often becomes bored, which can lead to him engaging in behaviours he deemed to be inappropriate. Lenny also discussed how he often feels angry and how he feels his behaviour is a method of managing this emotion. Lenny felt that his difficulty regulating his emotions and behaviour led to difficulty maintaining 'good' behaviour over time.	"…but if I don't go toilet in a lesson, especially if it's like a really boring one, I'll end up doing something really stupid." "I get bored really easy, I need something to distract me otherwise I will just mess around" "I don't know, I get angry quite a lot." "…but some teachers, generally think they know everything and it annoys me so much to the point where I actually want to like misbehave. And that's the only way I can let my anger off" "…because if I've had a good day it means I've been trying to have a good day, which means I'm in a bad mood now because of I'm really tired but I've got loads of energy I need to use too." "I'd do like a few good weeks yeah.... Normally what happens is I do a few good weeks and then have like one bad week, or a few bad weeks, then I do one good week and I have a few more bad weeks and then a few weeks good."
Friendships - Positive and negative influences - Social isolation	Lenny talked about the positive effect of having friends, in particular when they would check in with him and in supporting transitions. In contrast, he also discussed how friends could be a negative influence on his own behaviour. As well as this, Lenny reflected on experiences of social isolation when he was separated from friends, leading to feelings of loneliness.	"I was mates with everyone, didn't really have any problems" "I knew a lot of people here too so that helped." "My one mate, he's safe, he always texts me asking how I'm doing" "So I'd never had one of them because I was never like that naughty. Then as soon as she joined, I got my first one. And then I got a few more after that, because of her" "but yeah, when I was with my mates I just did whatever they did. I was never one to start it but if my mates did it I was like ah yeah I'll come."

| | | "So it's literally just like you're on your own, you have nothing to do, no one to speak to, no friends keeping you updated or nothing."

"How lonely it is. It's just lonely most the time." |
|---|---|---|
| *Substance use* | Lenny discussed the events which led to him beginning to smoke weed and vape when he joined secondary school. He felt that engaging in this behaviour stemmed from boredom and the influence of his friends. Lenny saw this to be significant as he believes that engaging in this behaviour led to his eventual PEX. | "…and they all started smoking and everyone was doing it so I was like… I tried it."

"…and then I was just staying over at my best mates, one of the best mates called XXX [friend] … so I was at his doing it [smoking weed] and it was just funny, yeah"

"I was still vaping in year seven and then started smoking weed quite a lot. And I got caught a few times smoking it."

"…and then I got caught by my dad smoking it, he told the school about it and then this woman done like a whole investigation about it with me."

"So I started smoking weed a bit again, because I got caught a few months before, so I completely stopped. I just stopped smoking and vaping and stuff. Then yeah I got bored and started vaping again, cause like I kinda had a bit of freedom back. So I started again. And then I went out one time, smoked and I was like ah I've missed this." |
| *Relationships with staff*

- Support

- Staff perceptions | Lenny discussed the significance of relationships with staff members at the settings he has attended. He described times where these relationships have felt supportive, for example through a member of staff advocating for him or because he felt understood by a staff member. He believes that these experiences had a significant impact on his own behaviour and motivation. On the other hand, Lenny also reflected on | "My form tutor would always help me. She would always speak to my English teacher, trying to help. Every detention that I got she would always try and cancel it or find a way to like, take it off. Every time I was in isolation she tried getting me out. Things like that."

"They [staff at PRU] understand you more. They understand that you're gonna make mistakes and that everyone has their own issues and stuff."

"I think if you behaved, but still messed around, kind of like what I was doing, they kind of understood. They understood you more."

"…like I had an English teacher… and honestly … she hated me. I don't even know what I did to her." |

	his perception that some staff held negative perceptions of him and that this may have also impacted upon his self-perception.	"They all thought I was naughty." "Sometimes I've felt a bit judged [by staff]."
Family	Lenny sees himself partly as a product of his family environment. He discussed how his parents, who are separated, interacted with him differently, allowing different levels of freedom, and how he feels that this led to his own confusion and inconsistent behaviour. Lenny also discussed times where there have been arguments at home, including with his parents' partners, and his perception that this affected his own behaviour in school.	"My dad's always been strictish… my mom was letting me out till like eight o'clock, nine o'clock when I was twelve years old in the summer.... then my dad started getting more involved … And then I had to come back at seven whilst my mates were out till like half eight" "I ended up like with my mom I could kinda just do what I want, do whatever. And then with my dad, he was always in my room and stuff. It's not like I didn't mind that, it just felt weird from going from do whatever you want to like having to chill out quite a lot." "Home has never been like the dream home, mom and dad together and stuff. Cause my mom and dad broke up, got back together, broke up, have a step-dad on and off, have a step-mom now, and it's all arguments." "Me and my step-dad speak and he checks up on me and stuff and that's kinda it. As long as my room's clean, I'm not being too loud, its fine. [Has that relationship improving made school easier now?] Yeah."

Table 9: Description of the themes in Lenny's narrative with example quotations

4.3.4 Summary of findings in relation to RQ1: *"What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?"*

4.3.4.1 Self-regulation

A key theme which persists throughout Lenny's narrative is his own perceived difficulty in regulating his emotions and his behaviour. He discussed experiences of regularly feeling angry in each educational setting he has attended. Sometimes this anger is due to frustrations with school and in particular difficult relationships with staff, whilst at other times Lenny has been unsure why he has felt angry. He perceives this to be a key factor in his own behaviour, which he deems to be inappropriate in school at times. However, Lenny does not view his anger as the cause of his behaviour in school, instead he stated that "I actually like to misbehave… that's the only way I can let my anger off." This suggests that Lenny sees his behaviour as a choice to an extent, and a method through which he can attempt to regulate his feelings.

As well as experiencing feelings of anger, Lenny described regularly feeling bored throughout his journey. He described to me experiences of being bored in lessons, resulting in him engaging in behaviours he knew would result in behavioural consequences: "if it's like a really boring one [lesson], I'll end up doing something really stupid." It appears, therefore, that Lenny feels once he becomes bored, he is limited in his ability to regulate and control his behaviour. Lenny feels that boredom is inevitable in a mainstream school, due to a perception that mainstream education is not suited to or interesting to him, meaning that he also perceives his behaviour in school to be inevitable to an extent.

These experiences and Lenny's interpretation of them suggest that he views his own behaviour in part as the result of his own perceived failing to regulate himself, as opposed to perceiving an external cause for his behaviour. This is reflected in Lenny's experience of trying to maintain what he views to be good behaviour in school over time. He described to me difficulty in doing this, feeling tired from actively attempting to regulate himself over a school day and feeling unable to maintain the standards expected of him by staff in a mainstream school. When asked if Lenny had received support from adults who have worked with him for his

difficulties, in particular with feeling angry, he shared that he had not, but he was uncertain whether he would want support. My interpretation of this was that Lenny perceives this difficulty to be a fixed trait and so does not feel that support would help him. This also means that, as stated previously, he sees his difficulty behaving in a manner deemed appropriate in school as, to a certain extent, inevitable.

4.3.4.2 Friendships

Although Lenny constructed much of his behaviour as the result of individual difficulties, as described above, he also discussed experiences where he perceived his friends to be a negative influence on his behaviour. Lenny first started getting into trouble for his behaviour at primary school and he attributes this to a peer joining school with whom he became friends, saying that he was getting into trouble "because of her". He also talked about experiences where he would not have initiated behaviours, but he engaged with them because his friends already were, despite being aware of the consequences. This suggests that Lenny sees his own behaviour as multi-faceted, where at times he attributes it to his own individual difficulties, whereas at other times he constructs his behaviour as the product of his social relationships.

Despite discussing the negative influence of friends, Lenny also spoke of his friends as a supportive factor throughout his journey. In particular, Lenny highlighted the positive impact of already having friends at the school he reintegrated to, which made him feel more confident and provided a sense of belonging upon reintegration. The importance of friendships to Lenny is highlighted by the fact that many of the low points of his journey related to being isolated from his friends. In particular he discussed the connections lost when he experienced PEX and coming to terms with the fact that he might not maintain all of the friendships he had built. When describing his journey Lenny summarised that "it's just lonely most the time".

4.3.4.3 Substance use

Numerous key events in Lenny's journey have been related to substance use. He described to me how he began smoking weed and vaping when he joined secondary school, at first because all of his friends were and he wanted to fit in. Therefore, engaging in this behaviour initially provided Lenny with a sense of belonging amongst his peers and strengthened his social connections. Lenny then described how his perspective towards smoking and vaping changed, moving from a social mechanism to a method he used to cope with boredom. Lenny discussed how he often felt unstimulated over his journey, both inside and outside of school. In school, he would manage this by engaging in behaviours deemed inappropriate by staff, and outside of school he would manage this through substance use. This suggests that Lenny sees both behaviours as a coping mechanism.

Substance use is particularly significant in Lenny's narrative as he perceives it to be the catalyst which led to his PEX. He described to me how following smoking weed at home and being caught by his dad, his dad informed the school, who conducted a "whole investigation". At a similar time one of Lenny's friends became ill from substance use in school. Lenny believes that these events were the "main reason" he was excluded from school, despite receiving "lots of reports" and "loads of detentions" for other behaviours in school. Whilst Lenny acknowledged to me that he thought his behaviour in school prior to PEX was inappropriate at times, this suggests that he did not see his behaviour in school as the cause for PEX. Rather, Lenny understands his PEX to be the result of substance use related behaviour.

4.3.4.4 Relationships with staff

Some of Lenny's key experiences through his narrative were related to his relationships with the staff who have worked with him at the educational settings he has attended. In particular, he views the support offered by staff across all three settings in his narrative to be significant. He described to me one relationship he viewed as particularly supportive prior to his PEX. This relationship was with his form tutor at the school and Lenny recounted how she would regularly advocate for him ("every detention that I got she would always try and cancel it or find a way to like, take it off. Every time I was in isolation, she tried getting me out.") Lenny viewed this advocacy as important because he felt as though it gave him a voice in school which

would be listened to by other staff. He feels that without a staff member supporting him in this way he would have had no voice in school, suggesting that he perceives staff in general to not listen to or give weight to the views of pupils.

Lenny experienced positive relationships with the staff at the PRU he attended. He felt that, in this setting, staff "understood" him more. When discussing this, Lenny stated "I feel like they knew what was wrong with me even when I didn't." Lenny saw this as a turning point in his narrative, feeling that being understood by the adults working with him, through time taken to get to know him, helped him in understanding what was "wrong" with himself. He believes that these relationships were necessary in order for him to develop his own self-understanding.

Whilst Lenny noted the significance of positive staff relationships, he also discussed the perceived harmful impact of negative relationships with staff. For Lenny, this related to staff perceptions of him in particular. He discussed how in his first secondary school, prior to PEX, he believed "all" teachers saw him as "naughty" and how he has at times felt "judged" and "hated" by staff. Lenny reflected on how this construction of him as a naughty pupil by the adults working with him affected his construction of himself. Over time in the first chapter of his narrative, he began to see himself as naughty, in alignment with what he was being told by adults. He feels that this may have impacted upon his motivation to meet behavioural expectations in school, leading to more incidents of what he described as inappropriate behaviour. Whilst negative perceptions of staff were particularly significant prior to PEX, Lenny believes that they continued following his reintegration. He discussed feeling that his new school did not want to take him on roll, instead "they *had* to". This perception affected Lenny's experience of reintegration as he joined a school believing he was not wanted by staff, therefore impacting upon his sense of belonging and self-worth.

4.3.4.5 Family

A significant aspect of Lenny's narrative was his family life outside of school. Lenny's parents are separated and he discussed how he believes they have taken different parenting approaches, with his dad being "strictish" and his mom letting him "do whatever [he] wants". This experience led to confusion for Lenny, which he perceived

to affect his behaviour in school. Similarly, Lenny discussed experiences of arguments at home and his perception of never having the "dream home". Again, Lenny suggested that these experiences outside of school impacted upon him as a person and his ability to manage his behaviour and emotions in school. This would suggest that Lenny constructs himself and his behaviour partly as a product of his home environment. This construction leads Lenny to believe that improving relationships and consistency at home would support him in better managing his behaviour in order to meet the expectations of others in school.

4.3.5 Summary of findings in relation to RQ2: *"How do children and young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors do they perceive to be supportive in achieving this?"*

When asked what a successful reintegration means to him, Lenny responded "no major behavior problems and doing good in lessons". For Lenny, successfully reintegrating was a measurable outcome related to his behaviour and academic achievement in school. He reflected upon the fact that, since reintegrating, he has received detentions for behaviour incidents, however he did not feel that this meant his reintegration had been unsuccessful. He suggested that, had he reintegrated to a different mainstream school, "it might have went much worse". This is in line with Lenny's perception that aspects of his behaviour in school are inevitable, meaning that he is "always" going to get into trouble for "small stuff". For Lenny, perhaps due to this construction of himself, success would mean to avoid future PEX. Lenny also equated success with academic achievement. This may be because whilst Lenny views himself as being "naughty", he also holds a view of himself as "proper smart". Lenny does not describe these two identities as conflicting, instead feeling that they can co-exist. My interpretation of Lenny's perception of success is that, for him, the construct relates to him reaching his own perceived potential, both relating to managing his behaviour to an extent where he maintains his placement in school, and by achieving academically.

Lenny believes that the key to him succeeding in his reintegration, and in his life more generally, is his relationships with friends and family members. He draws comfort from these relationships, which offer him a sense of belonging and

encouragement. Lenny discussed with me how it is these relationships which helped him through the low points of his journey and made it possible for him to reach the point he is at now, where he feels confident about succeeding. Lenny also referred to the staff at the PRU as an important supportive factor, particularly in their role in helping to change his view of himself, which he saw as a key turning point. Lenny did not see the staff or systems in place at the mainstream schools he has attended as supporting of his success.

4.3.6 Summary of findings in relation to RQ3: *"How does the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affect children and young people's constructions of their future?"*

Lenny's construction of himself in the future has changed over the course of his journey. He told me that growing up and prior to his PEX from school, he always thought that he would be successful in the future. For Lenny, this related to "getting a good job" and being "rich", and stemmed from achieving academically throughout primary school, leading to a positive perception of his potential to succeed. However, Lenny's construct of his future self changed significantly when he was PEX: "When I got expelled, I was just thinking how shit my life's gonna be now." Lenny viewed the PEX as an obstacle to his future aspirations which could not be overcome. This led to a feeling of hopelessness during the middle chapter of Lenny's narrative, where he could no longer "see the point in trying", as he felt his future was pre-determined as a result of the PEX.

Lenny's perception of his future changed again following a key turning point whilst attending the PRU. As previously discussed, staff at the PRU supported Lenny in better understanding what the PEX meant for him: "They kinda explained that it's not like getting expelled is gonna ruin your career. They explained like it's obviously not the best thing to have on your record but it's not the end of the world either." This experience resulted in Lenny feeling more positive about his future again, which in turn led to an increased motivation to return to mainstream education and to achieve academically.

Following his reintegration Lenny felt "way more positive" about his future. He realised that he would like to train and qualify in a trade, "like a bricklayer or an

electrician" as he feels that he would excel in a career path such as this. This realisation gave Lenny a tangible future to work towards whilst still at school, which has significantly impacted upon his perception of his ability to engage and achieve in school.

4.4 Mohammed's narrative: *"I know I'm gonna do well"*

4.4.1 Narrative summary

A summary of Mohammed's narrative is presented in Table 10, including the key events and experiences that took place through the beginning, middle and end of his story.

Stage of narrative	Interpretation of key events and experiences
Beginning	When Mohammed first joined secondary school, he experienced bullying from his peers. He believes this is because he was small for his age, making him an easy target. He also initially had difficulty making friends and so felt isolated in school. Whilst Mohammed made friends at school, he experienced increasingly threatening behaviour from his peers, such as following him to his home. Mohammed believes that this behaviour was racially aggravated as it was conducted by his white peers towards himself and his friends of the same ethnicity as him. At this point Mohammed was feeling increasingly scared inside and outside of school. He was becoming involved in fights more frequently, leading to school behavioural consequences and police involvement. This culminated in Mohammed being permanently excluded from school at the beginning of year nine. He believes that this was unfair as himself and some of his friends of the same ethnicity were excluded, whilst his white peers also engaging in the same behaviour remained at the school.
Middle	Mohammed did not join a new educational setting for approximately two months following exclusion. During this time, he was involved in a fight in the local area and was arrested by the police and held in a cell for a day. He then became socially isolated, staying in his room at home, without contact to peers. Mohammed feels that this time spent out of education was detrimental to him and his arrest would have been avoided if he was in a school. He was then placed into a PRU which led to conflicting feelings. Mohammed enjoyed the freedom allowed at the PRU and the relationships he developed with staff but felt like he did not belong with the other pupils in the PRU. This realisation came from an interaction with a staff member who helped Mohammed to see that he could succeed in mainstream education. This was a turning point for Mohammed and he now felt motivated to return to a mainstream school.

End	Mohammed reintegrated to mainstream education at the end of year nine, having spent the majority of a school year in the PRU. He found this transition to be difficult, in particular because of the differences between the two settings. Since joining his new school Mohammed has experienced racism from peers and has had negative interactions with staff, leading him to believe that experiences will be the same regardless of where he is placed. He does however feel that he has grown and changed as a person, allowing him to manage difficult situations better than he has previously. Mohammed is now in year eleven and maintains a negative perception of school, but he feels motivated to succeed in life and believes the educational journey he has been on has supported him in reaching this point.

Table 10: A narrative summary of Mohammed's educational journey

4.4.2 Restorying

Mohammed's re-storied narrative is presented in Figure 3. Experiences deemed by Mohammed to be of significance (a high point, a low point or a turning point) are identified. The chapters making up Mohammed's narrative were decided by Mohammed prior to the interview.

4.4.3 Themes

The themes and subthemes derived from Mohammed's narrative, my description and related quotes are presented in Table 11. For a description of the coding and theming process, as well as further supporting quotations, see Appendix 11.

Figure 3: A summary of the chapters and key experiences in Mohammed's narrative derived from the restorying process

Chapter 1: Before permanent exclusion

- Joins secondary school and experiences bullying and initial difficulty making friends
- Getting into fights with peers and experiencing threatening behaviour inside and outside of school (turning point)
- Police become involved and Mohammed is PEX (low point)

Chapter 2: Time spent out of education before joining the PRU

- Spending lots of time in local area, getting into trouble
- Becomes involved in a fight and is subsequently arrested by the police (turning point)
- Stays at home, isolated from peers, until joining the PRU (low point)

Chapter 3: Time spent in PRU

- Joins the PRU and is shocked at the difference to a mainstream school
- Feels stuck in the small setting with no hope of leaving (low point)
- Increased feeling of not belonging (turning point)
- Increased motivation to return to mainstream education (high point)

Chapter 4: Following reintegration to mainstream education

- Difficulty moving back to a different setting
- Initial six week trial period and slow transition
- Experiences of racism and unfairness (low point)
- Feelings of personal growth and change (turning point)
- Feelings of motivation for the future (high point)

Themes and subthemes	Description	Example quotations
Experiences of racism	Mohammed discussed experiencing racism throughout his journey. This includes peers making racist remarks to Mohammed whilst at school and behavioural consequences for himself and peers of the same ethnicity being different to those for peers who were white.	"They used to make real snarky comments about like, our religion and our race." "…he just turns around to me and he goes oh back in the day you wouldn't have been in the fucking country" "…he just goes straight up to my face, he says again go back to your fucking country." "Yeah, I do think it's unfair. The boy that tried to fight me seven times one day, he still goes there…. And so, you know, there was only a select few people that they chose to kick out." [What's the difference between you and them?] "I'll be honest, they're all white…"
Experiences with peers	Mohammed regularly discussed social experiences with peers throughout his journey. He shared that it took him time upon joining secondary school to make friends and during these time he was bullied by other peers. Mohammed described how once he had made friends, he felt that they could be a negative influence on his views and actions. He also described threatening behaviour of peers both inside and outside of school, and what he views as provocation from peers, leading him to engage in behaviour which has resulted in negative consequences.	"I'm a small kid. I joined XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from] and everyone there's humongous and they're all big kids and you know they weren't like, me I was soft. So everyone used to try and pick on me" "…so I used to get picked on a bit and I didn't have many friends." "…and these kids you know, all they wanted was just to fight. So we had a lot of fights in XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from]" "They tried to find out where I live. They had people waiting for me outside of school. They're threatening my mom. They found my sister shopping and, you know, they're screaming at her in the shopping centre, she had to stand in front of the camera…" "…and those 20 lads [Mohammed's friends], as much as they saved me from a lot of problems, you know, they caused so many problems too, because they've all got big mouths. They just wanna look good."

		"…but other kids they try and test you. Try and see what you're about. And they'll call you like little names or they'll say little things, just try and get on your nerves and see your reaction."
Systems - Behaviour management systems - Different educational settings - Time spent out of school	Mohammed felt that throughout his journey he has been involved in a number of different systems, which have impacted upon his views and behaviour. He spoke about how others, including school staff and the police, attempt to manage behaviour, seeing this as largely ineffective in creating change. Mohammed also spoke about how his educational journey has taken him to different settings, noting how there are differences between settings which can make adjustment difficult, whilst still feeling some aspects of life are the same everywhere. Mohammed discussed how the systems he is placed within resulted in him spending time out of the education system and the impact of this.	"No one was really afraid. They never really had no way of, like, actually telling us off." "It's like I'm in school, I don't really care about school and you're threatening me saying you're gonna send me home. It don't make sense." "For every single one of these problems, they called the police like, and the police would come and they interview you and they'll try and scare you or whatever." "…and then on my way back home, just walking down the road, and the police car just pulled up onto the pavement, and they just arrested me, like, stuck me in the station cell" "There was no punishments, no nothing [at the PRU]. So because we had the option, no one would really do anything. You could walk out if you really wanted to, you could just do whatever you wanted. No one cares. So that's what we did. We did whatever we wanted" "…but joining and like actually settling in, it's not easy. That's the hardest part of the whole thing, because you're coming from seven people every single day, and now I'm seeing a thousand first thing in the morning." "…but I didn't join in September. After September, I had to wait a couple months before I could even get into the PRU. So that entire time, I'm just at home." "…and if I was in school, I wouldn't have been there."
Relationships with staff - Positive vs negative relationships - Power imbalance	Mohammed talked about experiencing both positive and negative relationships with staff throughout his educational journey. In particular he mentioned how he has been left	"There was plenty of good teachers. And, they were all so friendly. And to be honest, like even my head of year, my head of year was the best. I think they would have got rid of me earlier if not for him." "…but over there we had a couple of teachers that would sit down and talk to you. They understood."

	feeling unsupported by adults who he feels should have been supporting him. He discussed how he believes that many adults who have worked with him had already made their mind up about him and the impact this had on his behaviour. Mohammed also noted the power that staff at schools have and how, in his view, this can often be abused.	"…so we had the Zoom call meeting, and when I joined the call, it was me, my mom, a safeguarding teacher, and my head of year and somebody else, and we're sitting on the call. And I realised from the second I joined, like, they're really hostile." "They like to say they support you and stuff, and they talk to you or whatever. But they don't really do anything. They just sit there and write in their little notepad and then they leave, and you never see them again. So, I never really got support from anyone." "They just build, like, an idea of what I'm like in their head. So yeah, they will always think I'm up to no good." "They just know already what they wanna do, it's just premeditated." "They have, obviously, the school won't work without the teachers having the power. But obviously they got it and they won't admit it." "…but they [teachers] abuse it. And they'll always abuse their power."
- Minds made up		
Wasted time	Mohammed felt that the result of the educational journey he has been on is wasted time. He discussed this in terms of falling behind academically as a result of his PEX and time spent in a PRU, leading to difficulties upon reintegration. He also thought of time wasted more generally, which is contributing towards an increased motivation to succeed now.	"…but I had a real big problem with, cause when I was at XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from], I was in top sets for everything, so when I come here, they put me in top sets for everything. But I've missed a whole, basically a whole year and a half of school" "As much as I was naughty, I did well in school. Just like, a year off, you forget a lot." "Time consuming. That's the big one." [Do you feel like you've lost time because of it?] "Yeah. A lot of it." "Like I said, my biggest thing was it was so time consuming. Just wasted so much time. I can't waste any more time."

