Volume Two

Professional Practice Reports

By

Rebecca Kirkbride

A thesis submitted to

The University of Birmingham

In part fulfilment for the Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology

School of Education

University of Birmingham

June 2012

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME TWO

1.1 Introduction

This volume of work constitutes the second part of a doctoral thesis, contributing towards the award of Applied Educational and Child Psychology Doctorate. This volume is split into five chapters: this introduction, followed by four Professional Practice Reports (PPRs), each reflecting areas of an educational psychologist's (EPs) work, in addition to my developing practice, knowledge and understanding.

All four PPRs were undertaken in the Local Authority (LA) within which I was employed for years two and three of the doctorate, Silvashire Council[1]. The demographics of the LA will now be outlined, highlighting the contextual influences on the selection of work for the PPRs and the extensive and varied opportunities that have been available during my training.

1.2 The Local Authority

Silvashire Council is a Unitary Authority set within the south-east of England. Silvashire ranks as the 115th most deprived district of 354 in England (Noble et al, 2008).

---

[1] Silvershire Council is a pseudonym, to maintain the anonymity of the Local Authority and the individuals referred to in the Professional Practice Reports

Silvashire has an increasingly varied population with one of the smallest proportions of white heritage people in the country (367th out of 376 authorities). 73.9% of the school population has been classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British (Ofsted, 2011). English as an additional language is spoken by 49.6% of pupils (Ofsted, 2011), with over 50 languages spoken in schools (Silvashire Children's Trust, 2011).

24% of Silvashire's total comprises of children and young people (Ofsted, 2011), which is the second highest youth proportion amongst the LAs in the South-East (Silvashire Children's Trust, 2008). The population of Silvashire is increasing at a rapid rate since 2001, causing nurseries to be oversubscribed, the creation of a new primary and secondary school and many schools creating larger form entries.

Silvashire has 47 schools and academies of which 5 are nurseries, 28 are primary, 11 are secondary and 3 are special schools. In line with national and regional averages (Silvashire Children's Trust, 2011). 5218 of Silvashire's children have Special Educational Needs (SEN), with 12% having a Statement of SEN (Silvashire Children's Trust, 2011).

1.3 Experience as a trainee educational psychologist

Since September 2010 Silvashire Educational Psychology Service (EPS) adopted a purchase-model. This resulted in schools buying in set blocks of EP time varying from a quarter a day a week to two days a week. As a result of this EPs have been able to develop their practice and work alongside schools in various types of practice including research and training.

During my time with Silvashire EPS, I have been involved in a range of experiences, as outlined in Appendix One:

1.4 Overview of professional practice reports

Chapter Two explores and evaluates the effectiveness of a specialist provision for supporting the psychological well-being of children who are at risk of exclusion due to their disruptive and challenging behaviour.

Chapter Three outlines an action research enquiry (adopting a 'plan-do-review' cycle) charting the development, implementation and evaluation of a self-esteem group for adolescent girls.

Chapter Four is an account of the application of Video Interaction Guidance for the professional development support provided to two Teaching Assistants (TAs), examining the role of communication and interactions between TAs and children. Specifically it aims to improve the efficacy of small wave three literacy interventions.

Through the application of a needs analysis model Chapter Five outlines research that takes an organisational perspective, exploring the needs of Looked After Children (LAC), the current gaps that exist and the possible role EPs can play in supporting LAC a needs analysis was conducted.

1.5 Contribution to knowledge

The PPRs demonstrate my work as an EP across different levels of input, providing examples of my ability to carry out the key roles of an EP (consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research) at the different levels (with children and families, with schools, and across the LA). See Appendix Two for overview of breadth of work.

1.5.1 Critical reflection and professional development

Completing the PPRs gave me the opportunity to develop personal interests as well as develop my professional practice. Additionally it enabled me to develop my research skills to ensure that Volume One of my doctoral research was conducted in a rigorous manner.

PPR1 was the first piece of research undertaking during the training process. I found this to be a challenging process in terms of managing different elements of the research, including the demands and expectations of the stakeholders and the university course requirements. I learnt from this the importance of developing a tightly focussed piece of research with which all stakeholders are clear, particularly around the objectives of the research.

PPR2 and PPR3 allowed me to develop experience of working different contexts – group work with students and my role in supporting other staff in school and an EP's work in training others. Whilst carry out the work I developed an appreciation of the preparation time

required in such work, which is something that I will take in to considering when negotiating a piece of work in schools.

The focus of looked after children in PPR4 allowed me to consider the ethical issues in research when working with vulnerable group of children. Ensuring that my research was conducted ethically, as well as informing the young people of the outcomes of the research enabled them to be active participants in the research. This highlighted to me the experiences of research from the participants' perspective as well as how young people's voice should be valued in research in which they are the focus, rather than just focus on the professional perspective.

1.5.2 Schools and education services

Conducting the PPRs in a variety of settings, including primary and secondary schools, and specialist provisions has allowed me to develop an understanding of the systems that are in place to meet the needs of children and young people. Additionally working with a variety of professions has enabled me to develop skills in professional practice, as well as consider educational provision and supporting children from other perspectives.

Completing the PPRs has enabled me to work with specific groups who may find learning challenging including children educated in specialist provisions, who have emotional, behavioural difficulties, and who are looked after. I have had to consider factors that can

impact on learning such as self esteem and difficulties at home. Additionally I have experienced the EP role in supporting school staff in working with children.

1.5.3 Educational knowledge

The PPRs cover a breadth of areas which has developed my practice and will enable me to consider evidence bases in my practice to ensure effective outcomes. The development of the research involved in the PPRs and the critical consideration of research literature has developed the additional skills of being able to conduct and evaluate current research

REFERENCES

Dwyer, C., Modood, T., Sanghera, G., Shah, B. & Thapar-Bjorkert, S. (2006) **Ethnicity as social capital? Explaining the differential educational achievements of young British Pakistani men and women**. Ethnicity, Mobility and Society Leverhulme Programme Conference, University of Bristol, 16-17 March, 2006.

Noble, M. McLennan, D., Wilkinson, K., Whitworth, A., Barnes, H. & Dibben, C. (2008). **The English Indices of Deprivation 2007**. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

Ofsted (2011). **Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services: Silvashire Council**. London: The Stationary Office.

Silvashire Council (2009) **Primary strategy for change 2009-2023**. Silvashire: Silvashire Council.

Silvashire Children's Trust (2008) **Children and young people's plan 2008-2011**. Silvashire: Silvashire Council.

Silvashire Children's Trust (2011). **Slough Children & Young People's Plan 2011-14: Needs Analysis**. Silvashire: Silvashire Council.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Outline of responsibilities in year two and three of training

- Being the named educational psychologist for four primary and one secondary school (with time spent varying from quarter to one day a week in school), as well as having a caseload of early years cases and work in specialist provisions. My casework has allowed me to gain a wide range of experience will all age groups with various needs, including learning, behavioural, speech and language, social, emotional and medical.

- Applying psychological theory to case work, group work and work with staff.

- Applying assessments and interventions, from a range of paradigms.

- Implementing group interventions to support educational and emotional needs.

- Supporting, monitoring and evaluating interventions over time, and making necessary adjustments if required.

- Delivering training to school staff and parents.

- Working collaboratively with other professionals to support the needs of children and their families. For example, working with professions such as Services Supporting Behaviour, advisory teachers for the hearing and visually impaired, early years outreach workers, specialist teachers for children with autism, speech and language therapists, drama therapists, and social workers.

- Developing my communication skills through different written records of my work (reports, consultation records, letters) and verbal contributions in meetings including Team Around the Child, eCAF (Common Assessment Framework) reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Multi-Agency Meetings and annual reviews.

- Involvement in research and evaluation, including evaluating the impact of nurture groups across the LA, and researching into effective methods of eliciting child voice regarding their experiences of engaging with the EPS.

- Receiving professional development, including being trained in Video Interaction Guidance and attending research seminars.

Appendix 2: Overview of PPRs and areas of EPs roles

| | | Roles of an EP | | | | |
		Consultation	Assessment	Intervention	Training	Research
PPR level of work	PPR1 *Participants:* Children, Staff *Context:* PRU	X				X
	PPR2 *Participants:* Children *Context:* Secondary school	X	X	X		X
	PPR3 *Participants:* TAs *Context:* Primary school	X	X	X	X	X
	PPR4 *Participants:* Children, multi professional *Context:* LA	X				X

CHAPTER TWO

PPR1: AN EVALUATION OF A SPECIALIST SETTING FOR PUPILS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

Abstract

The psychological needs of students who have been excluded or at risk of exclusion may be greater than most, with additional needs relating to learning, educational disengagement and challenging home lives (Barham, Hughes & Morgan, 2000; DCSF, 2008b). This paper examines and evaluates the effectiveness of a key stage 3 and 4 specialist provision for students who have been excluded or at risk of exclusion. Through the application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1992), it examines to what extent the provision supports students' psychological needs. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with students, provision staff and mainstream SENCOs, in addition to session observations and pre-post data gathered using Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1989) and DiClemente & Prochaska's cycle of change (1982). Key findings are discussed with reference to the students' psychological needs as well as the interactions between students, school, family, the focus provision and other support agencies. Results indicate that the provision meets students' psychological needs to some degree although there are gaps in the support provided regarding the reintegration process and working with families. Conclusions are made regarding meeting the focus population's needs and the role of educational psychologists.

Table of contents

List of illustrations

List of tables

Introduction

<u>Psychological well-being</u>

Psychological well-being is an important area of child development (DCSF, 2008b), which includes "...emotional, behavioural, social and cognitive attributes of well-being" (DCSF, 2008b). However recent studies have suggested that the well-being of children in the UK is lower than many other nations (UNICEF, 2007). Psychological well-being is viewed as a multi-dimensional concept which has developed over the years from theories proposed by Erikson (1959), Maslow (1970), Allport (1961), Rosenberg (19665) and Rogers (1961) and involves elements such as self-acceptance (Rosenberg, 1989), personal growth (Allport, 1961), purpose in life (Erikson, 1959) and positive relations with others (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

However difficulties with well-being can be far reaching and impact on educational attainment, lead to school absences or exclusions, poor friendship networks, and poor physical health (DCSF, 2008b), although it is important to highlight that this relationship could also be the other way around. Therefore educational settings may be viewed as the best context outside the family to promote and maintain well-being (Geddes, 2005), as reflected by the introduction of policies including Every Child Matters (DCSF, 2004), and the introduction of Sure Start (DfES, 2003), Extended Schools (DCSF, 2008c), SEAL (DfES, 2005) and the Healthy Schools Programme (DCSF, 2007b).

<u>Alternative provisions</u>

The Education Act 1996 states that the Local Authority (LA) has a duty to provide education to children who cannot attend school due to being excluded on a permanent or fixed-term

basis, often due to challenging behaviours. This form of education outside of a mainstream setting is called 'alternative provision' (DfES, 2007a). A large proportion of alternative provision is provided by Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), of which there are currently 437 in England (Finbow, 2011). A PRU is a provision for students whose needs cannot be met in mainstream settings. They are designed to help those children or young people who may struggle to work within the normal school structure for a variety of different reasons. During the school day in a PRU students may cover some National Curriculum subjects but lessons will also cover alternative subjects such as self management. Students often go into PRU to help them cope with current difficulties they are experiencing with their education.

Needs of students attending alternative provisions

Students attending alternative provisions may have multiple barriers to learning (Hayden, 1997; Barham et al, 2000), including a number of complex internal and external factors (Cole et al., 1998). This may be due to negative experiences of conflict with others, rejection and failure, often leading "...to low self-esteem and damaged confidence." (Leon, 2002, p.2). They may be unwilling or unable to work (Hayden, 1997; Solomon & Rogers, 2001) and may have had fewer positive child/adult interactions (Murray & Greenberg, 2006). Such students may display negative externalised behaviours including truancy, aggression, disruptive or destructive behaviour (Gowers et al, 2000; Souter, 2001). Internalising behaviours can also present challenges, particularly to the individual's own well-being (Cooper, 2008), including acute depression, neurosis, anxiety, self harm and suicidal tendencies (Visser, 2003). However despite these challenges, alternative provisions have been shown to increase educational achievement, influence behaviour and attitude, and improve social skills, relationships and self-esteem (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003).

The education and environment within such provisions needs to consider the students' psychological needs. Therefore characteristics of these provisions will often include aspects such as a high staff to student ratio, to enable effective behaviour management but also to foster supportive and mutually respectful relationships (Cole et al, 1998; Macleod, 2007). Cooper states that this is one of the most important means of supporting children in such provisions (2008). The use of short-term targets (which students help to formulate) and high expectations in performance and ability are strategies also found in effective provisions (Cole et al, 1998). The use of alternative curriculums, such as self management programmes, has been found to be successful (Macleod, 2007) in developing skills in social competence and emotional intelligence. This is an important area as many who attend such provisions "...are vulnerable or disadvantaged. They may face more barriers to learning or may have a higher risk of educational failure than their peers" (DfES, 2007a, p.3).

Key variables in effective provision

Over the years the government has published much advice linked to educating outside of the mainstream education setting (DFE, 1994; DfEE, 1997). Effective school-focussed factors and successful teaching can make a significant difference to the challenges a child attending an alternative provision may present (Hamill & Boyd, 2001). Students who attend specialist provisions may be experiencing difficulties that are either ongoing or may have arisen from relatively recent events. Therefore provision has to successfully cater for a range of emotional and behavioural needs (Ofsted, 1999; Sellman, 2009). Successful provisions should be in a warm and secure learning environment (DES, 1993), with high expectations and personalised learning pathways available that ensure academic or vocational success (DES, 1993; Daniels

et al, 1999; Cooper, 2001; Hamill & Boyd, 2001; Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003; Macleod, 2006; DCSF, 2008a).

Provision staff having a strong understanding the needs of the students and their parents is crucial (Cole et al, 1998; Hamill & Boyd, 2001). This includes fostering supportive and pro-social relationships between staff, students and their families (Cooper, 2001; Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003) as well as good links with the local community (Cole et al, 1998). Cooper highlights that effective provision value students as individuals, with an underlying ethos of value and care for all, which results in "...positive challenges to disaffection and lower levels of exclusion." (2008, p.15). Students should have a positive relationship with a support worker, have the opportunity to develop behaviour management strategies, be able to resolve any disagreements in their school and have one-to-one tuition to be up-to-date with their learning (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003). At the actual point of reintegration back into mainstream students also need peer support, practical assistance with issues such as uniform, possible counselling and behavioural targets (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003). Additionally parents require regular contact with the mainstream school and the PRU, with pastoral support workers being involved with the family (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003).

Effective provision: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

One theoretical framework that is useful in evaluating the effectiveness of educational provision is Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems theory (Johnson, 1994). Bronfenbrenner's (1992) theory allows us to explore the possible impact home and social factors may have on students' psychological well-being and how the specialist provision can work to address these factors (Johnson, 1994; Mowat, 2010).

There is the view that "...schools can be both part of the problem and part of the solution." (Hamill & Boyd, 2001, p.145). Therefore in terms of evaluating the provision in this chapter, the application of this framework may enable the author to examine whether the provision takes into consideration or has mechanisms in place to support the needs of students other than their educational needs. Cooper highlights this by stating whilst "...biology may create propensities for certain social and behavioural outcomes, biology is always mediated by environment and culture" (1999, p.239). Bronfenbrenner's framework moves away from the medical or deficit model of child development (Jones, 2003) and enables one to examine "...the systemic influences on child development" (Singal, 2006, p.240). The dynamic and transactional interactions between the child and the environment is an important area to consider when examining provisions supporting students' behavioural difficulties (Johnson, 1994), as Farrell (1995) states that difficulties may be "...a product of the interaction between the child's family and the school and their individual or collective views of normality." (p.7). Additionally McSherry highlights that "...emotional or behavioural difficulties are often engendered or worsened by the environment, including schools' or teachers' responses." (2001, p.1).

Bronfenbrenner's (1992) framework outlines human development as occurring through reciprocal interactions between the individual and other people and objects in their environment. Bronfenbrenner's theory involves complex layers within an individual's environment, each having an effect on a child's development (1992). Bronfenbrenner called these layers of the environment the micro-system, the meso-system, the exo-system and the macro-system (see figure one).
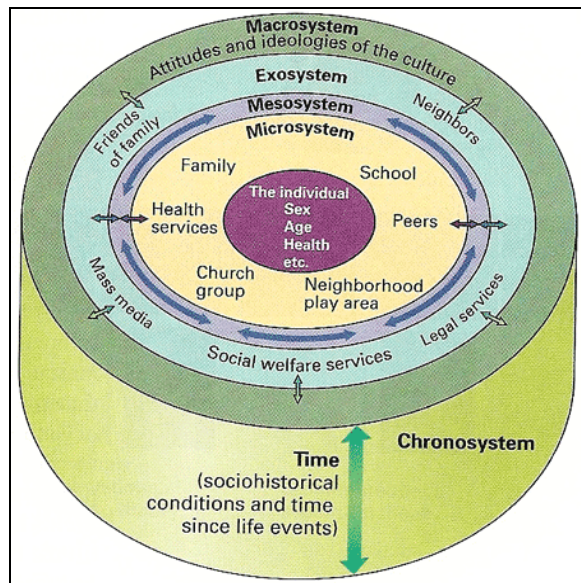
Figure 1: _Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1992)_

The _micro-system_ relates to the child's direct interactions and relationships, for example the relationships in the home or at school. The specialist provision itself can also be viewed as a micro-system. These relationships have a bi-directional influence. For example, children may experience difficulties at home which could lead to child-parent conflict as well as challenging behaviour in the provision (Connell & Prinz, 2002; Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond, 2004). Alternatively the relationships developed in the provision could also have a positive influence on child-parent relationships (Wise, 2000; Solomon & Rogers, 2001).

The _meso-system_ is the relationship and connections a child's micro-systems have. For example, the relationship parents have with school. Forging home-school links has been shown to be hindered by low parental self-esteem, mutual mistrust, lack of confidence, anxiety and school scepticism (McCormick, 1999).

The *exo-system* is "...the settings or events that do not directly involve the micro system but still influence it." (Singal, 2006, p.242). These tend to be systems that interact with others in the child's micro-system, such as the work life of the child's parents. The *macro-system* refers to the layer comprising of "...political, social, economic and cultural patterns, which have a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all other layers." (Singal, 2006, p.242).

Effective provision: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

An alternative perspective on evaluating provision can be through taking a more child-centred focus and examining the needs and motivation of individuals attending the provision. The premise to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is that unless a human's basic needs are met, higher levels of behaviour and motivation cannot be experienced (Benson & Dundis, 2003; Konarska, 2010). In the context of the provision this is an important area to explore, as the satisfaction of these needs is thought to affect perception and behaviour (Osterman, 2000). For example, students attending an alternative provision may experience feelings of stress around school as well as difficulties with relationships with peers and family (Benson & Dundis, 2003). Therefore it could be argued that in order to adequately support students needs in an alternative provision, the provision needs to address the areas Maslow proposed (see figure two) in order to enable them to fulfil their potential.
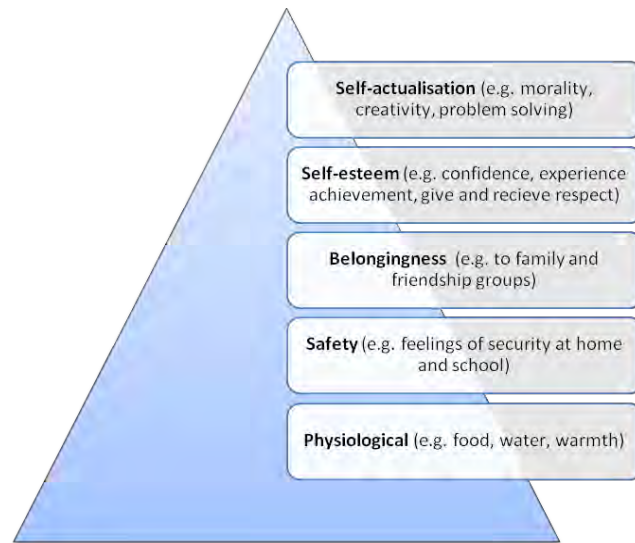
Figure 2: *Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943)*

Maslow's theory is well evidenced in organisational and managerial settings (Benson & Dundis, 2003). However in the context of education there is limited evidence of its application (Kunc, 1992; Turnbull, Turnbull & Blue-Banning, 1994), particularly when exploring the additional needs of students. Therefore it was felt that Maslow's (1943) theory would be interesting to apply, given its prominence in psychology, to explore how the provision supports students to achieve the different levels of the hierarchy.

It has also been recognised that educational settings can provide the key support required for students to successfully overcome difficulties in a number of areas (Ttofa, 2006). For example, students' physiological needs may need to be supported (Wise, 2000). In the context of the provision the definition of physiological needs goes beyond the basic level proposed by Maslow and extends to supporting students possible medical needs and physiological aspects of the students difficulties (Wise, 2000).

In terms of the safety needs proposed by Maslow this could be thought to apply to students' physical and emotional safety, addressing feelings of anxiety as well as providing a safe environment to promote students to discuss their difficulties (Wise, 2000). As confidence and self-esteem are key to learning as well as in developing a positive sense of self, the whole content of some alternative provision programmes may focus specifically on this area (Wise, 2000).

In terms of belonging Smith (2006) describes how students can have an attachment to the school, which can have an impact on their behaviour (Osterman, 2000) and attainment (Meece, Anderman & Anderman, 2006). The attachment to school can be thought of as "...the degree of commitment towards and an engagement in schooling..." (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2007, p.14). Promoting a sense of belonging may be particularly important for those students who have had negative experiences of their schooling (Finn, 1989; Roeser, Midgley & Urdan, 1996) in addition to challenging experiences at home (Gilligan, 2000).

The present study

The present study is an evaluation of Brookfield[2], a Key Stage 3 and 4 alternative provision in South East England for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion. The specific provision within Brookfield being examined is a self-management programme. See appendix one for further information regarding the provision.

---

[2] Brookfield is a pseudonym for the specialist provision examined.

The researcher is a Trainee Educational Psychologist, who has been employed by a Local Authority Psychology Service. Through liaison with the Executive Head Teacher the researcher was able to negotiate a focus for the evaluation that would be both able to meet her academic requirements and be of use to the provision.

Aims

The aims of this study were to answer two broad questions:

1. How does the provision meet pupils' hierarchy of psychological needs?

2. How does the provision work with and support the individuals in the child's ecosystems?

Method

This study aimed to take an interpretive approach (Cohen & Omery, 1994). The main focus of interpretive research are "...individuals' and groups' lived experience of their reality." (Sandberg, 2005, p.47). Therefore the researcher was able to explore the experiences of the students and staff at Brookfield, and interpret these through Maslow and Bronfenbrenner's theories. By taking this approach it was felt that implementing a methodology using semi-structured interviews (SSIs) would be most appropriate.

Sample

The sample was a current group of students taking part in one of the provision's two week interventions. The group was comprised of nine students were predominantly male (6 male, 3 female) and white British (8 white British, 1 Asian Pakistani). Eight of the sample were in year 9, and one in year 7.

	Pupils								
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
SA									
SA+	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
St					X				

Table 1: Current cohort's special educational needs

It can be seen from table one that the majority of the students were at School Action Plus on the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. From discussions with staff, the main

needs of these students were around literacy and behaviour. The Statement of Special Educational Needs was for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Procedure

The research took place over a period of three months, starting in October 2010 with the researcher visiting the provision as part of her induction process. This was followed by the meeting mentioned above to discuss the details of the research in more detail. In November the researcher conducted observations of group sessions in the provision over two mornings (approximately 7 hours) as well as completing SSIs with three member's staff, two SENCOs and six students.

Measures

SSIs were completed with provision staff and two SENCOs in mainstream schools (see appendix three). The rationale for interviewing SENCOs in mainstream schools was to explore their perceptions of the provision and the impact they feel it has on their students once they returned to their mainstream school. The SSIs took an exploratory approach with the opportunity to be more flexible in the wording and order of the questions asked, in order to elicit the interviewee's ideas and opinions (Robson, 1993). An interview framework was developed, initially using open questions. The framework also included some non-leading probes, which aided clarification and encouragement for elaboration.

When working with the students the researcher applied personal construct psychology (Beaver, 1996) and developed a series of picture cards and statements as a method of drawing

out student views (see appendix four). Images were from a variety of sources and related to aspects of the students' life including school, home and relationships. Unstructured observations were used in order to collect data relating to student/staff interactions. A self-esteem questionnaire was given to students to complete at the beginning and end of their involvement with the provision in the self-management programme (Rosenberg, 1989). Additionally data on students' perceptions of their position on the cycle of change (DiClemente & Prochaska 1982), which was covered during programme sessions, was noted. Data was also collected from student referral forms, provision policies and procedures. See appendix five for information on how different measures addressed different aspects of the research.

Ethical issues

Ethical issues are present throughout the whole research process (Robson, 1993) and must be considered and appropriately addressed in order to ensure reliable research results are produced. As a trainee educational psychologist the researcher ensured that she is adhering to the university ethical guidelines as well as to the British Psychological Society's guidelines (2009).

When participants were initially contacted they were informed of how the researcher has sourced their details as respondents have the right to know how their name was accessed (Brace, 2004). Informed parental consent was gained prior to collecting data (see appendix two), ensuring that parents understand their child's potential role in the research, what the outcomes of the research will be as well as individual's right to withdraw (Brace, 2004; BPS,

2009). Additionally participants had guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity. Following the end of the interviews participants were de-briefed in person.

Results

Research question one: How does the provision meet pupils' hierarchy of psychological needs?

Information was gathered from the referral forms given to the provision from the current cohort of students mainstream schools (see table two). The table highlights that of the nine students, six have previously or currently been working with the Psychology Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and/or a therapist. Therefore it is apparent that this group of young people do have additional psychological needs that require support. In addition to their own needs, many of the group also have complex home lives which could impact on their own well-being.

	Pupils								
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
Child Protection	X								
CAMHS			X	X	X				X
EP	X	X							X
YOT				X	X	X	X		
Therapist involved					X				
Family issues	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Previous exclusions					X(x3)	X	X	X	X
Substance misuse						X			

Table two: *Profile of students' additional needs*

Physiological needs

In the context of the provision, evidence was sought regarding the extent to which the provision worked with other agencies (e.g. housing, substance misuse support, financial advice) as well as the structure of the provision to meet students' physiological needs. It appears from unstructured observations that the students' physiological needs are successfully met to some extent. General good practice, such as providing food and spending time with staff during break times, could be observed. However, following the staff SSIs, liaison with agencies supporting issues around housing and family poverty was left to the students' mainstream school. For example, if there were concerns this would be flagged up to the mainstream SENCO rather than the provision working directly with other agencies. This could be a potential area in which communication and support regarding students' individual needs are not successfully met, or delays in support are experienced due there being unnecessarily complicated referral routes. This could mean that physiological needs, particularly at home, may not be met.

Safety needs

Meeting students' safety needs encompasses security and stability needs, as well as the freedom from fear. Safety is one core area that may be particularly pertinent for Brookfield students, as outlined by the provision's drugs and substance abuse policy. This states that a "significant proportion of young people referred to Brookfield College are known users of drugs and alcohol. Some are also known dealers".

The staff SSI revealed responses including the following points:

- Some students socialise with people or around areas where there are risks of drug dealers or sexual assault. It's important that they know how to deal with such situations in a safe way.

- We cover topics on the course that are applicable to home situations or staying safe on the streets.

This suggests that in addition to fostering a safe environment at the provision, staff aim to develop student awareness of their personal safety in a range of environments.

One measure of safety could be reflected in student attendance figures. If students didn't feel secure in the provision they would not attend. Brookfield's attendance figures for last year were on average 93 per cent, compared to the mean student attendance rate prior to starting the course of 54 per cent. The high attendance rates could be viewed as linked to student-staff relationships. One student made the comment "you can tell them (staff) how you're feeling and they make you feel welcome".

Belonging

Belonging can relate to unconditional positive regard and positive relationships with those around the student, as well as having a connection to the setting. This is an important element to foster in such a provision as pupils who have experienced exclusion or disaffection will most likely have also experienced a sense of exclusion emotionally. One way in which student belonging is fostered is a daily problem circle, which provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences that day and to receive feedback from their peers on things they have done well and aspects others feel they need to develop.

Both staff and students commented on the relationships that are developed in the provision as an element of its success. During their time in the provision each child is assigned a sports coach mentor as well as a sixth form peer mentor from the local grammar school. All social time at the provision is supervised, and the students eat their lunch together with staff, which can aid in the development of relationships.

Comments from staff and student SSIs include:

- Our relationships with students, making sure we're approachable helps deal with any issues or problems they want to talk about. (staff member)

- The staff here are really nice, they treat you with real good respect. But if you don't show them respect they won't show respect for you. (student)

However this can appear to become a problem in terms of the student's identity to their mainstream school (where the initial issues around disaffection and not belonging arose) and how this may possibly impact their reintegration. For example, one student was heard in during lunchtime to say "I'm not a student at xxx (their mainstream school), I'm a Brookfield student".

All of the six students who were interviewed agreed with the statement "I would rather stay at Brookfield". Student made the following comments:

- It's a little group and I feel more confident here, I've tried so hard.

- I know it can't all be fun but they support us here.

- I would want to stay here. I've got connections here but I know we've got to go.

- School's annoying, it gets on my nerves. Teachers getting in your face and shouting. Here they speak to you calm.

<u>*Self esteem*</u>

Chart one shows students' self-esteem ratings at the beginning and end of the course, as rated from Rosenberg's self esteem questionnaire (1989). In the early sessions of the group the majority of the students self esteem was rated as medium, with two rating themselves as having high self-esteem (with a score of 21 or over). Following the end of the programme, the students' scores were mixed, although mainly positive. 62.5 per cent of the scores indicated an increase in self-esteem, and 25 per cent of students' scores remained the same. Only one student's score decreased following their involvement in the course.
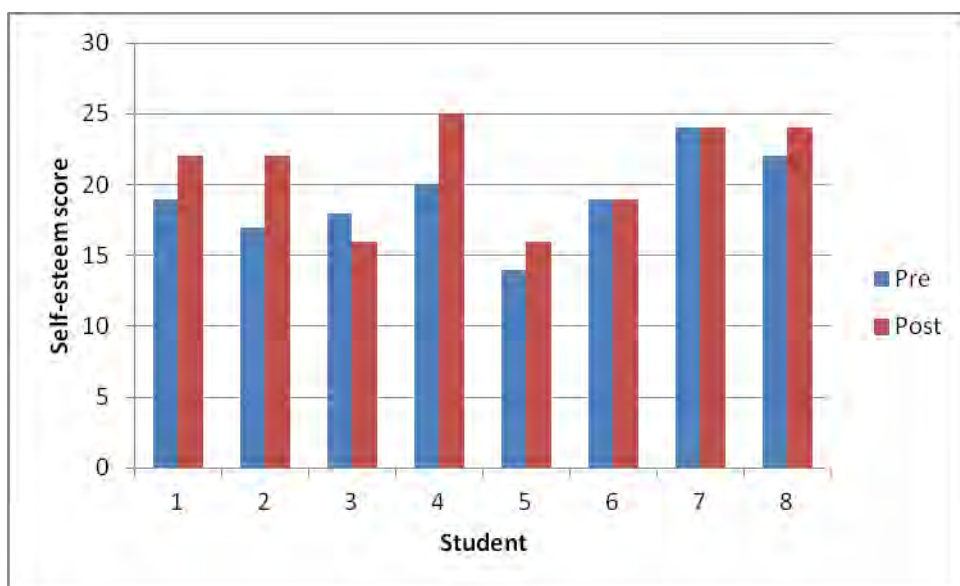

<u>*Chart 1*</u>: *A graph to show students' self-esteem scores pre and post the self management intervention (Rosenberg, 1989)*

It could be argued that attributing this general increase in self-esteem to the provision is difficult. However, additional evidence from the SSI's may allow for some links between the provision and the students' self-esteem. Many of the students mentioned their perceived increase in confidence following the course:

- I'm more confident and am looking forward to keeping out of trouble.

- I think it's doing the role plays that help, help me express my feelings. Know now that if there's ever something I want to try out I can succeed. Feel like I can change things and prove them (school staff and other students) wrong.

- I was a bit nervous to start but I've got more confident.

- Being with people in the same situation as you, you know that you don't need to try and fit in. Shows you can do it here.

Other elements of the programme that target self-esteem include the use of sport to promote self esteem, in which group members are encouraged to play as a team and to experience individual successes (e.g. when scoring goals). Additionally the feedback at the end of each day also encourages individual students to become more aware of their individual strengths through affirmation and peer recognition.

At the end of the programme mainstream teachers and parents are invited to the students 'graduation'. This allows students to mark an end to their time at the provision but also gives them an opportunity to show case skills and performances they have been involved in during the sessions (including drama and dance). This is based on the idea that students need recognition for their contributions and efforts in order to foster self-esteem.

Examining where students placed themselves on the cycle of change (DiClemente & Prochaska 1982) may also provide some indication of their confidence levels and their locus of control regarding actions they may need to take in order to implement newly acquired skills back in their mainstream schools.
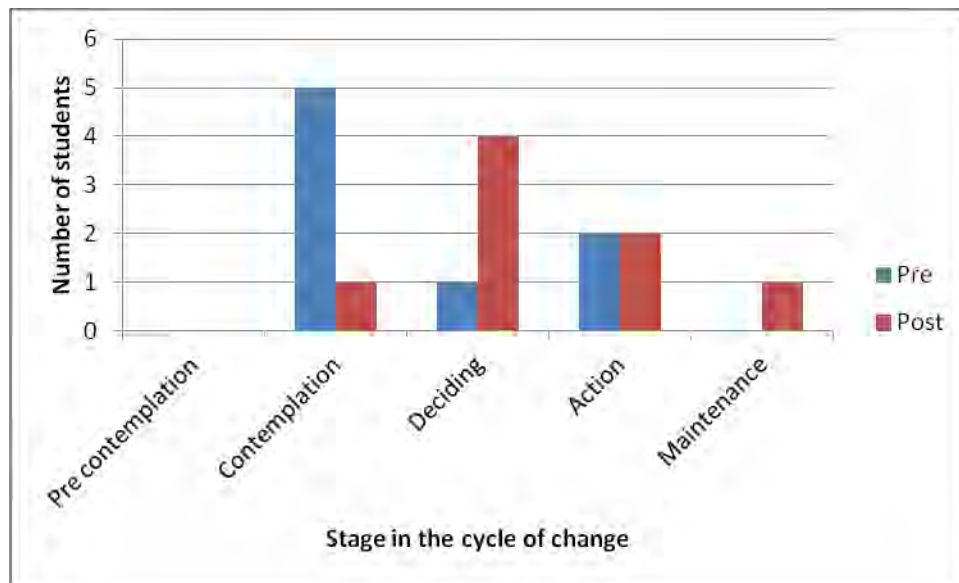
Chart 2: A graph to show student perceptions of their position on the cycle of change (DiClemente & Prochaska 1982)

Results from the bar graph indicate that there has been some movement in the students' readiness to change their behaviour, perhaps linked to their perceive increased in self-esteem. Prior to the programme the majority of students were in the contemplation stage, aware that there was an issue with their behaviour in school but they were not really sure how to address the issue. Following the end of the course the majority of the students had moved in the 'deciding' stage, thinking about how to make those changed. A further 37.5 per cent felt that they were putting those changes into place (action).

Research question two: How does the provision work with and support the individuals in the child's ecosystems?

Provision-family meso system

Although the programme does not directly work with families, staff try and involve parents by providing regular feedback as well as try and support families with any behavioural difficulties that may be taking place in the home. Although parental views were sought, no parents gave consent to be interviewed. This perhaps highlights the potential challenges with working with some families to support the children and young people attending the provision. In terms of staff views, the following points were expressed:

- We have good rapport and contact is maintained with parents. Often parents will contact us if there have been problems at home.

- Parents are kept updated through speaking to staff when collecting student. We speak more to parents if there is an issue or an incident.

- Parents differ in terms of how much they want to support their child. It's the harder to reach families that we need more contact with. We need parents to be on our side, but some don't want to work with us.

- We have previously facilitated parenting courses, following a need that was highlighted. It doesn't happen very often though.

Provision-mainstream school meso system

The last week of the programme is based around reintegration. However working with the students' mainstream schools throughout their time in the provision is important. Once

students have finished the programme, the sports coach mentors work with a link worker in the school to discuss the student's progress and strategies they felt help manage their behaviour. They also give the office number to students to call whenever they have a problem.

- In the student's first week back, we go in once or twice. We set students targets if they need them and emphasise that we can come in and visit them whenever.

- Meeting is an opportunity for students to have a general chat or to talk over a specific problem. We remind the students of the skills they have learnt and how they could apply them in school.

- We use a 'pupil progress report' – includes positives, negatives, behaviour management strategies that work for the individual student and a lead trainer comment.

- We don't normally work directly with staff, but I have been asked by some schools to run some inset. I've also done Restorative Justice work between staff and students, which has worked well in the past. I facilitate sessions so that both adult and student can see how individual behaviour perpetuates the situation.

One difficulty was highlighted when a member of staff was asked how students ensure that they do not fall behind on their academic work from their mainstream school. SENCOs report similar views:

- It's always an issue. For lower schools students we tend to slide them back in with a bit of support. For upper school students it's an issue of catch-up or re-sit.

- Reintegration is difficult. Students see the provision as this wonderful place, and we experience some behavioural problems when they return to the environment where the original problems occurred.

The SSIs with the mainstream SENCOs revealed the following, possibly contrasting, views of their work with the provision:

- It offers a very good service. I initially had reservations but these disappeared when I saw the expertise they could offer. I'm very impressed with the results. We use the provision in more of a preventative way, once the student has been through the in-house strategies.

- I feel the provision provides more for respite; it isn't so much about the skills. The students do know what to do; I've seen how they behave in their football clubs. They just don't choose to use the skills.

Provision-other agencies meso system

Table two (see page 18) illustrates a profile of the current group from available data regarding their background. It can be seen that many have complex needs which involves multiagency work in order to support the students' additional needs.

In terms of working with other agencies, provision staff felt that their role was more to refer on rather than to work collaboratively.

- In terms of drugs and alcohol or psychological issues, we make sure the school is aware. They are better placed to put in appropriate support.

<u>Discussion</u>

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream school. The study sought to address two broad research questions: how does the provision meet pupils' hierarchy of psychological needs, and how does the provision work with and support the individuals in the child's ecosystems?

In terms of the first question it is clear that the students have additional psychological needs of varying degrees that require support. When examining these needs through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs it appears that the provision is able to meet student psychological needs on a number of levels, through the student-staff relationships as well as the alternative curriculum. When compared to the available literature regarding alternative provisions and the complex needs of the students attending such provisions, Brookfield appears to have a positive influence on behaviour, attitude, social skills, relationships and self-esteem, addressing experiences of failure and rejection in mainstream school through positive child-adult interactions (Cole et al, 1998; Hamill & Boyd, 2001). As Ofsted (2007) concluded, successful PRUs focus on personal development and increasing student confidence, which appears to be the case at Brookfield, where there has been a perceived increase in self-esteem and confidence. Short-term targets were set and shared with students, and high expectations in terms of performance and participation were set (Cole et al, 1998).

