Exploring Collaboration from the Perspectives of Culturally Deaf Parents and Hearing School Staff Teaching Children of Deaf Adults: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Abstract

Research indicates that parental involvement in their children's education has a positive impact on a child's academic and social-emotional development. Culturally Deaf parents, defined as individuals who self-identify with the culturo-linguistic model of Deafness, experience difficulties accessing their children's education. However, there has been little published research exploring Deaf parents' engagement in schools. The current research aimed to explore the lived experiences of Deaf parents and hearing school staff of collaboration and to identify the barriers and facilitators to effective collaboration in this population. Three Deaf parents and one hearing teacher participated in online individual semi-structured interviews. Data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis so that individual participants' experiences could be explored and valued within their own right in addition to identifying themes evident across participants. Data indicated that participants' experiences of collaboration were generally difficult and frustrating, and suggestions for how collaboration could be improved related to attitudinal changes and the implementation of systems and policies. These findings were discussed alongside exploration of relevant literature, following which a methodological review was provided and implications for professional practice and future research were considered.

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List of Abbreviations

BDA   British Deaf Association

BPS   British Psychological Society

BSL   British Sign Language

CODA   Child(ren) of Deaf Adult(s)

DfE   Department for Education

EP   Educational Psychologist(s)

GET   Group Experiential Theme(s)

IPA   Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

JPLG   Joint Professional Liaison Group

LA   Local Authority

PET   Personal Experiential Theme(s)

RNID   Royal National Institute for Deaf People

SEND   Special Educational Needs and Disability

ToD   Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People

UK   United Kingdom

UoB   University of Birmingham

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Chapter Overview

This research project represents volume one of a two-volume thesis completed as part of the requirements for the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate. Chapter one will briefly situate the project within its research context, outline the researcher's personal interest in the topic, and provide an overview of the thesis structure.

1.2. Research Context

According to the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID, 2024), there are an estimated 18 million adults in the United Kingdom (UK) who are D/deaf or have tinnitus (perceiving sounds coming from inside the body rather than from an external source). Whilst deafness is largely viewed as an audiological disability, individuals who self-identify as culturally Deaf position themselves as members of a culturo-linguistic minority group with its own culture and history (Pyper & Loft, 2022). The Deaf community have historically experienced oppression living in hearing society due to a power imbalance between Deaf communities and hearing institutions responsible for developing policies that affect the Deaf community (Ladd, 2003; Kusters & De Meulder, 2013; Greene-Woods et al., 2020).

Research relating to other minority groups has recognised that it is vital to involve communities in the decision-making processes that impact them. Autistic communities occupy a similar position to Deaf communities as they are often positioned as disabled despite not seeing themselves as such and having pride in their natural differences. Chown et al. (2017) note the importance of involving autistic researchers in planning and conducting research to ensure that the aims are relevant to what is identified as important in the community itself. Similarly, Ladd et al. (2003) argue that research and policies affecting Deaf people should be informed by the Deaf community's priorities.

Deaf parents experience inequality compared to their hearing counterparts regarding access to their children's education (British Deaf Association [BDA], 2015). Parental involvement has a positive impact on their child's academic achievement and social-emotional capabilities (Wilder, 2014; T. Smith et al., 2020). However, parents can find schools difficult to access (A. Harris & Goodall, 2008), particularly if they are members of minority culturo-linguistic groups (Lasky & Karge, 2011; Leddy, 2018). There is little published research exploring the lived experiences of culturally Deaf parents of accessing their hearing children's education and identifying barriers and facilitators to engagement with school staff (Kanwal et al., 2022), indicating a need for more research to occur in this area.

1.3. Personal Interest

My interest in Deaf culture grew from my lessons in British Sign Language (BSL) which I began studying in 2016 partly due to fear that I was losing my hearing; I had developed unilateral pulsatile tinnitus (a rhythmic heartbeat sound in one ear) and was unsure whether this was a precursor to hearing loss. Having seen communication difficulties experienced by close deafened family members, I thought that learning BSL would give me an alternative communication method if I lost my hearing. Initially, I viewed deafness as a disability and BSL as a language used by people who could not hear, but my course educated me about Deafness as a minority culture and BSL as a natural human language.

Whilst learning BSL, I interacted socially with members of the Deaf community, including my Deaf teachers and the local Deaf Club who generously received my class at social evenings. I learned about their experiences within hearing society and frustrations at societal barriers, including those related to accessing their children's schools. As an assistant psychologist, I worked in an ethnically diverse city and saw acceptance and inclusion of other languages and cultures. I was struck by the contrast in these parents' experiences and those of my Deaf friends.

When I started the Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate course, I received teaching on anti-oppressive practice and working ethically and sensitively with diverse communities and reflected regularly on the diverse context in which educational psychologists (EPs) practice (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2023). As my own investigation found little published research exploring experiences of Deaf parents of collaborating with their hearing children's hearing school staff, I felt this would be a valuable topic to explore. Additionally, I felt it would be valuable to the wider EP profession as colleagues whom I worked with as an assistant psychologist and on my course placements expressed interest in and lack of knowledge about the topic, explaining that it was not an area they had experience or training in.

1.4. Research Aims

The current research aimed to explore the lived experiences of culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff of collaboration and to gather their views on how collaborative practice can be facilitated. It was hoped that the findings would be used to deepen the understanding of school staff and EPs around cultural Deafness and effective collaboration with this population and to develop practice within the researcher's local authority (LA). A bounded relativist ontological and constructionist epistemological approach and an interpretivist theoretical perspective was adopted, with data explored using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The philosophical stances and methodological choices adopted reflect the researcher's desire to explore participants' lived experiences within their individual contexts.

1.5. Thesis Structure

The current chapter has situated the research within its academic context and provided information about the researcher's interest in the topic. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature regarding Deafness as a culturo-linguistic minority and partnership between school

staff and parents from minority cultures. Chapter three outlines the study's research

questions, philosophical underpinnings, and methodological approach. Chapter four presents

the research findings, and chapter five summarises the findings in relation to the relevant

literature and socio-political context, following which the research design is critical reviewed

and implications for educational practice and future research are provided.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Chapter Overview

The current study explores the experiences of culturally Deaf parents and hearing mainstream school staff of collaboration. To fully understand the results, key terms used throughout the study must be defined and relevant literature summarised to contextualise the research topic. Chapter two begins by outlining different models of Deafness, with particular focus placed upon the positioning of Deafness as a minority culture as parents with this Deaf identity are the current study's focus. Next, research is summarised which explores communication between Deaf and hearing individuals within society and within families in which at least one parent is Deaf and at least one child hearing. Consideration is then given to how effective collaboration between parents and school staff is defined, theories of collaboration are described, research into collaboration between school staff and parents from minority groups is explored, and explanation is provided regarding how EPs conceptualise and utilise collaboration. The chapter concludes with a rationale for the current study.

2.2. Defining D/deafness

Physiologically, deafness is measured in terms of decibel hearing levels and their assigned audiometric descriptors. The British Society of Audiology (2018) summarises the range of hearing loss as mild (21-40 decibels), moderate (41-70 decibels), severe (71-95 decibels), and profound (in excess of 95 decibels). Utilising these parameters, the RNID (2024) estimate that there are currently 18 million adults in the UK who are D/deaf or have tinnitus, with around 1.2 million having hearing loss of a level that affects their ability to hear conversational speech. Research demonstrates that deafness can negatively impact the development of receptive and expressive spoken language (Herman et al., 2017), reading and writing skills (M. Harris & Terlektsi, 2010), self-advocacy skills (S. Antia et al., 2010), and social interaction and development of positive friendships with hearing peers (Xie et al.,

2014; Terlektsi et al., 2020). Hearing aids (electronic sound amplification devices) and cochlear implants (surgically-implanted auditory nerve stimulators) can be used to lessen the impact of deafness on language development, though their effectiveness depends on the individual's level of hearing loss.

A purely audiological definition of D/deafness does not recognise the differences between deafness as a disability and Deafness as a cultural identity. Whilst there is no universal definition of Deaf identity, typical elements include deafness being prelingual, preferred or primary communication being sign language, personal identification with Deaf culture, and not being able to communicate using spoken language due to hearing difficulties (Pendergrass et al., 2019). It is difficult to determine how many people in the UK identify as culturally Deaf as these statistics are not gathered by central government agencies.

Statistics relating to D/deafness are based on decibel hearing loss, but levels of hearing loss are not an automatic indicator of a Deaf identity. As cultural Deafness and audiological deafness are not differentiated when statistics are gathered, it is not possible to determine how many people in the UK self-identify as culturally Deaf. Additionally, although statistics on the number of audiologically deaf children born in the UK are collected, the same is not true of how many children are born to D/deaf parents; LAs routinely collect data on deaf children as this informs the planning and implementation of support available for them in their education settings, but statistics on D/deaf adults are not frequently gathered. Whilst numbers of culturally Deaf parents could be inferred from data on children of Deaf adults (CODAs), these statistics are also not collected.

Population estimations could be made using data exploring use of BSL as this is an indicator of cultural Deafness, but available statistics widely vary and so estimates would not be accurate. For example, the 2021 Office for National Statistics language census records BSL as the main language of over 22,000 UK residents, but data was not collected on how

many of these people were Deaf or on numbers of people for whom BSL is their preferred but not main language. Elsewhere, it has been reported that, not including professional BSL users such as interpreters, there are around 151,000 BSL users in the UK, 87,000 of whom are Deaf (Department for Work and Pensions & Disability Unit, 2023). The disparity in these statistics, combined with the lack of available data related to cultural Deafness, means that it is not possible to definitively state how many Deaf parents of hearing children there are in the UK.

As outlined by Senghas and Monaghan (2002), "the Deaf/deaf distinction is significant" (p.71), with deafness denoting audiological classification and Deafness implying cultural identity. Throughout this thesis, capitalised terminology relates to cultural Deafness and lowercase terms refer to audiological deafness. Where a distinction has not been made (for example, if the topic explored relates to cultural Deafness and audiological deafness, or if the research discussed has not clarified the status of its participants), the combined term 'D/deaf' is utilised.

2.3. Models of D/deafness

Understanding of D/deafness is affected by the model through which it is viewed and the related attitudes internalised. There are three models of D/deafness: the medical, social, and culturo-linguistic models. The first two models align with a disability view of deafness, whereas the third relates to a Deaf identity position. Whilst the focus of this research is on parents who identify with the culturo-linguistic model, the medical and social models must be presented for the culturo-linguistic model to be fully appreciated.

2.3.1. The Medical Model

The medical model of deafness pathologises deafness as an audiological disability and within-person impairment. The medical model of disability focuses on diagnosing, preventing, and curing disabilities (Marks, 1997). As applied to deafness, the medical model posits that for a deaf person to have good quality of life and function effectively in society,

the effects of their hearing loss should be lessened using technology such as hearing aids or cochlear implants and compensatory measures such as speech therapy (Ohna, 2004). As "90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents who have little or no background in deafness" (National Deaf Children's Society [NDCS], 2016, p.15), deafness is predominantly viewed as a disability in hearing society. This is partly evidenced by the focus of medical professionals on the development and use of hearing technology. In 2022, the British Irish Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association reported that the National Health Service provided 1,539,546 hearing aid units to people in the UK, and much funding and time has been invested into improving hearing aid technology regarding sound quality and directionality, comfort, size, and connectivity with other electronic devices (Strom, 2021).

2.3.2. The Social Model

The social model of deafness moves away from viewing disability as a within-person impairment and instead considers how societal attitudes and structures disable a person. The social model of disability differentiates between disability and impairment, positioning the latter in relation to medical conditions and the former to societal factors (Shakespeare, 2006). This turns attention away from treatment of individuals and towards adaptations made to increase acceptance in and access to society (Gallagher et al., 2014). Regarding deafness, the social model accepts deaf people's differences and holds that adjustments must be made to societal attitudes, beliefs, and structures (Young & Temple, 2014). For example, Obasi (2008) critiques the perception that deaf people access sign language interpreters because they are disabled, highlighting that this view is not taken of hearing language minorities who converse through interpreters and stressing that sign language interpreters are needed in some situations by hearing people.

2.3.3. The Culturo-Linguistic Model

The culturo-linguistic model of Deafness rejects the positioning of Deafness as a disability and regards Deaf people as members of a minority linguistic and cultural group (Ohna, 2004) recognised by its shared social identity and cultural artefacts (Humphries, 2008). Development of Deaf identity has been described as "an intensive process of self-discovery" (McIlroy & Storbeck, 2011, p.89) affected by access to the Deaf community and signed languages (Byatt et al., 2021). Within the culturo-linguistic model, individuals who identify as Deaf can have either an immersion identity, where they are involved in the Deaf community and proud of their Deafness (Fischer & McWhirter, 2001), or a bicultural identity, where they are comfortable in Deaf and hearing communities and can successfully navigate both worlds (Marschark et al., 2017).

Those who self-identify as culturally Deaf do not view their Deafness as a disability and argue that a disability view can be harmful to Deaf culture as its focus on preventing or correcting D/deafness endangers continuation of Deaf communities, can lead to unnecessary medical and surgical risks for Deaf children, and ultimately "brings bad solutions to real problems because it is predicated on a misunderstanding" (Lane, 2005, p.291). For example, the positioning of BSL interpreters as 'reasonable adjustments' under the 2010 Equality Act creates a double bind for culturally Deaf individuals in which they must "accept our [disability] construction of your life of give up your access to equal citizenship" (Lane, 1995, p.185) and so "fails to recognise [BSL] as an indigenous minority language with a rich cultural heritage" (Pyper & Loft, 2022, p.5).

Ladd (2003) situates the Deaf community as a minority group who have historically been subjected to linguistic colonialism and oppression by the hearing majority. Parks (2007) and McKee et al. (2013) highlight the pervasive 'othering' impact of the oralism movement (use of oral rather than signed language) on the perception of Deafness by the hearing majority. In recent years, supporters of the culturo-linguistic model of Deafness have rallied

for Deaf people's rights to be protected under legislation recognising them as a cultural and linguistic minority as opposed to a disability group, campaigns which led to the passing of the BSL (Scotland) Act in 2015 and the BSL Act in England in 2022. As this legislation aims to increase accountability regarding use of BSL in communication between D/deaf individuals and public bodies (including LAs and schools), the views of Deaf parents and hearing school staff must be gathered to explore the current context and identify how culturally-responsive collaboration can be facilitated and what supports are needed for this to occur.

2.4. Exploring Culture

To fully comprehend the culturo-linguistic model of Deafness and appreciate the nuances of Deaf culture and of Deaf participants' experiences in the current study, it is important to understand what is meant by the term 'culture'. There is no universally accepted definition of culture, which reflects the complexities of this subject (Ingold, 2003). However, there are several characteristics commonly identified across definitions (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Whilst definitions vary regarding the identified content of culture, they converge in their description of culture as relating to something that is learned or shared across groups (Birukou et al., 2013). Culture is not static and will change over time, partly through the process of cultural diffusion in which cultures adapt elements of other cultures (Ferraro, 2001).

It is widely agreed that culture is multilayered and comprised of subjective and objective elements (Minkov, 2013) which can be categorised as observable artifacts, values that govern behaviour, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 1990). Beliefs, assumptions, values, and motivations that affect behaviour can be either explicit or implicit (Hawkins & McMahon, 2020), and so it is important to examine culture at more than a superficial level. Objective elements are those which can be observed and include, for example, artifacts such as art and technology, institutions such as marriage, political parties, and religious groups.

Subjective elements cannot be viewed and refer to underlying values and unconscious assumptions. Friedman and Antal (2005) utilise an iceberg metaphor to demonstrate this; visible aspects of culture such as behaviours and artefacts (the tip of the iceberg) are expressions of the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions (the body of the iceberg below the water level – unseen, but present and influential).

Hofstede et al. (2010) differentiate culture from personality and human nature, highlighting that culture is a collective learned phenomenon specific to a certain group whereas human nature is inherited universally and personality is specific to an individual. Therefore, it can be concluded that culture is not inherited but learned through experiences within social environments, thereby explaining why culture is not homogeneous but varies between people who identify as belonging to the same culture (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). This variety is also affected by the fact that an individual belongs to multiple cultural networks and groups simultaneously (Council of Europe, 2010), each with its own "purpose, hierarchy, and networking system" (Matsumoto, 2007, p.1293).

Although the term 'culture' is often used synonymously with phrases such as 'ethnicity', 'race', and 'nation', there are differences between these concepts (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Ethnicity places focus on the importance of a group's shared history and ancestral heritage (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996). Whereas identification with culture is an individual's choice, a person's ethnicity is inherited. Similarly, race is not chosen but is influenced by genetics, with classifications and assumptions made about people based on observed physical and behavioural characteristics (Baumann, 2004). Race is not equivalent to culture as individuals can belong to the same racial classification but to different cultural groups influenced by where they were raised. For example, a Caucasian person raised in England will have a different cultural identity to one who grew up in Sweden. Finally, whilst multiple cultural groups often cohabit within the geographical boundaries of a nation, a nation does

not delineate a culture. Spencer-Oatey (2012) defines a nation as "a government and a set of formal and legal mechanisms that have been established to regulate the political behavior of its people" (p.18). Within nations, different cultures can disagree with these legal mechanisms, an example of which is the political parties system in England: each party has its own culture containing artifacts, values, and assumptions, but these cultures coexist within the nation of England.

2.4.1. Deaf Culture

Whilst a minority culture is often defined in numerical terms (i.e. a cultural group being the demographic minority within a given region or nation), these definitions have been criticised as being oversimplistic (Council of Europe, 2010). Perkins and Wiley (2014) define a minority group as a population subgroup with unique characteristics that differentiate them from the majority group and who have been "subjected to oppression and discrimination by those in more powerful social positions, whether or not the group is a numerical minority" (p.1192).

Baker and Padden (1978) defined the Deaf community as "those deaf and hard of hearing individuals who share a common language, common experiences and values, and a common way of interacting with each other, and with hearing people" (p.4). Whilst this is not an exhaustive definition as it does not address the bicultural identity or account for those who are part of the Deaf community through familial or professional links, its summary of commonalities within the community remains valid. Parallels can be drawn between this definition and Schein's (1990) description of culture as consisting of artifacts, values, and assumptions, indicating that Deafness can be categorised as a minority culture. As evident in the models of D/deafness discussed earlier, being deaf does not automatically constitute identity (Munoz-Baell & Ruiz, 2000), as summarised by Singleton and Tittle (2001) who

outline that social acceptance into the Deaf community is based on "attitude and use of [sign language], and not upon the details of one's audiogram" (p.10).

Deaf culture differs from other cultures regarding how Deaf beliefs, values, and attitudes are transmitted. Peer-to-peer diffusion is more common than parent-to-child dispersion as the majority of D/deaf children are born to hearing parents (Pendergrass et al., 2019). Many Deaf people are bicultural in that they live in at least two cultures (Deaf and hearing cultures) and adapt to and blend aspects of both cultures' behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs (Grosjean, 1996). Ladd (2003) coined the term 'Deafhood' to describe how a Deaf person's identity grows through their interactions with the Deaf world. Deafhood is intended to empower Deaf people to explore their own cultural identity and to resist oppressive colonising narratives of Deafness (Hauser et al., 2010; Kusters & De Meulder, 2013).

Chapman (2021) highlights the impact of hearing majority cultures on the formation of Deaf culture and community, with marginalisation from the hearing majority and acceptance by Deaf peers both influencing an individual's cultural identity. Cultural conflict occurs between Deaf and hearing communities due to faulty assumptions made by the hearing majority and resulting misunderstanding of Deaf identity (Jones & Pullen, 1992; Greene-Woods et al., 2020). Historically, decisions about Deaf people have been made by hearing people with an ethnocentric bias against Deaf culture (Ladd, 2003). When differing definitions of Deafness are held by those making decisions and those about whom decisions are being made, as is often the case in the UK (BDA, 2015), cultural conflict is inevitable (Erting, 1985).

Parallels have been drawn between Deaf communities and First Nation peoples by Batterbury et al. (2007) who position both groups as "in need of legal protection in respect of educational, linguistic, and cultural rights" (p.2899), areas where these groups have historically experienced oppression, colonialism, and attempted forced assimilation into

majority culture. Whilst changes have been made to D/deaf education, with D/deaf children now largely educated in mainstream schools and supported by itinerant Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (ToD) who provide academic instruction and support in non-academic areas such as self-advocacy and social skills (Antia & Rivera, 2016), linguistic inequality continues to be experienced by the Deaf community (BDA, 2015).

In 2003, BSL was officially acknowledged as an indigenous language of the UK (Department for Work and Pensions, 2003). The BSL Act (2022) has given BSL legal status, and it is expected that this will improve access to BSL in public sectors (including education) for D/deaf people. It is therefore important for those working in these sectors to have knowledge of what makes BSL a natural language. It is a misconception that BSL is the verbatim signed version of spoken English; BSL has developed over time and has its own grammar, lexicon, and regional and age dialects (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999). BSL is different to Makaton which is a language programme developed by a speech therapist and designed to be used alongside spoken language (Sense, 2023a).

Sign language fluency has been linked to positive self-esteem and identity in Deaf children (Buzzard & Nicholson, 2006). Research into language acquisition in D/deaf children indicates that direct comparison can be made between learning signed and spoken languages; if a D/deaf child has meaningful access to sign language, they can acquire this language in the same way that a hearing child would learn spoken language from their communication partners (Brennan, 1975). Biological similarities are also evident as neuroimaging studies show that verbal and visual languages are both processed in the brain's left hemisphere (Young & Temple, 2014), and studies of sign language production indicate that the processes used in signed and spoken language production are highly similar (Corina et al., 2014).

Claims made that sign languages are inadequate to spoken languages because they do not use verbal systems have been criticised as myopic as this stance ignores natural variations

in human languages (Brennan, 1975; Gabarró-López & Meurant, 2022). Variations in spoken languages are viewed not as failings but as differences, and the same should be true when comparing spoken and signed languages. For example, Khoisan languages are not seen as superior to English because they make use of click consonants; similarly, BSL should not be viewed as inferior to English because it does not utilise, for example, intonation and metaphor. BSL should also not be seen as a lesser language because it does not have a written form (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999). BSL is not the only language without a written form; some spoken languages, such as Sylheti, do not have a standardised writing system (Temple & Young, 2004). As with other oral traditions, sign language communities are storytelling cultures who pass traditions and knowledge down through sharing narratives with one another (Ladd, 2003; Young & Temple, 2014).

2.5. Communication Between Deaf and Hearing Individuals

When Deafness is viewed as a minority culture, consideration of communication between Deaf and hearing individuals becomes a matter of appropriate cross-cultural communication (Jones & Pullen, 1992). Communication between Deaf and hearing people will naturally occur differently within Deaf-parented families (where Deaf culture is understood and is inherent to communication) and within hearing-parented families and wider society (where Deafness is largely viewed as a disability rather than a culture). As the current research project focuses on collaboration between Deaf parents of hearing children and hearing school staff, research exploring communication within families will be summarised in relation to Deaf parent-hearing child families as opposed to hearing parent-Deaf child families to ensure that the research discussed is relevant to cross-cultural communication; hearing parents of D/deaf children are unlikely to have exposed their children to Deaf culture which reduces the likelihood of communication in these families being cross-cultural, as supported by research highlighting that Deaf adults retrospectively

report feeling isolated within hearing families where sign language was not used (Chapman, 2021).