Personal experiences	Mohammed discussed a number of experiences personal to himself. He shared that he believes it is difficult for an individual to make change in their views and actions, but he believes that multiple turning points in his journey have resulted in him changing. Mohammed described experiences of making realisations which supported this change, in particular realising the importance of social connection with others. Another discussion point was Mohammed's changing feeling of belonging and the impact this had on his self-perception and motivation.	"…and I always used to have this thing like I always used to know I'm doing something wrong, and I'd always want to change, and I make a change, and then I'd just always slip back into whatever I was doing before." "It's the knowledge, the wisdom, you know, I've grown. I've just got a better understanding of people." "…but I never really had an idea of what I wanted to do. But all this, it did change what I wanted to do a lot, like, it changed the way I look at things. And, you know, I realised I don't really wanna do it this way, like come to school and chase the grades. I don't wanna sit behind a desk all day. I can't. It's not for me. It's not for me." "…then I realised that everybody's going through the same thing. And I just realised then, you can throw a rock to someone who can understand you, you know, just across the road. So, you know, I realised everybody's going through the same thing." "They [staff at PRU] all used to say you know, we don't understand why you're here. You shouldn't be here. You've been sent here, and it's just not the place you're supposed to be … I just needed someone else to tell me. And when I heard It from them, I realised this isn't where I wanna be, I wanna leave."
- Change
- New realisations
- Belonging

Table 11: Description of the themes in Mohammed's narrative with example quotations

4.4.4 Summary of findings in relation to RQ1: *"What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?"*

4.4.4.1 Experiences of racism

A key theme to emerge within Mohammed's narrative was experiencing racism. Mohammed discussed how he feels that he has experienced two different forms of racism throughout his educational journey. Firstly, Mohammed recounted multiple events where peers at school have used racist remarks towards him such as "go back to your fucking country". When recalling these experiences, Mohammed was resigned to the fact that this is a normal aspect of life for a young British Asian Muslim living in the UK, stating "it is what it is". These experiences in school have often led to feelings of anger, fear and being 'othered'. Mohammed reflected that once he had built social connections and friendships within his community, these experiences became easier to manage, as with an increased sense of community came increased feelings of safety and security. However, these experiences often led to Mohammed becoming involved in fights inside and outside of school, which he perceives to be significant in his journey towards PEX. Mohammed also noted that whilst he is happy in the school he reintegrated too, he still experiences racism from peers, perhaps perpetuating his view that these experiences are inevitable.

Mohammed referred to the second form of perceived racism he has experienced as "unfairness", which I have interpreted to mean systemic racism. When discussing his PEX from school, Mohammed informed me that himself and a number of his peers, also British Asian Muslims, were PEX for engaging in fights, as well as ongoing disruptive behaviour in school. Contrastingly, Mohammed's peers who were white, whilst engaging in the same behaviours, were not PEX and still attend the same school. This experience has led Mohammed to perceive the education system as an inherently unfair system which works against him, and others like him. He discussed how this has been demotivating for him through his journey and has contributed towards a dislike of school and a desire to leave the system as soon as he is able to.

4.4.4.2 Experiences with peers

When discussing his journey, Mohammed reflected on many experiences with peers, often seeing them as being significant points in his narrative. When Mohammed first joined secondary school, he recalled not having any friends and experiencing bullying from peers. Mohammed saw this as a formative experience for him, where he felt that he was required to "toughen up". This suggests that Mohammed views himself and the manner in which he behaves around his peers as socially constructed, whereby he felt that he needed to change his personality in order to "survive" in secondary school.

Mohammed discussed how making friends at school gave him confidence and helped him to feel safer in school, but also reflected on how he perceived his friends to be a negative influence at times, stating "as much as they [Mohammed's friends] saved me from a lot of problems, you know, they caused so many problems too." Mohammed felt that he often got into trouble because he would join in behaviours his friends were participating in, again suggesting that he sees his behaviour as the product of his social environment.

Some of Mohammed's key experiences with peers also took place outside of school, where he experienced threatening behaviour such as being followed home. These experiences in particular led to feelings of significant fear. As Mohammed had already developed a distrust of school and the police, in his view there was "no point" in seeking support from either in managing these threatening experiences. Instead, Mohammed perceived these instances as something he must manage himself, leading to escalating behaviour and engagement in fights, which he viewed as necessary in order to protect himself and his family.

4.4.4.3 Systems

Mohammed regularly referred to the different systems he has found himself within throughout his educational journey. When discussing school behaviour management systems, Mohammed reflected on his viewpoint that they are ineffective in preventing behaviour in school and in supporting pupils such as himself to change their behaviour. Prior to his PEX he recalled an experience where the school suspended him for fighting, noting "I don't really care about school and you're

threatening me saying you're gonna send me home. It don't make sense." Whilst Mohammed saw many of the behaviours he engaged in prior to PEX as necessary, he discussed how he thought he would have been more likely to make a positive change to his behaviour had he been supported by school staff, rather than threatened with consequences which he was not "afraid" of.

Mohammed also discussed the impact of moving between different educational settings, as a result of the school exclusion system. He perceived the differences between mainstream schools and the PRU he attended to be of particular significance. When he joined the PRU, Mohammed was shocked at the approach taken to behaviour management. In his view there were "no punishments, no nothing… you could just do whatever you wanted". Mohammed informed me that whilst he enjoyed this freedom whilst attending the PRU, the transition back to a mainstream school with significantly different behavioural expectations and behaviour management systems was difficult, especially considering the length of time he spent in the PRU. Similarly, Mohammed reflected on how he had become used to attending a small setting and the difficulties that came with reintegrating to a much larger school: "You're coming from seven people every single day, and now I'm seeing a thousand first thing in the morning." Mohammed perceived these differences as being a significant barrier to a successful reintegration, saying that this was the "hardest part" about returning to a mainstream school. This suggests that Mohammed views himself and his behaviour as affected by the environment he finds himself within. It is possible that Mohammed's self-perception and identity changed each time he moved to a new setting on his journey, which he found difficult to manage.

Another function of the exclusion system which Mohammed deemed to be significant to his narrative was the amount of time he spent not attending an educational setting, following PEX and before he was placed into the PRU. Mohammed informed me that he did not attend school for "more than two months". During this time Mohammed shared that he was "up to no good", culminating in him being arrested by the police for his involvement in a fight in the local area. He feels that during this time period he "never really got support from anyone". Mohammed viewed this time as symptomatic of a flawed system, which he perceived was "setting [him] up to fail" rather than supporting him to change.

4.4.4.5 Relationships with staff

Mohammed deemed the relationships that he has had with staff who have worked with him throughout his journey as significant to his narrative. He discussed how he feels that he has had positive and negative relationships with staff both prior to PEX and following reintegration, seeing this as a normal aspect of school life. For Mohammed, the most significant positive staff relationships occurred whilst he was placed in the PRU, where staff would take the time to "sit down and talk to you", which led Mohammed to feeling like they "understood" him better. This was the first time Mohammed experienced feeling "properly understood" by adults working with him and he perceives this experience to be a key turning point in his narrative.

In contrast to this, Mohammed also discussed multiple experiences of negative relationships with staff in his mainstream settings, predominantly prior to PEX. He perceived that staff had made pre-conceptions about him, saying "they just build, like, an idea of what I'm like in their head. So yeah, they will always think I'm up to no good." Mohammed believes that this construction of him contributed towards his PEX, feeling that it was "premeditated". Believing that staff thought of him negatively both affected Mohammed's own view of himself and demotivated him in attempting to meet their expectations behaviourally.

Mohammed also perceived there to be an imbalance of power in schools, stating that some teachers will "always abuse their power". This relates to Mohammed's construction of school and the education system as inherently unfair, a viewpoint which he acknowledged has affected his own behaviour throughout his journey.

4.4.4.6 Wasted time

A theme which Mohammed identified within his own narrative is that of wasted time. He discussed how he perceives his time spent out of education and placed in the PRU as detrimental to his academic progress, stating "as much as I was naughty, I did well in school. Just like, a year off, you forget a lot." Mohammed saw this negative impact on his progress as a result of the learning environment in the PRU,

where "no one would really do anything [in lessons]". This frustrated Mohammed as he felt that it could negatively impact his prospects upon leaving school, which is where he told me his motivation lies.

Mohammed described to me a feeling of having lost time because of the journey he has been on. However, now that he feels he has fully reintegrated to mainstream education, this has changed from a source of frustration to something which motivates him to make the most of the time he has left in education. Mohammed summarised this in saying "I can't waste any more time", highlighting Mohammed's changing perspectives and motivation as he has progressed through his journey.

4.4.4.7 Personal experiences

The final theme to emerge from Mohammed's narrative was that of personal experiences. A key aspect of this theme is Mohammed's perspective on personal change, and how this perspective has changed following events through his journey. Mohammed described to me his belief, prior to his PEX, that he was incapable of changing as a person: "I always used to know I'm doing something wrong, and I'd always want to change, and I make a change, and then I'd just always slip back into whatever I was doing before." This suggests Mohammed held a fixed construct of himself as a person, feeling that despite making efforts to change, he would eventually return to what he perceived to be his true self. However, reflecting on where he is now in his journey Mohammed told me that he has "grown" and "changed" as a person. This shows a different perspective on self and identity, where change is possible, which Mohammed feels is the result of the journey he has been on.

In particular, the experience of not feeling like he belonged was significant for Mohammed. He recalled a key turning point, whilst placed in the PRU, where staff helped him to realise that it was "not the place [he was] supposed to be". In realising this, Mohammed's motivation to return to mainstream education increased, leading to behaviour changes and a "determination" to stay in mainstream education following reintegration. This again highlights Mohammed's changing perspective of himself through his narrative. Mohammed's narrative seemed to end with him having

a better understanding of himself as a person, which he believes is integral to him succeeding in school and in life.

4.4.5 Summary of findings in relation to RQ2: *"How do children and young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors do they perceive to be supportive in achieving this?"*

Mohammed's construction of what makes a reintegration to mainstream education successful centres around making personal change. He believes that it "isn't just not being excluded again", but instead creating "an understanding of not just what's happened, but like, how to move forward and how to make a real change". Furthermore, reflecting on his earlier perception regarding the difficulty in maintaining significant change, Mohammed feels that success is dependent on a person's ability to "make that change and keep it there and keep moving forward". This construction of success suggests that Mohammed places more importance in improving himself as a person, rather than meeting the expectations of others in the education system.

This perception is also reflected in Mohammed's views on what has supported him in his reintegration. Whilst he acknowledged the support he has received from adults, in particular those who worked with him at the PRU, he saw the most significant supportive factor in him being successful to be himself. He felt that without making the realisations that he did, which allowed him to grow as a person, he would not have been able to successfully reintegrate to mainstream education. This viewpoint was perhaps reinforced in Mohammed's initial experience of reintegration, where he expected to join his new school and be offered support by staff to ease the transition, but instead it was "pretty much just [him] on his own".

4.4.6 Summary of findings in relation to RQ3: *"How does the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affect children and young people's constructions of their future?"*

Mohammed's perception of his future has changed significantly over the course of his journey. He discussed how, before his PEX, he "wasn't thinking about all that". Instead, at that point in his narrative Mohammed felt that he was only focused on the

present and, in particular, what others thought of him: "I wanted clout and just to look good." However, he shared that this changed through his experience of PEX and reintegration, stating "it did change what I wanted to do a lot, like, it changed the way I look at things".

For Mohammed, the changes that he has experienced have brought about new motivation to succeed in life, along with a greater focus on his future. As a result of these changes Mohammed now feels "confident" about his future: "I know I'm gonna do well." This suggests that Mohammed's perception of his future has become more salient and more positive as he has progressed through his journey.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter aims to discuss the findings of this research, presented in Chapter 4, in the context of the literature outlined in Chapter 2. The findings related to each research question are discussed. In order to provide this discussion, significant commonalities and differences in the participants' narratives are identified and explored. Despite seeking commonalities between narratives, this discussion aims to maintain the individuality of each participant's experience, in line with the social constructionist position that there is no objective reality and each participant's narrative has been constructed through their own personal and social experiences (Gergen, 1985; Andrews, 2012). To support this and to promote the voice of the participants, areas of discussion have been guided not only by commonalities and differences, but also by the experiences identified as most significant by each participant. Following this discussion, the implications of the findings of this research on educational practice and future research are explored, as well as a consideration of the limitations of this research.

5.2 Discussion of findings in relation to RQ1: *"What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?"*

The narratives of each participant contained multiple commonalities, with all three sharing similar experiences and viewpoints in relation to certain aspects of their journey. The experiences that are discussed in this chapter are relationships with staff, experiences of systems, peer relationships and personal experiences. The different meanings and consequences associated with these experiences for each participant will be reflected upon throughout the discussion.

5.2.1 Relationships with staff

All three participants perceived their relationships with the adults who have worked with them throughout their educational journey to be significant to their narrative.

This finding supports the findings of previous research which has sought to explore the views of CYP who have experienced PEX (Edwards, 2004; Loizidou, 2009; Gooding, 2014; Bovell, 2022), spent time being educated in AP (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Cajic-Seigneur & Hodgson, 2016; Gibson, 2019; Owen, 2022) and experienced a reintegration to mainstream education (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Levinson, 2016).

A key distinction made by all of the participants was the difference between their relationships with staff in mainstream school, especially prior to PEX, compared to the relationships they felt they had with staff in the PRU. For instance, Shardinay's perception of staff prior to her PEX was that they did not care about or respect her. This echoes Bovell's (2022) finding that pupils who have been PEX perceive there to be a lack of mutual respect between staff and pupils in school, as well as a perception that staff can be disinterested in the pupils they work with. Michael and Frederickson (2013) suggest that PEX pupils' perceptions of relationships with staff are more varied following reintegration. This was also reflected in the current study's findings as Shardinay discussed experiencing much more positive staff relationships following reintegration, whereas Lenny and Mohammed held a less positive view, seeming to accept that there would always be some negative relationships with staff in a mainstream school.

A significant aspect of all participants' constructions of their relationships with staff was that they all perceived staff at mainstream schools to have made and held negative judgements about them. Before his PEX, Lenny felt "hated" by teachers, who he feels perceived him at "naughty". Similarly, Shardinay reflected on how staff members' fixed perception of her made it difficult to change her behaviour and Mohammed discussed how he felt his PEX was "premeditated". Gooding (2014) found that these views have previously been shared by pupils who have experienced PEX, suggesting that the perception leads to feelings of anger and frustration, which was a consequence also experienced by the participants in this study. Furthermore, Lenny and Mohammed described feeling that, following their reintegration, they were judged by school staff due to the fact they had been PEX. This supports previous findings suggesting a perceived stigmatisation upon reintegration (Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017).

Mohammed and Shardinay both discussed their perception of a power imbalance between pupils and staff members in mainstream schools. Whilst previous research has found that pupils can view themselves as having less power than teachers in school (Robinson, 2011; Keddie, 2015), this does not appear to have been a view explicitly shared by PEX pupils in recent research. However, Pomeroy (1999) inferred that a lack of power can be a contributory factor in a pupil's path to PEX, which was a perception shared by Mohammed and Shardinay. Both discussed feelings of powerlessness, in particular when they were required to justify or defend their actions and their belief that, had they had more power when interacting with staff, they may have been treated more fairly and their PEX may have been avoided.

Perhaps associated with feelings of powerlessness, is the experience of not feeling listened to or understood by staff in mainstream school, which all participants described. This experience appears to be common in PEX pupils (Edwards, 2004; Bovell, 2022), with findings suggesting that CYP believe that had staff made more effort to listen to and understand them, they may have avoided PEX. This finding being supported in the current study further suggests that PEX pupils perceive themselves and their behaviour in school to be misunderstood. Contrastingly, all participants in this research experienced feeling listened to and understood by staff in the PRU they attended, often perceiving this experience to be a key turning point. This supports previous findings of positive perceptions of staff relationships in AP (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Cajic-Seigneur & Hodgson, 2016; Gibson, 2019; Owen, 2022). Interestingly, previous research has suggested that developing positive relationships in AP whilst excluded can demotivate CYP from engaging in the reintegration process (Jalali & Morgan, 2018; Bovell, 2022), however all of the participants in this study perceived these relationships as a supportive factor in their reintegration, helping them to become more motivated to return to mainstream education.

5.2.2 Environmental and systemic factors

A commonality that was shared between all participants' narratives was an apparent construction of themselves and their behaviour partly as a consequence of the environment and systems they have found themselves within through their journeys.

Two environmental and systemic factors, referred to by all participants, were the differences between the educational settings they have attended, and the behaviour management systems they have been involved in.

Mohammed and Shardinay both described the difference between the school they were PEX from and the PRU they joined as significant. In previous research, the differences between mainstream education and AP have been perceived positively by PEX pupils (Gooding, 2014; Warner, 2021; Owen, 2022). However, aside from the more positive relationships with staff, this was not found to be CYP's perspective in the current study. For instance, Shardinay discussed feeling socially disconnected due to the small size of the setting and Mohammed felt that the limited extent to which learning was a focus was detrimental to his academic progress. Mohammed's experience in particular contrasts with previous findings which have suggested an AP setting is an effective space to promote engagement in learning (Nicholson & Putwain, 2015; Trotman et al., 2016) and to prepare CYP for their future (Johnston & Bradford, 2022). However, whilst both participants held a relatively negative view of the PRU they attended, they described this as a motivating factor for them in reintegrating to mainstream education and so viewed the experience positively.

The difference between PRUs and mainstream schools was also viewed by Mohammed and Shardinay as being significant to the reintegration process, both giving examples such as different behavioural expectations and the different size of the settings as potential barriers to a successful reintegration. Whilst adjusting to new behavioural expectations has previously been cited as significant in the reintegration process (Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017), the difficulties of managing a transition from a setting with few pupils and small class sizes to a large mainstream secondary school when reintegrating has not been widely considered in previous research. These findings suggest that this an environmental factor which should be considered when supporting a CYP's reintegration to mainstream education.

A commonality across all three narratives was significant involvement in school behaviour management systems, both prior to PEX and following reintegration. For all participants this included being placed on multiple reports to monitor their behaviour in school, as well as receiving detentions and suspensions for behaviour deemed to be inappropriate by the school. Valdebenito et al. (2018) suggest that

school-based behaviour interventions such as those mentioned are seen by schools and educational policymakers as a method through which to mitigate against permanently excluding pupils. However, this system of managing and responding to behaviour was perceived differently by the participants in this study. All of the participants perceived behaviour management systems as ineffective in preventing behaviour deemed inappropriate in school and, further to this, shared a perception that these systems set them up to fail in school by contributing to negative staff perceptions and hindering their ability to change their behaviour. This construction of behaviour management in school echoes Sellman's (2009) findings, where CYP who were experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in school argued that a relational and supportive approach to behaviour management would be more effective than the punitive approach often taken by schools.

The construction of the education system and school exclusion process as unfair and potentially systemically racist was a significant aspect of Mohammed's narrative. He described feeling as though he was treated differently by school staff following behavioural incidents than his white peers were, with him being PEX whilst they remained at the school. For Mohammed, this led to a distrust of the education system and the adults who work within it. Mohammed's understanding of the system echoes widely shared concerns relating to school exclusion disproportionately affecting minority groups (Parsons, 2008; Parkes, 2012; McCluskey et al., 2016; Black, 2022). As well as being in line with the disproportionality highlighted in school exclusion data (DfE, 2023b), Mohammed's experience and viewpoint has previously been shared by CYP of colour, who have felt regularly discriminated against in school due to their race, with perceived greater challenges to overcome through their educational journey than their white peers (Page, 2020; Kennelly & Mouroutsou, 2020).

The only participant to discuss their family life as a significant experience throughout their narrative was Lenny. He attributed some of his behaviour in school to his experience of inconsistency and difficult relationships at home. This perception provides support to previous findings where family life has been seen by CYP to be a significant aspect of their behaviour in school and PEX (Moore, 2009; Loizidou, 2009; McManus, 2023). Previous research has shown that school staff have also at times perceived pupils' behaviour to be the product of the home environment and

family relationships (Wilkin et al., 2010; Gazeley, 2012; Macleod et al., 2013). However, this construction has been associated with a perception of incompetent parenting (Gazeley, 2012) and potential discriminatory views related to social class (Kulz, 2015). Furthermore, parents of excluded CYP have reported feeling judged by school staff, sometimes leading to feelings of shame (Kulz, 2015). As the significance of familial relationships have been discussed by excluded CYP in numerous studies, adults working with CYP should consider them when aiming to understand a pupil and their behaviour. However, the approach taken should aim to be supportive, listening to the voices of the CYP and their family members, as opposed to judgemental (Gazeley, 2012; Macleod at al., 2013).

5.2.3 Peer relationships

Across all three narratives, experiences and relationships with peers were seen to be significant. One key perceived positive impact of friendships was their role in creating a sense of belonging in school. Pupils experiencing a sense of belonging in school has continually been found to be associated with a number of desirable outcomes for CYP educationally, socially and in relation to their emotional wellbeing (Gardner, 2011; Shaw, 2019; Allen et al., 2021). Craggs and Kelly (2018) explored the effect that managed moves to new schools have on CYP's sense of belonging in school, finding that when CYP join a new setting they often do not feel as though they belong, with an initial lack of friendships and peer support cited as a significant factor contributing to this. The findings of this study suggest that CYP reintegrating to school following PEX hold a similar perception. Shardinay and Mohammed in particular discussed feeling as though their reintegration experience was prolonged and made more difficult due to a lack of belonging. In contrast, Lenny already had a number of friends at the school which he reintegrated to, which he perceived to be a key supportive factor in his journey, perhaps highlighting the need to promote a sense of belonging in reintegrating CYP, with a particular focus on friendships and peer relationships.