However this conclusion can only be drawn for the short term and more in-depth research would be required to draw conclusions regarding any longer term impact of attending the

provision. Additionally, cautious interpretation of the intervention's outcome needs to be applied, as positive results observed back in student's mainstream schools may not be solely due to the intervention. Furthermore there needs to be some consideration that such interventions may not be solely adequate if students are not given the opportunity to apply skills in the original context where the difficult behaviours arose. Finally it was very clear that students at Brookfield form very strong attachments to the provision, which can be viewed as positive but could also result in difficulties in reintegration for some students.

In terms of the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy these are perhaps harder to successfully quantify or objectively measure these abstract concepts. For example, self-esteem can be viewed as a changeable state that is difficult to define and reliably measure (Bosson, Swann & Pennebaker, 2000). Additionally ascertaining the impact of the intervention the provision specifically provides on these areas of the students psychological well-being (rather than another variable such as being removed from the 'problem' environment of the mainstream school) may also be difficult. Additionally, very few people achieve the top level of the hierarchy, self-actualisation, in their lifetimes. Therefore in the context of the provision this was a difficult and perhaps unsuitable concept to try to explore, hence it was not included in the results section.

It was felt that the application of Maslow's theory in the context of this current paper revealed some weakness of his theory when compared with Bronfenbrenner's theory (1992). Bronfenbrenner suggests judgements or assumptions cannot be made based on a single context (i.e. just the provision) and the theory takes a more holistic perspective of a young person's needs, viewing human behaviour and development as "...interdependent and must be

analysed in systems terms." (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.518). Whereas Maslow's theory (1943) takes a more reductionist perspective that perhaps simplifies the situational factors and ignores the possible interactions between the different environments and wider social contexts the young person experiences. Additionally, when considering the concept of a hierarchy it is difficult to be chart an individual's progression through the levels and to pinpoint aspects of, for example, belonging developing before self-esteem. Therefore it could be argued that since Maslow's theory was developed in the mid twentieth century that the understanding of factors on an individual's development has developed considerably and as a result its application in the twenty first century, against competing theories, is challenging.

In contrast, Bronfenbrenner's theory allowed for an exploration of the interactive and reciprocal nature of the systems a young person functions in, as well as highlighting possible dynamics of power in these transactional processes (between provision staff, mainstream school staff, parents and the young person). In the context of the provision being evaluated Bronfenbrenner's theory reveals that the layers of a child's ecological systems work together in a somewhat fragmented manner. Although communication channels between the provision, parents and the mainstream school are kept open, little work is done collaboratively. This is partially due to some difficult-to-engage parents but perhaps also due to the expectations from schools of the role of the provision. The majority of the work appears to be reactive to incidents rather than focus on capacity building for mainstream staff in positive behaviour management and de-escalation.

The fragmented nature of the provision is further highlighted by the failure to meet student learning needs – in terms of the national curriculum students learning seem to be forgotten for

the four weeks in which they are out of mainstream and little is done to ensure that they do not fall behind in their learning. Additionally, although the use of an alternative curriculum appears to be effective (as suggested by Macleod, 2007) one risk of adopting an alternative curriculum whilst in such a provision is that disaffected students find it even harder to engage on return to their mainstream provision, and therefore may exacerbate the disaffected behaviour.

In terms of the students' wider community and working with other agencies staff appear to be involved on a fairly superficial level and seem to refer on rather than to work jointly. However it could be argued that this is the remit of their mainstream school rather than the provision itself.

Conclusions

The current study was illuminative in its approach (Burden, 1998) – it placed emphasis on "... interpreting educational practices, participants' experiences, institutional procedures and management problems in ways that are recognisable and useful to these for whom the study is made." (Burden, 1998, p.16). Although the findings from the current study cannot be generalised due to its specificity to one particular setting and small number of participants, the findings may aid in the understanding of how best to support students with complex needs both in their learning and educational context as well as in their home and social contexts. In understanding the behaviour of an individual student it may be necessary to understand how each of a wide range of factors may contribute and interact dynamically. The inter-relationship between these social, psychological and educational factors needs to be considered in order for specialist provisions to impact on students' 'challenging behaviour'.

In terms of any research it is important to consider the reliability and validity of the measures used, and the impact this may have on the findings. As highlighted in appendix five a variety of measures were used which the author felt enabled her to triangulate the findings. Rosenberg's measure of self esteem has been found to have high reliability and validity (Rosenberg, 1989). However it may be viewed that some of the measures used in the present study lacked reliability. For example, only one person conducted the observations. However it is important to bear in mind the scale of this study and remember that the specificity of the findings to the provision imply that the results would be difficult to generalise.

<u>Implications for Educational Psychology practice</u>

As part of their role Educational Psychologists are expected to become involved in research-based practice (Shapiro, 2002). During the current piece of research the author felt that she was able to fulfil both of the roles of researcher and practitioner. Additionally the study was conducted in a manner which was ethical and congruent to principles of good research. As a practitioner the researcher felt that the methods, such as personal construct psychology, were evidence based and that the research practice in the provision was appropriate, adopting the interpersonal skills of an educational psychologist. Taking this approach highlighted that both sides of an Educational Psychologists work are as equally important, particularly if the profession is to continue working in evidence-based practice (Mellott & Mehr, 2007).

The results of the current research emphasise the importance for Educational Psychologists in taking a person-centred approach, whilst also considering the different systems that may provide support as well as sources of difficulty for the child. Additionally when working with other professionals it is felt that the Educational Psychologist is in a useful position to highlight the rhetoric-reality gap in situations where specialist provisions are said to provide a means of supporting pupils' successful reintegration into mainstream provision, rather than offering the school respite from attempting to teach a challenging student.

References

Allport, G. (1961) **Pattern and growth in personality**. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Barham, L., Hughes, D. & Morgan, S. (2000) **New Start: Personal Adviser Pilot Projects**. London: DfEE.

Beaver, R. (1996) **Educational Psychology Casework: A Practice guide**. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Benson, S. & Dundis, S. (2003) Understanding and motivating health care employees: integrating Maslow's hierarchy of needs, training and technology. **Journal of Nursing Management** 11: 315–320.

Bosson, J., Swann, W. & Pennebaker, J. (2000) Stalking the perfect measure of implicit self-esteem: the blind men and the elephant revisited? **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, 79 (4): 631-643.

Brace, I. (2004). **Questionnaire Design**. London: Kogan Page Limited.

British Psychological Society (2009) **Code of Ethics and Conduct**. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. **American Psychologist**, 513-531.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). Ecological systems theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), **Six theories of child development** (pp. 187-250). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Burden, B. (1998) Illuminative evaluation. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 15 (3): 15-24.

Cameron, R. (2005). Educational Psychology: The distinctive contribution. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 22 (4): 289-304.

Cohen, M. Z. & Omery, A. (1994). Schools of phenomenology. In J. M. Morse, ed. **Critical issues in qualitative research**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 136-156.

Cole, T., Visser, J. & Upton, G. (1998) **Effective schooling for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties**. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Connell, C. & Prinz, R. (2002) The Impact of Childcare and Parent–Child Interactions on School Readiness and Social Skills Development for Low-Income African American Children. **Journal of School Psychology**, 40 (2): 177-193.

Cooper, P. (1999) The further evolution of emotional and behavioural difficulties: bringing the bio psychosocial approach into education. In P. Cooper (Ed.). **Understanding and Supporting Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**. London: Jessica Kingsley. pp.229-239.

Cooper, P. (2001) **We can work it out: What works in education pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties outside mainstream classrooms?** Essex: Barnardos Publications.

Cooper, P. (2008) Nurturing attachment to school: contemporary perspectives on social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pastoral Care in Education, 26 (1): 13-22.

Cooper, P. & Tiknaz, Y. (2007) **Nurture Groups in school and at home: Connecting with Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**. London: Jessica King Publishers.

Daniels, H., Cole, T. & Reykebill, N. (1999) **Emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools**. London: Department for Education and Skills

DiClemente, C. & Prochaska, J. (1982) Self-change and therapy change of smoking behaviour: A comparison of processes of change in cessation and maintenance. **Addictive Behaviours**, 7, 133-142.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2004) **Every child matters: change for children**. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) **Guidance for schools on developing emotional health and wellbeing**. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) **Introduction to the National Healthy Schools Programme**. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008). **Back on track: a strategy for modernising alternative provision for young people**. London: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008). **Improving the mental health and psychological well-being of children and young people**. London: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) **Extended schools: building on experience**. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Education (1994) **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**. Circular 9/94. London: DFE.

Department for Education and Employment (1997) **Excellence for all children: Meeting special educational needs**. London: DfEE Publications.

Department for Education and Employment (2001) **Promoting children's mental health within early years and school settings**. London: DfEE Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (1993) **Education for Disaffected Pupils**. London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Skills (2001) **Special Educational Needs Code of Practice**. Annesley: DfES Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (2003) **Sure Start Guidance 2004-2006: overview and local government arrangements**. Annesley: DfES Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (2005) **Excellence and enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning**. London: DfES Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (2007) **Learning Environments for Pupil Referral Units**. London: The Stationary Office.

Education Act 1996 s.5 (312) (1), London: HMSO.

Erikson, E. (1959) Identity and the life cycle: selected papers. **Psychological Issues**, 1: 1-171.

Farrell, P. (1995) Emotional and behavioural difficulties: causes, definition and assessment. In: P. Farrell (Ed.). **Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: Strategies for assessment and intervention**. London: The Falmer Press. pp.1-16.

Finbow, N (neil@finbow.eu), (14 March 2011), **Re: PRUs**. email to R. Kirkbride (beccakirkbride@yahoo.co.uk)

Finn, J. (1989) Withdrawing from school. **Review of Educational Research**, 59 (2): **117-142.**

Fletcher-Campbell, F. & Wilkin, A. (2003) **Review of the research literature on educational interventions for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties**. London: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Geddes, H. (2005) **Attachment in the classroom**. London: Worth Publishing.

Gilligan, R. (2000) Adversity, resilience and young people: the protective value of positive school and spare time experiences. **Children and Society**, 14 (1): 37-47.

Gowers, S., Bailey-Rogers, S., Shore, A. & Levine, W. (2000) The Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for Child and Adolescent Mental Health. **Child and Adolescent Mental Health**, 5 (2): 50-56.

Hamill, P. & Boyd, B. (2001) Striving for inclusion: Evaluation of provision for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) in secondary schools in a Scottish council. **Scottish Educational Review**, 33 (2): 142-156.

Hayden, C. (1997) Exclusion from primary school: children 'in need' and children with 'special educational needs'. **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**, 2 (3): 36-44.

Johnson, G. (1994) An ecological framework for conceptualising educational risk. **Urban Education**, 29: 34-49.

Jones, R. (2003) The construction of emotional and behavioural difficulties. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 19 (2): 147-157.

Klein, R. (2000) **Defying disaffection: how schools are winning the hearts and minds of reluctant students**. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Konarska, J. (2010) The influence of parents on the formation of psychological needs of teenagers with disability. **International Journal of Special Education**, 25 (3): 9-16.

Kunc, N. (1992) The Need to Belong: Rediscovering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs [online]. Available at http://www.normemma.com/articles/armaslow.htm [Accessed 25th October 2010].

Leon, L. (2002) The mental health needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. **Mental Health Foundation Updates**, 3 (17).

Macleod, G. (2006) The place of separate provision in a policy climate of inclusion. **Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs**, 6 (3): 125-133.

Macleod, G. (2007) Are we nearly there yet? Curriculum, relationships and disaffected pupils. **International Journal on School Disaffection**, 5 (1): 29-36.

Maslow, A. (1943) A theory of human motivation. **Psychological Review**, 50: 370-396.

Maslow, A. (1970) **Motivation and Personality** (2nd edition). New York: Harper and Row.

Maslow, A. (1976) **The farther reaches of human nature**. New York: Viking.

McCormick, J. (1999) **Family learning: parents as educators**. Edinburgh: Scottish Council Foundation.

McSherry, J. (2001) **Challenging behaviour in mainstream school**. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Meece, J., Anderman, E. & Anderman, L. (2006) Classroom goal structure, student motivation, and academic achievement. **Annual Review of Psychology**, 57: 487-503.

Mellott, R. & Mehr, S. (2007) Reaffirming the Role of the Scientist-Practitioner Model of Training in Psychology. **American Behavioural Scientist**, 50; 842-845.

Mowat, J. (2010) Inclusion of pupils perceived as experiencing social and emotional behavioural difficulties (SEBD): affordances and constraints. **International Journal of Inclusive Education**, 14 (6): 631-648.

Murray, C. & Greenberg, M. (2006) Examining the importance of social relationships and social contexts in the lives of children with high-incidence disabilities. **Journal of Special Education**, 39 (2): 220-233.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (1999) **Principles into practice: effective education for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties**. London: Ofsted.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2007) **Pupil referral units**

Establishing successful practice in pupil referral units and local authorities. London: Ofsted.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2009). **Inspection report**. London: Ofsted.

Osterman, K. (2000) Students' need for belonging in the school community. **Review of Educational Research**, 70 (3): 323-367.

Robson, C. (1993). **Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers**. Oxford: Blackwell.

Roeser, R., Midgley, C. & Urdan, T. (1996) Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescent psychological and behavioural functioning in school: the mediating role of goals and belonging. **Journal of Educational Psychology**, 88 (3): 408-422.

Rogers, C. (1961) **On becoming a person**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rosenberg, M. (1989) **Society and the adolescent self-image (revised edition)**. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Ryff, C. & Keyes, C. (1995) The structure of psychological well-being revisited. **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, 69 (4); 719-727.

Sandberg, J. (2005) How do we justify knowledge produced within interpretive approaches? **Organizational Research Methods**, 8(1): 41-68.

Sellman, E. (2009) Lessons learned: student voice at a school for pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**, 14 (1): 33-48.

Shapiro, D. (2002) Renewing the scientist-practitioner model. **The Psychologist,** 15 (5): 232-234.

Singal, N. (2006) An ecosystemic approach for understanding inclusive education: An Indian case study. **European Journal of Psychology of Education**, 21 (3): 239-252.

Smith, D. (2006) **School experience and delinquency at ages 13 to 16**. Edinburgh: Centre for Law and Society, University of Edinburgh.

Solomon, Y. & Rogers, C. (2001) Motivational patterns in disaffected school students: insights from pupil referral unit clients. **British Educational Research Journal**, 27 (3): 331-345.

Souter, K. (2001) The Relevance of Systems Theory for Teachers Dealing with Emotional and Behaviour Problems in Schools. **Pastoral Care in Education**, 19 (1): 36-41.

Ttofa, J. (2006) Reigniting the beacon: A resilience-based approach to helping young people 'at risk' in schools. **Child and Educational Psychology**, 117: 32-38.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, H. & Blue-Banning, M. (1994). Enhancing inclusion of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families: a theoretical and programmatic analysis. **Infants & Young Children**, 7(2): 1-14.

UNICEF (2007) **Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-Being in Rich Countries**. York: Unicef.

Visser, J. (2003) **A study of children and young people who present challenging behaviour**. Birmingham: School of Education, Birmingham University.

Webster-Stratton, C., Reid, M. & Hammond, M. (2004) Treating children with early-onset conduct problems: intervention outcomes for parent, child, and teacher training. **Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology**, 33 (1): 105-124.

Wise, S. (2000) **Listen to me! The voices of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.** Oxford: Lucky Duck.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Background information regarding Brookfield College

Brookfield College is split into four sites, running seven unique programmes, each with its own curriculum, identity and specialism. Overall the college has approximately 130 pupils on roll. The students come from some of the most socially deprived backgrounds in the area, with 85 per cent of students eligible for free school meals as well as being the group most likely to become NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) involved in offending behaviour or substance abuse.

An OFSTED inspection in 2009 rated the provision as being outstanding overall. The OFSTED report stated that most students "...enter the college with complex needs and a history of poor attendance and challenging behaviour. Some arrive with limited information about their attainment owing to the extended periods...spent out of mainstream education" (2009, p.4). Despite these challenges the OFSTED report states that the college "...changes lives" (2009, p.4).

Self management programme

The aims of the programme are to increase individual emotional literacy in order to develop effective social and emotional skills, to control and modify behaviour successfully and as a result, successfully access the curriculum and to succeed in mainstream school. It focuses on developing self-esteem and confidence through personal awareness, self management and by learning interpersonal skills.

Staff describe the typical profile of students attending the programme as having "mainly problems around bad attitude towards learning and behaviour. Sometimes it's also around attendance, threatening behaviour or bullying".

Structure of the day and overall programme

The provision varied from a mainstream setting in terms of the structure of the day, which is an hour shorter, and all free time (breaks and lunch) is supervised. The programme content is not based around the national curriculum but instead upon experiential learning. This includes weekly sports sessions in the adjacent school as well as dance and drama lessons. This appeared to provide a rich context for informal learning to take place alongside the formal objectives around self management.

Week	Session	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	1	Welcome	Best Practice	HGS	Acrostic	Views on news
	2	Good School/ Bad School	Reaction Qs	A-Z/ PE Debate	Science/ Angry art	Drama Workshop Relationships
	3	Changes can be made	ABC	Gym	Hype	Drama Workshop MT
2	1	Character Cards	Best Practice	HGS	Science	Big Foot
	2	Speed Dating	Mediation	Chalfont Scout	Best	Theatre

	3	TA	Dream on/ Keep it real	Camp	Drumming	Company
3	1	Big Foot	Best Practice	HGS	Science/ Best	Drama Workshop
	2	Theatre	Best Practice	Reading	Bystander	Drama Workshop
	3	Company	Rap	Football Club	Hype	Drama Workshop
4	1	B/Targets/Pass	Best Practice	HGS	Jelly Tree/ Brookfields Challenge	Prep 4 Celeb
	2	Comic Strip	Anger Style	Go	Graduation preparation	Graduation preparation
	3	SWOT Analysis	Rap	Ape	Celebration	End

Adult support

Within the group the number of adults supporting the sessions ranged from 4 to 6, resulting in an adult: child ratio of approximately 1:2. This enables effective students to feel supported both in terms of the content of the sessions but also ensuring that any literacy needs are supported and individual targets can be addressed. As one member of staff states "we make sure we support any literacy difficulties, but quite often we find that the group members help each other".

In terms of the quality of adult support provided, it was observed that throughout the sessions the sports coach mentors were constantly close by and helping students in the activities,

mediating their learning and bringing in less confident members of the group. Figure one illustrates a typical layout of the group room, which appears to help facilitate the supporting of the students learning needs. Praise was given regularly and individual targets were constantly highlighted and opportunities for success were sought.

Figure 1: Group room layout

= Member of staff (sports coach mentor, lead mentor or session facilitator)

= Student
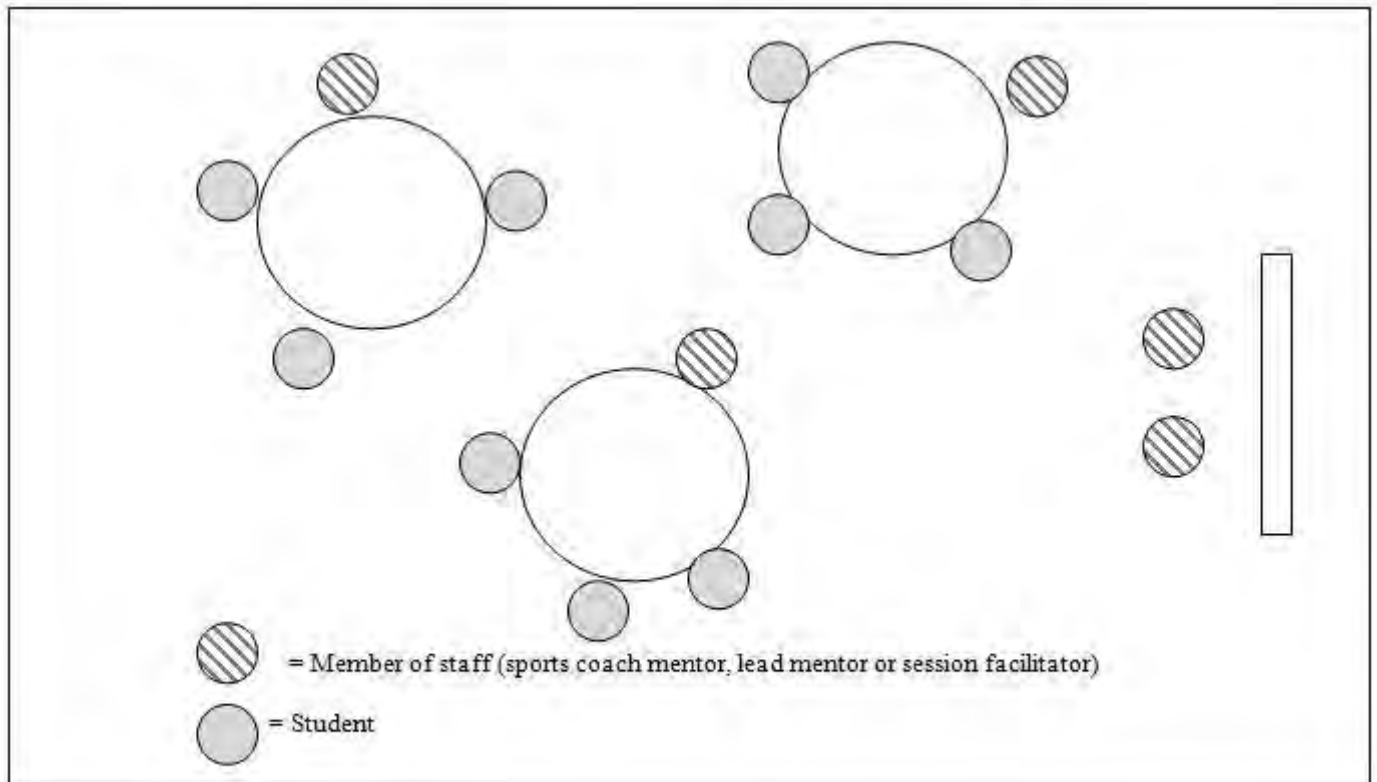
From the data collected in the interviews, the provision staff considered their aims for the students to include:

- Raise self-esteem.
- Expand concentration levels.
- Develop pupil engagement with school and their learning.
- Modify behaviours that had triggered exclusion (or that put them at risk of being excluded).

- Improve attitudes and confidence.

In terms of addressing individual needs one member of staff explains "There isn't a manual. We base it on the students needs, not take a set approach. We look at the referral form and put together sessions relating to the individual students. We need to be quite flexible and responsive. So if issues arise during the course we can change the sessions. The only session that stays the same is the first session that focuses on team building and ice breakers".

Student perceptions of their attendance on the programme

Student perceptions (and their interactions with the micro-system that is their mainstream school) regarding the reasons for them having to attend the provision included the following:

- I was fighting a lot in school and smoking all the time. I wasn't going to lessons or was late to lessons. Was getting shouted at all the time, getting detentions or excluded.

- I didn't really pay attention; I had a lack of focus. I used to fall asleep in lessons, they were boring and I'd just turn off. My friend was being bullied, and I had a fight with the bully to stick up for him.

- I was fighting a lot – mainly because I was bored or others were starting rumours. Also I used to go out on the weekend and drink, so I used to go to school with a banging headache. This made me kept on being in trouble and they (staff) had enough of it.

- I've come here twice. Last year I was rude to a teacher. Everyone gets on my nerves, just want to push them. They'll say something about my mum and I'd retaliate. I used to get bored in my lessons too, especially English. We'd muck around, fall asleep, talk, shout, get sent out.

Appendix 2: Consent form

Dear Parent,

The reason for contacting you is because Slough Psychology Service is supporting us in carrying out a study into evaluating Brookfield College, where your child is currently engaged in a programme.

Why is the study being done?

In order to deliver effective programmes to support your child's needs it is important to regularly review the provision we provide in order to see what we are doing well and areas we may need to improve. The study's results will enable us to do that.

The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to find out how Brookfield College meets the needs of students attending the provision.

What will this involve?

The study will involve talking to your child about their experiences so far Brookfield College. They may also be asked to complete a questionnaire.

Does my child have to take part in this study?

We are writing to see whether you are happy for your child to take part in this research. It is up to you whether or not you would like your child to take part in this study. If you decide now, or at a later date, that you do not wish them to participate in this research you are free to withdraw.

Who will have access to the research records?

All information collected from your child during the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential. All identifying details will be removed. Both the college and your child's details will remain anonymous.

If you are happy for your child to take part, please return the form at the bottom of this letter to one of the sports coach mentors at Brookfield College.

Yours sincerely,

xxxx

Executive Head teacher

<u>Parent Informed Consent Slip</u>

I would like my child to take part in this study ☐

Parent / Guardian of

Child's Name: …………………………………………………

Signed:…………………………………………………………….

Date:..…………………………………………………………….

Appendix 3a: Provision staff semi-structured interview schedule

<u>Aims and ethos of the programme</u>

- Monitoring and evaluation systems? Baselines
- Changes of students (social aspects, behaviour, learning, staff/child relationships)?
- What is the typical profile of a student attending Brookfield? (child factors, school/teacher factors, home factors).
- How do these difficulties become a barrier to learning?
- Opportunities to practice skills?
- How are students selected for a group? Or is it a case of getting the right numbers? How do you decide if a child is suitable?

<u>How (if at all) does the programme support the following?</u>

- Self management of behaviour (self regulation)
- Self and others (empathy)
- Self awareness and confidence
- Self organisation
- Attitude
- Learning skills

<u>Relationship with students</u>

- How do you manage the relationships between Brookfield students?
- How is missing school work overcome?

<u>Supporting students' additional needs</u>

- How do you support individual student needs?
- Do you use multi-agency working
- Opportunity for counselling etc?

<u>Supporting families</u>

- Communication
- Supporting families

- Complex needs of whole family

Multi-agency work

Supporting school staff/ outreach

- Attitude of staff when you go in to work with them

- How do you work in mainstream (individual teachers, whole school?)

Reintegration process

- How do you manage any dependency students may show towards Brookfield staff?

Appendix 3b: Mainstream SENCO semi-structured interview schedule

- Views of the provision?

- What impact do you hope it has on students (e.g. therapeutic, punitive)?

- What support for staff does the provision provide?

- What are your views on the reintegration process?

- Progress of students who have just finished the course (changes in social aspects, behaviour, learning, staff-child relationship)

- Why do you refer to the provision? Is this planned or reactive?

Appendix 4: Student SSI, picture cards and statements

<u>SSI</u>

1. Perceptions of own needs/difficulties – why are you here?
2. Views of attending the provision. What did they expect? What did your friends and family think?
3. How do you feel about leaving Brookfield and going back to your school?
4. Relationships/views of Brookfield staff
5. Relationships/views of learning mentors
6. How do you think the course has helped with getting on with others/behaviour/your confidence
7. How do you think it will affect your school work?

<u>Picture cards</u>

These were given to the student, who chose as many pictures as they liked. The pictures had

to relate to the reasons they thought they were attending the provision. These were then used

in combination with the SSI to gather student views.

Statements

These were given to the student, who sorted the statements into three piles – agree, disagree, and not sure. These were then used in combination with the SSI to gather student views.

- Now that I'm coming to the end of the course I've got some ideas on ways of keeping out of trouble.

- I want to keep out of trouble

- It's hard work, but I feel like my behaviour's getting better

- When I feel like something is about to go wrong I think I now know what to do

- I am looking forward to going back to my school

- The course has made me feel more confident about myself

- The course has made no different to my situation

- I'm not sure what I'm going to expect when I leave here.

- I think I may go back to my old ways

- I would rather stay at Brookfield

- Being at Brookfield has helped me so much

- Being at Brookfield hasn't helped me at all

Research question 1

	Physiological needs	Safety needs	Belongingness	Self esteem	Self actualisation
Measures	- Unstructured observations	- Provision policies - Staff SSIs - Student SSIs - Attendance figures	- Staff SSIs - Student SSIs	- Pre-post self esteem questionnaire - Student SSIs - Programme structure examined	- Pre-post cycle of change

Research question 2

	Work with families	Work with students' mainstream schools	Work with other agencies
Measures	- Staff SSIs	- Staff SSIs - SENCO SSI	- Analysis of student files, referral forms etc

CHAPTER THREE

PPR2: AN ACTION RESEARCH INQUIRY IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING

A SELF-ESTEEM GROUP FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Abstract

Many disagree on the definition and concept of self-esteem and strong views are held regarding the worth of targeting self-esteem (Ecclestone, 2004; Craig, 2009). However Government reports on effective practice supporting social and emotional well-being (Weare & Gray, 2003) has seen the introduction of new policy and interventions such as the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2004), SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) curriculum (DfES, 2005), Circle Time (Mosley, 1998), Targeted Mental Health in Schools Project (DCSF 2008), as well as the introduction of statutory responsibility of Local Authorities to improve the mental health and emotional well-being of children (Children Act, 2004). This paper forms an action research enquiry charting the development, implementation and evaluation of a self-esteem group for adolescent girls in one college in south-east England. Self-reflective spirals involving a 'plan-do-review' cycle were adopted to achieve this process. Initial data was collected using the C-GAS and pre-post data was gathered using Harter's 'what am I like' scale (1985) and student evaluation forms. Five sessions were run and the outcomes of the group explored. Results indicate that the students experienced slight increases in their global self-esteem. Key findings are discussed in terms of how well self-esteem can be addressed within the context of a group intervention, how young people's development of positive self-esteem can be supported and what impact self-esteem group work may have on young people. Conclusions are made regarding the success of self-esteem groups and the changing role of educational psychologists in delivering group interventions.

Table of contents

Introduction

Mental health is now everybody's business (DfEE, 2001) with "...children and young people's mental health and emotional well-being... (being) central and underpins all the work around improving achievement and outcomes..." (Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010, p.296). Strong views are held regarding the worth of targeting self-esteem (Ecclestone, 2004; Craig, 2009). Despite its weak evidence base (Craig, 2009; Wigelsworth et al, 2010), the Government report on effective practice supporting social and emotional well-being (Weare & Gray, 2003) has seen the introduction of new policy and interventions that have had varying degrees of success (Craig, 2009; Walker & Donaldson, 2011). For example, the Every Child Matters agenda (DfES, 2004), SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) curriculum (DfES, 2005), Circle Time (Mosley, 1998), Targeted Mental Health in Schools Project (DCSF 2008), as well as the introduction of statutory responsibility of Local Authorities to improve the mental health and emotional well-being of children (Children Act, 2004). With a greater focus on self-esteem, it could be argued that the 'one-size fits all' approach has so far not been successful and that a smaller scale, more individualised approach is required.

The context for this paper is a Local Authority that has changed to a traded services model of service delivery in September 2010, where schools have the opportunity to buy significantly more amounts of Educational Psychologist (EP) time. This has led to increased opportunity for regular school contact as well as a broadening of the work that EPs can offer. In the changing political and financial climate this opportunity is professionally beneficial as it can

demonstrate to 'consumers' the breadth of support and intervention EPs can deliver (Burton, 2004; Alpay, 2006; Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010; Pugh, 2010).

Examples of group interventions addressing self-esteem report having a positive impact on self-esteem (Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010) as well as on anxiety (Kendall, 1994), behavioural difficulties (Quayle & Holsworth, 1997) and on peer and teacher relationships (Burton, 2004). However despite the planning of such interventions there are often difficulties identifying the specific successful elements in addition to the researchers being able to draw strong conclusions regarding long term effects (Emler, 2001). This professional practice report (PPR) forms an action research enquiry charting the development, implementation and evaluation of a self-esteem group for adolescent girls attending a mainstream college in the South East of England. It explores conceptualisations of self-esteem, the development and maintenance of self-esteem and the role of EPs in promoting self-esteem in children and young people through the use of interventions.

Aims

The main aim of this study was to provide an insight into implementing a self-esteem group intervention, to explore related issues and raise further questions. Three research questions will help to achieve this aim:

1. How can we address the concept of self-esteem within the context of a group intervention?

2. How can we support young people's development of positive self-esteem?

3. What impact can self-esteem group work have on young people?

<u>Methodology</u>

The current research adopts a constructivist epistemology, which emphasises the importance of social experience and subjective world views (Raskin, 2002). It was felt that this was appropriate due to the nature of the intervention – as the researcher is actively involved in the construction and delivery of the group sessions, as well as the importance of considering the group members' experiences. Such a view allows for a reflective approach to the data and complements the circulatory nature of action research. Action research "...aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework" (Rapoport, 1970, p.499). It is a form of 'self-reflective inquiry' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), and a tool used to investigate change and enable research to be transformed into usable and relevant practice (Elliott, 1991; Noffke, 1994; Hopkins, 2002; Coulter, 2002). "...'theories' are not validated independently and then applied in practice. They are validated through practice." (Elliott, 1991, p 69). Adopting an action research model will enable the current research to develop into meaningful and useable results that can be used again in the future in this context.

Cohen et al (2000) suggest that action research is suitable "…in almost any setting where a problem involving people, tasks or procedures cries out for a solution…" (p.226). Action research is a small scale, individual and deliberate process that is based on a willingness to examine change and reflect or learn from what is discovered, and implementing this into practice before repeating the action research process – which is known as the self reflective

spiral (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992). These spirals allow for several iterations of a 'plan-do-review' cycle, as suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart (1992), who state that action research should not have an end but, rather, is a constant cycle of thinking about what needs to be improved and challenged (as outlined in figure 1).

Figure 1: A spiral of action research cycles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992)

In the current research, literature will be reviewed to allow for successively informed iterations of a plan-do-review cycle during the process of the intervention. The PPR is comprised of three sections – reconnaissance, implementation and evaluation. The initial exploration and formulation of the intervention, which forms the beginning of the current action research enquiry can be found in the section titled 'stage one: reconnaissance'. The subsequent loops of the action research spirals will be formed from each session of the intervention. The 'act' element will be the actual delivery of the session, the 'monitor' and

'evaluation' stages will be formed from scaling questions asked to group members each session (see appendix four) and the researchers reflections (see appendix three).

Sample

The participants were four female Asian-Pakistani students from year eleven (aged 15-16 years) who were identified by the college SENCO and Head teacher as requiring additional support due to their perceived low self-esteem.

Group sessions were facilitated by the researcher (a Trainee Educational Psychologist, or TEP) and a Psychodynamic Counsellor based in the college.

Procedure

The group intervention comprised of five 50 minute sessions, which took place over an eight week period over February and March 2011 in a designated room in the learning support unit of the college.

Measures

Prior to the intervention the Children's Global Assessment Scale (C-GAS) was completed by the TEP and the Psychodynamic Counsellor. The C-GAS is a global measure of functioning of children aged 4-16 years old, completed by practitioners (Shaffer et al, 1983). This was

selected as a tool to explore the individual students needs as the researcher felt that perhaps if student needs were too great, a group setting may not be suitable in this context.

The Harter's self-esteem scale 'What I am like' (1985) was also administered prior to the group starting, to enable the researcher to tease out the specific aspects of self-esteem that the individual students may require support with. This was chosen instead of a uni-dimensional measure of global self-esteem such as Rosenberg's self-esteem questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1989) as it allows for a more detailed assessment of self-esteem. Post intervention scores were also gathered.

At the end of each session scaling questions were used, to allow the students to chart their feelings about experiences during the week as well as to aid in their reflection of the content of the session they had just had (see appendix six). A five point Likert scale was used for scaling items to reduce the number of possible response points (Punch, 2003) and therefore allow for more reliable data to be collected.

Ethical considerations

As a TEP, the researcher ensured that British Psychological Society (2009) and university ethical guidelines were adhered to.

Informed consent from the students was gained prior to commencing the group (see appendix five), outlining the right to withdraw (BPS, 2009) limits of confidentiality, and guarantees of

anonymity in terms of the research write-up. Unusually parental consent was not sought, due to the background of the girls and concerns they expressed regarding their parents. All of the girls came from very traditional Muslim backgrounds and did not feel comfortable with their parents knowing about their participation and stated they would not attend if their parents had to give consent. Additionally parents had previously signed a 'request for involvement' general consent form for the college, giving permission for their child to be involved in "any form of support" involving one agency for short programmes of support.

There are obvious tensions between the traditional routes for gaining consent with the opportunity for young people to independently access psychological support without parental consent (Ayling, 2006). Discussions were had with the Principal Educational Psychologist, the Head Teacher and the SENCO of the college and it was felt that Gillick competency could be applied due to the context of the work and the age of the students (Daniels & Jenkins, 2000; Ayling, 2006). Gillick competence is the judgement that if a young person is of "...sufficient understanding and intelligence" (Gillick v West Norfolk AHA, House of Lords 1985) parental rights yield to theirs and the young person is legally able to access treatment. Sufficient understanding is viewed as the young person being able to make "...a reasonable assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the treatment proposed, so the consent, if given, can be properly and fairly described as true consent." (Gillick v West Norfolk AHA, House of Lords 1985).

There were other ethical issues relating to the group setting and confidentiality (Daniels & Jenkins, 2000), and the therapeutic aspects of the group (Westbrook, Kennerley & Kirk,

2007). As well as highlighting to the group members the group format of sessions in the consent form, there was a joint formation of group rules (see appendix four) which were displayed in all sessions and frequently referred to. The therapeutic aspects of the group include practical aspects such as ensuring availability of an appropriate room and the method students will use to leave lessons without drawing unnecessary attention or having intrusive questions asked by their teachers or peers. Appropriate support was made available in between sessions and at the end of the group, via the counsellor. Related to this, there was also a consideration of how sessions and the group as a whole would end.

Stage one: reconnaissance

<u>Initial brief</u>

The initial brief following the request for Educational Psychologist involvement had arisen from a session with the Counsellor and one of the future participants, in which she suggested that she felt she needed some support with her self-esteem. After some consideration, the Head Teacher felt that some other students may also benefit from some work in this area and spoke to the college's EP. This is a positive approach which values early intervention and targeted support with children and young people (DoH, 2004; Greig, 2007).

In addition to promoting psychological well-being, the value of addressing self-esteem has been shown to have benefits for student learning as confident students have been shown to take more risks in their learning (Long & Fogell, 1999; Colwell & O'Connor, 2003; Lawrence, 2006; Urhahne et al, 2011). Seligman (1996) suggests that the variable connecting self-esteem and achievement is the student's level of optimism, or their attribution bias. Self-esteem is also thought to affect learning, the development of basic skills and resiliency (Rae, 2000). However, the difficulties with this view is the correlational nature of the data (Long & Fogell, 1999; Lane, Lane & Kyprianou, 2004), and the direction of the causal relationship (Regan, 2009).

Despite some methodological difficulties that exist around some of the literature, it is clear that the field has been well explored. Table 1 highlights in more detail the characteristics of individuals with high and low self-esteem as identified in the literature.

