

VOLUME 2

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORTS

by

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Chapter 1
Introduction to the Volume

Chapter 1

Introduction to Volume 2

1. Introduction

The thesis for the Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Birmingham is presented in two volumes. This is the second volume of the thesis, which consists of four professional practice reports (PPRs) reflecting different aspects of the work I undertook, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), during my second and third years on the Doctoral programme (2010 – 2013). This chapter presents an overview of each PPR. Although each PPR is a reflection of different aspects of my practice, collectively they illustrate the development of my practice and my professional experience over the past two years.

2. Local Authority Context

The local authority in which I completed the second and third years of my professional placement was a West Midlands Metropolitan Borough. The local authority is a large metropolitan borough within the West Midlands with a diverse range of ethnic minority groups and some areas of high social and economic deprivation (Census, 2011). The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) became a

part-traded service (AEP, 2011) in April 2011 and is 'bought into' by schools prior to the start of each financial year. The introduction of trading has broadened the remit for EPs within the service to undertake a variety of activities, such as providing guidance and strategies for whole school approaches; training for schools and other services; working more closely with Early Years providers and also undertaking more research within educational settings to improve the learning and achievement of all children rather than focusing solely on the area of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

3. Summary of the Professional Practice Reports

The PPRs in this volume cover a range of aspects of EP practice which arose from work that I was involved within the EP service. The Currie Report (Scottish Executive, 2002) which reviewed the provision of EP services in Scotland, identified that EPs' work ranged from the level of the individual child or family, the school or establishment, to the local authority or national level. This Report also suggested that across these levels, EPs engaged in five core activities: consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research.

Table 1 illustrates how the PPRs in this volume relate to these core activities and different levels of work, by providing an overview of the focus of each PPR based on the University guidelines and the levels of EP work that they address.

Table 1.

University Guidelines	Professional Practice Report	Level of Involvement	Core Activity
Evaluation of specified intervention within a designated setting which aims to improve social, emotional and behavioural development	1. A small scale exploratory study of staff perceptions of the purpose and nature of the nurture group	Group School	Consultation Research
Work with a child or young person with complex needs	2. An exploration into the use of a systemic cognitive-behavioural approach to support a young child with complex needs	Individual child Family	Assessment Intervention
Reporting the TEP's involvement in a planned change process in an organisation	3. Applying an Appreciative Inquiry approach to support organisational change in a group of Children's Centres	Organisation	Training Intervention
An account of the TEP's contribution to applied psychology practice within a defined professional specialism	4. Ethnicity and Identity: The role of a bilingual trainee educational psychologist in supporting families of Pakistani origin with little or no spoken English	Individual Organisation Local Authority	Research

Details of Professionals Practice Reports

3.1 Professional Practice Report One: A small scale exploratory study of staff perceptions of the purpose and nature of the nurture group

Nurture Groups (NGs) are educational provisions used to support children who exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties whilst also facilitating engagement and access to the curriculum (Cooper and Lovey, 1999). This PPR describes a small scale qualitative study which focused on a Key Stage One NG provision, within a mainstream primary school, that was based on the classic 'Boxall' NG model (Boxall, 2002). The study elicited key characteristics of the provision that were perceived to support the children's social and emotional development along with the role that EPs have in supporting NGs.

3.2 Professional Practice Report Two: An exploration into the use of a Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural approach to support a young child with complex needs

This PPR focuses on the assessment of the needs of a young child through the development of a Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural formulation (Dummett, 2006), using the information gathered during the assessment process. The use of a Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural (CB) approach is examined in regards to the assessment and formulation of a five year old boy referred to the Educational Psychology Service for complex emotional and behavioural difficulties. The paper concludes by critically reflecting on the assessment and formulation processes, with a view to understanding the implications of this work for my future professional practice when assessing, formulating and implementing a therapeutic intervention.

3.3 Professional Practice Report Three: Applying an Appreciative Inquiry approach to support Organisational Change in a Group of Children's Centres

This PPR presents a study undertaken to facilitate organisational change within a group of participants from four different Children's Centres that were located within areas identified as highly disadvantaged, based on Census, 2011 information. The managers and deputy managers, along with the area Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) supporting these Children's Centres participated in an Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987) approach to organisational change and development in order to focus on improving the way in which children's social and emotional needs are addressed and supported within each setting. This PPR discusses the role of EPs in organisational change and development and how this aspect of the role can be developed through implementing an organisational development framework such as Appreciative Inquiry.

3.4 Professional Practice Report Four: Ethnicity and Identity: The Role of a Bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist in supporting Families of Pakistani Origin with little or no spoken English.

This paper focuses on my experience as a bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist (EP) working with families from minority ethnic groups who have little or no spoken English. An action research study (Stringer, 1999) was conducted with parents of Pakistani origin using semi-structured interviews with parents regarding support services involvement, experiences of support received in their home language, and their expectations of EP service involvement. This PPR served to

enhance my awareness and enabled reflection on my own role as a minority ethnic professional.

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Chapter 2

Professional Practice Report One

A Small Scale Exploratory Study of Staff Perceptions of the Purpose and Nature of the Nurture Group

Abstract

The role of Nurture Groups (NGs) is to support children who exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties whilst also facilitating engagement and access to the curriculum (Cooper and Lovey, 1999). This paper focused on a Key Stage One NG provision, within a mainstream primary school, that was based on the classic 'Boxall' NG model (Boxall, 2002). The study explored teachers' perceptions of the purpose and nature of the NG through a single-case design (Yin 2009). The study employed a mixed methods approach to gathering data, through the implementation of 'My Class Inventory' questionnaire (Fraser and Fisher, 1983) and semi-structured interviews with three staff members involved with the NG.

The study elicited key characteristics of the provision that were perceived to support the children's social and emotional development, including: positive relationships between NG staff and the children in the group, the secure and consistent environment, regular assessment and monitoring of children, and well-planned transitions. Staff perceptions also demonstrated that the NG was viewed as an inclusive provision which was regarded to positively benefit the whole school ethos, to create a nurturing school. Staff perceived EP support as a valuable resource for whole school training and capacity building. Some recommendations are suggested in regards to the role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in supporting NGs in view of the developing role of the EP and the increased emphasis towards measuring impact of involvement.

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on a small scale study which explores teachers' perceptions of the purpose and nature of a Key Stage One Nurture Group (NG) based in a mainstream primary school located within a metropolitan borough in the West Midlands. The school is situated in an area of socio-economic deprivation which impacts on the social and emotional well-being of some of the children entering the school. The NG provision was established over eight years ago in order to provide a secure and supportive environment for the school's most vulnerable children.

This paper begins, in Section 2, by outlining the theoretical rationale of NGs and research exploring the key purpose and nature of NGs as provisions to support children's social and emotional needs. Section 3 describes the design and methodology of the current study and Section 4 presents the results from the information gathered. Section 5 discusses the results in relation to previous research findings, Section 6 summarises the discussion and Section 7 suggests some recommendations regarding the professional practice of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in supporting NGs in view of the developing role of the EP and the increased emphasis towards measuring impact of involvement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Origins and Rationale of Nurture Groups

Nurture Groups (NGs) were established in the 1970s by Marjorie Boxall, an Educational Psychologist (EP), who worked with children displaying a range of social and emotional difficulties. NGs were created for children, from socially deprived backgrounds, who had not experienced adequate care from their primary care-givers in the earliest years of their life (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). The rationale for NGs is based on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980), which asserts that in order for children to develop successful relationships with others during childhood, and also in later life, they need to experience an emotional relationship with their primary care-giver that involves an exchange of comfort, care and pleasure (Bowlby, 1988). It is argued that the quality of interactions in the early years, between the child and their primary care-giver, can determine how successfully adjustment is made to school (Bowlby, 1965; Coopersmith, 1967).

Bowlby's account of attachment disorders are drawn on, by Bennathan and Boxall (2000), to account for the various psychological characteristics displayed in children who could benefit from NG provisions. Winnicott (1964) suggests that 'good enough' care, where the care-giver is attuned to and can satisfy the needs of the child, is important for the child's sense of feeling 'lovable' and viewing others as reliable and accessible. This is identified as the child forming a 'secure attachment' with the care-giver (Geddes, 2006).

On the other hand, an unsatisfactory relationship with the care-giver can result in the child viewing themselves as unworthy and creates low self-esteem and a sense of mistrust in others (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000). This can result in 'insecure attachment' behaviour (Ainsworth et al. 1978) which is demonstrated through three different attachment behaviours.

- Avoidant Attachment: Contact with care-giver is avoided when child's anxiety is aroused.
- Ambivalent Attachment: The child shows indifference to the care-giver during attachment related stress.
- Disorganised attachment: The child does not have consistent strategies for dealing with stress.

(Geddes, 2006, p.104)

These insecure attachment patterns are argued to impact upon the psychological development of the child's transition from an egocentric view of the world to the degree of social competence that is needed when commencing school. Egocentrism relates to the Piagetian notion that very young children do not have the ability to fully communicate or understand the views of others (Neale, 1966). Egocentrism gradually decreases as the child begins to socialise and confront viewpoints that differ from their own (Piaget, cited in Neale, 1966 p.98). However, children who develop insecure attachment behaviour lack appropriate social awareness and communication skills to form effective relationships with others (Cooper, Arnold and

Boyd, 2001). These are the social, emotional and behavioural skills that are focused on and developed within NGs.

In reference to children who have attachment disorders, Carr (2006) states that:

‘Children need a small group of adults who provide consistent care over an extended period with whom to form a hierarchy of selective attachments. These adults should be responsive to their [the children’s] cues and available at times of tiredness or distress or in stressful, challenging circumstances.’

(Carr, 2006, p.944).

This view signifies the importance of consistency and security for children with attachment disorders in order to help them access a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs whilst also recognising their individual needs for developing their emotional and social skills and improving their self-esteem within a safe and stable environment (Cooper and Lovey, 1999). NGs are viewed as provisions which are set up with the primary purpose of supporting such vulnerable children; however the nature and purpose of NGs has changed and developed over time.

2.2 Nurture Group Variations

Since their conception in the early 1970s, different variations of the NG model have developed from the model set out by Boxall. A two year national study on the nature and distribution of NG provision in England and Wales (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 1999) identified the defining factors of a NG, which Bennathan and Boxall (2000) subsequently formulated into the following six guiding principles of NGs (Appendix 1):

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem.
4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children.

Cooper, Arnold and Boyd's study (1999) also identified four variations of the NG model (see Table 2, Appendix 2):

- Classic 'Boxall' NGs, which follow the model established by Marjorie Boxall (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000).
- Variants of NGs, which differ in some features to the classic NG, but adhere to the core NG principles.
- Groups referred to as NGs but do not conform to Boxall principles.
- Aberrant NGs, which contravene or undermine core NG principles.

The classic 'Boxall' NG focuses on providing a safe environment with the conditions necessary for children to develop emotionally, socially and cognitively (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005). The children are selected from mainstream classes depending on their level of need and return to their class regularly whilst attending the NG. The aim of the NG is for the children to gradually reintegrate back into their mainstream class, which is usually after around three to four terms (Bennathan and Boxall, 1996).

Placement of children within the NG is facilitated through administering the Boxall Profile (an assessment used to ascertain the child's social, emotional and behavioural functioning, and developmental status, Cooper, 2004). In order to provide children with intensive levels of support, two adults, a teacher and teaching assistant, are required, with groups of no more than 10 - 12 pupils. Doyle (2005) uses a case study to vividly portray how supporting the social and emotional development of children enables academic achievement and successful reintegration into mainstream classes. She asserts that:

'Nurture Groups exist as a bridge between the needs of mainstream classrooms and children who, for a wide variety of reasons, are without the basic essential early learning experiences that enable them to function socially and emotionally at an age-appropriate level.'

(Doyle, 2005, p.3)

This view emphasises the importance of communication between home and school, ensuring that parents understand the purpose of the NG and why their child is placed in this provision. Thus, it could be argued that teachers' understanding and perceptions about the purpose and nature of the NG is significant in ensuring the needs of children are accurately understood. Uncertainty in teachers' views about the NG's purpose and a lack of clarity about its aims, could lead to children's needs not being addressed or supported appropriately, which in turn could cause detrimental effects to both teachers' and pupils' emotional wellbeing.

2.3 The Effectiveness of Nurture Groups

The long-term effects of NGs have gained increasing interest in recent years which could be linked to the previous Government's focus on early intervention and improving outcomes for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), which featured heavily in their educational policies during the late 1990s and the 2000s (DfEE, 1997, DfES, 2001; DfES, 2004a and DfES, 2004b). The revival of NGs has led to a number of recent studies relating to the effectiveness of NGs as a provision to support vulnerable children with SEBD and attachment difficulties.

A longitudinal study conducted by Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997) that followed 308 children who had been placed in NGs during 1984-1998, found that 87 per cent of the sample returned to mainstream classes within one year, and 83 per cent of the original sample were still in mainstream education in 1995, with only 4 per cent needing additional Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision. This study identified the positive long-term impact of NGs on children's learning and achievement. However the results could not be evaluated against the outcomes of a comparison group of children with SEBD that did not attend NGs as the groups were not matched. Thus, interpreting the effectiveness of the NGs based on differences in outcomes was problematic.

Nevertheless, comparing the outcomes from Iszatt and Wasilewska's study to other studies that have looked at the effect of NGs on pupil outcomes, show that NGs increase pupils' self-confidence, self-awareness and the ability to manage their behaviour, alongside improved academic skills (Doyle, 2001; Cooper & Lovey, 1999).

Another large-scale, longitudinal study, by Cooper, Arnold and Boyd (2001), was also unable to report statistical significance when comparing outcomes for pupils in NGs with two matched groups due to variations among the groups. The large-scale studies undertaken to report the effectiveness of NG have, up to the present time, been unable to substantiate the positive outcomes of NGs, with descriptive statistics due to the difficulties with matching control groups and the lack of randomised studies, which are argued to be the 'gold standard' in assessing the effectiveness of an intervention (Robson, 2011). On the other hand, it could be argued that NGs are, by design, socially complex environments, which cater for children who present with a range of needs and the implementation of a randomised controlled trial would raise ethical considerations and centre findings on outcomes of the intervention, rather than the processes behind the success or failure of the intervention (Pawson and Tilley, 1997).

2.4 Teachers' Perceptions of Nurture Groups

The role of teachers and their understanding and commitment to the nurturing process is vital for the success of the provision (Boxall, 2002). Limited evaluation has been undertaken regarding the impact of NGs on teachers and schools; however staff perceptions, in questionnaires and interviews, have indicated their own increased capacity to support children with social and emotional difficulties (Binnie and Allen, 2008) and their views on the improvements in children's self-management, social skills, self-awareness, confidence and skills for learning (Cooper and Tiknaz, 2005).

Alongside the benefits for vulnerable groups of children, studies have also demonstrated that school staff members also perceive the NG as affecting whole school ethos by creating a 'nurturing school' environment. (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001; Binnie and Allen, 2008). Other studies, such as Cooper and Whitebread (2007) and Reynolds et al., (2009) have identified this as a significant feature of schools with effective NG provisions.

Binnie and Allen (2008) reported that school staff felt that whole school development was further enhanced by support from Local Education Authority and working collaboratively with agencies to support schools and families. Staff views about the importance of support from both within the school and from external providers was highlighted in a pilot NG project conducted in Hampshire (Sanders, 2007) where staff felt that having an EP attached to the NG was helpful for:

'...coordinating the initiative within the LEA, communicating about groups to other LEA agencies, contributing towards the strategic planning for future groups, providing ongoing support for nurture group staff, and contributing to quality assurance'.

(Sanders, 2007, p.58)

Staff perceptions elicited from this study highlighted the importance of support from EPs and other agencies in order to build staff confidence to work with the most vulnerable children.

The outcomes of NG studies overall should be contained within the broader context that NGs have undergone a revival in the last two decades and research into staff perceptions (along with parent and pupil perceptions) has only increased over the

past few years, without rigorous matching and controlled studies being conducted thus far. Thus, it is useful to view outcomes of these studies as a starting point for more in-depth investigations into the purpose and nature of NGs.

2.5 The Current Study

The current small scale study aims to explore staff perceptions of the nature and purpose of a classic 'Boxall' NG provision for a group of vulnerable Key Stage One children, presenting with a range of needs and difficulties. This NG is led by a manager and assistant who have managed the provision since its establishment in 2003. The provision can support a maximum of 12 children, providing intensive learning experiences to aid academic achievement alongside the development of social, emotional and behavioural skills to facilitate successful reintegration into mainstream classes.

The focus of this study was developed through discussion with NG manager, who was concerned that the social and emotional development and awareness of the children in the NG appeared to show little improvement despite the focus on these skills through the curriculum. These views contrasted with the school's SENCo and Head Teacher who felt that the NG was an extremely effective provision and that concerns about a lack of improvement were due to the particular needs of the current children placed within the NG.

The differing staff views of the effectiveness of the NG appeared to be an appropriate starting point to gain an understanding about the nature and purpose of the provision and what it offered before any further strategies could be offered. Thus, the focus of

this study was to explore staff views held about nature and purpose of the NG in order to support the development and effectiveness of the NG.

3. Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Focus

The current study employs a single case study design, using a mixed methods approach to data collection (Robson, 2011), to undertake an exploration of this provision. The study focuses on gaining different teachers' perspectives on the nature and purpose of the NG, in order to explore how the children's social and emotional needs are addressed. The study will aim to elucidate staff perceptions of the NG to facilitate the development and improvement of the NG as a provision to support vulnerable children.

The research questions that this exploratory study aims to address are:

1. What are the teachers' views about how the Nurture Group supports the social and emotional development of vulnerable children?
2. What do the teachers view as the key characteristics of the Nurture Group?
3. How do the teachers perceive the children to be included in the wider school community?

3.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were accounted for by ensuring participants were fully informed about the research being conducted both verbally and through an information sheet (Appendix 3). The confidentiality and anonymity of participants was maintained through gaining informed consent (Appendix 4). The data gathered was kept securely and only accessible to the researcher, with voice recordings being deleted and written notes shredded, once the report was completed. The completed report would be discussed with participants and, with their agreement, would then be distributed to other members of the school.