Previous research exploring CYP's sense of belonging in school has found there to be a range of associated and predictive factors, both at an individual level, as well as at wider ecosystemic levels (Slaten et al., 2016; Ahmadi et al., 2020; Allen et al.,

2023). Factors which have previously been associated with CYP experiencing a sense of belonging within their school include academic self-efficacy (Uwah et al., 2008; McMahon et al., 2009; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021), the supportive involvement of parents or family members (Allen et al., 2018; Uslu & Gizir, 2017), a perceived sense of fairness related to the school experience (Wong et al., 2022; Burgess et al., 2023), supportive relationships with staff (Levett-Jones et al., 2009; Crouch et al., 2014; Allen et al., 2021) and positive peer relationships (Uslu & Gizir, 2017; Gowing, 2019; Saggers et al., 2023). Whilst previous literature has therefore shown school belonging to be a multifaceted construct, this was not found within the current study. Although a number of the predictive factors outlined here were seen by participants to be significant in their narrative, they did not associate them with a sense of belonging. For example, all participants experienced positive relationships with staff during their time attending the PRU, however they also described feeling as though they did not belong in the PRU. As previously discussed, for the participants of this study, a sense of belonging was generated through the development and maintenance of peer relationships, supporting previous findings in highlighting the importance of positive peer relationships in order to promote a sense of belonging in school (Uslu & Gizir, 2017; Gowing, 2019; Saggers et al., 2023). It should be noted that much of the research exploring school belonging has not sought the views of CYP who have experienced school exclusion (Slee, 2019). The findings of this study suggest that the factors associated with a sense of school belonging may differ in PEX pupils in comparison to their peers who have not experienced school exclusion.

Although peer relationships and friendships were discussed by the participants as a supportive factor in their narratives, all participants also viewed their friends as being a negative influence on themselves and their behaviour at points throughout their journeys. This perception has previously been reported by pupils who have experienced school exclusion (Farouk, 2015; Farouk, 2017), suggesting that CYP who experience perceived behaviour difficulties in school view their behaviour to be influenced by their peer relationships. McGrath and Noble (2010) suggest that this perception should be given more consideration by schools when attempting to manage behaviour. They recommend a shift away from an individual focus, towards an approach which recognises the significance of peer relationships and friendships,

aiming to foster more positive relationships in order to prevent, as opposed to respond to, instances of negative behaviour (McGrath & Noble, 2010). The views of the participants in this study support this advice.

An experience which has previously been reported by CYP who have joined AP following exclusion is improved peer relationships, due to a perception of shared experiences with peers in the new setting (Nicholson & Putwain, 2015; Jarvis, 2018; Warner, 2021). Interestingly, the participants in this study experienced different relationships with peers whilst placed in AP. Instead of perceiving similarities, all of the participants viewed themselves as different to the majority of their peers in the PRU. Whilst this affected their sense of belonging during that chapter of their narratives, all three participants described the experience as a motivating factor, encouraging them to engage in the reintegration process. Despite all participants at times describing themselves as "naughty", this shared perception suggests that they perceived themselves to belong in a mainstream setting, compared to peers who they perceived as belonging in AP. This finding highlights how CYP's self-perception is affected by experiences with peers, and how this can lead to changes in motivation and aspirations. Lee (2018) suggests that peer experiences such as this can be utilised by staff in PRUs, working with PEX pupils, in order to promote a positive self-perception and successful reintegration.

An experience that was specific to Mohammed's narrative was experiencing racism from peers in school. Mohammed deemed this experience to be particularly significant as he viewed this to be a key factor in him engaging in fights, which he perceived to be central to his PEX. Bennett and Lee-Treeweek (2014, p. 32) describe occurrences of "everyday racism" in UK secondary schools as "endemic" and CYP have previously described experiencing racism from their peers in school (Page, 2020; Kennelly & Mouroutsou, 2020), suggesting Mohammed's experience has been shared by many CYP across the country. Mohammed's experience echoes Bennett and Lee-Treeweek's (2014) findings, in that he felt that staff did not support him through these experiences, instead reprimanding his response. This experience therefore supports the suggestion of systemic racism discussed in Section 5.2.2.

5.2.4 Personal experiences

Whilst all of the participants in this study viewed their behaviour to a certain extent as a product of their social environment, they all also referred to key personal experiences on their journey. Common themes here were motivation and self-perception. Participants saw these factors to directly influence both their behaviour in school and efforts to engage in education more generally. This finding supports the findings of Levinson (2016) and Atkinson (2017), suggesting that when CYP feel motivated and view themselves in a positive regard, they perceive themselves to have more control over their presentation in school and feel more able to meet the expectations of adults with regards to behaviour and engagement. Both Mohammed and Shardinay discussed feelings early in their narratives of a perceived inability to change, which for Shardinay was perpetuated by her interactions with staff. This fixed self-perception has previously been reported by excluded CYP (Harris et al., 2006), however the findings of this study and previous research suggest that with support from adults in school and experiences such as a perceived fresh start, personal change can be accomplished, leading to significant behaviour change (Harris et al., 2006; Levinson; 2016; Atkinson; 2017).

Of the three participants, Lenny was the only one to discuss mental health and emotional wellbeing as a significant aspect of his narrative. For Lenny, his perceived difficulties in regulating his emotions and behaviour were a key aspect of his difficulties in school and PEX. Perceived emotional and mental health difficulties have previously been reported by pupils who have experienced PEX (Bovell, 2022; McManus, 2023), as well as being reflected in school exclusion data, where pupils with an identified SEMH need are more likely to experience PEX than their peers (DfE, 2023b). Lenny's experience also supports McManus' (2023) finding that CYP perceive the support offered by schools for their emotional and mental health needs to be inadequate. Lenny's perception was that he was seen by school staff as a "naughty" pupil, as opposed to a young person who may have been experiencing emotional difficulties. This finding therefore relates to the construction of challenging behaviour by staff in schools, where it is seen as something to be punished, as opposed to a potential result of unmet needs (McManus, 2023). This suggests that a change in how pupil behaviour is construed in schools would have a positive

influence on the individual experiences of CYP, as well as acting as a preventative measure with regards to school exclusion (Bovell, 2022; McManus, 2023).

5.3 Discussion of findings in relation to RQ2: *"How do children and young people construct a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education and what factors do they perceive to be supportive in achieving this?"*

Previous research has suggested that a CYP's reintegration to mainstream education following exclusion is often perceived as successful by the staff of the school the CYP is reintegrating to when instances of challenging behaviour are reduced and when the CYP is able to maintain the placement without further significant behaviour management, such as suspension or exclusion (Spink, 2011; Levinson, 2016; Graham et al., 2019). Lown (2005) suggests that CYP reintegrating to mainstream education construct success differently to this, with more emphasis on improved self-perception and positive feelings associated with the CYP's new school. The findings of this research appear to offer support to this suggestion. Shardinay constructed success as an ability to be herself in school more, which she felt would then support her in achieving the outcomes deemed important by schools in measuring success. Mohammed's perception of success centred around making personal change and being able to maintain that change. Both of these findings highlight the significance that reintegrating CYP give to their sense of self, in acknowledgment that improving this would support them to meet behavioural expectations of staff and therefore avoid future exclusion from school.

Lenny's construction of a successful reintegration aligned more with that of school staff, as he referred to avoiding "major behaviour problems". However, Lenny, similarly to Shardinay and Mohammed, was more pragmatic and "realistic" when considering his reintegration than school staff might be. All three participants had received negative consequences for their behaviour in school following reintegration, yet this was not perceived to have negatively impacted the success of the move. There was a general acceptance in all participants that returning to a mainstream school would result in a certain amount of perceived misbehaviour and therefore behavioural consequences. However, in not constructing success as the absence of any misbehaviour, the participants' self-perceptions improved, which was perceived

by all as a supportive factor in maintaining success. In comparison, if school staff hold a more black and white construction of success where these instances would deem the reintegration to be unsuccessful, a negative perception of the CYP may begin to form, whereby the CYP making and maintaining change is not seen as possible and therefore not supported or encouraged (Lown, 2005; Levinson, 2016). This therefore means that how schools and, more widely, the education system construe reintegrative success may have significant influence on the experiences and outcomes of CYP (Lown, 2005).

A key commonality in the participants' views surrounding the supportive factors in their reintegration to mainstream education was the perceived significance of relationships. This finding echoes the views previously shared by CYP who have reintegrated to mainstream education (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017). Although a number of relationships were viewed as being supportive by the participants of this study, a perspective which was shared by all three participants was the significance and positive influence of the relationships they experienced with staff whilst placed in the PRU. This experience has been previously reported by CYP who have been educated in AP following exclusion (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Cajic-Seigneur & Hodgson, 2016; Gibson, 2019; Owen, 2022). In this study, the aspect of these relationships which was of most significance to the participants was feeling listened to and understood. Previous research has emphasised the importance of seeking and acting upon the views of CYP with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Sellman, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2011; Flynn et al., 2012). The findings of this research suggest that this is an approach which is valued by CYP experiencing PEX and reintegration, although for all participants this was predominantly experienced in AP as opposed to mainstream education, a perception which has previously been shared by reintegrated pupils (Atkinson, 2017).

For Mohammed in particular, a significant factor in supporting a successful reintegration was seen to be personal development. However, when constructing his narrative, Mohammed recognised that this personal change was in part a result of the supportive, positive relationships he experienced with staff at the PRU he attended, who helped him to develop a more positive, rounded self-perception. This therefore shows the power of positive relationships and prioritising pupil voice in

instilling confidence in CYP that they are capable of change, in doing so supporting them to work towards their aspirations.

5.4 Discussion of findings in relation to RQ3: *"How does the journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration affect children and young people's constructions of their future?"*

All of the participants in this study experienced a shifting perception of their future selves as they progressed through their educational journey. In line with previous findings, all participants reported feeling disaffected with school and education prior to their PEX, leading to a negative perception of their future where aspirations were deemed unattainable or were not considered at all (Thacker, 2017). Strand and Winston (2008) found that low aspirations and a negative perception of the future self in CYP was associated with the construction of the self in the context of the school environment. The findings of this study support this, in that all participants construed themselves somewhat negatively prior to PEX, believing that they needed to change personally in order for their perceived future to change. McCoy and Bowen (2014) suggested that low self-efficacy in relation to school, both academically and behaviourally, was integral to the future perceptions of disaffected CYP. Here, self-efficacy in relation to meeting the behavioural expectations of schools was of particular significance.

A key commonality between participants in this study was the perception of the time spent in AP as a turning point in their narrative. As participants experienced this turning point, their perceptions of their future selves became more salient, and aspirations began to be perceived as more attainable. Thacker (2017) found that the experiences of pupils who attend PRUs, including more positive relationships with staff, an increased understanding of oneself and separation from difficult peer relationships, are attributed towards more positive feelings of the future. Similar findings were also reported by Cosma (2020), who also reported that CYP attending PRUs can see the limited opportunities provided by PRUs to negatively affect their perception of their future self. Both of these findings are supported by this study as the experiences reported as significant by Thacker (2017) were all contributors to perceived turning points where participants' future aspirations became more salient,

whilst all participants also expressed an increased motivation to leave the PRU, due to the limited opportunities it was perceived to provide, in order to achieve their future aspirations.

Following their reintegrations to mainstream education, all participants reported a continued perception of a positive future. This was driven in part by a more concrete understanding of desired future qualifications and career paths, which acted as motivation for the participants to succeed in their new placements. This finding echoes Daniels and Cole's (2010) research that found that when excluded CYP had more salient future aspirations, such as desired careers or educational achievements, they were motivated to reengage with education and attempt to meet behavioural expectations. It has also been noted that school can be seen by CYP who have experienced PEX (Daniels & Cole, 2010) and reintegration (Atkinson, 2017) as a necessary means to an end in order to reach the point they would like to in life, a sentiment which was shared by the participants of this study. Whilst in previous literature, CYPs' perceptions of their future following reintegration to mainstream education have been shown to be varied (Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017), all participants in this study held a relatively positive view of their future self. It should however be noted that each of the participants in this study perceived their reintegration to mainstream education to be successful. It is possible that a CYP who has perceived themselves to have unsuccessfully reintegrated may construct their future differently, highlighting the importance of supporting the reintegration process in order to promote success, and constructing success in a manner which is achievable for the CYP in question.

5.5 Summary of findings in relation to previous literature

In summary, this chapter has considered the findings of this research in the context of previous literature. In relation to RQ1 (What are children and young people's stories of their journey from permanent exclusion to reintegration?), four emergent themes were discussed: relationships with staff, environmental and systemic factors, peer relationships and personal experiences. As shown through Section 5.2, all of these themes have been identified in previous research as important experiences on CYP's journeys from PEX to reintegration. The findings of this research largely

support previous findings with regard to these themes, highlighting the similar experiences of other PEX and reintegrated CYP.

Whilst there has been limited research exploring CYP views in relation to their construction of a 'successful' reintegration to mainstream education following PEX, the findings of this research support Lown's (2005) suggestion that reintegrating pupils may construct success differently to school staff and policymakers, with more emphasis on self-perception as opposed to measures such as avoiding future PEX. Relationships, in particular those experienced with the staff working at PRUs, were identified as an important factor in supporting a successful reintegration, providing further support to previous findings (Michael & Frederickson, 2013; Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017).

The findings of this research demonstrate a continually shifting construction of the future in CYP as they progress through the journey from PEX to reintegration, with the time spent in the PRU acting as a turning point, echoing previous findings relating to CYP's self-perceptions and future perceptions (Atkinson; 2017, Thacker, 2017; Cosma, 2020). All of the participants in this research held a relatively positive view of their future at the end of their narrative, in contrast to previous findings which have shown this to be more varied (Levinson, 2016; Atkinson, 2017).

CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Strengths and limitations

Identifying the strengths of qualitative research requires the use of different paradigms to those which would be used when evaluating quantitative research (Fossey et al., 2002). As discussed in Section 3.7, Yardley's (2000) principles of trustworthiness (sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance) were used to guide my practice in conducting this research. In addition to this, Tracy (2010) outlines eight criteria to be used in evaluating the quality of qualitative research. Table 12 shows the eight criteria and the means through which they were achieved in this research. In meeting Tracy's (2010) eight criteria, as shown in Table 12, the strengths of this research are highlighted and the overall quality of the research is demonstrated.

Criteria for quality	Means through which criteria were achieved
Worthy topic	• PEX and reintegration to mainstream education is a relevant and timely topic in educational research as concerns remain regarding the negative effects and outcomes associated with school exclusion, as well as the disproportionality through which it affects minority groups. • Reintegration has been associated with improved outcomes for CYP, hence importance in further exploring and understanding the process. • There is significance in hearing and promoting the views of CYP who have experienced PEX and reintegration.
Rich rigor	• The use of semi-structured interviews and narrative inquiry was appropriate for the aims of the research and allowed for the gathering of rich, meaningful and interesting data, which provided valuable insight into the stories of CYP. • The study sample was appropriate in meeting the aims of the research.

	• The processes of data collection and data analysis were careful and rigorous. For example, time was taken to ensure transcript accuracy and the method of analysis ensured the meaning created by participants in constructing their narratives was maintained. The steps taken in data collection and analysis have been clearly communicated.
Sincerity	• Throughout the conduct of this research, I have engaged in self-reflexivity as a researcher, continually reflecting upon my own values and my contribution to the narratives constructed. • The reporting of the research process and findings, including my role as a researcher in the construction of meaning, has been honest and transparent. • The research is empathetic to the individual stories shared by each participant.
Credibility	• Thick descriptions of each participant's individual narratives are provided, offering in-depth illustrations that explicate the meaning generated. This means that the process through which meaning has been generated has been shown, rather than told. • Participants views and experiences were sought and have been shared openly and honestly, providing space for different perceptions that may diverge from the majority, based on individual experiences. • Throughout the interviews, the meaning created by participants was checked by the researcher through questioning in order to ensure participants agreed with the researcher interpretation.
Resonance	• The stories of each participant are presented individually and thoroughly in order to provide vivid and engaging narratives which promote empathy in the reader. Throughout the research process, the power of storytelling in supporting this aim has been acknowledged. • Through seeking and promoting in-depth narratives, this research provides readers with vicarious experience, which can be used in the reader considering the transferability of the findings to other, similar contexts.
Significant contribution	• This research provides a unique contribution to the literature by exploring the narratives of CYP across their educational journeys,

	exploring experiences and perceptions at each chapter of the journey, where previous research has focused on singular points of the journey (for example, the exclusion or the reintegration). • The findings of this research relate to a number of implications for practice at numerous levels, both in supporting previous research findings and offering new insight. • The research provided the participants with an opportunity to share and reflect on their own experiences, an experience which was valued by all participants.
Ethical	• As outlined in Section 3.4, care was taken throughout the research process to ensure that the research was conducted ethically, both procedurally (for example, in gaining informed consent and ensuring participants understood their right to withdraw) and relationally (through promoting values such as mutual respect and researcher-participant connectedness).
Meaningful coherence	• The research achieves the research aims and effectively answers the research questions, which were justified following a literature review. • The methodology employed in this research was appropriate for achieving the research aims. • The chosen methodology and findings of this research have been meaningfully considered within the context of previous findings and literature.

Table 12: Tracy's (2010) eight "big-tent" criteria of quality in qualitative research and the means through which they were achieved

A potential limitation of this research is that it was not feasible for participants to provide feedback on my narrative analysis, otherwise known as member checking. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) suggest that member checking is an effective method by which a qualitative researcher can ensure their analysis is an accurate representation of the views described by participants. Although I initially planned to include a member checking session with all participants following my analysis, this was not possible due to timescales following recruitment. Whilst it has been

suggested that member checking can support the trustworthiness of findings (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018), it could also be argued that the process implies a singular truth in relation to the experiences of participants, which should be sought through the validation of analysis findings. In taking a social constructionist perspective, I acknowledge my role as a researcher in the construction of the narratives discussed (Cohen et al., 2018).

As discussed in Section 3.5.3 in outlining the data analysis process, despite seeking to analyse each participant's narrative individually in the first level of data analysis, it is possible that my analysis of earlier narratives may have influenced my analysis of later narratives, as certain themes became more salient. Prior to data analysis a literature review was conducted, which may also have influenced my analysis through confirmation bias. This bias in the first level of analysis may then have influenced the themes generated within the second, comparative level of analysis. However, I have sought throughout to emphasise my role as the researcher in the construction of the reported narratives, including the interpretation of themes as a result of analysis.

This research did not aim to produce findings which were statistically generalisable, a form of generalisability which is often associated with quantitative research (Smith, 2018). Rather, the research sought to explore participants' experiences and the meaning they give to them, in line with the described philosophical and methodological positions. These experiences and interpretations were then discussed in the context of previous findings, in order that the reader is able to make "common-sense" judgements regarding their transferability to different contexts (Elliott, 2005, p. 26), thereby seeking naturalistic generalisability (Smith, 2018). In order to achieve this, rich, in-depth data is required (Elliott, 2005). Whilst this research was able to provide such insight, three participants constitutes a small sample size and further valuable insight would have been generated through the recruitment of additional participants.

6.2 Implications for practice and research

The findings of this research have a number of implications with regard to the practice of schools and educational psychologists (EPs) supporting individual CYP, as well as at a systemic level when considering the practice of school exclusion and reintegration. The key implications, derived from the experiences deemed most significant by the participants of this study, are discussed here. Suggestions for potential areas of future research are also given.

6.2.1 Implications for schools

The perception of relationships with staff at school was important for all participants in this study, with the relationships built with staff at PRUs highlighted as a supportive factor and turning point. The importance of relationships between school staff and pupils, and in particular pupils' perceptions of the relationships, has been widely reported (Anderson, et al., 2004; Hart, 2013; Allen et al., 2021). Furthermore, Coffey (2013) highlighted the perceived importance of staff-pupil relationships at key points of transition through an educational journey. The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of relationships in school as significant and, when perceived positively, supportive. Schoenmakers (2015) recommends a shift in perspective in schools, towards a relational approach where the quality of relationships experienced by pupils are prioritised, as opposed to a focus on the outcome of the educational experience. This suggestion is relevant to schools working with pupils exhibiting behaviour they deem to be challenging, pupils at risk of PEX and pupils reintegrating following PEX (Sellman, 2009). From the experiences of the participants in this study, this was a perspective already held by the PRUs they attended, which was perceived by participants to contribute towards significant personal change, suggesting that if the same approach is taken by mainstream schools in supporting pupils with behaviour difficulties, the risk of PEX could be mitigated.

As well as relationships in school, the importance of fostering a sense of belonging for CYP in school, and the effect that this has on their constructions of themselves and their school, has been widely reported (Osterman, 2000; Sanders & Munford,

2016; Slaten et al., 2016; Allen et al., 2018). The findings of the current study suggest that this should be a significant consideration for schools and educational settings working with pupils who are at risk of PEX, have experienced PEX or have reintegrated to mainstream school. Whilst a number of factors have previously been cited as significant in the experience of belonging in school, for the participants of this study, a sense of belonging in school stemmed from positive peer relationships. CYP experiencing losses of friendships and social connections on their journey from PEX to reintegration may be viewed as unavoidable due to the nature of the journey across multiple schools. This suggests that schools working with excluded and reintegrating CYP should place importance on the peer relationships of pupils in order to support in fostering a sense of belonging. McGrath and Noble (2010, p. 79) recommend that schools adopt a "relationship culture that focuses on the development of positive peer relationships". From the views shared by participants in this study, an approach such as this would support transitions to new settings, particularly upon reintegration to mainstream education, and promote a successful reintegration as construed by CYP.

The findings of this research highlight the importance of schools seeking, valuing and acting upon the views of CYP experiencing PEX and reintegration. Whilst government policy calls for the voice of every CYP to be heard (Children and Families Act, 2014; DfE, 2014), this did not appear to be the experience of the participants in the current study, who described perceptions of not being listened to. In line with government policy, schools should aim to actively seek and engage with the views of pupils who may be at risk of PEX, have experienced PEX or have reintegrated to mainstream education. A common perception shared by participants in this study was that of a power imbalance in school and the perception of staff abusing the power that they hold, leading to negative views of school and a distrust of school staff. Although it should be noted that engaging with pupil voice may not always address power relations in a school (Arnot & Reay, 2007), it has been suggested that actively promoting pupil voice can lead to perceptions in CYP of a reduced power imbalance and increased equality between pupils and staff (Noyes, 2005; McIntrye et al., 2007), and is seen as particularly significant by pupils with perceived behavioural and emotional difficulties (Flynn et al., 2012). Within the findings of this research, a greater emphasis on pupil voice in the experience of the

participants, may have worked towards alleviating some of the lowest points of their narratives.

6.2.2 Implications for educational psychologists

The findings of this study have implications for the practice of EPs. Professional practice guidelines for EPs state that they should aim to promote the voice of the CYP they are working with and "incorporate the child's understanding of his or her world" into any assessment where possible (Division of Educational and Child Psychology, 2012, p. 25). This is relevant to individual casework with PEX or reintegrating pupils, where the CYP's construction of themselves, their behaviour and their environment has been seen to affect factors such as motivation and self-efficacy. Within this study, participants reported feeling unheard throughout their educational journeys and discussed the negative impact this was perceived to have on their school experiences, often representing significant low points on the route to PEX. As a result of the training requirements to practice, EPs appear to be well positioned to access and represent the views of CYP (Harding & Atkinson, 2009; Smillie & Newton, 2020), in doing so providing an opportunity for PEX and reintegrating pupils to feel heard and potentially empowered.