High self-esteem	Low self-esteem
- Socially and academically active and successful (Rae, 2000; Baumeister, Tice & Hutton, 2003; Trautwein et al, 2006). - May approach tasks and group work confidently and creatively (Alpay, 2006; Trautwein et al, 2006). - Feels comfortable with their self perceptions (Rae, 2000). - Seeks new challenges (Baumeister et al, 2003; Trautwein et al, 2006). - Optimistic (Cosden, Brown & Elliot, 2002; Alpay, 2006). - Would not want to change places with others (Alpay, 2006). - Have a positive overall view of self (Rae, 2000; Baumeister et al, 2003; Alpay, 2006; Trautwein et al, 2006).	- Negative cognitions (Rae, 2000). - Perceive self as socially isolated (Rae, 2000). - Sensitive to criticism (Baumeister et al, 2003; Alpay, 2006) - Dwell on problems or issues (Rae, 2000; Alpay, 2006). - Avoidance, compensation, low motivation or resistant behaviours. (Banks, 1995; Colwell & O'Connor, 2003; Alpay, 2006). - Feelings of worthlessness, uselessness, unloved (Rae, 2000; Alpay, 2006). - May display aggressive or defensive behaviours. (Banks, 1995; Baumeister et al, 2003; Colwell & O'Connor, 2003). - Experiences more psychosomatic illness (Alpay, 2006). - External locus of control (Alpay, 2006). - Academic difficulties, with little confidence in ability and participation, possibility of disruption in class and unpopularity (Banks, 1995; Baumeister et al, 2003; Colwell & O'Connor, 2003; Alpay, 2006; Trautwein et al, 2006).

Table 1: Traits and self-esteem

<u>Exploration of the brief</u>

During the exploration of the brief and in addition to the case formulation the author explored the various conceptualisations of self-esteem as well as the development and maintenance of self-esteem. It was felt that this exploration of the literature will later relate to the practice that the researcher was undertaking, as it influenced how self-esteem would be conceptualised in the current intervention as well as affect which areas the intervention paid more attention to.

The conceptualisation of self-esteem and how such a trait is measured is an element of the self-esteem literature that requires exploration. The field lacks a consensus regarding a definition of self-esteem, with different researchers placing greater emphasis on different elements (Emler, 2001). James originally defined self-esteem as "...a ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities..." (1890, cited by Andrews, 1998, p.339). Whilst this is a useful starting point, this explanation is perhaps deterministic in its stance, implying that self-esteem is a static trait. However over time there have been various ideas regarding the concept of self-esteem offered, and the concept is increasingly becoming better defined (Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000; Alexander, 2001; Lane et al, 2004).

One theory regarding the construct of self-esteem is that it is a global trait (Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000; Alpay, 2006) which is a general appraisal or evaluation of all elements of the self (Pope et al, 1988). Global self-esteem encompasses all aspects of an individual "...the individual's positive or negative attitude towards the self as a totality." (Rosenberg et al, 1995, p.141). This could perhaps be best explained through figure two below.
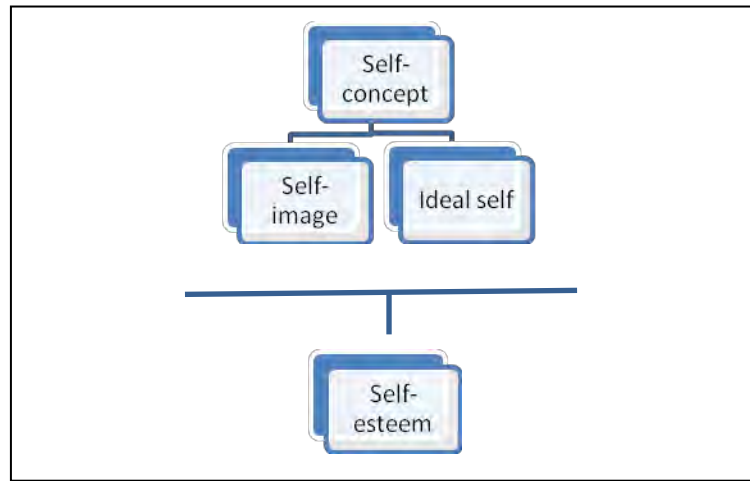
Figure 2: A model of self-esteem as a global trait (Lawrence, 2006)

However this conceptualisation of self-esteem could be viewed as too fixed and not responsive to different situational factors or changes within the individual over time, minimising other factors such as age (Emler, 2001), personality traits (Baumeister et al, 1989) and socio-cultural factors (Clay, Vignoles & Dittmar, 2005).

Others view self-esteem as a multi-dimensional trait (Alexander, 2001; Alpay, 2006; Trautwein et al, 2006) which involves an individual's evaluation of "...a specific domain or ability in academic areas." (Trautwein et al, 2006, p.335) including the individual's perceived competence in cognitive (such as social problem-solving, self-statements, attributional style), behavioural, social (social understanding and communication skills) or physical domains (Pope et al, 1988; Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000; Emler, 2001; Lane et al, 2004), a sense of

belonging (Maslow, 1970), personal identity (Alexander, 2001; UNICEF, 2007), or self concept (Hater, 1985; Hoare et al, 1993). This can be seen in more detail in Table 2.

Area of self-esteem	Description
Social	- Subjective perceptions of social integration. Being liked and accepted by peers (Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000). - The level of satisfaction an individual has with regard to their social interactions and relationships. E.g. how they feel about themselves as a friend (Harter, 1999). - Being assertive – feeling able to ask and take action to get what you want in life (Alexander, 2001).
Academic	- Self evaluation as a student and individual levels of academic achievement (Harter, 1999; Lane et al, 2004). - Experiences of success and failures (Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000). - A sense of capability or efficacy – knowing what you are capable of as well as what you find difficult (Harter, 1999; Lane et al, 2004). - A sense of purpose – having a goal or direction in life, and taking action to achieve that goal (Lane et al, 2004).
Family	- Individual feelings about themselves as a family member, making a unique contribution (Harter, 1999). - Feelings of being valued and secure (Harter, 1999; Alexander, 2001).
Body image	- Satisfaction regarding appearance, sex, height, weight, material possessions such as clothes (Harter, 1999; Alexander, 2001). - Unconditional self-acceptance – knowing and accepting who you are, your positive attributes as well as your weaknesses (Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000).

Table 2: Domain specific conceptualisations of self-esteem

Within these domains Harter proposed a hierarchy of self-esteem (1999), as illustrated in figure three.
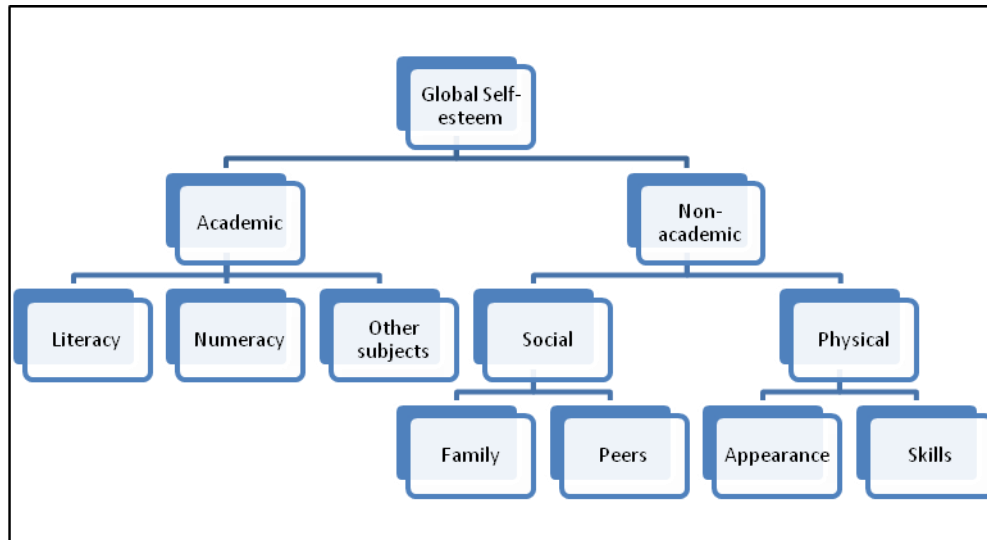

Figure 3: Self-esteem hierarchy (Harter, 1999)

However the importance placed on individual domains is subjective and therefore this hierarchy does not provide a definitive model and emphasises the individuality of self-esteem. This may have implications for group self-esteem interventions as it may be that supporting self-esteem requires some degree of specific individualised work. Although this would not be possible in the current intervention due to time allocation, this is an issue to consider in the future.

Cognitive-behavioural approaches

The use of cognitive-behavioural therapeutic (CBT) related interventions have increased significantly over recent years, with the introduction of the 'Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies' initiative (Clarke et al, 2009). CBT approaches have been found to

be an effective form of intervention to support the development of self-esteem and the factors influencing self-esteem highlighted in this literature review (Hall & Tarrier, 2003). Such approaches have been found to have a positive impact in randomised control studies (Shortt, Barrett, & Fox, 2001). Additionally cognitive-behavioural interventions yield effect sizes twice those achieved by other preventive programmes for young people (Durlak & Wells, 1997). As an approach which addresses thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals (Stallard, 2005) CBT is appropriate for the current self-esteem group. Previous interventions focussing on addressing self-esteem using CBT approaches such as 'coping cat' (Kendall & Hedtke, 2006), 'Think good, feel good' (Stallard, 2005) and 'FRIENDS' (Barrett, Lowry-Webster, & Turner, 2000) encourage individuals to examine their beliefs and seek evidence to support those beliefs (Hall & Tarrier, 2003) as well as to promote the use of active coping strategies (Lecomte et al, 1999).

Case formulation

In order to explore the needs of the individuals in the group it is good practice to form a baseline measurement of the identified issue (Rhodes, 2009). Not only will this allow for pre-group intervention data to be collected but will also help inform the content of the sessions. Prior to the group starting the author and her co-group facilitator completed the C-GAS, (Shaffer et al, 1983) which involves scoring an individual on a number of different areas (see appendix one). Results from this discussion can be seen in Table 3.

Student	Pre intervention C-GAS score
1	61
2	69
3	69
4	62

Table 3: *Pre-intervention C-GAS scores*

The findings in table 3 show that the girls have a C-GAS score ranging from 61-69. This range of scores indicates that all four students would be in the 'some problems' category. This category ranges from 61-70 out of a total of 100, where the 91-100 range indicates 'doing very well' and 1-10 indicates 'extremely impaired' (Shaffer et al, 1983). The range of scores for the group implies that they are functioning fairly well but have difficulties in particular areas relating to home, school or personal relationships, which are displayed though anxious or disruptive behaviour in school.

Harter's self-esteem scale 'What I am like' (1985) was completed by the girls pre-intervention to give information regarding self- perceptions in different areas of their life (see appendix two). The scale is a 36 item which evaluates self-esteem in five domains: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, and behavioural conduct, as well as global self-worth. The results of this can be seen in chart one.
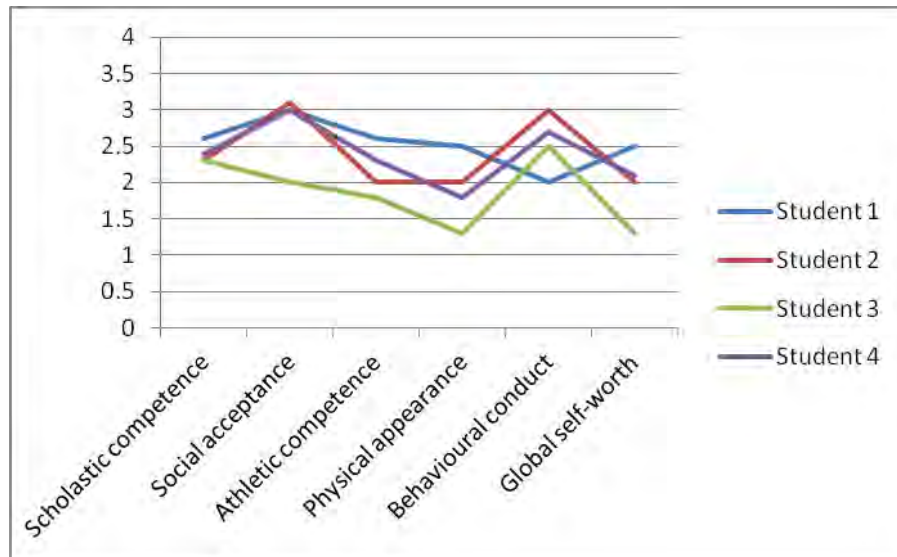
Chart 1: Student self-esteem profile (Harter, 1985)

A subscale score of 1 or 2 is low, 2.5 to 3.5 is average and 4 is high. Results indicate that scholastic competence was found to be average. Social acceptance was average for three students, but student three perceives herself to be socially isolated and has low self-esteem in this area. All four girls have below average scores on the physical appearance scale. Behavioural conduct was generally not a problem area, except for student one, who has had a history of difficult behaviour in the school. Overall the students global self-worth was recorded as low for three of the students, and at the lower end of average for one. Student three had particularly low levels of self-esteem in all of the areas measured.

<u>Initial conclusions from the reconnaissance stage</u>

Following an initial exploration of the group needs it was decided that the intervention will aim to take a multi-dimensional approach to self-esteem and target specific areas which may be impacting on the girls' self-esteem. This was due to the self-esteem profile results (Harter, 1985) as well as findings from the initial literature review. The intervention sets out to address the aims outlined below, which have been drawn from the literature review.

- To develop and practice ways of challenging self-statements and negative attributions (Kavussanu & Harnisch, 2000; Rae, 2000; Alpay, 2006; Trautwein et al, 2006).

- To encourage an understanding of how others may view us and how this may impact on self esteem (Rae, 2000; Alpay, 2006; Lawrence, 2006).

- To recognise that we all have a right to be who we are and to be accepted by others (Harter, 1985; Rae, 2000; Alexander, 2001; Burton, 2004; Lawrence, 2006).

- To enable students to indentify feelings of stress and to develop appropriate personal coping strategies (Harter, 1985; Kendall, 1994; Rae, 2000).

These will be shared with the group, outlining these could be addressed in the group sessions and elicit the group's views (Cosgrave & Keating, 2006).

In terms of the content and number of sessions for the intervention the literature suggests allowing time for at least five to six weekly sessions, which allows time for relationships within the group to develop (Burton, 2004). This length of time means different areas can be explored and discussed, but is also manageable for the college. The length of the sessions was

to be 50 minutes, which is the length of lessons. The co-facilitator of the researcher gave group members appointment cards which are frequently used in the college.

As the literature suggests many different aspects of self-esteem may need to be addressed in one session supporting self-esteem (Borba, 1989; Westbrook et al, 2007), a responsive approach was taken and sessions were planned following the previous session and were influenced by issues that had arisen from previous sessions (Westbrook et al, 2007).

Stage two: intervention

Due to the differing views regarding the nature of self-esteem, interventions may vary in which aspects of self-esteem are targeted (Pope et al, 1988; Coleman, 2001; Emler, 2001; Daniel & Wassall, 2002). Incorporating activities to develop areas of resiliency (Daniel & Wassall, 2002), enhance self-image, increase opportunities for positive feedback from peers as well as increase awareness of individual strengths through peer recognition and affirmation (Borba, 1989; Fogg et al, 1998) are all important elements of previous self-esteem interventions.

Following the initial formulisation the intervention commenced. Adopting the action research methodology of 'plan-do-review' each session was developed following the input and feedback from group members from the prior session. Each session had the core elements of agenda setting, self-monitoring, learning from any setbacks and updating the formulation (Westbrook et al, 2007). See appendix seven for a detailed outline of the sessions.

Session 1: Introductions

Session one aimed to provide participants with an introduction to the group, to the facilitators and to each other. An important element of early sessions is to provide group members with the opportunity to explore what to expect from being involved in the intervention (Cosgrave & Keating, 2006). It will be important for the group to feel comfortable in the setting and for the facilitators to aid in a positive and warm setting. Group rules were established and

discussions were had regarding the aim of the group, and what the girls would like to explore in the session. See appendix eight for examples of work relating to these exercises. The content of session one was intentionally fairly unstructured to allow the girls the psychological space to get comfortable with the group and to see how it meets their expectations.

Westbrook et al (2007) suggest that the development of a positive therapeutic relationship is an important element to establish early on in a group work context as it has been shown to impact on positive outcomes, providing "...a useful laboratory for working on problems..." (p.25). Therefore the style of group facilitation was one that employed curiosity and respect, with facilitators displaying traits identified by Rogers necessary for therapeutic style working, including warmth, empathy, genuineness and unconditional regard (Anderson, 2001; Stallard, 2005; Westbrook et al, 2007). Similar expectations were supported through the establishment of jointly created group rules which were formed at the outset. By showing mutual respect it was hoped that group members felt more comfortable with each other, and as they get to know one another better, a sense of belonging is fostered. Another key task for group facilitators was to adopt motivational interviewing techniques (Miller & Rollnick, 2002) and to reflect back students feelings, encouraging peer feedback and discussion in order to develop more successful strategies for managing situations involving feelings such as frustration (Burton, 2004). An approach that was used to manage this was the use of a form of questioning called Socratic questioning (Friedberg & McClure, 2002; Stallard, 2005) which guides the individual through exploring and clarifying beliefs; probing assumptions and viewpoints; and exploring the consequences of holding certain views.

Session 2: Emotions and stress management

The focus of this session was to explore emotional literacy (Steiner, 2002), with a focus on stress. Labelling feelings can impact on self-control and effective problem resolution, which plays a role in self-esteem if an individual feels they are in control of their emotions and behaviour (Pope et al, 1988; Sharp, 2001; Steiner, 2002). This is linked to the theory of locus of control (Ajzen, 2002), which expresses the idea that if an individual feels in control of their actions (and has an internal locus of control) they will feel more positive about a situation or experience (Ajzen, 2002). It is also the first session in which 'psychoeducation' occurred, which involves discussing the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Stallard, 2005).

In addition to an exploration of emotions, the application of relaxation techniques was covered, which have been found to be beneficial amongst different populations including new teachers (Payne & Manning, 1990), people suffering from anxiety disorders (Miller, Fletcher & Kabat-Zinn, 1995) and pregnant women (Bastani et al, 2005). However the literature in this area specifically focussing on students is limited. The researcher wanted to incorporate a relaxation element into the session due to the link between thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physiological responsiveness (Westbrook et al, 2007). This was felt to be relevant as physical tension can significantly contribute to and maintain feelings of stress and anxiety (Lundberg et al, 1999; Westbrook et al, 2007). The selection of the appropriate technique was based on what was thought to work best for the students (Westbrook et al, 2007). Guided imagery (Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010) and breathing techniques (Sang-Dol & Hee-Seung, 2005) were shared with the group. Guided imagery is an approach that has been found to increase self-esteem and promote positive-thinking (Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010). Although the long

term impact of these approaches are not reported it was felt that these techniques would be appropriate for the group as their use was intended for brief periods of time rather than as a long-term coping strategy.

Session 3: Positive and negative thoughts

Young people who have low self-esteem can "...misperceive ambiguous events as threatening, are overly self-focused, are hypercritical and have negative expectations." (Greig, 2007, p.22). Interventions focussing on self-esteem should focus on improving self awareness of thoughts (Coleman, 2001), increasing individuals understanding and recognition of irrational thoughts and the importance individuals can play as an active agent influencing thoughts and behaviours (Banks, 1995; Fogg et al, 1998). Previous interventions focussing on this area have had positive results (Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010).

The aim of session three was to explore the difference between these negative thoughts and positive thoughts, as well as how to challenge negative thoughts. The exercises in the session supported the group in identifying and challenging negative automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions (Stallard, 2005). To achieve this, literature on the ABC model (antecedents, behaviour, consequences), attributional style, self-theories and automatic thoughts was explored further (Grieg, 2007; Westbrook et al, 2007).

Related to types of cognitions an individual may have, self-theories influence how people initially develop beliefs about their performance and choice making and play an important

role in self-esteem (Pope et al, 1988). Self-theories create subjective perceptions and 'private speech' about our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. An individual with high self-esteem tends to perceive their abilities as fluid and dynamic. Therefore failure at a previous task cannot dictate failure at another similar task. It is these self-theories that can lead to negative automatic thoughts, which arise from "...habitual schemas that are activated and that go on to have an effect on everyday cognitive processing." (Grieg, 2007, p.20). Evaluative judgements that include the view that our abilities are static may result in characteristics seen in a person with low self-esteem - underachievement in performance, poor choice making and task avoidance (Dweck, 2000).

Therefore by exploring the groups self statements and automatic thoughts in session three this may help the individual students understand the impact of irrational thoughts and how negative thoughts can influence our behaviour, as well as how negative thoughts can be challenged and reframed.

Session 4: Positive relationships – me and others

Self-esteem interventions focussing on elements of social relationships can increase an individual's understanding of the importance they place on friendships and 'being liked' (Daniel & Wassall, 2002), as well as examining why having approval from individuals significant to the young person is important (Borba, 1989; Coleman, 2001). Adopting a resiliency perspective to self-esteem the PATHS programme (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) was developed to promote emotional and social abilities that can influence the

development of high self-esteem (Kusché & Greenberg, 1994). Evaluations of the programme suggest that it is successful in reducing behavioural risk factors (e.g. maintaining self control and employ social problem solving strategies) and increasing protective factors such as recognising emotions that are important for the development of higher self-esteem (Kusché & Greenberg, 1994).

In addition to examining friendships in the session, considering the social support present in the group itself can be valuable (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). In a group context tasks that involve an element of cooperation have been found to be positively related to a strong personal identity, ability to cope with adversity, social competencies, optimism about people, independence and self-esteem (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Cooperative experiences have been found to be related to an increase in self-esteem, enabling individuals to see their intrinsic worth as a competent and successful person and view others in a positive light (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Therefore by providing opportunities for the students to work cooperatively and share different experiences together should help build their resilience to social difficulties they may come across. Working together may also enable the individual group members to challenge others beliefs about what is a good or bad friend or highlighting what makes them a good friend, rather than the adults involved in the intervention.

Session 5: Endings and new beginnings

This session was led by the co-facilitator, and because of her background this session had a predominantly psychodynamic base. Additionally it was felt that perhaps taking a different approach to the last session may allow the group members to talk about the end of the group

as well as their feelings about the end of year 11, which was a theme that frequently arose during the sessions. The psychodynamic paradigm has been thought to be effective in exploring inter and intra personal interactions, including the concepts of transference and projection (Billington, 2006).

Fonagy et al argue that when working in the area of child mental health "...outcomes cannot be considered in absolute terms..." (2002, p.4) as difficulties and areas requiring support are often part of an interlinked and transactional chain. However, exploring whether a positive effect has been had is a fundamental issue which can be noted in the evaluation of the intervention.

Pre-post measures

When the group ended participants were asked to complete the Harter's self-esteem scale 'What I am like' (1985) in order to provide a pre-post group intervention comparison. The chart below outlines the pre and post scores for the individual's global self-esteem.
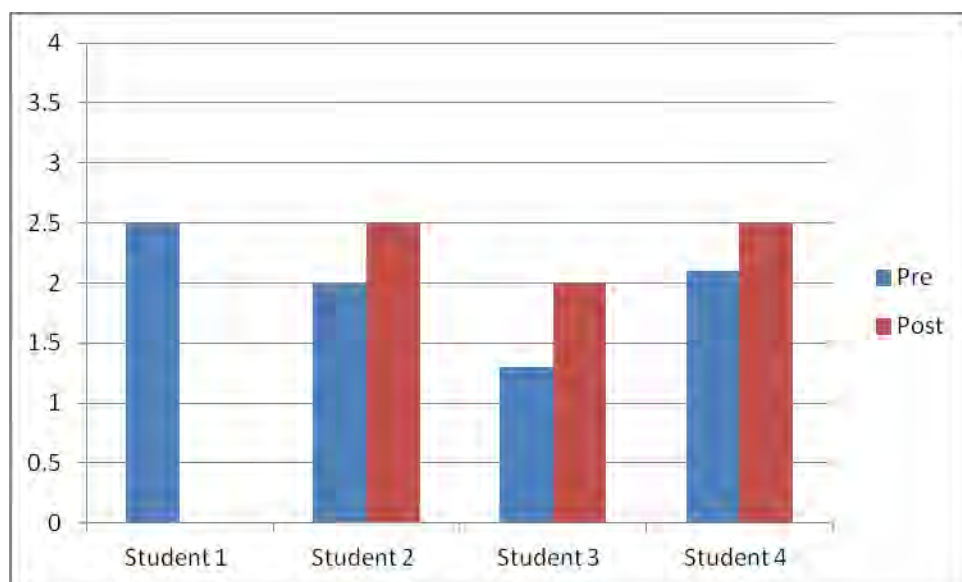

Chart 2: Pre and post self-esteem profile (Harter, 1985)

From figure four it can be noted that all three students who had completed all of the sessions experienced a slight increase in their global self-esteem. However research suggests that the change in global scores may not be too great as this measure tends to be very stable (Granlesse & Joseph, 1994). Student one does not have a post score as she left before the end of the group.

Student feedback

Post intervention feedback was sought from the students to explore their views of being involved in the group. An anonymous questionnaire (adapted from the Commission for Health Improvement 'Experience of Service' questionnaire) was given to the students to they return via a stamped addressed envelope. It was thought that this would allow for the students to express their true views. Of the four students, two returned the questionnaires. The results of these are outlined in Table 4.

	Certainly True	Partly True	Not True	Don't know
I feel that the people who saw me listened to me	1	1		
It was easy to talk to the people who saw me	1	1		
I was treated well by the people who saw me	2			
My views and worries were taken seriously	2			

I feel the people knew how to help me	1	1		
I have been given enough explanation about the help available here	1	1		
My appointments are usually at a good time (e.g. don't interfere with school, clubs)	2			
If a friend needed this sort of help, I would suggest to them to come here	2			
Overall, the help I have received here was good	2			

Table 4: Results from the 'experience of group' questionnaire

To the question "what was really good about the sessions" students' replies included "we weren't pressured to speak" and "the course was really good". One student gave feedback in terms of aspects of the group that she felt needed improving – "if possible find a way to get everyone more involved (speaking)" and "make the sessions longer – more than five sessions".

Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to chart the development and implementation of a group intervention supporting a group of adolescent females' self esteem. This arose from a student's request for support in this area during a counselling session. The rationale for the group was to promote their development of a more positive self-esteem. Based on their needs and the supporting evidence in research (Durlak & Wells, 1997; Shortt et al, 2001; Hall & Tarrier, 2003), the group took a predominantly cognitive-behavioural approach. The paper sought to explore three research questions which will now be discussed in more detail.

How can we address the concept of self-esteem within the context of a group intervention?

Overall it is felt that the intervention successfully addressed issues around self-esteem in a group context as indicated from the pre-post measures and participant feedback. However due to the small number of participants and only one group being run this result could not be generalised to a wider population. However as an action research methodology was adopted, one of the primary aims is the pursuit of situation-specific rather than generalisable knowledge.

There have previously been other groups focussing or including elements around self esteem which have highlighted the issues and positive experiences that can be had in group interventions (Kendall, 1994; Quayle & Holsworth, 1997; Burton, 2004; Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010). Exploring issues as a group can allow individuals to share and compare

experiences and perhaps highlight that other people have similar experiences. It can also provide an alternative source of support to young people. However one issue that needs to be considered is the dynamics of the group. In the current group one girl was known to have a reputation in the college of being a 'tough girl' and had been in trouble a lot. Not only did this prove to be a barrier to the other girls worrying what they may say in the group context going further, but also the girl in question appeared not to open up herself, perhaps worried about what the rest of the group would think if she showed an alternative side to her. This issue was also reflected in the student feedback.

Although many areas that were covered during the intervention were suitable in a group setting and applied to all of the group members, there were other areas that would have been useful to cover on a one-to-one basis to ensure that the intervention could also be tailored to the individual group members needs, such as the area of body image. An individual's self-concept can be largely based on satisfaction levels regarding physical appearance (Pope et al, 1988), which is particularly evident during adolescence (Button et al, 1997), and is even more pronounced for females. Therefore additional factors such as adolescence and the emotions associated with this stage of life need to be considered.

The possible outcome of groups focussing on self-esteem can also depend on how professionals conceptualise self-esteem as a stable global or specific trait, as an emotional response or based around views an individual makes about themselves (Emler, 2001). Additionally a consideration needs to be made regarding the stage of development an individual is at and where an individual's sources of value and influence lie, such as their

peers and family. If more time could be spent exploring these areas, support could perhaps be tailored more to the individual. However to what extent such influences could be successfully addressed should be questioned. Upon reflection of the intervention the researcher feels that perhaps the focus of the group could possibly be placed more in the field of resilience rather than self-esteem, which perhaps reflects the ongoing debate regarding the conceptualisation of self-esteem and the development of a shared meaning of this area of emotional well-being.

How can we support young people's development of positive self-esteem?

The field of educational psychology is undergoing change (MacKay, 2007) with which practitioners having to adapt and expand their practice, including their role in therapeutic work (Shami, Monsen & Squires, 2010). Working with small groups of pupils over time to bring about changes in attitude and behaviour has become one of the established practices for EPs (Burton, 2004), as they are so well placed to deliver this work in schools (Greig, 2007). However the opportunity for this type of work may increasingly depend on the Local Authority's model of service delivery, which may be more or less accommodating to the time required in preparing, delivering and following up sessions. However the increase of traded service delivery could increase opportunities for this type of working. Additionally the extent to which this work takes place can also depend on the individual EP's own perceived skills base – their confidence and competence in the therapeutic approach implemented, as well as access to appropriate supervision.

EPs are well placed to run group interventions due to their understanding of group processes and group dynamics, allowing therapeutic relationships to develop and to facilitate the

exploration of young peoples' feelings and experiences in a psychological context. EPs can also appreciate and consider exploring the wider systemic nature of individuals' difficulties by (when appropriate) involving parents or family, as this has been shown to result in better outcomes (Ayling, 2006; Shami, Monsen & Squires, 2010). However in the current intervention the group members' family were not involved.

What impact can self-esteem group work have on young people?

The literature suggests that group work can lead to positive outcomes in supporting the development of positive self-esteem. (Kendall, 1994; Quayle & Holsworth, 1997; Burton, 2004; Dawson & Singh-Dhesi, 2010). In line with this, the current group's pre-post measures from the Harter self-esteem scale indicate a positive development in the young peoples' self-esteem. The previously identified difficulty of identifying why such interventions have been successful (Emler, 2001) was considered for the current group. Taking into account individuals' specific needs and being responsive to what they felt appeared to support the positive results. In terms of the follow-up of this study there is an issue which is common in other interventions in that it has only been recorded in the short term. As the intervention was only over a short period of time, an individual's progress can only be measured from prior to starting the group to a short period of time after the group has ended. Along with many interventions, difficulties arise in discussing the extent to which they have been successful due to a lack of long term follow-up (Fonagy et al, 2002). Perhaps if a longer term evaluation was to take place could the results of the group be explored in terms of the potential benefits had on student learning (Urhahne et al, 2011) and later development of life skills (Pope et al, 1988; Rae, 2000; Coleman, 2001).

<u>Reliability and validity of measures</u>

The pre/post measures used to explore the impact of the intervention were appropriate. Many measures tend to tap into one dimension of an individual's functioning (Fonagy et al, 2002), which is why the Harter scale was chosen as it allowed an exploration of different areas of one's self esteem. Additionally the reliability of the Harter scale has found to be good (Granlesse & Joseph, 1994), with good internal consistency and test–retest reliability (Muris, Meesters & Fijen, 2003).

The CGAS was used prior to the beginning of the intervention to explore the needs of the individuals. The inter-rater reliability of the C-GAS is known to be poor (Fonagy et al, 2002), however in the current research the C-GAS was used between two professionals and was used more as a tool to aid discussion and exploration of the individual students' needs.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to explore and provide insight into the area of self-esteem group interventions. It can be concluded that the current study has allowed the author to explore how the concept of self-esteem can be addressed in a group context. Initially it has highlighted that the concept of self-esteem is not a simple area to address and depending on the conceptualisation of self-esteem the outline of such an intervention will vary. This perhaps indicates that a 'one-size fits all' approach to self-esteem is not advisable and a thorough formulation of individual and group needs is required before an intervention commences. This will be particularly pertinent in the context of the college in which the group ran, as the college intends to run further groups in the future for other populations including a boys only group. However in the context of the identified group members needs the group intervention has shown to be successful in the short-term.

EPs play a valuable role in supporting young people's development of a positive self-esteem, both in group and one-to-one settings. The unique contribution an EP is able to provide is immensely valuable, allowing the support of the young people themselves as well as being aware of possibly more subtle processes that take place during such interventions. The implications the findings of this paper have on EP professional practice include a consideration of how EPs can deliver therapeutic work both on a one-to-one and a group work basis, particularly as the role of psychology services and EPs is undergoing rapid change.

References

Ajzen, I. (2002) Perceived Behavioural Control, Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. **Journal of Applied Social Psychology**, 32 (4): 665-683.

Alexander, T. (2001) What is self-esteem and why does it matter? Self-esteem as an aid to recovery and understanding. **Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Care**, 41(10): 332.

Alpay, E. (2006) **Self-concept and self-esteem** [Online]. www.imperial.ac.uk/chemicalengineering/common_room/files/PsychEd_6.pdf [Accessed 27 January 2011]

Anderson, H. (2001) Postmodern collaborative and person-centred therapies: what would Carl Rogers say? **Journal of Family Therapy**, 23 (4): 339-360.

Andrews, B. (1998) State of the art: self-esteem. **The Psychologist**, 11 (7): 339-342.

Ayling, R. (2006) Young people's independent access to child and adolescent mental health services. **Clinical Psychology Forum** 157, 8-11.

Banks, J. (1995) Integrating children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: the effect on self-esteem. In Farrell, P. (Ed). **Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: strategies for assessment and intervention**. Pp.63-76.

Barrett, P., Lowry-Webster, H. & Turner, C. (2000). **FRIENDS program for youth: Group leaders manual**. Brisbane: Australian Academic Press.

Bastani, F., Hidarnia, A., Kazemnejad, A., Vafaei, M. & Kashanian, M. (2005) A randomised controlled trial of the effects of applied relaxation training on reducing anxiety and perceived stress in pregnant women. **Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health**, 50(4): 36-40.

Baumeister, R., Tice, D. & Hutton, D. (1989). Self-presentational motivations and personality differences in self-esteem. **Journal of Personality**, 57(3): 547-579.

Billington, T. (2006) Psychodynamic theories and the 'science of relationships' (Bion): A rich resource for professional practice in children's services. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 23 (4): 72-79.

Borba, M. (1989). **Esteem builders' complete program**. Torrance, Jalmar Press.

British Psychological Society (2009) **Code of Ethics and Conduct**. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Burton, S. (2004) Self-esteem groups for secondary pupils with dyslexia, **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 20 (1): 55-73.

Button, E., Loan, P., Davies, P., Sonuga-Barke, E. (1997) Self-esteem, eating problems, and psychological well-being in a cohort of schoolgirls aged 15-16: A questionnaire and interview study. **International Journal of Eating Disorders**, 21 (1): 39-47.

Children Act 2004: Elizabeth II. Chapter 31. London: HMSO.

Clarke, D., Layard, R., Smithies, R., Richards, D., Sucking, R. & Wright, B. (2009) Improving access to psychological therapy: Initial evaluation of two UK demonstration sites. **Behaviour Research and Therapy**, 47 (11): 910-920.

Clay, D., Vignoles, V. & Dittmar, H. (2005). Body Image and Self-Esteem Among Adolescent Girls: Testing the Influence of Sociocultural Factors. **Journal of Research on Adolescence**, 15 (4): 451–477.

Cohen, L, Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). **Research methods in education (5th edition).** London: Routledge Falmer. Ch. 13, pp. 226 – 241.

Coleman, J. (2001). Self-esteem: towards a better understanding. **Young Minds Magazine**, 51: 18–19.

Colwell, J. & O'Connor, T. (2003) Understanding nurturing practices - a comparison of the use of strategies likely to enhance self-esteem in nurture groups and normal classrooms. *British Journal of Special Education,* 30 (3): 119-124.

Cosden, M. Brown, C. & Elliot, C. (2002) **The development of self-esteem and self-understanding in children and adults with learning disabilities**. Elbaum: London.

Cosgrave, E. & Keating, V. (2006) After the assessment: introducing adolescents to cognitive-behavioural therapy. **Australian Journal of Guidance & Counselling,** 16 (2): 149–157.

Coulter, D. (2002) What counts as action in educational action research? **Educational Action Research**, 10 (2): 189-206.

Craig, C. (2009) **Well-being in schools: the curious case of the tail wagging the dog?** London: Centre for confidence and well-being.

Daniel, B. & Wassall, S. (2002) **Adolescence: Assessing and Promoting Resilience in Vulnerable Children. London:** Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Daniels, D. & Jenkins, P. (2000) **Therapy with children: children's rights, confidentiality and the law**. London: Sage Publications.

Dawson, J. & Singh-Dhesi, D. (2010) **Educational psychology working to improve psychological well-being: an example**. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 15 (4): 295-310.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) **The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures**. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) **Targeted Mental Health in School project: Using the evidence**. London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Employment (2001) **Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings.** Nottingham: DfEE Publications.

Department for Education and Skills (2005) **Excellence and Enjoyment: Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning**. Norwich: HMSO.

Department for Education and Skills (2004) **Every Child Matters**. Norwich: HMSO.

Department of Health (2004) **National Services Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services**. London: DH Publications.

Durlak, J.A., & Wells, A.M. (1997). Primary prevention mental health programmes for children and adolescents: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 25, 115–152.

Dweck, C. (2000) **Self theories: Their role in motivation, personality and development**. Hove: Taylor & Francis.

Ecclestone, K. (2004) Learning or therapy? The demoralisation of education. **British Journal of Educational Studies**, 52(2): 112-137.

Elliott, J. (1991) **Action Research for Educational Change**. Buckingham, Open University Press.

Emler, N. (2001) **The costs and causes of low self-esteem**. York: York Publishing Services.

Fogg, F., Foot, M., Gregor, A., Legg, V., Sullivan, C. & Williamson, N. (1998) **Developing targets for emotional and behavioural difficulties**. Buckinghamshire: Buckinghamshire Educational Psychology Service.

Fonagy, P., Target, M., Cottrell, D., Phillips, J. & Kurtz, Z. (2002) **What works for whom? A critical view of treatments for children and adolescents**. New York: The Guildford Press.

Friedberg, R. & McClure, J. (2002) **Clinical practice of cognitive therapy with children and adolescents**. London: The Guildford Press.

Gillick v. West Norfold and Wisbech Area Health Authority (1986) AC, 112 [Online]. http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKHL/1985/7.html [Accessed 17 February 2011]

Granlesse, J. & Joseph, S. (1994). Reliability of the Harter self-perception profile for children and predictors of global self-worth. **The Journal of Genetic Psychology: Research and Theory on Human Development**, 155 (4): 487-492.

Greig, A. (2007) A framework for the delivery of cognitive behaviour therapy in the educational psychology context. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 24 (1): 7-18.

Hall, P. & Tarrier, N. (2003) The cognitive-behavioural treatment of low self-esteem in psychotic patients: a pilot study. **Behaviour Research and Therapy**, 41 (3): 317-332.

Harter, S. (1985). **Self-perception profile for children**. Denver: University of Denver.

Harter, S. (1999). **The construction of the self**. London: The Guilford Press.

Hoare, P., Elton, R., Greer, A. & Kerley, S. (1993) The modification and standardisation of the Harter self-esteem questionnaire with Scottish school children. **European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**, 2 (1): 19-33.