3.3 Epistemology

This study is informed by a pragmatic philosophical stance (Robson, 2011) which *'seeks a middle ground between philosophical dogmatism and scepticism'* (Robson, 2011, p.28). This approach views knowledge as both constructed and based on the reality of the world; where meaning is tentative and changes over time (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Pragmatism asserts that the research problem should determine the methodological approaches used (Robson, 2011), rather than adhering to a particular paradigm. Cohen et al., (2011) state that: *'Pragmatism adopts a methodologically eclectic, pluralist approach to research,'* (Cohen, et al., 2011, p.23) which enables the use of a 'mixed methods' approach (Denscombe, 2008). This position corresponds to the methods utilised within this study, where both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, in order to triangulate the information

gathered and to address both the 'what' and 'how' research questions within this study.

3.4 Methodology

This study employs a single case design (Yin, 2009) which focuses on exploring the NG provision in one primary school, to elicit views around how the social and emotional needs of the children are addressed, in order to identify areas for developing and improving the support within the NG. This approach allows an in-depth analysis of a specific area and enables the mixed method approach to data collection to be utilised.

This study used a quantitative method of data collection: My Class Inventory – Short Form (MCI-SF) and a qualitative method of data collection: Semi-structured interviews with staff involved with the NG.

3.5 Quantitative method

3.5.1 *My Class Inventory – Short Form*

My Class Inventory – Short Form (MCI-SF) is a quantitative method for measuring pupil and teacher perspectives on the learning environment (Fraser and Fisher, 1983). This measure was used as it is as reliable and valid as more time intensive measures (Chavez, 1984 and Fraser, 1986). MCI-SF is made up of 25 items and is used to measure primary-aged pupils' and teachers' perceptions of their classroom learning environment. The form can be used to measure both actual and preferred views of the learning environment.

MCI-SF comprises 5 scales:

- Cohesiveness - extent to which children are friendly and helpful towards each other;
- Friction – extent of tension and arguments between children;
- Difficulty - extent to which children find the work difficult;
- Satisfaction – extent to which children like their class;
- Competition – extent to which children perceive an atmosphere of competition in the classroom.

The answers to the 25 questions are given by circling 'yes' or 'no'. The responses are then scored using a scoring key (either 1 or 3) and invalid responses are scored 2. Scale totals are recorded at the bottom of the questionnaire (see Appendix 5 for examples of completed preferred and actual MCI-SF questionnaires).

3.6 Qualitative Method

3.6.1 *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Semi-structured Interviews were conducted, at the school, with the NG manager, NG Assistant and the SENCo. The interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes each and focused on eliciting their views on:

- Their roles and involvement with the Nurture Group.
- The support offered by the Nurture Group and the children it could most benefit.
- The impact of the Nurture Group on the School as a whole.

The semi-structured interview schedule can be found in Appendix 6.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Results: My Class Inventory – Short Form (MCI-SF)

The MCI-SF questionnaires (actual and preferred) were completed by the NG manager, NG assistant and the school SENCo. The 5 scales were individually scored on the questionnaires.

Figure 1 shows the actual views of the learning environment, and Figure 2 shows the scores from the preferred views MCI-SF Questionnaire. All 3 staff members indicate a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment within the NG, although the NG manager

and assistant do not view high levels of cohesiveness, and both perceive that children experience the classwork as difficult. The SENCo's role is not based within the NG as it is a strategic role. From her perspective, the NG is viewed as quite cohesive and the difficulty of work is not perceived as challenging to the same extent as that viewed by the NG staff.

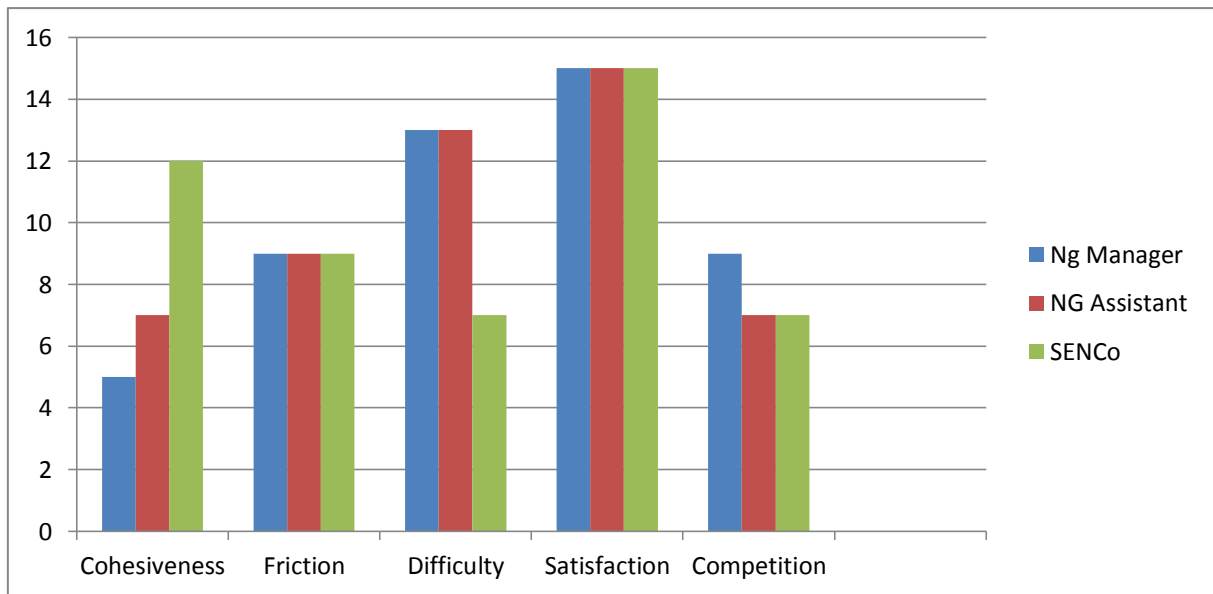


Figure 1. Actual views of learning environment, scores from MCI-SF Questionnaire

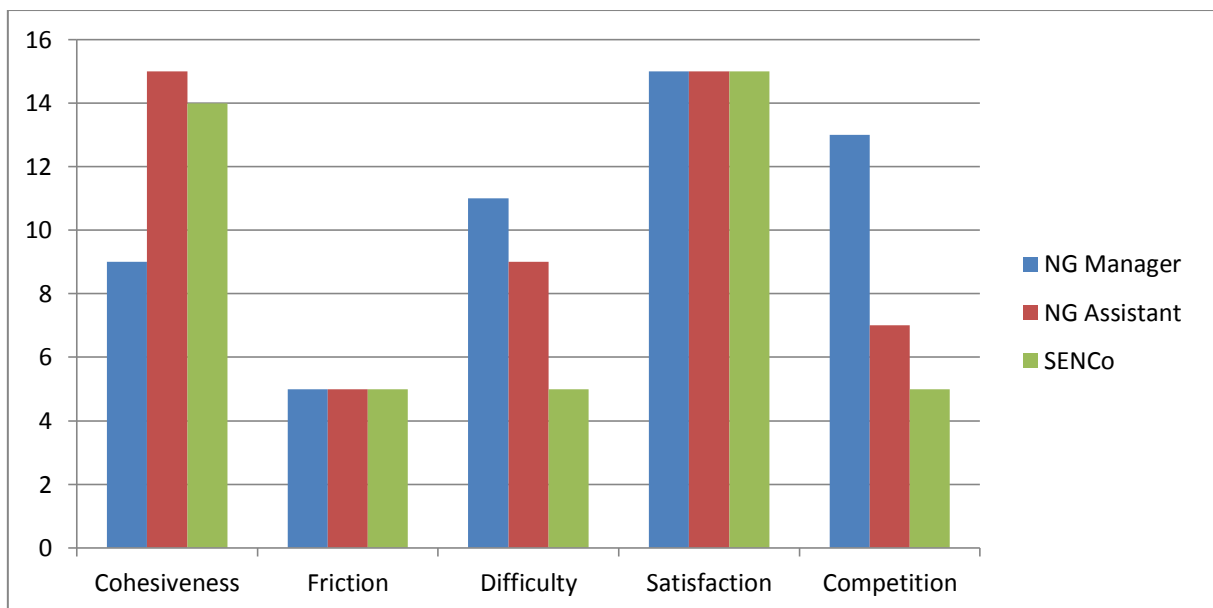


Figure 2. Preferred views of learning environment, scores from MCI-SF Questionnaire

Figure 2, shows the preferred views of the learning environment. Again, other than satisfaction and cohesion, there is a contrast of views, particularly between the NG manager and the SENCo in respect of cohesiveness, difficulty and competition.

Whilst the SENCo's views show greater preference for more cohesiveness, less difficulty in the work children undertake, and less competition within the classroom, the NG manager shows a preference for an increased level of difficulty in the work and a more competitive classroom.

As previously mentioned, these differences could be based upon the difference of roles, the NG manager is intrinsically part of the NG and may want the children to be stretched academically, in order to fulfil their potential, whereas the SENCo has a broader view of the school and views the achievement of the children in the NG in relation to the extent to which children in full time mainstream classes can achieve academically. These results will be discussed further in the next section.

4.2 Qualitative Results: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured Interviews were conducted, with the NG manager, NG Assistant and the SENCo. The interviews were transcribed (Appendix 7) and then thematically analysed, using the 6 phase approach as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006). These phases are:

1. Familiarisation with data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes

5. Defining and naming themes
6. Reporting themes.

At Phase 3, emergent themes were coded (Appendix 8) and then grouped into superordinate themes (Appendix 9), which overarched several overlapping and interconnected ideas. Table 3 shows the superordinate themes elicited from the three semi-structured interviews conducted.

4.3 Limitations of the Methods

4.3.1 MCI-SF Questionnaire

It may have been useful to gain views from a larger sample of teachers within the school and also from pupils and parents, in order to compare views and surface any contradictions that may have arisen. Also, the similarity of wording in the statements used in both questionnaires could have caused confusion and inaccurate responses from participants. However, staff reported that they found the questionnaire quick and easy to use and did not experience difficulties in completing it.

4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The thematic analysis of interviews is a subjective experience which is affected by the researcher's view of the world. Although, this is regarded as a limitation, Gibbs

(2007) suggests that: '*coding is how you define what the data you are analysing are about.*' (Gibbs, 2007, p.38). Thus, the themes that emerge are used to capture a significant idea related to the research questions, which links to the pragmatic epistemology underpinning this study, where the research is driven by practice and not by the needs or preferences of the researcher.

Table 3.

Superordinate Theme	Summary from Semi-Structured Interviews
Structure and content of Group	Providing a secure base for children to learn from, maintaining consistency and supporting both academic and nurture needs.
Needs and supportive interventions	The Group was described as catering for a spectrum of needs, whilst taking account of individual needs, and providing additional, intensive support to ensure academic progress.
Inclusion	Children are involved in every aspect of the whole school community by attending visits, assemblies and enrichment days. Also, misconceptions about the purpose of the Group have been overcome, thus it is not viewed as an exclusionary provision.
Reintegration to mainstream	Reintegration is viewed as the main purpose of the Group and careful assessment (using Boxall Profile and Reintegration scale) is undertaken to check when children are ready to begin to reintegrate fully back into their class. Emphasis is also placed on assessment and tracking academic attainment in order to provide evidence of progress and impact.
Staff support and training	The staff request support and training, however there is a dearth of training available locally. The NG can receive EP support as school can now buy in the service.
Community Issues	The school serves a community which faces many challenges which has an impact on the children in the school; however the NG has mostly been positively received by parents.

Superordinate themes emerging from the semi-structured interviews

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how the NG was viewed, from different teachers' perspectives, in regard to the provision's nature and purpose, in order to support the development of the NG to increase its effectiveness of meeting the social and emotional needs of the children.

This section discusses the findings emerging from all the information gathered. Each research question is addressed in turn for coherence and clarity.

5.1 Research Question 1

What are the teachers' views about how the Nurture Group supports the social and emotional development of vulnerable children?

The interviews with staff highlighted the importance of the NG being a comfortable and secure environment for the children to learn in. Careful assessment of individual children's needs and creating positive links with parents and families were perceived as key factors in promoting social and emotional development in the children. The importance of staff-child relationships on children's development was also identified as a key supportive factor in the NG provision, which is regarded in the literature as the children's secure attachment to the NG staff (Colwell and O'Connor, 2002). Other research studies have also stated that relationships with teachers can positively influence children's development and behaviour, despite challenging home

environments (for example, Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001; Campion, 1992; Lyndon, 1992).

The environment of the NG is perceived as a significant factor, by all three teachers, for supporting the children's emotional and social needs. Boxall (2002) asserts that the central objective of a NG is to provide the children with a safe and secure environment that connects home and school. This relates to the notion of a secure base, where the emotional bonds between child and care-giver help reduce anxiety in the child. However, it is argued, that a secure base can also be adapted to practice within an institution, such as school, where containment, security and consistency can support the child's ability to manage anxiety (Geddes, 2006).

The social and emotional needs of the children within this NG are reported to be identified through individual assessment before entering the NG and during their time in the NG, including reintegration back into the mainstream class. Colwell and O'Connor (2002) suggest that the Boxall Profile is a useful tool in aiding the identification of children who could benefit from NG provision. Bennathan (1997) also states that its use is facilitated through the profile being easy to administer and not categorising children. However, as a non-standardised measure there is no reliability or validity data to support its use (Howell, 2010), and only trained practitioners would understand its rationale and application.

The links between home and school are also perceived to be important in promoting the development of children. During the semi-structured interviews it was mentioned

that parents gave positive feedback about the NG and were happy for siblings to attend the NG if needed. The link between home and school is emphasised within NG research, as the provision aims to bridge the gap between both environments. Cooper and Whitebread (2007) found that some parents asked for parenting advice from NG staff and modelled their interactions with their child on the NG teachers' behaviour. Bennathan (1997) also reports that staff model positive behaviour with children that parents use as a basis for their interactions with their child. This emphasises how significant the role of NG staff is in ensuring the provision effectively promotes the needs of all the children.

5.2 Research Question 2

What do the teachers view as the key characteristics of the Nurture Group?

The perceptions of all three teachers showed a high degree of concurrence about the main characteristics of the NG, which included: offering a secure base for vulnerable children, providing boundaries, learning to 'do school', socialisation skills, developing relationships and developing their early skills. Competing for the NG staffs' attention was an issue that was reflected within the semi-structured interviews, where teachers showed an awareness that children can become overly dependent on the NG staff. Geddes, (2006) suggests that ambivalent attachment difficulties can lead to a dependence on the teacher which needs to be handled appropriately, to help the

child to feel confident in developing their autonomy. The reliability and consistency of support is key here, which was clearly identifiable through the interviews.

The MCI-SF questionnaire responses showed a high level of satisfaction with the NG, however the NG manager and assistant did not view high levels of cohesiveness, and both perceived that children experienced difficulties in classwork. These views could stem from the staff working closely with the children and being aware of the children's ability to complete academic work. The SENCo's views suggest that work is not too difficult and cohesion and satisfaction are highly rated. From the preferred view, she rates friction, difficulty and competition as low, in comparison to the NG staff who view competition and the difficulty of the work as higher, which could suggest that they would like to encourage the children to gain academically from the NG as much as the emotional and social development.

The variation in views regarding the difficulty of work, levels of competition and cohesion could suggest that the purpose of the NG is viewed differently by the SENCo: as a provision that focuses on social and emotional development; however the NG staffs contrasting views may highlight the need to show effectiveness of the NG through pupils' academic achievement. These contrasting views were noted for follow up discussions with staff members in order to clarify the NGs main purpose to ensure that it focuses on achieving its objectives as effectively as possible.

5.3 Research Question 3

How do the teachers perceive the children to be included in the wider school community?

The semi-structured interviews elicited many responses from the staff regarding the inclusion and transition of children to and from the Nurture Group. In line with the classic 'Boxall' NG provision, children remain in daily contact with their mainstream class and enjoy spending time with peers during whole class activities, assemblies and enrichment activities.

The school and parents increased knowledge about the NG is perceived to have enabled the children to be included successfully within the school, whilst ensuring that they continue to receive nurturing support from the school. One of the key benefits of having a NG within a mainstream school is shown to be the effect it has in the ethos of the entire school, and to the extent of spreading nurturing activities into the community too (Lucas, 1999). This can be viewed here through the teachers' descriptions of the schools' recognition of the needs of the children within their classes and the Nurture Group.

Many research studies have highlighted the benefits of a whole school nurturing approach and the positive impact it has on everyone within that community in reducing exclusion and promoting social and emotional development (for example, Doyle, 2003; Binnie and Allen, 2008 and Cooper and Whitebread, 2007). However, it

is also noted that successful inclusion and reintegration of pupils from NG to mainstream class also depends upon the integrity of the provision (Cooper and Tiknaz ,2005).

The SENCo also mentioned the importance of having EP support, during the interview, to ensure wider school training and understanding about the needs of the children in the NG. This view was also asserted by Sanders (2007) during the pilot NG project, which regarded the LEA and EPs as important external resources that are needed, especially when NGs are being set up. It is significant that this study was undertaken at the request of the SENCo, who stated that she valued EP input in the NG and felt that reassured by the support the EP could offer.

6. Conclusion

This small scale exploratory study has elicited teachers' views about the factors perceived to effectively facilitate the NG:

- Building positive relationships between NG staff and all the children in the Group;
- Providing a comfortable, secure and consistent environment;
- Children are monitored, reviewed and assessed to ensure appropriate needs are addressed;
- High levels of satisfaction and cohesiveness within the Group;
- Transitions, reintegration and inclusion are well managed and incorporated in all aspects of whole school activities.

These elements correlate with findings from previous studies and the findings have also highlighted the importance of group cohesion and satisfaction in being part of the NG.

The contrasting views about the primary purpose of the NG demonstrated how effectiveness within one school can be perceived differently depending on staff roles, responsibilities and understanding of what 'achievement' means. In this study, teachers' views appeared to differ based on their level of involvement with the NG and this study could be used as a springboard for further discussion about clarifying the purpose and nature of the NG and facilitating ways to further enhance its effectiveness in supporting the school's most vulnerable children.

7. Recommendations for EP Professional Practice

This study highlights the need for EP involvement with NGs, as they were formed by EPs on psychological theory, that can become obscured as models deviate in structure and focus. Thus, it is critical that the theoretical foundations should remain at the forefront of the provisions ethos. As an early intervention approach, EPs can offer support through training and guidance that aims to keep NG practitioners' knowledge and skills updated.