Another aspect of EP practice is the use of ecosystemic approaches in order to consider the effect of wider environmental and systemic factors, such as family, school curriculum and policies, and community, within their assessment of a CYP (Division of Educational and Child Psychology, 2012). Within this study, participants construed themselves and their behaviour in school as the product of these interacting factors, whilst still recognising individual factors and agency. Contrastingly, participants perceived that school staff held constructions of them as naughty pupils who were unable to meet the expectations required of them in school. This suggests that an important aspect of EP involvement with PEX and reintegrating CYP may be to apply understanding of ecosystemic theory and models in order to support school staff's construction of a CYP and their behaviour. In developing a more holistic understanding, schools may then be able to provide more effective targeted support and intervention, which could act to mitigate the risk of

PEX, or increase the likelihood of a successful reintegration to mainstream education.

6.2.3 Implications for policymakers

Schools' response to behaviour which is perceived to be difficult or inappropriate is informed by government guidance and policy. There is a contradiction within current guidance between a reported aim of recognising and meeting the needs of CYP, and a desire to manage the behaviour of pupils in school (Timpson, 2019; DfE, 2023). This may be a product of how behaviour in schools is construed by educational policymakers. Not only did the participants in this study see themselves and their behaviour as being negatively and, at times, unfairly perceived by school staff, they also experienced behaviour management systems which in their view hindered their ability to change. Government guidance which appears to construe behaviour as a choice and something to be punished, rather than an indication that support is required, may be perpetuating school exclusion in the UK. The current construction of behaviour in education policy may be contributing towards rates of PEX (Hatton, 2013), as well as difficulty successfully reintegrating pupils to mainstream education, where they are often faced with the same policies and ethos which led to their PEX (Pillay et al., 2013). Therefore, a shift in how behaviour in schools is construed at a national level may support in reducing rates of PEX and supporting the reintegration of those who have experienced PEX.

As previously discussed, school exclusion in the UK disproportionately affects minority groups (Parsons, 2008; Parkes, 2012; McCluskey et al., 2016; Black, 2022). For Mohammed, this related to feelings of being treated unfairly due to his ethnicity, alongside experiencing racism in school which he perceived to be disregarded by staff. Joseph-Salisbury (2020) argues for a number of changes to the education system at a national level in order to work towards equality, including developing the 'racial literacy' of teachers through training, and embedding anti-racism within school curricula and policies. The findings of this study add to the weight of literature suggesting the education and school exclusion system can be unfair and systemically racist and therefore support calls for systemic change such as those offered by Joseph-Salisbury (2020).

6.2.4 Suggestions for further research

Narratives are not fixed and are thought to change over time (Murray, 2003), suggesting that the meaning participants gave to their experiences on their educational journey may be different if they were to look back on them in the future. Within this study, two of the participants' reintegration to mainstream education was relatively recent at the time of interview, and all participants were only interviewed once. Longitudinal research may therefore offer an opportunity to explore how CYP's narratives and interpretations of their educational experiences change over time. A longitudinal approach may also allow for an exploration of the views of young people through adolescence and into adulthood, which would support our understanding of the long-term perceptions and effects of exclusion and reintegration.

All of the participants of this study were PEX from and reintegrated to secondary schools. However, government data suggests CYP are more likely to reintegrate to mainstream education if they are PEX from a primary school (DfE, 2023a). It may therefore be useful to explore the experiences and interpretations of younger children who have experienced reintegration, as these would likely differ from their older peers.

Whilst this research explored the experiences of pupils who had reintegrated to a new school following PEX, it may also be helpful to explore the narratives of CYP who return to the same school following periods of suspension, for example. This contrasts to the experiences explored within this study, as relationships have already been formed and the fresh start which was deemed to be supportive in this research may not be seen to be possible. This means that factors seen to be supportive in successfully reintegrating may also be different.

6.3 Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature surrounding PEX and reintegration by exploring the narratives of young people who have reintegrated to mainstream education following a PEX from school. Whilst the views of PEX pupils have

previously been sought in research, and some studies have explored the reintegration process with CYP with a focus on supportive and hindering factors, this study offers a unique contribution by considering the participants' narratives across their educational journey, including their experiences prior to PEX, whilst placed in AP and following their reintegration.

The narrative inquiry employed in this research provided rich, in-depth findings, offering valuable insight into the experiences of CYP and the meaning they give to them. Findings were discussed in the context of previous research and were found to support a number of key findings previously highlighted, such as the importance of relationships, the perceived unfairness and ineffectiveness of school behaviour and exclusion systems and the significance of self-perception. Further to this, insight was gained into CYP's construction of a successful reintegration to mainstream education as well as the influence that the journey from PEX to reintegration has on a CYP's perception of their future.

In supporting previous findings and offering new insight, this study contributes to the discussion surrounding the implications for those who work with excluded and reintegrating CYP, including school staff and EPs, as well as the argument for systemic change.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: School recruitment letter

This information sheet has been given to you in the hope that you may be able to identify children and young people as prospective participants in a research project by Jack Taylor, a trainee educational psychologist and full-time postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham. The research project fulfils a core component of Jack's training as an educational psychologist.

Brief description of the project

The project aims to explore the narratives of children and young people who have returned to mainstream education following a permanent exclusion from a school, in order to gain insight into their lives and educational journeys.

Purpose of the project

The views and experiences of children and young people who have been excluded from education have previously been explored, however this exploration often occurs whilst the child or young person is placed in Alternative Provision. There appears to be little focus in the literature on the views and experiences of pupils who have returned to mainstream education. This reintegration to mainstream education can often be unsuccessful and this research project therefore aims to promote the experiences and views of children and young people who have experienced it.

Details of the project

The pupil will firstly spend time with Jack in order for them to feel comfortable with him and to build trust between both parties. This will include an initial meeting between the pupil, their parent/carer and Jack to answer any questions regarding the research, as well as opportunity for subsequent meetings between Jack and the pupil, with a member of school staff present, to build familiarity. Jack will then interview the pupil in order to explore their journey leading to permanent exclusion and returning to mainstream education. The interview will be voice recorded and stored securely so that Jack can analyse it following completion.

Participant requirements

Participants for the research project will be:

- Aged between 8 and 16 years.

- Male or female.
- Currently attending a mainstream school following permanent exclusion from a previous setting.
- Able to give informed consent to taking part in the research.

Young people will not be considered for the research project if they:

- Have specific Special Educational Needs that would significantly affect their ability to engage with the research.

- Pose a potential risk because of known recent or regular physical violence directed towards others.

- Have heightened emotional needs as a result of recently becoming a looked after child or mental health diagnoses.

- Have current safeguarding concerns such as being the victim or perpetrator of abuse or sexual exploitation.

Thank you for your support.

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

Hi, my name is Jack, that's me in the picture. I would like to invite you to take part in a project that I'm running.

I am currently training to be an educational psychologist which means that I work with lots of young people to support them in their education.

As part of my training I am running a project which aims to listen to the stories of young people who have been excluded from schools but are now back in a new school. I am most interested in finding out about your experiences and how you feel about them.
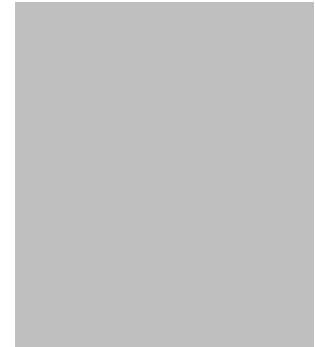
What will happen if you choose to take part?

Firstly, I will come into your school to meet you and get to know you a bit and give you the chance to get to know me a bit too. Firstly, I will meet you with your parent or carer so you can ask me any questions you may have about the project. I can then also come back in to meet with you again, with one of your teachers there too, so you can get to know me well. I want you to feel comfortable with me before starting the project.

We will then have a discussion about your journey so far, leading up to being excluded from school and including coming into your new school. I will voice record this discussion so that I can listen back to it afterwards, but the recording will be kept safe and secure. During our discussion, we will make a timeline of important events that have happened on your journey, including the really good times and times that might have been more difficult. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to or share anything you don't want to with me. You can also stop at any time if you want to and you can decide that you don't want me to use our discussion in my report up until 7 days after the discussion takes place.

After our discussion I will write a report about what we talked about, which makes up part of my training at the University of Birmingham. You will be able to have a copy of this report if you wish, but it will be long. I will also give you a short summary and meet with you again to discuss your thoughts.

Making sure its private

After our discussion I will write a report. In this report, and any other notes I make, I won't use your name and no one who reads it will know who you are. You will be able to choose what name I use instead of your real name. I also won't include anything you don't want me to.

Only myself and my university tutor will have access to the voice recording of our discussion and this will be kept safely and securely.

What we talk about will be kept private. I won't share what you tell me with anyone unless I am worried for your safety. If you tell me something which makes me concerned for your safety either in the past, right now or in the future, I will ask you more about it and write down everything you say. I would then pass this information on to one of your teachers and let you know which teacher I am going to tell.

What happens next?

If you feel like you would like to take part, I will also need your parent/carer to agree to you taking part too. If you both agree then I would like to meet with you both to tell you more about the project and answer any questions you have. After this I will ask you to both sign a consent form and then we will arrange for me to come in to your school again to talk to you.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me or my university tutor, our emails are below.

Contact details

Jack Taylor –

Julia Howe -

Appendix 3: Parent information sheet

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

This information sheet has been provided because I am seeking yours and your child's consent to take part in a research project I am undertaking. I am a full-time postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham and a Trainee Educational Psychologist working at [Local Authority] Educational Psychology Service.

Before deciding whether you would like your child to take part in the project please read the following information so that you understand why I am carrying out the project and what it will entail. If you have any further questions, please contact me so that we can discuss them (please see the bottom of this sheet for contact details).

Description of the project

This project aims to listen to and promote the narratives of young people who have returned to mainstream education following a permanent exclusion from school. This means exploring the stories of these young people, including positive and more difficult experiences, to better understand their educational journey.

Purpose of the project

Whilst other projects have listened to excluded young people, there has been little focus on those who have returned to a mainstream school. This can be a difficult transition and can often be unsuccessful. This project therefore aims to give young people who have experienced this journey an opportunity to share their individual experiences and to tell their story. This will include giving young people an opportunity to share what they feel has helped them and what they have found difficult throughout their educational journey, in order to understand how we can best support young people on similar journeys.

Details of the project

Firstly, I will get to know your child by spending some time with them in school. I want them to feel comfortable with me and happy sharing their views. This will include an initial meeting between yourself, your child and I to answer any questions regarding the research, as well as opportunity for subsequent meetings between your child and I in school, with a member of school staff present, to build familiarity.

I will then have a discussion with your child about their life and their time in education. This will be voice recorded so that I can listen back to the discussion, the recording will be stored securely. During the discussion we will create a timeline of some of the important events leading up to their exclusion and following their return to mainstream education. This will include times that were really good and times that were more difficult. I will ask them some questions about these different times, including why they think things happened, how they

felt at times and what helped and didn't help them. Your child does not have to answer questions if they would rather not and they do not have to share anything they do not want to with me.

We can become upset whilst sharing our experiences. If this happens, your child will be able to take a break from the discussion if they want to or reschedule our meeting for another time.

What happens at the end?

After finishing the recorded discussion with your child I will listen back to the recording and think about the areas we have discussed. I will then write a report which is marked by the University of Birmingham as part of my training.

Both you and your child will be able to have a copy of the report if you wish when it is finished. I will also write a short summary so that you can both read what came from our discussion. Your child will also be able to meet with me again so that they can ask any questions they might have and give any feedback.

What will happen with the information gathered from my child?

In the report that I write about the project and in any other notes I make, I will make sure that no one is able to identify your child. I will write about what they tell me, but I will not use their name, they will have the opportunity to choose the name I use when talking about them. I also will not include any information they do not want me to.

Only I will have access to the recording of our discussion and the recording will be deleted following transcription of the discussion. Following completion of the project and report write up, any data gathered will be securely stored for 10 years within the University of Birmingham's BEAR Data Archive.

As a professional who works with young people, I have a responsibility to ensure that they are safe. Therefore, if your child shares any information that I believe means they are not safe I will inform the Safeguarding Lead at their school and they will follow this up in line with their Safeguarding Policy.

What happens next?

If your child would like to take part and you are happy for them to do so, I would like to meet with both of you to tell you more about the project and so that you have the chance to ask any questions you may have. I will then ask both of you to sign a consent form. If at any point in the project your child does not want to take part anymore, or you do not want your child to take part, it will be possible to withdraw from the project. This will be possible up until 7 days after the recorded discussion with your child, at which point I will begin analysing the discussion and withdrawal will no longer be possible.

I would like more information

Please do not hesitate to contact me for me information regarding the project. You can find my contact details below. Alternatively, you can contact my university supervisor if you wish.

Contact details

Jack Taylor –

Dr Julia Howe – University of Birmingham supervisor –   .

Appendix 4: Participant consent form

Please read the sentences below and write your initials in the box next to each statement if you agree with it.

I have read the information sheet provided and understand the project and what will happen if I take part	
I have had a chance to ask any questions I have about the project and these have all been answered	
I understand that this project forms part of Jack's University of Birmingham educational psychological training and my data will be used in a research report submitted to the university	
I understand that taking part in the project is voluntary and I do not have to answer any questions or share any information I do not want to	
I understand that I can change my mind about taking part in the project at any time up until 7 days after the recorded discussion with Jack	
I understand that Jack will know who I am, but my data will remain confidential and other people will not be able to identify me from the report	
I understand that my data will be stored on a password-protected and encrypted laptop and after the report is written the data will be securely stored for 10 years within the University of Birmingham's BEAR Data Archive	
I agree to take part in this project	

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 5: Parent consent form

Please read the statements below carefully and write your initials in the box next to each statement if you agree with it.

I have read the information sheet provided and understand the purpose of the project and what will happen if my child takes part	
My child and I have had a chance to ask any questions we have about the project and these have all been answered	
I understand that this project forms part of Jack's University of Birmingham educational psychological training and my child's data will be used in a research report submitted to the university	
I understand that taking part in the project is voluntary and my child does not have to answer any questions or share any information they do not want to	
I understand that my child can withdraw from the project at any time up until 7 days after the recorded discussion and their data will not be used	
I understand that Jack will know who my child is, but their data will remain confidential and other people will not be able to identify them from the report	
I understand that my child's data will be stored on a password-protected and encrypted laptop and after the report is written the data will be securely stored for 10 years within the University of Birmingham's BEAR Data Archive	
I consent to my child taking part in this project	

Child's name:

Your name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 6: Application for ethical approval

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Application for Ethics Review Form

Guidance Notes:

What is the purpose of this form?

This form should be completed to seek ethics review for research projects to be undertaken by University of Birmingham staff, PGR students or visiting/emeritus researchers who will be carrying out research which will be attributed to the University.

Who should complete it?

For a staff project – the lead researcher/Principal Investigator on the project.
For a PGR student project – the student's academic supervisor, in discussion with the student.

Students undertaking undergraduate projects and taught postgraduate (PGT) students should refer to their Department/School for advice

When should it be completed?

After you have completed the University's online ethics self-assessment form (SAF), **IF** the SAF indicates that ethics review is required. You should apply in good time to ensure that you receive a favourable ethics opinion prior to the commencement of the project and it is recommended that you allow at least 60 working days for the ethics process to be completed.

How should it be submitted?

An electronic version of the completed form should be submitted to the Research Ethics Officer, at the following email address: aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

What should be included with it?

Copies of any relevant supporting information and participant documentation, research tools (e.g. interview topic guides, questionnaires, etc) and where appropriate a health & safety risk assessment for the project (see section 10 of this form for further information about risk assessments).

What should applicants read before submitting this form?

Before submitting, you should ensure that you have read and understood the following information and guidance and that you have taken it into account when completing your application:

- The information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-of-Research.asPEX)

- The University's Code of Practice for Research (https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf)

- The guidance on Data Protection for researchers provided by the University's Legal Services team at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/legal-services/What-we-do/Data-Protection/resources.asPEX.

Section 1: Basic Project Details

Project Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

Is this project a:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ☒
Other (Please specify below) ☐
Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the Principal Investigator or Lead Supervisor (for PGR student projects):

Title: Dr
First name: Julia
Last name: Howe

Position held: Academic and Professional Tutor
School/Department School of Education

Telephone:
Email address

Details of any Co-Investigators or Co-Supervisors (for PGR student projects):

Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
First name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Last name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Position held: Click or tap here to enter text.
School/Department Click or tap here to enter text.

Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Details of the student for PGR student projects:

Title: Mr
First name: Jack
Last name: Taylor

Course of study: Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate
Email address

Project start and end dates:

Estimated start date of project:
Estimated end date of project:

Funding:

Sources of funding: N/A

Section 2: Summary of Project

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon - please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases. Please do not provide extensive academic background material or references.

Purpose

The proposed research will focus on children and young people (CYP) who have returned to mainstream education following permanent exclusion from a school and aims to gather rich information on CYP's lives and educational journeys leading to permanent exclusion and their experience of returning to mainstream education. The research will use narrative methodology to elicit the stories of CYP focussing on what they deem to be key points throughout their lives and education so far.

Background rationale

There have been a number of studies which aim to gather the views and explore the experiences of CYP who have experienced exclusion from a mainstream school (Hingley, 2020; Taylor, 2019; Jalali & Morgan, 2017). However, these studies have gathered the views of pupils who have been excluded and are currently placed in some form of Alternative Provision, such as a Pupil Referral Unit, having not yet returned to mainstream education. Other research has sought to explore the specific process of pupil reintegration from Alternative Provision into mainstream education (Pillay, Dunbar-Krige & Mostert, 2013; Lawrence, 2011; Moran, 2010; Lown, 2005), however this research area focusses solely on the reintegration process and therefore does not explore in-depth the lives and educational journeys of the CYP concerned. There is therefore currently no literature which seeks to explore how pupils who have been permanently excluded, but have subsequently returned to mainstream education, narrate their lives and educational journeys, including events leading to their exclusion, any time spent in Alternative Provision, and their perception of their return to mainstream

education. This research will therefore provide an opportunity for a population of CYP who have had little chance previously, to share their views and their stories.

References

Hingley, F. A. (2020). *The educational experiences of children and young people who have attended a pupil referral unit in England: a narrative inquiry*. (Doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham).

Jalali, R., & Morgan, G. (2018). 'They won't let me back.' Comparing student perceptions across primary and secondary Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, *23*(1), 55-68.

Lawrence, N. (2011). What makes for a successful re-integration from a pupil referral unit to mainstream education? An applied research project. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *27*(3), 213-226.

Lown, J. (2005). *Returning pupils to mainstream schools successfully, following permanent exclusion: participant perceptions*. (Doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield).

Moran, K. (2010). *Reintegration Into Mainstream Secondary School Following Permanent Exclusion: Experiences and Opportunities*. (Doctoral thesis, University of Manchester).

Pillay, J., Dunbar-Krige, H., & Mostert, J. (2013). Learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties' experiences of reintegration into mainstream education. *Emotional and behavioural difficulties*, *18*(3), 310-326.

Taylor, E. (2019). *Exploring perceptions of enablers and barriers to positive outcomes in a primary Pupil Referral Unit: The perspectives of pupils, primary caregivers and staff.* (Doctoral thesis, University College London).

Research question

How do CYP who have returned to mainstream education following permanent exclusion narrate key points of their life and their educational journey?

Expected outcomes

- Hearing and promoting the views of CYP who have experienced permanent exclusion and a return to mainstream education.
- Understanding the key life points and educational journeys of permanently excluded pupils.
- Hearing CYP's own views on their return to mainstream education, including factors which have supported and constrained this reintegration.

Section 3: Conduct and location of Project

Conduct of project

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used. If more than one methodology or phase will be involved, please separate these out clearly and refer to them consistently throughout the rest of this form.

Qualitative methods of narrative inquiry will be used in this research. Three participants, with parental consent, will be interviewed in a face-to-face, one-to-one setting, using a narrative interview adapted from McAdam's (1993) Life Story Interview. The interview guide will act as a tool to broadly structure the interview in order to elicit important narrative information from the participants. As the interview is to act as a guide, the researcher may add, change or remove questions to best support participants in sharing their narratives in meaningful ways. Where necessary, additional tools, such as the use of narrative storyboarding, visual cues or sentence completion tasks, may be used to support participants in effectively sharing their narratives.

Prior to the participant interviews, a pilot interview will be carried out in order to practise using the interview guide and any additional narrative tools such as storyboarding, as well as testing the effectiveness of these methods in answering the research question. The pilot will require an additional CYP however their data will not be stored or included in the analysis.

All participant interviews will be voice recorded so that they can be listened back to for the purpose of transcription and analysis.

Interviews will last approximately one hour and participants will be able to take breaks throughout if required. If a participant would like to end the interview at any point and continue at a later date then that will be possible. If participants would like to be interviewed for longer than one hour in order to tell their story to as full an extent as possible then this will also be possible.

Geographic location of project

State the geographic locations where the project and all associated fieldwork will be carried out. If the project will involve travel to areas which may be considered unsafe, either in the UK or overseas, please ensure that the risks of this (or any other non-trivial health and safety risks associated with the research) are addressed by a documented health and safety risk assessment, as described in section 10 of this form.

The research will be carried out within the West Midlands Local Authority where the researcher is placed as a trainee educational psychologist. Participant interviews will be carried out within the schools where the participants are currently being educated.

Section 4: Research Participants and Recruitment

Does the project involve human participants?

Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, in crowd behaviour research).

Yes ☒
No ☐

If you have answered NO please go on to Section 8 of this form. If you have answered YES please complete the rest of this section and then continue on to section 5.

Who will the participants be?

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

It is proposed that three participants are used for this research. As well as this, there will be an additional CYP used for the pilot interview. The following inclusion and exclusion criteria will be applied:

Inclusion criteria

- CYP who has experienced permanent exclusion from a mainstream school within the local authority within which the researcher is currently placed within as a trainee educational psychologist.
- CYP who are currently placed in a mainstream school following their permanent exclusion from a different school.
- CYP will be aged between 8 and 16 years.
- CYP can be male or female.
- CYP who provide responses to general wellbeing questions (eg. scaling from 0-10 how emotionally well they are feeling) that the researcher deems safe and appropriate to proceed with the interview following communication with parents/carers, school staff and University of Birmingham supervisor.

Exclusion criteria

- CYP who have specific Special Educational Needs that would significantly affect their ability to engage with the research, including being supported by a Speech and Language Therapist, and CYP whose attainment levels are significantly below age-expectations based on attainment data recorded in any educational setting where the pupil has been placed.
- CYP who pose a potential risk to the researcher because of known recent or regular physical violence directed towards others.
- CYP with heightened emotional needs, as a result of recently becoming a looked after child or mental health diagnoses.
- CYP with current safeguarding concerns such as being the victim or perpetrator of abuse or sexual exploitation.