2.5.1. Communication Within Families

CODAs can be considered to be both "bilingual and bicultural in that they potentially share the language and culture of their Deaf parents" and that of hearing society (Singleton & Tittle, 2000, p.225). Positive aspects of being a CODA identified in research include developing pride and a sense of maturity and feeling acceptance and social belonging in the Deaf community, whereas challenges relate to navigating stigma in society associated with parental Deafness and interpreting in inappropriate situations, leading to parentification and loss of childhood (Heffernan & Nixon, 2023; Knight, 2018; Hadjikakou et al., 2009; Klimentová et al., 2017). Research into CODAs largely explores their communication with their parents and their role as language brokers. In families where a parent is Deaf and uses sign language and other family members are hearing, CODAs communicate bimodally through spoken and signed languages, mode switching depending on whom they are addressing (Pizer et al., 2012). Communication through sign language between Deaf parents and CODAs has been found to be effective and a positive experience for both parties (Mallory et al., 1992), though some children may be hesitant about signing with their parents if they perceive sign language as being viewed negatively by other significant people (Zaborniak-Sobczak, 2020).

Using CODAs as interpreters has consistently been raised as inappropriate practice and yet still occurs due to systemic language barriers faced by the Deaf community. Mallory et al. (1992) described interpreting for one's parents as "a complex interaction that may have impacts on interpersonal relationships, responsibility distribution, and behavior management" (p.19). The BDA (2015) labelled the practice of using family members as interpreters as dangerous because many are not qualified interpreters and all are emotionally involved in the

situations which they are interpreting in. CODAs have regularly described interpreting for parents from very young ages in circumstances they are not developmentally mature enough to navigate. For example, respondents in Klimentová and Dočekal (2020) reported interpreting in situations such as medical appointments and housing department meetings from as young as five years old. Whilst CODAs may feel proud of the independence and responsibility learned through their experiences of interpreting, it is important that they are protected from situations which are neither emotionally or psychologically appropriate for them to be involved in (Moroe & de Andrade, 2018). More consideration must be given to how CODAs are supported by institutions such as schools to ensure that they are not given inappropriate responsibility (Klimentová et al., 2017) and to how Deaf parents can access linguistic support independent of their children (Hadjikakou et al., 2009)

2.5.2. Communication Within Society

Little guidance has been published outlining best practice for communication between Deaf and hearing people, with the majority produced for medical professionals. Barnett (2002) emphasised that professionals must flexibly adapt their communication methods dependant on the needs and preferences of the Deaf person. Appropriate communication methods in professional situations such as medical appointments include sign language (using professional interpreters), written English, lip reading, and using technology (Richardson, 2014). It is not appropriate to utilise family members in these settings as this compromises the Deaf person's right to privacy (Singleton & Tittle, 2001) and could lead to important information not being communicated if the person interpreting does not know how to translate medical terminology (Richardson, 2014).

It is interesting to note that challenges in communication are viewed differently by Deaf and hearing people, with the latter perceiving them as related to language and the former to person-centred practice. Deaf respondents in Young et al. (2000) reported feeling

valued and respected by their hearing colleagues who signed with them, and it was the willingness to sign that was most appreciated, not necessarily communication fluency. Respect can be conveyed by demonstrating understanding of cultural norms regarding interaction in the Deaf community (Harris et al., 2009). Various D/deaf charities have produced general guidance for communicating with Deaf people (RNID, 2023; SignHealth, n.d.; BDA, n.d.) which include simple considerations that signify respect to a Deaf conversation partner, such as making eye contact, using normal lip movement instead of exaggerated annunciation, gaining the person's attention before talking, and reducing visual and auditory distractions in the environment.

2.6. Parent-Professional Partnership

Parental responsibility and right to involvement in their child's education is protected in England under educational law (Department for Education [DfE], 2023b). Schools are increasingly responsible for supporting parental engagement as external agencies' availability in this area is decreasing, often due to budget cuts within LAs (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Partnership between parents and educational professionals is hailed as best practice, with research highlighting the positive effect of parental involvement on their child's academic achievement (Wilder, 2014). However, key legislation protecting parental rights, such as the Children and Families Act (2014) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (DfE, 2014), do not specify what is meant by partnership, assuming that there is a preexisting shared understanding informing practice. In reality, partnership is a complex concept which can be defined and enacted in several different ways, as recognised by O'Connor (2008) who defined parent-professional partnership as "an evolving relationship graduating parents from positions of clients to partners who collaborate with professionals on decisions relating to their child's education" (p.255).

Partnership is positioned by Mittler and Mittler (1982) and Bastiani (1993) as a process or a goal to work towards rather than a static state automatically achieved when parties work together. Oversimplifying partnership to a single definition risks the individuality of these relationships being overlooked (Dale, 1996) and could lead to a reductionist view being taken of parent-professional partnership or one that does not acknowledge its fluidity. Therefore, as opposed to selecting a single definition, a range of models are presented to support understanding of the plurality of parent-professional partnership relationships, following which common themes in partnership are explored and a definition of collaborative partnership used in the current project is provided.

2.6.1. Models of Parent-Professional Partnership

The majority of research into models of parent-professional partnership has occurred in the context of SEND research, a field in which much change has been seen as views of disability have shifted away from a pure medical model of disability towards increasing acceptance of the social model. Similarly, developments have been seen in models of parent-professional partnership as parents have been repositioned from passive to active partners. A summary of the parent-professional partnership models discussed in this literature review can be found in Table 1.

The expert model places parents as passive receivers of professionals' input, with professionals having no requirement to consider or utilise parental views or wishes and parents being disempowered to question the purpose or content of professionals' involvement (P. Appleton & Minchom, 1991). Communication is one-way, with professionals informing parents of decisions rather than involving them in the process (Beveridge, 2005). This lack of parental involvement means that a less holistic view is taken of the child (Cunningham & Davis, 1985). To address this, the informant model involves parents in the information-gathering stages (P. Appleton & Minchom, 1991). However, parents are not involved on an

Table 1.

Models of Parent-Professional Partnership

Model	Description
Expert	Parents passively receive professional expertise
Informant	Parents provide information to inform professionals' decision-making
Transplant	Parents implement professionals' advice
Empowerment	Parents and professionals engage in mutual decision-making but professionals set parameters
Negotiation	Parents and professionals have interchangeable roles and engage in mutual decision-making
Consumer	Parents make informed decisions based on information from professionals
Dual-expert	Parents' expertise about their child and professionals' technical expertise have equal value and are used for decision-making
Family partnership	Parents are supported to make decisions by helping professionals whose personal qualities support the process

ongoing basis, and their purpose is still viewed as being to inform experts' decision-making.

The transplant model increases parental involvement by explicitly involving them in

assessment or ongoing support of their child under the direction of the professional (P.

Appleton & Minchom, 1991) who 'transplants' their knowledge onto parents to increase

parental skillset (Dale, 1996). Whilst the active inclusion of parents is positive as it increases

communication (Cunningham & Davis, 1985), a deficit view is taken of parents as they are

viewed as needing direction by professionals to be effective (Beveridge, 2005).

Other partnership models place greater focus on active parental involvement in

decision-making. In the empowerment model, parental control and power is emphasised and

professionals are expected to be responsive to individual parents (Beveridge, 2005). This

marks a shift away from viewing parents as a homogeneous group and recognises the

importance of professionals identifying individual parents' strengths and needs and

resultingly tailoring their involvement to effectively support and empower them (Dale, 1996).

Whilst professionals in the empowerment model set parameters around parental involvement,

the negotiation model actively attempts to address power imbalance between parties by

encouraging negotiation as a tool for mutual decision-making (Hellawell, 2017). A key aspect

of this negotiation process is for professionals to listen to and appreciate parental perspectives

and invite parents to understand their decision-making (Dale, 1996). Negotiation is also

valued in the consumer model, but parental power is further increased as parents are

recognised as having valuable in-depth knowledge of their child which, alongside

information provided by professionals, is used to make decisions (Beveridge, 2005).

Professionals are expected to build relationships with parents which are mutually respectful

and therefore allow expectations to be openly and honestly explored (Cunningham & Davis,

1985).

Models have also considered which skills utilised by professionals are valued in

parent-professional partnership. The dual-expert model (Hellawell, 2017) recognises parents

as having expertise about their own child and professionals as having technical expertise,

both of which are given equal value and can inform decision-making. In contrast, the family

partnership model places value on the skills (including active listening, empathy, enabling

change, and negotiating) and qualities (such as respect, humility, integrity, and genuineness)

of the professionals whose role is to help parents' decision-making (H. Davis & Meltzer,

2007).

2.6.2. Themes in Parent-Professional Partnership

Whilst definitions of parent-professional partnership vary, three areas considered key

for effective partnership have consistently been identified: power, communication, and trust.

Power was explored in all of the models previously discussed which indicates its importance,

and communication and trust have been positioned as foundational to building parent-

professional relationships (Griffiths et al., 2021).

2.6.2.1. Power. As is clear in the models discussed above, power is variably

distributed within partnerships dependant on the view taken of the professional and the

parent. Discussing their perspectives on collaboration gained from over 15 years of action research, Huxham and Vangen (2009) emphasise the importance of identifying points of power which influence how partnership will occur. Within parent-professional partnerships, points of power include aspects like who holds ownership over the partnership, who determines which individuals are involved, and who implements decisions made. Whilst equal power between parents and professionals may be seen as the ideal position in partnerships, this is often not the reality (Todd & Higgins, 1998). Within education, parents have the right to receive information and make decisions about their child's education (DfE, 2023b), but they hold no power over systemic factors such as time and resource management which affect their child; this power lies with the professionals and the governmental and legislative frameworks directing the UK education system. Power is not static or dependent on invitation; individuals can be given power or empower themselves throughout the partnership as dynamics and contexts change (Huxham & Vangen, 2009). Without flexibility of power, preexisting hierarchical structures will be further reinforced (Todd & Higgins, 1998) which "prevent the development of more equitable home-school relationships" (p.235) and are exclusionary to parental involvement.

    2.6.2.2. Communication. Triangulating observational, interview, and textual data analysis, Conus and Fahrni's (2019) longitudinal study found that parent-professional partnerships develop over time through reciprocal communication. Beveridge (2005) stresses the importance of communication being two-way and underpinned by commitment and positive attitudes towards one another. Communication partners must actively listen to one another and be willing to consider new perspectives (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2008) and change their opinions when convincing arguments are presented (Tveit, 2013). Communication is not akin to contact alone; whilst schools collecting information from parents increases contact, in isolation it does not improve communication (Feuerstein, 2000).

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's (1997) research review emphasises that communication must be proactively welcoming to nurture partnership as parents are less likely to engage with school staff if they do not perceive their involvement to be valued. In order for communication to be effective, mutual knowledge, or common ground, must be established. Mutual knowledge is defined by Cramton (2002) as the knowledge which communication partners share. In parent-professional partnership, common ground is found in the two parties' desire to support the child at the centre of their partnership. Communication must be built on a foundation of awareness, understanding, and trust for it to be open and honest (J. Appleton et al., 2013).

2.6.2.3. Trust. For genuine active partnership to occur, the relationship must utilise reciprocal communication "underpinned by mutual trust and respect" (Beveridge, 2005, p.95). This must be built over time and repaired where difficulties have been encountered (Miller & Ahmad, 2000). Vangen and Huxham's (2003) cycle of trust, developed from their longitudinal research into and review of literature around collaboration, discusses how trust is built through small wins; if a positive outcome occurs within a trusting relationship, trust will be reinforced and sustained, thereby reducing the risk perceived by partners in future activities. Whilst Huxham and Vangen (2009) recognise that trust is a precondition for effective partnership in theory, their research indicates that this condition is often not met in reality, with suspicion being a common starting point in partnership.

2.7. Collaborative Partnership

The terms 'partnership' and 'collaboration' are often used interchangeably in research (Huxham, 1996). However, in the current research, a distinction is made between these terms. As evidenced in the summary of parent-professional partnership models, collaboration is not a prerequisite for partnership; parents are frequently positioned as passive receivers of professional input, and active parent involvement is not necessarily valued. Conversely,

Wolfendale (1983) states that collaborative parental partnership should be built on the principles of advocacy and reciprocity and that professionals should: view parents as partners; consult with parents to ensure that they have the opportunity to voice their opinions; actively involve parents in setting mutually agreed upon objectives; involve parents in the actioning process; ensure that parents and professionals are both accountable for outcomes; and involve parents in testing hypotheses and evaluating impact. Stamina, determination, and communication are seen as essential to effective collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 1996). It is this active involvement and its underlying principles of respect and reciprocity which the current research is interested in.

To demonstrate how collaboration between majority and minority groups can be actioned in education settings, a summary of studies exploring collaboration between school staff and parents from minority groups and, more specifically, D/deaf parents shall be provided. Literature exploring collaboration with parents of children with SEND or with parents who have disabilities themselves has not been specifically focused on. Whilst these parents can also be positioned as belonging to minority groups, the purpose of the current research is to explore collaboration between school staff and with parents who have a minority culturo-linguistic identity. Therefore, it was felt that exploration of collaboration in the field of SEND was not appropriate as the disability view discussed in this research was discordant with the identity internalised by parents in the current study.

2.7.1. Collaboration Between School Staff and Parents From Minority Groups

For collaborative partnerships to be formed between school staff and parents from diverse backgrounds, barriers to parental involvement must be removed and culturally-sensitive participation encouraged (Matuszny et al., 2007). Collaborative partnerships cannot be imposed but are build through frequent reciprocal and respectful communication (Conus & Fahrni, 2019). For communication to be effective, parents' cultures must be respected and

understood, and parents should not be stereotyped but viewed as individuals (Tomlinson, 1993). A deficit view of minority parents must be avoided (Lasky & Karge, 2011), and parents from diverse backgrounds should be viewed as a resource which school staff can draw upon (Dusi, 2012). Teachers need access to training and modelling of effective collaboration with minority group parents from professionals in relevant fields and colleagues in similar settings (Smit et al., 2007). Additionally, they need support to reflect on their strategic goals and on the systemic changes which need to occur for these to be met (Smit et al., 2003).

Open and clear lines of communication between teachers and parents from minority groups are essential for effective collaboration (Joshi et al., 2005). Research indicates that parents from minority groups are interested and would like to be involved in their children's education but that communication is often a barrier to their participation, either due to perceived potential issues or previous negative experiences (Smit & Driessen, 2005). For example, in Crozier and Davies' (2007) study, Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents who lacked confidence in their English proficiency and knew that an interpreter would not be provided by school would be unlikely to attend meetings with their children's teachers. Parents' own negative school experiences can also be a barrier to parental participation in their children's schooling (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011), a factor particularly relevant to Deaf parents taught through restrictive oralism.

2.7.2. Collaboration Between Hearing School Staff and D/deaf Parents

To the researcher's knowledge, two papers have been published exploring experiences of D/deaf parents of participating in their hearing children's education. Kanwal et al. (2022) researched challenges faced by 28 D/deaf parents in the Punjab in contributing to their children's academics, and Barbosa et al. (2023) researched experiences of 10 Deaf mothers in Portugal of participating in their children's school lives. Qualitative data were collected

through interpreter-supported semi-structured interviews (Kanwal et al., 2022) and a focus group (Barbosa et al., 2023). Both studies utilised thematic analysis which explored across-group themes but which meant parents' individual experiences were not examined. Whilst neither study stated how many participants identified as culturally Deaf, both included information about Deaf culture in their literature reviews and described using sign language in interviews, and information discussed in the results sections indicated that some participants explored the concept of Deaf culture when recounting experiences.

Similar results were found across the two studies, with several significant challenges to participation highlighted. Participants in both studies reported experiencing communication difficulties and attitudinal barriers when communicating with school staff, which were exacerbated by hearing people's misconceptions about D/deafness and a lack of use of interpreters. Recommendations for how to facilitate Deaf parents' involvement in their hearing children's education for those working in government and educational settings included providing training and guidance around D/deafness to professionals working with parents and facilitating access to interpreters.

2.8. Collaboration Within Educational Psychology

The EP role has been reconstructed over time, with focus shifting from completing within-child assessments using psychometric testing to active engagement in a variety of functions, ranging from completing individual casework to supporting systemic change, with a wide array of partners, including children and young people and the adults supporting them at school, home, and in the wider community (Fallon et al., 2010). Alongside the expansion of the EP role, developments have occurred regarding how children and young people and their parents are involved in decision-making, with the expectation being that they should be invited to fully participate in discussions and contribute to decisions being made about them as much as possible (Fox, 2015). In the context of education, health, and care plans, for

which EP involvement is compulsory, the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014) highlights the importance of collaboration and multi-agency working when writing education, health, and care needs assessments (Boyle et al., 2017).

Unsurprisingly given the context in which they work, collaboration is named as one of the underlying principles of EP practice by the Joint Professional Liaison Group (JPLG, 2020). The Currie Report (Scottish Executive, 2002) outlines five core functions of the EP (consultation, assessment, intervention, training, and research) which are enacted across three levels (child and family, school or education establishment, and the LA). Collaboration is interwoven across all of these functions and levels as none can be successful without the active engagement of the clients for and with whom the work is completed. Assessment and intervention cannot occur without the consent of those involved in these processes, and the designing and implementation of training and research must be informed by requests from service users. Collaboration is arguably most evident within consultation as this process cannot occur without the collaboration of those involved in the situation being discussed (Wagner, 2000; Wagner, 2017).

The use of consultation and problem-solving approaches which promote collaboration are widespread within EP practice (Lee & Woods, 2017), with frameworks such as the Monsen Problem-Solving Model (Monsen & Frederickson, 2017), the Constructionist Model of Informed and Reasoned Action (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2017), and the Woolfson et al. Integrated Framework (Woolfson, 2017) taught as part of EP training courses and implemented by EPs when actioning systemic change. Using approaches such as these allow for a holistic view to be taken of an individual or situation and values the contributions of all parties involved (Cameron, 2006; Atkinson et al., 2006; Farrell, 2009). EPs are well-placed to utilise collaborative approaches due to their psychological knowledge, which informs their

understanding of the situations being collaborated on, and interpersonal skills, which support the management of collaborative partnerships (Fallon et al., 2010).

Due to their knowledge of the dynamics of group processes and their eco-systemic view of multi-faceted situations, EPs are able to appreciate and positively influence the dynamics of a partnership (Cameron, 2006). Given that the quality of working relationships affects the impact of collaborative efforts (Gameson & Rhydderch, 2017), it is important that partnerships are built on reciprocal respect, trust, and understanding, which is formed through active listening and strengthened through joint working. Active listening is a key skill that EPs must develop to best include all participants in collaborative partnerships (Miller & Rolnick, 2013; Gray & Woods, 2022). Active listening ensures that the views and experiences of all involved in the partnership are recognised and valued (Farrell, 2009; Wagner, 2017), and EPs can use their mediation skills to facilitate these conversations, ensuring that everybody has an equal opportunity to contribute (Rothì et al., 2008) and working to reconcile any conflict arising from differences in perspectives (JLPG, 2020; Harker et al., 2017). When conversations are mediated well, everybody involved has the opportunity to actively participate in joint formulation, hypothesis-testing, and critical reflection on implemented actions, thereby addressing the power imbalance often evident in parent-professional relationships (Monsen & Frederickson, 2017; Woolfson, 2017).

An intrinsic aspect of EP training and qualified practice is personal and professional reflexivity (British Psychological Society, 2023). EPs are expected to continuously reflect on their own practice and to develop their professional knowledge and personal skills. Through reflection, EPs can develop their awareness and understanding of potential or actual discriminatory practices within education settings and wider society and of their own personal biases. It is expected that this awareness will then lead to actioning of measures that

aim to minimise biases within their own professional practice and to address discriminatory attitudes that may impact on those with whom they work.

2.9. Literature Review Summary

Individuals who identity as Deaf position themselves as members of a culturo-linguistic community. Typical elements of a Deaf identity include, but are not limited to, prelingual deafness, use of sign language, and difficulty in spoken communication (Pendergrass et al., 2019). Deaf identity develops over time and is impacted by access to Deaf culture and sign language (Byatt et al., 2021), and a Deaf cultural identity is impacted by marginalisation from hearing culture and acceptance by the Deaf community (Chapman, 2021). Decisions affecting Deaf people are often made by policy makers with little understanding of Deaf culture (Ladd, 2003), and Deaf people must be actively involved in decision-making to ensure that community priorities are taken into account and actions conducted in a culturally appropriate manner.

Systemic barriers to equal access are experienced by Deaf people, including in their access to their hearing children's education (BDA, 2015). In recognition of the impact of parental engagement on children's academic achievement (Wilder, 2014), the DfE (2023b) protects parents' rights to involvement in their children's education. As reflected by the models of parent-professional partnership discussed, there is no universal definition of partnership. However, important aspects of effective partnership include parental empowerment (Huxham & Vangen, 2009), reciprocal communication (Conus & Fahrni, 2019), and respectful trust (Beveridge, 2005).

To support collaborative participation with parents from minority cultures, communication must be culturally sensitive (Matuszny et al., 2007) and linguistic barriers removed (Joshi et al., 2005). It is hoped that the BSL Act (2022) will increase linguistic access for the Deaf community to public sectors such as education, and Deaf people must be

consulted about how this can occur. Little research has been published exploring

collaboration between Deaf parents and hearing school staff.

2.10. Rationale For The Current Research

Deaf parents have consistently raised that their communication and collaboration with

their children's school is limited, either due to contact being infrequent or interactions not

taking communication needs into account (Mallory et al., 1992; BDA, 2015). Despite this, the

DfE have produced no guidance regarding communication between Deaf parents and hearing

school staff. Research exploring Deafness and education tends to focus on the experiences of

CODAs or hearing parents with Deaf children. Only two published papers examine

collaborative partnership between Deaf parents and hearing school staff, neither of which

were conducted in the UK or explored school staff's experiences of collaboration with Deaf

parents. The current research aims to address this identified research gap by exploring the

experiences of culturally Deaf parents of hearing children and of hearing school staff of

collaboration in England.