Fallon, Woods and Rooney (2010) argue that the changing and developing role of EPs, including the commissioning of EP services, means that evaluating the EPs

involvement is necessary to measure impact. Offering support and training to NG practitioners and whole schools that have NG provisions can provide opportunities for EPs to contribute to an intervention that can demonstrate the impact of the EPs involvement, by measuring the subsequent outcomes for children and also through evaluation of school staff views on training and support offered by the EP. This can also provide further evidence for the effectiveness of NGs in supporting the social, emotional and behavioural development of the most vulnerable children within the school community.

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Appendix 1

The six principles of nurture groups

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally

In nurture groups staff respond to children not in terms of arbitrary expectations about 'attainment levels' but in terms of the children's developmental progress assessed through the Boxall Profile Handbook. The response to the individual child is 'as they are', underpinned by a non-judgemental and accepting attitude.

2. The classroom offers a safe base

The organisation of the environment and the way the group is managed contains anxiety. The nurture group room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of the children's relationship with each other and with the staff. The nurture group is organised around a structured day with predictable routines. Great attention is paid to detail; the adults are reliable and consistent in their approach to the children. Nurture groups are an educational provision making the important link between emotional containment and cognitive learning.

3. Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem

Nurture involves listening and responding. In a nurture group 'everything is verbalised' with an emphasis on the adults engaging with the children in reciprocal shared activities e.g. play / meals / reading / talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and thought about as individuals, so in practice this involves noticing and praising small achievements; 'nothing is hurried in nurture groups'.

4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication

Language is more than a skill to be learnt, it is the way of putting feelings into words. Nurture group children often 'act out' their feelings as they lack the vocabulary to 'name' how they feel. In nurture groups the informal opportunities for talking and sharing, e.g. welcoming the children into the group or having breakfast together are as important as the more formal lessons teaching language skills. Words are used instead of actions to express feelings and opportunities are created for extended conversations or encouraging imaginative play to understand the feelings of others.

5. All behaviour is communication

This principle underlies the adult response to the children's often challenging or difficult behaviour. 'Given what I know about this child and their development what is this child trying to tell me?' Understanding what a child is communicating through behaviour helps staff to respond in a firm but non-punitive way by not being provoked or discouraged. If the child can sense that their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. The adult makes the link between the external / internal worlds of the child.

6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children

The nurture group helps the child make the difficult transition from home to school. However, on a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes, e.g. between sessions and classes and between different adults. Changes in routine are invariably difficult for vulnerable children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support.

Appendix 2

Table 2.

Nurture Group Variant	Key Features of Group	Significance of Variation
Classic Boxall Nurture Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matches model established by Boxall and Bennathan (2000) and Boxall (2002). • For KS1 and KS2 pupils. • Inclusive educational provision. • Supports pupils' reintegration to mainstream classes. • Focus on educational, social, emotional and behavioural development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows key underpinning principles and retains all the core features of a NG.
New Variant Nurture Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain core principles and features of classic model • Differ in structure and / or organisational features • Can serve a cluster of schools located in same geographical region • up to KS3 pupils • Focus on educational, social, emotional and behavioural development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to the original NG model, retaining core features and principles of a NG.
Groups Informed By NG Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often depart completely from classic model • Can take form of lunch/ break-time group • May be run by single individual / non-teaching adult • Activities have social and developmental focus only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides social and emotional support but with limited focus on educational development, which could cause pupils to fall behind academically.
Aberrant Nurture Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear NG name • Contravene or undermine key principles of classic model • Lack educational and/ or developmental focus • Emphasis on containment and control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address any principles or retain features of the classic model, and promotes a negatively distorted view of NG provision.

Nurture Group variations (Cooper and Whitebread, 2007, p.176-178)

Appendix 3

Educational and Child Psychology Service
EPS Address

8th November 2011

Project Information Sheet.

Research Title: A small scale exploratory study of staff perceptions of the purpose and nature of the Nurture Group.

Dear Colleague

My name is Snah Islam (Trainee Educational Psychologist) and I am undertaking a small scale Nurture Group project based within your school. The emphasis for this project was developed through discussion with your school Educational Psychologist (Lisa Taylor) and will focus on understanding the purpose and nature of the Nurture Group in order to gain a clear picture of the role of the provision.

As part of the project, I will be gathering information about the Nurture Group through:

- My Class Inventory – Completed by staff involved with the Nurture Group;
- Interviews with three members of staff involved with the Nurture Group.

I will analyse the information gathered and will then report back the findings to staff involved with the Nurture Group and also to the school Educational Psychologist.

I will be audio recording the interviews, but the recording will only be accessed by me, for the purpose of analysing the information. No names or personal details will be stored with any of the information gathered (written or audio recorded).

Before conducting the interview, I will explain how your information will be used and an informed consent form will need to be signed if you are happy to proceed with the interview.

If you are not happy to proceed with interview, or would like to withdraw your participation at any point during or after the interview you are free to do this, and I shall ensure that any information gained from you is not used.

Once all the information is analysed, I shall be in contact with you to arrange a convenient time to discuss the findings and possible interventions which may support the work you are already undertaking within the Nurture Group.

If you have any questions, or need to contact me following the interview, please feel free to contact me at ***** Educational and Child Psychology Service on: ***** or email: snah.islam@*****.gov.uk. Thank you.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SNAM' with a stylized flourish underneath.

Mrs Snah Islam - BA (Hons), Dip Psych (Open), PGCE Primary, MBPsS.

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 4

Educational and Child Psychology Service

EPS Address

Informed Consent Form

Research Title: A small scale exploratory study of staff perceptions of the purpose and nature of the Nurture Group.

Name of Researcher: Snah Islam (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

1. I have read and understood the attached information sheet giving details of the project.
2. I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher (Snah Islam) any questions about my involvement in the project, and understand my role in the project.
3. My decision to consent is voluntary and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason.
4. I understand that the data gathered in this project will form the basis of a report or other form of publication or presentation.
5. I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

Participant's signature:..... Date:.....

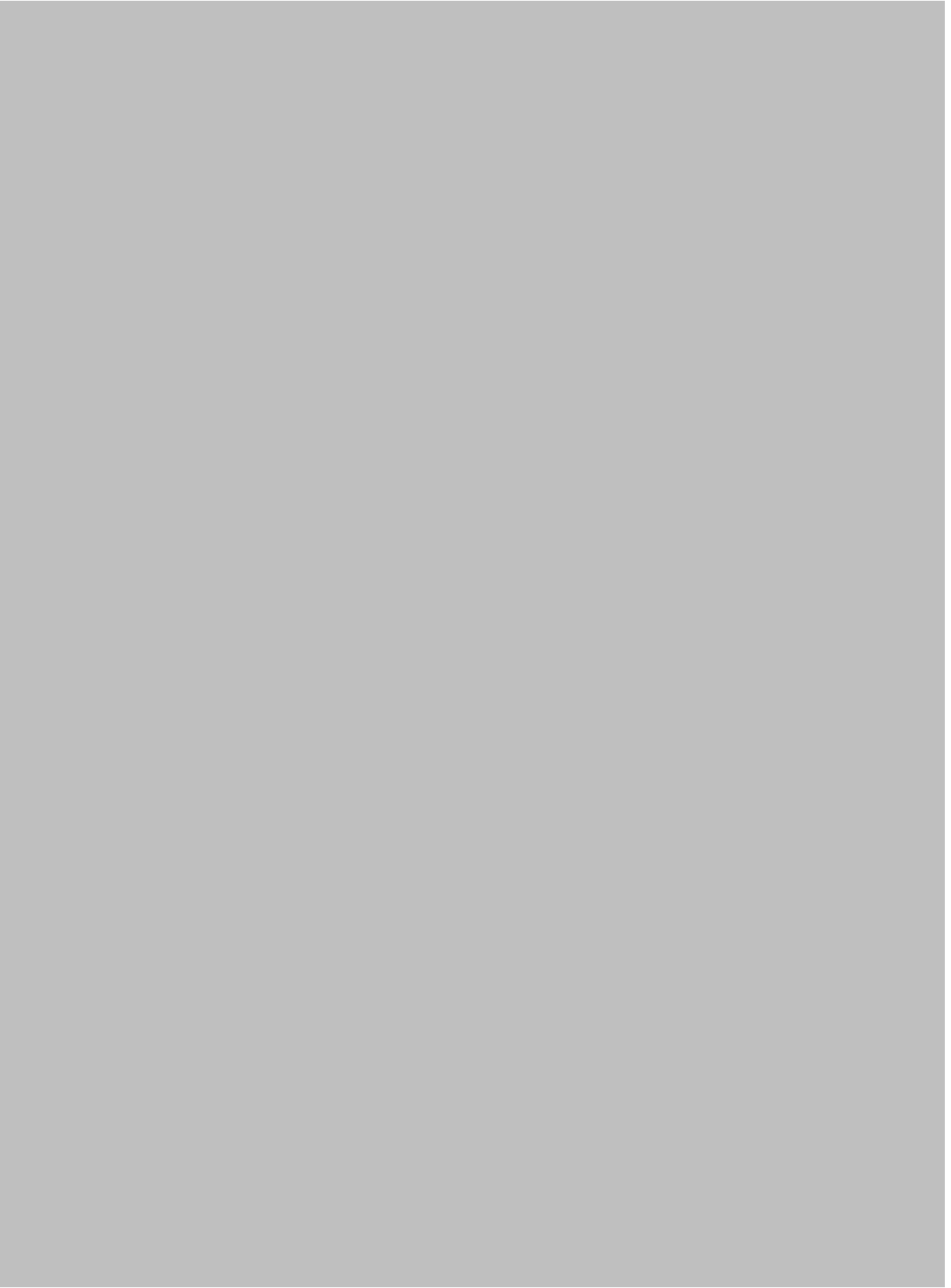
Participant's name (in CAPITALS):.....

Researcher's signature:..... Date:.....

Appendix 5 a

My Class Inventory – Short Form Questionnaire

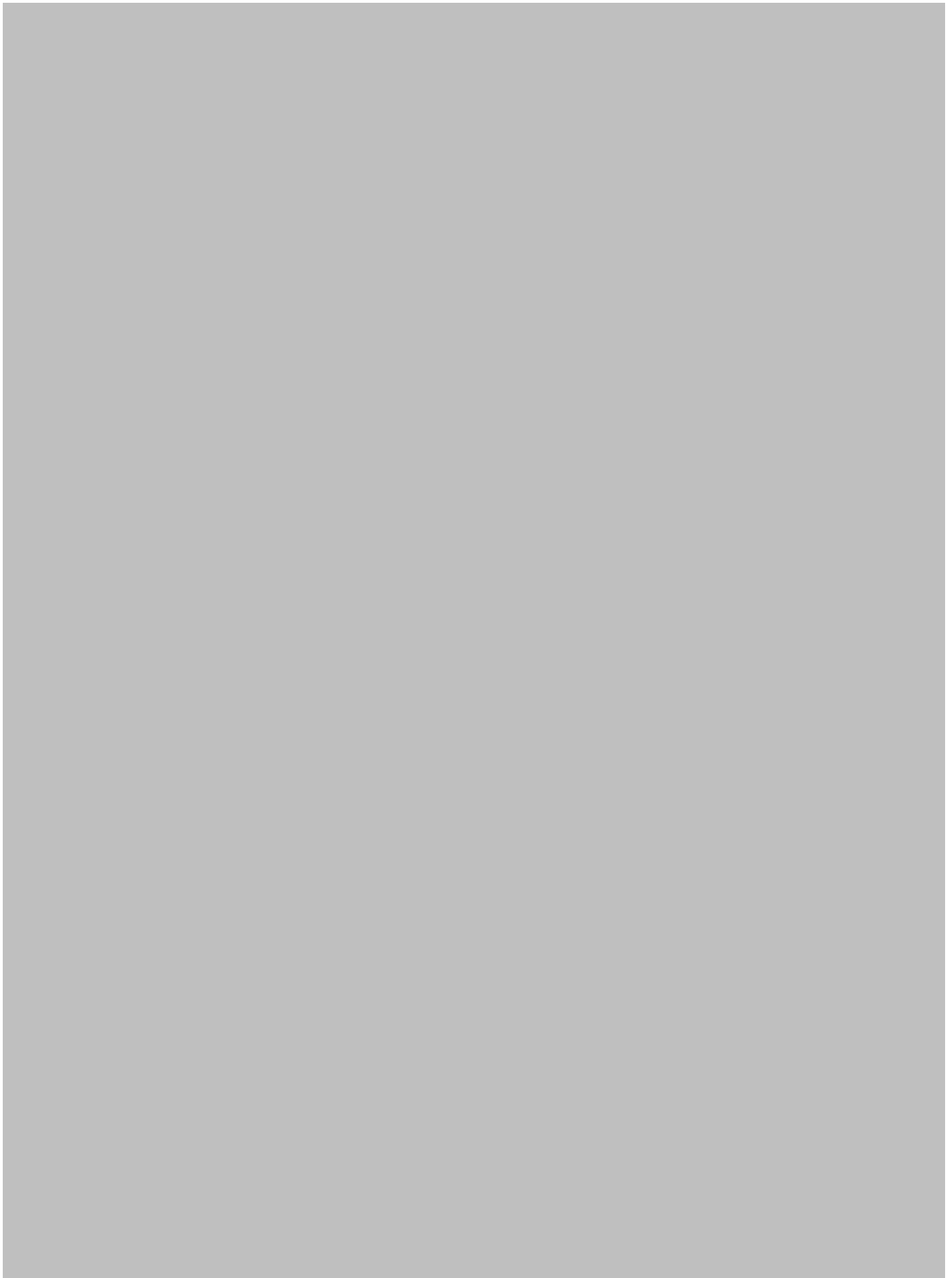
a) Completed Example of Actual Questionnaire



Appendix 5 b

My Class Inventory – Short Form Questionnaire

b) Completed Example of Preferred Questionnaire



Appendix 6

Interview Schedule for Semi-Structured Interview with Nurture Group (NG) staff

Thank you for consenting to participate in this interview which will focus on the Nurture Group in your school. Before starting the interview I want to assure you that you and your details will remain completely anonymous and no records of the interview will be kept with your name on.

1. Can I first ask you generally about your role within the School:
 - a) What is your job title and what does your role entail?
 - b) How long have you been in this position?
 - c) How long have you been involved with the Nurture Group in this school?
 - d) Have you had involvement or experience with other Nurture Groups?
 - e) Have you received / been on any Nurture Group training? When? What training was this?

2. In regard to the Nurture Group within your school:
 - a) What does the Nurture Group offer that differs from other support for children with special needs?
 - b) Which children do you feel would benefit from time in the Nurture Group?
 - c) What would you expect these children to gain from the Nurture Group?

3. How do you think having a Nurture Group effects the School?

- a) How are children in the Nurture Group involved in whole school activities?
- b) How do children transition back to their class?
- c) What do you feel works well in the Nurture Group?
- d) Is there any aspect of the Nurture Group which you would like to improve?

If so, what?

It is hoped that your answers along with the other information collected will help to inform further interventions that could be used effectively within the Nurture Group.

- 4. Do you feel that there is any aspect of the Nurture Group and your involvement with the Nurture Group that has not been addressed? If so, What?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 7

Transcript of Semi -Structured Interviews with School SENCo, Nurture Group Manager and Nurture Group Assistant

KEY

SENCO

Nurture Group Manager

Nurture Group Assistant

Question 1. Can I first ask you generally about your role within the School:

a) What is your job title and what does your role entail?

Pupil and family support coordinator.

Nurture Group Manager – Running the provision in school, that is the NG for whatever need at that time, it is essentially a Key Stage 1 Nurture Group but it has space for reception children if the need arises and also we have kept children into year 3 if that need would arise. For example if a child started quite late in year 2 we may have kept them into year 3 or if they are waiting for a place in a special school for example, and we didn't feel it was appropriate to put them back into mainstream then we kept them, but essentially it is a Year 1 and 2 Nurture Group, so provide children with a different curriculum. So parents give consent for their children to take part in a curriculum that's different to what they'd get if they were in a classroom. Because they do get numeracy and literacy and phonics, but they're getting a different style of curriculum in that they're getting a lot of social skills and emotional emphasis at the same time.

Nurture Group assistant, assist NG manager in the Group, assist with numeracy and literacy, help with behaviour. I have other roles within the school including after school clubs an OSCA –Out of school club activities with 16 children, that's free play. Also Early birds club where children can come open to all the children in the school Early Birds is open for Reception to year 6.

b) How long have you been in this position?

8 Years, gradually changed into this position from Special Needs Coordinator (14 years)

8 Years

8 years, I was supporting a child with behaviour difficulties who was placed in the NG, that's where I supported him as well as being in there and then I stayed in there with the NG manager.

c) How long have you been involved with the Nurture Group in this school?

For 9 years, involved since the start of the NG.

Worked across the school and key stages and been with NG from the beginning.

There's no other members of staff working in the NG – we have students occasionally – we try to keep the consistency. We did have one learning mentor who supported us and knew the children well.

d) Have you had any involvement or experience with other Nurture Groups?

No, But I read about them and thought that they ticked the box.

My sister was a NG manager so that was where the idea came from that I was interested in NGs. So I went and did the training before we started the NG I'd done the training before the Head started here. And then when she started we had a conversation because she had had a NG in her previous school and it went from there really. The children that were currently in reception at the time were extremely difficult. There were lots and lots of behaviour problems and so it was almost I'd done the training and I'd look into doing it. I was taken out of the class to take on the NG and the building work came after – we've been in this building 2 years.

No, this is my only experience of working within a NG.

e) Have you received / been on any Nurture Group training? When? What training was this?

Received information to set up the NG from the Inclusion Team when first set up group, but no funding received.

Attachment Theory training – EPS about 4 years ago.

LAC and Attachment, more recent (2 years ago) Early Childhood Trauma, Training on Boxall Profile from Pam Bishop. At School's request, not training that has been offered. Follow up only if requested. No recent training specifically around the NG, NG staff are going to be doing the IDP on Speech, Language and Communication as part of their CPD. There's very little around locally.

I did the proper NG network through Cambridge University. 4 day course. 2002, prior to starting the NG. There is lots of whole school training going on. I'm going on a narrative skills which is a speech course. And a P Scales course. SENCo and I have been on attachment training. We tap into anything the authority can give us unfortunately when NG was set up there was a lady from the LA who supported setting up NGs in Dudley but she was seconded and no one else took that on and since then there's been little bits of training, some of its lower than the qualifications that I've already got or for people who haven't got experience of working in an NG.