The researcher will communicate with the Senior Leadership Team of the school within which the CYP is placed, as well as the Senior Leadership Team of other previous educational providers where necessary, to ensure that all participants meet the specified inclusion criteria and do not meet any of the exclusion criteria.

How will the participants be recruited?

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student). Please ensure that you attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

Educational psychologists working within the Local Authority within which the researcher is undertaking their placement will be approached and asked to consult with the mainstream schools with whom they work as to whether they currently have any pupils who have previously been permanently excluded from different mainstream education providers.

As well as this, a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) within the Local Authority who offer placements for permanently excluded pupils will be approached by the researcher and asked to identify the schools of potential participants who are known by the PRU to have been permanently excluded and subsequently returned to mainstream education.

Once a school has been identified, either through Local Authority educational psychologists or the Local Authority PRU, who has a pupil or pupils currently placed with them following previous permanent exclusion, the researcher will approach the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the mainstream school. A meeting will then be arranged with the aim of outlining the purpose of the proposed research in addition the recruitment sheet. The researcher will answer any questions the SLT may have regarding the research at this stage.

Following this, the SLT will make the initial contact with potential participants. The researcher will have spoken to the SLT of the school and given them information sheets for pupils and parents/carers which the SLT will distribute.

If the identified pupils and their parents/carers are interested in the pupil taking part in the research, after reading the information sheets, they would then indicate their interest to the school SLT. A meeting will then be arranged between the and the pupils and their parents/carers to explain the details and purpose of the research in-depth and to ensure both the pupils and their parents/carers have understood. Both pupils and parents/carers will be able to ask any questions and have them answered fully by the researcher. Additional meetings can be arranged to further discuss the research and details of the researcher's supervisor will be given.

After the initial meeting, pupils and their parents/carers can indicate orally to the researcher whether they wish to take part in the research. For those that wish to take part, consent forms will be issued to pupils and parents/carers to be read and signed. They will again have the opportunity to discuss the research and ask any questions. Contact details will be provided for any additional queries or concerns.

Section 5: Consent

What process will be used to obtain consent?

Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why. If the participants are under the age of 16 it would usually be necessary to obtain parental consent and the process for this should be described in full, including whether parental consent will be opt-in or opt-out.

Initial consent will be gained from the Senior Leadership Team of the school which any potential participant attends.

All participants will be 16 years old or younger, therefore the researcher will gain both the participants' informed consent and the informed consent of a parent/carer. The researcher will ensure that consent is informed by providing each participant and their parent/carer with information sheets the researcher can read to them if required. Participants and their parents/carers will also have the opportunity to meet with the researcher to gain a more detailed understanding of the research and to have any questions regarding the research answered. Participants and their parents/carers will be aware that participation is on a voluntary basis and will be consenting to this. Initial consent will be given orally and then followed up with a written consent form.

Please be aware that if the project involves over 16s who lack capacity to consent, separate approval will be required from the Health Research Authority (HRA) in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

Please attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

Note: Guidance from Legal Services on wording relating to the Data Protection Act 2018 can be accessed at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/legal-services/What-we-do/Data-Protection/resources.asPEX.

Use of deception?

Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study?

Yes   ☐
No   ☒

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and the nature of any explanation/debrief will be provided to the participants after the study has taken place.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 6: Participant compensation, withdrawal and feedback to participants

What, if any, feedback will be provided to participants?

Explain any feedback/ information that will be provided to the participants after participation in the research (e.g. a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

Each participant will be provided with an information sheet detailing the findings of the research. The participants will have the opportunity to discuss the research findings in-depth and to ask any

questions they may have regarding the findings with the researcher in a one-to-one meeting. As well as asking questions the participants will have the opportunity to give their own feedback on the research findings.

Upon completion, participants will be offered an electronic copy of the completed volume one thesis.

What arrangements will be in place for participant withdrawal?

Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project, explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

Please confirm the specific date/timescale to be used as the deadline for participant withdrawal and ensure that this is consistently stated across all participant documentation. This is considered preferable to allowing participants to 'withdraw at any time' as presumably there will be a point beyond which it will not be possible to remove their data from the study (e.g. because analysis has started, the findings have been published, etc).

On both the consent forms and information sheets participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the study and will be given information on who to contact in order to do so. Participants will be able to withdraw from the study up until 7 days after the final data collection. Participants will be made aware of this prior to giving informed consent and will be given reminders orally about their right to withdraw throughout the data collection process.

Participant withdrawal time will be limited to 7 days following final data collection as following this time period data analysis will begin, at which point it will be difficult to remove a participant's data from analysis.

There will be no consequences as the result of a participant choosing to withdraw from the study. If a participant chooses to withdraw prior to data collection, the researcher will attempt to identify a new participant. If a participant chooses to withdraw either during data collection or within the 7 days following the first recorded interview, any voice recordings of their interview, along with any full or partial transcript, will be erased from all storage devices and their data will not be used for analysis.

What arrangements will be in place for participant compensation?

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

Yes ☐
No ☒

If yes, please provide further information about the nature and value of any compensation and clarify whether it will be financial or non-financial.

Not applicable.

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

Not applicable.

Section 7: Confidentiality/anonymity

Will the identity of the participants be known to the researcher?

Will participants be truly anonymous (i.e. their identity will not be known to the researcher)?

Yes ☐
No ☒

In what format will data be stored?

Will participants' data be stored in identifiable format, or will it be anonymised or pseudo-anonymised (i.e. an assigned ID code or number will be used instead of the participant's name and a key will kept allowing the researcher to identify a participant's data)?

Because of the chosen narrative methodology, participants in the study will not be anonymous to the researcher. However, data will not be stored in an identifiable format. At the beginning of the research, each participant will choose a pseudonym (not a nickname) they will be identified by to ensure that collected data is traceable to individual participants throughout data collection, analysis and the write up. The use of pseudonyms will allow for a participant's data to be identified and removed from the research should they choose to withdraw.

All data will refer to each participant by their chosen pseudonym, instead of their real name, to ensure confidentiality.

No educational providers, including those the participants currently attend or have previously attended, will be named in the research and therefore will not be identifiable. However, some demographic information will be included in the write up, such as the study taking place in a West Midlands Local Authority. Some demographic information regarding the participants will also be included in the write up of the research, including their age and gender, however participants will not be identifiable from this information.

Participants will be advised orally and through written information, on the consent form and information sheet, that their data will be confidential throughout the research process and in the final write up of the research and that they will not be identifiable through the research.

Will participants' data be treated as confidential?

Will participants' data be treated as confidential (i.e. they will not be identified in any outputs from the study and their identity will not be disclosed to any third party)?

Yes ☒
No ☐

If you have answered no to the question above, meaning that participants' data will not be treated as confidential (i.e. their data and/or identities may be revealed in the research outputs or otherwise to third parties), please provide further information and justification for this:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 8: Storage, access and disposal of data

How and where will the data (both paper and electronic) be stored, what arrangements will be in place to keep it secure and who will have access to it?

Please note that for long-term storage, data should usually be held on a secure University of Birmingham IT system, for example BEAR (see
https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/it/teams/infrastructure/research/bear/index.asPEX).

In line with university policy, data will be kept for 10 years after completing the research. During this time, the researcher, supervisors and university examiners may have access to the data. After this time, all electronic data will be erased, and printed transcripts securely shredded.

Interviews will be audio recorded on a Dictaphone and will subsequently be transferred onto a password-protected and encrypted computer file which can only be accessed by the researcher. The audio recordings will then be deleted from the Dictaphone.

Printed transcripts of the data will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet which only the researcher will have access too. Any written notes will use the participants' chosen pseudonyms and will not be traceable to the participants.

Data retention and disposal

The University usually requires data to be held for a minimum of 10 years to allow for verification. Will you retain your data for at least 10 years?

Yes   ☒
No   ☐

If data will be held for less than 10 years, please provide further justification:

Click or tap here to enter text.

What arrangements will be in place for the secure disposal of data?

Any data collected will be shredded or deleted.

Section 9: Other approvals required

Are you aware of any other national or local approvals required to carry out this research?

E.g. clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Local Authority approval for work involving Social Care, local ethics/governance approvals if the work will be carried out overseas, or approval from NOMS or HMPPS for work involving police or prisons? If so, please provide further details:

An up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be needed. I am on the up-to-date service so this can be checked at any time by the participating schools. A paper copy will also be made available.

For projects involving NHS staff, is approval from the Health Research Authority (HRA) needed in addition to University ethics approval?

If your project will involve NHS staff, please go to the HRA decision tool at http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/ *to establish whether the NHS would consider your project to be research, thus requiring HRA approval in addition to University ethics approval. Is HRA approval required?*

Yes   ☐
No   ☒

Please include a print out of the HRA decision tool outcome with your application.

Section 10: Risks and benefits/significance

Benefits/significance of the research

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

The research is anticipated to have the following benefits for the participants involved and for wider professional practice.

Benefits for the participants:
- The research will offer CYP who may not have previously been able to share their stories, an opportunity to do so, and to feel listened to.
- Participating CYP may feel empowered through the act of telling their stories and may develop further self-understanding.
- The use of narrative approaches has been linked with improved psychological wellbeing.

Benefits for professional practice:
- Better understanding of the views and experiences of a group of CYP whose voices may not have been heard.
- Findings may support professionals, including mainstream school staff, alternative provision staff and educational psychologists, who work with CYP at risk of permanent exclusion or following permanent exclusion, in better understanding the experiences of the CYP and meeting their needs.
- Findings may offer further insight into the reintegration to mainstream education process, as perceived by the pupil. This may hold implications for reintegrative practice.

Risks of the research

Outline any potential risks (including risks to research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research, the environment and/or society and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.) ***Please ensure that you***

include any risks relating to overseas travel and working in overseas locations as part of the study, particularly if the work will involve travel to/working in areas considered unsafe and/or subject to travel warnings from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (see https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)*. Please also be aware that the University insurer, UMAL, offers access to RiskMonitor Traveller, a service which provides 24/7/365 security advice for all travellers and you are advised to make use of this service (see* https://umal.co.uk/travel/pre-travel-advice/*).*

The outlining of the risks in this section does not circumvent the need to carry out and document a detailed Health and Safety risk assessment where appropriate – see below.

Potential risk to the researcher

The participants being interviewed in the proposed study will have been permanently excluded from a mainstream school. Often, permanent exclusions are the result of challenging and potentially aggressive behaviour. There is therefore a risk of perceived or actual challenging or aggressive behaviour towards the researcher during the interview process. To minimise this risk, interviews will be conducted during the school day, taking place inside the school which the CYP currently attends, where other professionals who know the CYP will be nearby. In their role as a trainee educational psychologist, and previous role working in a secondary school, the researcher has experience of working with CYP who exhibit perceived or actual challenging behaviour and is therefore able to recognise signs of emotional dysregulation and employ skills to support a CYP in regulating their emotions.

There is a potential emotional risk to the researcher due to the nature of the population whose stories are being listened to. The participants will be part of a vulnerable group and there is potential for details in the narratives to be upsetting. Through their experience as a trainee educational psychologist and in previous roles, the researcher feels confident in managing their own emotional responses to information gathered and utilising effective self-care. As well as this, the researcher will have access to university, placement and peer supervision where emotional reactions to data gathered can be discussed if required.

Potential risk to participants

There will be no risk of physical harm of the participants, however there is a potential emotional risk. This is because of the potentially emotive nature of the narrative approach, where key life and educational events will be discussed and as some events discussed will have led to permanent exclusion, they may be upsetting for the participant.

To reduce the potential for any emotional discomfort, any difficult discussion points in the interview will be immediately followed with the joint identification of positives. The general framing of the interview will be positive also as there will be a focus on the achievement of the CYP returning to mainstream education despite difficulties.

As a trainee educational psychologist, the researcher has had access to training in therapeutic and counselling skills. The researcher will be able to employ these skills to reduce the risk of emotional discomfort for the participants, through building trust and rapport and responding sensitively to the emotional needs of the CYP. If a participant becomes emotionally distressed during the interview, the interview will be paused whilst the emotional needs of the participant are met. There will also be a member of staff with whom the participant has a positive relationship nearby to support with meeting emotional needs if required. The participant will be reminded of their right to withdraw if

they feel uncomfortable and that there are no consequences for withdrawing. The researcher will use their professional judgement if they feel there is significant emotional discomfort and will sensitively end the interview and ensure that the participant's needs are met.

<u>Risk to individuals not involved in the research</u>

There is a potential risk to those not involved in the research, who have some relation to the participant, including family, school staff and peers. This risk is because of the potential emotional nature of the interviews and the potential for challenging behaviour because of emotional discomfort following the interview. However, it is anticipated that the measure outlined in the 'potential risk to participants' section will reduce the potential for emotional discomfort and therefore reduce the risk of any resultant challenging behaviour. It is anticipated that the emotional support in place for the participant will enable them to return to the classroom or their home environment safely and without risk to others.

<u>Risk of disclosure</u>

Due to the qualitative, narrative approach proposed in this research, there is a risk that participants will disclose information to the researcher during the interview process that the researcher regards as a safeguarding concern. In this instance, the researcher will follow the safeguarding policy and procedures outlined by the Local Authority within which they are placed as a trainee educational psychologist, in the same way they would with a safeguarding concern arising through casework. The researcher would ensure that the participants knows that information will not be kept confidential and ensure the participant knows who will be told. The researcher would document the disclosure in the words of the participant and ask open questions in exploring the concern so as not to lead the participant. The researcher would promptly inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school which the participant currently attends and subsequently discuss the concern with their supervisor on placement and their university supervisor. The disclosure would be logged within the Educational Psychology Service as to follow policy and procedure.

University Health & Safety (H&S) risk assessment

For projects of more than minimal H&S risk it is essential that a H&S risk assessment is carried out and signed off in accordance with the process in place within your School/College and you must <u>provide a copy of this with your application</u>. The risk may be non-trivial because of travel to, or working in, a potentially unsafe location, or because of the nature of research that will carried out there. It could also involve (irrespective of location) H&S risks to research participants, or other individuals not involved directly in the research. Further information about the risk assessment process for research can be found at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/policy/Research-Risk-Assessment-and-Mitigation-Plans-RAMPs.asPEX.

Please note that travel to (or through) 'FCO Red zones' requires approval by the University's Research Travel Approval Panel, and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances where sufficient mitigation of risk can be demonstrated.

Section 11: Any other issues

Does the research raise any ethical issues not dealt with elsewhere in this form?

If yes, please provide further information:

No

Do you wish to provide any other information about this research not already provided, or to seek the opinion of the Ethics Committee on any particular issue?

If yes, please provide further information:

No

Section 12: Peer review

Has your project received scientific peer review?

Yes   ☐
No   ☒

If yes, please provide further details about the source of the review (e.g. independent peer review as part of the funding process or peer review from supervisors for PGR student projects):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 13: Nominate an expert reviewer

For certain types of project, including those of an interventional nature or those involving significant risks, it may be helpful (and you may be asked) to nominate an expert reviewer for your project. If you anticipate that this may apply to your work and you would like to nominate an expert reviewer at this stage, please provide details below.

Title: Click or tap here to enter text.
First name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Last name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Email address: Click or tap here to enter text.
Phone number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Brief explanation of reasons for nominating and/or nominee's suitability:

N/A

Section 14: Document checklist

Please check that the following documents, where applicable, are attached to your application:

Recruitment advertisement ☒

Participant information sheet ☒
Consent form ☒
Questionnaire ☐
Interview/focus group topic guide ☐

Please proof-read study documentation and ensure that it is appropriate for the intended audience before submission.

Section 15: Applicant declaration

Please read the statements below and tick the boxes to indicate your agreement:

I submit this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of Birmingham for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent. ☒

The information in this form together with any accompanying information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it. ☒

I undertake to abide by University Code of Practice for Research (https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/research.pdf) alongside any other relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines. ☒

I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer. ☒

I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which occur to the relevant Ethics Committee via the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer. ☒

Please now save your completed form and email a copy to the Research Ethics Officer, at aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk. As noted above, please do not submit a paper copy.

Appendix 7: Interview schedule

Topic	Questions/Comments
Introduction	• Thank the participant for agreeing to participate in the research. • Brief rapport building (e.g., "how is your day going?" or continuing any conversation points from initial meeting). • Recap the purpose of the research using the information sheet. • Review the consent form and remind the participant that they can take a break or stop whenever required, with no negative consequences. Remind the participant that I will be audio recording the interview once we begin. • Ask the participant to choose a pseudonym. • Check if the participant has any questions.
School chapters	• Participant is asked to consider their time in education as if it is a book (can use 'novel' to describe if appropriate to participant's understanding, alternatively 'story'). • Participant is asked to imagine that the book contains the chapters of their time in education. • Participant is given time to consider the chapters of their time in education and asked to identify between 3 and 7 chapters to describe their story. • Participant is asked to name each chapter they have identified. • At the beginning of discussing each chapter, the participant is asked to describe the chapter before discussing key events. If discussion points arise here these can be explored with the participant before discussing key events.
Key events	• Participant is asked to consider key events from each chapter they have identified. These will be events or experiences which stand out to them for a particular reason. • The participant is asked to describe in detail what happened during the event, when and where it happened, the significant people associated with the event and what the participant was thinking and feeling during the event. • Participant will be asked to describe key events including: – A high point (an event or experience which stands out as particularly positive). – A low point (an event or experience which stands out as particularly negative). – A turning point (an event or experience which marked an important change in the participant's story).

	– Any other events the participant deems to be significant or important within the chapter.
Successful reintegration and support	• Participant is asked what a successful reintegration to mainstream education means to them and whether they feel that they have achieved this. • Participant is asked what factors have supported them in achieving a successful reintegration, if they deem their reintegration to have been successful.
Future script	• Participant is asked to consider their perception of their future during each chapter and whether this has changed as they have moved through their journey. • Participant is asked to summarise their story.
Conclusion	• Ask the participant if there is anything further they would like to add to their story that they think is relevant. This can include returning to previous chapters if the participant has remembered additional details. • Once the participant has finished sharing their story, check chronology of any events where it is unclear. • Thank the participant for taking part and ask them to reflect on the interview experience (including checking participants' wellbeing following the interview). • Remind the participant of their right to withdraw their data at any point up until 7 days after the interview, highlighting contact information to do so.

Appendix 8: Copy of Shardinay's interview transcript

Key:

… Short pause (3 dots)

….. Long pause (5 dots)

R: Researcher speaking

P: Participant speaking

XXX: Information anonymised to protect participant's identity

[]: Parentheses

(): Actions (e.g. laughing)

Italics: Emphasis

R: So as we've already talked about, I want you to think about your time at school like it's a book and that book is made up of different chapters.

P: Ok.

R: If you can I want you to think of the chapters you feel make up your time in education. You can have between three and seven chapters. I'm gonna give you some paper here if you want to write them down but you don't have to. Any questions?

P: Nah I got it.

R: Ok great.

….. [Approximate 2 minute pause]

P: Ok I'm ready I think.

R: Great, so could you tell me what the chapters of your time in school are?

P: Yeah. So I've got before I was excluded, the time when I was in XXX [PRU] and my time here.

R: Ok so you've got three chapters and the first is up until your permanent exclusion from school?

P: Yeah.

R: And then your time in XXX [PRU] is your second and your time in XXX [school Shardinay reintegrated to] is your third?

P: Yeah.

R: Ok great, thank you. We're gonna talk about the chapters in your journey now. For each chapter I'm gonna ask you some questions but first I want you to just describe the chapter to me a little bit. So the first chapter that you've spoke about is the time before exclusion. So can you tell me a bit more about that time and what does it means to you?

P: When I think about it's just like, it's just, it's just like. It was good. It was strict. It was just, it was just a normal school. I can't explain. Just, you know, it's better to be in a school than be in XXX [PRU]. It was like, it was just way better than XXX [PRU].

R: Okay, why? Why? What makes you say that?

P: Because XXX [PRU] people are it's like… the rules there, there's barely no rules. And like say like, you would break a window. It would be like a two day exclusion or a two day suspension like. You're allowed to talk, swear, talk back to the teachers, like, they don't care. It was just bad like comparing to XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]. And it's like, like, you can do what you want, and that's really it.

R: Okay. So are there any particular memories that you have of XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] where that feels, where you can see that?

P: Not really. It's just, it's just like, I can't explain it. It's just like a school that, it's just it, it's a good school. But then, you know…

R: Okay. So what year were you in when you got excluded from XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from],

P: Like at the end of year eight.

R: Okay. So were you ever in trouble that XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] before then?

P: What do you mean like behavior? I mean, there was some detentions. It was, but that's just on my part. That's like it weren't the teachers fault or nothing.

R: Okay, so what, what happened?

P: It was just detention, like not listening in a class, behaving, homework. Um, just a number of reasons.

R: Okay. Can you tell me a bit more about any of them or maybe just pick one?

P: When I got one attention for, I don't even know it was just, it was just all behavior issues, like I'd be talking in class, or, like, I'd be talking back to a teacher.

R: Oh, okay. And you think the detentions were fair?

P: Some of them was, some of them like, because say, you was bad in year seven and you move up to year 8, they always think you're gonna be bad.

R: So do you think that the school, or some stuff at the school had an impression of you that you were, what would you say, naughty?

P: Troublemaker.

R: Troublemaker. OK, um. And did you think that that may be affected how you were seen and what happened at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]?

P: I mean, like, some teachers prefer, like, some teachers, like, is like, don't always get an impression of you, but then some teachers will just go off what other teachers say, and they'll just pick on you for the whole thing. But most the teachers were alright there, they'll just, it's like some teachers were only there just to do their job, go home and just get paid. Only some teachers actually cared.

R: Okay, so what, how did that make you feel?

P: I mean, the ones who used to pick on me, well not pick on me, like, always have an impression of me, its like, I don't know, it was like why? I can't explain it, because I was naughty in year seven doesn't mean, like, if I wanna change, like, it's like they're not letting me change, they're just getting this impression and whatever I do, they'll just carry it on, carry it on. So it'll just be like, I don't know… Unfair.

R: Okay. In terms of your emotions in school, how did that, how did you feel about that?

P: Most of the time, I was happy but like, certain teachers could bring down my mood. It was just, it was just like a mix of emotions, just like between happy and, um, just like, not, I wouldn't say mad, but like say like I don't know the word… It's like, it's like, quite like, I cant explain it

R: Kind of frustrated?

P: Yeah

R: Okay. Did you have the same experience of primary school?

P: Primary school was just, primary school was normal, I would get in trouble a few times but it wasn't like as bad. But it's a big change for primary school to secondary school obviously. It's way more rules and primary school was just alright.

R: Do you think that contributed to getting in trouble at secondary because of the change and how different it was?

P: At first it was cause, like primary school's way less, way less strict. So you go to primary school, and then obviously when you come back for year seven, it's like, it's just a big change.