This research is relevant to EPs as collaboration with parents and professionals is an

integral aspect of EP practice (DfE, 2023a; JPLG, 2020) and an area in which they can model

good practice and support school staff to develop their own skills. As EPs work with children

and families, schools or education establishments, and LAs (Scottish Executive, 2002), it is

important that understanding of facilitators and barriers to effective collaboration with Deaf

parents and hearing school staff within the education sector is gained to support

understanding and development of their role in these partnerships. It is expected that parents

will be involved in decisions being made about their children (Fox, 2015), and this cannot

occur without parents being active collaborators alongside school staff, a relationship that

EPs have the interpersonal skills to support. EPs are also well-placed to support school staff

as they appreciate the contextual pressures of working in the education system and so can

assist them in navigating complex relationships and in managing time and financial constraints, the latter of which is a particular consideration in relation to collaboration with parents belonging to a linguistic minority such as Deaf parents (Farrell, 2009). At the level of the LA, EPs can support development of systems that would facilitate collaborative relationships in education settings, so it is again important that understanding of current systems is gained.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Chapter Overview

Chapter three outlines the philosophical underpinnings and methodological approach of the research. Particular focus has been placed on researcher positionality and its impact on the research design, procedure, data collection, and analysis due to the active role that the researcher takes in interpretation of data in IPA studies.

3.2. Research Aims and Questions

There is a scarcity of research exploring factors that facilitate and hinder collaboration between culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff. Although some guidance has been published regarding best practice for effective communication between D/deaf individuals and hearing practitioners (Singleton & Tittle, 2001; Barnett, 2002; Richardson, 2014), consultation with the Deaf community indicates that this is not consistently followed (BDA, 2015). Additionally, the guidance produced relates to practice in medical settings where contact tends to be brief. Although the information around communication practicalities is generalisable to education settings, direction is not provided on how to establish and maintain ongoing collaborative relationships which is an area that school staff would benefit from guidance in, particularly because of the positive link between parental engagement and child academic achievement (Wilder, 2014).

This research aimed to explore the experiences of culturally Deaf parents and hearing mainstream school staff of collaboration and gain insight into what they feel facilitates and hinders effective collaboration. It is intended that this information will inform best practice guidelines within the author's LA education services and wider EP practice. The research questions are as follows:

1. Based on their lived experiences, what do culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff report to be the current strengths and weaknesses of collaboration?

2. According to culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff, how can collaboration be facilitated?

As the aim of the current research was to explore collaboration, a research question was not developed relating to Deaf identity development. However, upon analysis of the data, it was felt that exploration of parents' Deaf identity development was relevant to support understanding and appreciation of the experiences discussed. This will be further explored in chapter four.

3.3. Researcher Positionality

Before exploring the research methodology, I must present my positionality as a researcher. It is important in any research project to reflect on positionality because factors such as the researcher's lived experiences, identity, and beliefs will affect their position and, in turn, how their research is conducted and results analysed (Holmes, 2020). It is vital in this research project to explain my positionality as the culturally Deaf research participants involved in the study belong to a minority culturo-linguistic group that has experienced oppression from the hearing majority. As a hearing researcher, I am a cultural outsider to the Deaf community. I do not wish to contribute to oppressive practice and so must be transparent by declaring my status as a cultural outsider working towards allyship.

The Anti-Oppression Network (n.d.) defines allyship as "an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group" (para.1). Allyship is not a destination but a continuous journey. The Deaf community has "hearing allies" (Ladd, 2003, p.113) who advocate for recognition of Deaf culture and support members of the Deaf community to take ownership of campaigning for and actioning change. Guiding Principles for Hearing Allyship (n.d.), a living document created using the contributions of Deaf people, outlines five principles of hearing allyship: listen to the Deaf community; ensure that Deaf

people have equal partnership or majority ownership in decision making; create and value Deaf spaces; keep power and opportunities within the Deaf community; and stand with and speak up for the Deaf community. These are principles which I have aimed to follow throughout the research project.

It is important to recognise that my BSL courses and interactions with the Deaf community were a driving force behind the research project and that my role as a trainee EP whilst completing the research meant that I frequently visited schools and worked with school staff during this time. These experiences influenced some of the methodological choices during the project, such as the decisions to facilitate parent interviews using interpreters and to explicitly separate my role as a researcher from my position as a trainee EP to school staff, but care was taken to reduce the impact of my prior learning and experiences on data analysis. I continuously considered the possible impact of my preconceptions through reflective supervision and keeping a research diary, endeavouring to minimise potential biases that could have affected data analysis and remain as objective as possible during these research stages. Please see Appendix A for an illustrative reflexive research diary extract.

When presenting the methodology, analysis, and discussion of the current research, I have written in the third person. Whilst a researcher's interpretations are an intrinsic aspect of IPA (as will be discussed in section 3.5), I wanted to make a clear distinction throughout the research between participants' experiences and my own interpretations. I felt that this was particularly important in my research as I did not want to risk my (hearing) interpretation as being misunderstood as those of the Deaf participants. Writing in the third person helped me to communicate this more clearly than I felt could be achieved when writing in the first person.

3.4. Philosophical Stance

It is important that social scientists actively reflect upon the philosophical underpinnings of their research to consider how it is situated within its social context (Delanty & Strydom, 2003). Moon and Blackman (2014) outline three fundamentals which must be considered: ontology, epistemology, and the overarching theoretical perspective.

3.4.1. Ontology

Ontology, defined by B. Smith (2003) as "the science of what is" (p.155), is the study of that which knowledge can be acquired about. Ontologies can be categorised as realist or relativist. Realist ontology posits that researchers can discover brute facts about reality which "exist independently of any human institutions" (Searle, 1995, p.2) and do not require meaning to be attributed by the researcher to be understood (Cohen et al., 2018). Realist ontology was not felt to be appropriate for the current study as these ontologies examine objective facts which were not the focus of the investigation; subjective experiences were explored. Conversely, researchers employing relativists ontology believe that reality differs across contexts and is understood through people's experiences (M. Smith, 2006); facts are not brute but "owe their existence to human activity and belief" (Monutuschi, 2014, p.127). Due to the current study's focus on understanding the experiences of culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff, relativist ontology was employed. Of the relativist ontologies available, bounded relativism was selected which argues that "one shared reality exists within a bounded group…but across groups different realities exist" (Moon & Blackman, 2014, p.1170). This can be recognised in the models of Deafness discussed in the literature review; D/deafness is simultaneously viewed as a culture and as a disability by different groups, indicating that multiple realities exist within the shared reality of human existence.

3.4.2. Epistemology

Epistemology, characterised by Hofer (2001) as the study of "the nature and justification of human knowledge" (p.355), refers to the relationship between the researcher

and the object of their research and the impact of this on the knowledge gained. According to Crotty (2014), epistemological positions exist on a continuum comprising objectivism at one end, subjectivism at the other, and constructionism between the two. Whilst objectivism holds that reality exists independently of human consciousness, subjectivism asserts that meaning is imposed on reality by the person experiencing it (Kettley, 2012) and constructionism claims that meaning is created through engagement with reality (Hammersley, 2013). Objectivism was rejected for the current study as lived experiences of individuals within their own unique realities was the focus of investigation rather than a single shared reality. A constructionist epistemological stance was adopted due to this school of thought's view that meaning is constructed through active engagement with reality; the different experiences of Deaf and hearing people shape construction of their realities. Constructionism was felt to be more appropriate an epistemology than subjectivism due to its focus on divining shared understanding in addition to exploring individual perspectives; subjectivism would allow for exploration of individual but not shared understanding of a phenomenon.

3.4.3. Theoretical Perspective

A researcher's theoretical perspective (the philosophical orientation guiding their study) is informed by whether knowledge acquisition arises from deductive or inductive reasoning (Moon & Blackman, 2014). In deductive reasoning, a hypothesis is formulated based on an existing theory and data collected to test the hypothesis, whilst in inductive reasoning, general principles are formed through many observations of a phenomenon (Thomas, 2022). Within the current study, an interpretivist theoretical perspective was adopted with inductive data explored using phenomenology. Interpretivism was utilised due to its belief that people's interpretations are impacted by the historical and cultural context in which they are formed. The shared history and culture of the Deaf community are significant to this population's identity and so should be considered. Interpretivism advocates that reality

cannot be studied objectively as it is "a series of interpretations that people within society give of their position" (della Porta & Keating, 2008, p.25) which the researcher interprets in turn, a process which Giddens (1976) coined the double hermeneutic. In other words, the researcher aims to make sense of how a participant makes sense of their own experiences and realities.

Depending on the theoretical perspective taken, research can have different applications, such as to predict, understand, emancipate, or deconstruct (Moon & Blackman, 2014). Due to practical constrictions imposed on the study by the researcher's doctoral course, it was not possible for this research to be participatory and conducted with a Deaf co-researcher which would have been the preference in line with the Guiding Principles for Hearing Allyship (n.d.) which state that Deaf people should have equal or majority ownership in decision making and that power and opportunities should be kept within the Deaf community. The researcher had a fixed timescale to complete the research in whilst simultaneously completing professional practice elements on their placement and therefore did not have time to recruit for and robustly implement a participatory action research project. Instead, careful consideration was given to how the researcher could ensure that data collection empowered Deaf participants to discuss their individual lived experiences and analysis and presentation of findings preserved and communicated participants' voices.

3.5. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

A researcher's ontological and epistemological positioning will influence the approach taken to their research (Scotland, 2012). Of the qualitative methods explored, it was felt that IPA (J. Smith et al., 2022) was the most appropriate for the current study as its underlying philosophical principles align with the researcher's relativist ontological, constructionist epistemological, and interpretivist theoretical positions. "IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of experience to

participants and how participants make sense of that experience" (J. Smith, 2011, p.9). Participants are viewed as experts in their experiences, and researchers are positioned as enablers to exploring the phenomenon under investigation (Eatough & Smith, 2017) who 'bracket off' their preconceptions to enable the participants' experiences to be communicated on their terms (J. Smith et al., 2022). The empowerment of participants by positioning them as experts was particularly important for the Deaf participants in the current study due to the disempowerment experienced by the Deaf community within hearing society.

IPA was felt to be more appropriate for the current research than the other qualitative options considered. Discursive approaches were explored, but the researcher was concerned about the impact that using interpreters for parental interviews may have on analysis of the language used; BSL has its own grammar and lexicon and so is not a verbatim translation, and it does not utilise the same figurative linguistic elements as spoken English which would further limit the language analysis. IPA moves away from a purely linguistic analysis endorsed by discursive approaches (Willig, 2015) and allows for detailed exploration to occur of the sense that participants make of their lived experiences (J. Smith & Osborn, 2015).

IPA values the experiences of participants at an individual level through creation of Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) before moving to explore Group Experiential Themes (GETs) across participants (Eatough & Smith, 2017), thereby maintaining each participant's individuality which was seen as important in the current research. The focus on individuality distinguishes IPA from reflexive thematic analysis and grounded theory, which focus on developing across-participant themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Contrary to reflexive thematic analysis and grounded theory, an experience is not invalidated in IPA if it is not seen across all participants. Instead, it is valued in its own right and respected as a unique component of the participant's lived experiences, principles that the researcher felt were important in the current study due to the lack of available literature in the

area under investigation. The exploration of group themes differentiates IPA from narrative analysis, which explores individual narratives and does not generate group themes (Murray, 2015). The researcher felt that it was important to explore group themes in the current study to explore similarities and contrasts in experiences and to analyse reasons behind convergence and divergence which may lead to identification of next steps for research and practice in education settings.

IPA is informed by three philosophical principles: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography.

3.5.1. Phenomenology

J. Smith et al. (2022) describe phenomenology as the study of lived experiences. In contrast to positivist studies, phenomenological research acknowledges and engages with the subjectivity inherent in the exploration of experiences. It recognises and accepts that individuals experience phenomena subjectively rather than encountering a value-free objective reality (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Instead of looking to make objective statements about events, researchers explore participants' personal lived experiences and examine their perceptions in detail to make experiential claims (Larkin et al., 2006). Acknowledgement of the subjectivity of experiences aligns with the bounded relativist ontology employed in the current study and explains how different realities occur within the same contexts; whilst audiological deafness is a shared phenomenon, the realities of how D/deafness is experienced widely differ.

Phenomenological inquiry is founded on the belief that "experience should be examined in the way that it occurs, and in its own terms" (J. Smith et al., 2022, p.8) instead of trying to fit experiences into preexisting categories, a principle first promoted by Husserl. Phenomenological researchers must intentionally 'bracket' their preconceptions to allow the phenomenon's essence to be explored and ensure that the researcher's views do not unduly

influence the investigative process (Oxley, 2016). The practice of 'bracketing' was particularly important within the current study due to the researcher's prior knowledge of Deaf culture and history gained through education from members of the Deaf community. Advancements in phenomenology made by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Satre led to a more interpretative view being adopted that situates individual within their own realities which are influenced by relationships, language, culture, beliefs, and personal values, a position that applies to participants and researchers alike.

3.5.2. Hermeneutics

Developed separately to phenomenology but linked to this body of thought is hermeneutics, defined by J. Smith et al. (2022) as "the theory of interpretation" (p.3), which originated in the critical examination of Biblical texts and further developed to exploration of other written texts and then to understanding lived experiences. Hermeneutics was influenced by Schleiermacher who argued that to fully understand a text, the writer themself must be understood, an idea further developed by Heidegger and Gadamar who argued that a person's previous experiences and resultant preconceptions will affect how they interpret a phenomenon (J. Smith et al., 2022). This is consistent with the current study's constructionist epistemological stance as it recognises the impact that experiences have on how an individual's personal reality is built.

Within hermeneutical phenomenological research, the researcher moves from depicting a phenomenon to its interpretation whilst recognising that how they view the world is intertwined with how they interpret the experiences described by the participant. Data is co-constructed through the double hermeneutic process in which the participant explores the meaning they make of their reality and the researcher attempts to understand and make sense of this meaning (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). A reflexive attitude must be adopted throughout data analysis as preconceptions may not be easily identified prior to the analytic process.

Oxley (2016) describes this continuous reflection as a hermeneutic circle: "At the core of IPA is an intention to understand the whole by looking at the part, but in order to understand the part the researcher also needs to look closely at the whole" (p.57).

3.5.3. Idiography

Integral to the hermeneutic circle is the principle of idiography which highlights the importance of in-depth analysis of an individual's perspectives on their unique contexts before producing statements across participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Each case is analysed in turn before examining themes evident across the data set. Experiences discussed by one participant are not invalidated if they are not seen across all cases but instead can be explored as a distinct aspect of that individual's lived reality (Oxley, 2016). It is vital in IPA research that across-group themes are rooted in the particulars of an individual's experience (Eatough & Smith, 2017). The commitment of idiography to exploring and transparently communicating individual experiences was valued in the current research as it preserved participants' unique experiences and allowed for exploration of different meanings experienced within common themes.

3.6. Research Design

Thomas (2022) positions IPA as "a specialised branch of case study" (p.160), distinct from case study design as it specifically focuses on people's experiences. Instead of specifying a single data collection method for use in IPA studies, researchers are guided to employ whatever method will allow for collection of rich data whilst ensuring that participants "have been granted an opportunity to tell their stories, to speak freely and reflectively, and to develop their ideas and express their concerns at some length" (J. Smith et al., 2022, p.53). Due to the exploratory focus of the current research, semi-structured interviews were utilised. Interviews were selected over written data collection methods such as textual analysis or surveys as a dialogical approach was felt to be more appropriate for

exploring experiences because the researcher could prompt for further information when topics of interest arose. The use of designs such as observations was not felt to be appropriate as this would not elicit information on participants' previous lived experiences or internal though processes.

The flexible dialogical nature of semi-structured interviews enabled participants to discuss their experiences in detail and the researcher to follow the participants' lead in exploring significant topics (J. Smith & Osborn, 2015). Interview guides were produced that contained a range of questions which addressed the phenomenon being explored along with related prompts and probes that could be used to further explore topics raised (Robson & McCartan, 2015). Interview schedules was developed using the guidelines outlined in J. Smith and Osborn (2015) regarding using open-ended and neutral questions and avoiding jargon.

Consideration was given to the use of a paired design to explore the experiences of parent-teacher dyads which would have allowed investigation of experiences from the point of view of both parties involved (Larkin et al., 2019), but this design was felt to risk compromising internal confidentiality (Ummel & Archille, 2016) as participants' anonymity could not be guaranteed within reported information and concern around lack of anonymity could discourage participants from discussing their experiences transparently. For example, if only one of the dyads interviewed discussed a child attending a middle school, it would be easy for participants to identify themselves and each another through the data; if negative experiences were discussed, this could negatively affect the relationship which may in turn reduce the effectiveness of collaboration between the dyads and negatively impact the child at the centre of the collaborative relationship. Therefore, participants were recruited independently of one another.

It was initially planned that interviews with school staff would occur within a focus group design. Focus groups can be used to gain insight into an individual's views and into how a social context impacts on their elaboration (Wilkinson et al., 2004). Previous IPA research using focus groups has noted that a group environment can "allow group members to co-constitute narratives and multiperspective accounts that would probably not have emerged in single interviews" (Palmer et al., 2010, p.117). Transcripts are explored twice so as to examine group dynamics and patterns and explore individual idiographic accounts (J. Smith, 2004). It was felt that use of focus groups would therefore provide information about individual and group narratives which would both be valuable to explore. However, due to difficulties recruiting school staff (see Appendix B for a summary), the design was adapted to individual interviews.

Interviews with Deaf parents were facilitated by BSL interpreters to ensure that participants could communicate in their preferred language. Interpreter fees were partially paid by a £500 grant from the University of Birmingham's (UoB) College of Social Sciences Postgraduate Research Student Development Fund (awarded May 2023). To ensure that participants felt comfortable with the facilitating interpreter and therefore were confident about discussing potentially sensitive topics (Temple & Young, 2014), their preferred interpreters were used. All interpreters were fully qualified and registered with the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People. It was important that interpreters were qualified to ensure they met professional standards and competencies and so were suitably proficient in interpreting the complexities of BSL (Singleton & Tittle, 2000). To promote consistency between different interpreters across the interviews, a communication protocol was developed based on the practices outlined by J. Davis (2005), a copy of which can be found in Appendix C.

To ensure that they were as comfortable as possible during the interview process and so felt safe in sharing their honest experiences and views, participants were offered meetings face-to-face or virtually on either Microsoft Teams or Zoom. All chose online interviews, with parents selecting Zoom and the teacher choosing Microsoft Teams. Parent interviews were audio and video recorded so that signed communication could be viewed in cases where participants spoke and signed simultaneously. In line with the General Data Protection Regulation principle of data minimisation in which data is not collected unless necessary (BPS, 2018), audio but not video was recorded for the teacher interview.

3.7. Procedure

3.7.1. Ethics

The current study was conducted according to guidelines produced by the BPS (2021a; 2021b), the British Educational Research Association (2024), and the UoB (2021). Table 2 outlines the salient ethical considerations and related actions taken to safeguard participants. Ethical approval was granted for the study in June 2023 by the UoB Humanities and Social Sciences Committee. See Appendix D for the letter of ethical approval.

Table 2.

Ethical Considerations and Related Actions

Ethical Consideration	Related Action
Valid informed consent	Information sheets that used clear accessible language were provided to participants prior to the interviews via email. Additionally, to ensure that Deaf parents were fully informed in their preferred language, the parent information sheet was translated into BSL by a Deaf translator, and this video was sent to Deaf participants alongside the information sheet. No information about the research was withheld from participants. Written consent was gained prior to the interview via a Word document consent form, and consent was confirmed at the start of the interview following a summary of the key content in the information sheet. Participants had the opportunity to ask any questions prior to the interview. Participants and interpreters consented to being recorded.

Ethical Consideration	Related Action
Right to withdraw	Participants were informed of their right to withdraw in the information sheet and video and prior to the interview and in the debrief sheet after the interview. They were informed that a reason for withdrawal did not have to be given and were reassured that there would be no negative consequences for withdrawal from the research. Right to withdraw was reiterated at the start and end of the interview, and a specific date was stated by which participants could withdraw their data (seven days after the interview). Participants were informed that all data collected from them would be destroyed if requested before the stated date.
Confidentiality	As each interview was conducted online, the researcher could only guarantee privacy and confidentiality in their physical location as they could not control where participants joined the meeting from. However, the researcher checked that participants were comfortable to continue the interview at the start of the meeting. The researcher conducted interviews in a private location where conversations could not be overheard or viewed, and the same was true when reviewing videos for transcription. Online meetings were conducted in password-protected virtual rooms (Zoom or Microsoft Teams, depending on participant preference) which participants and interpreters could only join if they had a meeting invitation and the password. A virtual waiting room was set up so that if a person requested to join the room who had not been invited to the interview, their request could be denied by the researcher (though this did not occur). Administrator rights were only assigned to the researcher. Interpreters were bound to confidentiality through their own professional body's regulations, and the need for confidentiality was also emphasised in the communication protocol. Identifiable information such as names of individuals or institutions was removed from transcripts. Anonymised transcripts were named using participants' pseudonyms, and consent forms were labelled with the date on which the interview took place so that participants' names could not be linked to transcripts. Participants were informed in consent forms and at the beginning of the interview that anonymised quotes would be used in the research paper and related viva and that there was potential for the research to be published in an academic journal.
Anonymity	It was not possible for participants to remain anonymous to the researcher due to the use of virtual face-to-face interviews. Additionally, one participant was recruited via one of the researcher's academic tutors, and so their identity was known to this tutor. However, participants' identities and personal information were kept confidential, and no information irrelevant to the study's research questions or inclusion/exclusion criteria was gathered. Interpreters were not

Ethical Consideration	Related Action
	identified in the research to avoid the risk of participants being identifiable through their preferred interpreters. The risk that parent participants may be identifiable due to the small Deaf population in the UK was highlighted in the consent form, but participants were informed of the steps that would be taken to protect their anonymity as detailed in this table.
Privacy and data storage	Interviews were recorded using the in-built video and audio recording features of Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Audio was also recorded on a dictaphone placed next to the researcher in case the video/audio files were corrupted. Dictaphone recordings of parent interviews were deleted once the researcher had reviewed the video and audio recorded using the relevant online application. Videos of the interviews and consent forms were stored on the UoB secure server in line with data management and retention guidelines. Access to research data for this project was restricted to the researcher and their research supervisors. Participant video and audio files were deleted following completion of analysis. Anonymised transcripts were saved using participant pseudonyms on the UoB encrypted secure server and on the researcher's password- and biometrically-protected laptop. All data was handled and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018). Consent forms and anonymised transcripts will be kept on the UoB secure server (BEAR) for 10 years, after which they will be permanently deleted.
Avoidance of harm to participant	No risks were identified to school staff participants. It was recognised that parent participants may discuss sensitive or emotive experiences and so the information sheet and video included the details of three D/deaf charities who could offer appropriate guidance and emotional support. The researcher monitored body language and non-verbal cues to identify signs of discomfort or distress. Parent and school staff information sheets (and the parent information video) contained the contact details of the researcher and their research supervisors for use if participants had any concerns about any aspects of the study.

3.7.2. Interview Schedule

Two interview schedules were developed (one for Deaf parent participants and one for hearing school staff). J. Smith et al.'s (2022) guidance was followed, meaning that a descriptive question was asked first in each interview to help participants feel at ease and was then followed by subsequent questions exploring participants' experiences in more

depth. At the point of developing the interview schedules, the only published research

exploring collaboration between Deaf parents and hearing school staff was Kanwal et al.