If it's available we'll go and access it, but there isn't a huge range unless you're prepared to travel to London or whatever. I'd asked for the P Scale training, because we're required to assess the children on the same scale that everyone else is on.

I did a 2 day course from the NG network, I haven't done the 4 day course like the NG manager. About 4 years ago. No further top up. Within school there's the SEN training, but nothing further for NGs. I did some training in school, provided by the EP on attachment – sometime last year. We also get the feedback from others who have been on training

Question 2. In regard to the Nurture Group within your school:

a) What does the Nurture Group offer that differs from other support for children with special needs?

Looking at the child right from the very baseline, their social and emotional needs, it's about creating a strong and secure base from which children can then develop their learning, their language. It gives them space and time so that those very early skills can be developed, without stress, without anxiety. The emphasis as children move through the NG then starts to move on to learning. But without the foundation stones in place the learning's not looking too good.

For a lot of them it gives them a safe haven, for children whether introvert / extrovert they haven't learned to do school. It might be as simple as sitting and concentrating or it might be what we're actually expecting them to do their lack of experience from home. So we give them the safety I suppose and they learn how to do school so they can then go into class like everybody else. For some its boundaries at home. It's a whole list of things and for every child its different .

The social and emotional side of it. There's 2 adults in there that are consistent with one another it gives good role models to the children where

they can see 2 adults actually getting on with each other and being asked to talk and chat. We have our snack time where they sit down at a table and eat sociably. It's the small group whereas in class the ratios are a lot bigger

b) Which children do you feel would benefit from time in the Nurture Group?

It's actually a spectrum of children, so children who are hard to reach, difficult to engage, children who don't build relationships with other children, with other adults, they may be very quiet, introverted, very extroverted, very attention needing. Maybe children who hurt other children, children who just don't understand social etiquette around learning, behaviour, mixing with other children.

There's quite a range of children we've had real extremely difficult behaviour and in 6-8 weeks we've seen a big difference in the behaviour, nobody in school could believe it was the same child. Gone from swearing at me and thumping furniture to conforming and now that child is in year 2 and he does have some learning difficulties but you wouldn't pick that child out. So you have children showing that extreme behaviour to those that are timid and introverted and those are the ones that are harder to deal with and harder to identify which the teachers don't pick out those are the ones we have to be very careful we're addressing In your class you don't automatically pick out that child do you? But equally the NG works for those children who are very introverted, low confidence, low self-esteem.

A lot of the introvert ones get missed, the quiet ones, because there are left in class because they are not causing any trouble. The ones who have got emotional difficulties and social difficulties

c) What would you expect these children to gain from the Nurture Group?

For many of the children it's simply may, or something that has happened specifically that affects their development, so it gives them the opportunity to catch up in those areas. We also put in additional support in for children's learning so that we can help them to catch up a little bit quicker. We started using Fisher Family Trust as a tool for that and that's been effective.

In a nutshell we complete the reintegration scale which is a NG tool alongside the Boxall profile we're looking for the score of 70% As a school is way of proving that the NG has done something for these children it isn't just evidence on APP It's about the confidence and self-esteem and that looks at their social skills, their ability to cope within the classroom. They're very important for all the children within the classroom.

Some children become quite dependent on me and NG assistant so they work quite well in the room but when putting them back in the classroom we've got to be certain that they'll cope alright in the mainstream class. It's different sitting around a table with 2 members of staff and doing some writing to going back to a class where there's 30 children. We tend to liaise closely with their teachers as the children do an hour a day back in their normal class. And on Thursday afternoons they're back in their classroom all afternoon. Giving them a little bit more ownership.

We found in the past the more time they spend in the NG they tend to dislike going back to class. So we like to get them involved in as many class activities as possible. They're involved in enrichment days, and go on trips without me and the NG assistant so that their class teachers know that they have got more coping strategies. If they are too dependent on you they look to you all the time. And they don't see their class teacher as their teacher they see me as their teacher which we are trying to move away from.

To experience people getting on, being able to make friends. To go up and socialise with other people and their peers. Gain confidence within themselves

Question 3. How do you think having a Nurture Group affects the School:

It generally has a positive effect there's 2 ways of looking at it: the children in the NG wouldn't get that kind of attention in their classroom also, as these children are so demanding; when they are out of the way they allow the class teacher to get on and teach. From both sides the NG children gain from it and the other children also gain from it – if you have a child in your class who is extremely demanding on the teacher's time.

I think it just gives children the chance, given the children we have in the NG it gives children in class- they are able to get on with their work, teachers are able to deliver the work because we've got the ones causing the problems in the Rainbow Room

How is it viewed by people who are not connected directly with the NG?

Generally very positive. In the beginning there was a thought that maybe these children are playing all day and not having to do what everybody else is doing but I think you get through that through the years. From a parents point of view, perhaps initially some of the parents were a bit sceptical about it but a lot of the children now, I mean we've had some families where we've had 2 and 3 from the same family. There was one little girl that we took in last week, we've already had her brother so we asked dad and he said 'yeah' she can come in. We've had occasional negative reactions but they tend to be

extremely positive. Generally the staff in school are very accommodating because the way the whole estate is - its not as simple as having a two form entry and 2 classes going through school and the teacher teaches them and that's how it works, but it's not like that here.

Do you think that staff that don't have a connection with the NG have a good understanding of what goes on in the NG?

I think everybody is really positive, the SENCo did a research project a few years ago and she did a questionnaire of staff and the feedback was extremely positive, in fact more positive than I thought it was going to be. The most negative things were from me.

Very positive, we've had parents say how well we've done with their child, and we've had other siblings and the parents are happy to say that's fine they can come into the rainbow room, because you've done so well with the others.

a) How are the children in the Nurture Group involved in whole school activities?

It's a massive win-win for everybody, the children get what they need, that very very individualised support, the children who are in the mainstream class get the attention of their class teachers because if these children were in mainstream they'd be the quieter individuals, heavily differentiated support, and that's not just academic support that's the access to support.

Yes, absolutely, they go on trips with their year groups, any activities that their Year group undertakes they are part and parcel of that. They go back into their class at 2pm, so they are part of the mainstream classroom in the middle of the afternoons they've always got that link in with the teachers the children they're out on the playground with the rest of the children. They access absolutely everything.

Anything that involves the whole class e.g. assemblies, they always go on trips that their classes go on, even if it means that I don't go with the children, they are always involved in the enrichment days where someone covers the teachers class and do activities with them, like we've just done a day on Diwali- we always join in with that so the children feel that they are a part of their class. If its possible they come together more so but we can't always fit in with what is going on in phases across the school, but we try cos our aim is to get them back into their class as much as possible.

b) How do children transition back to their class?

We look at where the children's strengths lie. We use the reintegration readiness scale they've got to hit that magic 70% once they've done that it's

all about looking at the child's strengths and so we introduce that child back into their lessons.

We work on having the children in The NG for 4 terms option, some children come out much sooner some are in for considerably longer e.g. LAC's. Because the links are always there because children are in their class we look at that and give a term's notice and discussing that with teaching staff and then it's about transition in that half term before they go back.

Generally, raised confidence and raised independence you start to see in the children that they are hankering more towards being part of their class and knowing what they're doing. Rather than being with us, they are more interested in what is going on outside the Rainbow Room and what are they doing

We reintegrate them slowly it's a slow process and we usually choose between the literacy and numeracy. It's usually the numeracy that tends to come across as the more positive so we introduce them back into class for one lesson and if that works well sort of over a couple of weeks then we introduce them back for numeracy and literacy and they still come back to us for the afternoon and if all goes well. We liaise with their teachers and they still have their rewards as well they have like a target card so the children are aware that we still talk to the teachers and the target card has got smiley faces on which we see every day, if they get their smiley faces then we know that they've had a good afternoon in class and this then builds up to the end of the week where they get their reward time. So there still with us and on a Friday they get their reward time which is nice

c) What do you feel works well in the Nurture Group?

Everything, absolutely everything.

Snack time, around the table, use manners it is a positive time. The day runs very well generally, it's busy and more pressure towards attainment over the years, targets to achieve. Need to keep the balance between nurture and academic needs

As a whole, the 2 adults, we get on so well, we bounce off each other if one's got something then the other will stop it as well and I think the consistency with us both. They know if one has said something then the other is going to say exactly the same thing so the consistency with both adults and the routine, they're happy with the routine, they know the routine which they really do like their routine.

d) Is there any aspect of the Nurture Group which you would like to improve? If so, what?

I'd like a bigger room. It was custom built but not as big as we'd like it to be. Concerns about focus on achievement, returning emotional immature. We have asked specifically for the Educational Psychology Service because we have a couple of children who emotionally are quite out of touch. But the immaturity, I guess some of the children are immature but there are children in the mainstream class who are equally immature. The issue around standards has always been an issue for NG staff and that's because in this school we have to keep driving standards forward and although staff do appreciate the fact that it is a Nurture Group, they've always got an eye on the SATS that the children are working to. The NG manager does feel that pressure, every term she has to on children's SATS levels, how many words they can read so that, because we have to show that impact and within the new OFSTED framework Nurture Groups have to do that as well.

Emotional needs of the current group of children, want that extra support as this due to the current needs within the NG. Like the idea of having strategies that could be drip fed in within the curriculum.

Were mainly looking for something to do with the social and emotional side of it that's our main concern at the moment. Currently this is the main issue because of the children we have got in the NG at the moment.

e) Anything else you would like to add?

I think the idea of having intervention being drip-fed in, rather than a grand project will be more beneficial long term. The big thing for me is that we can now use educational psychology to support our NG, given that the NG has been running for all these years and these are most vulnerable children, socially, emotionally, we actually haven't had that sort of support available, which is shocking. Now that we can buy it in, that's what we'll do. Educational Psychologists supporting the NG is one of our priorities.

No I'm happy with what's being done.

Appendix 8

Thematic Analysis of Semi-structured Interviews

Transcript Quotes	Emergent Themes
the NG for whatever need at that time	Spectrum of needs
we didn't feel it was appropriate to put them back into mainstream then we kept them	Reducing exclusion
a curriculum that's different to what they'd get if they were in a classroom.	Different curriculum
different style of curriculum in that they're getting a lot of social skills and emotional emphasis at the same time.	Different curriculum
assist with numeracy and literacy, help with behaviour	Help to learn
we try to keep the consistency	Consistency
The children that were currently in reception at the time were extremely difficult.	Behaviour
There were lots and lots of behaviour problems	Behaviour
At School's request, not training that has been offered.	Training / support
Follow up only if requested	Training / support
No recent training specifically around the NG	Training
NG staff are going to be doing the IDP on Speech, Language and Communication as part of their CPD.	CPD
There's very little around locally.	Training support
We tap into anything the authority can give us	training
when NG was set up there was a lady from the LA who supported setting up NGs but she was seconded and no one else took that on	Loss of LA Support
there's been little bits of training,	Lack of training opps
If it's available we'll go and access it, but there isn't a huge range unless you're prepared to travel to London or whatever	Lack of training opps
I'd asked for the P Scale training, because we're required to assess the children on the same scale that everyone else is on.	Assessment of learning
Within school there's the SEN training, but nothing further for NGs.	Lack of training opps
I did some training in school, provided by the EP on attachment – sometime last year.	Training in school
Looking at the child right from the very baseline, their social and emotional needs,	Spectrum of need

it's about creating a strong and secure base from which children can then develop their learning, their language	Secure base
It gives them space and time so that those very early skills can be developed,	Development of skills
The emphasis as children move through the NG then starts to move on to learning.	Development of learning skills
But without the foundation stones in place the learning's not looking too good	Secure base
For a lot of them it gives them a safe haven,	Safety
for children whether introvert / extrovert they haven't learned to do school	Spectrum of needs
it might what we're actually expecting them to do	Teacher expectations
So we give them the safety I suppose	Safety
For some its boundaries at home	Boundaries
It's a whole list of things and for every child its different .	Individual differences
The social and emotional side of it	Social and emotional needs
There's 2 adults in there that are consistent with one another	Consistency
it gives good role models to the children where they can see 2 adults actually getting on with each other	Role models
being asked to talk and chat	Communication skills development
We have our snack time where they sit down at a table and eat sociably.	Social skills development
It's the small group whereas in class the ratios are a lot bigger	Group size
It's actually a spectrum of children	Spectrum of need
so children who are hard to reach, difficult to engage	Emotional needs
children who don't build relationships with other children, with other adults	Social skills development
they may be very quiet, introverted, very extroverted very attention needing	Attention seeking
Maybe children who hurt other children	Managing behaviour
children who just don't understand social etiquette around learning, behaviour, mixing with other children.	Social skills / behaviour
There's quite a range of children	Spectrum of need
we've had real extremely difficult behaviour and in 6-8 weeks we've seen a big difference in the behaviour, n	Managing behaviour

So you have children showing that extreme behaviour	Behavioural needs
to those that are timid and introverted and those are the ones that are harder to deal with and harder to identify	Emotional needs
But equally the NG works for those children who are very introverted, low confidence, low self-esteem.	Emotional needs
A lot of the introvert ones get missed, the quiet ones, because there are left in class because they are not causing any trouble.	Identification of need
The ones who have got emotional difficulties and social difficulties	Em and social difficulties
something that has happened specifically that affects their development	Developmental problems
We also put in additional support in for children's learning so that we can help them to catch up a little bit quicker	Additional support
we complete the reintegration scale which a NG tool alongside the Boxall profile we're looking for the score of 70%	Impact measures
As a school is way of proving that the NG has done something for these children	Impact measures
It's about the confidence and self-esteem and that looks at their social skills, their ability to cope within the classroom.	Social needs
Some children become quite dependent on me and NG assistant	Dependence on NG staff
we've got to be certain that they'll cope alright in the mainstream class	Coping
It's different sitting around a table with 2 members of staff and doing some writing to going back to a class where there's 30 children	Size of group
We tend to liaise closely with their teachers	Communication with mainstream class
children do an hour a day back in their normal class. And on Thursday afternoons they're back in their classroom all afternoon.	Links to mainstream class
We found in the past the more time they spend in the NG they tend to dislike going back to class	Effective transition
we like to get them involved in as many class activities as possible	Inclusion
They're involved in enrichment days, and go on trips without me and the NG assistant	Inclusion
so that their class teachers know that they have got more coping strategies.	Coping
If they are too dependent on you they look to you all the time.	Dependence on NG staff

To experience people getting on, being able to make friends.	Social skills development
To go up and socialise with other people and their peers	Social skills development
Gain confidence within themselves	Emotional skills development
when they are out of the way they allow the class teacher to get on and teach	Mainstream teaching
teachers are able to deliver the work	Mainstream teaching
we've got the ones causing the problems in the Rainbow Room	Problem children
In the beginning there was a thought that maybe these children are playing all day and not having to do what everybody else is doing but I think you get through that through the years.	Misconceptions of NG
From a parents point of view, perhaps initially some of the parents were a bit sceptical about it	Misconceptions of NG
had occasional negative reactions but they tend to be extremely positive.	Misconceptions of NG
Generally the staff in school are very accommodating because the way the whole estate is	Wider social issues
its not as simple as having a two form entry and 2 classes going through school and the teacher teaches them and that's how it works, but it's not like that here.	Wider social issues
I think everybody is really positive,	Positive feedback
we've had parents say how well weve done with their child,	Parental positive feedback
weve had other siblings and the parents are happy to say that's fine they can come into the rainbow room, because you've done so well with the others	Parental positive feedback
It's a massive win-win for everybody, the children get what they need, that very very individualised support, the children who are in the mainstream class get the attention of their class teachers	Individual support
if these children were in mainstream they'd be the quieter individuals, heavily differentiated support, and that's not just academic support that's the access to support.	Access to support
they go on trips with their year groups, any activities that their Year group undertakes they are part and parcel of that.	Inclusion
They go back into their class at 2pm, so they are part of the mainstream classroom in the middle of the afternoons they've always got that link in with the teachers	Inclusion
the children they're out on the playground with the rest of the children. They access absolutely everything.	Inclusion

Anything that involves the whole class e.g. assemblies, they always go on trips that their classes go on, they are always involved in the enrichment days where someone covers the teachers class and do activities with them	Inclusion
we always join in with that so the children feel that they are a part of their class.	Inclusion
If its possible they come together moreso	Inclusion
we can't always fit in with what is going on in phases across the school, but we try because our aim is to get them back into their class as much as possible.	Inclusion
We look at where the children's strengths lie.	Child's strengths
We use the reintegration readiness scale they've got to hit that magic 70%	Impact measures
We work on having the children in The NG for 4 terms option,	Period of time in NG
so we introduce that child back into their lessons.	Transition
some children come out much sooner some are in for considerably longer e.g. LAC's.	Period of time in NG
Generally, raised confidence and raised independence	Emotional skills development
you start to see in the children that they are hankering more towards being part of their class and knowing what they're doing.	Transition
Rather than being with us, they are more interested in what is going on outside the Rainbow Room and what are they doing	Transition
We reintegrate them slowly it's a slow process and we usually choose between the literacy and numeracy . Its usually the numeracy that tends to come across as the more positive	Transition to mainstream class
so we introduce them back into class for one lesson and if that works well sort of over a couple of weeks then we introduce them back for numeracy and literacy and they still come back to us for the afternoon and if all goes well.	Transition to mainstream class
We liaise with their teachers and they still have their rewards as well they have like a target card	Liaison with mainstream teachers
Snack time, around the table, use manners it is a positive time.	Snack time
The day runs very well generally, its busy and more pressure towards attainment over the years, targets to achieve.	Academic achievement
Need to keep the balance between nurture and academic needs	Academic vs nurture needs
and I think the consistency with us both	Consistency

so the consistency with both adults and the routine, they're happy with the routine,	Consistency and routine
I'd like a bigger room. It was custom built but not as big as we'd like it to be.	Environment
Concerns about focus on achievement, returning emotional immature.	Academic achievement
We have asked specifically for the Educational Psychology Service because we have a couple of children who emotionally are quite out of touch.	Emotional needs
The issue around standards has always been an issue for NG staff	National standards
But the immaturity, I guess some of the children are immature but there are children in the mainstream class who are equally immature.	Emotional needs
they've always got an eye on the SATS that the children are working to.	Assessment
The NG manager does feel that pressure, every term she has to report on children's SATS levels, how many words they can read so that, because we have to show that impact within the new OFSTED framework Nurture Groups have to do that as well.	Assessment / impact measures
	National Policy
Emotional needs of the current group of children, want that extra support as this due to the current needs within the NG.	Emotional needs
Like the idea of having strategies that could be drip fed in within the curriculum.	Small interventions
Were mainly looking for something to do with the social and emotional side of it that's our main concern at the moment .Currently this is the main issue because of the children we have got in the NG at the moment.	Social and emotional interventions
I think the idea of having intervention being drip-fed in, rather than a grand project will be more beneficial long term.	Small interventions
The big thing for me is that we can now use educational psychology to support our NG,	Support for NG
given that the NG has been running for all these years and these are most vulnerable children, socially, emotionally, we actually haven't had that sort of support available, which is shocking.	Support for NG
Educational Psychologists supporting the NG is one of our priorities.	Support for staff

Appendix 9
Superordinate Themes emerging from the
Semi-structured Interviews

Superordinate Themes	Emergent Themes
Structure and content of NG	Secure base Containment Consistency
	Different Curriculum Teaching expectations Role models Academic and Nurture needs Managing behaviour
Needs and Supportive Interventions	Academic support Group size Additional support
	Spectrum of needs Developmental problems Individual differences Attention seeking Dependence on NG staff
Inclusion	Inclusive practice Misconceptions of Involvement in school community
Reintegration to mainstream	Assessment of learning National standards
	Liaison with mainstream teachers Transition
Staff support & training	Loss of LA Support Training Support for NG
Community	Wider social issues Parental positive feedback

Chapter 3

Professional Practice Report Two

An Exploration into the Use of a Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural Approach to Support a Young Child with Complex Needs

Abstract

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is a psychotherapeutic approach that is based on the integration of cognitive and behaviourist psychological perspectives and seeks to emphasise the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour in order to bring about changes for clients (Stallard, 2005; Whitfield & Davidson, 2007). This paper examines the use of a Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural (CB) approach to the assessment and formulation for a five year old boy referred to the Educational Psychology Service with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties.