R: Yeah, I get that. Okay, , so you potentially felt judged a little bit at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] or, like, some staff have made their mind upon you and kind of put you into a box, that kind of thing, um. In terms of over feelings at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] or before your exclusion, did you feel like you fit in in school? Um, you know, friendship wise, how, how was that for you?

P: I liked my experience at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] a lot because in my form, I had friends from primary because I went to two primaries, I had friends from primary. And

like my friends from outside school of school. So it was a lot, it was a lot harder to be really, like best, best behaved. So I liked my experience there, but then some teachers, because I have all my friends in there, it will be hard to like, concentrate and all of that.

R: Ok. So it's a mix then between you enjoyed school because you have mates and you got on with people in school, but potentially that kind of affected your behavior. Is that what that what you think?

P: Yeah. And then it would obviously go on and you would get more frustrated and you get put on report and all of this. Cause when you're on report its like everyone's watching you, but if you do one thing wrong, it's like they're all on you over one thing.

R: So when did you go on report?

P: In year seven I went on report once. And then I got off it in a week. And then in year eight I went on first report, which is like tutor report so like you only go back to your tutor, form tutor, and then head of house report where you go to your head of house and then leadership report. And I went through all of them. So I went on form report two times, and then I went on head of house report once. And I was on that for a few… And it's like to get off it you have to do two weeks of like, no crosses and loads of ticks and I was always so close to getting off it, and then I'll get one cross, and it'll be, you're starting all over again. So, like you would have to be good. And then leadership reporters, you have to go to SLT, basically to get your report signed every day. And I was so close to getting off that like if you go in my old school bag, like you can still see, I still have the report because I got excluded literally right on the last term of your eight.

R: And do you think that worked that that system?

P: I mean, it would work. But if you would get a cross in lesson, you would get frustrated a lot, a lot. Say like you've been good the whole lesson but then you turn around, and you talk to your mate once, that's that. Like depends on your targets, so one was like concentrate in class and not distracting others. Say, I would turn around, I would ask for something I'd talk to my mate like once, that will be across. So, like, say, for the whole lesson, you've been good and then you turn around once and like, yeah… so they'll be really, really strict on you. So yeah it would get you frustrated. And that was probably the worst time in school.

R: Okay so that was one of the worst times in school. That leads us on to the questions I want to ask you about the chapter actually. So can you think of a high point now, in this chapter? That means a time or experience which stands out to you as really positive.

P: I mean, there was one point where it was just pure fun. I was off report, and it was just everyone, all my friends were off report and we was like, we had good teachers, had nice ones that we actually liked. Because the subjects get better when you have teachers that you actually like.

R: What's your favourite subject?

P: It was science and English, but it depends on the teachers. Like, I could, I could hate, I could hate a subject, and then like it the next day, because of the teachers.

R: Okay, so that stands out for you at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]. Year seven or eight was that?

P: Year eight.

R: All right so there's a point in year eight where you and your mates, none of you were on report. How did that make you feel?

P: It was like more freedom because it was like, we're always doing it together. Because, say, me and my friends, we would like, we would all be on report the same time, coincidentally, and would all be off report at the same time. So say, are we trying to get most ticks? We'd always have competitions with each other like trying to get the most ticks. It'd be like competitions to try get the highest number. So, like, yeah, it was good.

R: Okay, good. And the next question is, and this is still thinking the chapter before your exclusion, if that's a high point, was there a turning point where things changed?

P: I mean, there was always situations like, there were situations outside of school that will come into school, like fights. I never had a fight but like fights and like, when someone does stuff they would question you, and it's like sometimes because… say a certain person say, a parent rung up the school, they would always be on the parents side who rung up because they're just trying to make them happy. You know what I mean. So it was like, they'll blame you, put the blame on you. Because, say some parents came up and called up about the situation or something. So they would always try to make the parents happy, and trying to make *their* school look good.

R: Okay, that's interesting. So do you think that was what, what the school was trying to do in how they kind of dealt with behavior?

P: Yeah like they're just trying to make their school look good. Like when OFSTED came in, they had an assembly, and they were like, they will give our extra consequences like if we were being bad when OFSTED came. So they'll give out more hour detentions, more reports. So they just wanted to like make their school look good.

R: And do you think you got the support that you needed in school?

P: Depends on what teacher. Like the safeguarding team were rubbish. Like, really bad. Certain teachers would just, they just did their job, went home. It was like they're just trying to get out, like they was just trying just go home and just do what they want to do. Some teachers were proper nice like there's teachers that will actually listen to me, but because I have like a stammer and that, they would just be like, don't listen to me, and that would make me a lot more frustrated and that. Because they won't let me talk if you get what I mean. So yeah, some were just their to do their job and just go away.

R: Can you think of any examples of times where that happened?

P: Like, say, cause I get my stammer when I'm excited, or, like, in certain situations, so, like, when I'm angry or happy. So I will go into my head of house and I'll get my reports signed, and I wanna explain something but I will keep on stammering and they'll just be like 'go to lesson' or something. Or once, there was a fight happening outside of school, obviously I was walking home and I saw it, and I was with all my friends. It was on my path, walking

home so obviously I stopped and watched it. And they gave everyone who watched an hour detention. And I said in a respectful way I was like, I'm not doing my hour because it's not my fault, I'm not gonna change my whole route. And I'm not gonna jump in the fight, because if you jump in a school fight, then you're gonna get jumped like then everyone else is gonna jump in and its gonna be hectic, be more of a big disturbance. So obviously I said to leadership, I'm not doing it and then I went back, and I was like, I was trying to talk to them like 'why do I get an hour because someone else fighting'? And they was just like 'go to lesson'. And they was like, if you talk one more time or if you're not out my face in one minute I'm gonna suspend you and they were counting down, and I was like how am I meant to get out my words and say all of this if you're just gonna threaten to exclude me, because they think they have the power. Obviously, because it was leadership it was like, it was the deputy head. So they wouldn't let me speak or nothing.

R: Okay. That sounds awful I'm sorry. How did you feel?

P: I mean, it was just annoying, because when I had a meeting about my behavior, they would bring it up, but because my parents were just going off what they said I couldn't explain nothing, because this just there was no point of explaining. Because whatever they said, they will go with because they're the big teachers and they're the adults. And they think why would they lie? It was just annoying.

R: So it's that kind of feeling of not being able to get your point across and not being listened to. Is that right?

P: Yeah. But that like when you actually speak to the teachers that don't listen to you you actually, like, figure it out. Like we had our exclusion meeting, and this one teacher, safeguarding teacher who just doesn't listen at all and to be honest she's just really bad at her job. And it's like, you'll see that. Because she walked out the meeting. My mom was saying she was unprofessional and that because my dad said to her you can't do your job properly because they were giving false information in the packs, and that. And so we had a big meeting in school, and it was like the, um, you know, the XXX [local authority] people and then we had the two safeguarding leaders and the head and they wouldn't get the information right, all of this, all of that, and my dad just said they're not doing their job properly. And then one just walked out and got angry and like, in my opinion that's unprofessional. And then, but that's, that's the teacher that just never listened to me and just uses her power to just like, I dunno how to explain, like dominate.

R: Okay. So what was her role?

P: Safeguarding leader.

R: Okay. So you think she had power? How did you feel, did you feel like you had any power?

P: Not when I'm speaking to her. No. Like she was just so unfair, like she was the one where a parent will call in and she would go on the parent's side just to try and make that parent happy. She don't care about the kids. And because she's been there for ages, she thinks she can just do what she wants. And yeah, its just unfair.

R: Okay. So we talked about turning points, that's maybe where things changed in how you felt about school and I asked you about your high point, now I'm gonna ask you about a low

point. What stands out for you as a low point in this chapter?

P: There was one point where I was on report, all the teachers were just like, because you're on a report, I can basically do what I want because they have the power to write ticks, crosses, and if I get a cross then the head of house with go with what they say. And it would always be off their word. So sometimes teachers would be untruthful and I can't say my point because they, they weren't in the room at the time so the head of house don't really know. And another one is probably like, up to the exclusion like, I couldn't really say anything, because that safeguarding leader, she was just… you can't… yeah its like you can't communicate with her, you just go of what she says, and then she'll look down on you basically. She'll think she's that person. She'll think she has the power. And she'll just look down on you and it's just annoying cause… just because you're a leader, safeguarding leader, and you have power to do this, power to do that, doesn't mean you should like use it in a bad way? It was just frustrating and annoying for me and my parents cause we couldn't communicate with her, you know? And once I get a certain view of a teacher, I won't like them. So say they don't give me respect, I'm not gonna give them respect back. So it's like I would always get in trouble with certain teachers, because if they were being a disrespectful, I'll be disrespectful back.

R: Okay. And then just, so I'm kind of clear on what sort of happened. You were on report, um, were you suspended any point?

P: I've never been suspended. I've been threatened to be suspended, but never actually suspended.

R: Did you ever go into, like, you know, like an internal, you know, internal exclusion, where you go off to like, a isolation room?

P: I've been in isolation a few times but that's for like stupid stuff like say I've skipped my detention, or there's been fights and like interrogating me, like writing statements, or like, yeah just stupid stuff like that.

R: So is that why you were on report?

P: It was just behaviour. Like all my behavior adds up so I'll get detentions. Because the different reports, there was homework reports, I was on a behavior report. It's just like my targets were, do not disrupt the class, get there on time and like, just listen, just like focus on my work. So it was just them.

R: And then, so the exclusion itself, where you were permanently excluded from XXX [last school]. What does that mean to you? Like, how, how did you feel about that?

P: I was isolated for it for two days, because they were like questioning me. And then I knew they were gonna exclude me, cause the Monday, I came back to school and I was in isolation obviously and then at the end of the day the head pulled me into her office, and she said to me and the people that were being excluded, she was like, one by one, she was like, do you know what this means? Do you know what this means? All of this, all of that. We have like a policy, all of this, so saying they had to. And then the next day I woke up getting ready for school, and they just call my mom saying I was excluded. I wanted to get like a meeting out of it because I didn't know what I did to actually get excluded. It weren't for behavior. It just felt very like, sudden because they were saying that they were on the verge

of excluding me anyway, cause of my behavior, but my behaviour weren't even that bad? And if they wanted to exclude me they could have obviously, It's like they were *urging* to already. So I felt they were happy that they excluded me because they just gave us the call like Shardinay's excluded and we got no contact after that. After that we were just talking to the XXX [local authority], and like all the people that could... the next steps that could actually get me into a mainstream school. I didn't think I was gonna get back into one because I've heard that its hard.

So it's a feeling of you're kind of out the loop a little bit, like the communication weren't good.

R: Did you feel like you really knew what was going on?

P: It's like, I knew, but I didn't actually like deep it. Like when I was excluded, it didn't feel like I was excluded cause like I've been in that school since year seven till the end of year eight and I thought I was always gonna be in that school and I've built so much connections in that school so it felt really unreal cause I was like I'm never, gonna get back, I'm never actually gonna go back to that school again. So it felt unreal, and then it actually hit me, and I was like I'm not going to that school again.

R: How did do you feel?

P: It's, it's sad to be fair, because I've got friends in there from primary school, close friendships as well. And then I have to start at a new school. And when I came here I knew a lot of people from XXX [primary school]. So making friends again, It's just long. Like, if I had to pick, I'd probably still go back to XXX [last school]. And only because the friendships I made there though, like this school has better people here, listening, and like you actually have some sort of communication. But if I had to choose.... it's only cause, like, the deep relationships that I have over there.

R: So, do you feel that in your at XXX [last school], you fit into the school?

P: Yeah I did, I think so. I enjoyed it a lot. Everything's not perfect, and it's not gonna be all good all good all the time, because there's always gonna be something that gets you, gets me trouble, or something like that.

R: OK. So the next chapter you've said is your time at XXX [PRU]. So this was after you were permanently excluded from XXX [last school]. How long was it before you went to XXX [PRU]?

P: I got excluded in, I think it was June I think and then I went to XXX [PRU] like November I think or October. I don't know. I'd say it was like a good one and a half months, two months. We didn't know who to get in touch with because everybody... it weren't clear.

R: Okay. So in the same way you did for your first chapter, I just want to start off if you can with you describing this second chapter at XXX [PRU].

P: Obviously, I went there and it was just, it was just different like. It was no big school. It was just like rooms. Obviously, there weren't many kids in the rooms. Just like, it would be like three, four kids in certain rooms. Or there'd be like one in one and then two in another. But the person, when I went there, like he was teaching me, um, they used to be a training

teacher at XXX [last school] because I knew them because they taught my class once. So I got along with her a lot and then she left because she was in like an agency or something like that and she had to go to a different school. It was all right. And then obviously it's like to get out there you have to be good at work. But the kids in there, they were just like bad. There were some there that just wanted to learn, wanted to get out. But then there were some that were just like, I don't care about my future. It's like they wanted to… -I had some even tell me that they wanna go to that you know that thing where like when, you get into year ten like a college, they was, like I want to go to that and they don't wanna go to a mainstream school. And there were some who literally just couldn't get into a mainstream school because what they did to get excluded, and they would actually be good but…..

R: Because what they did was so extreme?

P: Yeah.

R: How did you feel? So you have, there's some people who were by sounds of it, kind of happy to be there. They didn't wanna go back to the mainstream. What was your thinking?

P: Me? I wanted to get into mainstream, obviously. So I just followed what they said. I just followed what the teachers said. They were all nice. Yeah, they were all nice.

R: The teachers?

P: Yeah.

R: Were they different to the teachers at XXX [last school]?

P: Yeah.

R: How were they different?

P: The teachers are XXX [last school], some of them didn't care about their job. Some of them was nice, but they teachers at XXX [PRU], it was luck they weren't your teachers. It was like they were your friends that you can just talk to. It was like having older friends that you can just talk to.
And because they will tell you about their experiences here, some of them were new, some of them weren't, but they'd tell you about their experiences here. And it was good in there to be fair. But like there would some places, like some bits, that'd be bad. Like, I never really had, like, a low point there cause I reckon it was all good. I made a few friends. Well, I was friendly with everyone. It was like, I knew everyone, and I would talk to, like, more, like, people. But I wouldn't really want to be good friends with them because it would be a bad impression and so it was just cause I was there for a small amount of time.

R: How long were you there?

P: About like two, three months. Yes, it was just, it was just alright. But the work there was not proper, cause it's for kids, like under, so it was like year six work. So it was like recapping what, like, year six work, and that. So It'd be easy and I'd just do what I need to do, and sometimes I'd be finished with the work and I would have like an hour left. So we'd play games for like an hour and, and it was fun sometimes. I mean I would go there and I'd get a headache sometimes because kids would be screaming, throwing chairs, like, people would even flip through chairs. It was just mayhem

R: So really different...

P: Very different. Sometimes I would have kids like kicking doors down. Some kids would be sneaking vapes in classes. Cause we had like a fire exit door, and they'll just kick it, they'll click the fire exit, run through it. On my last day there, I saw a kid like, put his foot through a window. It was mad. And then I had kids breaking windows, throwing chairs through windows, there was kids fighting, obviously. And it was just, like it was hectic. But at the same time, it was like, if you went through my experience, you kinda wanna see that because you'd be like, I don't wanna be like one of these kids. Some were nice there obviously, but I don't wanna be like, one of those kids that just wanna fail.

R: Okay. So do you think that kind of helped motivate you then?

P: Definitely. Cause I was like, if I how if I act like I was in XXX [last school] or… Cause in XXX [last school], I learned but I didn't care about my behavior. Like, just like, I would just have fun. I would think year eight is one of the best years, just have fun. That's what I'd be like. And then I'll take it more seriously in year nine or ten. But I realised if you keep thinking that then you're just gonna keep being bad.

R: So would you say that that the placement as a whole, was the turning point for you?

P: Yeah. There's no one thing I think it's kinda just all of it. Cause what happened yeah… Cause it was like if I keep acting bad, its prove that I'm not gonna get… I'm not gonna listen in class which means GCSEs when it comes up I'm gonna be stuck. And some people like, I've got, like, a brother who's got eights and sevens, in his GCSE, sixes, and that's good. And I wanna live up to that standard as well. I just don't wanna be naughty. I didn't wanna be like *them*, you know like going out, setting fires and that. It's not fun.

R: But then you also talked about the staff kind of listening more, I guess as well?

P: Yeah. Treating me more like my own person you know? So, it was like, say you had an older brother who was like 20, and you was like, eleven. It's like treating you like that, so they're there to here help you, but they're not gonna be strict. But they'll tell you what's wrong and what's right, obviously. But they're not gonna push on you, like do your work, because if you didn't want to do your work, they'd let you have a break. It was good. They were actually there to help and they didn't mind working at a place like that. So, like, they actually seemed like they wanted to help you.

R: So it actually seemed like they wanted to help you?.

P: Yeah and they actually listened, way better than the staff at XXX [last school].

R: Okay. So are you able to think of a high point for this chapter? Again just like a time or event that stands out as positive to you.

P: Its not like my only good experience but the good experiences were like just having a one on one chat with teachers, and them just understanding you and taking in what you're saying and doing something about it. Or they would tell you about their own experiences. Cause they were like to me you only live once, you know. The new teachers there it was like, it was their first time being there as well so it's like your experiencing it together. It was just good having good people around you, basically. So, good experience yeah it was just the teachers

there, they actually understood you.

R: Okay great. Were there any times where you made friends with the kids in school?

P: Yeah, I didn't make enemies, but I didn't like… I didn't try to be friends with them, but I would talk to them from time, talk to people in my class and in different classes. I had like two good friends there. I don't speak to them anymore, but at the time they would just be there. And yeah, everyone was just calm. I didn't have no enemies or anything.

R: So there's not anyone that you met while you were there, who you still talk to then?

P: I still talk to, well one like once every two weeks, not major. Sometimes I put something on my snapchat story and he'll be like come back to XXX [PRU] or something (laughs) and I'm like nah (laughs).

R: Do you still talk to your mates from XXX [last school]?

P: Yeah like, sometimes. Because when I get off the bus, it's like at the shops, right by XXX [last school]. So I've seen some of my old friends from primary that are still there. Like the other day, I saw one of my friends that was in my form, that I've known from primary. Its good seeing them. And I asked them, how's XXX [last school] and they're just like it's boring and they'll ask me how XXX [new school] is and I'll just be like yeah its alright.

R: Do you feel like you're still as close to them?

P: I'm not as close to them because I used to see them every single day so I would be more close to them. Some people I don't talk to anymore. Some I do talk to. Some people, cause I realized what the situation was for me getting excluded, I realised some people are just snaky, like some people could just bait you out like that, and just, they won't care. It's like they wanna get their self out of trouble and put me in trouble. They only care about themselves.

R: Do you think that was a part of getting in trouble before he was excluded, then as well…?

P: Yeah.

R: Okay so we've talked about your high point. You said the whole of XXX [PRU] you view as a turning point. So was there an experience in XXX [PRU] that was a particular low point? Again just thinking about anything that stands out to you as particularly negative during that time.

P: Yeah. We'd go out for PE in like a minivan, we'd go to the park or something. And then we'd come back and my form room, the whole three windows were just smashed because someone's got angry and threw a chair through the windows. Those were the bad experiences. I only got ever told off once because you're not allowed to wear hoodies because people sneak stuff in. And I get what they're saying but I didn't want to take my body off, because I was cold and it was freezing and I'm not wearing a t-shirt inside, so I was refusing. And they was like, if you wear a hoodie you have to go home. And because it was an hour and 30 minute on the bus, so I have like, what? And it's just like it's long to go back to the house, because you don't need to wear hoodie. So I took it off, obviously, because its just stupid. I called my mom and asked what should I do and she said to take it off. Because

it would have affected my experiences as well. Because they decide when you're ready for mainstream school. So it would affect my experience if they write it down on the report.

R: So the low point was the behaviour…

P: Of the other kids yeah, it was mad sometimes.

R: Right ok… So if the same thing happened at XXX [last school], would you have took the hoodie off?

P: If it was in lesson? Probably because you have to take off in lesson anyways. But if it was like, if I was just outside wearing my coat or hoodie outside I wouldn't take off. I'd be like, I'm going to lesson, and I'll take it off, but when I'm inside the building because there's no point of me typing off when I'm out. They could've said take it off take it off and obviously, if I was outside, I wouldn't have taken it off. And if they gave me a detention for it, I wouldn't go. Like when they gave me detentions for stuff I don't think is fair, or like my parents don't, I just won't go to it. And they'll try to escalate stuff but I wouldn't care.

R: Okay so coming towards the end of your time at XXX [PRU] how were you feeling?

P: It was like, I was excited to leave, because it's just, it was just not a nice environment to be around. Sometimes it was good, sometimes it was just like I've got a headache, I wanna go home. It's a lot sometimes you know, jarring. And then, but, on the last day, cause the person who I got excluded with came like, two weeks before I left, and I've known him from primary as well. So like I had him with me, and it was all right. I felt bad leaving everyone at the same time, cause I made some friends there. But I just wanted to go. I'd had enough basically, of people keeping windows in (laughs).

R: Did you feel motivated?

P: Yeah. I was like I'm gonna start at this new school and I'm gonna try my best.

R: Okay. So the final chapter that you said is XXX [new school], which is following your reintegration from XXX [PRU] and then joining here. So when did you join here?

P: It was the third of October or November, I think I don't even know. It was like, I'd say, was like, a good four, three months ago now.

R: Okay. So the same thing again for this chapter. If you could start by just describing the chapter to me.

P: Yeah so when I first joined, it was like, because I only knew about two people obviously I made friends and one of my friends here who I've known since like I was, young because I used to live around here obviously, I moved, so I moved schools, and actually I lived around here. So it was like, I haven't seen him in a good seven, eight years. I haven't talked to him, so like, seeing him was a shock. It was good. And then the lessons, you know, they were good. I got put all the top sets though at first, it was hard. And then I got put into the sets I'm meant to be in. And then, um, it was like starting out, behavior was like, cause I was in a habit of getting told off and like, not doing my work. So it was hard. And then, obviously, when you get to know the teachers, the teachers were more understanding, way better. More understanding and they'll listen to you, they'll understand. And you can have a laugh with them sometimes as well because they actually cared about doing their job. And

obviously there's a point where it was just was just jarring or like annoying because I kept getting negatives, because it's like, it's like three negatives, it's getting sent out and detention. There was a point where I was just scared that they was wanna call my parents, and then my parents would be like you've been moved when your behaviour in the other school wasn't good, so like there was always the fear of getting excluded again, and then it will be hard to get a job or something because they'll see I've got excluded again. So obviously I've fixed up now. I get some negatives sometimes... My teachers are nice. Well, there's just some lessons like maths. I had this teacher in this school, and I just kept getting sent out of her lessons. Like every single lesson, I'd get sent out of maths cause she got a reputation of me on the first lesson cause I was with my friend from like ages of ago. I was sat by him and obviously, I was being like, he was being… talking and laughing and that. And from there she was just like like... I was in her class the other day, and my friend is sat in front of me, he kept on opening the window, I kept on shutting it and stupid stuff like that that would get me sent out. She was like I'm shouting out and because I told Miss to tell him to stop opening the window, I shouted out, I didn't put my hand up so Miss was just like get out. So it's been some frustrating moments like that, just stupid stuff. And obviously the teachers saw that I kept getting sent out of her lesson and they moved me in maths. So that was just better. It's like they showed that they care. You never know that they're actually watching you, but they actually are watching you. And they show that they care, it's just way better and that's kinda been my high point since being here you know. The teachers are just different to before, well not all but some anyway.