Hopkins, D. (2002) **A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research**, Maidenhood, Open University Press

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (2005) New developments in social interdependence theory. **Psychology Monographs**, 131,: 285–358.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (2009) An educational psychology success story: social interdependence theory and cooperative learning. **Educational Researcher**, 38 (5): **365-379.**

Josephs, R., Markus, H. and Tafarodi, R. (1992) Gender and self-esteem. **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, 3, 391-401.

Kavussanu, M. & Harnisch, D, L. (2000). Self-esteem in children: Do goal orientations matter? **British Journal of Educational Psychology**, 70: 229-242.

Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (1992) **The Action Research Planner (3rd edition)**. Geelong, Deakin University Press.

Kendall, P. (1994) Treating anxiety disorders in children: Results of a randomised clinical trial. **Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology**, 62: 100–110.

Kendall, P. & Hedtke, K (2006) **Coping Cat Workbook (2nd edition)**. Pennsylvania: Workbook Publishing.

Kusché, C. & Greenberg, M. (1994). *The PATHS curriculum*. Seattle: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc.

Lane, J., Lane, A. & Kyprianou, A. (2004) Self-efficacy, self-esteem and their impact on academic performance. **Social Behaviour and Personality**, 32(3), 247-256.

Lawrence, D. (2006). **Enhancing self-esteem in the classroom (3rd edition)**. London: Sage Publications.

Lecomte, T., Cyr, M., Lesage, A., Wilde, J., Leclerc, C. and Richard, N (1999) Efficacy of a self-esteem module in the empowerment of individuals with Schizophrenia. **Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease**, **187** (7): 406–413.

Long, R. & Fogell, J. (1999) **Supporting pupils with emotional difficulties: creating a caring environment for all**. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Lundberg, U., Dohns, I., Melin, B., Sandsjö, L., Palmerud, G., Kadefors, R., Ekström, M. & Parr, D. (1999) Psychophysiological stress responses, muscle tension, and neck and shoulder pain among supermarket cashiers. **Journal of Occupational Health Psychology**, 4(3): 245-255.

MacKay, T. (2007) Educational Psychology: the fall and rise of therapy. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 24 (1): 7-18.

Maslow, A. (1970) **Motivation and Personality (2nd edition)**. London: Harper and Row.

Miller, J., Fletcher, K. & Kabat-Zinn, J. (1995) Three-year follow-up and clinical implications of a mindfulness meditation-based stress reduction intervention in the treatment of anxiety disorders. **General Hospital Psychiatry**, 17 (3): 192-200

Miller, W. & Rollnick, S. (2002) **Motivational interviewing: preparing people for change (2nd edition)**. New York: Guilford Press.

Mosley, J (1998) **Turn your school round: Circle-time Approach to the Development of Self-esteem and Positive Behaviour in the Primary Staffroom, Classroom and Playground**. Cheshire: LDA Learning.

Muris, P., Meesters, C. & Fijen, P. (2003) The Self-Perception Profile for Children: further evidence for its factor structure, reliability, and validity. **Personality and Individual Differences**, 35 (8): 1791-1802.

Noffke, S. (1994) Action Research: Towards the next generation. **Educational Action Research**, 2:1, pp.9-21.

Payne, B. & Manning, B. (1990) The effect of cognitive self-instructions on pre-service teacher's anxiety about teaching. <u>**Contemporary Educational Psychology**</u>, <u>15 (3)</u>: 261-267

Pope, A., McHale, S. & Craighead, W. (1988) **Self-esteem enhancement with children and adolescents**. New York: Pergamon Press.

Pugh, J. (2010) Cognitive behaviour therapy in schools: the role of educational psychology in the dissemination of empirically supported interventions. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 26 (4): 391-399.

Punch, K. (2003) **Survey research: The basics**. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Quayle, W. & Holsworth, J. (1997) Self-esteem groups at the Eleanor Smith School and Primary Support Service. **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**, 2 (2), 21-24.

Rae, T. (2000) **Confidence, Assertiveness, Self-Esteem: A series of 12 sessions for secondary school students**. Bristol: Lucky Duck Publishing.

Rapoport, R. (1970) Three Dilemmas in Action Research. **Human Relations**, 23 (6): 499-513.

 Raskin, J. (2002) Constructivism in Psychology: Personal Construct Psychology, Radical Constructivism, and Social Constructionism. **American Communication Journal**, 5 (3).

Regan, D. (2009) **The fiction of facts. Raising achievement update**. 53. January.

Rhodes, H. (2009) **Knowing what you do works: measuring your own effectiveness with family, parents and children**. London: Family and Parenting Institute.

Rosenberg, M. (1989) **Society and the adolescent self-image (revised edition)**. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Rosenberg, M., Schooler, C., Schoenbach, C. & Rosenberg, F. (1995) Global Self-Esteem and Specific Self-Esteem: Different Concepts, Different Outcomes. **American Sociological Review**, 60 (1): 141-156.

Salmon, G., James, A. & Smith, D. (1998) Bullying in schools: self reported anxiety, depression, and self esteem in secondary school children. **British Medical Journal**, 317 (7163): 924-925.

Sang-Dol, K. & Hee-Seung, K. (2005) Effects of a Relaxation Breathing Exercise on Anxiety, Depression, and Leukocyte in Hemopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation Patients. **Cancer Nursing**, 28 (1): 79-83.

Seligman, M. (1996) **The optimistic child: How learned optimism protects children from depression**. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Shaffer, D., Gould, M., Brasic, J., Ambrosini, P., Fisher, P., Bird, H. & Aluwahlia, S. (1983) A children's global assessment scale (CGAS). **Archives of General Psychiatry**, 40, 1228-1231.

Shami, R., Monsen, J. & Squires, G. (2010) Cognitive Behaviour Therapies and their implications for applied educational psychology practice. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 26 (2): 105-122.

Sharp, P. (2001) **Nurturing emotional literacy**. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Shortt, A., Barrett, P., & Fox, T. (2001) Evaluating the FRIENDS Program: A Cognitive–Behavioural Group Treatment for Anxious Children and Their Parents. **Journal of Clinical Child Psychology**, 30 (4): 525-535.

Stallard, P. (2005). **A clinician's guide to think good-feel good: using CBT with children and young people**. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Steiner, C. (2002) **Emotional literacy: Intelligence with a heart**. California: Personhood Press.

Trautwein, U., Lüdtke, O., Köller, O. & Baumert, J. (2006) Self-esteem, academic self-concept and achievement: How the learning environment moderates the dynamics of self concept. **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology**, 90 (2): 334-349.

UNICEF (2007) **Innocenti Report Card 7: Child poverty in perspective - an overview of child well-being in rich countries**. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Urhahne, D., Sheng-Han, C., Luise Florineth, M., Luttenberger, S. & Paechter, M. (2011) Academic self-concept, learning motivation, and test anxiety of the underestimated student. **British Journal of Educational Psychology**, 81: 161–177.

Weare, K. & Gray, G. (2003). **What works in developing children's emotional and social competence and well-being?** RR456. London: DfES.

Westbrook, D., Kennerley, H. & Kirk, J. (2007) **An introduction to cognitive behaviour therapy – skills and applications**. London: Sage Publications.

Wigelsworth, M., Humphrey, N., Kalambouka, A. & Lendrum, A. (2010) A review of key issues in the measurement of children's social and emotional skills. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 26 (2): 173-186.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Copy of the C-GAS (Shaffer et al, 1983)

Child's Name: Date of Birth:

Use intermediary levels (e.g., 35, 58, 62). Rate actual functioning regardless of treatment or prognosis. The examples of behaviour provided are only illustrative and are not required for a particular rating.
Please indicate by circling appropriate level.

100 – 91   **Superior functioning in all areas** (at home, at school, and with peers); involved in a wide range of activities and has many interests (e.g., hobbies or participates in extra-curricular activities or belongs to an organised group, such as scouts, etc.); likeable, confident; 'everyday' worries never get out of hand; doing well in school; no symptoms.

90 – 81   **Good functioning** in all areas, secure in family, school and with peers; there may be transient difficulties and 'everyday' worries that occasionally get out of hand (e.g. mild anxiety associated with an important exam, occasional 'blow-ups' with siblings, parents or peers).

80 - 71   **No more than slight impairment in functioning** at home, at school, or with peers; some disturbance of behaviour or emotional distress may be present in response to life stresses (e.g. parental separations, deaths, birth of a sibling) but these are brief and interference with functioning is transient; such children are only minimally disturbing to others and are not considered deviant by those who know them.

70 - 61   **Some difficulty in single area** but generally functioning pretty well (e.g. sporadic or isolated antisocial acts, such as occasionally playing hooky or petty theft: consistent minor difficulties with school work; mood changes of brief duration; fears and anxieties which do not lead to gross avoidance behaviour, self-doubts); has some meaningful interpersonal relationships; most people who do not know the child well would not consider him/her deviant but those who do not him/her well might express concern.

60 - 51   **Variable functioning with sporadic difficulties** or symptoms in several but not all social areas; disturbance would be apparent to those who encounter the child in a dysfunctional setting or time but not to those who see the child in other settings.

50 - 41   **Moderate degree of interference in functioning** in most social areas or severe impairment or functioning in one area, such as might result from, for example, suicidal preoccupations and ruminations, school refusal and other forms of anxiety, obsessive rituals, major conversion symptoms, frequent anxiety attacks, poor or inappropriate social skills, frequent episodes of aggressive or other anti-social behaviour with some preservation of meaningful social relations.

40 – 31   **Major impairment in functioning in several areas** and unable to function in one of these areas, is. disturbed at home, at school, with peers, or in society at large, e.g. persistent aggression without clear instigation; markedly withdrawn and isolated behaviour due to either mood or thought disturbance, suicidal attempts with clear lethal intent; such children are likely to require special schooling and/or hospitalisation or withdrawal from school (but this is not a sufficient criterion for inclusion in this category).

30 – 21   **Unable to function in almost all areas** e.g. stays at home, in ward, or in bed all day without taking part in social activities or severe impairment in reality testing or serious impairment in communication (e.g. sometimes incoherent or inappropriate).

20 - 11   **Needs considerable supervision** to prevent hurting others and self (e.g. frequently violent, repeated suicide attempts) or to maintain personal hygiene or gross impairment in all forms of communication, e.g. severe abnormalities in verbal and gestural communication, marked social aloofness, stupor, etc.

10 - 1   **Needs constant supervision** (24 hour care) due to severely aggressive or self-destructive behaviour or gross impairment in reality testing, communication, cognition, affect or personal hygiene.

Appendix 2: Harter's self-esteem scale 'What I am like' (1985)

What I Am Like

Name _____ Age _____ Birthday _____ Group _____
Boy or Girl (circle which)   Month   Day

SAMPLE SENTENCE

Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
(a) ☐	☐	Some kids would rather play outdoors in their spare time	BUT	Other kids would rather watch T.V.	☐	☐
1. ☐	☐	Some kids feel that they are very *good* at their school work	BUT	Other kids *worry* about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.	☐	☐
2. ☐	☐	Some kids find it *hard* to make friends	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty *easy* to make friends.	☐	☐
3. ☐	☐	Some kids do very *well* at all kinds of sports	BUT	Other kids *don't* feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.	☐	☐
4. ☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with the way they look	BUT	Other kids are *not* happy with the way they look.	☐	☐
5. ☐	☐	Some kids often do *not* like the way they *behave*	BUT	Other kids usually *like* the way they behave.	☐	☐
6. ☐	☐	Some kids are often *unhappy* with themselves	BUT	Other kids are pretty *pleased* with themselves.	☐	☐
7. ☐	☐	Some kids feel like they are *just as smart* as as other kids their age	BUT	Other kids aren't so sure and *wonder* if they are as smart.	☐	☐
8. ☐	☐	Some kids have *a lot* of friends	BUT	Other kids *don't* have very many friends.	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Real True for m
9.	☐	☐	Some kids wish they could be alot better at sports	BUT	Other kids feel they are good enough at sports.	☐	☐
10.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with their height and weight	BUT	Other kids wish their height or weight were *different*.	☐	☐
11.	☐	☐	Some kids usually do the *right* thing	BUT	Other kids often *don't* do the right thing.	☐	☐
12.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* like the way they are leading their life	BUT	Other kids *do* like the way they are leading their life.	☐	☐
13.	☐	☐	Some kids are pretty *slow* in finishing their school work	BUT	Other kids can do their school work *quickly*.	☐	☐
14.	☐	☐	Some kids would like to have alot more friends	BUT	Other kids have as many friends as they want.	☐	☐
15.	☐	☐	Some kids think they could do well at just about any new sports activity they haven't tried before	BUT	Other kids are afraid they might *not* do well at sports they haven't ever tried.	☐	☐
16.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their body was *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their body the way it is.	☐	☐
17.	☐	☐	Some kids usually *act* the way they know they are *supposed* to	BUT	Other kids often *don't* act the way they are supposed to.	☐	☐
18.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with themselves as a person	BUT	Other kids are often *not* happy with themselves.	☐	☐
19.	☐	☐	Some kids often *forget* what they learn	BUT	Other kids can remember things *easily*.	☐	☐
20.	☐	☐	Some kids are always doing things with *alot* of kids	BUT	Other kids usually do things *by themselves*.	☐	☐

2

131

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
21.	☐	☐	Some kids feel that they are *better* than others their age at sports	BUT	Other kids *don't* feel they can play as well.	☐	☐
22.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their physical appearance (how they look) was *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their physical appearance the way it is.	☐	☐
23.	☐	☐	Some kids usually get in *trouble* because of things they do	BUT	Other kids usually *don't* do things that get them in trouble.	☐	☐
24.	☐	☐	Some kids *like* the kind of *person* they are	BUT	Other kids often wish they were someone else.	☐	☐
25.	☐	☐	Some kids do *very well* at their classwork	BUT	Other kids *don't* do very well at their classwork.	☐	☐
26.	☐	☐	Some kids wish that more people their age liked them	BUT	Other kids feel that most people their age do like them.	☐	☐
27.	☐	☐	In games and sports some kids usually *watch* instead of play	BUT	Other kids usually *play* rather than just watch.	☐	☐
28.	☐	☐	Some kids wish something about their face or hair looked *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their face and hair the way they are.	☐	☐
29.	☐	☐	Some kids do things they know they *shouldn't* do	BUT	Other kids *hardly ever* do things they know they shouldn't do.	☐	☐
30.	☐	☐	Some kids are very *happy* being the way they are	BUT	Other kids wish they were *different*.	☐	☐
31.	☐	☐	Some kids have *trouble* figuring out the answers in school	BUT	Other kids almost *always* can figure out the answers.	☐	☐
32.	☐	☐	Some kids are *popular* with others their age	BUT	Other kids are *not* very popular.	☐	☐

3

132

Session 1 reflections

Following the first session the researcher had noted that the group members were very quiet and extremely reluctant to participate in any of the activities, with one word answers being the main contribution. Westbrook et al (2007) highlight this as one potential issue in the early stages of cognitive behavioural approaches as individuals may experience difficulties in being aware of their cognitions. However there could also be other explanations for this experience including possible anxiety about being in a group setting, potential group dynamics issues, feelings of being worried about giving the 'wrong' answer or that others with laugh at answer, group members not used to being asked about their feelings in a school environment, or group members do not want to talk to unfamiliar facilitators about their feelings.

Having two facilitators enabled the adults to work with the more difficult silences and to help expand group members' answers. An adjustment that will be made is to use more activities rather than discussion points, to take the focus away from the students. Additionally, facilitators sharing their own experiences and giving examples will help.

An issue arising from group discussions and the 'contract to change' activity was that the girls were experiencing great amounts of stress and anxiety around exams. This was despite the Harter self-esteem profile results suggesting that scholastic competence was average. On a scaling question 'how do you feel about life in general?' on a scale between 1 and 10 (1 = not happy at all, 10 = really happy), two of the girls rated themselves as a four, and two rated

themselves as a five. Written comments about 'why I am where I am on the scale' included "because I do not get anything out of my life" and "exams, family, feeling sick and tired of stress". Comments to the question 'three areas I'd like to change' included "to have more confidence and open up to others", "have a higher self esteem" and " my academic skills (revise more)".

It was clear that there were lots of anxiety and stress around exams and low self-efficacy. Therefore it was decided that this would be the focus of the next session.

Session 2 reflections

Following session two, the group are opening up more and sharing experiences about stress and exams. This suggests that the group dynamics are developing positively and the individuals are responding well to each other and the facilitators. In the session the group described what others see in them when they are feeling stressed (see appendix nine for example of this exercise). This was a particularly useful exercise as it allowed the group to see how feelings can link to thoughts and behaviour. This can often be a difficult area of cognitive-behavioural approaches, so as Westbrook et al (2007) suggest focussing first on the physical sensations can help verbalise cognitions. During the relaxation part of the session it was clear that the girls did not regularly take opportunities to relax or how to employ relaxation strategies that worked for them. The group responded well to the guided imagery task "my special place" (Rae, 2000) and were going to try out the breathing exercises in between the sessions.

Session 3 reflections

Exploring and testing the group's self-theories the individual students were supported in challenging their negative and distorted beliefs. This was primarily done through an ABC functional analysis (see appendix ten). During this task the group found it hard to distinguish between thoughts and feelings and frequently got these confused. This highlighted to the author the vital role that facilitators provide in group work in supporting the development of understanding through the probing of ideas and the scaffolding of contributions.

Session 4 reflections

Since session three one of the group members decided to leave the group as she felt it was not helping her. Therefore some of the session was spent answering the groups questions about why she left. Following this, the content of the session was received well by the group.

Session 5 reflections

This session proved very enlightening in terms of revealing the feelings of the students. Although initially they appeared unsettled by the different set up of the session (which included sitting in a circle as well as having an empty chair for the group member who had left) gradually the girls opened up. One student stated she felt some feelings of anger about the sessions ending and felt a little abandoned by the facilitators. This highlighted the impact an alternative support network has had for the girls, as well as the importance of ending group work and providing further support, if necessary.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how well have you felt since the last session? (1 = really bad, I've had such a tough week to 5 = excellent, I've had a great week)

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |

Has anything covered in the last session helped you outside of the group?

Yes   **No**

If yes, what?

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much did today's session make sense? (1 = it didn't make sense at all, 5 = I understood all of it)

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |

On a scale of 1 to 5 how useful do you think today's session will be for you? (1 = not useful at all, 5 = all of it will be really useful)

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |

Dear   ,

The reason for contacting you is because XXX Psychology Service will be running a self esteem group in the school. This group work will explore different areas around self esteem. In the group you will be with approximately four other students. The sessions will involve exploring individual and group experiences and feelings as well as possibly try out some tasks in between sessions.

Please read the attached leaflet which explains more about the group. But we will talk more about what the sessions involve when we first meet up.

The sessions will be run by myself and Mrs XXX (who is based in the college). Mrs XXX will be available if you need to speak to someone in between sessions if you feel you need further support.

It is important to emphasise that you can withdraw from the group sessions at any time.

There will be an opportunity soon to answer any of your questions, but if you have any questions that you would like to ask before signing the letter you can speak to Mrs XXX.

I look forward to meeting you soon!

Rebecca Kirkbride

GROUP WORK INFORMED CONSENT

If you are happy to be involved in this group work please can you sign below.

Signature ………………………………………………… Date ………………………….

I would also like to write about the group for a piece of work I have to do for a university course. I will not put the name of the college or any of your names in this, so that you will remain anonymous.

If you are happy for the group work to be reported (anonymously) for my research please can you sign below.

Signature ………………………………………………… Date ………………………….

What does group work involve?

Getting a picture of your problems

In order to make sure we can help you as best as possible it would be great to see you before the group starts to talk about areas you think you need support in, as well as to answer any questions you may have. We will also complete a questionnaire together.

What we will do

Mrs XXX will come and see you before the start of session one to give you a permission slip to use to get out of your lesson. We will give you permission slips for later sessions at the end of each session.

In the sessions we will meet and talk about different topics. You might want to share some experiences of your own but if you don't want to that is totally fine. We will do some tasks which involve a little writing but also some drawing too! Sometimes you will work on your own, sometimes you will work in a pair.

Length of group

There will be five group sessions, which will be 50 minutes long (the length of one of your lessons). They will be held in a room in the Pupil Support Department.

The dates and times are:

- Session 1: 2nd Feb @ 2:00pm
- Session 2: 9th Feb @ 1:35 pm
- Session 3: 15th Feb @ 9:00am
- Session 4: 1st March @ 9:00am
- Session 5: 8th March @ 9:50am

<u>Confidentiality</u>

After the sessions Mrs XXX and Mrs XXX will look at the work you completed in the session and will talk to each other about the session and what might be useful to cover in the following sessions.

Mrs XXX and Mrs XXX are not going to talk to others about what was said in sessions unless they think that you or someone else is at risk of harm.

<u>In between sessions</u>

If there is anything you wish to say that you haven't said in our sessions you can go and speak to Mrs XXX who is based in school all week.

Appendix 6: Group rules

No pressure to answer

Confidentiality

Working together

No mean comments
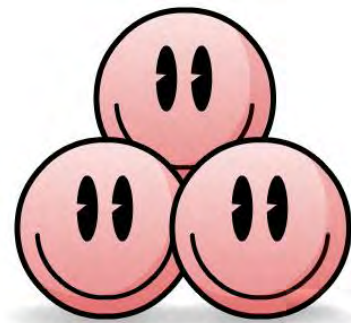
To be as honest as possible

Appendix 7: Structure and content of group sessions

	Session aims	Content
1: Introductions	- To find out more about the group and what we will do. - To meet each other and to ask questions - To set some group rules - To explore what self-esteem is	1. Welcome and introductions. Why are we all here today? 2. Aims of the sessions 3. Group rules: Listen when others talk, take turns to speak, be kind to each other 4. **Activity:** What is self esteem? Brainstorm –in pairs then share 5. Contract to change and scaling activity. 6. End of session. Review aims of the session.

| 2: Emotions and stress management | - To explore the difference between thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

- To explore how thoughts, feelings and behaviour can affect each other.

- To explore how stress makes us feel, think and behave.

- To think about how we manage stress.

- To explore some new ways of managing stress. | 1. Recap from last week

2. Icebreaker: complete the sentence (done verbally)

3. Introduce focus and aims of session

4. Recognising emotions in yourself and others: names of emotions (sort into positive or negative)

5. Stress in the body – colour in areas and write around the body the kinds of feelings, thoughts and behaviour you have when you're stressed

6. How do you react when you're stress? There are quiet and loud ways to react.

7. The good ways I respond to stress. The bad ways I respond to stress

8. How can we relax? Examples: 'my peaceful place' and '7-11' breathing. How did these feel? What do you think about these strategies?

9. Give out info sheet of relaxation / distraction techniques when stressed or experiencing other strong emotions.

10. End of session. Review aims of the session. |

3: Positive and negative thoughts	- To explore the idea of self-statements and think about the types of self-statements we make. - To think about the difference between positive and negative thoughts. - To explore how we can challenge negative thoughts	1. Recap from last week 2. Icebreaker 3. Introduce focus and aims of session 4. Self statements – "we all talk inside our heads every day, these messages are very importance because they can affect the way we feel about ourselves. These can be positive or negative." 5. Positive thoughts – using worksheet come up with some examples. How do these make us feel? 6. Negative thoughts – using worksheet come up with some examples. How do these make us feel? 7. Challenging negative thoughts 8. End of session. review aims of the session
4. Positive relationships – me and others	- To explore what a good friend looks like. - To explore how friends can support us in difficult times. - To learn about social problem solving - To examine communication skills	1. Recap from last week 2. Icebreaker 3. Introduce focus and aims of session 4. 'My life' grid exercise – outlining the challenges and positive elements of the individual's own situation. Naming of someone for each area who they could talk to or be a source of support. 5. Card sort exploring different ways of asking for help – good and bad ways of communicating. "if....then...." situations. 6. What makes a good friend? List attributes. Encourage reflection re: current and past friends: are they like this, are you? Consider choosing friends who make you feel good about yourself. 7. 'A good friend should.........' sorting game 8. End of session: review aims of the session

5: Endings and new beginning	To recap on the previous sessions.	1. Recap from last week
		2. Introduce focus and aims of session
		3. Taking a psychodynamic focus, the main part of this session was led by Siobhain.
	To think about how the sessions might be applied to our own situations.	4. End of session – thank all and wish good luck
	To think about the future and what we are looking forward to.	
	To think about the ending of the group.	

Name: ......

How do I feel about life in general?

1   2   3   ④   5   6   7   8   9   10

Not
happy
at all

Really happy

Why I am where I am on the scale?
Exams, family, feeling sick and tired
stress.

Where would I like to be on this scale?
9, not too happy, because
it can go wrong anytime.

3 areas I'd like to change:

• my confidence, and opening up
to others.

• Academic skills (revise more)

• ....

I will try and work at these areas as best as I can, and will try out
the skills and ideas where I can.

Signed: ....Date: ....

"What I would like to get out of the group"

146
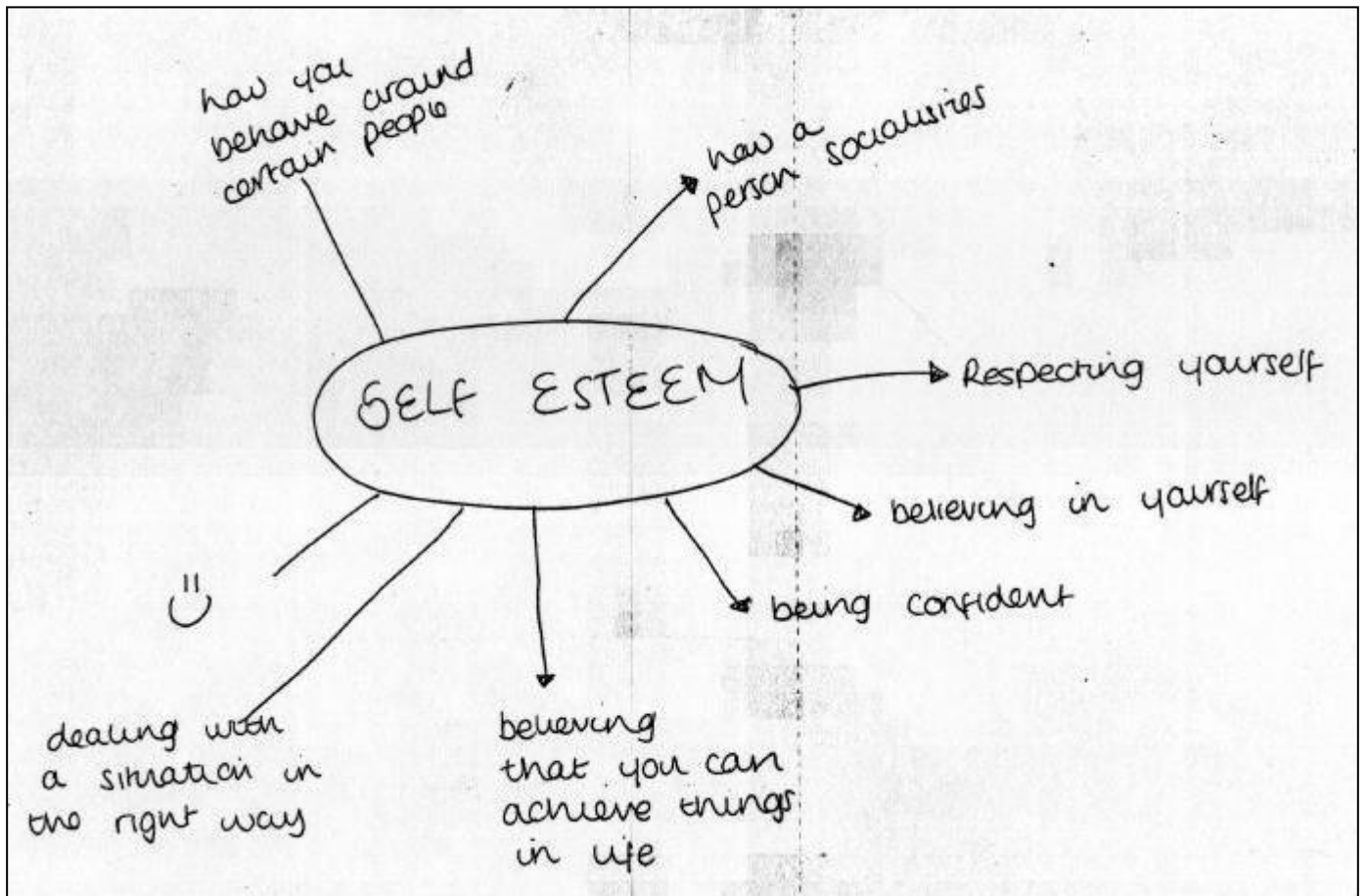
"My definition of self esteem"

Appendix 9: Example of work from session two

Hot headed

Crying a lot

Butterflies
Scared
Worry

Slam doors

Back problems

Knee pain
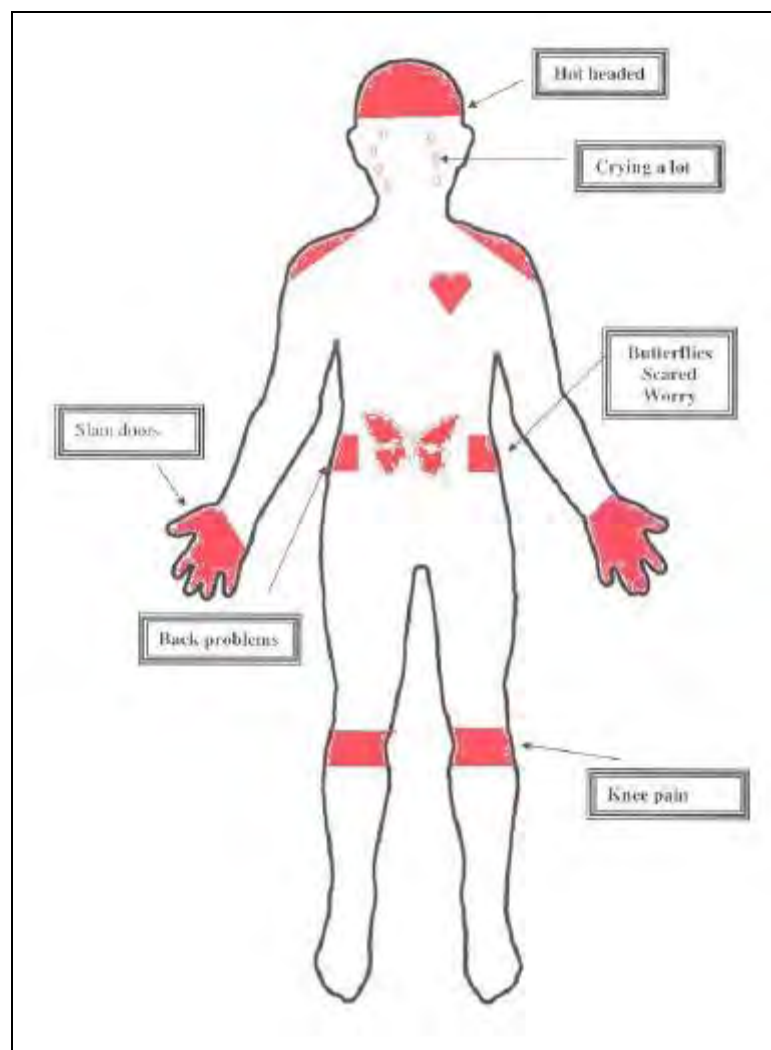
"What my body feels like when I am stressed"

Appendix 10: Example of work from session three
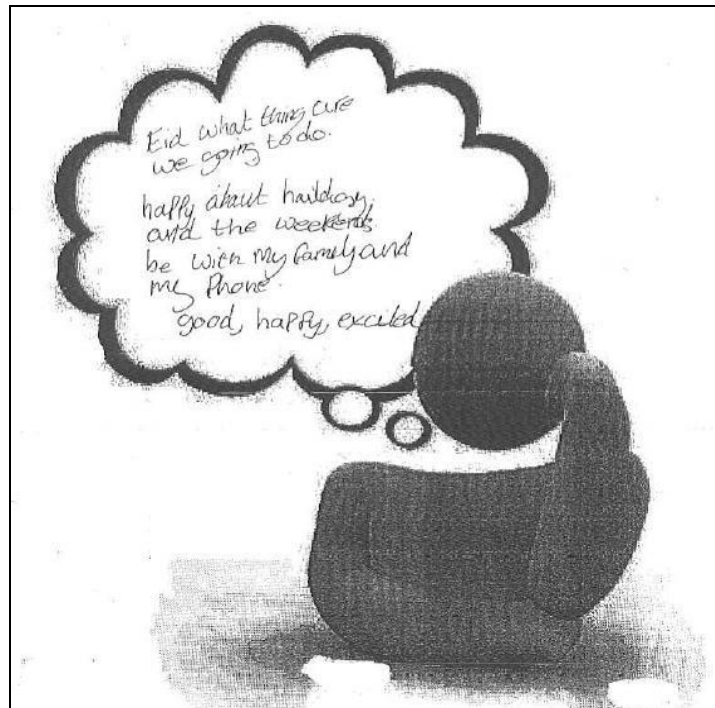
"Positive thoughts I have had"

"Negative thoughts I have had"

Event
GEOGRAPHY
2 hour
exam

Thought
not going to
finish it;

Feeling
stressed
& anxious

Behaviour
given/fed
up might
not do the
exam properly.
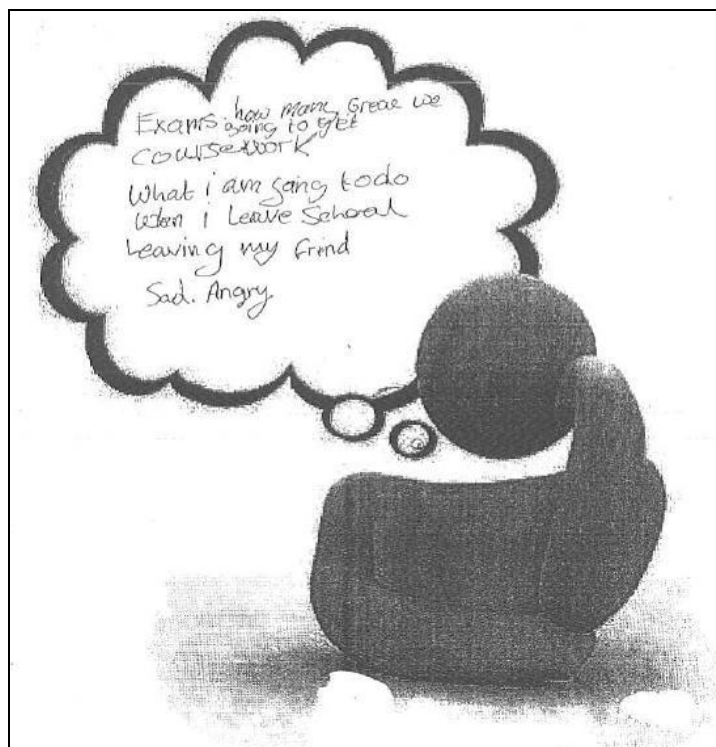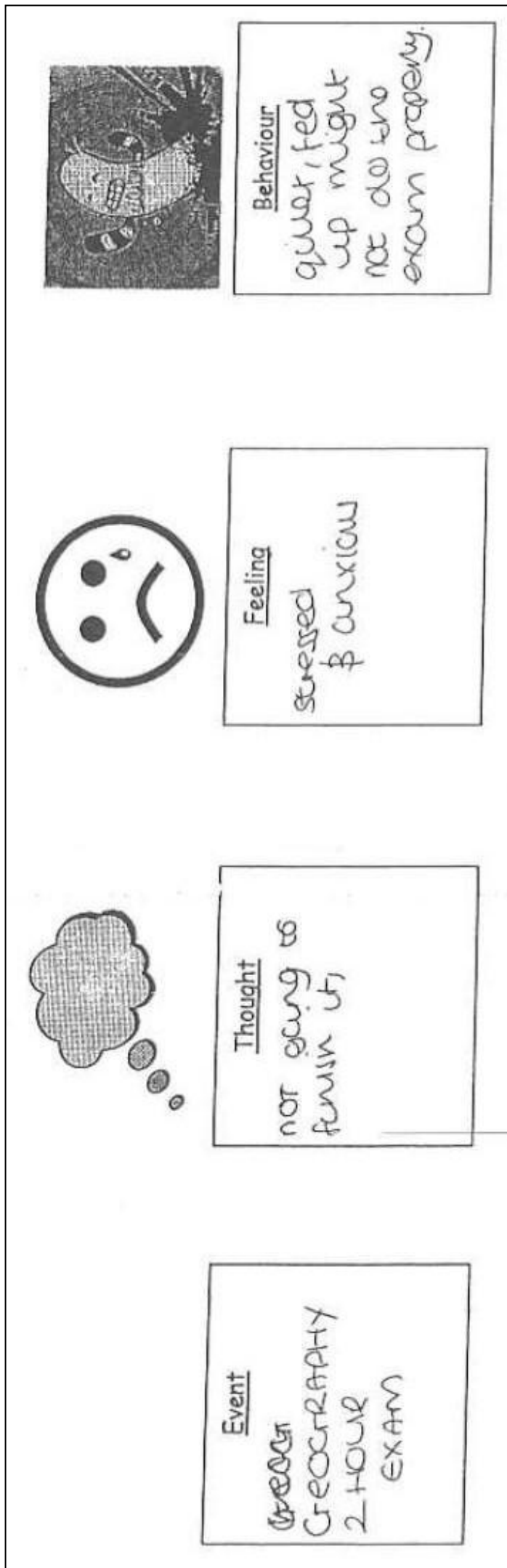
"What triggers my negative thinking"

CHAPTER FOUR

PPR3: DEVELOPING TEACHING ASSISTANTS SKILLS IN WAVE THREE READING INTERVENTIONS: AN APPLICATION OF VIDEO INTERACTION GUIDANCE

Abstract

Professional Practice Report Three examines the role of communication and interactions between teaching assistants and children. Specifically staff training that aims to improve the efficacy of small group work (in the context of wave three literacy support) is examined. Video Interaction Guidance is applied to professional development support provided to two TAs. VIG is a framework for analysing interactions, and aims to improve communication and attunement within relationships. Results indicate that VIG increases teaching assistant confidence and level of attunment when working with small groups of students. Key findings are discussed in terms of existing research literature. Conclusions are made regarding the use of video feedback in professional development and the role educational psychologists can play in training.

Table of contents

List of illustrations

List of tables

List of abbreviations used

EP	Educational Psychologist
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TA	Teaching Assistant
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
TME	Target Monitoring and Evaluation
VIG	Video Interactive Guidance
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Introduction

Professional Practice Report (PPR) three arose from the researcher's involvement in supporting a school with the implementation of wave 3 literacy interventions, where there can be a tendency to focus attention on within-child factors rather than environmental factors. This research examines the role of communication and interactions between teaching assistants (TAs) and children. Educational Psychologists (EPs) can bring a distinct perspective to the processes of teaching and learning, focussing on the learner's psychological processes and the interaction between the learner and adult (Farrell, Balshaw & Polat, 2000). This can be achieved through the concept of 'giving psychology away' (Macleod, Macmillan & Norwich, 2007) and training of staff to aid in the efficacy of small group or one-to-one work (Farrell et al., 2000).