This paper focuses on the assessment of the needs of a young child and then moves on to explore the development of a systemic CB formulation, using the information gathered during the assessment process. The paper concludes by critically reflecting on the assessment and formulation processes, with a view to understanding the implications of this work for my future professional practice.

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1. Introduction

This paper explores the use of a systemic Cognitive-Behavioural (CB) approach to support a five year old boy referred to the Educational Psychology (EP) service with complex emotional and behavioural needs. The use of a systemic CB approach is examined in relation to the assessment process for gathering information about the presenting concerns. The subsequent formation of a systemic CB formulation is discussed in relation to the development of a hypothesis based on the information gathered and the presenting concerns.

This paper begins, in Section 2, by providing a brief overview of CBT before examining the use of systemic CBT. The use and adaptation of CBT with young children is followed by an discussion around the application of therapeutic work in Educational Psychology (EP) practice.

Section 3 provides details of the assessment methods used in the current case. Section 4 constructs a systemic CB formulation and explores how this informs the development of a hypothesis relating to the presenting concerns. Section 5 concludes the paper by critically reflecting on the process of assessment and formulation and the implications for my future professional practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy: A Brief Overview

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is a psychotherapeutic approach that is based on the integration of cognitive and behaviourist psychological perspectives and seeks to emphasise the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour in order to bring about changes for clients (Stallard, 2005; Whitfield & Davidson, 2007). CBT has developed under two main influences: Behaviour Therapy (BT), as developed by Wolpe and others in the 1950s and 1960s (Wolpe, 1958); and Cognitive Therapy (CT) as developed by Beck, which was significantly influential during the 1970s (Beck, et al., 1979).

BT grew out of dissatisfaction with the Freudian psychodynamic approach to therapy, due to the lack of empirical evidence regarding its theory and effectiveness (Westbrook et al., 2011). BT is based on the notion that observable behaviour is open to scientific study and emphasised the importance of developing an evidence base to underline the empirical effectiveness of this approach (Eysenck, 1959). BT primarily focuses on the association between stimuli and responses, asserting for example that a negative response to a fearful stimulus can be reduced through learning a different response to the same stimulus. 'Systematic desensitisation' (Wolpe, 1958) is one approach used within the therapeutic process to break the stimulus-response connection and to learn a new, non-fearful response.

Cognitive therapy (CT) came to the fore during the 'Cognitive Revolution' (Mahoney, 1974) during the 1970s, when the behaviourist stance became increasingly viewed as limiting the understanding of the role of internal, mental processes, which were considered central to influencing thoughts and feelings. Beck et al., (1979) and his contemporaries developed CT as a therapeutic intervention for individuals with depression, which proved highly effective.

As CT and BT continued to develop over the succeeding decades, the mutual influence of both approaches led to their gradual integration and the establishment of the CBT approach that is widely-used today. CBT operates on the fundamental CT principle that different cognitions create different emotions (Westbrook, et al., 2011) and it develops the BT assertion that an individual's actions or behaviour has an impact on their psychological state.

CBT is often criticised for lacking clarity as a therapeutic approach that is distinct from other approaches (Mansell, 2008). This argument is based on the divergent theoretical perspectives from which CBT has developed which mean that there is no single coherent theory underpinning all variants of CBT (Trower, 2012). Indeed, some arguments opposed to CBT suggest that the many variants of CBT approaches only add to the confusing mixture of methods and techniques it adopts.

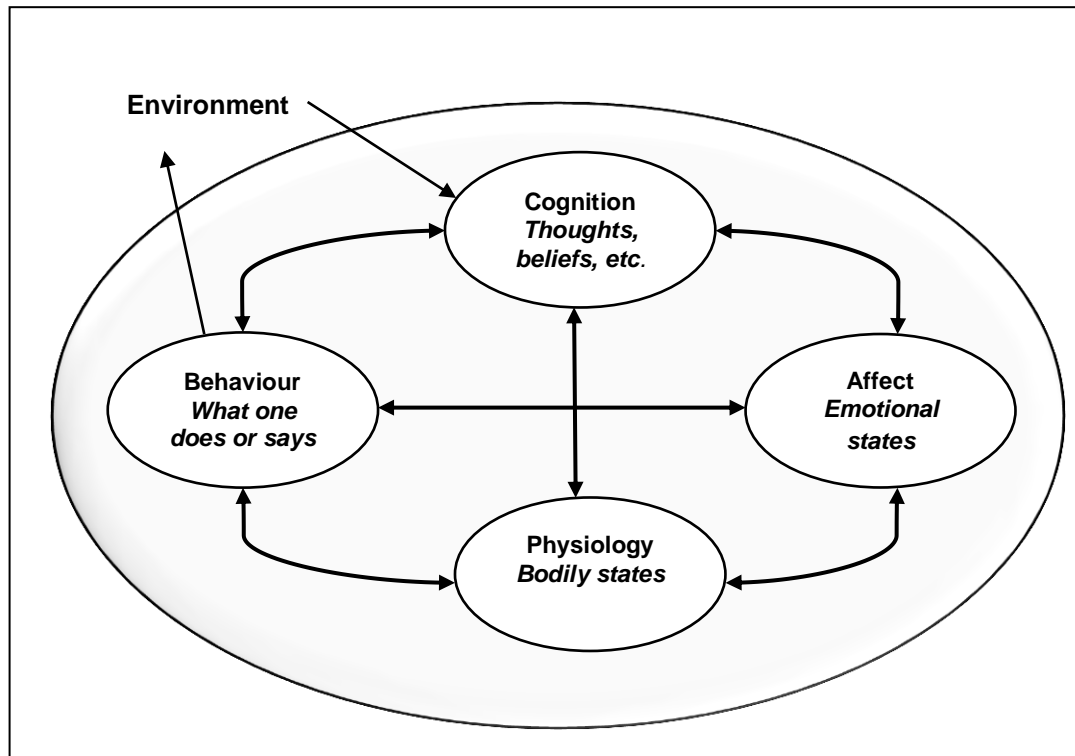
Dobson and Dozois (2010) counter this argument by asserting that all CBT approaches are underpinned by three key propositions that provide a clear and consistent rationale across all CBT interventions, these are:

1. *Cognitive activity affects behaviour*
2. *Cognitive activity may be monitored and altered*
3. *Desired behaviour change may be effected through cognitive change*

(Taken from Trower, 2012, p. 29)

CBT views problems as interactions between the internal world of an individual and the external contexts in which the individual operates. Padesky and Mooney (1990) illustrate these interacting systems in the form of the 'hot cross bun model' shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

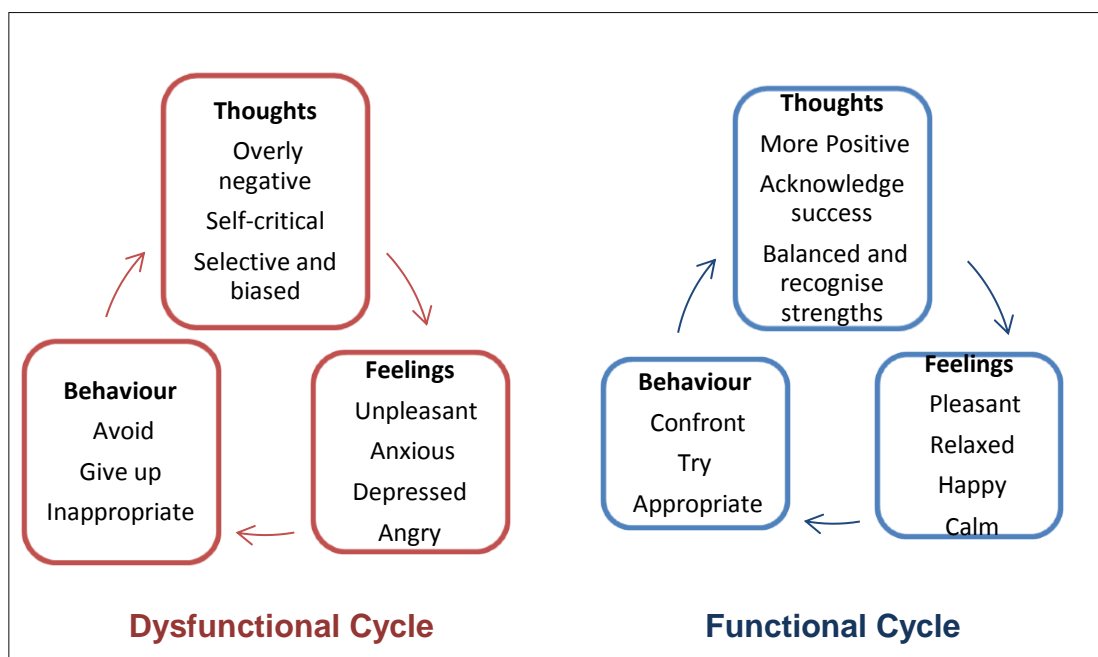


'The Hot Cross Bun Model' (Adapted from Padesky and Mooney, 1990)

It is argued that examining the interactions between these systems ensures a detailed analysis of the presenting problem, from the perspective of the client, and enables both the client and therapist to gain a deeper understanding of any maladaptive cognition.

CBT proposes that difficulties in cognitive processing are caused by maladaptive cognitions (McAdam, 1986) and it is argued that these maladaptive cognitions maintain a cycle of 'distorted thinking and dysfunctional behaviour' (Hawton, et al., 1989). An example of a functional and dysfunctional cycle is illustrated in Figure 2 (below). A key feature of CBT involves identifying this 'dysfunctional cycle' in order to become aware of its influence and break the cycle by interrupting its cyclical pattern.

Figure 2.



Functional and Dysfunctional Cycles (Stallard, 2002, p.7)

Various CBT strategies are utilised to facilitate self-awareness in order to help identify dysfunctional cognitions and create an understanding of the different levels of cognitions. This process encourages the replacement of negative, self-critical thoughts with positive thinking (Stallard, 2002). The different levels of cognitions used in CBT are displayed below:

- **Negative Automatic Thoughts** – *Habitual schemas that are activated subconsciously and have an impact on cognitive processing.*
- **Core Beliefs** – *Firmly developed cognitions that are acquired over a period of time.*
- **Dysfunctional Assumptions** – *Rigid, over-generalised cognitions that often take the form of conditional ‘if...then...’ propositions.*

(Adapted from Westbrook et al, 2011, p. 10 and Grieg, 2007, p. 20)

The range of influences that have contributed to the development of CBT have led to the creation of various different techniques and methods that can be adapted and applied within the therapeutic process (Stallard, 2002). The next section examines systemic Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (Dummett, 2006) as a specific approach to assessing and formulating the presenting needs of an individual.

2.2 Systemic Cognitive Behavioural Approach

As a therapeutic approach, CBT primarily focuses on working collaboratively with individuals in order to develop an understanding of the problems for which they

are seeking help (Stallard, 2005). Many writers stress the importance of considering the influence of wider systems when engaging individuals in therapeutic work (Dagnan, 2007; Uebelacker, et al., 2008; Koch, et al., 2010) in order to gain a deeper understanding about an individual's strengths and possible resources which can support problem resolution, alongside factors which may contribute to the maintenance of an individual's problems.

Systemic CBT embeds assessment and formulation within a systems approach and views problems as a product of relationships, asserting that difficulties lie between people rather than within individuals (Koch, et al., 2010). It is argued that considering the contextual systems in which an individual operates can facilitate a deeper understanding of the factors that are maintaining particular problems and help to focus on factors that are more amenable to change (Tarrier and Calam, 2002).

Jahoda, et al. (2009) assert that:

'The mutual influence between the individual and their environment also suggests a more dynamic process than the notion that people simply internalise maladaptive schema based on their past experience, or that cognitions and emotions are a closed system influenced by environmental inputs.'

(Jahoda, et al. 2009, p. 765)

In light of this view, considering therapeutic work based within a systemic perspective benefits from gaining an holistic picture of the problem and allows the practitioner to build awareness of the contextual factors that impinge upon the

individual, rather than viewing the problem as residing within an individual. This enables the practitioner to explore how the the individual can be supported at both an individual level, through therapeutic work, and at a systemic level, through working collaboratively with other services involved with the individual.

In regards to children and young people, Dummett (2010) asserts that incorporating wider systemic and interpersonal factors into the assessment of a child or young person is central to the development of a formulation which appropriately reflects the situation and stressors impinging upon problematic issues (Dummett, 2010, p.24).

Dummett (2006) proposes a systemic CB formulation for children and young people, which incorporates the cognitive model, proposed by Beck et al., (1979). The systemic CB formulation provides a template that includes systemic, cultural and attachment influences along with pragmatic factors, such as ranking a child's needs in order of those that must be satisfied first before 'higher order' interventions are attempted. The formulation template developed by Dummett (2006) can be found in Appendix 1.

This systemic CB formulation template is used in the case described in this paper in order to build a picture of the child's needs and to develop some guiding hypotheses to understand and explain the factors maintaining the difficulties presented by a young child, named 'Billy' within this paper (see Section 4). The

following section explores the feasibility, reliability and validity of using CBT with young children in further detail.

2.3 CBT and Young Children

Using CBT with young children brings about a set of challenges that are distinct from working with adolescents and adults. CBT aims to address cognitive aspects, such as '*negative automatic thoughts*' (Westbrook et al., 2011. p.10) and how these relate to feelings and behaviour. Southam-Gerow and Kendall, (2000) argue that young children can struggle to understand such abstract concepts, but without these, the CBT intervention becomes akin to BT by focusing on reinforcement of desired behaviours, using extrinsic motivational strategies. Thus, therapeutic strategies need to be appropriately adjusted to the level of understanding of the child to ensure the purpose of the intervention and concepts used are clear.

In order to ensure that the CBT is appropriately adjusted to a child's capabilities, the child's developmental stage and cognitive ability needs to be ascertained. Grave & Blissett (2004) cite Piaget's staged model of cognitive development in children (Appendix 2) as a useful reference point when viewing the ability of a child to think about the core concepts within CBT, e.g. increasing awareness of cognitions, to ensure the techniques used are developmentally appropriate for the child's level of understanding.

The Piagetian view of the cognitive development of children suggests that for young children (aged two to seven years), thinking is primarily egocentric and focus can only be given to one task at a time. Piaget argued that, from about seven years of age, children begin to develop cognitive strategies that can be applied to 'concrete' or immediately present objects (Smith et al., 2003, p.407).

Piaget's views have been challenged over the years by researchers (e.g. Donaldson, 1978; Jahoda, 1983) who have indicated that with appropriate wording and context, young children are capable of understanding concepts which Piaget asserted developed much later. The argument about whether children under the age of seven have the cognitive abilities and awareness to engage with CBT continues within the literature. Stallard (2005) argues that the main consideration when using CBT strategies is whether a young child can engage with a modified form of CBT (p.122), rather than their ability to understand abstract CBT concepts which are developed for adolescents and adults.

Research undertaken by Wellman et al., (1996) with three year old children concluded that, with some initial training, children at this age comprehended that 'thought bubbles' indicated what an individual was thinking and that thoughts about the same event could differ between individuals. Therefore, it is argued that modification of cognitive elements, and adapting methods and resources to accommodate the individual needs of the child, can enable young children to understand and effectively engage with the CBT process.

In summary, research indicates that young children can participate and benefit from CBT as long as consideration is given to the child's level of understanding and appropriate adjustments are made to reduce the use of abstract concepts in favour of more concrete and contextualised explanations and strategies.

2.4 Educational Psychologists and Therapeutic Work

Educational Psychology (EP) services are considered to work at three levels: individual, school and local authority, and to have five key functions across these levels: consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research (Scottish Executive, 2002, p.20). Thus, working within different systems in order to assess and provide appropriate interventions are two key facets of the EP's role as they are central to understanding the needs of children in relation to the contexts in which they develop and function (Farrell, 2006; Boyle and Lauchlan, 2009).

A review by Farrell et al. (2006) on the functions and contribution of EPs noted that there was potential to increase the scope of therapeutic work undertaken by EPs. However, Rait et al., (2010) have asserted that:

'Due to limited resources and time constraints, it is highly unlikely that educational psychologists will be in a position to offer regular intensive direct CBT to individual children and young people,'

(Rait et al., 2010, p.113)

In undertaking therapeutic work, EPs are deemed to be advantageously positioned to work systemically, through direct work with the child, as well as with

key adults, both at home and at school (Mackay, 2006), in order to create a detailed formulation of the variety of factors that could be maintaining or exacerbating the difficulties exhibited.