R: Ok so that's your high point of this chapter you think?

P: Yeah.

R: Ok so when you first joined here, there was still some behavior stuff. Do you feel like staff here treated you differently? Because they knew that you've been excluded and did that affected things?

P: I knew that what they emailed all my teachers saying that they should be strict on me because they don't want me messing around in their lessons, obviously, and distracting other people. And cause my behavior, cause I've been excluded, it's like... they knew that and they thought from that, I can't explain it but it's like I thought they were a bit iffy about me. But then I actually realised that they're just trying to help. Look, all the teachers here, they care a lot. They're nice. Safeguarding teams actually nice. They care about you. But they have like, GCSE teachers, like options people you can talk to. Whatever you need to talk about, you can talk about it with them, and they just listen.

R: So it's like different types of support, depending on what you kind of need.

P: Yeah.

R: So is there times where you've gone to safeguarding for support? But then also options where we're thinking more like curriculum type stuff?

P: I've gone to options teachers about what options I should pick and what job… If I want a job when I'm older what options to take to get that certain job because I don't know what I want to be when I'm older so my parents were telling me that I should know, because I need to pick my GCSEs, and if I pick the wrong GCSE and then I don't want to do that job, it's just bad. So I went to the option teacher and asked her, how do you know what wanna be? And

then we went through this thing about what you like, asked me loads of questions and they gave me a load of options of what jobs I can do with this stuff that I like. And it was just like, she helped me. Cause now, actually have an idea. I don't know what I wanna be yet, but I have an idea of what GCSEs I need to do, to do what I like instead of getting a boring job. Because if I get a boring job, and say I worked at a school, I'd be like, the teachers at the school, the ones who just wanna do their job and go home and you don't want that…. Never really had a low time here. High time it's like people, friends. Probably the worst time here, is probably just sometimes getting in trouble, getting detentions, just kind of minor stuff. Sometimes thinking in detention why am in here. Some teachers are proper, nice, but there's always, always in a school there's one or two teachers who are just like... you know what I mean?

R: Yeah, you're not gonna get on with everyone yeah? But in general, you're happy?

P: Yeah. It's just way better than XXX [PRU]. I'd rather be here than be in XXX [PRU]. And rather be here than XXX [last school], because of the support. If I was in XXX [last school], that probably would have… I don't even know. I probably would have tried to get a managed move or I'd ask my mom to move, because they don't help at all.

R: Do you wish that XXX [last school] had the support there that they give you here?

P: Yeah. I wish that teachers, teachers actually cared. There was always, there's always that one teacher that cares. And there's always one of those teachers that you won't get along with, that won't care, that's just there to do their job. But there was always those teachers that would me with my GCSEs and work and all of that. But here, there's just way more people that actually care and they're rooting for you and they want you to get a good job and that. And they'll keep it real like they'll say, if you don't do this, you won't get what you want, or you won't do this.

R: Absolutely. Okay. You said your high point was to do with the staff, you might have already discussed it but what has been your low point of this chapter?

P: Yeah kinda just what I was saying before you know, coming to a new school not knowing anyone its hard you know, especially coming from a PRU. That first bit weren't easy.

R: Okay. Do you think it's gone well then? Your move to XXX [new school]?

P: I'm happy. I'm happy because in XXX [PRU] you could, they give you free options and go try get in the school that you want. Obviously my mom, don't want me to go to XXX [different school 1], because half of my friendship group I used to be bad with are there. And there's bad people around that area, gangs and that. And they go XXX [different school]. My mom wanted me to go to XXX [different school 2] and I heard, that's good as well. And then I said, I wanted XXX [new school] to be my first pick cause I was like, oh, I heard it's a good school, it has good sports stuff and I like sports. And yeah, it's just like, I've heard its just a good school. And obviously the people that came to my house for the exclusion was one of the officers that worked for, you know, school have different officers, one of the officers that worked here, and they actually, they actually went to this school and they were talking about their experience and it sounded way better. Like the support team and everything.

R: Do you feel like you were listened to then, in that decision?

P: Yeah.

R: Okay. Do you feel that you fit in here?

P: Yeah. It's like when I first came, everyone was just like to themselves, just doing their own thing. And then everyone kind of opened up a little bit. It just feels… alright. Like you're not gonna like school all the time but its good.

R: That's the thing isn't it, it's not gonna be perfect.

P: Yeah. But on the good days I'm happy I'm here.

R: Good. So what does successful reintegration mean to you? By reintegration I mean coming back into mainstream education, joining XXX [new school]. What does it mean for you for that to have gone well?

P: If you just not like, I don't know... It's like you start off with a negative mindset, you get me. To know you've done well… its like to actually get back into a school and to just *do you* in there and to have teachers actually support you. And just not trying to be centre of attention, trying to be funny, trying to get people to like you… just doing you, being yourself. You know?

R: Yeah that makes sense.

P: You know you're successful when you're back in a school and you're actually doing good.

R: Do you think… you said that you've had, like, a couple of behavior issues, but nothing major. Do you think that still means it's been successful?

P: Yeah I do. Like, you're not gonna be perfect right? It's not gonna be all good, just good. There's some people who have zero behaviour points, all of this, all of that, and obviously…. but it's just… I'm better now that I'm here than back in XXX [PRU] or XXX [last school].

R: And what do you think has supported you in order for the move to be successful?

P: The teachers at XXX [PRU], they're the people that actually got me here. They were telling me how it was gonna go down, what was gonna happen. They were always a hundred percent truthful. So yeah, the teachers at XXX [PRU], they turned it for me.

R: What about now you're here, what's helped?

P: Just having teachers who actually care. If you've got someone who cares, its gonna help you get through it.

R: OK, so now I'm interested in how your idea of your future might have changed along your journey. So from before you were excluded, while you were in XXX [PRU], and now you're back in mainstream. Can you tell me about how, what you were thinking about your future at those times?

P: Well in XXX [last school] I was kinda just was doing what I wanted, so I didn't really know what was in the future. I was just thinking, GCSEs will come up, mocks will come up, I'll just

pick them and do what I want then. And then when I got excluded, I had a fear that I weren't gonna get anywhere. I'm gonna be stuck in a provisional centre all the time. And then when the teachers actually told me I could still make it into a school and all of this, I was like, I was just happy. And now I'm here I'm think of my options. I've got options. I pick my GCSEs in like a month, two months, and feels unreal that I'm so close to it. Its just a journey.

R: How's the journey been altogether?

P: There's been some ups and downs. There'll always be downs. It's just better now. Not everything can be perfect you know and I'm happy that I went on the journey, because you know there were times at XXX [last school] and XXX [PRU] when I'm thinking my future's gone, and now its not. So yeah, for the most part, it's been good.

R: Good. And if you could sum up how you're feeling about the future, including like, your time, the rest of your time here, and then post school, what would you say?

P: If I'm summing it up I feel like, in the future, it's gonna be positive. I'm gonna look back on this and be like, that actually helped… I feel like good things are coming.

R: Okay. Is there anything else that you think that you wanna share or think would be interesting to share now? Or is there anything about moving to mainstream that's been hard or made it difficult?

P: I always feel that people won't listen to me, like in meetings and in school. But when they actually do it's just so much better. And there was always doubts that I wouldn't get into a school but now I'm actually here, it's a relief.

R: Good, I'm glad to hear that. Thank you for taking part today Shardinay.

Appendix 9: Example of the development of codes and themes for Shardinay

Code	Quotes
1. Pre-judgements	"say, you was bad in year seven and you move up to year 8, they always think you're gonna be bad" "some teachers, like, don't always get an impression of you, but then some teachers will just go off what other teachers say, and they'll just pick on you for the whole thing" "…always have an impression of me, its like, I don't know, it was like why? I can't explain it, because I was naughty in year seven doesn't mean, like, if I wanna change, like, it's like they're not letting me change" "it's like they were *urging* to [exclude me] already" "like every single lesson, I'd get sent out of maths cause she got a reputation of me on the first lesson" "…and cause my behavior, cause I've been excluded, its like… they knew that and … they were a bit iffy about me"
2. Positive relationships with staff	"…because the subjects get better when you have teachers that you actually like" "…but the teachers at XXX [PRU], it was like they weren't your teachers. It was like they were your friends that you can just talk to. It was like having older friends that you can just talk to" "…it's like treating you like that, so they're there to here help you, but they're not gonna be strict. But they'll tell you what's wrong and what's right, obviously" "…so, like, they actually seemed like they wanted to help you" "It's like they showed that they care. You never know that they're actually watching you, but they actually are watching you. And they show that they care, it's just way better." "…but then I actually realised that they're just trying to help. Look, all the teachers here, they care a lot. They're nice." "…but here, there's just way more people that actually care and they're rooting for you and they want you to get a good job and that" "The teachers at XXX [PRU], they're the people that actually got me here" "Just having teachers who actually care. If you've got someone who cares, its gonna help you get through it."

3. Negative relationships with staff	"some teachers were only there just to do their job, go home and just get paid. Only some teachers actually cared."
	"…like the safeguarding team were rubbish. Like, really bad."
	"Certain teachers would just, they just did their job, went home. It was like they're just trying to get out, like they was just trying just go home and just do what they want to do"
	"…and once I get a certain view of a teacher, I won't like them. So say they don't give me respect, I'm not gonna give them respect back. So it's like I would always get in trouble with certain teachers, because if they were being a disrespectful, I'll be disrespectful back"
	"I wish that teachers, teachers actually cared"
	"…and there's always one of those teachers that you won't get along with, that won't care, that's just there to do their job."
4. Distrusting of school and staff	"…so they would always try to make the parents happy, and trying to make *their* school look good."
	"Yeah like they're just trying to make their school look good."
	"…so sometimes teachers would be untruthful and I can't say my point…"
5. Power imbalance	"…because they think they have the power."
	"…because whatever they said, they will go with because they're the big teachers and they're the adults."
	"that's the teacher that just never listened to me and just uses her power to just like, I dunno how to explain, like dominate."
	[Did you feel like you had any power?] "Not when I'm speaking to her. No."
	"…all the teachers were just like, because you're on a report, I can basically do what I want because they have the power to write ticks, crosses…"
	"…and then she'll look down on you basically. She'll think she's that person. She'll think she has the power."
6. Differences between settings	"…but it's a big change for primary school to secondary school obviously. It's way more rules and primary school was just alright."
	"At first it was cause, like primary school's way less, way less strict. So you go to primary school, and then obviously when you come back for year seven, it's like, it's just a big change."
	"…because XXX [PRU] people are it's like… the rules there, there's barely no rules."
	"…you're allowed to talk, swear, talk back to the teachers, like, they don't care."

	"Obviously, I went there and it was just, it was just different like. It was no big school. It was just like rooms. Obviously, there weren't many kids in the rooms. Just like, it would be like three, four kids in certain rooms. Or there'd be like one in one and then two in another." "…but the work there was not proper, cause it's for kids, like under, so it was like year six work. So it was like recapping what, like, year six work, and that."
7. Behaviour management systems	"…and you would get more frustrated and you get put on report and all of this. Cause when you're on report its like everyone's watching you, but if you do one thing wrong, it's like they're all on you over one thing." "In year seven I went on report once. And then I got off it in a week. And then in year eight I went on first report, which is like tutor report so like you only go back to your tutor, form tutor, and then head of house report where you go to your head of house and then leadership report. And I went through all of them." "…and it's like to get off it you have to do two weeks of like, no crosses and loads of ticks and I was always so close to getting off it, and then I'll get one cross, and it'll be, you're starting all over again." "…but if you would get a cross in lesson, you would get frustrated a lot, a lot. Say like you've been good the whole lesson but then you turn around, and you talk to your mate once, that's that" "Like all my behavior adds up so I'll get detentions. Because the different reports, there was homework reports, I was on a behavior report. It's just like my targets were, do not disrupt the class, get there on time and like, just listen, just like focus on my work" "…and if they gave me a detention for it, I wouldn't go." "…and they'll try to escalate stuff but I wouldn't care." "…and obviously there's a point where it was just was just jarring or like annoying because I kept getting negatives, because it's like, it's like three negatives, it's getting sent out and detention."
8. Academic work	"…but the work there was not proper, cause it's for kids, like under, so it was like year six work. So it was like recapping what, like, year six work, and that." "…and then the lessons, you know, they were good. I got put all the top sets though at first, it was hard. And then I got put into the sets I'm meant to be in."
9. Different types of school support	"…safeguarding teams actually nice…. But they have like, GCSE teachers too, and like options people you can talk too"

	"I've gone to options teachers about what options I should pick and what job… If I want a job when I'm older what options to take to get that certain job" "…so I went to the option teacher and asked her, how do you know what you wanna be? And then we went through this thing about what you like, asked me loads of questions and they gave me a load of options of what jobs"
10. Being listened to	"there's teachers that will actually listen to me" "Yeah and they actually listened, way better than the staff at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]" "Whatever you need to talk about, you can talk about it with them, and they just listen." "I always feel that people won't listen to me, like in meetings and in school. But when they actually do it's just so much better."
11. Not being listened to	"…because I have like a stammer and that, they would just be like, don't listen to me, and that would make me a lot more frustrated and that. Because they won't let me talk if you get what I mean." "I wanna explain something but I will keep on stammering and they'll just be like 'go to lesson' or something" "…and I was like how am I meant to get out my words and say all of this if you're just gonna threaten to exclude me" "Like we had our exclusion meeting, and this one teacher, safeguarding teacher who just doesn't listen at all"
12. Being understood	"…good experience yeah, it was just the teachers there, they actually understood you." "…and then, obviously, when you get to know the teachers, the teachers were more understanding, way better. More understanding and they'll listen to you, they'll understand." "the good experiences were like just having a one on one chat with teachers, and them just understanding you and taking in what you're saying and doing something about it"
13. Positive friendships	"I liked my experience at XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from] a lot because in my form, I had friends from primary because I went to two primaries, I had friends from primary. And like my friends from outside school of school." "…there was one point where it was just pure fun. I was off report, and it was just everyone, all my friends were off report…" "if I had to pick, I'd probably still go back to XXX [school Shardinay was PEX from]. And only because the friendships I made there"

14. Negative influence of friends	"…so it was a lot, it was a lot harder to be really, like best, best behaved [due to friends]"
	"…because I have all my friends in there, it will be hard to like, concentrate and all of that."
	"…cause I was with my friend from like ages of ago. I was sat by him … talking and laughing and that … he kept on opening the window, I kept on shutting it and stupid stuff like that that would get me sent out."
15. Lost connections	"…and I've built so much connections in that school so it felt really unreal cause I was like I'm never, gonna get back, I'm never actually gonna go back to that school again."
	"…because I've got friends in there from primary school, close friendships as well. And then I have to start at a new school."
	"…but if I had to choose, [which school Shardinay would rather be at], it's only cause, like, the deep relationships that I have over there."
	"I'm not as close to them because I used to see them every single day so I would be more close to them. Some people I don't talk to anymore"
	"I felt bad leaving everyone at the same time, cause I made some friends there."
16. Differences with peers	"…but the kids in there, they were just like bad. There were some there that just wanted to learn, wanted to get out. But then there were some that were just like, I don't care about my future."
	"…but at the same time, it was like, if you went through my experience, you kinda wanna see that because you'd be like, I don't wanna be like one of these kids."
	"I just don't wanna be naughty. I didn't wanna be like *them*, you know like going out, setting fires and that. It's not fun."
17. Feeling motivated	"I wanted to get into mainstream, obviously."
	"I don't wanna be like, one of those kids that just wanna fail."
	"I was like I'm gonna start at this new school and I'm gonna try my best."
	"…so like there was always the fear of getting excluded again, and then it will be hard to get a job or something because they'll see I've got excluded again. So obviously I've fixed up now."
	"…and then when I got excluded, I had a fear that I weren't gonna get anywhere. I'm gonna be stuck in a provisional centre all the time. And then when the teachers actually told me I could still make it into a school and all of this, I was like, I was just happy."
18. Realisations	"I would just have fun. I would think year eight is one of the best years, just have fun. That's what I'd be like. And then I'll take it more seriously in year nine or ten. But I realised if you keep thinking that then you're just gonna

	keep being bad."
	"…cause it was like if I keep acting bad, I'm not gonna get… I'm not gonna listen in class which means GCSEs when it comes up I'm gonna be stuck"
	"…cause now, I actually have an idea. I don't know what I wanna be yet, but I have an idea of what GCSEs I need to do, to do what I like instead of getting a boring job."

Themes and subthemes	Codes

1. Relationships with staff
    - Positive vs negative relationships
    - Pre-judgements
    - Power imbalance
	1. Pre-judgements
	 2. Positive relationships with staff
	 3. Negative relationships with staff
	 4. distrusting of school and staff
	 5. Power imbalance

2. Feeling heard	10. Being listened to 11. Not being listened to 12. Being understood

3. School systems
    - Behaviour management
    - Differences between settings
	6. Differences between settings
	 7. Behaviour management systems
	 8. Academic work
	 9. Different types of support

4. Peer relationships
    - Friendships
    - Comparisons to other peers
	13. Positive friendships
	 14. Negative influence of friends
	 15. Lost connections
	 16. Differences with peers

5. Personal changes	17. Feeling motivated 18. Realisations

Appendix 10: Example of the development of codes and themes for Lenny

Code	Quotes
1. Differences between parents	"my mom always says I was a devil child, but my dad always liked to say I was like an angel."
	"my dad's always been strictish,… my mom was letting me out till like eight o'clock, nine o'clock when I was twelve years old in the summer…. then my dad started getting more involved … And then I had to come back at seven whilst my mates were out till like half eight"
	"…probably how much freedom I had at my mom's compared to my dad's."
	"Its not like my mom don't care for me nothing, it's just like she would just leave me alone. I think she knows what I'm like, like if she keeps coming up to my room and checking how I'm doing I'll end up getting really annoyed with her. Compared to my dad, I can't get annoyed because he will go mental and no thank you."
	"I ended up like with my mom I could kinda just do what I want, do whatever. And then with my dad, he was always in my room and stuff. It's not like I didn't mind that It just felt weird from going from do whatever you want to like having to chill out quite a lot."
2. Family relationships	"Home has never been like the dream home, mom and dad together and stuff. Cause my mom and Dad broke up, got back together, broke up, have a step-dad on and off, have a step-mom now, and it's all arguments."
	"Me and my step-dad speak and he checks up on me and stuff and that's kinda it. As long as my room's clean, I'm not being too loud, its fine. [Has that relationship improving made school easier now?] Yeah."
3. Substance use	"…and they all started smoking and everyone was doing it so I was like… I tried it."
	"…and then I was just staying over at my best mates, one of the best mates called XXX [friend] … so I was at his doing it [smoking weed] and it was just funny, yeah"
	"I was still vaping in year seven and then started smoking weed quite a lot. And I got caught a few times smoking it."
	"we did it [smoked weed] a few times before school, just for the fun of it."
	"…and then I got caught by my dad smoking it, he told the school about it and then this woman done like a whole investigation about it with me."
	"No, no, I got suspended before that." [Was that for vaping in school?] "Yeah."
	"So I started smoking weed a bit again, because I got caught a few months before, so I completely stopped. I just stopped smoking and vaping and

	stuff. Then yeah I got bored and started vaping again, cause like I kinda had a bit of freedom back. So I started again. And then I went out one time, smoked and I was like ah I've missed this."
4. Positive peer connections	"…and then this girl called XXX [friend] joined and we were basically best mates." "I was mates with everyone, didn't really have any problems" "My one mate, he's safe, he always texts me asking how I'm doing" "I'd rather go from my mom's to XXX [local authority], because it means I'd get to see my mates on the way." "I knew a lot of people here too so that helped." "It was alright at first. All my mates were alright." "…and even like the older kids, because I was friends with year tens and elevens at my old school, even older kids here I knew from being friends with them." "I think my first day. I realised I knew loads of people and was just like yeah this is alright." "…cause I already knew people. Like my best mate from primary school is here and I was just back with him straight away"
5. Negative influence of friends	"…and then, literally her first day, of her joining, we ended up getting our first red cards together." "So I'd never had one of them because I was never like that naughty. Then as soon as she joined I got my first one. And then I got a few more after that, because of her" "…and there was these older kids that, like, a few of us knew. And they all started smoking and everyone was doing it so I was like… I tried it." "but yeah, when I was with my mates I just did whatever they did. I was never one to start it but if my mates did it I was like ah yeah I'll come." "in my first lesson there, cause I was messing around a bit with my mate, and cause he's naughty, I was messing around with him" […negative influences?] "My mates. They're just dickheads" (laughs). "When I told XXX [teacher – safeguarding lead] about who I knew here, because they're all naughty, he sorta just said like be careful who you're friends with. But I didn't really listen to that. So I'm still friends with them, which might not be good I guess."
6. Social isolation	"So it felt weird not being with any of my mates, because when you're in primary school, you're with all your mates, but because I was a lot smarter

	than all my mates, all them were in bottom sets and stuff and I was in top sets, so it felt a bit weird not being with them"
	"Well, actually, the few months I weren't in school at all I think I only stayed in contact with XXX [friend]."
	"How lonely it is. It's just lonely most the time."
	"So it's literally just like you're on your own, you have nothing to do, no one to speak to, no friends keeping you updated or nothing."
	"I'd stopped doing boxing, stopped doing mma so I couldn't even see people."
7. Behaviour management systems	"we ended up getting our first red cards together. [What's a red card?] What you got when you were naughty in primary school"
	"I got up to like two months without getting anything like detentions or anything and then I got a detention"
	"…and then after that I probably got a lot three detentions a week."
	"Every lesson I got a detention"
	"Me and XXX [friend] probably had like five hundred between the both of us [negative behaviour points]."
	"I got put on a lot of reports because my behavior was always bad. I probably had like 50 different reports over the years. Over the two years I was there. I was on form tutor report, I was on uniform report, lateness report, I was on head of the house report and I was on leadership report. I was literally on every single report you basically could have other than head teacher."
	"Mainly because it annoyed me because I'd end up getting a cross over something stupid like, not following the teachers instructions first time."
	"But in year eight I instantly got put on head a house report because of my behavior, and then when I got suspended I went on leadership report. But during them times I was on and off head of house, on and off form tutor, on and off uniform, on and off lateness."
	"Just constant detentions"
	"As long as I don't get any negatives then that's a good day"
	"…and then I got a detention within like my first week. For being out of bounds like I knew what that was."
	"It kinda happened like what happened in XXX [school Lenny was PEX from], like I got one detention for something stupid and my behaviour kinda went downhill."