(2022), so development of explorative questions was informed by the themes relevant to and

schedules used in studies of collaborative relationships between majority and minority culture

individuals that arose from the literature review. Additionally, Kanwal et al.'s (2022)

interview schedule focused largely on practicalities of collaboration in order to answer

research questions regarding challenges experienced. As the current research wished to

examine facilitators of collaboration as well as barriers, questions were developed to explore

this.

The interviews consisted of eight main questions and further prompts relating to:

relevant participant background information, including how the participant defined or

understood Deafness; participants' lived experiences of collaborating with hearing teachers

(parent interviews) or Deaf parents (teacher interview); current strengths and weaknesses of

these collaborative relationships; and how participants felt that future collaboration could be

effectively facilitated. The researcher also developed a list of probes such as "can you tell me

more about that?" which could be used to request further information.

3.7.3. Pilot

Following ethical approval being granted, parent and school staff interview schedules

were piloted. The purposes of the pilot interviews were to evaluate the appropriateness and

effectiveness of the interview schedule, to receive feedback from an interpreter about the

communication protocol's suitability, and to provide the researcher with the opportunity to

experience and reflect upon the process of interviewing (Malmqvist et al., 2019). As data

collection was not the aim at this stage, interviews were not recorded. It was felt to be

particularly important to pilot the parent interview to ensure that questions and interviewing

techniques were culturally sensitive.

The parent pilot interview took place at the parent's local Deaf club in July 2023 and was conducted with a Deaf parent whom the researcher knew socially and facilitated by an interpreter whom the parent trusted and was familiar and comfortable with. The teacher pilot interview took place online in September 2023 and was attended by the pilot parent's hearing child's hearing teacher. Whilst these participants represented a dyad, this was not felt to impact the study as interview data was not collected from them. Feedback from both pilot interviews was positive; pilot participants felt that the questions were easy to understand and reported feeling comfortable throughout the interview. The interpreter described the communication protocol as clear. The teacher suggested adding a question to the interview schedule about school staff's feelings regarding communicating with Deaf parents, so the researcher added a prompt to the interview schedule to ask about emotions if this had not arisen naturally during the interview. Copies of the finalised parent and school staff interview schedules can be found in Appendices E and F respectively.

3.7.4. Sampling and Recruitment

It is recommended that a small sample is utilised in IPA studies due to the in-depth nature of data analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The current study aimed to recruit between three and five parent participants and, following adaptation from focus group to individual interview design, between three and five school staff participants. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria of either being: a Deaf parent whose preferred language is BSL and who has at least one hearing child who attends a mainstream school; or an adult working in a teaching or pastoral capacity in a mainstream school who has current or recent (within the last five years) experience of working with Deaf parents whose preferred language is BSL, and with these parents' hearing children. Information sheets were produced for potential parent and school staff participants, and the parent information sheet was translated into a BSL video by a Deaf translator. For

copies of parent and school staff information sheets with LA information removed, please see Appendices G and H respectively.

As the current research aimed to explore views and experiences of hearing school staff who were unlikely to have received training or support in relation to D/deafness, the decision was made to exclude hearing school staff from specialist D/deaf schools or settings with D/deaf units as these individuals would have received training in D/deafness and have regular contact with trained professionals such as sensory support service specialist teachers due to the pupils' educational needs. This would mean that their understanding of D/deafness and access to support would likely be greater than that of mainstream school staff without this support, meaning that their data could not be used to address the research aims.

3.7.5. Participants

The final sample consisted of three Deaf parents and one hearing teacher. A summary of relevant participant information is provided in Table 3. Pseudonyms have been used to protect confidentiality. IPA studies seek homogeneity in their samples, though how homogeneity is defined differs depending on the study's context (J. Smith et al., 2022). In the current study, parent homogeneity was defined in terms of affinity with Deaf identity and having at least one hearing child attending a mainstream school. It was not feasible to further specify parent characteristics due to constraints of timescales and access to the Deaf population. Rather than medical measures like audiograms, self-identification as culturally Deaf was used as an inclusion criterion because this is a personal position best ascertained by the individual. To establish that parent participants' identities aligned with a view of cultural Deafness as opposed to medical deafness, the first question asked in parent interviews related to how they would describe their Deaf identity. Parents represented different relationship statuses and dynamics, and their children were at different stages of their academic careers. Consideration was given during reflexive tutorials to whether teacher's data should be

Table 3.

Relevant Participant Information

Pseudonym	Participant Information
Layla	Layla is married to a hearing husband and they have two hearing children. One child attends a mainstream secondary school, and the other is in a mainstream college. The family use a mixture of sign and speech at home. Layla's parents are both hearing. She was raised using a combination of speech and BSL and identifies as bilingual. Layla works for a D/deaf charity.
Evelyn	Evelyn is married to a Deaf husband and they have two hearing children. One child is in a mainstream primary school, and the other attends a mainstream secondary school with a Deaf unit. The family uses a combination of sign and speech at home. Evelyn's parents are both hearing. She attended a Deaf school where she was taught through cued speech (a visual version of spoken English which aims to develop lip reading skills, NDCS, 2024) and oralism, and she learned sign language here from her peers. Evelyn works for a Deaf charity.
Jack	Jack has a hearing child who attends a mainstream primary school. He co-parents with his hearing ex-partner, and their daughter lives with her mother in a different area of the country to Jack. His parents are hearing. Jack is the only member of his family who signs and so he wears hearing aids and communicates with his family through lip reading. Jack works as a ToD.
Natalie	Natalie is a Reception class teacher in a small mainstream single form entry first school. She currently has a child in her class who has two Deaf parents whose preferred method of communication is sign language. This is Natalie's first experience of working with Deaf parents.

included in the current research due to IPA exploration of GETs as well as PETs; as only one teacher participated in the study, school staff GETs could not be developed. The decision to include the data was made for two reasons. Firstly, the researcher felt that it would be unethical to remove this participant's data when they had not requested this themself (BPS, 2021a). Secondly, there are currently no studies to the researcher's knowledge exploring the experiences of hearing mainstream school staff of collaboration with Deaf parents of hearing children, and exclusion of the teacher data in the current study would perpetuate this gap in research literature. Rather than exploring parent and teacher GETs separately, GETs have been developed across all participants. It is recognised that generalisations to the wider population of school staff cannot be made from a single case. However, IPA does not aim to make generalisations but to gain insight into individuals' lived experiences. Therefore, the

current study represents early exploration of this research area. Further research must be conducted to explore experiences of the wider population of hearing school staff.

3.7.6. Data Collection

All interviews took place between November 2023 and February 2024 at a mutually agreed date and time. Due to the expected length of the interviews, each parent interview was facilitated by two interpreters as guidance indicates that fatigue begins to effect interpreted messages after 20-25 minutes (Clarion UK, 2019). Parents were informed that the researcher would organise and pay for two of their preferred interpreters to join the meeting, and a list of preferences was requested. The researcher organised interpreters for two parents who provided preferences. One parent indicated that their preference was to use a virtual interpreting service for which they had a subscription, and so the participant organised these interpreters personally. Parents communicated using their preferred methods; Layla communicated solely through interpreters, Evelyn used Sign Supported English (speaking and signing key words using BSL signs; Sense, 2023b), and Jack used a combination of speech and communication through interpreters. Each parent interview lasted for approximately 60 minutes, and the teacher interview was 40 minutes long.

Interviews began with a summary of the research aims, the process that would be followed during the interview, and how the collected information would be processed and stored. Consent was confirmed, and the recording was started. The interview schedules were used to structure the interviews, with the eight main questions asked in all interviews and prompts used variably in response to the discussions. Questions were structured in a manner that elicited in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and views and reduced interviewer input. The researcher monitored participants' emotional responses to questions and moved on from questions if discomfort was evident. At the end of the interviews, the participant were given the opportunity to make any additional comments or ask questions to

the interviewer and were thanked for their time. Following the interviews, the researcher emailed debrief sheets to participants. Please see Appendix I for a copy of this from which LA information has been removed.

As BSL has no written form, additional consideration was given into the different transcription options available for Deaf participants' interviews (as outlined by Young & Temple, 2014), and the decision was made to transcribe the interviews verbatim into written English. This option was selected as the intended audience of the research was education professionals who would find it difficult to decode translation that used linguistic glossing or BSL sign order. Verbatim transcription ensured that "the least cognitive effort to retrieve the meaning of an utterance" (Stone & West, 2012, p.656) was required of those reading the research findings.

The researcher contemplated sending transcriptions to parent participants to verify the translation accuracy but, due to limitations of the recording software which only captured the speaker's video rather than all meeting attendees' videos, it was not always possible to send a video of the parent signing for them to compare the transcription to; Layla and Jack's signing was not recorded when the interpreters were speaking, so there was nothing that the written transcript could be compared to. As the member checking process could not have been followed for all participants, the decision was made to not send Layla's transcript to her for verification. As the signs and spoken utterances for 'Deaf' and 'deaf' are the same, it was left to the researcher's discretion during transcription to decide whether the participant was referring to audiological or cultural D/deafness at each occurrence. On every occasion, the researcher examined the context of the discussion and used this to inform the decision. If it was not clear from the context, the combined term 'D/deaf' was utilised.

3.8. Analysis

J. Smith et al. (2022) describe analysis in IPA studies as "an iterative and fluid process of engagement with the transcript" (p.77) in which the researcher reduces the data whilst expanding on its meanings. The researcher processes information through the hermeneutic circle, aiming to make sense of how participants make sense of their experiences (J. Smith & Osborn, 2015). In-depth exploration of individual participants' experiences occurs before identifying patterns across the accounts (Eatough & Smith, 2017). The analysis framework outlined by J. Smith et al. (2022) and summarised in Table 4 was utilised for analysis in the current study. An extract of a parent participant transcript with the researcher's exploratory notes and experiential statements is provided in Appendix J to demonstrate how the process was applied. It should be noted that the linguistic analysis element of IPA is limited to an extent when exploring parent participants' transcripts as figurative linguistic components present in spoken English, such as idioms, metaphors, and similes, are not utilised in BSL (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999).

3.9. Validity

In qualitative research, 'validity' refers to the study's meaningfulness and credibility (J. Smith et al., 2022). In place of criteria used in quantitative studies such as objectivity, reliability, and statistical generalisability, Yardley (2015) outlines four considerations relevant to qualitative research (sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance). Each will be defined in turn and discussed in relation to the current study.

Sensitivity to context can be demonstrated through discussion of relevant literature, recognition of each participant's socio-cultural context and perspective, and careful consideration of ethical practice (Yardley, 2015). In the current study, summarisation and exploration of existing theory and research in relation to relevant topics such as Deaf culture and collaboration between parents and teachers was offered in the literature review, and

Table 4.

Stages of Data Analysis in IPA Research Outlined by J. Smith et al. (2022), as Applied in the

Current Study

Steps of Analysis	Description
1. Reading and re-reading	The first interview for which this process was followed was a parent interview. The researcher immersed themselves in the data from this interview through reading and re-reading the transcript and reviewing the video recording of the interview. This active engagement with the data helped the researcher to understand how narratives across the interview linked to one another (e.g. how the parent-teacher relationship developed over time in the CODA's school). To further support this understanding, the researcher used coloured pens to underline related sections of the transcripts to assist with recalling the links across the narrative. The researcher simultaneously recorded their initial impressions and reflections in a research diary which helped them to evaluate their ability to 'bracket off' their preconceptions.
2. Exploratory noting	The researcher processed the transcript line by line and noted points of interest. This helped them to develop their familiarity with the data. Language use and semantic content was explored (e.g. repetition of words or use of similar emotional descriptors). Exploratory notes can be categorised as descriptive (taking things at face value), linguistic (exploring the language used and considering how this impacts the researcher's understanding of participant experiences), or conceptual (analysing data at an interrogative level). Exploratory notes representing all three categories were produced and were recorded in the right-hand margin of the transcript.
3. Constructing experiential statements	The researcher developed statements that related directly to the participant's lived experiences and their sense-making. Each statement was grounded in the participant's experience whilst reflecting the researcher's interpretation of the experience (the hermeneutic circle). Where appropriate, the researcher used quotes from the participant in constructing the statement to ensure that their voice was communicated. Experiential statements were recorded in the left-hand margin of the transcript.
4. Searching for connections across experiential statements	Each experiential statement was typed up into a Microsoft Word document, labelled with the relevant page number to enable later location in the full transcript, printed out, and cut up (one statement per slip of paper). The statements were then moved around to map how they fitted together. This was a dynamic process of organising and reorganising clusters of statements to explore multiple potential grouping possibilities; the researcher explored at least two possible grouping placement for each statement.

Steps of Analysis	Description
5. Naming Personal Experiential Themes (PETs)	The researcher assigned a title to each cluster of experiential statements to make PETs which are: personal because they are derived from the individual whose experiences are being explored; experiential because they directly relate to the participant's experiences and sense-making; and themes because they reflect entities across the whole transcript as opposed to specific instances. Several analytical structures were used to develop the PETs (J. Smith et al., 2009): abstraction (grouping similar themes), subsumption (ranking according to meaning), polarisation (bringing together contrasting statements), narrative organisation (reflecting the temporal nature of the experience described), functional analysis (exploring the specific language used), and numeration (identifying how many times a theme emerges in a transcript). Abstraction and subsumption were the structures used most often. PETs and sub-themes were recorded in a table.
6. Continuing the individual analysis of other cases	The researcher completed steps one to five with each remaining transcript in turn. In keeping with IPA's commitment to idiography, the researcher 'bracketed' their preconceptions related to the previous case and approached each new transcript in its own right. When they recognised that they were making connections across the transcripts, the researcher would re-review the section that they had been working on to ensure that the data reflected the current participant's experiences.
7. Working with PETs to develop Group Experiential Themes (GETs) across cases	The researcher printed each participant's PETs, sub-themes, and experiential statements, colour coded them so they could be linked to the correct participant, and cut them out onto slips of paper. They then physically moved the statements around on a table, looking for similarities and differences between each participants' PETs to develop GETs and highlighting features that were shared across participants or unique to individuals. See Appendix K for an example of this process. The researcher moved between exploration of PETs, sub-themes, and experiential statements and also used the original transcripts to review the context. GETs and group-level sub-themes were recorded in a table.

identification of an area in which there was a dearth of research (effective collaboration

between Deaf parents and hearing school staff) led to the development of pertinent research

questions. Additionally, the researcher ensured that literature represented Deaf epistemologies

(De Clerck, 2010) as communicated by D/deaf researchers. Sensitivity to context was also

demonstrated through the research design as use of semi-structured interviews ensured that

participants' lived experiences were explored and valued. Sensitivity to context was

particularly important regarding Deaf participants due to the systemic power imbalances between Deaf and hearing communities (Young et al., 2018), so language access was prioritised through the use of translated information sheets and BSL interpreters.

To evidence commitment and rigour, the researcher must demonstrate personal commitment to the research through thoughtful engagement with the participants, thorough data collection, and sufficient breadth and depth of analysis which increases insight into the research topic (Yardley, 2015). The current study's use of IPA demonstrated the researcher's commitment to respectful engagement with participants and to valuing their individual experiences. The inclusion of the teacher's data shows the researcher's commitment to exploring and disseminating their experiences. Though it could be argued that inclusion of this participant's data may have affected the research's rigour as separate GETs were not developed for parents and school staff, the researcher did not feel that there was an ethical justification for its removal and felt that its inclusion increased breadth and depth of analysis. The researcher's commitment to the project was also communicated through their continuous development of methodological competence, both through reading IPA research and textbooks and through discussions in academic tutorials about their experiences of its application. Data analysis was an iterative and thorough process; each transcript was read in its entirety a minimum of four times.

Coherence and transparency refers to the extent to which the study makes sense and the openness with which the research is communicated (Yardley, 2015). An important aspect of transparency is reflexivity, which refers to the researcher's explicit consideration and communication of how the study was influenced by their experiences, beliefs, and values. In the current study, the researcher has explicitly stated all positions held and explained each decision made. The use of an honest positionality statement has supported reflexivity. Links have been made between the researcher's philosophical positioning and IPA's theoretical

basis, and the data collection and analysis processes have been described and supported by evidentiary extracts. To support the audience's understanding of how the researcher made conclusions from participant data, direct quotations from all participants have been used in the findings chapter.

Finally, impact and importance relates to how the research makes a difference to knowledge or practice in the area studied (Yardley, 2015). The current study has aimed to contribute to understanding of the topic under investigation which is an area where little research has been conducted. It is intended that the findings will be used to develop the practice of education professionals such as teachers and EPs regarding promoting and facilitating effective collaboration between Deaf parents and hearing teachers and in turn impact positively on the children at the centre of the collaborative efforts (Wilder, 2014). The implications of the findings will be discussed in later chapters.

3.10. Quality

Several criteria have been suggested for use with qualitative studies to evaluate their quality (Willig, 2021). Specific guidelines for determining the quality of IPA studies developed by J. Smith (2011) have been applied to the current study. These characteristics are summarised in Table 5 alongside steps taken by the researcher to meet these criteria.

Table 5.

Criteria of a Good IPA Study (J. Smith, 2011) and Steps Taken in the Current Study

Criteria	Steps Taken in the Current Study
The research should have a clear and detailed focus.	The literature review chapter gave an overview of research related to models of D/deafness, cultural Deafness, communication between Deaf and hearing individuals, models of and important themes in parent-professional partnership, and collaboration between teachers and parents from minority cultures. The gap in the literature regarding collaboration between

Criteria	Steps Taken in the Current Study
	hearing school staff and Deaf parents was highlighted, and the intention of the current study to address this was raised. Research aims were outlined in the methodology chapter and referred to explicitly in the findings.
Strong quality data should be acquired.	Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection to ensure that participants' experiences could be explored in-depth. Other data collection methods were considered and reasons were given for why these were rejected. The researcher frequently reflected on and developed their interviewing skills through academic tutorials and keeping a research diary which helped with the process of 'bracketing'.
The study should be rigorous. Extracts should represent the breadth and depth of the themes identified.	The researcher read through each transcript in its entirety a minimum of four times and explored at least two possible groupings during development of PETs and GETs. During narrative exploration of themes, the researcher explicitly stated which participants contributed to each theme's development. Illustrative extracts were provided for each theme and included enough information for the relevant context to be understood.
Each theme must be given sufficient space for elaboration.	In-depth exploration occurs for each theme discussed. Extracts from at least three participants were provided for each theme, and detailed interpretation was given for each quote.
Analysis should make use of the hermeneutic circle by being interpretative as well as descriptive. Commentary should follow presented extracts to demonstrate how themes develop.	The stages of data analysis outlined by J. Smith et al. (2022) were followed to ensure that both the participant's and the researcher's sense-making were highlighted (see Table 4 for details). Transcript extracts demonstrated the participant's lived experiences, and researcher commentary outlined their interpretation. All extracts were contextualised.
Convergence and divergence should be highlighted in analysis. Unique individual experiences should be explored as well as similarities between participants.	An idiographic exploration of each participant's experiences occurred before exploring similarities across the participants. Differences in experiences were explored as well as similarities, with PETs and GETs representing points of convergence and divergence. Extracts were used to evidence which participants contributed to each

Criteria	Steps Taken in the Current Study
	theme, and individual differences within similar experiences were discussed.
The paper should be written well and engage the reader in a well-constructed narrative. The reader should be able to learn about the participants' experiences in depth.	Participants' experiences were communicated through narrative reporting. The researcher engaged in reflective supervision with colleagues and research supervisors to discuss the narrative structure. The researcher did not assume the reader's prior knowledge and explained experiences clearly.

Chapter Four: Analysis

4.1. Chapter Overview

Chapter four outlines the results of the analysis of participant interview transcripts. In recognition of the importance of idiography and transparency when reporting findings, an overview is first given of PETs identified in each individual interview. Focus then moves to exploration of GETs. A visual overview of the GETs and sub-themes is presented to demonstrate which participants contributed to each sub-theme. Anonymised explanatory quotes are provided throughout in italics, with the participant's pseudonym provided in brackets. All identifiable information discussed by participants has been anonymised and all names replaced with pseudonyms.

It was felt that moving between PETs and GETs would negatively impact presentation of a cohesive narrative, so greater focus is placed on GETs than PETs. Exploration of GETs ensures that convergence and divergence across participants' experiences are demonstrated, allowing for comparisons to be made and influencing factors considered. Use of explanatory quotes ensures that participants' individual experiences are still presented and valued within the group themes.

4.2. Personal Experiential Themes

The PETs identified from the four participants' transcripts are presented in Table 6, (PETs in bold text and sub-themes italicised). Similarities can be seen across the individual cases, but these arose from examination of the individual transcripts rather than being created following exploration of all transcripts together. Within the similar themes identified, there were differences evident in how these were experienced by each participant. For example, all Deaf participants discussed the development of their Deaf identity, but how this development occurred was unique to each participant. A brief overview of each participant's PETs is provided below.

Table 6.

Personal Experiential Themes Across Participants

Layla (Parent)	Evelyn (Parent)	Jack (Parent)	Natalie (Teacher)
Deaf identity	**Deaf identity**	**Deaf identity**	**Understanding of D/deafness**
Developed over time	*Changed over time*	*Developed over time*	*Knowledge is limited*
Linked to language	*Led to desire to educate others*	*Impacted by contact with other*	*Uncertainty about impact on CODA*
Impacted by stage of life and resulting social circles	*Language use within the family*	*Deaf people*	*Perception of communication within family*
	Awareness of rights and legal protections		*Desire for external support and education*
Dynamics within the family	**Experience with children's primary school**	**Experiences of communication in child's school**	**Differences in experiences of communication**
Deaf parent feels unequal to hearing husband (father to their children)	*Spoken language use in communicating with school staff*	*In-person meetings*	*Difference between school staff*
Involvement of hearing children	*Privacy and confidentiality compromised*	*Indirect communication*	*Difference between parents*
	Lack of staff understanding/awareness of Deafness	*Desire to be more involved in CODA's education*	
	Responsibility placed on CODA	*Poor staff understanding of Deafness*	
	Adjustments not made	*Impact of parent's job*	
		Impact of CODA's parents not living together	
Experiences within their children's education settings	**Experience with child's secondary school**	**Facilitators of communication with school**	**Factors that facilitate collaboration**
Cognitive load	*Transition*	*Regular and consistent communication*	*Use of interpreters*
Negative emotions	*Positive impact of staff training*	*Attitudes*	*Adaptability*
Lack of understanding from school staff	*Positive impact of regular communication*		*Attitude*
			Building relationships

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Layla (Parent)	Evelyn (Parent)	Jack (Parent)	Natalie (Teacher)
Preference for online meetings *Differences between settings*		*School staff meeting and understanding Deaf parents*	
Barriers experienced *Finance* *Inflexible systems* *Misconceptions*	**Barriers to collaboration** *Cost* *Geography* *Feelings* *Inflexibility*	**Barriers to contact and communication with school** *Inflexibility* *Lack of systems to support communication* *Lack of understanding of Deafness*	**Barriers to collaboration** *Lack of response from parents* *Lack of parental engagement with school community*
Factors that would improve collaboration *Technology* *Training (and resultant increased understanding)* *Involvement of hearing CODAs and Deaf adults* *Policy* *Collaboration between schools*	**Things that would facilitate collaboration** *Open and honest communication* *Recognition of adjustments as rights* *Collaboration between schools* *Training*		

4.2.1. Layla (Parent)

Five PETs were identified from examination of Layla's transcript. The first theme related to her Deaf identity and explored how this had developed over time and was linked to signed language, life stages, and social circles. The second theme referred to dynamics within her immediate family, specifically the inequality that she reported feeling with her hearing husband and the advocacy role adopted by their hearing children. The third theme discussed experiences linked with meetings with hearing school staff, with focus placed on the impact of a lack of staff understanding. The fourth theme referred to barriers to effective collaboration including finances, inflexible systems, and staff misconceptions. The final theme related to factors that Layla felt would improve collaboration such as technology, training that involves Deaf adults and gives the opportunity for CODAs' views to be communicated, policy, and schools working together.