'EPs have a vital role in helping to gain information about an individual's whole development and helping to make all the systems that impinge on the school system function together in a co-ordinated and positive way.'
(Bozic, 1999, p. 240)

Research into EPs' views of their role and professional practice indicates an increasing shift towards undertaking therapeutic interventions as part of professional EP practice (Scottish Executive, 2002; Farrell, et al., 2006; Grieg, 2007). The broadening and robust evidence base for the efficacy for therapeutic approaches, including CBT, ensures that interventions are developed from evidence of what works well and for whom. This ensures that EPs are conducting therapeutic work which is based on robust research evidence that is underpinned by psychological theories.

2.5 Ethical Considerations Within Therapeutic Work

Wolpert, et al., (2005) suggest some general areas that are potential ethical concerns when conducting CBT with children; these are presented in Table 1 (below) along with how these concerns were addressed within the current case. Children referred for therapeutic work are involuntary clients and typically those who irritate or disturb their caretakers (Ronen, 1998). Thus children referred for

therapy tend to be those identified with 'conduct problems' such as aggressiveness and disobedience (Ronen, 1998, p. 9).

Thus, a detailed assessment and formulation, including gathering information about the child in different contexts, as well as the child's views, is significant to understanding whether the child is displaying behaviour that is age and developmentally appropriate and / or if other factors are also affecting the child.

Stallard (2005) also raises the issue that as children do not typically refer themselves for therapeutic work, this has implications for the level of engagement and the motivation of the child which can limit the effectiveness of the therapy. This can be due, in part, to the child not sharing the concerns of the adult referrer. The assessment process, therefore, is vital for sharing the reason for EP involvement with the child, in and also for gaining the child's perspective

Table 1.

Area of Ethical Concern	Example where application of CBT principles may raise difficulties	Key Questions that need to be addressed	Addressed in Current Case
Balancing viewpoints	How can the commitment to openness and partnership be maintained in the face of competing viewpoints?	Who gives consent for intervention? Who determines the goals and outcomes of the intervention? What should be done when the views of different family members are in conflict?	Consent gained from Mother Explanation of work given to Billy Goals determined by the aspect(s) focused on from the formulation Regular review meetings with teacher, SENCo and Parent
Addressing family issues	The principle of minimum invasiveness may mean that underlying family problems may not be addressed which may be detrimental to the best interests of the child	How can family issues best be assessed and dealt with? Is it appropriate to maintain an individual focus when working with children and families?	Discussing and signposting parent support services Use of Systemic CBT approach to enable focus on context that maintains the presenting difficulties
Promoting Genuine Collaboration	Lack of clarity about the role of parents and the therapy Is it possible to be truly collaborative with all family members bearing in mind the power differentials existing between adults (therapist and parents) and children?	How can it best be determined and acknowledged what role should parents play in an intervention? How can involvement in decision making by all relevant family members best be optimised?	Use of regular review meetings Discussion and explanation of EP involvement Use of CBT homework to retain a link with home and school Provide Mother and teacher with details of strategies to be discussed within the therapeutic work, to ensure reiteration in other contexts

Areas of ethical concern in using CBT with children (Adapted from Wolpert, et al., 2005, p. 107)

of issues that they feel are influencing problems that they are experiencing (Dummett, 2006) as well gauging sources of support that the child can use for encouragement and help.

EP's are also required to work according to the code of ethics and conduct as set out by the British Psychological Society and the Health and Care Professions Council. Within the HCPC guidelines there are some criteria which are more pertinent when undertaking therapeutic work, these include:

- *respecting confidentiality of your service users;*
- *acting within the limits of your own knowledge;*
- *communicating effectively with service users; and*
- *getting informed consent to provide care /services (as far as possible).*

(Taken from HCPC, 2012)

The case presented in this paper will consider how these ethical considerations were addressed and the challenges that I, as a Year 2 Trainee EP, was presented with when undertaking therapeutic work with a young child.

The following sections examine a case with which I was involved. The assessment and the development of an initial systemic CB formulation are discussed in order to illustrate the bases for the understanding of the difficulties presented by 'Billy' (a five year old child, referred to the EP service for therapeutic work), which formed the basis for a subsequent CBT intervention.

3 Assessment

Sections 3 and 4 presents details of my involvement with Billy. Both the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and Billy's mother gave consent for the detailed examination and interpretation of the case for the purpose of this paper. This section focuses on the aims, methods and outcomes of the assessment, along with ethical considerations regarding the use of CBT with so young a child.

3.1 Aims

The assessment process aimed to gather information to build a picture of how Billy presented, based on a systemic CB approach. Thus, the assessment process incorporated a multi-method approach to explore Billy's presentation in both home and school settings, including past experiences and contextual information. Information was sought from the perspectives of Billy, his mother and Class Teacher.

The referral to the EP service indicated that key concerns, from the adults' perspectives, were that Billy displayed disruptive behaviour in school and also with his mother at home. His behaviour was reported to be erratic and he was described as emotionally immature compared with his peers. Thus, the aims of the assessment process were:

- To clarify the referral information;
- to contextualise Billy's behaviour;

- to view how his teacher, mother and he, himself, viewed his behaviour.

Alongside these aims, the assessment process was also central to supporting the elicitation and identification of information which could be arranged to provide an explanatory model or to develop some hypotheses. Tarrier and Calam (2002) suggest that such a model or hypotheses can be used to understand and clarify the origins, development and maintenance of the presenting problems.

3.2 Methods

Table 2 sets out the methods of assessment used, including the rationale and reliability of these measures:

Table 2.

Method of assessment	Rationale	Reliability
Classroom observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To observe Billy interacting in the class with his peers and class teacher. To view his behaviour in context and in comparison to peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be a subjective account based on observers perspective. (Banister, 1994) This was overcome by using a structured observation and sharing this with teacher to check reliability of notes.
Consultations with Class Teacher and Billy's Mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain views of adults' key concerns, effective strategies and possible onset and maintaining factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of subjectivity Use of a structured approach to consultation to ensure same aspects covered in both consultations
Individual work with Billy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain Billy's view of difficulties being experienced. To view his ability to understand and articulate his perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of PCP (ideal self, Moran, 2001) to gain child's views and the level of self-awareness and understanding.
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows a baseline measure to be gained regarding the presenting concerns and can be used to post intervention to view any changes in scores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scores can depend on the mood of adult completing the SDQ. Does not infer a causal relationship between intervention and outcomes. Scores can be triangulated to increase reliability across respondents

A summary of the methods used to gather information about Billy.

A variety of methods was used to assess Billy's presentation in order to explore developmental, interpersonal and wider systems (Dummett, 2006; Dattilio 2005). This section summarises the information gathered from each of the methods used and provides a brief synthesis of the findings. The synthesis focuses on conceptualising a set of hypotheses which can inform the formulation. These are based on identifying pre-disposing risk factors, precipitating factors, maintaining factors and situational triggers.

Classroom observation

Billy was observed within the classroom setting. He was observed whilst undertaking individual written work on a table with four other children. From the observation, I hypothesised that Billy often tried to gain the class teacher's attention through inappropriate behaviour that often distracted others from their learning. Billy was observed to respond positively to praise and reassurance. To ensure a greater degree of reliability, the observation notes were discussed with the class teacher, who confirmed that the observation had highlighted Billy's typical classroom behaviour.

Observations are often criticised for presenting a subjective view from the perspective of the observer (Banister, 1994). Nevertheless, this method enables the observer to view the child in context and view interactions with others.

Synthesis of findings

From the observation I hypothesised that Billy's inappropriate behaviour, and being punished, often led to gaining his peers' attention, which he enjoyed, therefore, this continued to maintain his behaviour. The maintaining factors were instigated by certain situational triggers which were hypothesised to include: being goaded by his peers, being ignored by his peers and being punished for poor behaviour.

Consultation with the Class Teacher and Billy's Mother

The consultation with Billy's class teacher and his mother focused on understanding Billy's early school and life experiences, including any changes within the wider systems which may have influenced his behavioural and emotional development.

From the consultation with Billy's mother it emerged that his maternal Grandmother had passed away when Billy was four years old and it had been around this time that his mother had begun to notice a change in his behaviour. Billy's mother also mentioned that she suffered from depression and often struggled to manage Billy's angry outbursts. Billy was reported to have been close to his Grandmother and had become increasingly angry following her death.

Billy's Father's views were gained through the EP referral form, where he stated that he did not have concerns about his son's behaviour, but considered it legitimate for his son to defend himself against any bullying.

In school, it was reported that Billy responded well in small group situations, particularly when he received individual attention and praise from the teacher. It was noted that incidents of disruptive behaviour tended to occur when he was expected to work independently, without adult support. Billy was reported to struggle to make friends and often used inappropriate behaviour to gain his peer's attention.

Synthesis of Findings

The consultations provided useful information regarding maintaining factors, as well as pre-disposing and precipitating factors. Maintaining factors were hypothesised to include adult reassurance and adult which encouraged him to work well in small groups. His lack of friends and wanting to make friends maintained the behaviour that was viewed as disruptive and challenging.

The parental information highlighted possible precipitants which may have influenced the onset of Billy's presentation. These were hypothesised to include: his Grandmother's death, his mother's depression and difficulties in managing his behaviour, along with different parenting styles which could have led to Billy receiving inconsistent messages about what was identified as appropriate behaviour.

The bereavement, parental separation along with the different parenting styles could also be viewed as possible pre-disposing factors that place Billy at greater risk of developing problems.

Individual Work with Billy

Billy's views were elicited through the use of the 'The Ideal Self' technique (Moran, 2001) which is used to engage children actively in an activity with a psychotherapeutic basis in Personal Construct Psychology. This technique was used to gauge Billy's ability to talk about problems he experienced, and enabled me to understand his level of awareness in relation to his feelings and his thoughts. I explained the request of adult referrers to work with Billy and explained the concerns his teacher and mother had described. I asked what he felt was the biggest problem for him. The discussion centred around not having friends and getting into trouble when his work was not completed.

Billy talked about wanting to be 'good'. His understanding of this was elaborated through using the 'ideal self' technique where he drew pictures of someone he would not like to be like and someone who he would like to be like. He suggested that being 'good' meant not fighting, tidying up and working hard in school. On the other hand he considered the person he did not want to be like was 'bad' as he fought, had no friends and his mum did not want him. He shared that having no friends made him angry and that he could make friends by making others laugh.

Although Billy was able to articulate his feelings and problems at school and at home, it was clear that his expressive vocabulary was limited to the feeling of being 'bad' or 'good'. Following completion of the drawings as part of the 'Ideal Self' technique, Billy was able to state that he was good sometimes but knew that at times he became angry and would not listen to anyone.

Synthesis of Findings

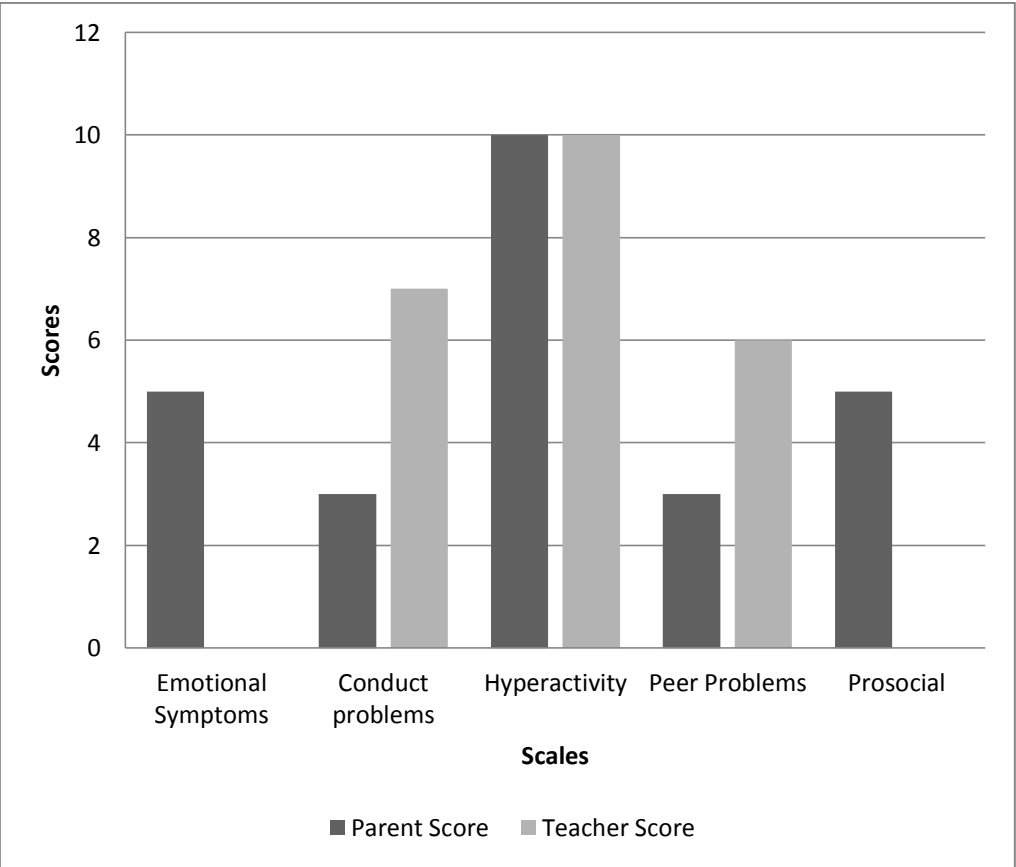
Eliciting Billy's perspective suggested that his anger was triggered by children being unkind to him, goading him and ignoring him and it was hypothesised that these led into maintaining his difficulties as he would fight with children, which would lead to being punished and being further alienated from his peers.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) is a standardised measure that was used to gain a baseline measure of Billy's presenting difficulties and to ascertain, in norm-referenced terms, the severity of the reported concerns. The SDQ is also a core recommended measure by the CaMHS Outcome Resource Consortium (CORC) which sets out a model for routine outcome evaluation (CORC, 2007). The SDQ (Goodman, 1997) (see Appendix 3) was completed by Billy's mother and his teacher to gain a baseline measure of his

behaviour before commencing the therapeutic intervention. The SDQ could then be used following the intervention to assess any changes that may have occurred in the scores. Figure 3 shows Billy’s pre intervention SDQ scores

Figure 3.



Pre-intervention SDQ scores from Parent and Teacher

Synthesis of Findings

The pre-intervention SDQ scores for both parent and teacher (Figure 3) indicate a high level of concern regarding Billy’s conduct, level of hyperactivity and how he gets on with his peers. There is a discrepancy between the scores for emotional

symptoms, where Billy's teacher's score places him within the normal range, however his mother's scores suggest a high level of concern.

The SDQ scores were viewed in relation to the other information gathered in order to identify areas that were consistently presented as key concerns. The SDQ needs to be considered alongside other methods to ensure that the concerns focused on did not overlook other relevant issues or concerns (Goodman, 1997).

A shortcoming of the SDQ is that any change in scores, following an intervention, cannot be solely accounted for by the intervention. This means that a causal relationship cannot be inferred between the intervention and a change in the scores as there are a number of other, external variables which could influence changes in the score.

Summary of Information Gathered

Table 3 (below) sets out a summary of the information gathered to inform the systemic CB formulation. This information was used to develop hypotheses about the onset and maintaining factors relating to Billy's presenting difficulties (as discussed in Section 4). The information relates to developmental factors as well as family history, as these may have affected the onset and maintenance of the Billy's presentation

Table 3.

Child Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Billy, aged 5 years• White / British• Year One at Primary School
Referral Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disruptive behaviour• Lack of self-confidence• Not making friends at school
Sources of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom observation• Consultation with Class Teacher, SENCo, Mother• Individual work with B, using Ideal Self Technique (Moran, 2001)
History of Presenting Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented with challenging behaviour during the first term of the Reception Year, when playing with other children.• Greater disobedience and aggressive behaviour at home• Non-compliance and hitting out when not wanting to participate• Increasing intensity and frequency of the acting-out behaviour
Developmental History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Billy is an only child• Parents separated shortly after his birth• No health concerns• No incidents whilst at Nursery• Start of the Reception year reported to become increasingly aggressive towards peers• Intensity and frequency of outbursts increased
Family History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular contact with Father and Paternal Grandparents.• Parents relationship is conflictual• Father was excluded from high school due to physically aggressive behaviour towards peers• Mother and Maternal Grandmother very close until her recent death• Maternal Grandmother died around the time that Billy transitioned from Nursery to Reception.• Mother works part-time, supporting teenagers who are disengaged from education• Mother takes a strong discipline/punishment approach to parenting• Mother has begun a new relationship, which is strained as Billy appears to dislike her partner

Table 3. Summary and integration of gathered information (Table headings adapted from Carr, 2006, p.167-169)

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations suggested by Wolpert et al., (2005) are addressed during the assessment process (see Table 1). As Billy had been referred for concerns about his disruptive and erratic behaviour, it was evident that the adult referrers were primarily focused on Billy's externalising behaviours and conduct towards others (Ronen, 1998).

The individual work with Billy focused on gaining his perspective in order to gauge his willingness to participate in individual work and to discuss his problems (Stallard, 2005). In order to communicate effectively with Billy, (HCPC, 2012) the PCP technique was used drawing rather than just talking to draw out his views. The adults views were also gauged through multi-method approaches, using consultations, completing the SDQ and feedback about the observation in order to ensure their perspective were accurately gauged.

Although informed consent was given by his mother, the individual work also provided me with an opportunity to explain my role and reason for the referral in to Billy (Stallard, 2005). This also provided me with an opportunity to view Billy's willingness to engage, which could be used to indicate whether he was happy to participate in an intervention or not.

4. Formulation

Formulation is described as *'an individualised picture that helps us to understand and explain a client's problems.'* (Westbrook, et al., 2011, p. 63). Westbrook et al., (2011) go further to describe the key features of a CBT formulation, as comprising:

- *a description of the current problem(s);*
- *an account of why and how these problems might have developed; and*
- *an analysis of the key maintaining processes hypothesised to keep problems going.*

(Westbrook et al. 2011, p.63)

The elicitation of these features produces a detailed picture of an individual's needs and is a representation of a collection of hypotheses which are agreed with key individuals. A formulation can be used as the basis for developing interventions that are well-targeted and appropriately adjusted to the individual's level of understanding and awareness.