Literature Review

1. Introduction

Nationally literacy is a challenge for many people in the UK, with one in six adults struggling with reading (Jama & Dugdale, 2010). Longitudinal research indicates that unsupported literacy difficulties in childhood can have a profound effect on life chances, employability and social inclusion (Bynner & Parsons, 2005). This literature review explores the vast area of literacy, considering the historical context of literacy education and the prevalence of literacy difficulties, particularly in relation to reading. It then goes on to explore the role of adults and their style of interaction with children in literacy activities. Specifically the current research will examine the role teaching assistants (TA) can play in working with children with literacy difficulties, and will include an account of the application of an intervention supporting TAs professional development. However before this is considered the wider context needs to be explored.

2. Literacy

2. 1 What is literacy?

The notion of what literacy is has been evolving for many years, influenced by research, technology and the changing demands and expectations of the curriculum. Literacy can be viewed as an ability involving many discrete skills. UNESCO defines literacy as "...the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts." (UNESCO, 2008, p.18). The plurality of literacy

is also highlighted in the Rose Report (2006), which emphasises that the curriculum needs to place equal attention to all four strands of literacy – reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Literacy is deemed "...an essential life skill" (APPG, 2011, p.4), which is key to later educational achievement (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007) and outcomes later on in life (Sparkes, 1999). However significant numbers of children experience literacy difficulties (Brooks, 2002). Nationally one in five children leaves primary school performing below the expected levels for literacy (Ofsted, 2011a), with this statistic rising to one in three in deprived areas (APPG, 2011). In the current report the focus will specifically be on reading, and how adults can support the development of the discrete skills that are involved in reading.

Learning to read has been quoted as being the "...most important activity any child undertakes at school." (DfE, 2010, p.43). Despite a governmental focus on literacy in educational policy development (Rose, 2006; DfE, 2010; APPG, 2011) and the introduction of additional financial support through match funding (DfE, 2011) low reading standards in the UK have remained largely unchanged (Beard, 1998; Solity et al., 2000; Brooks, 2002). There continues to be a debate about how best to address this and what schools can do to raise children's achievement. The 2010 UK Conservative – Liberal Democrat coalition government has already placed emphasis in the Education White Paper (DfE, 2010) for young children to master the basics of reading, stating that it is "...an area of such fundamental importance, we will go further than in any other area in actively supporting best practice."(DfE, 2010, p.43). The Government has made recommendations including teaching reading through systematic synthetic phonics, implementing a reading check at six years old (DfE, 2010) and improving class teacher knowledge of how best to support emerging reading skills (DfE, 2010). However

the reading check has not been a popular introduction with education professionals (ATL, 2011). It has been criticised by some as taking a within-child focus on the reasons why literacy difficulties may occur (ATL, 2011), which may lead to 'teaching to the test' and not successfully identifying those who may need further support (ATL, 2011). The DfE does not directly consider the interactions between adult and child and the impact the adult could have in supporting learning, and develop guidance regarding staff training.

In addition to its designated role as an inspector of schools Ofsted has published several 'best evidence' case study reports into supporting literacy development, as well as training guidelines for inspectors (Ofsted, 2010a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d). These outline aspects of teaching practice that can improve the outcomes of children experiencing literacy difficulties (Ofsted, 2011a). Interactive factors including high teacher expectations were highlighted as essential, in addition to more traditional elements such as the careful assessment and analysis of data to determine the next steps and most appropriate curriculum (Ofsted, 2011a). Additionally it highlights the importance of training in teaching literacy (Ofsted, 2011a).

2.2 Wave three interventions

According to Government policy, effective literacy provision needs to be considered in terms of the three waves of practice (DfES, 2003). The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) describes a 'graduated response' to identifying and meeting special educational needs which may be mapped onto these waves.

Wave one describes whole-class quality teaching, such as literacy hour. Wave two involves small group intervention for children (who may or may not be receiving additional SEN support) who can be expected to catch up with their peers as a result of the intervention. Wave three involves specific targeted approaches for children identified as requiring SEN intervention. Students in wave three will be on school action or school action plus level of support; or have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. These waves are important in areas such as literacy provision to ensure that children can access the whole curriculum (DfES, 2003). However, waves two and three are often delivered by support staff, leading to a view that often it is the neediest students who are entrusted to the least qualified person (Blatchford et al., 2007).

2.3 Approaches to reading

There are still numerous unresolved issues in determining how best to teach reading (Solity et al., 2000), with many different approaches to teaching reading, including whole language teaching, whole word teaching, and analytic or synthetic phonic work. However the style of interaction and level of support given by the adult to the child also needs to be considered as a variable in success (Wray et al., 2000). The adult's style of interaction with children has been found to be a feature of effective literacy teaching and plays a part in ensuring task engagement (Wray et al., 2000).

In order to understand how best to support reading development a useful starting point is to consider the *content* of the adult's interactions with the child and the interactive nature of learning. The adult's role in the learning process has often focussed on how to directly assist

with the acquirement of skills and knowledge. For example, Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development, ZPD, (Vygotsky, 1978; Chaiklin, 2003), and the notion of scaffolding (Bruner, 1978; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). It is clear that adults play an important role as the mediator of the child's learning intentions. Adults can support the child's learning through positive reception, giving meaning to the child's cognitions and experience. However if these elements of learning experiences are overlooked or omitted, there is a risk that learners develop a passive approach to their education (Kaye, Forsyth & Simpson, 2000) and therefore a possibly inefficient acquirement of skills.

2.4 The role of adults in literacy

An alternative for within-child explanations of literacy difficulties is to consider the impact of teaching assistants (DfES, 2003). There are increasing numbers of TAs being employed in schools (Edmond, 2003; Groom & Rose, 2005), making up 25 per cent of school employees (Hayes et al., 2011). However despite the creation of posts such as Higher Level Teaching Assistants, 34-39 percent of TAs do not have any formal qualification (DfES, 2002), and the boundaries between teaching staff and support staff are blurring (Bach, Kessler & Heron, 2006). As the numbers of TAs have increased, so the role has developed – from a classroom 'helper' to one more specifically directed to support the teaching and learning process (Edmond, 2003; Groom, 2006; Rubie-Davies et al., 2010). In order to support this changing role there are greater requirements on the school to provide support and training (Groom & Rose, 2005).

However schools do not regularly provide opportunities to enable TAs to support inclusion through effective training, which may lead to the creation of further barriers for the children TAs work with (Ainscow, 2000). Although Ainscow's research was written before the introduction of specialist TA roles, the need for regular, role specific training opportunities for TAs still remains. Training needs to develop skills and incorporate opportunities for reflection, sharing ideas and self-appraisal (Groom, 2006), which will consequently have a direct impact on practice and student learning. Research indicates that when TAs are well trained, a positive difference was made to student learning (Albortz et al., 2009; Ofsted, 2010b)

Rubie-Davies et al.'s (2010) research examines the interactions between TAs and students. They note that the type of interaction that takes place tends to be more active and sustained, on a one-to-one or small group basis. However Blatchford et al. (2007) suggest that TA interactions with students do not positively affect their educational progress. A higher frequency of questions, making links to prior learning, providing students with feedback and encouragement are associated with effective teaching (Rubie-Davies et al., 2010). This was lacking in TA-student interactions. Rubie-Davies et al.'s (2010) research found that TAs were more likely to be informal and use colloquial language with students, and more likely to confuse students when explaining a concept. They were more likely than teachers to give the answer to the student rather than prompt and encourage thinking. They were also more focussed on task completion than developing understanding and learning opportunities. However Rubie-Davies et al.'s (2010) study only examined the language used by staff (with data being audio recorded), which may have resulted with possibly revealing non-verbal interactions not being considered. As "...learning is constructed through interaction..." (Kaye

et al., 2000, p.69), TAs need to remain aware of opportunities to support learning and development. However this could be due to TA's confidence levels regarding practice (Ofsted, 2002). Therefore whilst there are many lenses in which TA-child interactions could be considered, this current paper will consider the impact and the content of TA-student interactions.

Relating to the focus of this research it is particularly important to ensure that TAs have the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively with pupils (Ofsted, 2004). Research suggests that when TAs are appropriately trained they are able to give feedback on pupils' learning and behaviour; have improved subject knowledge to be able to challenge and extend pupils' learning; have good questioning skills and are able to manage student behaviour better (Kaye et al., 2000). One possible route to develop these areas is the use of video feedback.

3. Video feedback

Meta-analytic research indicates that the use of video feedback has been successful in a range of professions for skill development (Fukkink, Trienekens & Kramer, 2011). Research has indicated that by focussing on short clips or 'micro behaviours', the overall style of approach and the verbal content of interactions can be observed by the individual (Fukkink et al., 2011). One form of video feedback that is increasingly being used by EPs in a school context (Kaye et al., 2000) is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), to support children and staff in a coaching and training context (Hayes et al., 2011). A particular appeal of using VIG in a school context is that research indicates that short interventions using video feedback are the most powerful, as indicated in Fukkink's (2008) meta-analysis.

3.1 <u>Video interaction guidance (VIG)</u>

VIG is a framework for analysing communication, originally aimed at developing attachment interactions between individuals, which aims to improve communication within relationships (Kennedy and Sked, 2008). With its origins in examining parent-child relationships (Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001), the main aim of VIG is to improve interactions between adults and children, and to facilitate a process of change through the shared review of video clips (Kennedy, 2011). It allows individuals to reflect on their interactions "...drawing attention to elements that are successful and supporting clients to make changes where desired." (Kennedy & Sked, 2008, p.140).

3.2 <u>Why use VIG?</u>

Although the application of VIG in schools has been adopted relatively recently, research into its impact in schools indicates positive effects. Kaye et al. (2000) reported that teachers involved in VIG became more aware of communication and interpersonal skills, and the use of video to aid the process had a positive effect on their perceptions. Kennedy and Sked (2008) in their work with non-teaching staff supporting children with Autism found an increase in positive interactions between the adult and child. Research indicates that VIG increases participant confidence (Hayes et al., 2011), positively reframes the participants' perceptions of themselves (Kaye et al., 2000) and changes patterns of interactions (Pearson, Chambers & Hall, 2003; Kennedy & Sked, 2008; Hayes et al., 2011). However consideration must be made regarding the small samples sizes of these studies. Additionally the long term impact (following VIG) on the adults' interactions has not been examined.

3.3 <u>Theoretical context of VIG</u>

The theoretical basis of VIG is around three areas (Kennedy, Landor & Todd, 2010) – the concepts of intersubjectivity (Stern, 1985), mediated learning (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978), and emotional competencies (Goleman, 1996). In the context of VIG these three areas form what are called 'contact principles' (Bieman, 1990), which are discussed later in this section. These are fundamental to effective communication, and within VIG these principles are applied in order to develop child-adult interactions so that they become more 'attuned' (Kennedy et al., 2010).

3.3.1 Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity (Stern, 1985) is a concept which develops from infancy and involves shared experiences such as joint attention of an object (Kennedy et al., 2010). Intersubjectivity underlies the contact principles, which illustrates increasingly attuned adult-child interactions (see Figure One, Figure Two and Appendix One for a summary of the principles). The contact principles were formulated following the micro-analysis of attuned moments (Bieman, 1990) and form a framework for understanding adult/child communication, and indentifying successful components of social interactions that are important for child development and learning (Bieman, 1990).
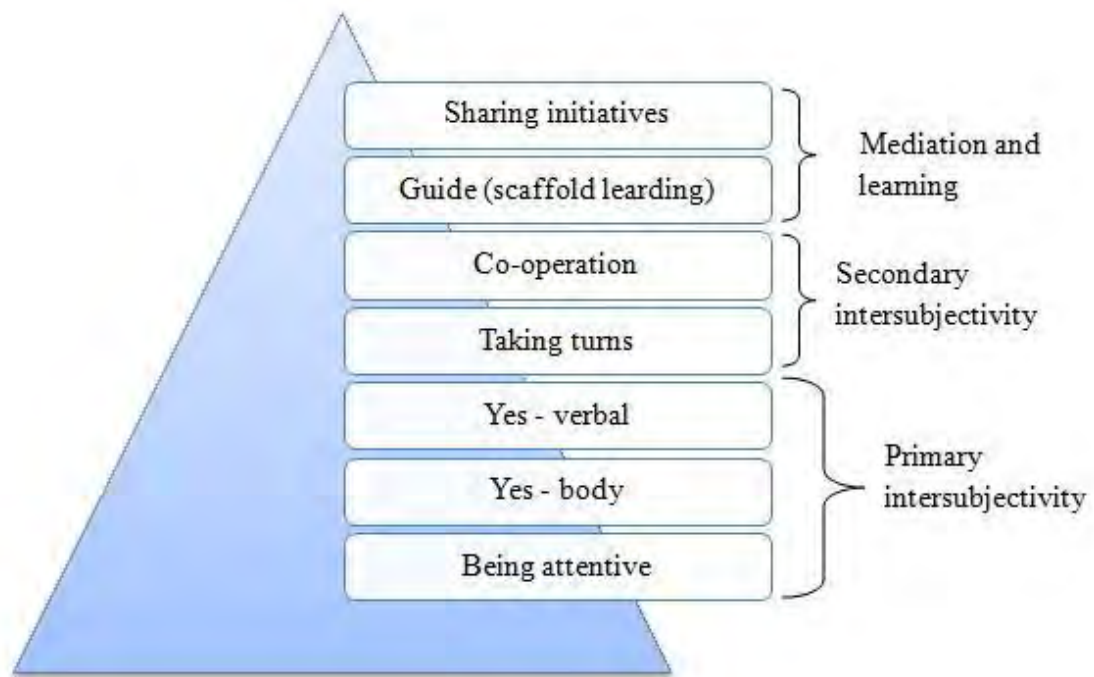
Figure One: Contact principles (Bieman, 1990)

Primary intersubjectivity forms the basis of the lower levels of Bieman's (1990) contact principles, and describes the shared interactions between adult and child that can seen in the early years. For example, turn taking when a baby is babbling and the mother is replying in 'motherese'. Such communications convey the "...emotions which are actively expressed and perceived in a two way dialogue." (Kennedy & Sked, 2008, p.142).

This advances into secondary intersubjectivity (which forms the basis of the higher levels of Bieman's contact principles), where interactions take place via the mutual involvement of an object, task or idea, and involves a more complex form of interaction. Through achieving successful secondary intersubjectivity the adult is attuned to the child's responses to learning scenarios, increasing optimum opportunities for mediated learning. There is a shared understanding, which has developed due to "...close attention to and reception of all pupil verbal and non-verbal initiatives by the teacher, who in turn is attended to and received by the

pupils in a rhythmic cycle of reciprocity" (Kaye et al., 2000, p.74). At this point it will be clear that the adult is attuned to the child's responses, and can empathically understand the child's learning experiences and adjust their interactions as necessary in a sensitive manner.

3.3.2 Mediated learning

Bieman's model (1990) emphasises the importance of higher forms of adult-child interaction for sharing meaning and embedding learning as higher cognitive functions. These can be attained through mediated learning (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978), involving concepts such as the ZPD and scaffolding. However these can only occur if the more basic elements of primary intersubjectivity are realised (such as attentive verbal and non-verbal communication, shared attention). These higher levels of the contact principles (and therefore the more advanced degree of attunement) can only be achieved if adults are attuned to the child's attempts at initiating interactions early on in Bieman's (1990) model.

3.3.3 Emotional competencies

Another skill that is targeted in VIG in order to increase an adult's attunement is their emotional competencies (Goleman, 1996). Although this is not explicitly referred to in Figure One or Figure Two, an adult's emotional competencies are key to developing an attuned style of interaction. This includes skills of empathy and self-awareness – recognising the child's emotions relating to a learning experience and adjusting their own responses accordingly. In relation to the contact principles (Bieman, 1990), adults need to understand how a child is experiencing a task in order to make adjustments to their own verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The aim of this is that their interactions with the child will be more responsive to

their needs, with a view that the child's understanding, enjoyment and learning of the shared task will increase.

3.4 Attunement

As previously stated, intersubjectivity (Stern, 1985), mediated learning (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978), and emotional competencies (Goleman, 1996) form the basis of the contact principles applied in VIG. One of the aims of VIG is to increase attunement to the child's initiatives to learn, by applying Bieman's (1990) contact principles. Attunement is the ability of individuals to know what others have in mind and how they adjust their behaviours and interactions accordingly. It is characterised as being a "…harmonious and responsive relationship where both partners play an active role." (Kennedy, 2011, p.23), which develops in stages (see Figure Two).
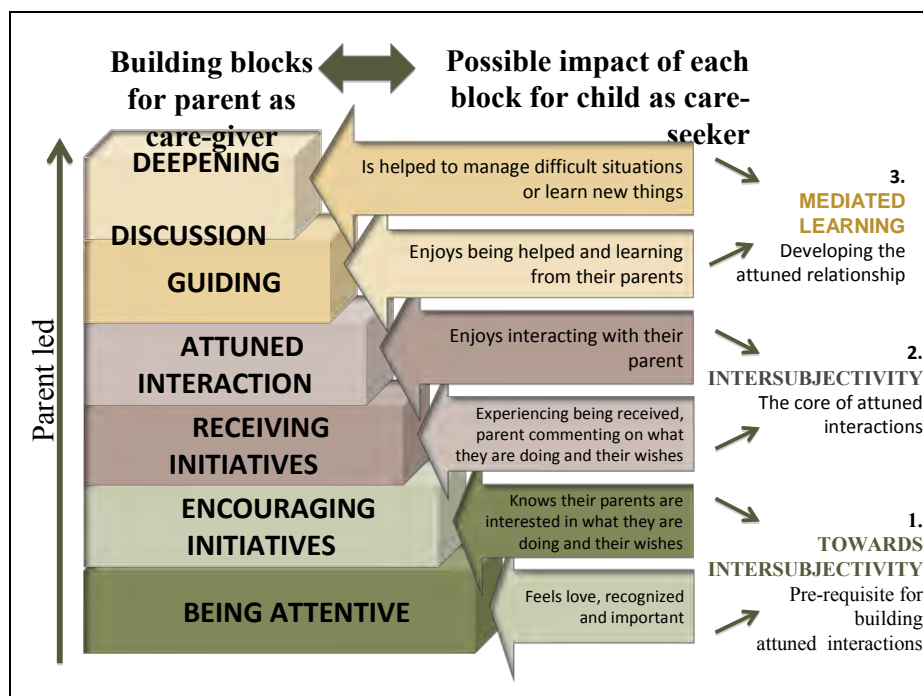
Figure Two: Building attuned relationships – an application of the contact principles (Kennedy, 2011)

Figure Two describes how developing intersubjectivity increases attuned behaviours between adults and the child. Although Figure Two outlines attuned relationships between parent and child, the same principles have also been applied in schools and attunement in learning activities (Kaye, Forsythe & Simpson, 2000; Ogden, 2000; Fukkink & Tavecchio, 2010; Gavine & Forsyth, 2011; Hayes et al., 2011). In this context effective interactions should involve a "...shared negotiation of learning with the class through attuned turn-taking and emotional referencing." (Kaye et al., 2000, p.70)

Interactions between an adult and child are viewed as successful when the child's initiatives are received and positively responded to by the adult (Fukkink & Tavecchio, 2010). The adult is able to mediate the child's learning (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978), as well as anticipate how the child is experiencing the learning event (Goleman, 1996), and make adjustments accordingly. This does not necessarily relate to the content of the learning activity, but the learner's *experience* of learning. However, as previously mentioned, to achieve this level of interaction, there are several levels of interaction that lead up to attunement (as illustrated in Figure One).

3.5 Framework of VIG

The structure of the VIG follows a set process – filming, microanalysis, and a shared review. There are also stages that just involve the VIG guider, in preparation of these shared reviews. There is no prescribed period of time for VIG (Kennedy, 2011). For the purpose of the current research this process will involve four cycles in total of the intervention (over a four month period).

3.5.1 Filming

The filming stage involves recording a 10 minute clip of a typical task the adult and child may participate in. The task itself is not the focus of the filming, but how the adult and child interact.

3.5.2 Microanalysis of film

Through a microanalysis of the clip the researcher identifies and extracts three clips. Very short clips are selected of the most successful interactions, and which are most relevant to the shared goals. These are observable behaviours that are exceptions to the usual pattern, and should exemplify principles of attuned interaction. The selection of fragments may be guided by the purpose to stimulate reflection, gain insight and motivate change.

3.5.3 Shared review

VIG is an intervention based on 'partnership observation' (Tilstone, 1998) where two people (a parent or member of staff and the VIG 'guider') working collaboratively through the use of video clips. The aim of the shared reviews (each lasting approximately one hour) is for the VIG practitioner and the TA to reflect together in a collaborative manner. The purpose is not so much to praise the participant for the positive attuned interactions but rather naming what can be seen in the clips and considering what effects this has on the child (Kennedy, 2011), to allow the recognition and acknowledgement of desirable behaviours. A detailed discussion of the clips is had, watching the selected clips or 'micro-moments', and reflecting on what the participant is doing that makes the interaction be successful. The film is stopped when either person would like to discuss what is seen. The discussion is then structured around the participant's 'helping question' – an area of practice that they would like to develop.

Participants engage in a process of reflective practice, where they are "…guided to reflect on video clips of their own successful interactions." (Kennedy, 2011, p.21).

4. The present study

The present study aims to look at the use of VIG as a tool for staff development in the delivery of reading interventions. The VIG intervention aims to focus on specific aspects of the adult's attuned behaviour and how TAs can develop their perception and reception of the children's learning initiatives (as shown in Figures One and Two). More specifically, the aims included:

- To observe teaching assistant practice through using videos.

- To facilitate and support teaching assistants to indentify successful and positive strategies used when working with students, through the shared reviews.

- To relate the observations made during the micro analysis and shared review to the higher-order contact principles and apply to teaching assistant practice.

4.1 Research questions

1. What impact will VIG have on the TAs' confidence to support students developing reading skills?

2. Does VIG increase the rate of attuned interactions between teaching assistants and students?

Research question one relates to the TA's 'helping question', which is the area the TAs chose to develop. Research question two relates more to the research literature surrounding VIG, to help consider whether as an intervention it helps increase the rate of attuned interactions.

Method

1. <u>Design</u>

The research used a repeated measures design. TAs participated in four sessions (as recommended by Kaye et al., 2000). Quantitative measures included video analysis using an observation schedule, which recorded the frequency of attuned behaviours, as based on the contact principles (Bieman, 1990). Data was also gathered pre and post intervention using the Target Monitoring and Evaluation form. These are outlined in more detail in the measures section.

2. <u>Epistemology</u>

The research adopts a constructivist epistemology, which emphasises the importance of social experience and subjective world views (Raskin, 2002). It was felt that this was appropriate due to the nature of VIG, in which the selection of clips demonstrating attuned interactions, and showing these in the shared reviews are structured around the TA and the VIG guider's separate interpretations of the video clips.

3. <u>Participants</u>

Two TAs (both female, aged 22 and 24) completed the intervention during a four month period. Both TAs were involved in small group literacy support with 4-5 children (in year 4), who were either on School Action plus on the Special Educational Needs register or had a

Statement of Special Educational Needs, and who they met with four times a week to provide small group literacy support.

The researcher completed the work as part of her supervised practice, contributing to the training process to become a VIG practitioner. This involves being supported throughout the process by an accredited VIG guider, to ensure integrity to the principles and application of VIG.

4. <u>Procedure</u>

The initial brief given by the school SENCO was for the TEP to support the school with its implementation of wave 3 literacy interventions, which the SENCO wanted to improve. She particularly wanted to focus on the work delivered by the TAs.

Prior to the VIG intervention starting, a meeting was held between the researcher and the participants. The aim of this was to provide information regarding VIG, outline how VIG may be able to help with their situation and to discuss whether they would be interested in participating (see Appendix Two for information summarised in a leaflet given to staff). Discussions are also had relating to specific behaviours or difficulties the adult may be having. This was then formulated into a target or 'helping question', framed on a Target Monitoring and Evaluation (TME) form.

Once informed consent was gained from the adults, the children and their parents the intervention began, which involved four cycles of filming, supervision and shared reviews. The filming took place in school, with the TA running a literacy session with the children,

completing an activity of the TA's choice. The shared reviews took place following the researcher's supervision with a qualified VIG guider. The shared reviews involved observation of selected clips and discussion of these, which focused largely upon the contact principles (Bieman, 1990). Each feedback session was allocated one hour of TA/trainer time (this process is outlined in more detail in the literature review). Trainer VIG supervision was typically one hour session following each feedback and centered upon selected clips from feedback. The last session with the TAs also indentified areas the TAs wanted to continue to develop in their professional development and in their interactions with the children they support.

5. <u>Measures</u>

5.1 Target Monitoring and Evaluation form

To explore research question one, pre and post data was gathered from the TAs using the TME form (see Appendix Five). TME (Dunsmuir et al., 2009) is an evaluative tool adapted from Goal Attainment Scaling (Kiresuk, Smith & Cardillo, 1994). The TME allows practitioners to evaluate the impact of a piece of work from the perspective of the consultee, based on their own perceptions of where the 'problem situation' is now, and where they would like to be following the intervention. The TAs rated their baseline and expected level of confidence and attunement on a ten point scale prior to the intervention. Post intervention they then provided a rating for their level of confidence. During the four cycles their TME was also revisited and discussed in each shared review.

5.2 Interval sampling video analysis

Data for the second research question was gathered through the use of an observation schedule specifically developed for the research (see Appendix Six), which allowed for a

systematic and structured observation (Bryman, 2001). The observation schedule was developed through operationalising attunement, as defined in the literature (Bieman, 1990; Kennedy, 2011). This ensured that the observations remained structured and focussed. This also allowed for observers other than the researcher to rate the videos. The schedule was used in an interval sampling observation, and looked for incidences of attunement, as based on the contact principles (see Appendix Six). The prevalence of pre-coded behaviours in the first 20 seconds of every minute of the ten minute video were noted. The tapes were also analysed by an EP who was using VIG, adding to the internal consistency and reliability of the results.

6. <u>Apparatus</u>

The following equipment was used for the recording of the clips for analysis, as well as for the shared reviews:

- Laptop, with 'FlipShare' programme to video edit and view the clips.

- 'Flip' video ultra HD camcorder.

7. <u>Ethical issues</u>

As a TEP, the researcher ensured that British Psychological Society (2009) and university ethical guidelines were adhered to.

7.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was gained from the TAs, giving their permission to be filmed as well as to take part in the VIG process (see Appendix Three). Informed parental consent was also gained

from the parents of children who were in the TAs literacy groups and would be filmed as part of the process (see Appendix Four). For both sets of consent forms information regarding the adult and child's potential role in the intervention was outlined, what the outcomes of the intervention will be as well as individual's right to withdraw (BPS, 2009). The video clips were saved on an encrypted laptop computer and were destroyed at the end of the intervention.

7.2 Privacy and confidentiality

Confidentiality was assured to all participants, as the shared review sessions involved only the guider and the TA. The only people who saw the videos were the guider, the TA in question and the guider's supervisor. The guider's supervision was confidential and video footage was not viewed outside those contexts by any other individuals.

7.3 Right to withdraw

It was emphasised to all participants that they had the right to withdraw from the intervention and the research at anytime. If this request was made, their data would be destroyed and removed from the research.

7.4 Debriefing

Time was spent with participants at the beginning of the intervention explaining what the process involved. This was done verbally as well as giving written information (see Appendix Two). Upon completion of the intervention participants were giving an opportunity to ask any further questions and were given the researcher's email address if they needed to get in contact.

<u>**Results**</u>

1. Research question one: What impact will VIG have on the TAs' confidence to support students developing reading skills?

The results from the TME indicate that the TAs' subjective views of their levels of confidence increased following participating in VIG (see Table One). The TAs' feelings of confidence, as defined by the TME, were rated during each shared review. An increase in confidence can be seen more clearly in Chart One.

	Baseline	Expected	Actual
TA1	4	8	9
TA2	6	10	10

Table One: TME results
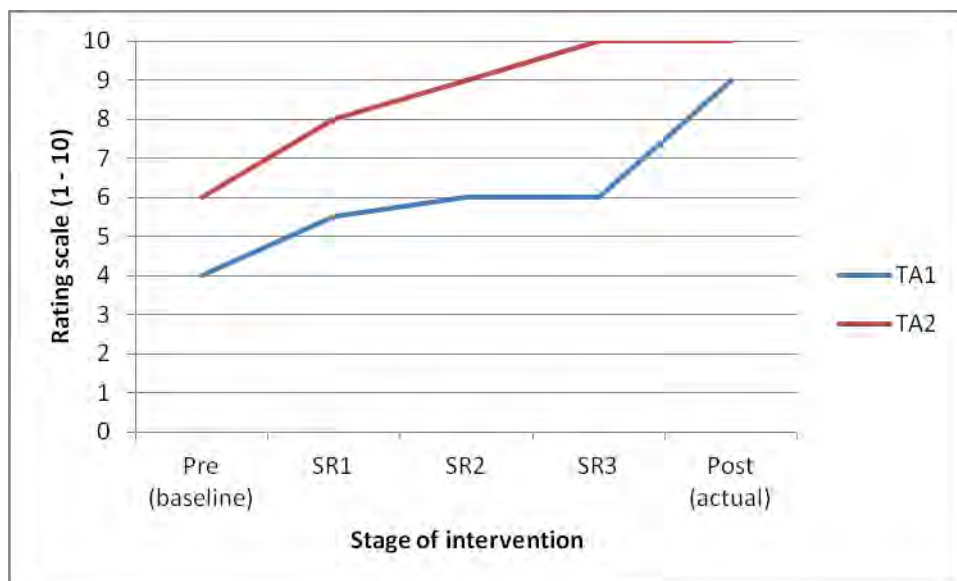
Chart One: TAs' confidence ratings throughout the VIG intervention

It seems that following the first shared review of the positive video clips the TAs had already experienced a large increase in confidence. TA1 felt that her confidence had exceeded her hopes for an expected level.

Research question two: Does VIG increase the rate of attuned interactions between teaching assistants and students?

The rate of attuned interactions was measured through the application of an observation schedule. Charts Two and Three show that over the course of the four films both TAs increased in their rate of attuned behaviours towards the students.

TA1 showed a slower development of becoming attuned towards the students, with Charts Two illustrating that she did not progress towards using more complex attuned behaviours. The chart also indicates that her development in her interactions were at a more basic level,

developing her ability to become attentive to the children's' needs and display encouraging

verbal and non-verbal cues.
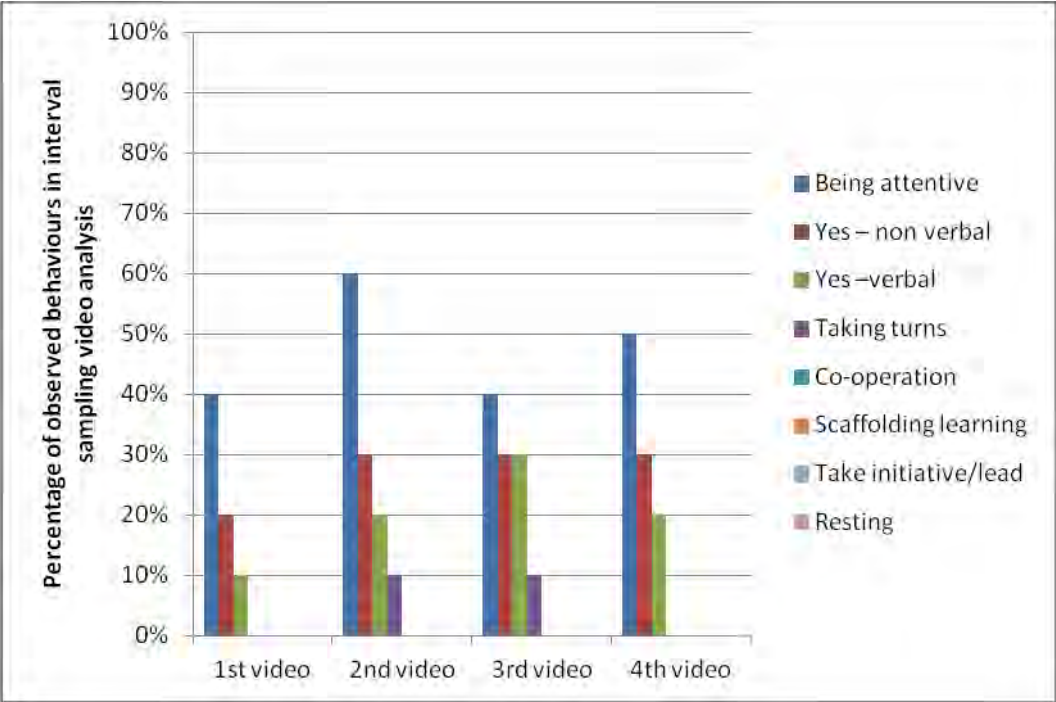
Chart Two: _TA1's rate of attuned interactions with students_

As can be seen in Chart Three, TA2 showed greater development of attunement.
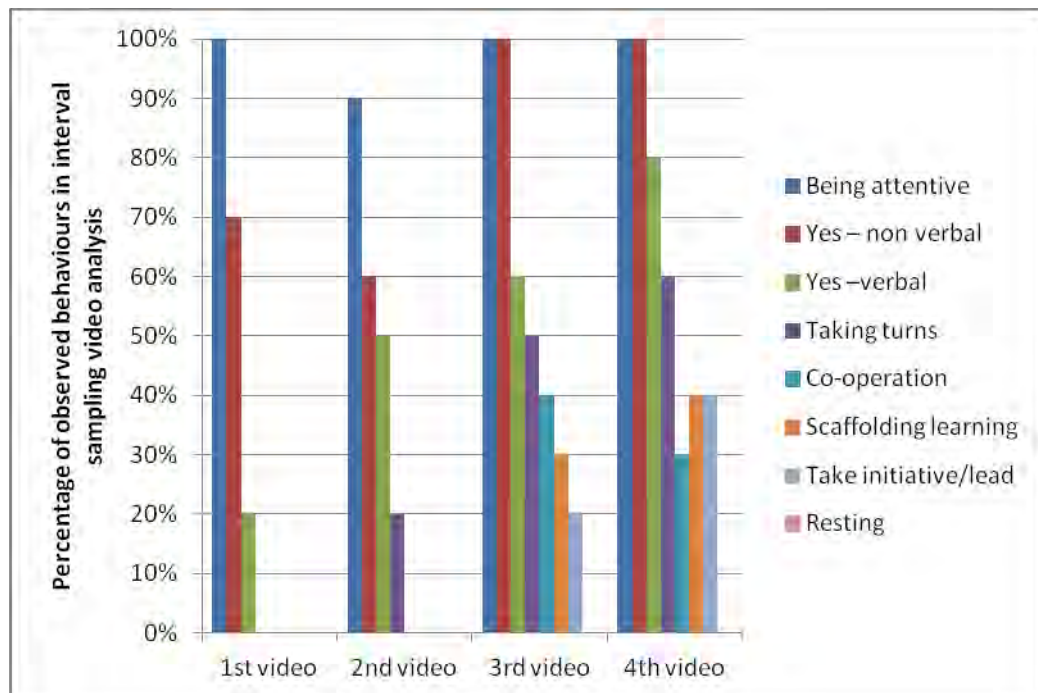
Chart Three: *TA2's rate of attuned interactions with students*

From early on in the intervention she was confidently using the more basic aspects of attunement interactions. She was able to continue applying these consistently throughout the intervention. Chart Three illustrates that over the course of the VIG intervention TA2 was able to develop her use of more complex aspects of attunement when working with the students.

<u>Discussion</u>

The purpose of this study was to consider the effectiveness of VIG as an approach to staff training, to aid in the efficacy of small group literacy work. Two research questions were asked:

1. What impact will VIG have on the TAs' confidence to support students developing reading skills?

2. Does VIG increase the rate of attuned interactions between teaching assistants and students?

The discussion section will now consider the results of the study as well as in relation to previous research. It will then go on to consider the reliability and validity of the measures used, and the strengths and limitations of the research.

1. A discussion of the findings

1.1 <u>Research question one: What impact would VIG have on the TAs' confidence to support students developing reading skills?</u>

The results of this study indicate that VIG had helped the TAs in developing their confidence in supporting students. This reflects previous research which found that the use of video feedback had a positive effect on staff perceptions of their professional capabilities (Kaye et al., 2000) and that VIG increases confidence (Hayes et al., 2011). During the intervention both TAs commented on valuing the opportunity to receive regular professional development opportunities that related to their practice. It seems that although the neediest students are

entrusted to the least qualified person (Blatchford et al., 2007), these staff perhaps do not receive the same level of support in their professional development as other school staff. Not only is this important for the staff development but also for the needs of the students, as when TAs are well trained, a positive difference was made to student learning (Albortz et al., 2009). When staff feel confident, their style of interaction with children ensures task engagement and therefore more effective learning (Wray et al., 2000). Overall if TAs confidence can be increased, their approach to working with students may be more productive, resulting in better outcomes for the students. However one aspect that needs further exploration is whether engaging in the VIG process itself influenced the TAs feelings of confidence. As in relation to the literature Groom (2006) notes that TAs engaged in professional development experience increased confidence and feel a sense of appreciation for the work they are completing.

1.2 <u>Research question two: Does VIG increase the rate of attuned interactions between teaching assistants and students?</u>

The results of this study suggest that when TAs are engaged in VIG there is an increase in observable attuned interactions between the adult and child. This would reflect previous research findings in which the use of video feedback has been successful for skill development (Fukkink et al., 2011) and changes patterns of interactions (Pearson et al., 2003; Kennedy & Sked, 2008; Hayes et al., 2011). By the end of VIG both TAs were able to ask more questions, make links to prior learning more frequently, and provide the students with more feedback and encouragement – traits all associated with effective teaching and learning (Rubie-Davies et al., 2010). These findings mirror previous research in which school staff involved in VIG became more aware of communication and interpersonal skills (Kaye et al.,

2000). This lays the basis for more advanced skills required to teach skills such as literacy, such as scaffolding a child's learning.

2. Reliability and validity of measures

Observations play a large role in VIG, and in the data collection for research question two of this research. How observations are conducted and what is subsequently reported can affect the quality of the data and the conclusions of the research. Therefore consideration of the reliability and validity of observations is important. The observations that occur during the micro-analysis stage of VIG are influenced by the researcher's own perceptions of the behaviours. When these are subsequently shared in the joint review with the TA, the TA's perceptions of the clips result in another possible view of what is seen. However VIG acknowledges the subjectivity of the clips, and focuses on the discussion that should be developed from the sharing of these clips. In terms of the observations made in answering research question two, as mentioned before, another person familiar with VIG also rated the video clips.

3. Strengths and limitations of the research

Although the sample used was very small the results of the research are not intended to be applicable to a wider context, they are specific to the individuals taking part in VIG. The outcomes were specific to the TAs individual aims. As VIG emphasises the subjective perceptions of the guider and the participant, the research is not generalisable. However the research highlights the impact VIG can have on individual practice. An additional factor that needs to be considered is the interpersonal interactions between the VIG practitioner and the

participant. During the filming and the shared review it is essential that the participant feels at ease and can discuss their observations and thoughts regarding the clips. Therefore the success of such an intervention is dependent on more subtle factors that need to be considered.