4.2.2. Evelyn (Parent)

Five PETs arose from exploration of Evelyn's transcript. The first theme explored Evelyn's Deaf identity development, describing how her identity changed over time, was linked to language use, led to desire to educate others, and increased her understanding of her rights and legal protections under relevant legislation. The second theme referred to experiences within her children's primary school and involved discussion around how privacy and confidentially was compromised because other parents work within the school and how lack of Deaf awareness among staff affected communication, placed responsibilities on her children, and meant that adjustments were not made. The third theme related to Evelyn's experiences within her eldest child's secondary school and discussed the impact that staff training had on transition and communication. The fourth theme outlined barriers to collaboration such as cost, geography, staff feelings, and inflexibility. Finally, the fifth theme referred to things that Evelyn felt would facilitate collaboration and included open and honest

communication, staff training, recognition of adjustments as rights, and schools working together to share good practice and experiences.

4.2.3. Jack (Parent)

Four PETs were identified from examination of Jack's transcript. The first theme described how his Deaf identity developed over time and was impacted by contact with other Deaf people. The second theme related to Jack's experiences of communicating with his child's hearing school staff and included discussion about the involvement that Jack desired to have in his child's education, the effect of poor staff Deaf awareness on communication, in-person meetings and indirect communication, and the impact that co-parenting and not living locally had on Jack's access to his child's school. The third theme explored factors that facilitated communication with school such as regular and consistent communication, staff attitudes, and school staff meeting and understanding Deaf parents. The final theme outlined barriers experienced by Jack to contacting and communicating with his child's school, including inflexibility, lack of supporting systems, and lack of staff understanding.

4.2.4. Natalie (Teacher)

Four PETs arose from examination of Natalie's transcript. The first theme related to Natalie's understanding of D/deafness; she discussed the limits of her knowledge, her uncertainty about the impact of the parents' Deafness on their child and on the family's communication, and her desire for external support and education. The second theme described the different communication approaches taken by colleagues and the parents themselves and the impact this had on information being relayed. The third theme outlined factors that facilitate collaboration and included use of interpreters, adaptability, attitudes, and building relationships over time. The fourth theme explored barriers to collaboration, including lack of response from parents and lack of parental engagement in the school community.

4.3. Group Experiential Themes

Table 7 demonstrates which participants contributed to each GET sub-theme. GETs are reported in bold text and sub-themes are italicised. In line with J. Smith's (2011) guidance on sufficient density of evidence in good quality IPA research, input from at least three participants was required to contribute to a sub-theme. A summary of each GET will be given, following which sub-themes will be explored in detail.

4.3.1. Participants' Experiences of Collaboration Are Generally Difficult and Frustrating

Exploration of the four participants' PETs revealed that experiences of collaboration were generally characterised as difficult and frustrating. The following four sub-themes were

Table 7.

Distribution of Group Experiential Themes and Sub-Themes Across Participants

Group Experiential Theme	Sub-theme	Contributing Participants
Participants' experiences of collaboration are generally difficult and frustrating	School staff lack understanding of D/deafness	Layla, Evelyn, Jack, Natalie
	Systems to support D/deaf parents are not in place	Layla, Evelyn, Jack, Natalie
	Parents have communication preferences, but these are not always employed	Layla, Evelyn, Jack
	Parents need to self-advocate	Layla, Evelyn, Jack
Things that would facilitate collaboration	Training to increase staff understanding of D/deafness	Layla, Evelyn, Jack, Natalie
	Systems and policies being in place	Layla, Evelyn, Jack
	Positive attitudes towards consistent communication	Layla, Evelyn, Jack, Natalie
	Schools sharing good practice with one another	Layla, Evelyn, Natalie
The importance of Deaf identity	Deaf identity has changed and strengthened over time	Layla, Evelyn, Jack
	Difficulty experienced communicating with hearing family members	Layla, Evelyn, Jack
	Impacted by language and involvement in the Deaf community	Layla, Evelyn, Jack

identified: school staff lack understanding of D/deafness; systems to support D/deaf parents are not in place; parents have communication preferences, but these are not always employed; and parents need to self-advocate. Although there were some positive experiences discussed by individual participants, they were not evident across enough participants to permit the creation of a sub-theme. Polarising positive experiences will be discussed where appropriate within sub-themes to highlight contradictory experiences.

4.3.1.1. School Staff Lack Understanding of D/deafness. Lack of staff understanding was raised by all participants, highlighting the pervasiveness of misconceptions about D/deafness. Layla and Evelyn felt that the majority of their children's school staff did not have a good understanding of D/deafness which negatively affected collaboration as it led to erroneous assumptions being made and appropriate adjustments not being put in place. Layla discussed how interactions with school staff were affected by misconceptions and unhelpful assumptions. Despite explicitly communicating her needs and preferences to school staff, Layla felt that they did not appreciate the importance of her requests because of their poor understanding of D/deafness and did not make an effort to develop their knowledge:

"I think I'm probably perhaps not a typical D/deaf parent that they've had to deal with…they've had D/deaf parents previously and I've had comments 'well the other D/deaf parent didn't need interpreters, they can lip read' and I think well hold on a minute…every D/deaf person is different and every D/deaf person's needs are going to be different…for example I do speak, I can use my voice and it's pretty clear when I speak so when they hear me speak…they've just made the assumption that I can hear and they really haven't quite got it…through my life my hearing has deteriorated and…my hearing aids are pretty much useless now…although I'm still able to speak, if you like, well…that doesn't directly translate

into the ability to hear so…yes there's a lot of misconceptions around that that I've had to

face." (Layla)

She also felt that school staff's lack of knowledge about Deaf culture affected how

they reacted to her children in primary school:

"my children across the hall were able to use sign language to communicate, and the teacher

pulled them both up about it and said hold on a minute…children this is this is rude, you can't

be having a private conversation across the dining hall and my children were like woah…well

this is normal for us…it's normal for us to communicate this way to use sign language and

across the hall…that's just normal" (Layla)

Her use of the phrase "normal" highlights that normalcy is relative; whilst school staff

would not define signing across a room as such, this is normal in Deaf culture.

Misunderstanding of language was also raised as an issue by Evelyn who described how

primary school staff's lack of understanding about D/deafness led to them teaching children

Makaton for songs in a Christmas performance. Whilst Evelyn was positive about the

inclusive intention, she was frustrated by the lack of understanding about the differences

between BSL and Makaton as this meant that she and her husband were not able to access the

performance. Her use of phrases such as "I flipped" and "I didn't know whether to laugh or

cry" highlight the emotions felt in this scenario. Evelyn discussed the emotional impact of

misunderstandings about D/deafness and Deaf culture several times during the interview,

indicating that this experience is familiar but frustrating for her. She also emphasised that it

was not her son's role to correct the teacher in this situation as this would place unfair

responsibility on him:

"the person who taught them signing knew Makaton and was hearing…I flipped when I

learned that because when they were signing the Christmas songs lots of the signs were

wrong… I didn't know whether to laugh or cry…Timothy knew some of the signs were wrong

so he changed to the correct sign and I was proud of him but…I said to him 'why didn't you tell that person who was teaching you [that they were] *wrong? He said 'I was terrified', I though fair enough, it's not your responsibility"* (Evelyn)

Layla also discussed protecting her children from unnecessary responsibilities. Whilst she described them as "fantastic advocates", she did not feel that it was fair to expect them to prompt teachers to make sure that adjustments were made:

"I have to rely on the children…to remind the teacher about the appointments system…I feel that's…maybe not fair to ask…a 14-year-old to be reminding the teacher about…this particular issue…the load is then passed to the child as well and that doesn't feel comfortable" (Layla)

As he has not had much contact with his child's school staff, Jack was unsure what their understanding of D/deafness is. He knows they are aware that he is deaf, but he is not certain that they understand Deaf identity or culture:

"I'm pretty sure they have an awareness of it but…how deep that goes I don't know" (Jack)

Natalie described her own understanding of D/deafness as "very limited". She and her colleagues have not been able to access any D/deaf awareness training and have no experience of working with D/deaf parents or teaching D/deaf children. Natalie is unsure how much she can ask the parents as she views this as a sensitive topic which is interesting considering the openness with which all parent participants discussed their Deafness and their access needs with their children's schools:

"it's interesting to know how much you should delve into…these parents compared to others…from what I've heard before some people are born deaf, some people maybe it deteriorates and I don't know…is that something that we could and…should be asking them and trying to find out more or…actually is that encroaching on…their privacy and things we shouldn't…really be talking about?" (Natalie)

The positive impact of D/deaf awareness was highlighted by Evelyn who described different experiences of secondary school tours when her eldest child was in Year 6. Her Deaf husband toured two local secondary schools, the second of which has a specialist D/deaf unit and has trained all of their staff in D/deaf awareness and Level One BSL. The first school did not provide an interpreter or make requested adjustments despite Evelyn contacting them in advance to let them know that she and her husband are Deaf and give them details of local interpreters:

"When my husband went [to the first secondary school] *with Patrick it was awful, all the parents were moved around and the man was walking and talk talk talk facing away so poor Richard was like 'what's happening? I don't understand'. When he went to Patrick's school, they were spaced in small groups and there was an interpreter with Richard and Patrick and* [they could] *take their time"* (Evelyn)

All three parents felt that where there was a lack of understanding of D/deafness, school staff were nervous about communication. Layla attributed this to the teachers' previous experiences with other D/deaf parents not aligning with their experiences of communicating with her, whilst Jack ascribed their unease to a lack of any experience communicating with D/deaf parents:

"their view of Deafness is definitely not me, I think I've been very new to them and possibly scared them" (Layla)

"I think definitely they were a bit worried…when [I] *was coming to visit…they were like oh what d'you need…and like, it was good that they're asking me but also it's a bit like…I don't know if they've met a Deaf person before"* (Jack)

In response to her poor experiences of collaboration at her children's primary school, Evelyn offered to teach D/deaf awareness to school staff. However, this has not been

accepted which she has found frustrating. Evelyn feels that this is influenced by staff fearfulness:

"I have offered so many times in the past,' I'm happy to go in and teach Deaf awareness to your staff as I know it's difficult to find in the area so use me if you can', but they haven't shown any interest and that's a sign of negativity, I think they're very frightened or unsure" (Evelyn)

In line with the parents' perceptions discussed, Natalie described some of her colleagues as nervous about communicating with Deaf parents, particularly if conversations relate to sensitive topics:

"[Teaching assistant] *can feel nervous almost about even approaching* [dad] *at all…for some staff there is a little bit of apprehension about…being misunderstood I suppose as much as anything"* (Natalie)

4.3.1.2. Systems to Support D/deaf Parents Are Not In Place. All four participants discussed the impact of systems to facilitate D/deaf parents' collaborative involvement not being in place which demonstrates this issue's pervasiveness. Inflexibility of existing systems and financial considerations were frequently discussed. Jack explained that his physical access to his child's school is restricted by his job and the fact that he lives in a different geographical area. Despite this, the school do not make exceptions for him which leaves him feeling "stuck". He has previously requested online meetings, but school have not facilitated this which significantly delayed these meetings:

"[I] *have to wait like six weeks before I can just have a meeting* [in person]*…it's not really great. I asked to do it on Zoom and… they were like no… so I just said 'oh you know what just wait, I will come in… in a few weeks…to see you and have a proper conversation'"* (Jack)

Layla described feeling frustrated whenever there was a system or staffing change at her children's secondary school as this meant she had to explain her communication needs repeatedly. Whilst she was positive that school organised interpreters for meetings, she needed to remind them of this each time which created a "mental workload" for her and undermined her confidence. She contrasted this with her experiences with her eldest child's college:

"when the new head of year came or when there's staff turnover or there are…new systems put in place…going to telephone system or going online, every time something changes we have to start all over again. But what I will say is for my oldest, they've gone to college now…and we've been in contact with the college, this is the second year that they've been at college now and they are remembering so…that seems promising...When there've been performances…at the end of year, they offered to provide an interpreter before I actually asked…they instigated that so…that was really great" (Layla)

She has found it frustrating that school do not have policies or systems in place to support D/deaf parents, meaning that she does not have equal access within the school compared to parents with other access needs:

"they always know about wheelchair access…that's instantaneously available, so why not about access for Deaf people?" (Layla)

Layla has needed to "battle" to have her rights understood and ensure that facilitators to collaboration are enacted. She felt that systems would have to be more flexible if both parents were D/deaf. However, this has not been Evelyn's experience with her children's primary school. Despite both her and her husband being Deaf BSL-users, the school has not made adjustments during the eight years that their children have attended the setting. For example, Evelyn has requested that adaptations be made to parents' evenings, but these have not happened:

"with parents evenings in primary school, it's short, 10 minutes…the D/deaf, we need longer…we did request that we might need a bit of extra time to make sure we get the information…with lip reading, we don't want to feel rushed because if we feel rushed we can't focus very well… but they still haven't taken that on board and they still…look behind us at the other parents…so we just go [nod] and just leave" (Evelyn)

Similar experiences occur frequently and have left Evelyn feeling disempowered and frustrated, particularly because reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act: *"they never do it* [make requested adjustments]*…I just feel like I can't be bothered now but I shouldn't be made to feel like that"* (Evelyn)

Language used by Evelyn during descriptions of these experiences highlights that her frustration has built over time due to repeatedly being disappointed by inflexibility and unwillingness to learn which led to weariness about the situation. A contrast is evident between the inflexibility experienced by Evelyn and the flexible approach described by Natalie. Whilst she does not feel skilled in communicating with D/deaf parents, it is important to her that the parents feel "as included as possible":
"I think the biggest thing is just everybody's wanting them to feel as included as possible…we want to find as many ways as possible for them to feel included but at the same time feel a little bit inadequate in that area" (Natalie)

Natalie has been as flexible as possible when communicating with Deaf parents. She recognised that the parents have different preferences and needs and responded by adapting her communication methods. Natalie privately meets with them regularly and uses written communication for important messages and is planning to utilise interpreters more:
"doing the extra meetings and having the new information written down ready and things like that, I think that's really important… we've tried really hard to make sure they know that we're there…we've said quite a few times via email and things so they can read it that if they

ever want a meeting and things and it's just…making sure they…know they can be part of it"
(Natalie)

Natalie has felt unsupported in developing good communication systems and building trusting relationships with the parents. They have not been able to access help from external agencies because the CODA is hearing:

"we don't really know what else is out there really so…it's hard to know if we're missing something that would be really useful" (Natalie)

Natalie noted that she can only access interpreters because parents have a subscription to an online live signing service. As this service is expensive, the school does not have an account and relies on the parents' subscription to access interpreters. Natalie and Evelyn both described school finances as a barrier to using interpreters in meetings. They both viewed provision of interpreters as a reasonable adjustment that schools needed to arrange and fund. Layla recalled the response from her children's secondary school when she first requested an interpreter:

"I went along to say 'just to let you know I will need to have an interpreter' and the first response to that was 'oh! How often is that?'…they were nervous, they were asking me…'how often will this be?' They were quite…defensive, I think they were thinking about the cost being prohibitive and I was thinking well the budget is actually not my problem really, don't pass that to me" (Layla)

She reflected that she has found it easier to request interpreters from the secondary school than the primary school due to perceived differences in their budgets and finance management, seeing secondary schools as having more control over budgets:

"I just found it harder to request and…make my needs known [with the primary school] *because I know that it's difficult financially for them whereas secondary school is run more like a business…the way they're run is very separate from the council, they're*

more…business styled… and so I just felt …it was easier to ask a business for…interpreters whereas primary school…almost felt like I was asking a charity for an interpreter…I found it more difficult to…express my needs" (Layla)

Lack of finances was also given by Evelyn's children's primary school as a reason for not providing interpreters:

"I don't feel that they take it seriously enough no matter how much I ask they say 'oh… it's too expensive, we can't afford it' and I said 'that's not my problem, you should meet our needs and requirements', schools have to have a budget to cover this, my partner says the council says they should cover because of Equality Act and now the BSL Act" (Evelyn)

4.3.1.3. Parents Have Communication Preferences, but These Are Not Always Employed. All three parents discussed their personal communication preferences. All stated that their preference was for meetings to be facilitated by an interpreter as this increases their involvement. Jack had to compromise his communication preferences in order to meet with his child's school staff:

"[The meeting] *got delayed two, three times because they couldn't find an interpreter, then I just said 'oh you know what, I'll come in, I'll be fine to just lip read and listen'"* (Jack)

It was important to Jack that he could directly communicate with school staff to interpret nonverbal cues:

"when it's just an email sometimes it can feel a bit…plain, a bit blank and then you're…not sure what the other person's reaction is to that…you can't see their face… seeing someone by the face or even on…Zoom…it can help, it's better than email it's better than…a text message" (Jack)

Due to interpreters not being provided for primary school meetings or events, Evelyn has relied on lip reading for communication with school staff. However, this has made her

feel uncomfortable when discussing sensitive topics. She has found it frustrating that her requested alternative (written communication) was not used in these situations:

"they talked very clearly and loudly so other parents could hear, I'd feel more confident them writing in a book but they'd still talk to me and once for example, because Patrick was [neurodiverse] *we didn't realise at the time, the teacher said 'he's been a troublemaker, he refused…can't focus on the work', I would feel embarrassed, the other parents would be looking and think I'm a failure as a mother. I feel that would have been better if they wrote it down or come and talk to me private in a quiet room later"* (Evelyn)

Evelyn again contrasts her experiences with her children's primary school and her eldest child's secondary school. She described visiting the secondary school as "a big culture shock" because there is always someone who signs. The school recognise the importance of using interpreters for effective communication and proactively organising interpreters for meetings which helps Evelyn feel respected:

"before the open day we emailed six weeks before, knowing they needed time to find an interpreter. Within the first week of the email, Patrick's school emailed saying 'we've found an interpreter, that's all sorted'" (Evelyn)

Layla discussed the impact of the Coronavirus lockdown on communication with the secondary school. The initial use of telephone conversations for all contact was exclusionary for Layla, but the later implementation of online meetings increased her involvement in her children's education as she can use her preferred interpreters whom she trusts:

"Covid struck so everything changed at that time and then everything became phone appointments which of course…is not good so we had to go all the way back to square one really in terms of them not understanding the impact of that…they were trying to make it really complicated…it actually became very stressful to try and work out how to have a telephone parents' evening appointment and for me to have access, and then…the parents

evenings all went online and that did become easier, because then as I say I could choose my

preferred interpreter and they could join us online" (Layla)

4.3.1.4. Parents Need to Self-Advocate. All three parents described needing to self-advocate and "fight" to have their rights understood and preferences enacted in school and wider society. Words such as "demand", "battle", and "fight" within their accounts highlights that they find these systems adversarial. Jack has had to "demand" for adjustments to be made to the contact methods that school staff use with him:

"after that meeting I sort of demanded 'I need text message for anything that's small or big, I

want you to text me'" (Jack)

Evelyn has needed to self-advocate because parent accessibility has not been prioritised by her children's primary school's senior leadership team:

"there have been three different heads, each had different attitudes, different goals, but none

of them have increased access for disability or Deaf" (Evelyn)

She feels "comfortable" challenging misconceptions and advocating for her rights to be acknowledged and adjustments made because she recognises that she lives in a homogeneous geographical area:

"they're not used to it, I think that's why I'm comfortable challenging them" (Evelyn)

Layla explained that her self-advocacy skills developed alongside her Deaf identity. Before developing a strong Deaf identity, she did not feel able to ask for adjustments:

"when the children were at primary school…I was about 26, 27 at that time…I was not

confident to ask for anything…I just kind of got on with things and didn't make my needs

known" (Layla)

She will now ask for adjustments, communicate her rights, and "battle" for modifications as needed:

"I've got better at asking for the things that I need, for example for interpreters for parents evening" (Layla)

The parents interviewed have had to build confidence in advocating for themselves and to develop resilience in the face of frustrating barriers. Exploration of their accounts reveals a combination of determination to lobby for their rights and weariness at the fact that barriers persist.

4.3.1.5. Summary. School staff were largely reported by parent participants to have poor D/deaf awareness which negatively affected development of collaborative relationships. The teacher interviewed also reported having limited knowledge of D/deafness. Systems were typically described by parents as inflexible, and parents reported frustration at adjustments not being made and interactions not utilising their preferred communication methods. All parents discussed needing to self-advocate for adjustments to be made. The teacher participant reported trying to include the Deaf parents as much as possible but feeling unsupported by external agencies. Although colleagues in the school supported one another emotionally, nobody else had knowledge about or experience of working with D/deaf individuals which meant practical support was not available from colleagues within the setting. Where school staff had accessed D/deaf awareness training, parents described positive relationships being developed and flexible systems ensuring that requirements were met.

4.4. Things That Would Facilitate Collaboration

All participants identified factors that would facilitate collaborative practice between Deaf parents and hearing school staff. These can be summarised under the following four subthemes: training to increase staff understanding of D/deafness; systems and policies being in place; positive attitudes towards consistent communication; and schools sharing good practice with one another.