The BPS guidelines on the use of psychological formulations (BPS, 2011) state that:

'Formulations are developed through a recursive process of assessment, discussion, intervention, feedback and revision...there is always the possibility of re-formulation in order to include new information and insights, and in this sense all formulations are partial and dynamic.'

(BPS, 2011, p.10)

The next section will examine the development of the initial formulation for Billy, using a systemic CB formulation, based on the underlying view that the formulation is

situated in a particular point in time and will continue to change and develop over time in response to the improved understanding that emerges throughout the intervention period (Westbrook, et al., 2011),.

4.1 Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural Formulation

Formulation is central to synthesising and analysing the assessment information gathered and for informing the intervention used to help the individual move forward (BPS, 2011). Dummett (2006) developed a template for a systemic CB formulation for use with children, young people and families which is described as:

‘...an empirical process of self-discovery that ensures that interventions are based on underlying causative and maintaining processes.’

(Dummett, 2006, p.179)

The systemic CB formulation structure that Dummett (2006) proposes is based on the Beckian Cognitive model (Beck et al., 1979) and the ‘four systems’ of response (Rachman, 1978, cited in Dummett, 2006). The systemic context is represented in the formulation by the incorporation of the genogram, views of important others, such as peers and school staff, and information about cultural and wider systemic influences. These are linked to the different levels of cognition mentioned in Section 2.1.

Many writers have argued that the formulation process should be undertaken collaboratively with the 'client' (Dattilio, 2005; Johnstone & Dallos, 2006; Dummett, 2010) and that the practitioner should retain a '*position of curiosity*' in relation to the individual and their family (Dallos & Stedmon, 2006, p. 77). The systemic CB formulation builds up a picture of the practitioner's hypotheses about the complex interactions between factors that maintain an individual's difficulties. Therefore, Dummett (2006) suggests that, the template is not presented in its completed form to clients; rather the practitioner may refer to it during the assessment process and the formulation is developed collaboratively with clients over time.

In relation to current case, the completed systemic CB formulation for Billy is presented in Figure 4. The formulation was developed during the assessment process (summarised in Section 3). A review meeting was held with Billy's mother, teacher and SENCo, in order to feedback the synthesised information and to discuss the formulation.

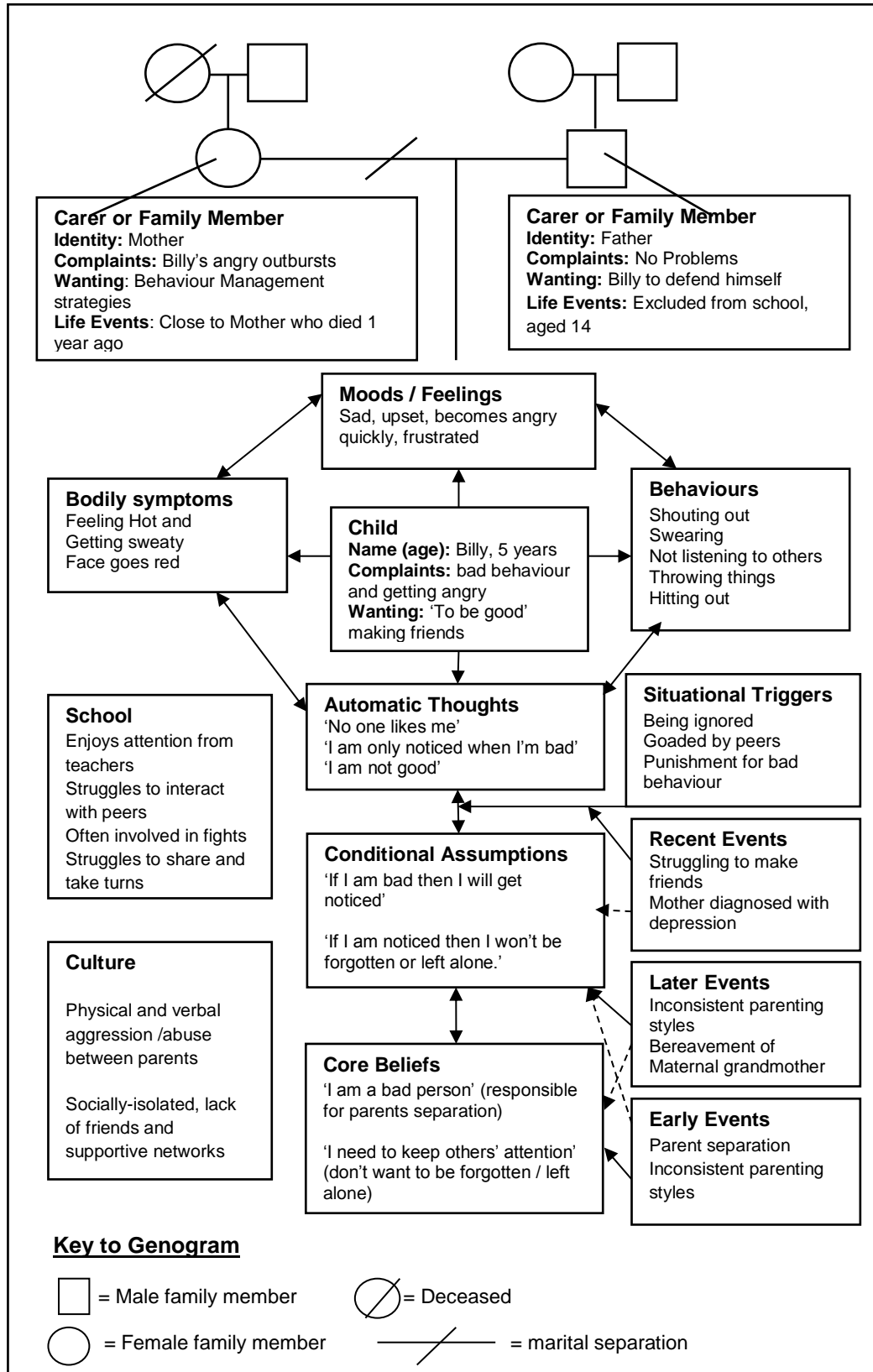
During the review meeting, I set out the hypotheses that had been generated from the assessment process, which incorporated the maintaining, pre-disposing and precipitating factors along with the situation triggers. Dummett's (2006) systemic CB formulation was used to structure the discussion and present the hypotheses. I suggested that the death of Billy's grandmother, who he had been close to, had affected his behaviour, and that his anger and erratic behaviour represented his

response to loss and distress evoked by his Grandmother's death, which was increasingly expressed through attention-seeking and disruptive behaviour.

I also suggested that the difference in parenting styles and Billy's mother's difficulties in managing Billy's behaviour provided Billy with inconsistent messages regarding how to manage his behaviour appropriately.

I discussed the Beckian Formulation aspect by linking these experiences and contextual information with hypotheses regarding his current behaviour around behaving inappropriately, often due to goading by other children, which led to Billy getting into trouble. The inappropriate, disruptive behaviour appeared to be maintained as Billy was gaining his peers' attention which is what he seemed to desire.

Figure 4.



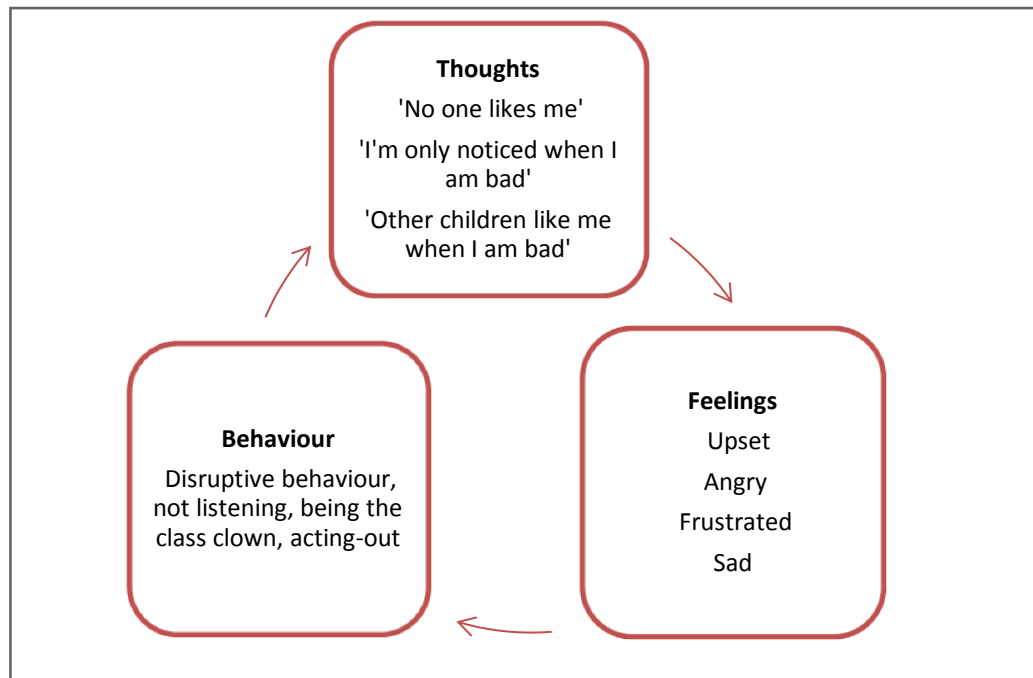
Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural Formulation for Billy (Adapted from Dummett, 2006, p.181)

Experiencing anger after a bereavement are common emotions that children experience as they try to come to terms with losing someone (Long and Fogell, 1999; Carr, 2006). This hypothesis was agreed with Billy's mother and his teacher as one possible explanation for the difficulties he was displaying.

Due to the number and complexity of issues highlighted from the systemic CB formulation, this hypothesis was useful for gaining a broad understanding of Billy's needs, and highlighted a specific aspect that could be focused on within a therapeutic intervention.

The hypothesis was informed a proposed cycle of dysfunctional behaviour and distorted thinking (Hawton et al., 1989). This broad hypothesis regarding Billy's dysfunctional cycle of thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Stallard, 2002) is represented in Figure 5. This cycle emphasised Billy's hypothesised view that being 'bad' was the only way to gain others' attention and to make friends. This model of a dysfunctional cycle was used as the basis for the development of the therapeutic intervention, as school staff, Billy's mother and I believed that by supporting the development of Billy's understanding, he could be enabled to learn to seek attention and praise from others by behaving appropriately, which would in turn increase his feelings of happiness as he would be noticed for behaving as expected.

Figure 5.



Billy's Dysfunctional cycle (Adapted from, Stallard, 2002)

The use of a systemic CB formulation, based upon the multi-method assessment summarised in section 3 of this report informed a number of hypotheses related to how Billy viewed himself and how his past experiences had influenced his current feelings, thoughts and presenting behaviours. The formulation, summarised in Figure 4, highlights the complexity of the case and the above hypothesis was one of several that could have been developed from the assessment data within the formulation.

For clarity and simplicity, one hypothesis was focused on, although both the hypothesis and the dysfunctional cycle could be criticised for over-simplifying the concerns and maintaining factors. Stallard, (2005, p.133) asserts that after agreeing

the formulation, the task of the practitioner is to ensure that the child and family are educated in the cognitive model and that developing emotional awareness is a useful place to start the intervention.

Also, the simplicity of the cognitive model (figure 4) is helpful for young children, with limited cognitive capacity, to understand the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. In this case, the model of Billy's dysfunctional cycle was agreed to emphasise the importance of supporting Billy to build positive friendships with peers, through developing his awareness of his behaviour and the way it affected how others behaved towards him.

5. Critical Reflections

The use of a systemic approach to inform the assessment process and formulation (Dummett, 2006) has highlighted some implications to consider for future therapeutic work. Billy's referral to the EP service specifically requested therapeutic work to address the presenting difficulties that both his teacher and mother felt were of significant concern.

In this case, the systemic CB formulation led to the development of a hypothesised dysfunctional cycle which was used as the starting point for the therapeutic work with Billy. However, the formulation also highlighted factors, such as: parenting styles and

dealing with bereavement which could also be addressed through different methods, such as parent training and counselling support for the family.

Billy's mother struggled to manage his behaviour at home, which may have been linked to her mental health as she was suffering from depression. Belter, et al., (1991) argue that parental perceptions of their children's behaviour can be affected by their own mental health, however addressing this can be problematic if the parent is resistant to accepting the hypothesis.

Also, research suggests that parental involvement in therapeutic work with children is beneficial, where systemic ideas are used to inform the intervention (Robins, 1999). Cottrell and Boston (2002) assert that parental involvement in therapeutic interventions with children can have positive effects that are maintained over time. Although engaging parental involvement and support from the initial referral through to the therapeutic work itself, is significant for the success and long term efficacy of the intervention (Stallard, 2005), this is can be elusive in practice, as viewed in the current case.

The systemic CB formulation also highlighted the importance of gaining multiple perspectives, through a multi-method approach, as this allowed an insight into the parent's and teachers' perspectives, along with an understanding of Billy's point of view concerning his behaviour. Without this multiple perspective collation of information, the formulation would have been incomplete, particularly without an

awareness of the early experiences and contextual information which was elicited from the assessment process. This would have led to an inaccurate information about the factors that influenced and maintained the presenting difficulties.

Dummett (2010) argues that if information is missed during the completion of a systemic CB formulation, it may be because:

‘...key cognitions or affects have been missed or undue emphasis has been given to those that, although present, are not intensely held but have been consistent with an overvalued therapist hypothesis, for example.’

(Dummett, 2010, p.27)

Formulation can be influenced by biases during decision-making processes which can, in turn, affect the focus that is subsequently taken within the therapeutic intervention. Kuyken et al., (2009) suggest that a formulation can be implicitly based on a suggested reference point (availability heuristic) or judgements can be made on how easily incidents of a particular behaviour come to mind (anchoring heuristic) which can lead to an inaccurate or incomplete formulation. BPS guidelines (2011) recommend working collaboratively with service user's, using clear language in order to develop the formulation. Supervision is also central to minimising potentially unhelpful aspects and removing the focus from just one aspect.

The opportunity for EPs to undertake therapeutic work is viewed as an opportunity to increase the breadth and scope of the professional role (Mackay, 2007). Farrell et al.

(2006) reviewed EP practice and found that the only about 2 per cent of EP time was allotted for therapeutic work with individual children, within most EP Services. However, they noted that there was scope within professional practice to broaden the EP role to incorporate individual therapeutic work.

Although some argue that EPs are well placed to support school staff to deliver interventions, through offering training on the psychological theories underpinning social and emotional interventions (Rait, et al., 2010), others argue that EPs should undertake further direct therapeutic work in order to expand the range of skills and services that can be offered to schools and other services (Mackay, 2007).

This is a pertinent argument in the current economic climate, where schools and other agencies are increasingly moving to commissioning EP services. In this way providing therapeutic work, as well as training, enables EPs to develop a broadening profile of skills, which will improve their 'marketability' (Fallon, et al., 2011) if they can demonstrate effective outcomes for children from this work.

In conclusion, this case has examined the use of a systemic approach to assessing the needs of a young child and developing a systemic CB formulation, which encapsulates the contextual influences as well as developmental factors, in order to understand the factors precipitating and maintaining the presenting concerns. This paper has demonstrated that working collaboratively with the child and key adults enables a detailed understanding of the presenting problems, which can help to inform an appropriately adjusted therapeutic intervention, which takes the child's needs and cognitive skills into account.

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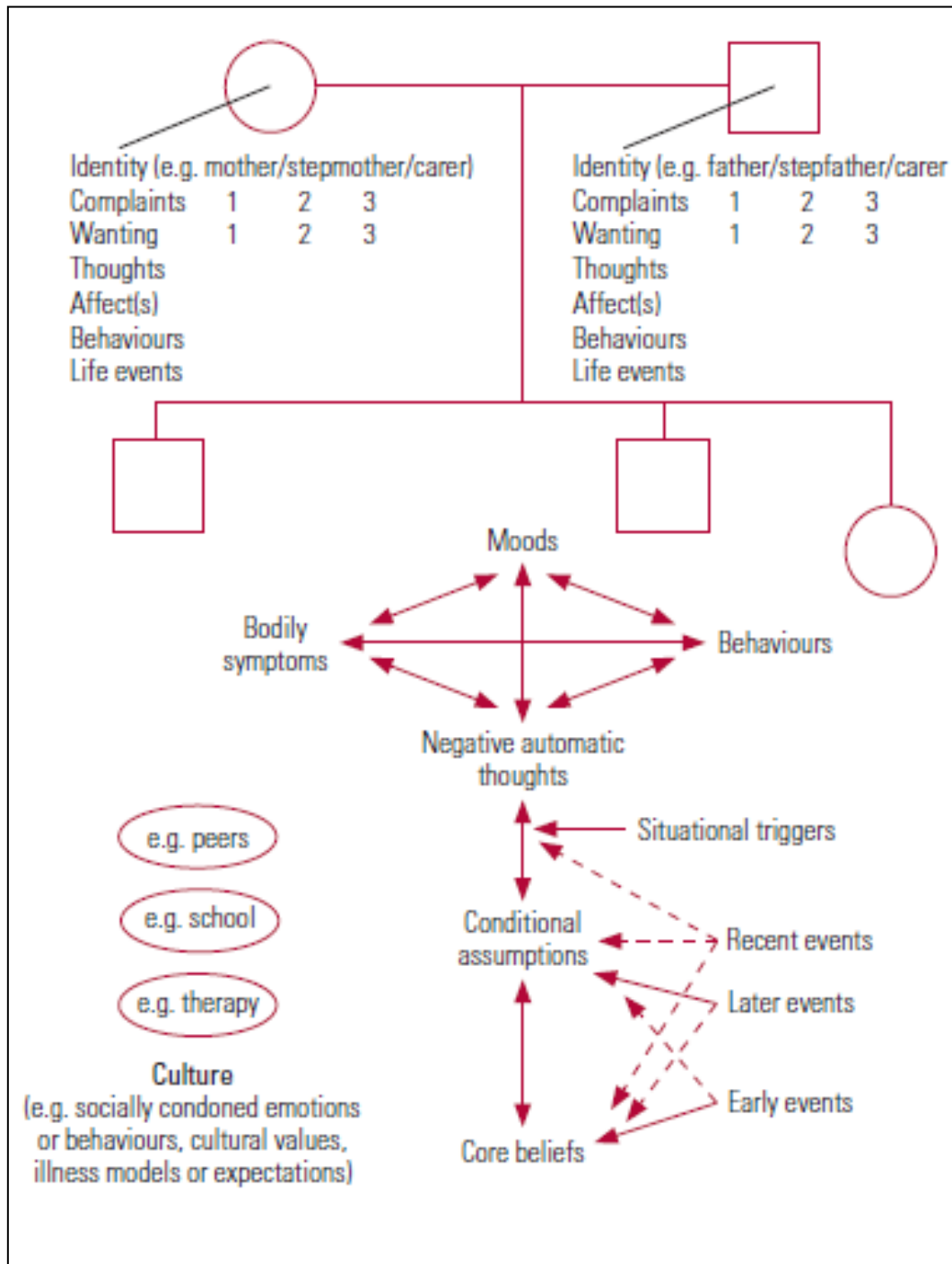
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Appendix 1

Systemic Cognitive-Behavioural Formulation

(From Dummett, 2010, p.29)



Appendix 2

The Stages of Intellectual Development according to Piaget

(Adapted from Smith, et al., 2003, p. 392)

Stage	Approximate Age (Years)	Characteristics
Sensori-Motor	0 – 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The infant learns about the world through actions and sensory information Learn to differentiate self from environment Begin to understand causality in time and space Develop capacity to form internal mental representations.
Pre-Operational	2 – 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symbolic use of language and intuitive problem-solving used to classify objects Thinking is egocentric Child will focus on one aspect of a task By the end of this stage children can take another's perspective
Concrete Operational	7 – 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children can take the perspective of others with ease. Able to classify and order as well as organise objects into series Child still tied to immediate experience but can begin to perform logical mental operations.
Formal Operational	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstract reasoning begins Children can manipulate ideas and speculate about the possible Can reason deductively Can formulate and test hypotheses.