Conclusion

This small-scale research study aimed to explore the application of VIG as a tool for professional development in schools, specifically with developing TAs interactions with students supported in wave three small group literacy interventions. It can be concluded that VIG enabled the two TAs involved in the intervention to experience an increase in their confidence levels, as well as in their level of attuned interactions with the children they support. It illustrates the potential VIG may have in schools, developing staff understanding of learning, as perceived and experienced by children.

The findings of the research highlight an important role EPs can play in the delivery of training in schools. Training that involves opportunities for reflection, sharing of ideas and self-appraisal, as well as on the psychological processes involved in learning can help to develop the pedagogical skills that are also required for learning. However when delivering such interventions in schools EPs need to give consideration to the possible multiple stakeholders that may exist. For example, SENCOs may wish to use VIG as a means of monitoring 'failing' members of staff who are felt not to be meeting the professional standards required for working in schools. This would compromise the confidentiality that such an intervention can offer, and would mean that free participation would not take place, therefore affecting the fidelity of such a source of training. However if such issues can be addressed VIG offers a supportive and creative avenue for professional development for support and teaching staff.

List of References

Ainscow, M. (2000) The next step for special education: supporting the development of inclusive practices. **British Journal of Special Education**, 27 (2):76–80.

Albortz, A., Pearson, D., Farrell, P. & Howes, A. (2009) **The impact of adult support staff on pupils and mainstream schools**. London: Social Science Research Unit.

All Party Parliamentary Group for Education (2011) **Report of the Inquiry into Overcoming the Barriers to Literacy**. London: The Stationary Office.

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (2011) **Year 1 phonics screening check: Response from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers**. London: ATL.

Bach, S., Kessler, I. & Heron, P. (2006) Changing job boundaries and workforce reform: the case of teaching assistants. **Industrial Relations Journal**, 37: 2–21.

Beard, R. (1998) **National Literacy Strategy: review of research and other related evidence**. Leeds: School of Education, University of Leeds.

Biemans, H. (1990) Video home training: Theory, method and organisation of SPIN. In J. Kool, **International Seminar for Innovative Institutions**. Ryswijk, Netherlands: Ministry of Welfare Health and Culture.

Blatchford, P., Russell, A., Bassett, P., Brown, P. & Martin, C. (2007) **The Role and Effects of Teaching Assistants in English Primary Schools**. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

British Psychological Society (2009) **Code of Ethics and Conduct**. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Brooks, G. (2002) **What works for children with literacy difficulties? The effectiveness of intervention scheme**. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Bruner, J. (1978) The role of dialogue in language acquisition. In: A. Sinclair, R. Jarvella & W. Levelt (eds). **The Child's Conception of Language.** New York: Springer-Verlag. pp.241-256.

Bryman, A. (2001) **Social Research Methods**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bynner, J. & Parsons, S. (2005) **New light on literacy and numeracy: Results of the literacy and numeracy assessment in the age 34 - follow-up of the 1970 cohort study**. London: National Research and Development Centre, Institute of Education, University of London.

Cassen, R. & Kingdon, G. (2007) **Tackling low educational achievement**. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Chaiklin, S. (2003) The zone of proximal development in Vygotsky's analysis of learning and instruction. In: A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. Ageyev & S. Miller (Eds). **Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.39-64.

Cross, J. & Kennedy, H. (2011) How and why does VIG work? In: H. Kennedy, M. Landor & L. Todd (Eds). **Video Interaction Guidance**. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. pp.58-81.

Department for Education (2010) **The Importance of Teaching: Schools White Paper**. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2011) **Match funding for systematic synthetic phonics products and training** [online]. Available at

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/a00191791/match-funding-for-systematic-synthetic-phonics-products-and-training [Accessed 20th December 2011].

Department for Education and Skills (2001) **Special Educational Needs: Code of Practice**. London: DfES.

Department for Education and Skills (2002) **Consultation on Developing the Role of School Support Staff**. London: DfES.

Department for Education and Skills (2003) **Targeting support: choosing and implementing interventions for children with significant literacy difficulties**. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Dunsmuir, S., Brown, E., Iyadurai, S., & Monsen, J. (2009) Evidence-based practice and evaluation: from insight to impact. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 25 (1): 53-70.

Edmond, N. (2003) School based learning: constraints and limitations in learning from school experience for teaching assistants. **Journal of Education for Teaching**, 29 (2): 113-123.

Farrell, P., Balshaw, M. & Polat, F. (2000) The work of learning support assistants in mainstream schools: Implications for educational psychologists. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 17 (2), 66-76.

Fukkink, R. (2008) Video feedback in widescreen: a meta-analysis of family programs. **Clinical Psychology Review**, 28 (6): 904-916.

Fukkink, R. & Tavecchio, L. (2010) Effects of Video Interaction Guidance on early childhood teachers. **Teaching and Teacher Education**, 26 (8): 1652-1659.

Fukkink R., Trienekens, N. & Kramer, L. (2011) Video feedback in education and training: putting learning in the picture. **Educational Psychology Review**, 23: 45-63.

Gavine, D. & Forsyth, P. (2011) Use of VIG in schools. In: H. Kennedy, M. Landor & L. Todd (Eds). **Video Interaction Guidance**. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. pp.134-143.

Goleman, D. (1996) **Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ**. London: Bloomsbury.

Groom, B. (2006) Building relationships for learning: the developing role of the teaching assistant. **Support for Learning**, 21 (4): 199-203.

Groom, B. & Rose, R. (2005) Supporting the inclusion of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in the primary school: the role of teaching assistants. **Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs**, 5: 20-30.

Hayes, B., Richardson, S., Hindle, S. & Grayson, K. (2011) Developing teaching assistants' skills in positive behaviour management: an application of Video Interaction Guidance in a secondary school. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 27 (3): 255-269.

Jama, D. & Dugdale, G. (2010) **Literacy: a state of the nation**. London: National Literacy Trust.

Kaye, G., Forsythe, P., & Simpson, R. (2000). Effective interaction in the classroom – towards a new viewpoint. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 17(4): 69–90.

Kennedy, H. (2011) What is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)? In: H. Kennedy, M. Landor & L. Todd (Eds). **Video Interaction Guidance**. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. pp.20-42.

Kennedy, H., Landor, M. & Todd, L. (2010) Video Interaction Guidance as a method to promote secure attachment. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 27 (3): 59-72.

Kennedy, H. & Sked, H. (2008) Video Interaction Guidance: A bridge to better interactions for individuals with communication impairments. In: S. Zeedyk (Ed.), **Promoting social**

interaction for individuals with communicative impairments: Making contact. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. pp.139-154.

Kiresuk, T., Smith, A. & Cardillo, J. (1994) **Goal attainment scaling: Applications, theory and measurement.** Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Macleod, F., Macmillan, P. & Norwich, B. (2007) Giving psychology away Giving psychology away: Helping pupils at risk of reading failure by means of a self-voice feedback programme. **School Psychology International**, 28 (5): 555-573.

Norwich, B. (2005) Future Directions for Professional Educational Psychology. **School Psychology International**, 26(4): 387–397.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2002) **Teaching Assistants in Primary Schools: An Evaluation of the Quality and Impact of their Work**. London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2004) **Remodelling the School Workforce: Phase 1**. London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2010a) **Reading by six**. London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2010b) **Workforce reform in schools: has it made a difference?** London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2011a) **Removing barriers to literacy**. London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2011b) **Excellence in English**. London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2011c) **Getting them reading early**. London: The Stationary Office.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2011d) **Reading, writing and communication**. London: The Stationary Office.

Ogden, L. (2000) Collaborative Tasks, Collaborative Children: An analysis of reciprocity during peer interaction at Key Stage 1. **British Educational Research Journal**, 26 (2): 211-226.

Pearson, S., Chambers, G. & Hall, K. (2003) Video material as a support to developing effective collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants. **Support for learning**, 18 (2): 83-87.

Raskin, J. (2002) Constructivism in Psychology: Personal Construct Psychology, Radical Constructivism, and Social Constructionism. **American Communication Journal**, 5 (3).

Rose, J. (2006) **Independent review of the teaching of early reading: Final Report**. Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills.

Rubie-Davies, C., Blatchford, P., Webster, P. Koutsoubou, M. & Bassett, P. (2010) Enhancing learning? A comparison of teacher and teaching assistant interactions with pupils. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 21 (4): 429-449.

Solity, J., Deavers, R., Kerfoot, S., Crane, G. & Cannon, K. (2000) The Early Reading Research: The impact of instructional psychology. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 16 (2): 109-129.

Sparkes, J. (1999) **Schools, education and social exclusion**. London: London School of Economics.

Stern, D. (1985) **The Interpersonal World Of The Infant A View From Psychoanalysis And Developmental Psychology**. New York: Basic Books.

Tilstone, C. (1998) **Observing teaching and learning**. London: David Fulton.

Trevarthen, C. & Aitken, K. (2001) Infant inter-subjectivity: research, theory, and clinical application. **Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry**, 42 (1): 3-48.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2008) **The global literacy challenge: a profile of youth and adult literacy at the mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012**. Paris: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Vygotsky, L. (1978) Interaction between learning and development. In: M. Gauvin & M. Cole (Eds). **Readings on the development of children (2nd edition)**. New York: W. H. Freeman & Company. pp.29-36.

Wood, D. (1998) **How children think and learn (second edition)**. London: Blackwell Publishers.

Wood, D., Bruner, J. & Ross, G. (1976) The role of tutoring in problem-solving. **Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry**, 17: 89-100.

Wray, D., Medwell, J., Fox, R. & Poulson, L. (2000) The teaching practices of effective teachers of literacy. **Educational Review**, 52 (1): 75–84.

Appendices

<p style="text-align:center">Appendix One: Contact principles</p>

Stage 1: pre-requisite for building attuned interactions	
Being attentive	Looking friendly with attuned posture Giving time and space Turning towards Wondering what the child is doing, thinking or feeling Enjoying watching them
Encouraging initiatives	Waiting Active listening Showing emotional warmth through intonation Naming positively what you see, think or feel Using friendly or playful intonation as appropriate Saying what you're doing Looking for initiatives
Stage 2: core of attuned interactions	
Receiving initiatives	Showing you have heard, noticed their initiatives Receiving with body language Using friendly or playful as appropriate Returning eye-contact, smiling, nodding in response Receiving what they are saying or doing with words Repeating, using their words/phrases
Developing attuned	Receiving then responding

interactions	Checking that they are understanding
	Waiting attentively for your turn
	Having fun
	Giving a second (and further) turn on same topic
	Giving and taking short turns
	Interrupting long turns in the yes-cycle
	Contributing to interaction/activity equally
	Co-operating – helping each other

Appendix Two: VIG information leaflet

Where does VIG come from?

- The model has been developed in Holland over the past 20 years where it is sponsored by the Dutch Government aimed at helping adults to communicate effectively with children.
- The theoretical base to the model was provided by Professor Colwyn Trevarthen, based at Edinburgh University. He picked out the successful components of social interactions (referred to as "The Contact Principles") which increase children's ability to engage with others, their environment and their ability to learn.

Key concepts of "The Contact Principles" include:

- Developing attentiveness (the ability to speak/act and listen)
- Encouraging initiatives (promoting the development of independent learning skills)
- Developing attuned interactions (social communication and interaction skills)

Filming in schools

- Clients should be involved in a full discussion with the VIG guider before embarking on the process
- This should include signing a written agreement
- Clients include both adults and children directly involved in the process
- If the videoing is in a class/group that involves other children the Head Teacher should communicate with parents that this type of work will be taking place in school (through the school prospectus or a letter)

Contact Details

If you have a general enquiry please contact the VIG guider you are working with directly.

Name: ....

Telephone number: ....
General address:
Xxx Psychology Service

---

xxx Psychology Service

V.I.G.
(Video Interaction Guidance)

Information Leaflet for Professionals

- Guiding (providing opportunities to extend learning)

This interaction based approach to facilitating learning has been successfully applied in a wide range of settings (including early years settings, schools, and work with families and children and young people with SEN) since its development.

What is VIG?

It's a way of looking at video clips of people interacting that supports an understanding of communication and provides a process for building skills

---

VIG guider – the trained professional carrying out the VIG work
Client – the adult or child agreeing to work in partnership with the VIG guider using the VIG process

How will it help?

- It will highlight the strengths you already have
- It will build on these strengths
- Seeing yourself communicating effectively is a very empowering and motivating process
- The process of review provides an opportunity to reflect on your strengths and identify areas for development in relation to interaction
- The process provides an understanding of communication that can be taken applied in any interaction

How does it work?

- Clients are equal partners in the process with the VIG guider

---

- A short clip of video is taken (approximately 10 minutes) looking at the interaction of those involved
- The video is looked at by the VIG guider who will pick out a small number of clips showing positive communication
- The VIG guider returns to the client(s) to feedback and discuss the clips
- This process may be repeated up to 3 times

Who does the video belong to?

- The videos belong to the people being filmed
- You will receive a written contract confirming that the video will not be shown to anyone outside of the VIG project without your permission

<u>Appendix Three: Professional Consent Form</u>

What is Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)?

Video Interaction Guidance is a method, which aims to improve communication and relationships for participants. Participants are supported by a VIG Practitioner to view and discuss short edited clips successful personal interaction. Participants become much more aware of their skills in effective communication through viewing themselves and reflecting on what they observe. Relationships, interactions and behaviour can improve as participants change their communication style.

The video recording is a temporary tool to help as part of an intervention. Recordings are not kept as permanent records.

VIG is an accredited training programme with regular supervision and support provided for Practitioners.

Procedure for using VIG

VIG is explained to participants and, if a participant is a child, their parents. All aspects of consent, access and storage are explained.

Informed consent is gained from all participates and, where appropriate, their parents, before a recording is made. Any participant can withdraw their consent at any point during the session(s).

The only persons who have access to video recordings are the practitioner(s) and their supervisor(s) as part of ongoing work and VIG supervision. The practitioner should clearly explain who the person(s) involved is/are and the purpose for which the recording would be shared.

The practitioner will show the participant only edited material (as is usual practice with VIG). The practitioner should explain and check with the participants that they understand that the unused material will not be kept.

Consent Statement

I have been informed about the process and aims of Video Interactive Guidance.

I have been given the information Leaflet for Professionals.

I understand that the Video Interaction Guider involved in this project will look at the film together with me with the aim of providing an opportunity to develop my interaction skills.

I understand that I will be able to watch the film at a later session with a member of the Children's Centre/ School's team. This may lead to further filming or other help if I think it might be helpful.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the VIG process at any time and that any film footage will be destroyed upon my withdrawal.

I understand that the footage will be stored following xxx Council data protection policy. Xxx uses encryption to protect all data. It will be stored for the duration of the video interaction work and then deleted once the work is completed. Where permission is given to hold the material for training purposes it may be retained for longer, but ideally no longer than 6 months.

Name …………………………………………………………….............…………

Signature……………………………………………………………………………Date……….…/……/…….

I also give permission for the film to be used for training purposes

Signature……………………………………………………………………………

Date……./……/……..

Copies to be retained by client and staff member

Dear Parent/Carer,

<u>Video Interactive Guidance – Information Sheet for Parents/Carers</u>

xxx Psychology Service will be working with staff at your child's school, as part of staff on-going professional development. This work will include the use of video recorders to record examples of staff working with children to help staff develop their skills. It is possible that your child may be included in one/some of the recordings.

The video recording will be used solely for the purpose of staff development and watched by the member of staff, the educational psychologist, their external supervisor and staff within the service who have responsibility for editing and storing data. The recording will not be kept as a permanent record; it is a temporary tool to help as part of our intervention.

Recording will be stopped at any time if requested to do so by anyone being videoed. The recording will be stored following xxx Council data protection policy. xxx uses encryption to protect all data. It will be stored for the duration of the video interaction work and then deleted once the work is completed. Where permission is given to hold the material for training purposes it may be retained for longer, but ideally no longer than 6 months.

If you have any questions and/or require any further information please contact the xxx Psychology Service.

Yours Faithfully,

xxx Psychology Service

Appendix Five: Example of a Target Monitoring and Evaluation (TME) Form

Consultee: TA1	**Date of consultation**: 06.12.11
Trainee Educational Psychologist: Rebecca Kirkbride	**Date of review**: 29.03.12

Target 1:   To become more confident in working with groups of children in literacy

Rating: 1   2   3   ④   5   6   7   /8\   9   10

Descriptor of baseline level:

I don't feel confident in how I interact with the children, and I don't feel I know how I should be supporting the children in developing their literacy skills. Things like how to question them and encourage them. I also find it hard to make sure that all of the children in the group get my attention.

Baseline level indicated by   ◯

Desired level indicated by   △

Descriptor of level achieved:

To feel more confident in running the literacy groups. To understand more about how I can support a child's learning, encouraging them and helping them to enjoy their developing literacy skills. I will feel more comfortable in supporting the children with their difficulties.

Achieved level indicated by   ▢

ECM Outcome: Be Healthy [ ]   Stay Safe [ ]

Enjoy & Achieve [X]   Economic Wellbeing [ ]

Make a Positive Contribution [X]

The tape analysis system applied was based on the contact principles. The focus of the observations will be the teaching assistants' responsiveness to students, and how they facilitate and respond constructively to children's initiatives. No discordant behaviours were recorded.

Scoring occurred at the first 20 seconds of each minute, in a 10-minute period.

A 'resting' category was also used when the teacher was not engaged with a pupil or his/her activity and the child was not making initiatives. Change across the videos will be considered to have occurred if there was a variation of six (12.5%) or more in the number of TA responses, as adopted by Kaye et al. (2000) in their research into developing effective interactions in the classroom through the application of VIG.

Behaviour definitions

Primary stage

Being attentive: attentiveness to the other person, giving eye contact, paying attention to what they say and feel, looking towards them, naming what they do.

Yes – non verbal: using your body and face, smiling, nodding, friendly posture.

Yes – verbal: saying yes, responding to child's initiatives, receiving the child by repeating what they say

Secondary stage

Taking turns: taking turns in communication, making your turns short

Co-operation: sharing and helping each other, discussions

Higher stage

Scaffold learning: conflict management, naming contradictions, developing discussions

Take initiative/lead: leading and guiding, giving choices, making plans, distracting and diverting, making suggestions, problem solving.

Video number: Date:

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Being attentive										
Yes – non verbal										
Yes –verbal										
Taking turns										
Co-operation										
Scaffolding learning										
Take initiative/lead										
Resting										

CHAPTER FIVE

PPR4: SUPPORTING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: A NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Abstract

Looked after children (LAC) are a high profile group who have been associated with poor outcomes, which have not been shown to be significantly improving in many areas in comparison to their peers. Previous research indicates that Educational Psychologists (EPs) are well placed to make a unique contribution to supporting the needs of LAC, including the promotion of their education and emotional well-being through working with other professionals. However despite the knowledge and expertise EPs hold, their practice in supporting LAC can vary depending on the Local Authority (LA). However with the increasing uptake of a 'traded services' model of service delivery, EPs need to demonstrate their value in a variety of contexts. The aim of the research was to provide the initial groundwork for developing a package of support which the Psychology Service would deliver to LAC and/or those who support LAC in one LA. Through the application of a needs analysis model the research takes an organisational perspective, exploring the needs of LAC, the current gaps in provision that exist and the possible role EPs can play in supporting LAC. Data were collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to place information-rich quotations into thematic categories. Three thematic categories were judged to capture the current experiences and challenges, as well as areas of need that could be addressed: (a) experiences of LAC; (b) practice in the LA; and (c) role of the Psychology Service. Key findings are discussed in terms of current EP practice as well as identifying areas for the Psychology Service to develop, both in their approach and practice but also in terms of the services they can offer to others. Conclusions are drawn regarding the challenges faced when working with other agencies, as well as the changing role and identity of EPs.

Table of contents

List of illustrations

List of tables

List of abbreviations used

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CP	Child Protection
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
LACES	Looked After Child Education Services
OT	Occupational Therapy
PEP	Personal Education Plan
SSI	Semi Structured Interview
TAC	Team Around the Child
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist

Introduction

Since September 2010 Silvashire[3] Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has changed its resource model to one of traded services. As a result the service was keen to develop its practice in contexts other than schools. Professional Practice Report (PPR) Four provides the initial groundwork for a fellow Educational Psychologist's research into developing a package of support the EPS can deliver to Looked After Children (LAC) and/or those who support LAC.

The focus of the PPR is to explore the role educational psychologists (EPs) can play in one Local Authority (LA) in supporting LAC needs. This was done through gathering the views of different stakeholders who work with LAC to develop a coherent narrative regarding how EPs can support their various needs. The current practices and views of other members of the Psychology Service were also explored.

---

[3] Silvashire is a pseudonym for the LA in which this research is conducted.

Literature review

The literature review aims firstly to provide a contextual background of LAC in the UK. It then explores previous literature on the role of EPs in supporting LAC, and considers the advantages and challenges of adopting a multi-agency approach to supporting LAC. The literature review goes on to consider the extent to which the views and experiences of children who are looked after are considered when developing support for this group. Finally the literature review explores different models of needs analysis that may be appropriate for the current report.

A profile of children who are looked after

In 2010 it was estimated that there were 64,400 children in care (DfE, 2010), which is an increase of 7 per cent since 2006 (DfE, 2010). Despite making up approximately 0.5 of the total under 18 population (DoH, 2003) this group of children requires a significant amount of support involving many different professionals in health, social care and education. LAC are a vulnerable group who are cared for by the state, as set out in the Children Act 1989. They have been associated with poor outcomes in many areas in comparison to their peers, which to date have not been shown to be significantly improving (Christmas, 1998; Stanley et al, 2005; Jackson & McParlin, 2006; DfES, 2007; Greig et al, 2008; OFSTED, 2008; Norwich, Richards & Nash, 2010; House of Commons Education Select Committee, 2011). This is reflected in Government policy development, making supporting LAC a priority (for example, DfES, 2007) and the introduction of legislation and guidance such as the Adoption and

Children Act (2002), the Care Standards Act (2000), the Care Leavers Act (2000), the Quality Protects Initiative (DoH, 2000) and the establishment of corporate parenting (DfES, 2007).

Children and young people in care have been identified in the literature as amongst the most vulnerable children and young people (Kelly et al, 2003; Stanley, Riordan & Alaszewski, 2005; Dent & Brown, 2006; Peake, 2006; Sempik, Ward & Darker, 2008; Jackson, Whitehead & Wigford, 2010). This vulnerability may result from a complexity of factors relating to the adverse circumstances which led to becoming looked after, as well as the experience of being within the looked after system (Stanley et al, 2005). Research indicates that children in care do not achieve as well as their peers (Christmas, 1998; Jackson & McParlin, 2006; Greig et al, 2008; OFSTED, 2008; Norwich et al, 2010) and numerous unplanned moves can impact on an individual's educational experiences (Peake, 2006). 34 per cent of LAC experience a change in placement during the last six months of Key Stage Four (Evans, 2003). LAC are eight times more likely to be excluded (OFSTED, 2008). Attainment levels are significantly lower for LAC compared to their peers (House of Commons Education Select Committee, 2011), and there is a higher incidence of special (predominantly emotional and behavioural) educational needs (Geddes, 2005; Jackson & McParlin, 2006; DfES, 2007).

However there remain many challenges in effectively supporting LAC throughout their time in care and during their transition in leaving care, resulting in the outcomes for these young people not improving (DfES, 2007). The Government acknowledges that "...outcomes and experiences of young people in care...remain poor." and need to be addressed (House of Commons Education Select Committee, 2011, p.1).

Role of educational psychology in supporting children who are looked after

Previous research indicates that EPs are well placed to make a unique contribution to supporting the needs of LAC (Woolam, 2010; Norwich et al, 2010; Randall, 2010; Honey, Rees & Griffey, 2011), including the promotion of their education, emotional well-being through working with other professionals (Dent & Cameron, 2003, Dennison, McBay & Shaldon, 2006; Fallon et al, 2010). EPs are able to consider children's "...history and experiences, the burdens of disruption that they carry, and the variety of settings from which they attend our schools, affect their educational opportunities." (Peake, 2006, p.104). An example of such work is outlined by Davis and Cahill (2006) who explore one LA's development in supporting LAC. They emphasise the key role EPs can play through ensuring that issues affecting a child's educational progress and care placements can be considered from a psychological perspective. This was done through opportunities such as attending PEPs and sitting on adoption and fostering panels (Davis & Cahill, 2006).

An additional advantage of EPs working with LAC is their understanding of child development, learning and behaviour (Peake, 2006; Fallon et al, 2010) as well as the application of a wide range of psychological theories, such as psychodynamic perspectives (Nicholas, Roberts & Wurr, 2003), developmental psychology (Golding et al, 2006) and attachment theory (Fallon et al, 2010; Randall, 2010). EPs can also draw upon their understanding of neurological development (Dent & Brown, 2006); specifically the physical impact cognitive and emotional experiences can have on brain development (Siegal & Hartzell, 2003). Finally EPs can play a key role through providing consultation and assessment services (Farrell et al 2006), as well as being able to take a more systemic view of

presenting needs. However despite all of the knowledge and expertise EPs hold, the work they practice in supporting LAC can vary depending on the LA.

Farrell et al's report (2006) into the functions and contribution of EPs to meeting the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda (DfES, 2004) found that 71 per cent of EPs were involved in services supporting LAC. Examples of EP work include working as part of a multi-agency team, early intervention work, consultation and case work support for other professionals. Stanley et al (2005) report that 47.5 per cent children in care in their study had been referred to an EP by social care, and revealed that EPs are receiving more referrals from social care than other professionals such as clinical psychologists (40 per cent) or child and adolescent psychiatrists (25 per cent). Although the paper does not detail the reasons for the referrals or what was done with these by the psychology services, this finding highlights that other professionals do perceive EPs as a key professional in the support of LAC. However as this research was conducted over just two LAs, this finding does not necessarily provide an accurate picture across the country.

Bradbury (2006) explores the role of the EP in three LAs, and finds that there is great variation in EP views of the extent to which the profession is making a unique contribution to the area of supporting LAC. Caution needs to be applied to Bradury's findings as her data are gathered from only three EPs, however the findings of her research are a concern. Considering the 2010 UK Conservative – Liberal Democrat coalition government's move away from integrated children's services and the increasing uptake of a 'traded services' model of service delivery, EPSs will be placed under increasing pressure to demonstrate their

value-added involvement (Farrell et al 2006; Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010). Therefore in order for educational psychology to be valued by other professionals and for EPs to demonstrate their psychological knowledge in various contexts, EPS time needs to be invested to allow services to develop, including prioritising training and personal development, as well as developing coherent strategies for ensuring that a unique contribution is made.

Honey et al's research (2011) discusses the position of EPs in supporting the needs of LAC. Specifically they discuss the delivery of training in order to raise teacher awareness of the experiences of LAC, and how these may impact on young people's learning and behaviour in school (Honey et al, 2011), as well as the role school could play as a secure base for LAC (Randall, 2010). Honey et al go on to discuss the role of EPs in helping to equip school staff with appropriate strategies in managing LAC (2011). Stanley et al's (2005) research highlights why this may be a beneficial area to work on, pointing out that some school exclusions were due to school staff struggling to manage difficult behaviours of children in care. If school staff can be supported to feel more competent and use more effective strategies to manage challenging behaviour, a positive impact may be seen on issues such as exclusions. Finally Honey et al (2011) highlight the therapeutic role EPs could play in delivering targeted interventions such as supporting LAC's emotional wellbeing.

Norwich et al's (2010) article examines the extent and nature of EP involvement across several LAs. Their paper is positive in highlighting the types of work EPs in some LAs are currently undertaking, and what other LAs could adopt: for example, EP involvement in

training on topics such as attachment, resilience, domestic violence and mental health (Norwich et al, 2010).

Additionally the number of contexts in which EPs can work was also highlighted as a strength that could be built upon (i.e. school-based work, specialist positions, multi-agency work). EPs who hold a specialist post were found to carry out work in five main areas – a supportive role, training, promoting achievement, multi-agency work and providing an overview for others (Norwich et al, 2010). However their results also indicated that the involvement of the EPs who do not hold a specific specialist LAC role is small and often in a multi-agency context. They acknowledge the tensions between education and social care regarding the appropriate roles an EP should take in this area (Norwich et al, 2010).

Davis and Cahill (2006) provide an account of one LA in which the role of the EPS was proactively reviewed and adapted in order to meet the ECM agenda more effectively, creating a more innovative vision of the service EPs could provide. It was found through this process that adopting a preventative approach based in positive psychology, linking with community resources, enables an effective targeting of resources (Davis & Cahill, 2006). Although this is a positive finding for the future role of EPSs, this could be viewed as a possibly naive view in which the barriers experienced in 'real world' practice have not been considered. The conclusions provided by Davis and Cahill could potentially be at risk of confirmatory bias, in which like-minded fellow psychologists consider such findings as evidence for adopting a more innovative role. However in order to target resources effectively and work with other

professionals (both in Children's Services and in the community) others equally need to value the work that an EPS can offer.

A multi-agency approach to supporting children who are looked after

When considering the needs of LAC, Peake (2006) uses the analogy of highly polished mirrors. "We see much that is familiar, but we are also probably surprised and disappointed by what we see...the lines and blemishes in the...system" (p.98). Despite a renewed emphasis on multi-agency working (Farrell et al, 2006) and an awareness of the needs of children and young people who are looked after, in reality there appears to be a inconsistent implementation of support (Fallon et al, 2010).

Adopting the metaphor of an onion, Stott (2006) describes a model of systems that can be found around the child, including the family of origin, the current carers, community, professionals, agency, society and the legal system. Due to the multi-layered interactions, challenges, confusion and misunderstandings can arise (Jamieson, 2006; Stott, 2006; Norwich et al, 2010). Norwich et al (2010) identify three key areas of tension in multi-agency working – issues around control and whether EP views were acknowledged or valued, the EP's role and feelings of being taken away from the roles traditionally designated to EPs, and levels of expertise. Harker et al (2003) also raise this as a challenge in EP practice, giving the examples of a lack of communication and different record keeping procedures between agencies. These challenges have been raised in the Laming Report (2003) as a weakness that needs addressing in order fully to support vulnerable children, further emphasising the need to address such issues (Fallon et al, 2010).

Randall (2010) points out that as agents of change, EPs are well placed in a multi-agency context to develop approaches for supporting LAC, by moving problems forward in a solution-focussed manner. She describes how EPs can work with others supporting LAC (such as teachers, carers or other professionals), to acknowledge stresses and difficulties that may be experienced, and, as a reflective practitioner, adopt a problem-solving solution-orientated approach to work through those frustrations and challenges. Additionally she highlights that EPs have the research skills to ensure that the LA policy implementation in areas such as corporate parenting are of a high quality, and strategies implemented are evidence-based (Randall, 2010).

Views and experiences of children who are looked after

Relatively few studies have sought the views of care recipients about their educational experiences (Goddard, 2000; Golding et al, 2006; Winter, 2010; McMurray et al, 2011). However this is changing and more recent research seeks to ascertain the views of young people regarding the care system (Skuse & Ward, 2003; Golding et al, 2006; Winter, 2010). The insights that young people can provide highlight the complex needs, experiences and difficulties children in care face (Honey et al, 2011). Additionally young people's views on the degree and nature of support they receive from professionals (involving complex interactions in multi-agency working) may be a useful barometer in terms of the extent inter-agency working is necessary in individual cases (Goddard, 2000). A recent relevant study was conducted by Harker et al (2003), who interviewed 80 children and young people in care. The young people felt that teaching staff were their greatest source of educational support, whilst they felt that social workers did not understand or prioritise their education (Harker et al, 2003). They also wanted more understanding from teachers, their peers and social workers

about what it may be like to be looked after (Harker et al, 2003). The result of such research creates a clearer picture of children in care's educational experiences and their views of how these could be improved.

Models of needs analysis

In order to explore and identify the 'real-world' needs of LAC, the current gaps that exist and the possible role EPs can play in supporting LAC a needs analysis is reported in this paper. The next section of the literature review considers different models of needs analysis that could be appropriate for exploring the current and potential practices of professionals in Silvashire to support LAC.

A needs analysis is formal process of examining 'what is' and 'what should be' (Leigh et al, 2000; Altschuld & Kumar, 2010). Implementing a change or innovation involves "...analysing a range of needs so that a sound strategy for maximising the potential for adoption and ownership of the innovation..." can take place (Waters & Vilches, 2001, p.113). It is an approach that aims to increase "...understanding, improving and changing organisational life." (Preskill & Torres, 1999, p.93).

Conducting a brief search on the internet it is clear that many EPSs offer their skills in conducting needs analysis, but there appears to be little information available on the precise methods used. Common methods include direct observation, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. However needs analyses conducted by EPSs appear to be more of an unquantifiable subjective process than a specific systematic process (Jasso-Aguilar, 1999). Some literature suggests core elements of a needs analysis (Preskill & Torres, 1999; Reed &

Vakola, 2006), such as asking questions; identifying and challenging values, beliefs and assumptions; reflection and dialogue; collecting, analysing and interpreting data; action planning and implementation (Preskill & Torres, 1999).

Due to the lack of a clearly defined needs analysis model being used within educational psychology the approach to the current research was drawn to more explicit business and organisational models of needs analysis (Waters & Vilches, 2001; Reed & Vakola, 2006; Altschuld & Kumar, 2010). What many needs analyses have in common is the process of performing a 'gap analysis', involving examining the current situation and comparing this to the ideal situation.

Model of needs analysis selected for current research

The needs analysis model used in the current paper is the three-phase model of need assessment proposed by Altschuld and Kumar (2010), which was selected due to its clear sequential nature and its appropriateness for the topic of considering how the Silvashire EPS can support LAC. The needs assessment process comprises three key stages and considers needs at three levels – level one: the direct recipients of a service (in this context, LAC), level two: the needs of the service (the LA professionals supporting LAC, including the EPS), and level three: the needs of the systems that support the service. See Figure One below for an illustration of this process.
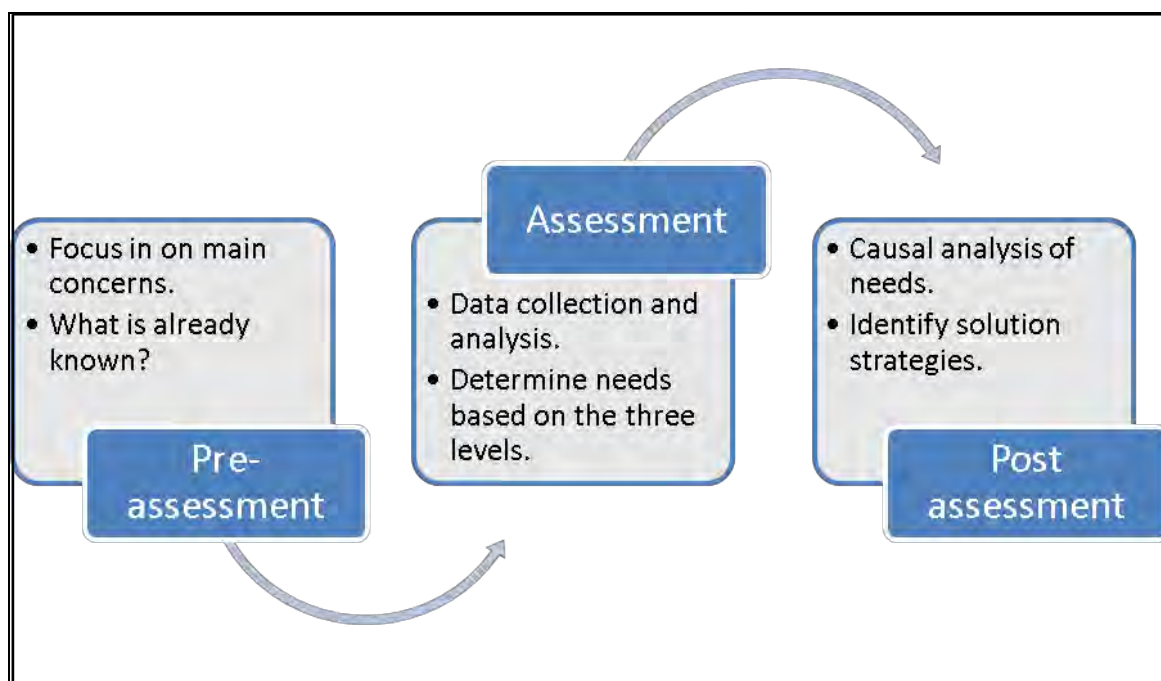
Figure 1: *Three-phase model of need assessment (Altschuld & Kumar, 2010)*

In the current research the pre-assessment stage involved an initial exploration of the main concerns and what is known about supporting LAC in Silvashire.

Summary

The literature review has explored previous literature on the role of EPs in supporting LAC, and has considered the advantages and challenges of adopting a multi-agency approach to supporting LAC. It is clear from the research that LAC are a vulnerable group who have significant educational and emotional needs. However their outcomes are still not at the rate of their non-looked after peers, and EPs may be in a position of support LAC directly as well as work collaboratively with other professionals. However a needs analysis will provide an useful opportunity to determine whether the role of the EP would be a beneficial one, or a potential only felt by psychologists, not other professionals. After considering different models of needs analysis Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) three-phase model of needs

assessment was selected. In the first, pre-assessment stage, what is already known in a specific area is initially established, which has been achieved in the literature review.

The next section will now continue the pre-assessment stage and determine what the main concerns are specifically in Silvashire regarding supporting and working with LAC. Following this the assessment stage involved exploring research questions based around Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) three levels, using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (SSIs). The SSIs were then analysed and discussed in the post-assessment section, which suggests possible solutions or areas in which EPs can work to support LAC.

This stage of the needs analysis involves an exploration of the current situation regarding the support in place for LAC in Silvashire. Reed & Vakola (2006) acknowledge that needs analysis and all forms of change that may arise from this originate from feelings of frustration or dissatisfaction about the present situation or context. The needs of LAC are of a high priority for Silvashire Council and for the EPS, particularly due to recent developments. A recent Ofsted report (2011) found Silvashire Council to be 'adequate' (which is defined as a service only meeting the minimum requirements) in its overall services in supporting LAC, with outcomes of care leavers in terms of 'enjoying and achieving' also being adequate. Therefore supporting LAC has been highlighted as a priority area for LA development. One recommendation made by Ofsted is that the monitoring of "...strategic planning should make explicit the specific priorities and targets for improving outcomes for looked after children and are used to underpin commissioning arrangements across the Partnership" (Ofsted, 2011, p.25). See Appendix One for a profile of LAC in the Borough.

Summary of pre-assessment stage

The pre-assessment stage has included a literature review to synthesise current research as well as exploring the context and priorities at a local level. Following this, a clearer view has been developed of what is already known as well as what the main concerns are regarding supporting LAC. The following conclusions can be made regarding LAC needs. At level one of Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) three levels (the direct recipients of a service), LAC require a greater level of consistent and planned support in their educational experiences as well as in key transitions. Additionally in order to support further young people, they need to have their

views considered at a meaningful level. At level two, the needs of the service (the LA professionals supporting LAC) include practical resources such as time and access to suitable training and support, as well as opportunities for multi-agency work. Additionally existing tensions that may also create barriers should be considered as an area to address, to support more effective working relationships. Finally at level three the needs of the systems that support the service are under great pressure, as Ofsted have deemed supporting LAC as a priority area for LA development.