4.4.1. Training to Increase Staff Understanding of D/deafness. All participants felt that effective collaboration linked to school staff's understanding of D/deafness. Layla and Evelyn discussed understanding in relation to D/deaf awareness training which they felt would positively impact on collaboration by increasing staff understanding and improving attitudes. Layla described training as "fundamental" and "critical" in preventing assumptions, demonstrating the importance that she places on good understanding of D/deafness and Deaf culture:

"training is fundamental…and also having an understanding of…the cultural aspects of Deafness and how important it is to not make assumptions…not to assume that all D/deaf parents are the same is absolutely critical" (Layla)

Evelyn felt that increasing staff awareness would mean that they would be more considerate of Deaf parents' access needs and therefore initiate contact in a more accessible manner. In addition to D/deaf awareness training, Evelyn felt that school staff should have Level One BSL so that they can better communicate with D/deaf parents. This is something that she has valued at her eldest child's secondary school as it has helped her to feel more included in the school community:

"for good collaboration to happen, mandatory training, for staff to have D/deaf awareness and Level One and refresh them every year and also for them to improve their understanding and awareness of disability or Deafness" (Evelyn)

Natalie felt that training would support understanding of parental D/deafness and the impact this has on their children. Natalie expressed a desire to know more about the CODA's home life and experiences, but she has not been able to access training because the child is hearing:

"as teachers and…educators nowadays we're very used to autism and [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder] *and actually we've all had training…not necessarily recently but*

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we've had it in the past and actually this is a situation where…nothing's kind of out there

so…it would have been useful" (Natalie)

All three parents felt that it was important for school staff to meet with D/deaf people to better understand them and their children's lives. Jack noted that this could come from increased contact with the school and conversations with school staff about home life. He felt that attitudes would be improved if school staff met Deaf parents at the start of their working relationship. Put simply:

"if you know Deaf people… you get a better understanding" (Jack)

Evelyn suggested that Deaf representatives be involved in staff training so school staff learn about Deaf culture from someone with this identity. This would increase collaboration and work to readdress power imbalances by empowering Deaf people to educate their hearing peers:

"invite representatives to go into school and talk with the staff, like the teachers have…staff training days, I would like to see that happen in these contexts" (Evelyn)

Layla discussed the possibility of CODAs being involved in increasing staff understanding of Deaf culture as she strongly feels that "young people should be involved with things that impact them". She clarified that involvement should not be related to giving children inappropriate responsibilities such as asking them to interpret during parents' evenings but should give them opportunities to discuss their experiences with school staff to increase understanding of Deaf culture:

"children should have an involvement, they should be aware of conversations, they should have the opportunity to contribute, but there shouldn't be responsibility placed on them so…involve them if it impacts them and allow participation but don't…place obligation or responsibility on their shoulders" (Layla)

4.4.2. Systems and Policies Being In Place. All three parent participants discussed possible systems changes that they felt would increase collaboration, indicating the importance they place on proactive planning. Suggestions included having specific policies or guidelines in place for communicating with D/deaf parents, using technology to increase parental access, and using interpreters. Evelyn felt that it was important for guidelines to be produced which included information about D/deaf parents' legal rights and school's responsibilities:

"For them to accept that we as D/deaf parents have a right for sign language interpreting, accessibility to material request, face-to-face when we need to, not when they offer…it would be lovely if the education system made a clear guideline for D/deaf parents…what we have, what can we offer, what our rights are, what we can expect from…school, if they made that clear, having that set out, that they need to provide this…under the Equality Act and the BSL Act" (Evelyn)

Layla viewed knowledge and understanding of Deaf parents' rights as "key". She felt that schools having a policy about communicating with D/deaf parents would improve collaboration by increasing school staff's knowledge and confidence and reducing parents' need to self-advocate for adjustments. This would ensure that D/deaf and hearing parents would have equal rights regarding access to and involvement in their children's education:

"having a policy in place so that…office staff are able to reply or respond without becoming defensive over the situation and 'ooh I'm not sure about the funding here' and raising that issue all the time and pushing that back on the parent and creating that load and feeling that you always have to battle and explain your rights and their responsibilities…if I could just email the school and get a really positive swift response back just saying 'absolutely no problem, we'll source an interpreter for you'…that would be the dream" (Layla)

Layla and Jack both suggested using technology to enable instant access to their children's schools. Jack negotiated the use of text messaging which he has found helpful, and this is a method that Layla felt would be beneficial in supporting immediate communication. Layla also described how she has benefited from technology in medical care systems that notify professionals of her D/deafness and prompt them to book an interpreter. She felt that this would be useful to implement in school systems:

"my email…gets lost in a sea of other emails… so is there a way to flag the fact that my email can be prioritised and could be…replied to sooner than other emails where a parent could have phoned if they were hearing?" (Layla)

Jack talked about using online live interpreter services and explained that it would be helpful if school had their own subscription as they could link this to their website and telephone systems:

"some websites have [interpreter service's] *tag on it…so it says obviously there's the phone number and it's also…this video call for Deaf person, they click on that it comes up and it's…ringing the school automatically"* (Jack)

4.4.3. Positive Attitudes Towards Consistent Communication. Jack, Evelyn, and Natalie discussed the impact of positive attitudes and consistency in communication. Jack viewed regular and consistent communication as important to collaboration but explained that this can be difficult to establish if the teacher has a negative attitude towards parents wanting more information about their children's school work:

"a little bit of though for the parents…maybe passing on information and not having…[an] *'oh, doesn't matter' sort of attitude about the parents"* (Jack)

Positive attitudes towards collaboration with culturally Deaf parents were summarised by Evelyn as being characterised by:

"Openness, transparency, trust, feeling you are being listened to and respected, good open communication channels" (Evelyn)

She explained that this attitude is evident in her eldest child's secondary school and has increased her involvement and trust in the school:

"at secondary school we're very involved in the education because we have access to the timetable, homework, so we know what Patrick has to do and can see feedback from the teacher which is brilliant because it helps us feel included, and the teacher will also email us every two weeks with updates on Patrick's progress which is fantastic collaboration" (Evelyn)

Natalie has taken a positive approach to communication which she feels has helped build the relationship between her and the Deaf parents. She is planning on increasing the consistency with which they meet as she has recognised that this has a positive impact:

"I've kind of always gone with the attitude of well…we'll give it a go [laugh] and we'll see if we can both come out of the end of this kind of understanding each other" (Natalie)

Positive attitudes can also be linked to the importance of D/deaf awareness training; gaining knowledge about D/deafness and Deaf culture leads to more positive attitudes being taken to collaboration.

4.4.4. Schools Sharing Good Practice With One Another. Layla and Evelyn both felt that it would be beneficial for schools to share their experiences and learning with one another:

"it would be good…for schools to be able to keep up to date by…sharing their learning and…reflective practice and I think it would be great if those the schools could share that learning with other schools" (Layla)

This is something that Natalie also felt would be useful as it would mean that school staff with no experience of working with D/deaf parents could receive support and practical advice:

"the things that we've put in place now, obviously other people probably have done that before so…it would have been nice for me…if there was a forum or something where you could say…'any ideas?' and things and share that because…we felt quite alone at the beginning" (Natalie)

4.4.5. Summary. All participants discussed factors that they felt would support effective collaboration, with improved awareness through training and from meeting D/deaf individuals identified as particularly important. All three parent participants raised the need for systems to be in place, including policies and procedures recognising parental rights and school responsibilities and supportive use of technology. The importance of positive attitudes was discussed, and benefits of schools sharing practice was highlighted.

4.5. The Importance of Deaf Identity

All parent participants described the development of their Deaf identity as a dynamic process. Whilst the journey was individual to each participant, there were three areas that arose across all three parents: Deaf identity has changed and strengthened over time; difficulty experienced communicating with hearing family members; and impacted by language and involvement in the Deaf community. Whilst this theme does not directly answer the current study's research questions and developed largely from participants' responses to a question about Deaf identity, the researcher felt that this theme should be included as it provides the reader with important contextual information about the participants which furthers understanding of their experiences and opinions; without understanding the historical experiences of the Deaf parents interviewed in this study, the more recent experiences would not be understood in as much depth. For example, parents' positive experiences of

communication and acceptance within the Deaf community provide helpful information about what needs to replicated in their children's mainstream hearing schools. As highlighted in section 2.6.2.2., mutual knowledge must be established for effective communication to occur. Within the context of Deaf parent-hearing professional collaboration, mutual knowledge must relate in part to understanding how Deaf people develop their Deaf identity in hearing society, why they reject the disability construction of deafness, and the implications that this has on collaboration.

4.5.1. Deaf Identity has Changed and Strengthened Over Time. Deaf identity was described by all parent participants as developing over time and influenced by various factors throughout their lives (discussed in detail through the remaining sub-themes). The experience of developing a Deaf identity was summarised by Layla as follows:

"it's always been there it's just that…my journey with it has been a bit up and down and depending on my stage of life…but now I would say…completely embrace who I am as a sign language user" (Layla)

This quote indicates the importance of self-acceptance in Deaf identity development. All parent participants reflected on their difficulties discovering their Deaf identity as young people; their description of their current Deaf identities as "strong" is in stark contrast to their descriptions of themselves as children and young people. For Layla, her social involvement in Deaf and hearing communities meant that she struggled to know where she fitted in, trying to become part of the hearing world before developing her Deaf identity:

"I would say I've got a strong Deaf identity [now]. *It's probably fair to say that when I was a teenager I struggled with my identity and…who I was…In my late teens I really struggled with where I fitted in, whether it was in the Deaf community because I did have Deaf friends…from school, but then moving on to university I started to struggle and felt like I*

didn't quite fit in, so I thought that I had to become hearing to fit with my university world" (Layla)

Similarly, Jack did not describe himself as having a Deaf identity as a child and talked about trying to fit in with his hearing communities:

"I think I [didn't] *really have much of a Deaf identity…I wasn't really sure…so I think I just tried to fit in with everybody else…and then as I've got older…I've sort of identified it more myself…so now I feel like it's quite a strong presence… I do have quite a strong Deaf identity now"* (Jack)

Evelyn is now "proud" of her Deaf identity but struggled with being deaf and seen as different as a teenager. She felt that changes in how Deafness is viewed in wider society increased her confidence in owning her Deaf identity:

"Now I would say I've got a strong Deaf identity because I know who I am…sign language is my way of communicating with D/deaf people and educating hearing people and it's a sense of purpose in myself, not feeling ashamed but more determined to raise awareness and also being proud of who I am, not having to apologise for being Deaf or anything. If you had seen me in my teens I was so ashamed… It's more acceptable nowadays to have that identity rather than a label, it's more mainstream" (Evelyn)

Descriptions of trying to "fit in" indicate that participants did not feel fully comfortable within their hearing communities and that finding acceptance in the Deaf community gave them a transformational positive sense of self and belonging.

4.5.2. Difficulty Experienced Communicating with Hearing Family Members. All parent participants were born into hearing families with no other D/deaf family members. Different communication methods were used across the participants' families, but the majority of family members communicated with them through speech. Use of words and phrases such as "manage", "try my best", and "get through" when discussing communication

within the family indicates that parents find use of speech alone in communication difficult.

Both Layla and Evelyn were supported to learn visual languages by their parents. Layla

communicated with her parents using spoken and signed language, but other family members

cannot sign which limits her communication with them:

"*I was born to parents who have never had any experience of D/deafness prior to myself. My*

mother at that time was a speech and language therapist so she did understand the

importance of language and so she raised me using speech but also BSL bilingually…Most of

my family can't sign…so I kind of have to try my best to lip read…and get through" (Layla)

Evelyn described communicating with her parents through cued speech, explaining

that her father went against societal norms to ensure that they were able to communicate

effectively with one another. However, her siblings did not use this method and so she

struggled to communicate with them:

"my father…was determined to find the best communication with me…you have to remember

back at that time sign language was frowned upon and the oral approach was preferred…my

parents realised that wasn't enough for me because I wasn't responding or communicating

enough so they moved to cued speech so that's how I got the visual aspect of communication

but throughout my life…I wasn't able to communicate with [siblings]*"* (Evelyn)

Only Jack signs in his family, so he relies on lip reading and hearing aids for

communication. Among the parent participants, Jack spoke most positively about

communicating with family members. It is worth noting that Jack is the only parent

participant who solely attended mainstream schools, did not learn a visual language at school,

and uses hearing aids, possibly influenced by his levels of hearing loss; whilst Layla and

Evelyn both described themselves using the audiometric descriptor "profound", Jack used the

term "severe" to describe his deafness, suggesting that he may have more hearing than the

other parent participants and so benefits more from the use of hearing aids than Layla and Evelyn:

"no one signs…it's all lip reading…and so I think I mean because…I'm deaf and it's…sort of severe…but I feel like I can manage ok when I've got my hearing aids…but I think because I'm very familiar with them, I mean I lived with them so I think that makes like lip reading sort of…quite easy…'cause I…recognise them" (Jack)

4.5.3. Impacted by Language and Involvement in the Deaf Community. All parent participants linked Deaf identity to communicating using sign language. Involvement with the Deaf community was positively discussed by all parents, indicating the importance of this to their identity development. Layla and Evelyn described themselves as bilingual and discussed how their identity and self-acceptance as sign language users developed over time and was impacted by their education experiences attending schools for deaf children. Layla used speech and BSL at primary school before being taught orally in her secondary school for deaf children. Her confidence in using signed language has grown over time as she has become more comfortable with her Deaf identity:

"growing up with that mixture of speech and sign language meant that mostly at that point I was using SSE, Sign Supported English, then later on…when I was…maybe 30-ish, around that time I started to realise that SSE was absolutely fine…it's just another form of communicating…another language and…I started to feel comfortable about being Deaf" (Layla)

Evelyn was taught through cued speech and learned BSL from her peers at school (even though this was not allowed at the time) but was self-conscious about signing as a young person. Her confidence in using BSL has developed as an adult along with her Deaf identity:

"recently my mother said to me 'it's the first time I've seen you sign openly without having to tell us don't sign'...so it's a big difference" (Evelyn)

Jack viewed BSL as facilitative to his engagement in the Deaf community. As he attended a hearing school and did not know other Deaf people in his family or community, he was unaware of Deaf culture or Deaf identity until he was 18:

"I didn't know other Deaf people, it wasn't something I was familiar with, I'd never met any before, the first time I met someone who was Deaf was when I was 18 and that was...the [Deaf sports team]" (Jack)

Jack could engage in his Deaf sports team because he knew some BSL. This introduced him to the Deaf community which helped him to explore his own Deaf identity:

"playing for [Deaf sports team]...going and interacting with Deaf people there, getting involved with the team...I think it just sort of developed from there and I was quite lucky because...I was already a Level One sign language user by that point...so I think that meant that I could engage with the team and then obviously went on to do Level Two and so on" (Jack)

As all parent participants grew up in hearing families, they first accessed Deaf culture through their peers. They now all have friends and colleagues in the Deaf community and have found belonging in this space. This is most clearly described by Layla who contrasts her experiences as a young adult to her current reality. She depicted herself as lonely and isolated as a young adult:

"when university finished...I moved home...I didn't have any friends in that area...most of my friends are either Deaf or involved in the Deaf community now but when I was 21 when I moved home I didn't have friends at that point in my life" (Layla)

In contrast, her Deaf identity grew as she started to work for a D/deaf charity and began to regularly interact with people who respected her as a Deaf person. She was able to find a community where she felt that she belonged:

"when I was 30 I started working at [D/deaf charity]…and I think that that was the first time that I started to mix regularly on a day-to-day basis with Deaf colleagues and I was treated like a Deaf person and with respect in terms of my communication needs and so on and so I think it all built up from there, so I think it's fair to say I think [D/deaf charity] really helped me develop my Deaf identity and now I work for [Deaf-led charity] which is even more of a Deaf…sign language community…kind of based organisation and from there I really feel like I've embraced my full Deaf identity now"(Layla)

The importance of social identification with the Deaf community is evident in all three parents' accounts. If they had not found the Deaf community, they would not have strong Deaf identities now and would likely feel less fulfilled in their work and social lives as they would still feel unsure about where they belonged and view themselves as in need of curing which would have a negative impact on their mental health and self-esteem.

4.5.4. Summary. All three parent participants described how their Deaf identity developed over time and as a result of their life stages and experiences. All parents grew up in hearing families and so learned about Deaf cultural identity through their peers, and they now all work in organisations with Deaf colleagues. A contrast was described between their isolation within their hearing families and social circles and their inclusion in the Deaf community. Experiences identified as influential for their identity development included education, social contact with Deaf peers, and use of signed languages. The biggest factor that made a difference in identity was positive self-acceptance.

4.6. Summary of Findings

Three GETs arose from exploration of the data: participants' experiences of collaboration are generally difficult and frustrating; things that would facilitate collaboration; and the importance of Deaf identity. Data from all four participants contributed to the first two GETs, and the last GET was specific to the three Deaf parent participants. Parent participants described school staff as largely having poor understanding of D/deafness and discussed the negative impact this had on implementation of supporting systems and communication preferences, and the teacher participant described her own understanding as limited. Factors that participants felt would improve collaboration were training, developing systems and policies, improving attitudes, and schools sharing good practice and learning with one another. Deaf parent participants discussed factors that impacted on development of their own Deaf identities and the impact that a strong Deaf identity had for them.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Chapter Overview

Chapter five explores the research findings within the current literature, educational, and socio-political contexts. The chapter is composed of four sections. Firstly, a summary of the study's findings is presented in relation to relevant research literature and theory, and the distinctive contribution of the study is outlined. Secondly, a critical review of the research design is provided, with strengths and limitations discussed. Thirdly, the implications of the findings for schools, LAs, and EPs are considered and suggestions made for future research. Finally, an overall conclusion is given.

5.2. Summary of Current Study

The current study aimed to address an identified gap in the literature regarding effective collaboration between culturally Deaf parents and hearing mainstream school staff. Despite Deaf parents raising concerns about barriers that prevent their involvement in their hearing children's education (BDA, 2015), this is an area in which there is little published research (Kanwal et al., 2022; Barbosa et al., 2023). The research adopted a relativist ontological and constructionist epistemological stance and an interpretivist theoretical perspective. Participants were enabled to share their lived experiences through semi-structured interviews, with parental interviews facilitated by interpreters to enable them to use their preferred language. IPA was utilised to ensure that participants' authentic voices were valued and perspectives preserved in presentation of findings. To answer the two research questions posed in the current study, each question will be presented in turn and a summary of the analysis provided alongside exploration of related academic research.

Views of Deaf parents are presented more prominently than those of the hearing teacher for two reasons. Firstly, the Deaf parents collectively had collaborated with multiple staff across six educational settings over several years whilst the hearing teacher had three

months of experience of collaboration with two Deaf parents. Therefore, parents discussed and compared a larger range of experiences than the teacher. Secondly, Deaf parents presented more suggestions regarding systemic factors in greater depth than the hearing teacher as comparisons between systems and further suggestions were based on their lived experiences and greater knowledge of available resources; the hearing teacher did not have this knowledge.

5.2.1. Based on Their Lived Experiences, What do Culturally Deaf Parents and Hearing School Staff Report to be the Current Strengths and Weaknesses of Collaboration?

Deaf parents reported that their experiences of collaboration with hearing school staff were generally difficult and frustrating due to poor staff understanding of and resultant attitudes towards Deafness and a lack of systems being in place to support collaboration. A contrast was evident in the practice of school staff who had received training on D/deafness but these experiences were not the norm for the Deaf participants. Positive attitudes towards communication with Deaf parents were described by the teacher who took a proactive and positive approach to communication and collaboration. However, she contrasted her positive approach to communicating and building relationships with Deaf parents to the fearful view held by her colleagues which was exacerbated by a lack of support from external agencies.

Where teachers had not received training on D/deafness, a contrast was evident in attitudes towards Deafness internalised by Deaf parents and hearing school staff. Deaf participants' narratives about their Deafness indicated that they viewed themselves in line with the medical and social models of deafness when they were younger (Ohna, 2004; Young & Temple, 2014) but now self-identified with the culturo-linguistic model of Deafness (Lane, 2005). Two Deaf participants appeared to hold strong immersion identities (Fischer & McWhirter, 2001) whilst the third seemed to have a bicultural identity (Marschark et al., 2017). Internalisation of Deaf identity was described by participants in the current research as

a dynamic journey of self-acceptance (McIlroy & Storbeck, 2011; Young & Temple, 2014), with experiences aligning with Chapman and Dammeyer's (2017) description of identity as being "influenced by a variety of factors including individual characteristics, situational context, and societal structures" (p.192). When their children's school staff had not accessed training on D/deafness, parents in the current study reported teachers as viewing Deafness as a disability which created attitudinal barriers rooted in misconceptions and physical barriers when using systems that rely on audition (Hauser et al., 2010; McKee et al., 2013). It was evident from the teacher interview that she and her colleagues had little understanding of D/deafness which led to a disability view being taken.

Where school staff had accessed training on D/deafness, parents in the current study reported feeling understood because both parties had mutual knowledge about Deafness. Mutual knowledge was described by Crampton (2002) as important for effective communication as it builds common ground between collaborative partners. A difference was noted in experiences of collaboration in the current study in cases where relationships had been developed and common ground established, with mutual knowledge associated by Deaf parents with respectful attitudes. Mutual knowledge is particularly important in light of widespread adoption of technology used to correct hearing (Chapman, 2021); Deaf participants in the current study discussed the frustration experienced when unhelpful generalisations about hearing aid use were made by school staff with little understanding of Deafness.

Where effective collaboration was described in the current study, communication was characterised as frequent and reciprocal and associated with respectful positive attitudes (Lasky & Karge, 2011; Conus & Fahrni, 2019; Miller & Ahmad, 2000). The enactment of the cycle of trust (Vangen and Huxham, 2003) was evident in these relationships; participants discussed feeling confident that school staff would respect their communication preferences

and enable them to participate as equal partners because this was their previous experience. Where lack of collaboration was discussed, trust had not been built and parents described feeling disrespected by school staff, frustrated at the lack of reciprocity and flexibility, and disempowered in communication (Huxham & Vangen, 2009).

Parents described feelings of frustration and weariness where systems were not in place, linking this to perceptions of poor attitudes and lack of trust. Respect and trust were discussed by Deaf and hearing participants in the current study. Barnett (2002) positioned adaptability and responding to the needs and requests of D/deaf people as crucial in collaboration, noting that D/deaf people "often have good suggestions on how to best communicate with them, and it is important to enlist their help" (p.695). This was evident in the current study's hearing teacher's practice; she trialled different communication methods and adapted situations to best suit the Deaf parents. However, inflexibility was experienced by all three Deaf parents which presented a barrier to effective collaboration with their children's school staff; Deaf parents' communication preferences were often not adopted by school staff, with a lack of available funding frequently cited as a barrier to using interpreters for meetings and events.

Flexibility of systems, or lack thereof, was discussed by all participants in the current study. Hodge and Runswick-Cole (2008) point to the importance of fluidity and responsiveness in parent-professional partnerships, whilst lack of flexibility has been linked to unequal power distribution in partnerships (Todd & Higgins, 1998) which prevents trust being built. Parents who spoke of disempowerment in the current study described situations where requests for flexibility in situations such as parents' evenings and incidental conversations were not adhered to which they associated with a lack of respect. Frustration was also described regarding underuse of technology, particularly since parents experienced increased use of technology to access school during the Coronavirus pandemic (Evans, 2020),

and the barriers caused by monetary constraints. Where schools had infrastructures that supported linguistic access, parents spoke more positively about their experiences of collaboration.

5.2.2. According to Culturally Deaf Parents and Hearing School Staff, How Can Collaboration be Facilitated?

Culturally Deaf parents in the current study viewed understanding of and positive attitudes towards Deafness as foundational to effective collaboration. Deaf and hearing participants all discussed the importance of developing systems and guidelines to facilitate collaboration and the positive impact that skilled schools and trained professionals sharing good practice would have.