	"The only thing I don't like here is how many negatives you can get, like if you get a warning here, it's a negative. And then if you get two warnings, that's a lunchtime detention, and then your third one is an after school." "...and because I started to get detentions for messing around outside, I started messing around a bit more in class, which meant a few more detentions from in class, a few more negatives." "Getting a day in isolation" "...because it's like a teacher can take my phone off me, they can put me in detention but that's it. Can't do nothing else."
8. Differences between settings	"...because I went from getting suspensions and stuff to then going to a PRU where you don't really get in trouble at all. And then to come here and get a detention for going to the wrong place, which I didn't know about" "The only thing I struggle with here is French because I've never done, I did German in my old school." "I probably missed out on a lot of learning. Like in my old school we did everything early compared to this place." "Longer days, more strict, more lessons, harder work." "...because teachers here are just used to... there's a few bad kids, but nothing terrible. They're just used to kids just getting on with their work and doing what they're meant to do."
9. Staff perceptions	"...like I had an English teacher... and honestly, my dad used to think that she never but honestly, yeah she hated me. I don't even know what I did to her." "most of the teachers hated me." "They all thought I was naughty." "...and the first thing my science teacher asked me was what set were you in at your last school, were you in a lower set? And I was like no I was in top set for everything. And he said to me, oh shocking ... I was thinking that's cheeky that is, can't believe you've said that to me." "Sometimes I've felt a bit judged [by staff]." "...just kinda feels like this school has had to take me, its not like they wanted to take me, they *had to.*" "...and you get judged by who you're with as well [by staff]."
10. Positive staff relationships	"...yeah probably my form tutor. We were literally like best mates. I'm still her favourite and I'm literally not even there no more." "...and my head of house, she was alright."

	"my form tutor would always help me. She would always speak to my English teacher, trying to help. Every detention that I got should always try and cancel it or find a way to like, take it off. Every time I was in isolation she tried getting me out. Things like that."
	"The teachers maybe. I got on more with the teachers than anyone else."
11. Anger difficulties	"...and then there was a few times where I'd get in trouble, and I'd get proper angry about it"
	[In response to getting a detention every lesson] "Angry."
	"...and then it got to a point where I was getting one every lesson. I was getting that wound up that I just completely stopped turning up to the lessons."
	"I wanted to headbutt her."
	"I don't know, I get angry quite a lot."
	"I don't even know. I just randomly wanna punch someone sometimes."
	"I think the only thing is randomly get angry. Because that just blows my whole mood."
	"...but when I get home, and I'm just in my room, nothing to do, I'm just angry with a bad attitude. And then my mom's telling me to do stuff, and I'm getting mad at her and stuff."
	"...but some teachers, generally think they know everything and it annoys me so much to the point where I actually want to like misbehave. And that's the only way I can let my anger off"
12. Self-regulation difficulties	"...but if I don't go toilet in a lesson, especially if its like a really boring one, I'll end up doing something really stupid."
	"I go toilet and I literally just sit down or I won't even sit down, just do whatever to sort of take my mind off things and then go back once I've calmed down."
	"...because if I've had a good day it means I've been trying to have a good day, which means I'm in a bad mood now because of I'm really tired but I've got loads of energy I need to use too."
	"I'd do like a few good weeks yeah.... Normally what happens is I do a few good weeks and then have like one bad week, or a few bad weeks, then I do one good week and I have a few more bad weeks and then a few weeks good."
	"Yeah. I can never only be well behaved, do what I'm told and that."

	"...but I can't focus. I don't know what it is. I can't focus on one thing. I need to be doing other things at the same time." "Sometimes I can definitely control it, but sometimes I'm really tired and sometimes I feel like I could run a marathon."
13. Boredom	"Oh boring man, I had nothing to do. I'd finish the work book the same day I got it and then there was just nothing else most days." "I was just bored. Like, that was fun for a bit and then I started getting bored. I couldn't really do nothing. No one was going out. Everyone was being a bit dry and boring" "...then yeah I got bored and started vaping again, cause like I kinda had a bit of freedom back" "I get bored really easy, I need something to distract me otherwise I will just mess around" "...but if I don't go toilet in a lesson, especially if its like a really boring one, I'll end up doing something really stupid." "With things like, when it's just writing things down, it gets boring easily, because there's literally nothing distracting me." "In the PRU I had kids messing around, swearing at teachers, or funny things are going on. Come here and everyone's just sat there quiet and yeah, its boring." [How would you describe most days here?] "Boring."
14. Feeling understood	"I feel like they knew what was wrong with me even when I didn't." "They understand you more. They understand that you gonna make mistakes and that everyone has their own issues and stuff." "I think if you behaved, but still messed around, kind of like what I was doing, they kind of understood. They understood you more."
15. Praise	"they'd always like praise me and stuff [at the PRU]" "with my behaviour too they just didn't say stuff like good job you know? [at the school Lenny was PEX from]"
16. Academic ability	"They didn't really want me there because my grades were too good and they said I was too smart to be there." "I've always been top sets for everything." "The only thing I had was my grades, but that was it." "this is gonna sound really big-headed, but cause I was the smartest one there"

	"I was top sets for everything" "everyone knew I was smart" "It felt a bit weird, when I got made fun of a bit for it [being smart]. That was weird. But I just thought I'd rather be smart than like you." "I've always been told that I'll be rich because I've always been smart" "I'm pretty sure I'm predicted like sixes and above for most subjects" "The only thing that puts us apart [Lenny and his friends] is that I'm smarter than them."
17. Freedom	[What did you enjoy about primary school?] "You were just free weren't you" "I literally couldn't speak to anyone, couldn't really do anything, I couldn't vape I literally couldn't do anything. I just had no freedom." "I was used to always having freedom, going out till whatever time I wanted, basically, doing whatever, going wherever I wanted" "Probably how much freedom I had at my mom's compared to my dad's." "…especially when I moved to my dad's, because I literally couldn't do anything at my dad's" "seeing kids doing whatever they want. So I'm like oh I wanna do that too"

Themes and subthemes	Codes
1. Self-regulation	11. Anger difficulties 12. Self-regulation difficulties 13. Boredom

2. Friendships
  - Positive and negative influences
  - Social isolation
	4. Positive peer connections
	5. Negative influence of friends
	6. Social isolation

3. Substance use	3. Substance use 5. Negative influence of friends

4. Relationships with staff
  - Support
  - Staff perceptions
	9. Staff perceptions
	10. Positive staff relationships
	14. Feeling understood

5. Family	1. Differences between parents 2. Family relationships

Appendix 11: Example of the development of codes and themes for Mohammed

Code	Quotes
1. Peer relationships	"I had a lot of friends and lot of people that didn't like me either" "eventually everyone started to love me, and everyone still loves me from over there." "…and everyone did like me, like, I got along with everybody. I do get along with everyone"
2. Experiences of bullying	"..but from what I remember those, those lads, they used to, they used to pick on us" "I'm a small kid. I joined XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from] and everyone there's humongous and they're all big kids and you know they weren't like, me I was soft. So everyone used to try and pick on me" "…so I used to get picked on a bit and I didn't have many friends" "It was problematic because it wasn't just like at break and lunch, this was during lessons, during the morning before, school, after school."
3. Experiences of racism	"They used to make real snarky comments about like, our religion and our race." "…he just turns around to me and he goes oh back in the day you wouldn't have been in the fucking country" "…he just goes straight up to my face, he says again go back to your fucking country." "There was this boy who used to sit next to me, and we used to talk, and he used to make jokes, and he used to make jokes about my ethnicity"
4. Fighting	"…and these kids you know, all they wanted was just to fight. So we had a lot of fights in XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from]" "First two weeks into XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from] I had a big, big fight in the middle of the field with like 200 people watching me" "there was… that kid that tried to fight me seven times one day. We had that fight at the end of the day…" "They kicked me out over the fight" "…so now I just had to fight loads of guys just on my own."

5. Threatening behaviour of others	"They tried to find out where I live. They had people waiting for me outside of school. They're threatening my mom. They found my sister shopping and, you know, they're screaming at her in the shopping centre, she had to stand in front of the camera…" "They even, they would even try and find out where I live. And they're trying to get people to follow me and find out where I live. And so I didn't go home I went to my grandma's house, so now these lot were all stalking my grandma's house" "There's a lot of people, and, you know, these kids they're not afraid to, like, just throw everything away. They'll kill you over a joke" "…even adults, their big brothers, their dads, their uncles, cause they were all just coming to my house." "…and it was like, it was a real problem because now there's people coming in into my… like a group of lads that came inside of my friend's house. Like, they come inside." "…and then by the time I get up to the top and I look back and I realise like everyone's just making way from me. I get to the top and I realise like it's just a complete set up because there's just ten guys waiting at the top of the stairs for me" "…so that same lad that I had the fight with after school. I came of the bus and the bus is right in front of my house, and I'm getting off at the bus stop, and they're waiting for me. And they rough me up. They beat me up from one side of XXX [local area] to the other."
6. Feeling scared	"it's a weird feeling, because you know, every man's got pride and that but you know, you're afraid." "so, like it's not nice, and it's just on your mind all day, every day from morning to night." "…because I was shitting myself." "I was a little kid, these are big lads, so I was just waiting for it to happen, waiting for something to happen."
7. Negative influence of friends	"…and those 20 lads, as much as they saved me from a lot of problems, you know, they caused so many problems too, because they've all got big mouths. They just wanna look good."
8. Police involvement	"For every single one of these problems, they called the police like, and the police would come and they interview you and they'll try and scare you or whatever." "…so they'd call the police that sits in a room like this" "…and then I had a little scuffle maybe a week after I got kicked out and they arrested me and put me in station cell just for the day. I was on a caution"

	"…so then after this, they sent me a stack of witness statements and then they sent police to my house to talk to me."
	"I got arrested"
	"…and then on my way back home, just walking down the road, and the police car just pulled up onto the pavement, and they just arrested me, like, stuck me in the station cell"
	"…and then they let me go. I was on a caution for like three months or something, and that was about it."
9. Ineffective consequences for behaviour	"No one was really afraid. They never really had no way of, like, actually telling us off."
	"Yeah no one really cared that much."
	"…and they'd try and scare you. But it would never really work. They threaten you with exclusion and stuff but no one was really afraid of it so we just carried on doing what we was doing."
	"It's like I'm in school, I don't really care about school and you're threatening me saying, you're gonna send me home. It don't make sense."
10. Behaviour management in PRU	"There was no punishments, no nothing. So because we had the option, no one would really do anything. You could walk out if you really wanted to, you could just do whatever you wanted. No one cares. So that's what we did. We did whatever we wanted"
	"…and it was, it was interesting, because as much as I liked it, because I could do whatever I wanted…"
	"…but when I was in PRU, as much as you could do whatever you want, I didn't really enjoy that either"
	"It was just you were allowed to do what you want. So a lot of the times, like sometimes we'd pay attention, on an off day, everyone would sit inside and would actually do the work and listen and we talk, you know, we'll get through the work. But the next day, everyone's running around like animals."
11. Minds made up	"I writ it all up. I knew what I was gonna say, sat in the call and I realise, no matter what I say, they don't care, their decision was made already. They already decided they were gonna get rid of me."
	"they had an answer for everything. They were just so prepared. They wanted me gone. he minute we started talking, I realised they, they had their decision from the start."

	"I was talking to them and they're asking me questions. I'm answering the questions, but every reply I have, it's like they didn't wanna hear the reply." "they just know already what they wanna do, its just premeditated" "They just build, like, an idea of what I'm like in their head. So yeah, they will always think I'm up to no good"
12. Positive staff relationships	"There was plenty of good teachers. And, they were all so friendly. And to be honest, like even my head of year, my head of year was the best. I think they would have got rid of me earlier if not for him."
13. Power	"You know what it is. A lot of teachers, obviously, they've got the power" "They have, obviously, the school won't work without the teachers having the power. But obviously they got it and they won't admit it" "...but they abuse it. And they'll always abuse their power."
14. Negative staff interactions	"...and it's let's shout and scream you know, just straight to it." "I'm standing there, my hands by my side, I'm not going nowhere, and just grabs me like this (actions a physical grabbing motion) and pulls me up as well." "...and then when the meeting came round, he said on the call I tried to attack him. He said I tried to hit him. He said I was trying to wrestle him and I denied it all." "...and it said we'll have, like, a Zoom call meeting. So we had the Zoom call meeting, and when I joined the call, it was me, my mom, a safeguarding teacher, and my head of year and somebody else, and we're sitting on the call. And I realised from the second I joined, like, they're really hostile." "You don't even have to do anything and they come up, they spit in your face, they scream at you, send you out the classroom, they make you sit in the corridor, make you face the wall. Its like what? We ain't living in 1987 Russia"
15. Positive staff interactions	"...but over there we had a couple of teachers that would sit down and talk to you. They understood." "When I was there, the teachers, they weren't like teachers, they were more like students. They just talk to you, like me and you are now. And they would tell me their stories and stuff." "...and every single teacher there, cause I was really friendly with all the teachers, they all loved me"
16. Similarities between settings	"I think it [power imbalance and abuse] is in every school. Whether it was, PRU, XXX [school Mohammed was PEXX from], here. It's always a thing."

	"You know what I realised, no matter the situation, it just repeats itself. It's the same thing, you know, all the situations that's happened here, I realised it's just like a complete reflection of XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from]. The same thing." "I like some of the teachers, and like every other school, I don't like some of the teachers." "As much as I think happens a lot here [negative interactions with staff], I think happens everywhere."
17. Differences between settings	"I joined XXX [PRU] and it's just like a really weird setting. Because I walked in and the building was like, really small. I was thinking like, you know, it's a bit small for a school" "it [PRU] was a weird, weird, weird place" "…but joining and like actually settling in, it's not easy. That's the hardest part of the whole thing, because you're coming from seven people every single day, and now I'm seeing a thousand first thing in the morning." "Yeah, very big difference. So it's just overwhelming" "…the initial joining, it was really weird for me because I joined and, you know, first thing I come into the school for my first meeting and when I look out the window and I can see a thousand people, and I'm already just thinking, okay this is a lot of people, it's different." "I'm seeing already, I walk in and there's more teachers in the reception than there is in the entire of XXX [PRU]. So, you know, it was really different" "…because, you know, in XXX [PRU], you could piss on the wall and the teacher would laugh with you. That's what it's like, everything's fun and jokes. But when I come here, you know, the teachers, they're really stern, they're really trying to police the students" "Being friendly with the teachers here isn't the same thing as being friendly with the teachers in XXX [PRU]. Like, you can never meet that same level."
18. Unfair consequences	"…and those kids still go to that school." "Yeah I do think it's unfair. The boy that tried to fight me seven times one day, he still goes there…. And so, you know, there was only a select few people that they chose to kick out." "…and then like, I got all the punishment. He didn't go to isolation. They said they sent him to isolation, they lied to me"

19. Racial inequality	[What's the difference between you and them?] "I'll be honest, they're all white, well most of them."
20. Time not in school	"...but I didn't join in September. After September, I had to wait a couple months before I could even get into the PRU. So that entire time, I'm just at home." "I was just out and about. I wasn't in school, I wasn't doing anything." "...and if I was in school, I wouldn't have been there." "I was just stuck at home for a long time. So I maybe spent about six months just in the house."
21. Missed learning	"You don't really have to work. That's the thing. There was no real education. We never really did any work." "...but I had a real big problem with, cause when I was XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from], I was in top sets for everything, so when I come here, they put me in top sets for everything. But I've missed a whole, basically a whole year and a half of school" "...so, I'm sitting in these top sets, and I just haven't got a clue. ... Because obviously its start of year ten now, so we're getting serious and GCSEs coming up but it took me the entirety of year ten to catch up" "...but everyone in year ten they're all revising they're all preparing, and they're ready for the exam by the end of it. By now, everyone's ready for the exam. I ain't got clue in the world. I'm still figuring out." "As much as I was naughty, I did well in school. Just like, a year off, you forget a lot."
22. Wasted time	"I was just up to no good. It was a waste of time." "I just realised I was just sitting there and doing nothing for just a whole year... a whole year of my life just gone. And it's crazy how it just disappeared. And, you know what it is, I didn't even realise it was going until the end of it. By the time I was leaving, I just realised, like I just wasted so much time. It's all gone" "Time consuming. That's the big one." [Do you feel like you've lost time because of it?] "Yeah. A lot of it." "Like I said, my biggest thing was it was so time consuming. Just wasted so much time. I can't waste any more time."
23. Unsupported by adults	"They like to say they support you and stuff, and they talk to you or whatever. But they don't really do anything. They just sit there and write in their little notepad and then they leave, and you never see them again. So, I never really got support from anyone."

	"Most of the time I was on my own, I just had to deal with it." "It was pretty much just me on my own."
24. Personal change	"You know, it's really weird because at that time, I was a different person and I used to have really different friends" "…but I think the exclusion was just the start of it, and by the end of PRU it was big change." "It's the knowledge, the wisdom, you know, I've grown. I've just got a better understanding of people."
25. Personal realisations	"It was just like a spark. It's not the flame. It's just a spark. And I felt it coming. You know what it is, it wasn't a turning point and I wasn't thinking, oh I wanna make a big change. It was just, I knew whatever I was doing, I was doing something wrong" "…but I never really had an idea of what I wanted to do. But all this, it did change what I wanted to do a lot, like, it changed the way I look at things. And, you know, I realised I don't really wanna do it this way, like come to school and chase the grades. I don't wanna sit behind a desk all day. I can't. It's not for me. It's not for me." "…because when I was in PRU I thought I wanted to come to school but then I come to school and realise I don't wanna be here" "I just needed someone else to tell me. And when I heard It from them, I realised this isn't where I wanna be, I wanna leave." "It's just, see, I don't really like school and, like, remember I said it when I was in PRU I didn't really know what I wanted, and I thought I wanted to come to school, but I wasn't sure. And I came to school, and I realised, I don't really like it here, but I'm stuck here and I gotta do the work." "when I was in PRU, I thought all I wanted was school. But the thing is, I realised while I'm here, I don't really care about the grade all that much. And I'm just here just to finish my school years off and get out of here. Just get through it."
26. Inability to change	"…and I always used to have this thing like I always used to know I'm doing something wrong, and I'd always want to change, and I make a change, and then I'd just always slip back into whatever I was doing before." "I think it's just the way the mind works. I always tried to be better, I always made the attempt, and sometimes I'd succeed and sometimes I'd do well, maybe two three weeks I was doing well, maybe a month maybe two months, but eventually you hear the voice and you slip back, it's just a normal thing" "…and I've felt like it's been turning points before. But the thing is, you turn and you keep turning, and eventually just come back full circle

	because that's just the way things go. So even during PRU like when I started to change, I made so many mistakes and I'd do well for a long time and then you just fall off again"
	"…and not just make a change, cause you know, like I said, everybody makes changes, but you always slip back into it"
27. Feeling stuck	"…and you're just sitting there for 10, 11 months every single day and it was… It just really just destroys your mind. Its just life just stuck in that one room."
	"Didn't know when I was gonna leave. And I tried to apply for schools. Schools turned me away as well. So I was just stuck there."
	"I think the big problem with the whole entire thing is, and this is a problem I think everyone had, even the teachers, like I could see the kids were driving them insane, but it's not just because the of kids, I think it's because everybody's just stuck in this one little room for, you know like six hours. The thing is everyone has to stay together."
	"…and so you're just with the same group of people all day, every day, and it's just forever."
	"…and then I also realised, like, in PRU I was stuck with seven of them, now I'm stuck with 500 of them."
28. Realisations about others	"…and I realised everybody's just going through shit. And it's just everybody. And no matter how good it looks on the outside, everybody's going through the same thing"
	"…and I realised, like even these kids as much as they're smiling, laughing and all this and that, did this the other day, fucked that girl the other day, smoked this yesterday, you know, they're just going through shit."
	"…and I realised we're all just the fucking same. We're just the same."
	"then I realised that everybody's going through the same thing. And I just realised then, you can throw a rock to someone who can understand you, you know, just across the road. So you know, I realised everybody's going through the same thing"
	"…because, you when I was in XXX [last school], I was ruthless. Like with my words, the way I used to talk, just how I was with people. Now I realise, no matter the situation, you just gotta be nice. You gotta realise they're feeling the same shit you are"
29. Out of place / not belonging	"they all used to say you know, we don't understand why you're here. You shouldn't be here. You've been sent here, and it's just not the place you're supposed to be."
	"I always knew, even when I was in XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from], it sounds so stupid, but I always kind of felt, I always feel like I'm different."

	"I knew I wasn't meant to be there" "At first, before, I used to think, no one would understand me. No one can understand me."
30. Motivation	"…so from then on, I just spent about six months just nagging and saying, get me out. Get me out. Get me out. So slowly, slowly starting to change and from there I just didn't really mess around no more" "I was looking forward to getting out." "…but I tried to stay quiet because I didn't wanna cause no problems. Cause like I'm finally here now and I just wanna keep my space so I was quiet." "I just wanna finish school and work. I wanna work and make some money. I'm better off that way"
31. Importance of social relationships/interactions	"That's what made the *real* change. It weren't just it just hearing things. It was like learning about other people. I never really had that insight into other people's lives." "as long as you look and you speak and you talk, you're gonna learn something and it will save you from these problems" "…and from meeting all these people, even, like I said, I still get problems from XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from], you know but all the people I met after XXX [school Mohammed was PEX from], that's what saved me from those problems from beforehand" "Mainly I was looking forward to the people, I just wanted to be around a lot of people" "…but I realised, you know, if you can prevent it you won't even have to worry about it happening in the first place. So what I've done is, when I joined, I realised I just wanna be as friendly as possible with everybody. So now I'm good friends with everyone. So now nobody really wants to mess with me anyway, because, you know, I'm liked by everybody."
32. Peer provocation	"…but other kids they try and test you. Try and see what you're about. And they'll call you like little names or they'll say little things, just try and get on your nerves and see your reaction" "It's just, some boys they'll just try and test the waters. You just gotta let them know the water's hot." "…but people here, they make it difficult. And like everybody will try and get on your nerves. And I know the way things work, and I know how people work. They're gonna try pick on me, and I'm gonna fight him."

Themes and subthemes	Codes
1. Experiences of racism	3. Experiences of racism 18. Unfair consequences 19. Racial inequality
2. Experiences with peers	1. Peer relationships 2. Experiences of bullying 4. Fighting 5. Threatening behaviour of others 7. Negative influence of friends 32. Peer provocation

3. Systems
   - Behaviour management systems
   - Time spent out of school
   - Different educational settings
	8. Police involvement
	9. Ineffective consequences for behaviour
	10. Behaviour management in PRU
	16. Similarities between settings
	17. Differences between settings
	20. Time not in school

4. Relationships with staff
   - Positive vs negative relationships
   - Power imbalance
   - Minds made up
	11. Minds made up
	12. Positive staff relationships
	13. Power
	14. Negative staff interactions
	15. Positive staff interactions
	23. Unsupported by adults

5. Wasted time	21. Missed learning 22. Wasted time

6. Personal experiences
   - Change
   - New realisations
   - Belonging
	6. Feeling scared
	24. Personal change
	25. Personal realisations
	26. Inability to change
	27. Feeling stuck
	28. Realisations about others
	29. Out of place / not belonging
	30. Motivation
	31. Importance of social relationships/interactions