Aims

The general aim of the research is to explore the perceptions of key stakeholders relating to LAC. Perceptions will be examined to determine the extent and nature of current involvement of EPs in supporting LAC in Silvashire LA, the perceived areas of support that work and do not work and potential areas the EPS could become involved in.

Research questions

Considering the three levels of Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) needs assessment model assessment phase the following research questions were formed.

1. Relating to level one (the direct recipients of a service), what role could EPs have in supporting the needs of LAC?
2. Relating to level two (the needs of the service), what forms of involvement do EPs currently have in supporting LAC, and what areas could be developed?

3. Relating to level three (the needs of the systems that support the service), what are the supporting factors and constraints for the EPS need to consider in supporting LAC?

ASSESSMENT STAGE

Methodology

As previously mentioned, as this paper reports a needs assessment, the main structure will be formed by Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) three-phase model of need assessment. The three phases are pre-assessment, assessment and post-assessment. As the pre-assessment stage has already been explored, the report will now outline the methodology implemented in the assessment stage. The methods used in this report are SSIs and questionnaires. The rationale, development and implementation of these will be explained in more detail.

Epistemology

The analysis of data comes from a constructionist perspective which takes the view that "...reality is socially constructed..." (Mertens, 2005, p.12) and therefore understanding of subjective meanings, constructions and multiple complex realities needs to be gained (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000). The data allow the researcher to explore the insiders' perspectives. Viewing the multiple realities relating to support for LAC, aspects that are successful and areas requiring development were highlighted.

Participants

Dehnad et al (2010) emphasise the importance of involving different stakeholders in a needs analysis so as to explore issues thoroughly from a number of perspectives. Experiences from three different perspectives were gathered (within the EPS, outside of EPS with other professionals, and service users - LAC).

The SSIs were conducted with eight participants who were recruited through snowball sampling (Robson, 2002), which is particularly useful in research where participants are hard to access. This form of sampling was particularly appealing when trying to recruit LAC participants for the research. This involved contacting the appropriate heads of departments in the LA Children's Services, outlining the research and requesting involvement from potential participants. Heads of departments then suggested individuals who were thought to be open to talking about their work, who were then contacted. Individuals who put themselves forward were encouraged to suggest other participants, who were consequently contacted. For example, the Team Manager for the residential home suggested talking to the two young people, whom she felt would be happy to become involved. Whilst the range of participants' roles is broad, the sampling has resulted in the selection of specific individuals whose roles in working with LAC and professional identity will influence their views. It is not be possible to generalise the views and findings due to the local context of the research.

The participants were:

- Head of Psychology and Inclusion

- An Educational Psychologist

- Virtual Head Teacher for Looked After Children

- Designated teacher for Looked After Children

- Team Manager for the only LA residential home for LAC

- Two Looked After Children

- Former Educational Psychologist previously posted 0.5 with the LACES (Looked After Children Education Services) in the LA

Of the 12 members of staff in the Silvashire EPS, 7 completed and returned questionnaires (two Trainee Educational Psychologists, four Educational Psychologists and one Senior Educational Psychologist).

Procedure

The SSIs lasted for approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, with transcriptions forming the data set. In this instance the researcher opted to use a SSI which took an exploratory approach, with the opportunity to be more flexible in the wording and order of the questions asked (Robson, 2002).

Members of the Psychology Service were also asked voluntarily to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix Three) exploring their previous experiences of supporting LAC.

In order to understand the current ways in which the EPS is supporting LAC and identifying areas of need, the research used the SSIs and questionnaire to answer the research questions. The development of these tools is now outlined.

Data collection tools – semi structured interviews

SSIs are designed to elicit the interviewee's ideas and opinions on the topic rather than leading them towards preconceived choices. The interview allows the researcher to explore the attitudes and values of individuals. In the case of the current research the interview

enabled the researcher to elicit examples of professionals supporting LAC and working with other agencies.

When designing the SSI, an interview framework was developed to encompass all possible issues that may be raised, relating to the research questions. In terms of the interview schedule, Robson (2002) suggests that open questions should come before closed questions to prevent the channelling of respondents' answers through one route, thereby possibly missing broader issues that matter to them. However a range of different types of questions were incorporated, including follow-up questions, specifying questions and direct questions, alongside using silence. Additionally the framework included some non-leading probes, which can aid clarification and encourage the participant to elaborate (see Appendix Five). The framework aided in directing the interview in an unobtrusive way (Oppenheim, 1992).

The focus of the SSI was determined by the existing literature and the three levels of the needs assessment model (Altschuld & Kumar, 2010), from which the research questions were formed. The schedule was piloted with a colleague in the Psychology Service who did not participate in the interviews. Questions broadly relating to the needs of LAC, communication, multi-agency working, service delivery and corporate parenting were included. However due to the nature of semi-structured interviews, specific questions were not given to all participants and the interview structure was flexible enough to allow for responding to and following up issues raised by the interviewee that may not have been anticipated. Prompter questions were developed in advance to provide direction if the interviewee did not provide

sufficiently detailed answers. Table One below provides examples of how initial items in the SSI items relate to the research questions (also see Appendix Five).

RQ1: Relating to level one, and the direct recipients of a service, what role could EPs have in supporting the needs of LAC?
What are your perceptions about the challenges LAC face during their time in care/ in education?   Do you know how the key transition points for LAC are supported?   Are the educational and emotional needs of LAC something that you consider in your role?   What is the psychology service's profile in supporting the educational and emotional needs of LAC?
RQ2: Relating to level two, and the needs of the service, what forms of involvement do EPs currently have in supporting LAC and what areas could be developed?
Who do you liaise with within the Psychology Service? Is this relationship satisfactory? What is the level/frequency of contact?   Would you like to see your work with the Psychology Service change? If so, how?   How is information transferred between yourself and the Psychology Service and what/where is information stored?   How would you describe the relationship between the your agency and Psychology Service in supporting LAC?
RQ3: Relating to level three, and the needs of the systems that support the service, what are the supporting factors and constraints the EPS need to consider in supporting LAC?
How do you refer children on to other professionals/services including the Psychology Service? What are key issues/problems with the process?   Have you experienced any tensions when working with other professionals?   In your experience do you think other professionals/agencies require additional training or support?   Areas that you think LAC are currently well supported? Can you give me an example?   Areas that you think LAC are not well supported? Can you give me an example?

Table 1: Links between the research questions and SSI items

Data collection tools – questionnaire

Designing the questionnaire involved a consideration of the research tool's purpose, as well as the type and order of questions (O'Leary & Miller, 2003). As the focus of the research was to explore the prevalence of EPs previous involvement in supporting LAC, the researcher felt that the purpose was predominantly descriptive (O'Leary & Miller, 2003).

Developing a questionnaire can be a lengthy process, and one that should be carried out thoroughly in order to ensure effective data collection. The importance of writing a good questionnaire can be underestimated and some view the process as simply writing a set of questions. But "...if those questions are the wrong questions, poorly phrased, or in the wrong order, the answers obtained may be worse than meaningless: they may be misleading." (Brace, 2004, p.1). Therefore when designing and implementing questionnaires, the researcher must keep in mind the priority of this process, which is gathering the most accurate answers for their research questions (Brace, 2004).

In constructing the questionnaire the researcher had to determine what topics needed to be examined in order to meet the research objectives. This was done through brainstorming and refining a number of topics (Cohen et al, 2007). The questionnaire was then written, following decisions being made regarding the types of questions to ask (which is outlined in more detail below) and was then ready to pilot, on a member of the EPS not involved in the research.

Questions are an essential component of research to consider when developing a questionnaire. As outlined in Table Two, research literature suggests that self-completion questionnaires should include the following aspects:

Aspects to consider in self-completion questionnaires	How these aspects have been address in the current questionnaire
Specific questions rather than general ones	Questions asked about the participants' work in supporting LAC.
Highly structured, closed questions are useful for producing frequency data, which can be easier to code and analyse	Excessive qualitative information was avoided by using closed questions that had to be answered through multiple choice.
Question order	At the beginning of the questionnaire a warm-up question was asked regarding the respondent's role. An open-ended question was included at the end to give respondents an opportunity to express their views.
Wording effects/choice of vocabulary	Leading questions and complicated structures for questions were avoided. Questions were unambiguous with the majority of the questions being multiple choice
Length of the questionnaire	The questionnaire was kept to two pages (double sided) to ensure that completion time was short.

Table 2: Good characteristics of self-completion questionnaires (Robson, 2002; O'Leary & Miller, 2003; Cohen et al, 2007)

Leading on from this, Table Three below outlines how the items in the questionnaire relate to the research questions.

RQ1: Relating to level one, and the direct recipients of a service, what role could EPs have in supporting the needs of LAC?
6. How regularly are you involved in Personal Education Plan review meetings? 9. Do you feel that as a service we could provide more in supporting LAC?
RQ2: Relating to level two, and the needs of the service, what forms of involvement do EPs currently have in supporting LAC and what areas could be developed?
1. What kind of work have you carried out in the last year related to looked after children? 2. What was the context for this work? 3. Have you have worked in a multi-agency forum, and if so, what was the context for your involvement? 4. If you have been involved in supporting LAC in the last year, which other professionals were you working with? 5. Are you aware of how many LAC there are in your school(s)? 6. How regularly are you involved in Personal Education Plan review meetings? 7. Do we as a service have a policy in how we as educational psychologists support the needs of LAC? 9. Do you feel that as a service we could provide more in supporting LAC?
RQ3: Relating to level three, and the needs of the systems that support the service, what are the supporting factors and constraints for the EPS to consider in supporting LAC?
5. Are you aware of how many LAC there are in your school(s)?

6. How regularly are you involved in Personal Education Plan review meetings?

7. Do we as a service have a policy in how we as educational psychologists support the needs of LAC?

8. Do you feel you require any additional support/development in order to effectively meet the needs of LAC and work with professionals supporting them?

9. Do you feel that as a service we could provide more in supporting LAC?

Table 3: Links between the research questions and questionnaire items

Analysis

The method adopted for the analysis of the SSI data was thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which allows the researcher to explore characteristics of the content of multiple interviews as well as the frequency of similar characteristics across a data set (Joffe & Yardley, 2004) to draw conclusions regarding themes. Thematic analysis will allow for the identification, analysis and "...reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). It was chosen because of its flexibility and as a way of searching across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically the thematic analysis was based on the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), as outlined below in Table Four. Please see Appendix Two for an example of the thematic analysis process.

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.

3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the themes	Selection of vivid, compelling extracts examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature.

Table 4: A summary of the phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

In order to ascertain the trustworthiness of the analysis undertaken, two transcripts were checked for accuracy with an EP acting as an inter-rater, who used Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis for her own Doctoral thesis.

1) Definitions of all the initial codes, superordinate and subordinate themes used were offered by the current researcher.

2) The current researcher and the inter-rater worked together looking through two coded interview transcripts together and all the codes within these transcripts were discussed.

In the discussion of the interview transcripts there was broad consensus in the coding applied.

<u>Ethical considerations</u>

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist the researcher ensured that British Psychological Society (2009) and University ethical guidelines were adhered to. However there were specific ethical considerations that had to be focussed on due to the nature of the research.

When recruiting participants to complete the questionnaire, participants were informed that they could complete and submit the questionnaires anonymously. In terms of the interviews, participants were reassured that they would remain anonymous.

Informed consent was gained prior to recruiting participants for the interviews (see Appendix Five), outlining the right to withdraw (BPS, 2009) limits of confidentiality, and guarantees of anonymity in terms of the research write-up. Heptinstall (2000) highlights the difficulties in conducting research with looked after children due to the increased number of 'gatekeepers' compared to their peers. This was the current researcher's experience too, which was lengthy and time consuming. However it was an essential part of the research process.

For the two young people in care there were additional ethical issues to consider in terms of informed consent as they are deemed to be part of a vulnerable population. With other populations of under 16s parental consent is sought. However in the context of looked after children, consent was also sought from their social workers as well as from the two young people (see Appendix Six). Additionally it was essential for considerations to be made to ensure that the young people's wellbeing was maintained throughout the research process.

Finally it was important to ensure that the individual young people had not been involved in prior pieces of research, which Munro, Holmes and Ward (2005) highlight can occur with vulnerable groups.

POST-ASSESSMENT STAGE

Results

The third, post-assessment, stage of Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) needs analysis model IS now explored. This involves considering two sections of results – results from the questionnaire delivered to members of the EPS, and results from the SSIs. The meaning of these results in relation to the research questions will be considered later in the discussion section.

PART 1: Results from the questionnaires: current Psychology Service involvement

Chart One illustrates that the majority of work that the EPS is involved in when supporting LAC is school-based work which involved predominately assessments. Some direct work with LAC or their carers was also conducted, as well as some multi-agency work. However all of this additional work came through the school context. The multi-agency contexts for those who have been involved in this were PEP review meetings, Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings and Child Protection Conferences.
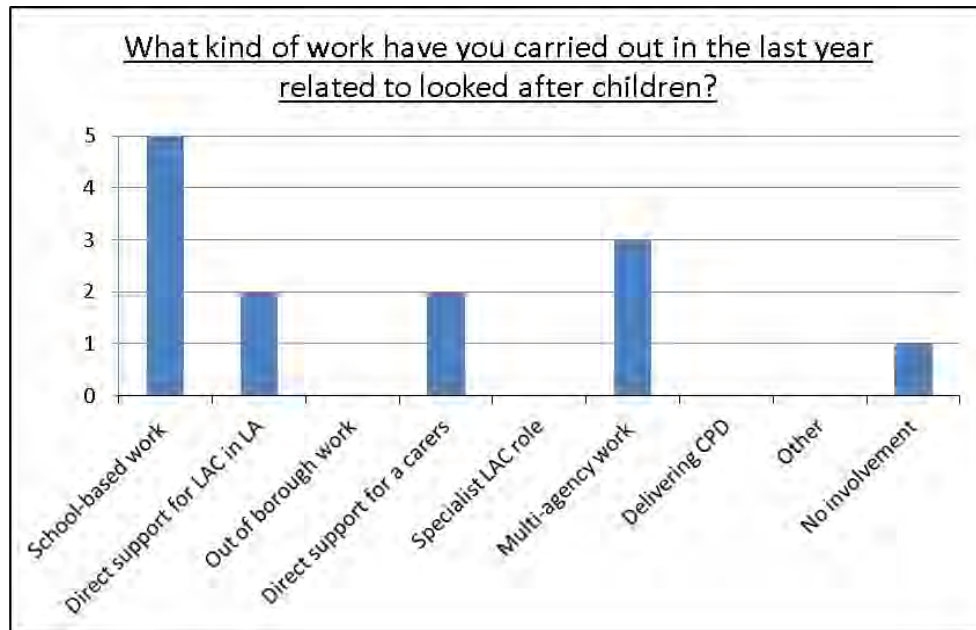
Chart 1: *Frequency of EP work involving looked after children*

Chart One illustrates that the majority of EP work involving LAC is through school-based work. EPs are currently less involved in other forms of work supporting LAC such as working with carers or in a multi-agency context.
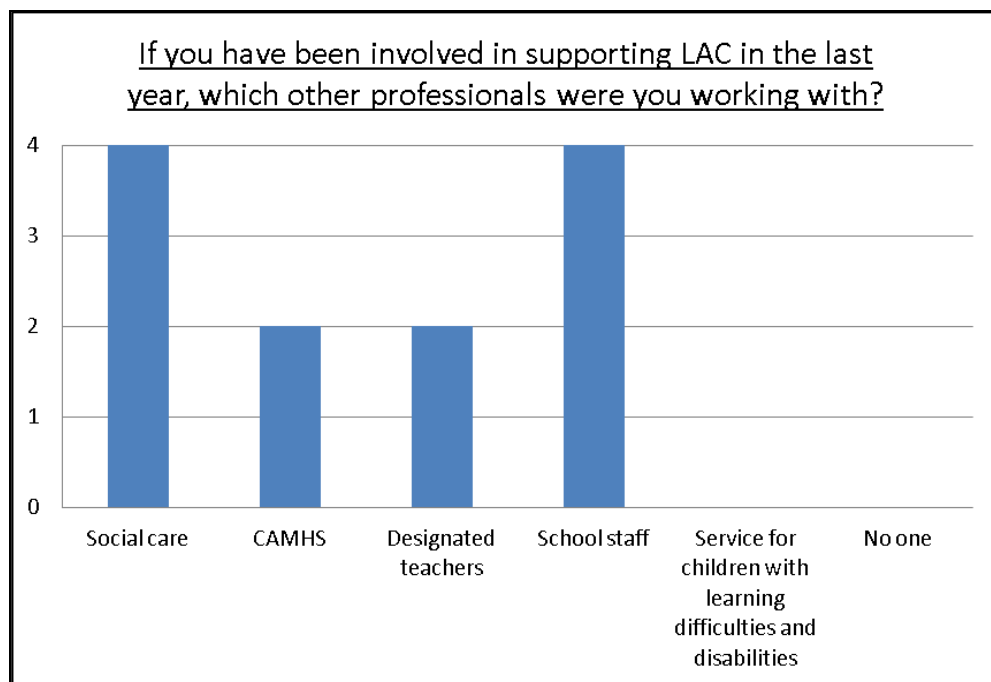
Chart 2: Frequency of multi-professional work supporting looked after children

Chart Two highlights that most of the EPS work supporting LAC is in conjunction with school staff and Social Care. Linked to this the work with Social Care was through the school which the child attends.
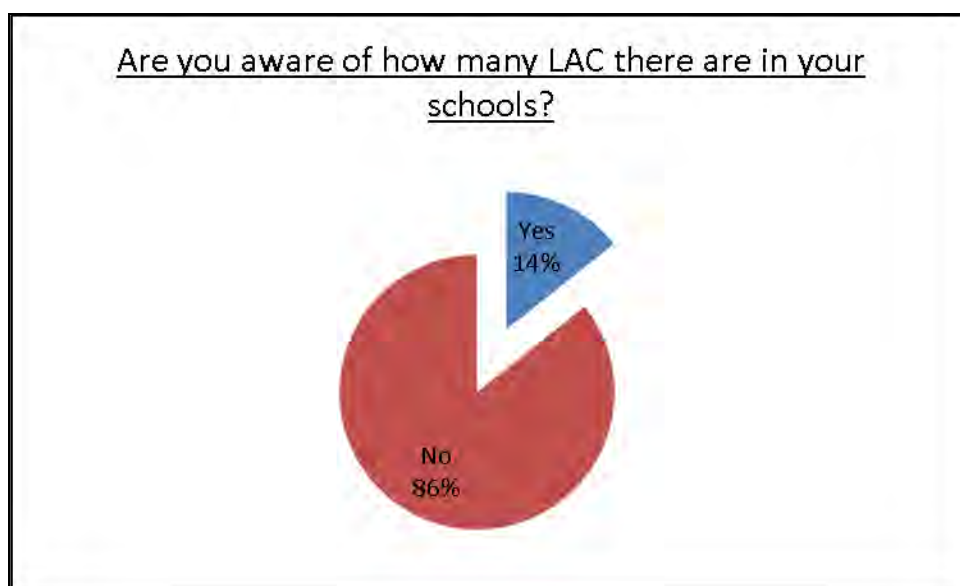
Chart 3: EP awareness of the looked after numbers in their schools

Of the seven psychologists who returned their questionnaire the majority did not know how many LAC there were in their schools. One questionnaire had written "I don't always find out – although I raise it in planning meetings and at other points in the year". This is a concern as one of the service and LA targets is on LAC and ensuring that they are discussed in such meetings. This is an area that may need further development within the EPS.

Chart 4: *Frequency of EP involvement in Personal Education Plan meetings*

All looked after children should have a PEP which is reviewed every six months. Although EPs do not have to attend these meetings it appears that the rate of involvement is very low (see Chart Four) and perhaps there is something the EPS can do to increase the number of these they were involved in or at least aware of. One respondent commented that

"Usually (I go) when I request dates from social care staff. They don't always seem to invite us by default, and we don't know it's happening" (Educational Psychologist)
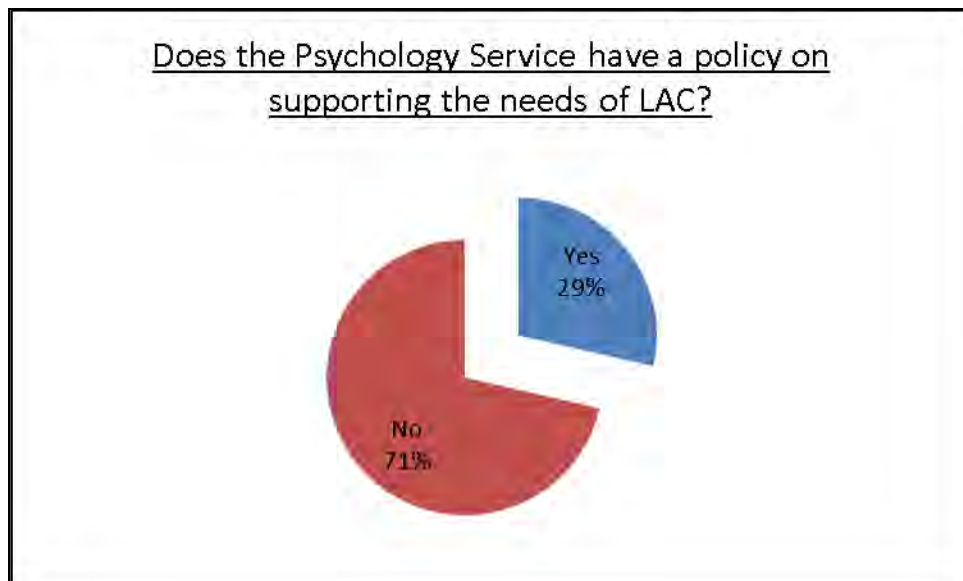
Chart 5: EP awareness of a service LAC policy

Most participants completing the questionnaire stated that the EPS did not have a LAC policy. A minority of respondents said that the service did have a LAC policy, although some of those who said 'yes' some were actually unsure. The results from Chart Five again perhaps highlight an 'in-service' need to raise the profile of LAC, to promote the importance of working with this group and to encourage the development of a LAC policy within the service.

Some respondents stated they were happy having their work with LAC supported though supervision or training. However overall the EPS respondents wanted additional development opportunities in order to meet the needs of LAC effectively and work with professionals supporting them. Revealing comments included:

"In order to work effectively we need to be part of the system supporting LAC...methods to ensure our involvement in PEP or other meetings would be helpful, particularly in secondary schools when communicating such needs/meetings etc is more difficult" (Senior Educational Psychologist)

"...as a team we need to develop a policy for working with LAC and to conceptualise what is good practice." (Educational Psychologist)

When asked 'do you feel that as a service we could provide more in supporting LAC?' Respondents gave many creative examples of possible work, including

- Supervision for the local residential home

- Foster carer training and group support

- Offering psychological input into PEP meetings

- Training for schools on aspects such as attachment

- Research and piloting of new evidence-based approaches

- More awareness of LAC in schools.

- More formal monitoring of the psychological and academic outcomes of LAC.

- To act preventively and to work in collaboration with designated teachers.

Other responses included some interesting points around profiles of LAC and of psychology and the work the EPS can provide. However overall there appears to be a particular emphasis on training and research.

"We need to raise LAC's profile and awareness of vulnerability with schools more systematically with training or possibly workshops available across the school around LAC issues (like we do for ASD)." (Educational Psychologist)

"My fear relates to others not perceiving the contributions EPs can make in supporting

LAC...Perhaps we do not do enough as a service to promote our role in this respect."

(Educational Psychologist)

From the questionnaire two main themes were identified as areas for possible development: (i) the profile of LAC within the psychology service and (ii) the profile of the psychology service/role of the EPS in supporting LAC. These will be considered in more detail in the discussion section.

PART 2: Results from the SSIs

The findings from the interviews illustrate how complex and wide reaching the challenges are in supporting LAC. In order to support the needs of LAC aspects of work need to be considered on a number of levels from the individual through to the systemic level.

This section outlines the themes which emerged from participant interviews. Table Four displays the subthemes clustered under superordinate headings and, for the purposes of transparency, indicates the percentage of participants represented in each subtheme. To support the reader in evaluating the analysis critically, participants' statements are presented as transcribed, and as closely aligned to their oral accounts as possible. See Figure Two below for the thematic map.
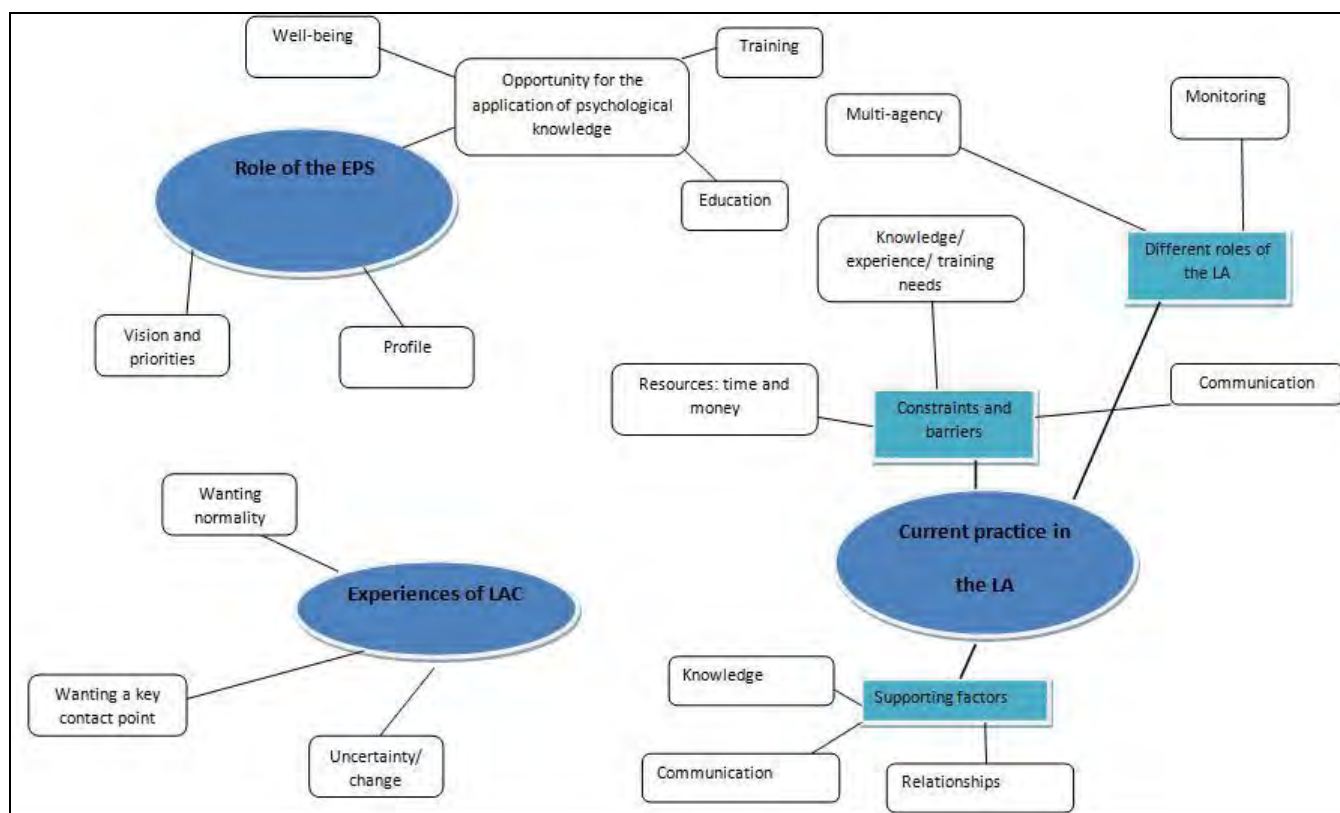
Figure 2: Thematic map of the work carried out in Silvashire LA in supporting LAC

From the eight SSIs, three superordinate themes were identified (see Table Five). In the analysis section that follows each theme is discussed in turn, using examples of data.

Themes	Percentage of participants
Experiences of LAC	
Wanting normality	25%
Uncertainty/change	37.5%
Key contact points	25%
Current practice in the LA	
Multi-agency working in the LA	50%
Constraints and barriers	75%
Supporting factors	37.5%

Role of the EPS	
Profile	50%
Vision and priorities	25%
Opportunity for the application of psychological knowledge	100%

Table 5: *Superordinate and subordinate themes identified from the interviews*

Superordinate theme 1: Experiences of LAC

In the context of Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) needs analysis this superordinate theme relates to the first level - the needs of the direct recipients of a service (i.e. LAC), as reflected by the experiences of the two young people interviewed as well as the experiences of professionals who support them. Overall the young people felt that most of their experiences in education were the same as their peers. However there were three subthemes that appeared that highlighted experiences of worry or frustration.

Subtheme A: Wanting normality

Subthemes relating to frustrations and the impact of being looked after on normal aspects of a young person's life such as socialising with peers and experiencing elements of school were revealed in the SSIs. The safeguards that are in place to support LAC appear to be a cause of these frustrations.

"The other thing that I wish could change is that we're not allowed friends around – only in the social rooms here but not in your bedrooms. But there's nothing to do. You're allowed to go over a friends' for certain amounts of time, and you get more time depending on your age. But I'd rather have friends over – I think that it's selfish that I have to always go over theirs rather than them come over here." (Young person one in care)

"The thing that's difficult is school trips. If a trip is overnight or more than one day it's so hard to sort out. By the time you've heard about the trip and got all the permission from so many people it's gone...I know the places will run out so that's one thing I've noticed my friends don't have to put up with." (Young person two in care)

Related to experiences in school there was also a desire for normality and to be able to have the same experiences as their peers. Although safeguards cannot be removed there perhaps needs to be a great awareness of the needs and experiences of young people in care so that barriers such as those highlighted above can be overcome more effectively.

Subtheme B: Uncertainty/ change

Feelings of the unknown, and experiences of change in the young people's lives and the impact these can have on school was also a subtheme raised relating to the experiences of LAC. Professional comments included:

"One of the gaps in provision is that there is a lot of movement within agencies, changes of key workers. This high level of movement with lots of different professionals and gaps in transfer can be very frustrating for schools." (Designated teacher for LAC)

"... with a child who was in care at the time, there was no real explanation why he was in care. He got really distressed and angry. They needed to tell him his rights and explain what will happen, treating him like a person and being open to him. Children need their anxieties managed, being treated like a person and being open to him, not being in a position of not knowing what is going on." (Virtual Head Teacher for LAC)

From a LAC perspective one of the young people also highlights the difficulty in changes of their situations and the anxiety this can provoke.

"Right now I don't know where I'm going to school, it's taking them so long to sort it out and it's really p*****g me off. It's annoying that there's no plan and we're supposed to go back to school next week. I just sit here not knowing what's going on." (Young person one in care)

Subtheme C: Key contact points

Due to the needs of LAC affecting their situation at home and in school, they can often experience involvement of many professionals in different contexts. However it appears from the SSIs that the young people lack a key contact point with someone they feel they can go to, to talk about issues relating to school.

"I don't really know my social worker so I wouldn't talk to them about school stuff." (Young person one in care)

"I'm kind of a quiet student, I just work stuff out for myself. I don't really like going to the teachers. I never ask for help here (the children's home) either, but they do offer." (Young person two in care)

"These kids need that continuity in their lives...one person to look out for them. They have so many people through their lives." (Virtual Head Teacher for LAC)

Summary and implications

This superordinate theme emphasises the experiences LAC go through in school and how their placements can influence their experiences in school. LAC require forms of support that promote normal childhood and young adulthood experiences, whilst having a key individual available for their support throughout expected and unexpected challenges. Whilst some of frustrations and barriers are due to safeguards put in place, such as difficulties gaining parental consent for school trips, there could be ways to manage these experiences whilst taking into account the additional constraints that are put in place to ensure that LAC are protected. This theme has implications for the practice of LA professionals – increasing awareness of individual children and young people and their needs at different points in their lives, considering them as individual children first rather than pooling all LAC into one homogenous group.

Superordinate theme 2: Current practice in the LA

This superordinate theme relates to the second level of Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) needs analysis model, with considers the needs of the service (i.e. the LA professionals supporting LAC, including the EPS). Through the interviews with LAC and the professionals supporting

LAC needs, three subthemes were revealed relating to the practices currently taking place in Silvashire LA and the EPS, and the associated constraints.

Subtheme A: Multi-agency working in the LA

It appears that there is evidence of some good multi-agency working taking place in the LA.

"If we do have a young person who is going to have a placement change we visit the school to see what would best meet their needs. We work with other professionals in those situations."

(Virtual Head Teacher for LAC)

"We also refer to CAMHS and work in partnership with a lot of other professionals." (Team Manager for residential home)

This is positive and provides a good starting point for further developments to be built upon. However there is a more dominant discourse relating to there being room for improvement in multi-agency working.

"I haven't met the LACES team, which is bad. I think it should be part of our induction, so we can work more together. Maybe they should come to one of our team meetings or run a session on one of our team days." (Educational Psychologist)

"...things would happen quicker if all the agencies were there thinking about the same

things." (Team Manager for residential home)

Although people appear to recognise the value and importance of working with other agencies there is a gap that exists between values and practice. This links to the next subtheme relating to constraints and barriers.

Subtheme B: Constraints and barriers

There were difficulties experienced around three areas of resources (time and money), communication, and knowledge within the LA.

"There's always issues in that inter-face between EPs working with social workers and for

schools, a real tension about funding and priority." (Head of Psychology and Inclusion)

"I don't know how easy it is for social workers to work with school systems and children in

the context of education. I think that the EP is ideally placed, we have the advantage over and

above the social worker in terms of supporting young people in schools." (Educational

Psychologist)

"But as with everything there were funding issues and it was scrapped." (Designated teacher

for LAC)

In this needs assessment a realistic consideration of the barriers that currently exist in the LA needs to take place in order to ensure that any developments suggested can be implemented effectively. Additionally having these barriers revealed would enable the researcher to highlight areas that the EPS could also support.

Subtheme C: Supporting factors

There were supporting factors in working with LAC discussed, including communication, knowledge and relationships.

"It's nice to talk through something, like a sounding board. She (Clinical Psychologist) gave us ideas to play with, and she was really good with staff morale. We'd talk about stuff about different kids through to specific ideas like how to increase the kids independence skills."
(Team Manager for residential home)

"What worked was that her carers fought for her to be in the right school placement. They were experienced and knew her so they knew how to support her." (Designated teacher for LAC)

"...the EP can be a useful link with the parents or carers, supporting them with challenging behaviour. Here is a small school – the EP runs drop-in sessions and supporting new teachers in working with specific students." (Designated teacher for LAC)

As with a consideration of the barriers and constraints that currently exist, the supporting factors can also help in the development of areas that the EPS could support further, specifically in the area of training. The areas of communication, knowledge and relationships can be seen in this subtheme. The importance of the role of communication needs to be considered for both working in a multi-professional context as well as when working with LAC. The areas of knowledge and relationships also need to be developed and promoted to ensure the best outcomes and support available for LAC, particularly during key periods such as transitions between schools and when preparing to leave care.

Summary and implications

It is clear that the current practice in Silvashire LA is fragmented, and although some good practice exists this is not a universal entitlement across the whole authority. From the issues raised in this superordinate theme it appears that the EPS could aid in the development of professional practice in the area of working with LAC through building on the strengths with the intention of diminishing the barriers that currently exist.

Superordinate theme 3: Role of the EPS

The current and potential role of the EPS was also revealed as a superordinate theme from the SSI. This superordinate theme relates to the third level of Altschuld and Kumar's (2010) assessment stage - the needs of the systems that support the service, including the supporting factors and constraints.

Subtheme A: Profile of the service

It appears from both the perspective of professionals within the EPS and other professionals that the profile of the service could be developed further.

> *"In my previous LA it was always part of your agenda, to give a profile of the needs of the school as well as to raise the profile of the EP within the schools. But since I've been here there's been no work at all linked to LAC." (Educational Psychologist)*

> *"Generally if schools aren't aware of what's on offer, what different agencies could provide, then we don't really know who to go to, if ask for help at all." (Designated teacher for LAC)*

> *"Work with the psychology service has normally been ok, is mainly them doing assessments in schools." (Virtual Head Teacher for LAC)*

It appears that currently the profile is somewhat restricted to the 'traditional' work and the opportunity to develop more effective ways of working has been missed.

Subtheme B: Vision and priorities

In relation to the profile of the EPS, there also appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the role the service should play in supporting LAC.

"We need an idea of what good working practice is. We need to liaise with social work, SSB (services supporting behaviour) etc. I think that any policy that is developed should be developed jointly." (Educational Psychologist)

"...what I think is now required is some psychological strategic input, looking at these vulnerable groups with a more strategic focus." (Head of Psychology and Inclusion)

Although individual EP practice might be supporting LAC there is not a whole-service approach for which the service can be known. This is despite the fact that there appear to be good opportunities for this to take place.

Subtheme C: Opportunity for the application of psychological knowledge

From the SSIs from the young people and the professionals there appears to be an opportunity for the EPS to become involved in supporting the quality of provisions and outcomes for LAC through training, supporting teachers and the application of approaches such as solution focused work and problem solving consultations.

"In secondary schools children have so many different teachers that by bringing them all together this could really help to promote resilience, share experiences around behaviour and the child's strengths, and use joint problem solving with the EP facilitating it." (Virtual Head Teacher for LAC)

"I think sometimes it would be good to have teachers know more about what it's like in places like (residential home), just to know what is going on at home." (Young person one in care)

"She had no attachment figure. I worked with her dad and her step mum – supporting them in how to give her positive attention at home and to understand attachment and how to take her behaviour and enable them to reflect on her history." (Educational Psychologist)

Not only would this promote the value of the EPS in schools where the context is the delivery of traded services, but additionally it would raise the profile of the service and develop the skills base of EPs through providing opportunities to deliver evidence-based practice in a wider context.

Summary and implications

It is clear from the subthemes raised that there is more work that the EPS can put into place in order to develop their role in supporting LAC, both in supporting other professionals but also in terms of the repertoire of work they can deliver.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a needs analysis in the area of EPs supporting LAC. The needs assessment process that has been conducted over three key stages has considered the needs of LAC in one specific LA at three levels – the needs of the direct recipients of the service; the needs of the service itself; and the needs of the systems that support the service. The results from the questionnaires and the SSI revealed some interesting findings in relation to current practice as well as identifying areas for the EPS to develop, both in their approach and practice but also in terms of the services they can offer to others.

What role could EPs have in supporting the needs of Looked After Children?