Respectful attitudes and trusting relationships are foundational to effective collaboration (Griffiths et al., 2021; Davis & Meltzer, 2007). Within the school context, parents must feel that they and their children are valued within the school community (Beveridge, 2005). For language and cultural minority parents such as those who are Deaf, respect is communicated by school staff through demonstration of an understanding of or willingness to learn about their cultures and avoidance of disrespectful or deficit-based attitudes (Buren et al., 2020; Fenton et al., 2017; Ishimaru et al., 2016; Lasky & Karge, 2011). The importance of training to increase school staff's understanding of Deafness and improve attitudes was highlighted by all Deaf parents in the current study. In addition to examining practicalities of Deaf communication styles, they felt that training should explore Deaf culture and behavioural norms (Aldalur et al., 2021) to increase school staff's reflective practice and cultural responsiveness. Deaf parents in the current study emphasised the importance of hearing school staff meeting Deaf people who can act as cultural brokers (Leddy, 2018; Hulseborsch & Myers, 2002), bridging the gap between the Deaf and hearing worlds and helping to build common ground (Crampton, 2002).

The desire for systems to be implemented that would facilitate effective collaboration between Deaf parents and hearing school staff was discussed by all participants in the current study. Parents felt that collaboration would be facilitated by policies and guidelines which would reduce school staff's feelings of uncertainty. The importance of having policies and guidelines on partnerships between minority group parents and majority group school staff has been discussed in academic research; Kim (2009) notes that a school's policies will determine how parents from minority groups are contacted by their children's teachers which indicates the need for policies to be available for schools to refer to pre-emptively when initiating contact, and Paccaud et al. (2021) highlight the importance of guidelines outlining provision of practicalities including physical space and financial resources to ensure that parents feel comfortable and meetings can be facilitated by interpreters or cultural brokers. Matuszny et al. (2007) outline two important factors in building collaborative partnerships between teachers and parents from minority cultures: removing barriers that prevent involvement, and encouraging participation by creating a supportive and comfortable environment that meets parents' needs. McKee et al. (2012) note that "Deaf individuals, regardless of age or background, are frequently savvy with new technology" (p.323) and that technology can help remove communication barriers and support quick information dissemination. Deaf participants in the current study discussed using technology in other areas of life such as medical appointments to increase their linguistic access and suggested that schools could learn from and adopt the systems used by other sectors.

Smit and Driessen (2005) position communication as a "prerequisite for parental involvement" (p.180), and lack of funding for interpreters is a factor that all participants in the current study described as preventing accessible communication. Effective communication is important in building trust and understanding in collaborative partnerships (Appleton et al., 2013), and it has been recognised as being particularly important for

language minority parents for communication to be linguistically accessible (Leddy, 2018). Whilst the Equality Act defines provision of interpreters as a reasonable adjustment (BDA, 2015) and the BSL Act provides legal recognition to signed language (Pyper & Loft, 2022), parents in the current research critiqued these legislation as being difficult to enforce which leads to experiences of linguistic exclusion. They emphasised the importance of enforceability being increased.

The teacher interviewed reported that they were not supported by external agencies to increase their knowledge or set up systems that would facilitate effective communication and collaboration. Whilst D/deaf children receive support from ToDs who can advise and support schools to include children socially and academically (Antia & Rivera, 2016), Deaf parents do not have access to professionals who can support their engagement with their children's schools, meaning that school staff with little understanding of D/deafness are left to develop systems themselves. The teacher felt that collaboration between school staff and Deaf parents would have been improved through the support of external agencies who could help increase their knowledge and assist with setting up systems. The teacher also expressed a desire to learn from other schools who have worked with Deaf parents, a sentiment also evident in parent interviews. The teacher felt that having contact with other schools who could share knowledge would also support school staff pastorally.

5.2.3. Distinctive Contribution of Current Study

There is a scarcity of research exploring the experiences of Deaf parents and hearing school staff of collaborating with one another. To the researcher's knowledge, Kanwal et al. (2022) and Barbosa et al. (2023) are presently the only published papers exploring Deaf parents' experiences of collaboration. These studies were conducted in the Punjab and Portugal, respectively. Therefore, the current research is the first study to explore the experiences of Deaf parents of collaboration with hearing school staff within the UK. The

current study is also the first to explicitly state the Deaf identity of the parent participants and to explore Deafness from a solely culturo-linguistic perspective: both Kanwal et al. (2022) and Barbosa et al. (2023) discuss Deaf culture in their literature reviews and use interpreters to support interviews, but neither discuss parental identity and both utilise the term 'deaf' throughout their papers. As in the current study, Kanwal et al. (2022) used semi-structured individual interviews to gather data and so could explore individuals' experiences in depth. However, their exploration was limited to the challenges faced by D/deaf parents in accessing their children's education, whereas the current study explored facilitators as well as barriers to collaboration. Barbosa et al. (2023) also explored a range of parental experiences, but their data was collected through a focus group, meaning that individual experiences were not explored in as much depth as in the current study.

There are no studies to the researcher's knowledge exploring hearing school staff's experiences of collaborating with Deaf parents, meaning that the current research is the first to explore the experiences of hearing school staff of collaboration with Deaf parents. Although exploration of hearing school staff's experiences was limited to one teacher due to recruitment difficulties, their data was valuable to the findings of the current study and provide particular insight into systemic barriers to collaboration with Deaf parents faced by school staff.

Additionally, this is the first study in this area of research to utilise IPA to examine individuals' experiences in depth before exploring across-participant similarities; previous studies have explored group themes through thematic analysis. This methodological decision was made because an integral aim of the current research was to empower Deaf parents to describe their experiences and communicate what they felt would support collaboration with hearing school staff as the Deaf community frequently describe feeling marginalised and disempowered by the hearing majority (BDA, 2015).

5.3. Methodological Review

The purpose of this research was to explore lived experiences of culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff of collaboration and gather their views on how collaborative practice can be facilitated. The relativist ontological and constructionist epistemological stances and interpretivist theoretical perspective adopted were appropriate for exploration of this topic due to the subjective nature of participants' experiences. The use of individual semi-structured interviews allowed experiences to be explored in a manner that enabled participants to describe them in their own words and the researcher to respond to areas that naturally arose from discussion (J. Smith et al., 2022), and the use of interpreters meant that Deaf participants could engage in their preferred language of BSL (McKee et al., 2012).

Utilising IPA ensured that individual perspectives were valued in their own right (J. Smith et al., 2022). Due to its commitment to examining a person's lived experiences and meaning making, exploration of participants' data using IPA allowed for in-depth exploration of their experiences to occur (J. Smith, 2011). Positioning participants as experts in their own lived experiences (Eatough & Smith, 2017) was particularly appropriate in the current study due to the researcher's cultural outsider status. Detailed exploration of each case in IPA meant that the small sample size in the current study was appropriate (J. Smith & Osborn, 2015). As all analysis and interpretation of participants' data was completed solely by the researcher, it is acknowledged that analysis by a different researcher may have led to different interpretation of the data. However, the researcher intentionally approached transcripts with an open mind and 'bracketed off' preconceptions from previous transcripts, using reflexive tutorials to discuss findings and address potential influences of their prior experiences and reading. An integral aspect of IPA is the researcher's sense making of participants' meaning making (J. Smith et al., 2022). Whilst the researcher's views and experiences cannot be separated from those of the participants, this is acceptable in IPA due to its use of the

hermeneutic circle (Giddens, 1976; J. Smith & Osborn, 2015). For further information about the validity and quality of the current study, please see the relevant sections in chapter three.

A potential criticism of the current study relates to the differences between Deaf participants. Homogeneity is sought in IPA studies, but participants in this research represent different relationship statuses (married and separated) and family dynamics (hearing and Deaf partners, coparenting with previous partner, and different amount and ages of children). Due to difficulties with recruitment of Deaf participants, it was not possible to further control these variables. However, the definition of homogeneity in IPA depends on the study's context (J. Smith et al., 2022). In the current research, homogeneity of Deaf parents was defined regarding their association with Deaf identity and having at least one hearing child attending a mainstream school. Whilst there is a risk of bias in participant self-selection, generalisation to the wider population is not the aim of IPA, so representativeness of a sample is not a mark of quality in IPA research in the same way as with other methodologies.

Due to the constraints of the researcher's doctoral course discussed in chapter three, it was not possible for a Deaf co-researcher to contribute to planning, implementation, or analysis of the study. However, the research aims represented topics identified as important by the Deaf community (BDA, 2015) and the researcher carefully considered implications of methodological choices during the project on participants' access to and engagement in the research, removing as many practical and linguistic barriers as possible and ensuring that participants' voices were accurately represented through illustrative quotations in the analysis chapter. Additionally, recommendations made about practical implications and future areas of study have included reflections on the need for the Deaf community to be actively involved in next steps.

5.4. Implications for Practice

Several implications for the practice of school staff, EPs, and LAs have been identified through this research. Implications for each sector will be discussed in turn.

5.4.1. Implications for School Staff

The most important aspect of collaboration discussed by participants in this study was positive attitudes, a factor viewed as foundational to building relationships between Deaf parents and hearing school staff. As evidenced by Deaf identity research and narratives of Deafness presented by parents in the current study, there is often a dichotomy between societal views and those of the Deaf community (Ladd, 2003; Greene-Woods et al., 2020). Hearing school staff must understand the culturo-linguistic model of Deafness to appreciate lived experiences of Deaf parents with whom they work. This understanding would develop through training which provides information around Deaf culture, addresses misconceptions, and warns against generalisations. School staff adopting positive attitudes towards Deaf parents would increase parents' perceptions of schools as respectful and willing to engage in collaboration (Beveridge, 2005; Fenton et al., 2017).

Deaf and hearing participants in the current study discussed the importance of proactivity in developing collaborative relationships. D/deaf people have different communication preferences, and it is important for schools to proactively inquire about parental preferences and implement suggestions and requests (Barnett, 2002). The importance of flexibility was also highlighted in the current study; a 'one size fits all' approach to collaboration is not appropriate due to the heterogeneous nature of D/deafness. Thought should be given to how preferences are recorded on school systems so that these are remembered without parents' prompting.

Finally, it is important that Deaf parents feel that they can trust their hearing children's school staff. Trust is linked to respect (Beveridge, 2005) and can be built through demonstration of understanding and respect of Deaf culture. Time must be invested into

building relationships, with small wins contributing to development of trust (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Effort must be placed into repairing trust where difficulties in communication have been faced and relationships broken down (Miller & Ahmad, 2000). For Deaf participants in the current study, reciprocity and frequency of communication was important to building trust (Conus & Fahrni, 2019), so schools must engage in reciprocal conversations around parental preferences regarding communication methods and frequency. Also, as parents described a desire for immediacy in communication with school, consideration should be given to the infrastructures in place that enable Deaf parents to communicate with school without delay.

5.4.2. Implications for EPs

One of the core competencies that EPs must demonstrate during their training and professional practice is to "take appropriate professional action to redress power imbalances and to embed principles of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in all professional actions" (BPS, 2023, p.20). EPs are expected to be able to guide and support schools in a range of areas and within diverse communities (DfE, 2023a). EPs must be knowledgeable about Deaf culture and how to facilitate collaboration with this community so that they can model good practice or provide requested guidance. As collaboration is a core aspect of their practice (BPS, 2023; DfE, 2023a), EPs are well positioned to model and support effective collaboration to stakeholders in school communities and contribute to development of school staff's practice in this area.

At a systemic level, EPs can be involved in organisational change within individual schools (BPS, 2023), supporting development and implementation of policies and practices grounded in psychological theory which encompass effective evidence-informed practice. EPs should also undertake organisational needs analyses within their own service and evaluate their personal practice, further developing their service offer in response to

stakeholders' feedback and support needs within their local communities. Action research projects with a range of stakeholders should be conducted by EPs regarding collaboration between Deaf parents and hearing school staff to help identify areas where further development is needed, supports required for change to occur, and the role EPs can play.

5.4.3. Implications for LAs and Central Government

As responsibility to bolster parental engagement is increasingly placed on schools (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018), school staff should be guided and supported to implement strategies that enable engagement of parents from minority cultures (Matuszny et al., 2007), including Deaf culture. This guidance must come from LAs to ensure that schools are informed of the local context and support opportunities available in addition to general information about D/deafness. This must be produced in equal partnership with the Deaf community so they are empowered to communicate their preferences, advocate for the change they want to see, and have ownership in decision making (BDA, 2015; Guiding Principles for Hearing Allyship, n.d.; Ladd, 2003). Clarification must also be provided on where school staff can access D/deaf awareness training where a child is hearing but their parent is D/deaf and on how and from where funding can be accessed to pay for this training and any necessary interpreter costs where parents utilise this service.

Central government agencies must collect more detailed population statistics regarding cultural Deafness to better inform systems to support the Deaf community's access to institutions within hearing society such as education. It is hoped that the BSL Act (2022) will facilitate development of more accessible systems and increase linguistic access for Deaf people, but further work is needed to ensure that this is not tokenistic and that legislation can be effectively enforced.

5.5. Implications for Future Research

There is currently little published research examining experiences of Deaf parents of collaborating with their hearing children's hearing school staff (Kanwal et al., 2022; Barbosa et al., 2023) and none to the researcher's knowledge examining experiences of collaboration with Deaf parents from the perspective of hearing school staff. The current research represents a small-scale study exploring lived experiences of collaboration within these populations. Further research is needed to examine experiences of the wider populations of Deaf parents and hearing mainstream school staff within the UK to best inform policies within schools and the practice of education professionals including school staff and EPs. It will be important for research into school staff's experiences to include exploration of those working in different types of education setting (such as nurseries, schools, colleges, and specialist settings) in a range of roles (including teaching, pastoral, and leadership).

The Deaf community must be actively involved in planning and implementing further research in collaboration with hearing school staff. Where possible, Deaf researchers should lead studies or have equal partnership with hearing co-researchers in decision-making for the research. A participatory action research methodology should be utilised to ensure that Deaf stakeholders are engaged in all research stages.

5.6. Conclusion of Current Research

Educational law protects a parent's right to involvement in their child's education (DfE, 2023b). Parent-professional partnership has been a topic of much research within academic literature, with studies highlighting the positive impact of parental involvement in their children's education (Wilder, 2014). There is a scarcity of research exploring collaborative partnership between Deaf parents and hearing school staff or guidance about how these partnerships can be effectively facilitated, despite this being raised by the Deaf community as an area where further development is needed (BDA, 2015).

In response to this identified gap in research, the current study was developed which aimed to explore lived experiences of collaboration of culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff in England and gain insight into factors they felt would improve collaborative relationships. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three Deaf parents and one hearing teacher, with BSL interpreters used to facilitate parent conversations. IPA (J. Smith et al., 2022) was utilised as its foundational philosophical principles aligned with the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and theoretic positions (relativism, constructionism, and interpretivism, respectively). IPA's focus on participant individuality (Eatough & Smith, 2017) was felt to be appropriate for research with members of a minority culturo-linguistic group conducted by a researcher who was a cultural outsider.

Exploration of each participant's PETs led to the development of three GETs: participants' experiences of collaboration are generally difficult and frustrating; things that would facilitate collaboration; and the importance of Deaf identity. When considering data in relation to the research questions, the impact of attitudes and the need for systems and policies consistently arose. Attitudes were explored in relation to differences between parent participants' own Deaf identities and those of hearing school staff, and the importance of respect, trust, and communication was discussed. Systems and policies were considered regarding the impact that participants felt guidelines would have on collaboration, barriers currently faced that policies would address, the importance of flexibility, and the need for external support for school staff. A methodological review which highlighted the research's strengths and limitations was provided, and implications for school staff, EPs, LAs, and central government agencies discussed. Finally, areas for further research were highlighted.

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Appendix A

Reflexive Extract From Research Diary

26.01.24

I did the exploratory noting for the first parent interview transcript today. The process took longer than I thought it would, but I feel that I have been able to explore the data in detail. I have highlighted quotes wherever possible/appropriate to ensure that I retain the participant's meaning. I was able to consider linguistics and conceptual aspects of the transcript. I will move on to the next step (constructing experiential statements) tomorrow. Notes that I made repeatedly across this transcript that will likely feed into the experiential statements related to: bilingualism; changing Deaf identity over time; belonging; equality; respect; responsibility; trust; CODAs' role; finance; technology; differences between primary and secondary schools; and attitudes. It will be interesting to see how these are grouped in the next stage.

27.01.24

I completed the 'constructing experiential statements' stage of data analysis today. As with the previous stage, it took longer than I expected. However, I am pleased with the final result. I ended up with quite a long list of statements. I can already see how some of these themes will link together, but others will require deeper consideration. I will need to make sure that I carefully think about all of the statements to avoid potential bias in the next stage, and it will be important to try a few options out for each statement rather than keeping them in the first groupings tried.

29.01.24

I clustered the experiential statements into Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) today. Whilst some of the statements cluster together easily, others were more complex. I organised the statements into several groups, but I am pleased with the groupings that I landed with. I will be interested to hear my tutors' thoughts on the PETs and subthemes. It will also be interesting to see if my thoughts remain the same upon review. I sorted the statements into five PETs with various sub-themes within them: Deaf identity (developed over time; linked to language; impacted by stage of life and resulting social circles); dynamics within the family (Deaf parent feels unequal to hearing partner; involvement of hearing children); Deaf parent's experiences of their children's hearing education

Appendix B

Summary of Recruitment Process and Challenges

Several avenues to recruitment were explored between September 2023 and February 2024. Initially, information was distributed in the researcher's LA via the EP team to schools who had an existing package of EP support. A potential parent participant was identified who initially showed interest, but they stopped responding to emails and so were not interviewed. Information was then disseminated to all schools within the LA via the children's services education bulletin and to special educational needs coordinators as part of network meetings. Additionally, the information was sent to the LA's sensory impairment team who advertised it on their social media page. A request was also sent to the local Deaf support network organisation, but they responded that they could not disseminate the information as this could compromise their clients' confidentiality. Three potential parent participants contacted the researcher, but one subsequently stopped responding to emails. Two parents agreed to virtual interviews but did not attend at the scheduled time and withdrew consent when contacted by the researcher to reschedule, so their consent forms were destroyed and contact details removed from the researcher's emails. One teacher was recruited.

As recruitment was proving difficult within the LA, information was disseminated more widely via emails sent to colleagues on the researcher's training course and the course lead who circulated the information to West Midlands EP services. Additionally, one of the researcher's academic tutors passed the information on to their Deaf students and to colleagues in the National Sensory Impairment Partnership and the British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People. Three parents were recruited through these routes. Information was sent to the schools that these parents' children attended to request participants, but no responses were received.

Communication Protocol for BSL Interpreters

Communication Protocol For BSL Interpreters

1. Time will be given at the beginning of the interview to allow the Deaf participant and the interpreter to become familiar with one another's communication styles.
2. Everything that is signed or spoken must be interpreted, including side comments and anything else that the hearing person can hear (e.g. environmental white noise, construction noise). Linguistic content will take precedence over environmental sounds.
3. The interpreter must sit opposite the Deaf participant and next to or slightly behind the hearing researcher so that eye contact can be maintained. The interpreter must not sit in front of a window or other light source so that their face can be seen.
4. The researcher will maintain eye contact with the Deaf participant and will address them directly.
5. A ten-minute comfort break will be offered after 50 minutes.
6. The interpreter will use facial expressions to convey emotional affect and grammatical content (for example, to indicate that a question is asked).
7. The researcher will conversationally pause as opposed to slowing down the overall pace of the conversation.
8. The interpreter can interrupt to request a change of conversational pace or repetition or clarification.
9. The information discussed in the interview will remain confidential.

Appendix D

Letter of Ethical Approval

Dear Nooreen Khan, Emmanouela Terlektsi, Ruby Noble

RE: An exploration of culturally Deaf parents' experiences of collaborating with hearing school staff

Application for Ethical Review: ERN_0841-Jun2023

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project, which was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that this study now has ethical approval.

Any adverse events occurring during the study should be promptly brought to the Committee's attention by the Principal Investigator and may necessitate further ethical review.

Please ensure that the relevant requirements within the University's Code of Practice for Research and the information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (available at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Links-and-Resources.aspx) are adhered to.

Please be aware that whilst Health and Safety (H&S) issues may be considered during the ethical review process, you are still required to follow the University's guidance on H&S and to ensure that H&S risk assessments have been carried out as appropriate. For further information about this, please contact your School H&S representative or the University's H&S Unit at healthandsafety@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Kind regards,

The Co-Chairs of the Humanities and Social Sciences Committee

E-mail: ethics-queries@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Parent Interview Schedule

Topic	Main questions	Further prompts
Background information and definitions	Tell me about yourself and your family.	How long has your child been at their current school? Are there any other Deaf people in your family?
	What does the phrase 'Deaf identity' mean to you? OR How would you describe your Deaf identify?	Are you involved in your local/national Deaf community?
	How do you define collaboration with your child's school staff?	
Lived experiences of collaboration	How are you involved in your child's education?	For example, parents' evenings, in-school meetings, etc.
	What have been your experiences of collaborating with your child's school staff?	Describe a time recently when you have collaborated with a member of staff at your child's school.
Current strengths and weaknesses of collaboration	What has helped/hindered collaboration between yourself and your child's school staff?	This could include resources, attitudes, adjustments made, etc. What do you think your child's school staff's understanding is of Deaf identity/culture?
Facilitating collaboration	What would you define as good practice for collaboration with culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff?	
	How do you feel that collaboration can be effectively facilitated?	What resources are needed to facilitate collaboration?

Appendix F

Semi-Structured School Staff Interview Schedule

Topic	Main questions	Further prompts
Background information and definitions	In what capacity have you worked with Deaf parents? What is your understanding of Deafness? How do you define collaboration with parents?	For example, class teacher/TA, SENCO, pastoral support, etc. For example, a disability, an identity, etc. Have you had any training on Deafness?
Lived experiences of collaboration	How do you involve parents in their child's education? What have been your experiences of collaborating with Deaf parents?	For example, parents' evenings, in-school meetings, etc. Is this the same for Deaf parents as for hearing parents? Describe a time recently when you have collaborated with a Deaf parent (prompt about emotions).
Current strengths and weaknesses of collaboration	What has helped/hindered collaboration between yourself and Deaf parents?	This could include resources, attitudes, adjustments made, etc.
Facilitating collaboration	What would you define as good practice for collaboration with culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff? How do you feel that collaboration can be effectively facilitated?	 What resources are needed to facilitate collaboration?

Anonymised Parent Information Sheet

Parent Participation Information Sheet

Study Title: An exploration of culturally Deaf parents' experiences of collaboration with hearing school staff
Researcher: Ruby Noble

You are invited to take part in this research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part of not, it is important that you understand why this research is being done and what your involvement would look like. Please watch this video in full. The researcher's email address will be provided near the end so that you can ask questions if anything is not clear or if you would like more information before you make a decision. You are welcome to discuss this with others, but it is your decision whether or not you take part. If you are happy to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

This research aims to explore the experiences of culturally Deaf parents of collaborating with their hearing children's hearing school staff. It is expected that those who participate in this study will be able to provide insight into the current strengths and weaknesses of collaboration between Deaf parents and their hearing children's hearing school staff and make suggestions about how collaborative practice can be further developed.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate because you meet the criteria for the target sample. For the purpose of this study, this means that you are a Deaf parent whose preferred language is British Sign Language and who has at least one hearing child who attends a mainstream hearing school.