Many suggestions were put forward in the questionnaire responses regarding possible areas EPs could support, which relate to Norwich et al's (2010) work which highlights main areas EPs could work in – a supportive role, training, promoting achievement, multi-agency work and providing an overview for others. For example, findings from the SSIs and questionnaires illustrate the potential work that could be delivered by the service in promoting of LAC's education and emotional well-being (Dent & Cameron, 2003; Dennison, McBay & Shaldon, 2006; Fallon et al, 2010). Such possibilities were also revealed in the thematic analysis. One area in which EPs could support LAC could be in providing training and support to school staff, social workers and foster carers on areas of psychology such as resilience, attachment and behaviour. This supports Honey et al's (2011) point that EPs are in a good position to deliver training in order to raise teacher awareness of the experiences of LAC, and how these may impact on young people's learning and behaviour in school. The role of the EP in consultations could also be used to support the communication between individuals either in

situations where difficulties arise or in set meetings such as PEPs, or to ensure that issues affecting a child's educational progress and care placements can be considered from a psychological perspective (Davis & Cahill, 2006). This role could prove important in ensuring that the poor outcomes for this group of young people are addressed (Christmas, 1998; Jackson & McParlin, 2006; Greig et al, 2008; OFSTED, 2008; Norwich, Richards & Nash, 2010; House of Commons Education Select Committee, 2011).

In terms of the direct recipients of a service, Goddard (2000) stated that young people's views on the level of support from professionals can be a useful barometer of the success of inter-agency working. In the context of the current research it would appear that from the young people's views that inter-agency working is currently not very successful. Furthermore the results from the current research mirror some of the findings from Harker (2003) in terms of LAC feeling the need for a greater understanding from their teachers, social workers and peers. The themes from the SSIs highlight that the experiences of anxiety, frustration, wanting to be 'normal', and having someone to go to access information (and therefore address the worries around uncertainty and change) could all be effectively addressed through successful multi-agency work which considers the individuals, with specific situations and support needs. However this requires co-ordination and effective communication. EPs could support this through their consultation skills, understanding of systems and group dynamics.

What forms of involvement do EPs currently have in supporting Looked After Children?

In the context of Silvashire LA it is clear that currently the EPS is not extensively involved in supporting LAC. Within school work they have some involvement, although this appears to

be restricted to more 'traditional' EP work. Outside of the school context EPs' work supporting LAC does not appear to take place in Silvashire LA. In previous years a specialist post for LAC was created within the service but due to funding pressures this ceased. If such a post were re-introduced, time could be created for designated research and development time, as highlighted by Norwich et al (2010). This current situation is a reflection of Bradbury's (2006) findings in which LAs varied greatly in the degree to which the profession was making a unique contribution to the area of supporting LAC.

Within Silvashire EPS, the lack of a specific policy is of a concern. In order to have a co-ordinated approach and departmental vision about how psychology can support LAC a policy is desirable. Without this there is a risk that the work can become disjointed and other professionals may not see the value of involving EPs in future work. This could have implications in the context of traded services where the profile of the EPS needs to be actively promoted. From the views expressed in the questionnaire results it is felt that this needs to start by raising the important of the EP's role in supporting LAC *within* the EPS. For example, only a minority of respondents from the questionnaire knew how many LAC were in their schools. This would suggest that the current practices employed by EPs could be improved. Once issues within the service have been addressed, and the role of the EPS was proactively reviewed, will the EPS be in a good position to then raise the profile of EPs to other agencies (Davis & Cahill, 2006)?

<u>What are the supporting factors and constraints for the EPS to consider in supporting Looked</u>

<u>After Children?</u>

There are some supporting factors that appear to be already present within the LA and the EPS that could be built upon and developed in order for EPs to increase their involvement in supporting LAC. As highlighted by previous literature EPs have a good knowledge of child development and psychological theory which can be applied to the training and support of other professionals (Nicholas et al, 2003; Siegal & Hartzell, 2003; Dent & Brown, 2006; Golding et al, 2006; Peake, 2006; Fallon et al, 2010). Additionally their position in schools and in working with other professionals should be promoted to further their role in multi-agency teams and to provide the link for others.

However the role of EPs in this context needs to be carefully considered as there could be a risk of professional egocentrism taking place in which EPs view themselves as key professionals in working with LAC and other professionals in this context. Whilst this report has highlighted some interesting potential areas for work, further discussion needs take place both within the EPS and with other professionals in order to ensure that confirmatory bias is not taking place and that possible actions are realistic and appropriate. However one issue that is clear from the findings of this report and a recent Ofsted report (2011) is that working together to support the needs of LAC is currently not sufficiently in place.

The constraints that currently exist within the EPS (and therefore need addressing) relate to having a clear idea of where it is placed in the LA in supporting LAC. However to develop this, a clearer whole service vision needs to develop, after which will come the confidence to

become involved and seek out opportunities. The first step in this is to develop a service policy. Additionally due to the number of contexts in which EPs could work, there appears to be a training need within the EPS to increase clarity and confidence regarding the role they play in the LAC arena.

Conclusion

The aim of this current research was to provide initial groundwork into developing a package of support the EPS can deliver to LAC and/or those who support LAC. The research has indicated the areas of need. As highlighted in the literature, the extent and success of multi-agency working in supporting LAC could be improved (Farrell et al, 2006; Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010), with constraints and barriers being identified. The tensions of multi-agency working, as highlighted by Norwich et al (2010) and as evident in the data of this report need to be addressed both within the EPS and the development of a LAC policy as well as in multi-agency working groups that maintain shared goals and complementary practices.

In terms of professional identity and the role of EPs in supporting LAC, Randall summarises the situation concisely. "The time for reflecting on an identity crisis within educational psychology is over. There is a vital job to be done...Educational psychologists know about it and are best placed to translate the theory into practice within education. Educational psychologists can also influence policy through disseminating their own every day practice. There is real potential to influence the future for children and families. It is up to us to get on and do it." (Randall, 2010, p.93)

A new vision for EP practice needs to be developed, in which there is a reinventing of the service. EPs need to be proactive in developing a role for themselves in the changing climate of practice in order to stay current and involved in contexts other than school-based assessment work. Principal EPs need to consider this when allocating resources within the

service, and making a greater commitment to supporting identified vulnerable groups. Finally, although this paper is perhaps idealistic in what EPS work should look like, it does raise questions regarding to what extent service delivery and ethos should be determined by LA funding and resources, and how much should be driven by evidence-based psychological practice.

References

Adoption and Children Act 2002. London: HMSO.

Allison, P. & Pomeroy, E. (2000) How shall we "know"? Epistemological concerns in research in experiential education. **The Journal of Experiential Education**, 23 (2): 91-98.

Altschuld, J. & Kumar, D. (2010) **Needs Assessment: An Overview**. London: Sage Publications.

Bogden, R. & Knopp Biklen, S. (1998) **Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods (3rd Ed)**. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Borland, M., Pearson, C., Hill, M., Tisdall, K. & Bloomfield, I. (1998) **Education and Care Away from Home: A Review of Research, Policy and Practice.** Edinburgh: The Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Brace, I. (2004). **Questionnaire Design**. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Bradbury, S. (2006) Corporate parenting: A discussion of the educational psychologist's role. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 22 (2): 141-158.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. **Qualitative Research in Psychology**, 3: 77-101.

British Psychological Society (2009) **Code of Ethics and Conduct**. Leicester: The British Psychological Society.

Cameron, R.J. & Maginn, C. (2009) **Achieving positive outcomes for children in care.** London: Sage.

Care Leavers Act 2000. London: HMSO.

Care Standards Act 2000. London: HMSO.

Christmas, L. (1998) Looking After Learning: Making a Difference for Young People in Care, **Educational and Child Psychology**, 15 (4): 79-90.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). **Research methods in education (6th Ed.)**. Oxon: Routledge.

Cullen, K. & Ramoutar, L. (2003) Building fresh perceptions of a class: Turning 'horrors into lovelies'. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 20 (4): 116-130.

Daniel, B. (2006) Operationalizing the concept of resilience in child neglect: case study research. Child: Care, Health and Development, 32 (3): 303-309.

Davis, B. & Cahill, S. (2006) Challenging expectations for every child through innovation, regeneration and reinvention. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 23 (1): 80-91.

Dehnad, A., Bagherzadeh, R., Bigdeli, S., Hatami, K. & Hosseini, F. (2010) Syllabus revision: a needs analysis study. **Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences** 9: 1307-1312.

Dennison, A., McBay, C. & Shaldon, C. (2006) Every Team Matters: The contribution educational psychology can make to effective teamwork. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 23 (4): 80-90.

Dent, R. & Cameron, R. (2003) Developing Resilience in Children Who are in Public Care: The educational psychology perspective. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 19 (1): 3-19.

Dent, H. & Brown, S. (2006) The zoo of human consciousness: adversity, brain development and health. In: Golding, K., Dent, H., Nissim, R. & Stott, L. (eds). **Thinking Psychologically About Children Who Are Looked After and Adopted: Space for reflection**. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. pp.68-97.

Dent, H. & Golding, K. (2006) Engaging the network: consultation for looked after and adopted children. <u>In</u>: Golding, K., Dent, H., Nissim, R. & Stott, L. (eds). **Thinking Psychologically About Children Who Are Looked After and Adopted: Space for reflection**. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. pp.164-194.

Department for Education (2010) **Children looked after by Local Authorities in England (including adoption and care leavers) – year ending March 2010**. London: Department for Education Statistical First Release.

Department for Education and Skills (2004) **Every Child Matters: Change for Children**. London: The Stationary Office.

Department for Education and Skills (2007) **Care matters: Time for change – white paper**. London: The Stationary Office.

Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills (2000) Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care. London: Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills.

Department of Health (2000) **The Quality Protects programme: Transforming children's services 2000/01**. London: The Stationary Office.

Department of Health (2003). **Children looked after by local authorities, year ending 31 March 2002**. London: The Stationary Office.

Evans, R. (2003) Equality and the education of children looked after by the state. **International Journal of Human Rights**, 7 (1): 58-86.

Fallon, K., Woods, K. & Rooney, S. (2010) A discussion of the developing role of educational psychologists within Children's Services. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 26 (1): 1-23.

Farrell, P., Woods, K., Lewis, S., Rooney, S., Squires, G. & O'Connor, M. (2006) **A review of the functions and contribution of educational psychologists in England and Wales in the light of "Every Child Matters: change for children**. Nottingham: DfEE Publications

Garnett, L. (1994) **Education of Children Looked After**. Humberside: SSD & Education Department.

Geddes, H. (2005) Attachment and learning. **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**, 10 (2): 79-93.

Goddard, J. (2000). The Education of Looked After Children. **Child & Family Social Work**, 5 (1): 23–33.

Golding, K., Dent, H., Nissim, R. & Stott, L. (2006) Being heard: listening to the voices of young people, and their families. In: Golding, K., Dent, H., Nissim, R. & Stott, L. (eds). **Thinking Psychologically About Children Who Are Looked After and Adopted: Space for reflection**. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. pp.1-33.

Greig, A., Minnis, H., Millward, R., Sinclair, C., Kennedy, E., Towlson, K., Reid, W. & Hill, J. (2008) Relationships and learning: a review and investigation of narrative coherence in looked-after children in primary school. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 24 (1): 13-27.

Harker, R., Dobel-Ober, D., Lawrence, J., Berridge, D. & Sinclair, R. (2003) Who takes care of education? Looked after children's perceptions of support for educational progress. **Child and Family Social Work**, 8 (2): 89-100.

Hart, A. & Luckock, B. (2004) **Developing Adoption Support and Therapy**. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hartas, D. & Lindsay, G. (2011) Young people's involvement in service evaluation and decision making. **Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**, 16 (2): 129-143.

Heptinstall, E. (2000) Gaining access to looked after children for research purposes: lessons learned. **British Journal of Social Work**, 30 (6): 867-872.

Honey, K., Rees, P. & Griffey, S. (2011) Investigating self-perceptions and resilience in Looked After Children. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 27 (1): 37-52.

House of Commons Education Select Committee (2011) **Looked-after children: Further government response to the third report from the Children, Schools and Families Committee, session 2008-2009 – HC 924**. London: The Stationary Office.

Jackson, S. & McParlin, P. (2006). The education of children in care. **The Psychologist**, 19 (2): 90-93.

Jackson, S. (1987) Residential care and education. **Children and Society**, 2: 335–350.

Jackson, S. & Simon, A. (2006) The costs and benefits of educating children in care. In: Chase, E., Simon, A. and Jackson, S. (eds.). **In care and after: A positive perspective**. London: Routledge. pp.44-62.

Jackson, E., Whitehead, J. & Wigford, A. (2010) **In an EBD population do Looked After Children have specific needs relating to resilience, self-perception and attainment?** Educational Psychology in Practice, 26 (1): 69-77.

Jamieson, R. (2006) Experiencing multi-agency working first hand. **Debate CP BPS Bulletin**, 120: 27-32.

Jasso-Aguilar, R. (1999) Sources, Methods and Triangulation in Needs Analysis: A Critical Perspective in a Case Study of Waikiki Hotel Maids. **English for Specific Purposes**, 18 (1): 27–46.

Joffe, H. & Yardley, L. (2004) Content and Thematic Analysis. <u>In</u>: Marks, D. & Yardley, L. (eds) **Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology**. London: Sage Publications. pp. 69-88.

Kelly, C., Allan, S., Roscoe, P. & Herrick, E. (2003) The mental health needs of looked after children: an integrated multi-agency model of care. **Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry**, 8 (3): 323-335.

Laming, H. (2003). **Report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié**. London: HMSO.

Leigh, D., Watkins, R., Platt, W. & Kaufman, R. (2000) Alternate models of needs assessment: selecting the right one for your organisation. **Human Resource Development Quarterly**, 11 (1): 87-93.

McMurray, I., Connolly, H., Preston-Shoot, M. & Wigley, V. (2008) Constructing Resilience: Social Workers' Understandings and Practice. **Health and Social Care in the Community Special Edition: Health and Social Care Needs of Children and Young People**, 16 (3): 299-309.

McMurray, I., Connolly, H., Preston-Shoot, M. and Wigley, V. (2011) Shards of the old looking glass: Restoring the significance of identity constructions in promoting positive outcomes for looked after children. **Child and Family Social Work**, 16, 210-218.

Mental Health Foundation (2002). **The mental health of looked after children – bright futures: working with vulnerable young people.** London, Mental Health Foundation.

Mertens, D. (2005) **Research methods in education and psychology: integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches (2nd ed.)**. London: Sage.

Munro, E., Holmes, L. & Ward, H. (2005) Researching vulnerable groups: ethical issues and effective conduct of research in local authorities. **British Journal of Social Work**, 35(7): 1023-1038.

Newman, T. (2002) **Promoting Resilience in children and young people during periods of transition** [online]. Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/ic78-00.asp [Accessed 11 August 2011].

Norwich, B., Richards, A. & Nash, T. (2010) Educational psychologists and children in care: practices and issues. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 26 (4), 375-390.

Ofsted (2008) **Looked after children: good practice in schools**. London: Ofsted.

Ofsted (2011) **Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services: Silvashire Council**. London: Ofsted.

O'Leary, R. & Miller, R. (2003). Questionnaires and structured interview schedules. <u>In:</u> R. Miller & J. Brewer (Eds.). **The A-Z of social research: a dictionary of key social science research concepts**. London: Sage. pp.253-255.

Oppenheim, A. (1992) **Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement**. New York: Pinter Publications.

Peake, A. (2006) 'Like Highly Polished Mirrors': Educational Psychology and Support for the education of Looked After and Adopted Children. <u>In</u>: Golding, K., Dent, H., Nissim, R. & Stott, L. (eds). **Thinking Psychologically About Children Who Are Looked After and Adopted: Space for reflection**. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. pp.98-127.

Powney, J. & Watts, M. (1987) **Interviewing in Educational Research**. London: Routledge & Kegan.

Preskill, H. & Torres, R. (1999) The role of evaluative enquiry in creating learning organizations. In: Easterby-Smith, M., Burgoyne, J., Araujo, L. (Eds). *Organizational Learning and the Learning Organization: Developments in Theory and Practice*. California: Sage. pp.93-115.

Randall, L. (2010) Secure attachment in the future: the role of educational psychology in making it happen. **Educational and Child Psychology**, 27 (3): 87-99.

Reed, J. & Vakola, M. (2006) What role can a training needs analysis play in organisational change? **Journal of Organisational Change Management**, 19 (3): 393-407.

Richardson, G. (2002) The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. **Journal of Clinical Psychology**, 58 (3): 307-321.

Robson, C. (2002) **Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers (2nd Edition)**. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Sempik, J., Ward, H. & Darker, I. (2008) Emotional and behaviour difficulties of children and young people at entry into care. **Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry**, 13 (2): 221-233.

Siegal, D. & Hartzell, M. (2003) **Parenting from the inside out: how a deeper self-understanding can help you raise children who thrive**. New York: Penguin Putnam.

Silvashire Children's Trust (2011) **Silvashire Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 Needs Analysis**. Silvashire: Silvashire Children's Trust.

Sinclair, I., Baker, C., Wilson, K. & Gibbs, I. (2005) **Foster children: where they go and how they get on**. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Skuse, T. & Ward, H. (2003) **Outcomes for Looked After Children: Children's views of Care and Accommodation**. An Interim Report to the Department of Health. Loughborough University: Centre for Child and Family Research

Social Exclusion Unit (2003) **A Better Education for Children in Care**. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Stanley, N., Riordan, D. & Alaszewski, H. (2005) The mental health of looked after children: matching response to need. **Health and Social Care in the Community**, 13 (3): 239-248.

Stott, L. (2006) Holding it all together: creating thinking networks. In: Golding, K., Dent, H., Nissim, R. & Stott, L. (eds). **Thinking Psychologically About Children Who Are Looked After and Adopted: Space for reflection**. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. pp. 37-67.

Taylor, C. (2006) **Young people in care and criminal behaviour**. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Wagner, P. (2000) Consultation: Developing a comprehensive approach to service delivery. **Educational Psychology in Practice**, 16(1): 9-18.

Waters, A. & Vilches, L. (2001) Implementing English Language Teaching innovations: a needs analysis framework. **English Language Teaching Journal**, 55 (2): 133-141.

Winter, K. (2010) The perspectives of young children in care about their circumstances and implications for social work practice. **Child and Family Social Work**, 15: 186-195.

Woolam, K. (2010) Research in brief: Appreciative inquiry and looked after children. **Division of Educational and Child Psychology Debate**, 134, 20-23.

Appendix 1: Profile of LAC in Silvashire

The Children's and Young People's Plan reported that there has been "...a significant increase in the number of children looked after in public care." (Silvashire Children's Trust, 2011, p.25). In June 2011 Silvashire had 167 looked after children (Ofsted, 2011).
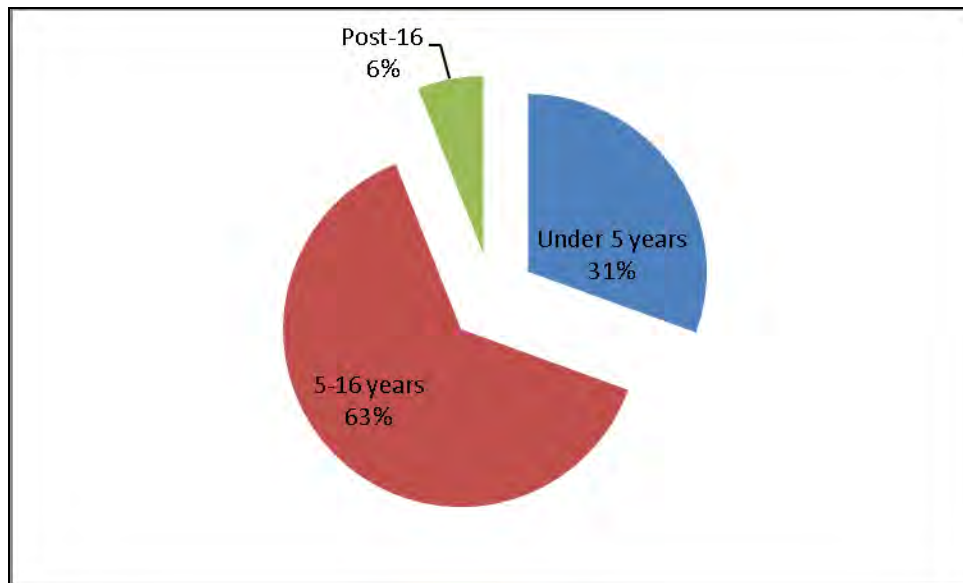
Chart 6: The age distribution of LAC in Silvashire, June 2011 (Ofsted, 2011)
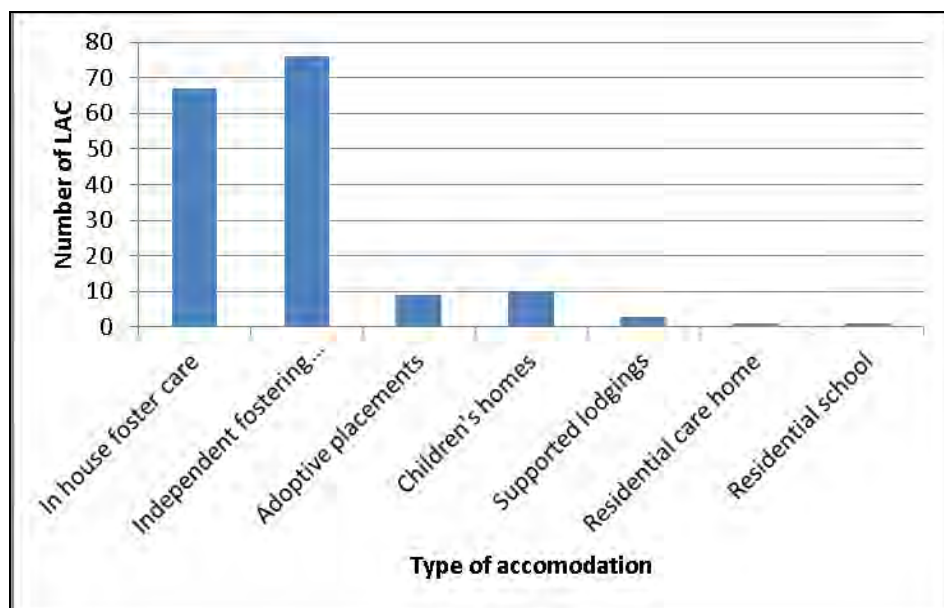
Chart 7: Placements of LAC in Silvashire, June 2011 (Ofsted, 2011)
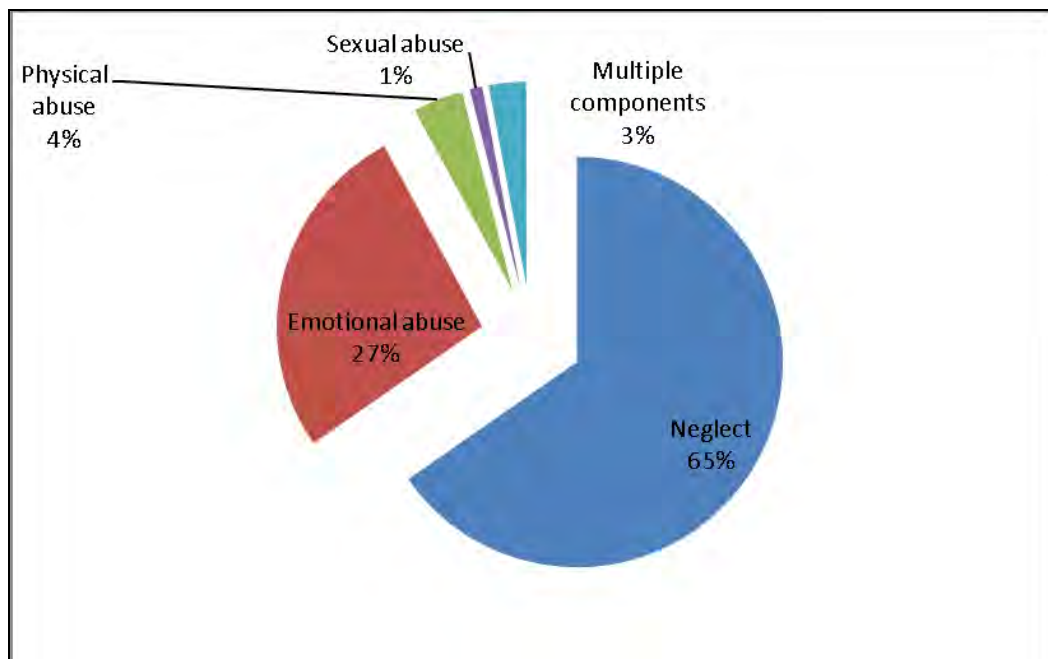
Chart 8: Reasons for children coming into care in Silvashire, June 2011 (Ofsted, 2011)

The three charts highlight that the LAC population in Silvashire is similar to the national picture (DfE, 2010). However Silvashire LA has been deemed unable to adequately support this population's needs.

Appendix 2: Example of the thematic analysis process

This appendix includes:

- example of the thematic analysis process on an excerpt of transcript; and

- units of the subtheme 'opportunity for the application of psychological knowledge'

In the process of coding, each transcript was transferred into a two-column table, with the main body of text on the left hand side, and space for codes to be recorded next to the text on the right hand side. Each transcript was coded line-by-line, and also in 'chunks' of meaningful text, where the meaning or importance of a comment only became clear in reference to further responses.

Having completed all the initial coding of transcripts, the component elements of each code were considered and examined for consistency or overlap with other codes. This provided the opportunity to begin defining and labeling the codes, and to link these together into groups. Some initial codes were abandoned or collapsed together at this point due to significant overlap with others.

Once an initial hierarchical structure was defined, the emergent codes were compared and contrasted with the research questions, in order to ensure that only those codes that significantly contributed towards the initial research brief were pursued. Themes and sub-themes then emerged from the coding groups, linking and informing the data together, and

also meaningfully linking back to the research questions. An example of the thematic analysis process is shown in the table below.

1) Interview Extract → →	→ Initial Codes
"There are big issues with the teenage girls who are looked after and their self-esteem. But they all have their individual needs. So with teenagers, placements can break down often because of their behaviour, which is compounded by their past experiences...with very young children they may have problems settling into nurture you know. But in my experience the earlier support is put in place the better the outcomes. It's also the kids with statements that have placement breakdowns and multiple school changes. They just need that one piece of stability"	Needs at different life stages Psychological needs Considering individual needs Stability Understanding of behaviour Psychological needs Needs at different life stages Support Stability Stability
2) Initial Codes → →	**→ Subthemes**
• Considering individual needs • Stability • Understanding of behaviour • Psychological needs	• Application of psychological knowledge • Uncertainty/change for LAC • Application of psychological knowledge • Application of psychological knowledge

• Needs at different life stages • Support	• Application of psychological knowledge • Profile of EPS

Example of the thematic analysis process on an excerpt of transcript

<u>Units of the subtheme 'opportunity for the application of psychological knowledge'</u>

Participant 4: We could also help by using something like solution focussed approaches. But with that kind of work you could also get entangled in child protection issues, someone might disclose things and you don't know what you're working on or supporting.

Participant 6: With the kids emotional needs it's about knowing who to talk to which young person. It's about having avenues rather than brick walls.

Participant 1: To support their wellbeing we've got one mental health worker, who's a counsellor. We used to have one that did art therapy but she left and with the cuts she hasn't been replaced. Specific support to LAC includes short term and long term therapy.... The longer work is for traumatic experiences. But when a child has therapeutic work they do better in school.

Participant 2: ...to help empower her and give her confidence...

Participant 1: All of them will have a personal education plan. The older ones only have one a year, they don't really like to be involved in that kind of stuff as they get older...The education worker also supports areas such as attainment, behaviour issues, out of borough placements that might also need more support from the EP.

Participant 1: I sit on fostering panels, emphasising the importance of education. I also help with attendance and exclusion, so we try and get fixed term exclusions instead of permanent, which has worked so far.

Participant 1: The only way we're going to improve attainment is to reduce the movement and instability, these always impact on attachment. So we try really hard to minimise changes of placement. Especially once a young person is in year 10, it's then really important to try and keep the child there, it's such an important time. Everything is done to try and keep the school placement stable.

Participant 2: With working with psychologists it really depends on the child. Most recently the work was linked to a statement. The school would use the EP in particular situations, to

seek an alternative opinion. Often the needs of a looked after child overlap with other needs specific to the school, such as behaviour, so specific work because they're looked after doesn't necessarily get covered. Although one thing that is often prominent are discussions about placement stability and attachment.

Participant 4: I think the commissioning agenda or planning meeting you need to explore the needs of LAC and ask what percentage of LAC are in your schools. If they're achieving the school should know this, and we need to know how schools are monitoring the social and educational inclusion and if we could support this. I imagine they probably just look at their grades and say 'they look like they're doing alright'. But it's about looking at individual child in context. What is done to make the child feel like they belong and that they feel that school is a safe haven? If there is a large gap in a school we could do work like training on attachment and positive psychology.

Participant 6: The kids education gets more support in school rather than here. I'm not really sure what we do in that department.

Participant 1: But I think we need more one-to-one tuition for individual needs, especially if there is a move as that's when a child will miss out on their education.

Participant 5: They need the emotional support. For example, the unaccompanied children, the asylum seekers and the extreme abuse cases.

Participant 1: School staff find these hard, especially the difficult behaviours. But we do have specialist schools that can help with smaller classes than mainstream, although places here are limited.

Participant 2: But perhaps for class teachers rather than designated teachers some kind of input about the needs of LAC would be beneficial.

Participant 3: In secondary schools children have so many different teachers that by bringing them all together this could really help to promote resilience, share experiences around behaviour and the child's strengths, and use joint problem solving with the EP facilitating it.

Participant 7: I think my last meeting (PEP) was about two months ago.... I think it was ok, I felt quite good after it. They just talked about how I was getting on in school and stuff.

Participant 8: Your PEP is a thing where you sit there and discuss things, I don't know. I don't really see the point of them but they're alright.

Participant 1: There are big issues with the teenage girls who are looked after and their self-esteem. But they all have their individual needs. So with teenagers, placements can break

down often because of their behaviour, which is compounded by their past experiences. With very young children they may have problems settling into nurture. But the earlier support is put in place the better the outcomes.

I am a (please tick):   Senior EP [ ]   EP [ ]   TEP [ ]

<u>Role of the EP with regard to looked after children</u>

1. What kind of work have you carried out in the last year related to looked after children?

    a. School-based work (consultation, meetings, assessments)
    b. Direct support for a young person or child (in Silvashire)
    c. Direct support for a young person or child (out of borough)
    d. Direct support for a carers
    e. Specialist LAC role
    f. Multi-agency work to provide a psychological perspective
    g. Delivering CPD
    h. Other
    i. No involvement

2. If you have been directly working with a young person or child, what was the context for this work?

    ....
    ....
    ....
    ....

3. If you have worked in a multi-agency forum, what was the context for your involvement?

    a. Early years
    b. LAC Interest group
    c. Supporting a child's transition
    d. Personal Education Plan review meeting
    e. Support group for carers
    f. TAC meeting
    g. Rapid response meeting
    h. MAM

4. If you have been involved in supporting LAC in the last year, which other professionals were you working with?

    a. Social care

    b. CAMHS

    c. Advisory teachers

    d. School staff

    e. LDD

    f. No one

5. Are you aware of how many LAC there are in your schools?

    a. Yes

    b. No

6. How regularly are you involved in Personal Education Plan review meetings?

    a. Always

    b. Sometimes

    c. Never

7. Do we as a service have a policy on how we as educational psychologists support the needs of LAC?

    a. Yes

    b. No

8. Do you require any additional support/development in order to effectively meet the needs of LAC and work with professionals supporting them?

    a. Yes (if so, what)?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    b. No

9. Do you think that as a service we could provide more in supporting LAC?

    a. Yes (if so, what)?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    b. No

Introduction

- Explain rationale and procedure

- Explain confidentiality and limits of confidentiality

- Check participant has signed consent form

- Ask if the participant has any questions

Rapport building and background details

- Could we start by you telling me a bit about yourself?

- What is your job title and can you outline your main duties

- How many years have you been in your current post?

- How does your role bring you in contact with LAC?

[RQ1: Relating to level one, and the direct recipients of a service, what role could EPs have in supporting the needs of LAC?]

- Can you give me an overview of the type of reasons why you might work with a child in care and how this supports their needs?

- What are your perceptions about the challenges LAC face during their time in care/ in education?

- What are the key facilities/services LAC requires from Children's Services? (accommodation/child protection, etc.). Which of these are the most difficult to access?

- How is information passed on/communicated to the young people?

- Do you know how the key transition points for LAC are supported?

- Do you know how young people's resilience is supported?

- What do you feel are the gaps in their support?

- What would you like see change?

- How are LAC currently supported educationally by the LA?

- How are LAC currently supported emotionally by the LA?

- Are the educational and emotional needs of LAC something that you consider in your role?

- To date what do you feel is the psychology service's profile is in supporting the educational and emotional needs of LAC?

[RQ2: Relating to level two, and the needs of the service, what forms of involvement do EPs currently have in supporting LAC?]

Communication/co-ordination

- Whose responsibility in your department is it to know about looked after children?

- Which staff would know a child was looked after and how are decisions made about who knows? What would they know?

- How is communication between relevant parties managed/planned?

- In your experience, to what extent is the eCAF (Common Assessment Framework) used?

- How is specialist help/involvement with the psychology service accessed? What are your thoughts regarding the speed of access/perceptions of supportiveness?

- To what degree do you currently work with the psychology service to support LAC?

- How are LAC currently supported educationally by the LA?

- How are LAC currently supported emotionally by the LA?

- Can you give an example of a time you have worried with the Psychology Service that you felt was successful?

Multi-agency working

- Who do you liaise with within the Psychology Service? Is this relationship satisfactory? What is the level/frequency of contact? Is this contact formal or informal?

- Would you like to see your work with the Psychology Service change? If so, how?

- How is information transferred between yourself and the Psychology Service and what/where is information recorded?

- How would you describe the relationship between your agency and Psychology Service in supporting LAC?

[RQ3: Relating to level three, and the needs of the systems that support the service, what are the supporting factors and constraints for the EPS need to consider in supporting LAC?]

Service Delivery

- How are young people referred to/come into contact with you/your service?
- How do you refer children on to other professionals/services including the Psychology Service? What are key issues/problems with the process?
- In your opinion does anybody fall through the gap? Why do they fall through the gap?
- What are the key areas of support you/your staff/ LAC require? What are the barriers to accessing these?
- Do you experience any issues around funding and resources?
- Areas that you feel LAC are currently well supported? Can you give me an example?
- Areas that you feel LAC are not well supported? Can you give me an example?

The corporate parenting role

- Should one organisation take sole responsibility for the corporate parenting role? What are the issues around this?
- In your view are Children's Services providing an integrated service for looked-after children? Could this be improved?
- Have you experienced any tensions when working with other professionals? Does it impact upon services to children?

Other general issues/questions

- What is your overall view on the effectiveness of Children's Services in terms of provision for LAC?
- Do you have any ideas for better organisation/integration/multi-agency working within specific departments or for Children's Services as a whole?

- Do you receive any specialist or additional supervision or training for your work with LAC?
- In your experience do you feel other professionals/agencies require additional training or support?

General prompts

- Can you tell me a bit more about that?
- What do you mean when you say . . .?

Debrief

"Those were all my questions, is there anything else that you would like to add? Do you have any questions about what we've been talking about?"

Thank you for your time

Appendix 5: semi structured interview guide for LAC

<u>Introduction</u>

- o Explain my role and what my job is.

- o My research is into how the psychology service can work with other professionals to help support children and young people who are in care.

- o I'm interested in hearing about your experiences in school and being in care

- o The things you say will form part of my research but I will make sure you are anonymous in the paper. Nothing will be included that could identify you, the school/college you go to or your residential placement.

<u>What are your perceptions of how you are doing in school (Likert scale), in the following areas?</u>

- o Going to school

- o Friendships – changes, ups and downs

- o Learning – subjects, what you enjoy/don't enjoy about school

- o Changes in school – exams, transitions

<u>I'm interested to know how you feel being in care can affect your experiences in school and in learning, for example…</u>

- o Things you find hard/easy?

- o Support you like to currently get/would like to get in the future

- o Support you don't currently like/wouldn't like to get in the future

- o (e.g. help with homework?)

<u>I'm interested to know how about any people who you think have supported your progress in school</u>

Thinking about your educational experiences can you tell me about any specific people who you feel helped or got in the way of your progress? How have they helped or not helped?

What educational support have you have in your care placements? For example…

- o Quiet room/space to study
- o Someone taking an interest in your education
- o Key books to help with your studies
- o Access to a local library
- o Computers to use for homework
- o Having someone come along to school events
- o Being able to go on educational school trips

What improvements would you like to see to your experiences in school? For example…

- o More encouragement
- o Improved facilities in my residential placement
- o Someone here to listen to me
- o Raising my social worker/teacher/peer awareness

General prompts

- Can you tell me a bit more about that?

- What do you mean when you say . . .?

Debrief

"Those were all my questions, is there anything else that you would like to add? Do you have any questions about what we've been talking about?"

"Would you like a copy of my report once it's written up?"

Thank you for your time

Dear

<u>Re: Participation in research into the role of Psychology Services in supporting Looked After Children</u>

I am writing to you regarding a piece of research I am intending to carry out and would like you to be involved in.

This research forms part of a requirement of my doctoral training to qualify as an Educational Psychologist. In partnership with the School of Education at the University of Birmingham I am researching the role Psychology Services can play in supporting Looked After Children. It will also inform a later piece of research conducted by Dr xxxxxx.

Why is the study being done?

The Psychology Service is keen to extend the range of services they can provide to all children and young people. Although Looked After Children are often supported through their school Educational Psychologist we wanted to explore how the service could support them out of school.

The focus of the research is to collect the views of different stakeholders who work with Looked After Children to develop a coherent narrative regarding how Psychology Services can support their various needs.

What will I have to do?

I would like to interview you about the support and contact you have with Looked After Children and other professionals who support Looked After Children, as well as your thoughts about the potential areas of support Psychology Services could provide.

You will need to be interviewed by myself, which will take approximately 45 minutes. This interview can be arranged at a time and place convenient to yourself.

Do I have to take part in this study?

It is up to you whether or not you take part in this study. If you decide now, or at a later date, that you do not wish to participate in this research you are free to withdraw. Your details will remain confidential and your data will be anonymous.

If you would like to take part in this research please could you return the slip below or email me at the email address below.

How to contact the researcher

Rebecca Kirkbride: rebecca.kirkbride@xxxxx.gov.uk   or telephone xxxxxxxxx.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Kirkbride

Trainee Educational Psychologist

_____

Consent slip

I give my consent to be interviewed about my experiences of working with Looked After Children.

Name:……………………………………………………………………………………

Signed:…………………………………………………………………………………..

Dear

My name is Rebecca, and I am a Trainee Educational psychologist.

I am writing to you as I would like to talk to you about your experiences of working with the adults around you (e.g. your social worker, the staff at xxxx, school) for a piece of research I am doing for University.

<u>What do I want to know about this?</u>

I want to hear about your experiences as the Psychology Service in Silvashire wants to improve how we support young people, to enjoy and achieve in your learning and development.

<u>What will you have to do?</u>

I will come to see you and ask you some questions. There are no right or wrong answers, I just want to hear about your experiences. It will take about ½ hour to 45 minutes. If there are any questions you don't want to answer that's ok.

The things you will tell me will be made anonymous – so people won't know who you are and what answers you give. I won't use your name or any other details that could identify you.

<u>Do I have to do it?</u>

No, it's totally up to you.

If you would like to talk to me tell xxx and she will call me to arrange a time for me to come and see you.

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter

Rebecca