What will happen if I take part?

If you take part, you can expect to participate in one interview of about 90 minutes long. This will take place in person at [*Local Authority office*] or at your child's school and will involve yourself, the researcher and a BSL interpreter. During the interview, you will be asked a set of questions prepared by the researcher relating to your experiences of collaborating with hearing school staff. The researcher will ask follow-up questions based on your answers. With your permission, the interview will be video and audio recorded to enable later transcription by the researcher. You will receive

information at the beginning of the interview about the study and what to expect. The researcher will also require you to provide your written consent to participate in the study, so a form will be provided for you to sign on the day of the interview. This form will be translated by an interpreter. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions before consenting to the study. After the interview, you will receive a full debrief from the researcher.

Are there any benefits to taking part in this study?

By taking part in this study, you will have an opportunity to share your experiences and opinions of working collaboratively with hearing school staff. The information from this research is planned to be used to develop the practice of professionals working in [*Local Authority*] education services.

Are there any risks involved?

Due to the relatively small Deaf population within the West Midlands, it is possible that you may be identifiable. However, steps will be taken to protect your anonymity by assigning you with different name and removing identifiable information from transcripts.

What data will be collected?

Your name and signature will be collected when signing the consent form. This will be the only document where your name will be stated. Data will be collected through the video and audio recordings taken during the interview which will then be transcribed by the researcher for analysis. The transcript will be anonymised and you will referred to by your assigned name. All video and audio recordings and transcripts will be password protected and stored on the University of Birmingham's secure server.

Will my participation be confidential?

All measures will be taken by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. Only essential data will be collected from you. For example, no personal data such as date of birth will be collected. You will be allocated a different name which will be used in transcripts and in the final report. All documents and recordings which contain your data will be held securely and under password protection on the University of Birmingham's secure server and will only be accessed by the researcher and their university tutors. The interview will take place in a private room. The researcher will review and transcribe data in a private room.

Do I have to take part?

No. There is no obligation for you to participate.

What happens if I change my mind?

If you change your mind about participating, you can email the researcher expressing your wish to either not go ahead with conducting an interview or to withdraw your interview data if you have already completed an interview. You will have up to seven days after completing your interview to withdraw from the study and have any data that you have provided up until that point securely

destroyed. After this period, your data will be fully anonymised and so it won't be possible to remove the data from the study.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Anonymous data will be stored by the researcher's university tutors for up to 10 years and transcripts may be accesses by other researchers in the interest of open science. Results will be reported in a postgraduate thesis and may also be published in an academic journal article. The findings will also be discussed within [*Local Authority*] to develop the practice of professionals working with children, young people and their parents in education settings.

Where can I get more information?

You can ask any questions to the researcher or to their university tutors. The debrief sheet will also provide a summary of the research as well as the contact details of the researcher and their university tutors.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have any concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy after speaking to the researcher or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher's university tutors. If participating in the study has raised any issues for you, you can contact the following charities for advice and support:

- Action Deafness: https://actiondeafness.org.uk/
- The Royal National Institute for Deaf People: https://rnid.org.uk/
- deafPLUS: https://www.deafplus.org/deafplus-advice-line/

Researcher name and contact details: Ruby Noble,
Researcher's university tutors and contact details: Dr Nooreen Khan,   or Dr Emmanouela Terlektsi,   .

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

School Staff Participation Information Sheet

Study Title: An exploration of culturally Deaf parents' experiences of collaboration with hearing school staff
Researcher: Ruby Noble

You are invited to take part in this research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part of not, it is important that you understand why this research is being done and what your involvement would look like. Please read this document in full. The researcher's email address will be provided near the end so that you can ask questions if anything is not clear or if you would like more information before you make a decision. You are welcome to discuss this with others, but it is your decision whether or not you take part. If you are happy to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

This research aims to explore the experiences of culturally Deaf parents and hearing school staff of collaborating with one another. It is expected that those who participate in this study will be able to provide insight into the current strengths and weaknesses of collaboration between Deaf parents and their hearing children's hearing school staff and make suggestions about how collaborative practice can be further developed.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate because you meet the criteria for the target sample. For the purpose of this study, this means that you are an adult working in a mainstream school who has experience of working with Deaf parents whose preferred language is British Sign Language (defined in this research project as culturally Deaf) and their hearing children.

What will happen if I take part?

If you take part, you can expect to participate in one interview of about an hour long. This will take place online using Microsoft Teams and will include yourself and the researcher. During the interview, you will be asked a set of questions prepared by the researcher relating to your experiences of collaboration with culturally Deaf parents, and the researcher will ask follow-up questions based on your answers. With your permission, the interview will be video and audio recorded to enable later transcription by the researcher. You will receive information at the beginning of the interview about

the study and what to expect. The researcher will also require you to provide consent to participate in the study, so a form will be provided for you to complete and return prior to the interview group and you will be asked to confirm that you are happy to take part at the beginning of the session. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions before consenting to the study. After the interview, you will receive a full debrief from the researcher.

Are there any benefits to taking part in this study?

By taking part in this study, you will have an opportunity to share your experiences and opinions of working with culturally Deaf parents. The information from this research is planned to be used to develop the practice of professionals working in [*Local Authority*] education services.

Are there any risks involved?

No risks have been identified relating to your involvement with this research.

What data will be collected?

Your name and signature will be collected when signing the consent form. This will be the only document where your name will be stated. Data will be collected through the video and audio recordings taken during the interview which will then be transcribed by the researcher for analysis. The transcript will be anonymised and you will be referred to by an assigned name. All video and audio recordings and transcripts will be password protected and stored on the University of Birmingham's secure server.

Will my participation be confidential?

All measures will be taken by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. Only essential data will be collected from you. For example, no personal data such as date of birth will be collected and you will not be asked to share the names of children or their parents. Participants should keep one another's contributions confidential. You will be allocated a different name which will be used in transcripts and in the final report. All documents and recordings which contain your data will be held securely and under password protection on the University of Birmingham's secure server and will only be accessed by the researcher and their university tutors. The researcher will conduct the interview in a private room and will review and transcribe data in a private room.

Do I have to take part?

No. There is no obligation for you to participate.

What happens if I change my mind?

If you change your mind about participating, you can email the researcher expressing your wish to either not go ahead with participating in the interview or to withdraw your interview data if you have already participated in the interview. You will have up to seven days after completing your interview to withdraw from the study and have any data that you have provided up until that point securely

destroyed. After this period, your data will be fully anonymised and so it won't be possible to remove the data from the study.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Anonymous data will be stored by the researcher's university tutors for up to 10 years and transcripts may be accessed by other researchers in the interest of open science. Results will be reported in a postgraduate thesis and may also be published in an academic journal article. The findings will also be discussed within [*Local Authority*] to develop the practice of professionals working with children, young people and their parents in education settings.

Where can I get more information?

You can ask any questions to the researcher or to their university tutors. The debrief sheet will also provide a summary of the research as well as the contact details of the researcher and their university tutors.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have any concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy after speaking to the researcher or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher's university tutors.

Researcher name and contact details: Ruby Noble,
Researcher's university tutor and contact details: Dr Nooreen Khan,   or Dr Emmanouela Terlektsi,

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

Debrief Sheet

Study Title: An exploration of culturally Deaf parents' experiences of collaboration with hearing school staff
Researcher: Ruby Noble

Thank you for taking part in this research study. This research aims to explore the experiences of culturally Deaf parents of collaborating with their children's hearing school staff. It is expected that those who participate in this study will be able to provide insight into the current strengths and weaknesses of collaboration between Deaf parents and their hearing children's hearing school staff and make suggestions about how collaborative practice can be further developed.

What will happen to my data?

All video and audio recordings and transcripts will be password protected and stored on the University of Birmingham's secure server and will only be accessed by the researcher and their university tutors. Your data will be anonymised by assigning you with a different name and removing identifiable information from transcripts. Anonymous data will be stored by the researcher's university tutors for up to 10 years and transcripts may be accessed by other researchers in the interest of open science. Results will be reported in a postgraduate thesis and may also be published in an academic journal article. The findings will also be discussed within [*LA education services*] to develop the practice of professionals working with children, young people and their parents in education settings.

What happens if I want to withdraw?

If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact Ruby Noble within the next seven calendar days. If you withdraw, any data that you have provided (consent form and video and audio recordings from the interview) will be securely destroyed. After this period, your data will be fully anonymised and so it won't be possible to remove the data from the study.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have any concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy after speaking to the researcher or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher's university tutors.

Researcher name and contact details: Ruby Noble, ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇
Researcher's university tutors and contact details: Dr Nooreen Khan, ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ or Dr Emmanouela Terlektsi, ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

Appendix J

Extract from a Parent Participant Transcript with Exploratory Noting and Experiential Statements

Note that the parent used Sign Supported English and so the interviewer gave visual responses (e.g. nods) that are not recorded in the transcript.

STATEMENTS		NOTES
Parent has felt humiliated when school staff have singled them out in front of others Parent felt embarrassed when other parents could hear conversation with teacher School staff didn't use parent's preferred communication method Parent felt embarrassed and judged, when discussion about child's difficulties could be overheard by other parents Importance of privacy Small things build up which affects relationship with school Parent frustrated at having to give repeat reminders Frustration at barriers in wider society Desire for systemic change Language barriers Frustration at lack of flexibility in systems in school	were calling for me that feels that's humiliating and that brings back memories when Patrick was in Nursery at the same school because I asked them to write and report because at the end of the day there was talk talk talk about what happening that day I felt too embarrassed but they talked very clearly and loudly so other parents could hear I'd feel more confident them writing in a book but they'd still talk to me and once for example because Patrick was autistic we didn't realise at the time the teacher said he's been a troublemaker he refused refused can't focus on the work I would feel embarrassed the other parents would be looking and think I'm a failure as a mother I feel that would have been better if they wrote it down or come and talk to me private in a quiet room later so it's all those little things that built up but we really didn't know back then I did try tried but frustrating having to remind but yeah I'm sure I'm not the only one. R: So it sounds like you've got quite a lot of um expectation on you to be the one making all that contact and reminding them again and again how does that feel? E: Yeah frustrating because it's not just school it's life as well doctor's surgeries dentist everything is just an added unnecessary pressure to do and I feel if I was in power I would change the system that the school they have to book an interpreter without having to be reminded yeah and making sure access is more clear accessible and regular updates face to face with an interpreter or simple use of language in emails or but because the argument we can't use text it's confidential but I feel the Equality Act surely they must allow that in this situation in this example it's exceptional circumstances should allow that and it's not like they have a lot of Deaf parents in the school it's only me and my husband yeah. That's how I feel. R: Yeah understandably so it sounds very frustrating. So thinking sort of um practically then about about what things help and hinder that collaboration what things we'll break it down into two [laugh] what things would you say have helped collaboration and that could be interpreters attitudes adjustments anything like that?	Parent feeling humiliated in front of other parents Embarrassed at lack of confidentiality Desire for privacy Parent wishes not taken into account "I would feel embarrassed" by other parents' perceptions - linked to lack of privacy Wish for privacy "all those little things that build up" "I did try" "frustrating having to remind." primary school Frustration at access difficulties in general "an added unnecessary pressure" "if I was in power I would change the system" to increase accessibility "without having to be reminded" "regular updates face to face with an interpreter" Wish for simpler language Lack of flexibility Frustration at lack of reasonable adjustments
Importance of Deaf awareness and BSL level 1 training Systems need flexibility Language overload creates barrier	E: Basically Deaf awareness for all staff they must so level one basic level one and also they need to look at how they provide support for parents not just Deaf parents but every parents and looking at how the app can improve video calls better video calls time reserved for parents evening um also I think the app is very not very flexible when and also newsletter when you open it's too much information I've said to them break it down so it's easier to read um accessibility that's all	Desire for staff to have Deaf awareness training and BSL Level 1 Technology increased flexibility wanted Too much reliance on written information

STATEMENTS column:

Adjustments needed in systems that rely on audio

Adjustments needed for parents evenings - timing and environment

Frustration that parent's requests/recommendations not acted upon

More positive about secondary school

Parent feels uncomfortable about mixed roles in primary school ("parents are staff themselves") because of impact on confidentiality and trust

Imbalance as parents working in school have more knowledge of CODA's education/school experience

Parent wonders whether sensitivity about confidentiality is 'normal' or specific to Deaf parent

Positive about children being taught to sign

Lack of understanding in school about Deaf identity/culture

Parent offered to be involved in teaching re sign language/culture

Importance of Deaf and hearing people interacting

Role of CODA in teaching Deaf awareness

Lack of staff understanding impact of CODA not talking to parent about school

Lack of understanding about difference between BSL and Makaton

Anger and irritation about lack of staff awareness

Main transcript column:

and also I have said outside the gates the speaker would have to be a feed like a video feed so they know oh it's a Deaf parent um I feel that needs it's a good way of making the parents feel inclusive even more when it comes to parents evening extra time an interpreter also the room they use sometimes too big and distracting so a smaller room with more light would be better so because when sitting in the classroom people walking past makes it difficult to focus I have raised that with them er but the secondary school I's simple steps so I have no complaints but I feel more for the primary school the attitude is so different because in primary school a lot of the parents are staff themselves which I feel a bit uncomfortable about because of confidentiality if I see that mum that mum knows more about what's happening with my children then I do I don't feel that's very acceptable when I know a lot of the parents are needing to work in school terms but I feel that confidentiality is compromised confidentiality and trust with the school but it feels like if the mum's working there you feel gosh you know what's happening with my children and even the at the reception it's a mum so I know they have to respect confidentiality but I don't like the fact that they know something that I don't I don't know if that's normal or being Deaf makes me more sensitive I don't know.

R: And I'm I'm interested that you've you've sort of mentioned attitudes a few times and um I was just wondering what do you think your children's school staff understanding is of Deaf identity and culture you as opposed to a disability?

E: Mm. Not too good because the SENCO teacher there is level 3 sign language and they have been teaching the children sign language which I think's fantastic but I don't really think around personal identity or understanding of Deaf culture I have said to her it might be better if you ask me because I'm Deaf I can get the extra and I think it's important for them to meet a Deaf person and see the difference because if you teach them and give them the impression that oh Deaf people can you know they need the experience meeting Deaf people if Timothy's class I would say are the most aware because Timothy has been teaching them about Deaf awareness like with the Christmas play I looked at the teacher and said where can we sit and she [shrugged] so I had to sit at the back but Timothy is small bless him and there was a tall girl in front of him so I couldn't see Timothy and they were all signing the songs I didn't know I said to Timothy why didn't you tell me you learned he said I though I did but and the person who taught them signing knew Makaton and was hearing I felt I flipped when I learned that because when they were signing the Christmas songs lots of the signs were wrong I was like oh why couldn't they ask me

NOTES column:

Technology

Increase time and access to interpreter

Increase environmental access

Visual distractions

Issues repeatedly raised but not addressed

"no complaints" with secondary school

Different attitude in secondary school

Confidentiality impacted by parents working at school-hearing

Uncomfortable that other parents know more about their children than they do

Unsure if their feelings are Deaf-specific

School teaching children BSL is "fantastic"

Staff understanding of language but not identity

Desire to educate about Deafness

Increase contact with Deaf people to improve understanding

Involvement of CODA in educating hearing people

Lack of staff awareness

Inclusion attempted

Difficulty of CODA involvement

Frustration of Makaton being confused with BSL

Frustration that parent wasn't involved

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STATEMENTS		NOTES
Parent as a resource that school could use Parent unsure how to process feelings Impressed by awareness shown by CODA's peer Proud of son who used correct signs instead of Makaton they'd been taught CODA didn't feel able to correct teachers Feel it isn't CODA's responsibility to correct school staff Parent shared feeling upset with school staff to educate them about BSL School staff taken aback by parent's feedback Parent positive about inclusive intentions but frustrated about poor understanding Need for attitude about Deafness to change Impact of geography and lack of cultural diversity in local area Parent feels comfortable about challenging perceptions/misconceptions	they should be <u>lucky</u> to have come and let me or my husband to teach the Christmas signs so I was sat there trying not to laugh because the signing was awful really I <u>didn't know whether to laugh or cry</u> but what impressed me is the girl in Timothy's class saw that we couldn't see Timothy so she said to him Timothy <u>you swap with me so your parents can see you sign</u> so they swapped and we could see Timothy sign <u>Timothy knew some of the signs were wrong</u> so he changed to the correct sign and <u>I was proud of him</u> but like I said to him why didn't you tell that person who was teaching you wrong he said <u>I was terrified</u> I though fair enough it's <u>not your responsibility</u> I understand but and at the end <u>I spoke to the one of the teachers and said I was very upset with the signs</u> he face dropped I said it was wrong I know <u>it was lovely that you encouraged them to sign but that's not BSL it's Makaton it's different</u> she was like <u>oh</u> I said <u>you need me to come and teach and explain the difference</u> she went oh oh ok so I just feel the <u>attitude needs to change</u> I've not forgotten where we live in [town] it's very backwards and <u>disability awareness and very predominantly white</u> very and lots of those parents are people who've never moved out of [town] so they're very comfortable <u>they're not very worldly</u> whereas me I love to travel my husband travels we lived in [city] lived in [city] and there were lots of different cultures but here there's only a few it's us and another lady who are Deaf in the town that's it so I can understand <u>we've got a way to go</u> they're not used to it I think that's why I'm <u>comfortable challenging them</u> yeah.	School "lucky" to have Deaf parents who could teach BSL "I didn't know whether to laugh or cry" Impressed at other children's awareness Proud of son who used right signs so parents could access performance CODA not feeling able to correct adult Parent considering CODA's role and feeling Giving feedback Staff feelings Recognition/appreciation of effort but frustration at lack of understanding Parent offer to teach about Deafness/BSL "attitude needs to change" in primary school Impact of geography Impact of lack of cultural diversity "we've got a way to go" "I'm comfortable challenging them" because of lack of awareness
	R: Yeah so it sounds like again it's it's a lot of misconceptions or not understanding things I'm I'm interested as well sort of do do the schools get interpreters in or anything for things like parents evenings Christmas plays or or do they try to do things in house on their own?	
Parent doesn't feel that primary school take accessibility seriously Cost barrier Parent feels that school's finances aren't a concern for them – adjustments are school's legal responsibility Acts not powerful enough Frustration that school haven't changed practice over the years Accessibility not prioritised by staff in primary school	E: No no no I don't feel that they take it seriously enough no matter how much <u>I ask</u> they say oh <u>we couldn't find an interpreter in time</u> or <u>it's too expensive</u> we can't afford it and I said <u>that's not my problem</u> you should meet our needs and requirements schools have to have a budget to cover this my partner says the council says they should cover because of <u>Equality Act and now the BSL Act</u> I know it's <u>not powerful enough</u> but now it's at the forefront it really needs <u>awareness</u> I've been as a mother I've been here for nearly for about seven eight years and <u>you have not changed</u> but so don't forget under those seven or eight years there have been <u>three different heads</u> each had different attitudes different goals but <u>none of them have increased access for disability or Deaf</u> and we only have one SENCO who's been there for years so I don't think from my	Not taken seriously despite persistently asking Lack of planning Cost barrier Problem ownership School not meeting parents' needs despite legal requirement Laws "not powerful enough" Need for awareness Frustration at lack of change in school Impact of staff changes

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Perceived lack of staff confidence	observation I don't feel she's got enough confidence to be determined I'll just be comfortable staying level two happy teaching children so I feel there needs a change there yeah.	Lack of self-confidence perceived in SENCO
	R: And you've mentioned um the obviously the Equality Act and and the BSL Act as well um what impact do you think they have I was I was just interested that you said you know they exist but you don't feel there's enough power and yeah could you give me a bit more information about that.	
Have to fight for rights to be recognised Rights under law - protected, but not enforceable	E: Well because we've been fighting for the BSL Act for many years and it was the last Bill that the queen signed before she died which was lovely but even when we have it we need to work on making it more enforceable it takes time when with the Equality Act it's more broad there's much more diverse than the BSL and sign language um I know the BDA are trying to polish it up to make it more serious and to be honest I don't know much about what's happening behind that but now	"Fighting for the BSL Act for many years" BSL Act not enforceable
Hopeful that BSL Act and GCSE will have an impact	with the BSL GCSE happening soon these two acts will work together in some way so it's still early days but I'm hoping to see that become more legal –	Positivity about BSL GCSE and hope about its impact Hopeful about the future
	R: Mm.	
Aware that change will take time More legal weight needed to make protections enforceable	E: – legal but it will take time for the whole country to be made aware of this but they need more something more weight with this yeah.	Recognition that change will take time 'more weight' needed to make Acts enforceable
	R: So it sounds like sort of the thing that you would say is the most helpful is attitudes really?	
Acceptance of parents' rights needed Adjustments must always be made, not just when decided by school Importance of staff awareness and confidence of parents' needs without needing prompting Desire for guidelines to be produced for schools which include information about legal protections Recognition/resignation that change will take time	E: For them to accept that we as Deaf parents have a right for sign language interpreting accessibility to material request face to face when we need to not when they offer when we need to and also making sure we receive handouts for any performance of parents big parents meetings we need handouts and staff to be more aware of and considerate of our needs without us having to be the one that initiates all that and making the school more accessible as well yeah that's what I feel I think it would be lovely if the education system made a clear guideline for Deaf parents what we what we have what can we offer what our rights are what we can expect from primary school if they made that clear having that set out that they need to provide this this this this under the Equality Act and the BSL Act I think that's what we need but that we're not going to see everything at that time um and that's the same for Deaf it's the same visual impairment	Acceptance needed Parents' rights should always be recognised, not just when it's easy for school Staff awareness should be automatic and not require parent prompting Desire for guidelines to be produced by education system, including rights under law Recognition/resignation that change will take time

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Appendix K

Example of the Process of Developing GETs from PETs

Training to increase staff understanding of D/deafness

School staff need to take a positive attitude towards parent (p.12)

Important to involve children (p.22)

Importance of staff awareness and consideration of parents' needs without needing prompting (p.8)

Positive attitude would be supported by school staff getting to know parent at the start of the working relationship (p.13)

Training seen as "fundamental" (p.21)

Importance of Deaf awareness and BSL level 1 training (p.5)

Teacher not able to access training on Deafness or support for how to facilitate effective collaboration (p.17)

Importance of staff training (Deaf awareness and BSL level 1) to improve understanding and awareness (p.9)

Important for school staff to meet Deaf parents (p.21)

Important for hearing people to meet Deaf people so they can understand them better (p.10)

Importance of Deaf and hearing people interacting (p.6)

Involving children would increase staff understanding of Deaf culture (p.23)

School staff need to meet parents with additional access needs to understand children's home lives (p.7)

Importance of "representative" to be involve in training" (p.9)