Appendix 3

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain or the item seems daft! Please give your answers on the basis of the child's behaviour over the last six months or this school year.

Child's Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth.....

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other children (treats, toys, pencils etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rather solitary, tends to play alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally obedient, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many worries, often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other children or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, down-hearted or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous or clingy in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often lies or cheats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often volunteers to help others (parents, teachers, other children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinks things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets on better with adults than with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sees tasks through to the end, good attention span	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature

Date

Parent/Teacher/Other (please specify:)

Thank you very much for your help

© Robert Goodman, 2005

Chapter 4

Professional Practice Report Three

Applying an Appreciative Inquiry approach to support Organisational Change in a Group of Children's Centres

Abstract

This paper presents a study undertaken by an EP service in order to facilitate organisational change within four Children's Centres that were located within areas identified as highly disadvantaged. The managers and deputy managers, along with the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) supporting these Children's Centres, participated in an Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) approach (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987) for organisational change and development in order to focus on improving the way in which children's social and emotional needs are addressed and supported within each setting.

The Ai process comprised of four key stages: Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny. (Whitney et al., 2002; Cooperrider et al., 2003; Ludema et al., 2003). The key themes emerging from the phases were: working with families, valuing children as individuals, professional development, the environment and links with other professionals. Overall, practitioners viewed the use of Ai as a useful approach to focus discussions about change within their settings. The paper ends by discussing the role of EPs in working at the level of the organisation and using approaches, such as Ai, to support change that can have positive implications for practitioners as well as the children and families that they support.

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1. Introduction

This paper presents a study undertaken by an EP service to facilitate organisational change within four Children's Centres that were located within areas identified as highly disadvantaged, based on economic deprivation indices (Census, 2011). The managers and deputy managers, along with the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) supporting these Children's Centres(n=8), participated in an Appreciative Inquiry approach for organisational change and development in order to focus on improving the way in which children's social and emotional needs are addressed and supported within each setting.

This paper begins, in Section 2, by viewing the policy context that Children's Centres originated from, followed by an examination of how Early Years provision is conceptualised within the current Government's vision of early education and support. The role of EPs working with Children's Centres is discussed and approaches to support organisational change are viewed in relation to the present study. Section 3 focuses on the Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) approach to organisational change and development (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987), and provides details of the research design and outcomes from the process. Section 4 discusses the outcomes of the Ai approach and views the role of EPs in supporting organisational change, in a general sense, as well as specifically related to Children's Centres. The paper concludes by viewing the implications of using Ai to facilitate change at an organisational level.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Development of Children's Centres in England

Early Years policy has undergone rapid change and development since the mid-1990s, which has dramatically affected the provision and support available for children from birth to five years, and their families. In 1999, the Labour Government prioritised the need to reduce child poverty, due to its negative implications on every aspect of children's lives. The formation of an Early Years policy, with a focus on early intervention strategies, was developed with a view to improving the lives of disadvantaged young children and their families:

'...early diagnosis and appropriate intervention improve the prospects of children with special educational needs, and reduce the need for expensive intervention later on. For some children, giving more effective attention to early signs of difficulties can prevent the development of SEN.'

(DfEE, 1998, p.13)

The drive to improve the lives of disadvantaged young children was further intensified by Lord Laming's Report (Laming, 2003) into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, an eight year old girl whose death was caused by the abuse she suffered from her primary care-givers. The key findings from Lord Laming's Report (2003) suggested that Victoria's death was due to systemic failures by professionals who failed to communicate across agencies leading to poor information sharing and concerns not being triggered:

“I am in no doubt that effective support for children and families cannot be achieved by a single agency acting alone. It depends on a number of agencies working well together. It is a multi-disciplinary task.”

(Laming, 2003, p.7).

This statement sparked reform into how Children's Services supported children and families and how they worked with other agencies. The 2003 green paper, *'Every Child Matters: Change for Children'* (DfES, 2003) introduced a new agenda for all services working with children, resulting in the Children Act in 2004, which instigated the emphasis for multi-agency working and the importance of sharing information between services for the benefit of children.

For children under the age of five, and their families, these reforms led to the initiation of the Sure Start programme, which focused on providing consistent, high quality childcare and support for parents (Baldock, 2009). In 2006, guidance was issued on the development of Sure Start Children's Centres (DfES, 2006) which followed on from the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (DfES, 2007).

The EYFS (DfES, 2007) was developed as the core framework that all Early Years providers were, and still are currently, required to adhere to, in order to ensure that children receive a high quality and consistent level of support. Within this political context, Children's Centres developed as settings to provide parents with easily accessible information and contact with support services. Children's Centres were initially located in the most disadvantaged wards in the country, based on economic indices of deprivation derived from the Census information (Census, 2001; 2011).

Through a phased approach, Children's Centres were established in every community, which was reported to have been achieved by 2011 (DfE, 2011a).

The key impact of the Early Years policy under the Labour Government was the emphasis on intra-agency working which ensured a range of services worked together within one setting. Children's Centres were regarded as:

'...service hubs where children under five years old and their families can receive seamless integrated services and information.'

(DCSF, 2010)

This has meant significant transformation of existing local provision to enable services to work within one setting, which has presented practitioners with many challenges, particularly as no detail or guidance was provided regarding the configuration of multi-agency teams (Barnes, 2008). Also, Barnes (2008) suggested that the evidence-base for multi-agency practice is limited in regards to which activities or models are most effective in supporting children and families. This highlighted some of the challenges to be overcome when working in and developing joined up multi-agency teams.

2.2 Recent Changes to Early Years Policy

Following the change of Government in the UK, to the Coalition Government (May 2010), there was much uncertainty concerning the future of Sure Start and Children's Centres; however a report published by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO, 2012a), concerning priorities for Children's Services, asserted that the Coalition Government's stance regarding Early Years' provision was to:

'Improve support for children in the Foundation Years, by:

- *Retaining a national network of Sure Start Children's Centres and ensuring that they deliver proven early intervention programmes to support families in the greatest need; and*
- *Ensuring access to sufficient and high quality Foundation Years provisions.'*

(C4EO, 2012a, p.3)

Hence, the Sure Start programme and Early Years agenda continues to remain a high priority for the Coalition Government for improving outcomes for the most economically disadvantaged families. A comprehensive vision concerning the services that should be provided for young children and their families was set out in the report *'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years'* (DfE, 2011b). This report describes the main areas of focus regarding Early Years support:

- *Greater focus on parental engagement.*
- *Retaining a national network of Sure Start Children's Centres.*

- *Extending free early education to the most disadvantaged two year olds.*
- *Revising the early year's code of practice to reduce beaureaucracy and increase flexibility of provision and support.*

(DfE, 2011b, p.4)

In this vision, early intervention was viewed as fundamental to Children's Centres policy, which was regarded to be provided most effectively by a well-qualified and motivated workforce (DfE, 2011b). Thus, an increasing emphasis has been placed on developing training pathways for Early Years' practitioners. Recent research into practitioners' views of providing a quality service in the Early Years relating to training and further professional development (Cottle, 2011), suggests that the 'professionalisation' of Early Years' practitioners has led to a sense of being imposed upon and controlled by government, due to top-down guidelines that have not taken account of practitioners' views (Hordern, 2012). This is viewed to have given rise to a shift towards managerialism and the use of professionalism as a mechanism for control (Osgood, 2010; Evetts, 2011). Some practitioners have suggested that the quality of Early Years services are dependent on the level of experience gained by practitioners and the learning that they acquire over time (Cottle, 2011), rather than the level of qualifications that they hold.

To ensure that Children's Centres provide effective services and improve outcomes for all young children and families, the Department for Education consulted with a range of practitioners and services linked to the Early Years sector in order to develop the core purpose of Sure Start Children's Centres (DFE, 2012).

Soni (2010) asserts that the changes and increasing emphasis on 'quality' in Early Years provision, and developing a highly qualified and effective workforce was

central to Labour Government policies. The Coalition Government has continued to retain this emphasis, along with an increased focus on measuring outcomes and effectiveness, to enable Early Years' providers to effectively support and bring about change for children and families.

Within the context of educational psychology practice, Soni (2010) argues that EPs are well-situated to '*empower, develop and support retention of the workforce*'. This view relates to the large scale reviews conducted of EP practice (DFEE, 2000; Farrell et al., 2006), which highlight the breadth of the EP role and the way in which the range of knowledge and skills of EPs can be utilised to help develop settings at the level of the individual, group and organisation. One of the future priorities mentioned within the DFEE (2000) report on the current role of EPs, was that:

'Early years work is regarded as high priority. Without exception, users of the service were committed to further developing these areas of work with the educational psychology service.'

(DFEE Report, 2000, p.6)

In line with this argument, the following section views the role of EPs in the Early Years and within Children's Centres. The following section also examines how the profession could use more collaborative approaches at the level of the whole organisation in order to develop and improve the services that they provide.

2.3 Educational Psychology and Organisational Change

Within the literature relating to the professional practice and the role of EPs, there is an emphasis on individually-focused casework which is often regarded as a significant aspect of EPs' work in relation to working with children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Farrell et al., (2006) found that practitioners from 73 per cent of nurseries, involved in their national study, were able to provide an example of the distinct role of EPs in relation to individual casework and working with children with SEN, as opposed to work at an organisational level; thus highlighting casework as the significant role for EPs in Early Years' work.

Shannon & Posada (2007) examined current models of service delivery in Early Years. They found that individual-based casework was the primary area of EP work in Early Years, with 59% of EPs spending over half their Early Years time engaged in individual work, compared with 31% spending the majority of their Early Years' time engaged in organisational level work, which most frequently related to EPs working with practitioners to develop individual education plans (IEPs). These results highlight the extent to which individual work is prioritised in comparison to organisational work.

Jensen et al. (2002) suggest that historically, the EP profession has attempted to shift the focus of EP work and practice from individually-focused work to more preventative and holistic activities, through the reconstructing movement (Gillham,

1978); however little impact has been made by subsequent approaches which have aimed to bring about change across systems and organisations (Burden, 1978; Stoker, 1987; Fox & Sigston, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Stobie, 2002). Fox (2009) claims that the ambiguous and interchangeable use of language such as ‘*systems*’ and ‘*working systemically*’ has caused confusion concerning how working in and with organisations should be defined. Also, it is suggested that working at the organisational level has become a greater challenge since the development of Children Services which require a greater emphasis on clarifying: ‘*how EPs are already using systemic thinking in their systems work.*’ (Fox, 2009, p.255).

To support the work of EPs within Early Years settings, Wolfendale and Robinson, (2001) proposed a sequential approach for working at both the individual and organisational level. Dennis (2003) argued that EPs have the ability to facilitate changes at an organisational level within Early Years settings; however she also raised a question that is pertinent to the current economic climate:

‘given the increasingly market-driven nature of LEA funding... how will the development of such ‘traded services’ affect the base budget of Educational Psychology Services?...In bidding for and taking on such projects, psychological services may find themselves in the unenviable position of having to reduce their core staffing and increasing the number of psychologists taken on short-term contracts in order to fulfil project work.’

(Dennis, 2003, p. 264)

Within the current climate of ‘traded’ EP service delivery, in order to retain the viability of many EP services (Fallon et al., 2010), EPs’ activities and functions require a clear research and evidence-based rationale, in order to demonstrate value for money and

effectiveness (Baxter and Frederickson, 2005; Allen and Hardy, 2013) which is central to any organisational work undertaken within Early Years settings such as Children's Centres (Sloper, 2004).

Jensen et al. (2002) argue that the evidence regarding EPs' involvement with organisations, such as in schools and local authorities, to bring about change, has been limited. This is argued to be due to the priorities of such organisations that are busy dealing with deadline-driven projects (Covey, 1994), and thus, have limited time to reflect on and engage in discussions about employing changes at the organisational level.

Schiemann (1995) suggests that organisational change can also be resisted by employees who fear the uncertainty of change and the implications for their role and the organisation as a whole. He presents a further five issues which can hinder change and development within organisations:

1. *Inappropriate culture.*
2. *Poor planning and communication.*
3. *Incomplete follow-up.*
4. *Lack of management agreement on strategy.*
5. *Insufficient skills.*

(Schiemann, 1995, cited in Jensen et al., 2002, p.38)

Jensen et al. (2002) argue that organisational change is central to developing and promoting positive change in children and families at both individual and

organisational levels. Therefore, increasing knowledge and awareness of evidence-based approaches to organisational change are necessary for the growing remit of EPs within Early Years settings.

Within the literature, there are some examples of approaches and frameworks which have been used by EPs to bring about change at the organisational level within various institutions. Some examples are provided in Table 1, below.

Table 1.

Approach	References	Focus of Research
Action Research	Simm and Ingram (2008) Binnie et al. (2008)	School level
Activity Theory	Leadbetter (2006); Leadbetter et al. (2007)	Multi-agency teams EP Service
Soft Systems Methodology	Gersch et al. (2001); Baxter and Frederickson (2005)	School level Multi-agency working
Solution-Focused	Rhodes, (1993); Alexander and Sked (2010)	School level EP Service
SWOT Analysis	Brown and Henderson (2012)	Whole School level
Research and Development in Organisations (RADiO)	Timmins, et al. (2003) Timmins et al. (2006) Ashton (2009)	Local Authority evaluation TEP negotiating research with EPSs School level

Examples of organisational change approaches used by EPs

Table 1 serves to illustrate some of the organisational change approaches that have been utilised by EPs in various contexts, although none of these are based in an Early Years context. These approaches have enabled EPs' to move beyond

individually-focused activities in order to make an impact at the level of the organisation.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

This literature review has examined the changing policy context within the Early Years domain, highlighting the development of Children's Centres as hubs for access to integrated support services for children and families. Research into the role of EPs in Early Years provisions has highlighted that the primary emphasis has traditionally been placed upon individually-focused work, rather than implementing organisational change and development approaches. It is argued that working at the level of the organisation poses some challenges for EPs and the way in which they work, particularly with the shift towards trading with services.

In light of the review of this literature, the next section aims to build on the previous studies conducted by EPs into organisational change, to focus specifically on facilitating change in a group of Children's Centres, through the use of Appreciative Inquiry (Ai), as an approach to bring about change at the level of the organisation.

3. Research Design

3.1 Appreciative Inquiry

Luthans (2002) discusses the influence of Positive Psychology on organisational change and development, stressing the importance of viewing the strengths of organisations in order to promote success and wellbeing. Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) developed from this Positive Psychology stance (Seligman, 2002), whereby a strengths-based approach is used to bring about change (Seligman and Csikzentmihalyi, 2000). This approach can be used at individual, group or organisational level. Linley et al. (2006) assert that the application of a Positive Psychology approach *'might be concordant with the needs and aspirations of many practising psychologists'* (p.7). Within the EP profession, Positive Psychology has been reported to be incorporated into elements of EP practice (Cameron, 2006). Linley, et al. (2006) state that focusing on strengths and taking a positive stance to organisational development provides a different perspective and can shine *'the light of scientific inquiry into previously dark and neglected corners'* (p.5).

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987), who developed Appreciative Inquiry (Ai), argued that action research focuses on critique rather than appreciation. They asserted that action research and problem-solving approaches diminish practitioners' ability to produce imaginative and inspiring ways to develop organisations, viewing Ai as:

'the appreciative mode of inquiry...[which] engenders a reverence for life that draws the researcher to inquire beyond superficial appearances to deeper levels of life-generating essentials and potentials of social existence.'

(Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987, p.131)

Ai is critiqued as an approach to organisational change by some writers who argue that it raises questions about subjectivity in regards to how *'positive'* is defined, and whose perspective should be taken as the focus of the inquiry (Spreitzer and Sonenschein, 2004). Also, it is argued that by focusing on the positives, practitioners may feel that any negative experiences are devalued or ignored. To overcome these issues, Linley et al. (2006) suggest that rather than disregarding negative experiences, Ai should aim to frame these into a more appreciative expression and incorporate these within the approach.

Table 1. above highlights the range of organisational development approaches that have been utilised by EPs; however Ai is an approach that has only one documented instance of being used within the EP domain (Sullivan, 2011). Therefore, to view the utility of this approach to organisational development, the present study used Ai in order to bring about change at the level of the whole organisation, within a group of Children's Centres, by focusing on the positives and facilitating change where difficulties are experienced.

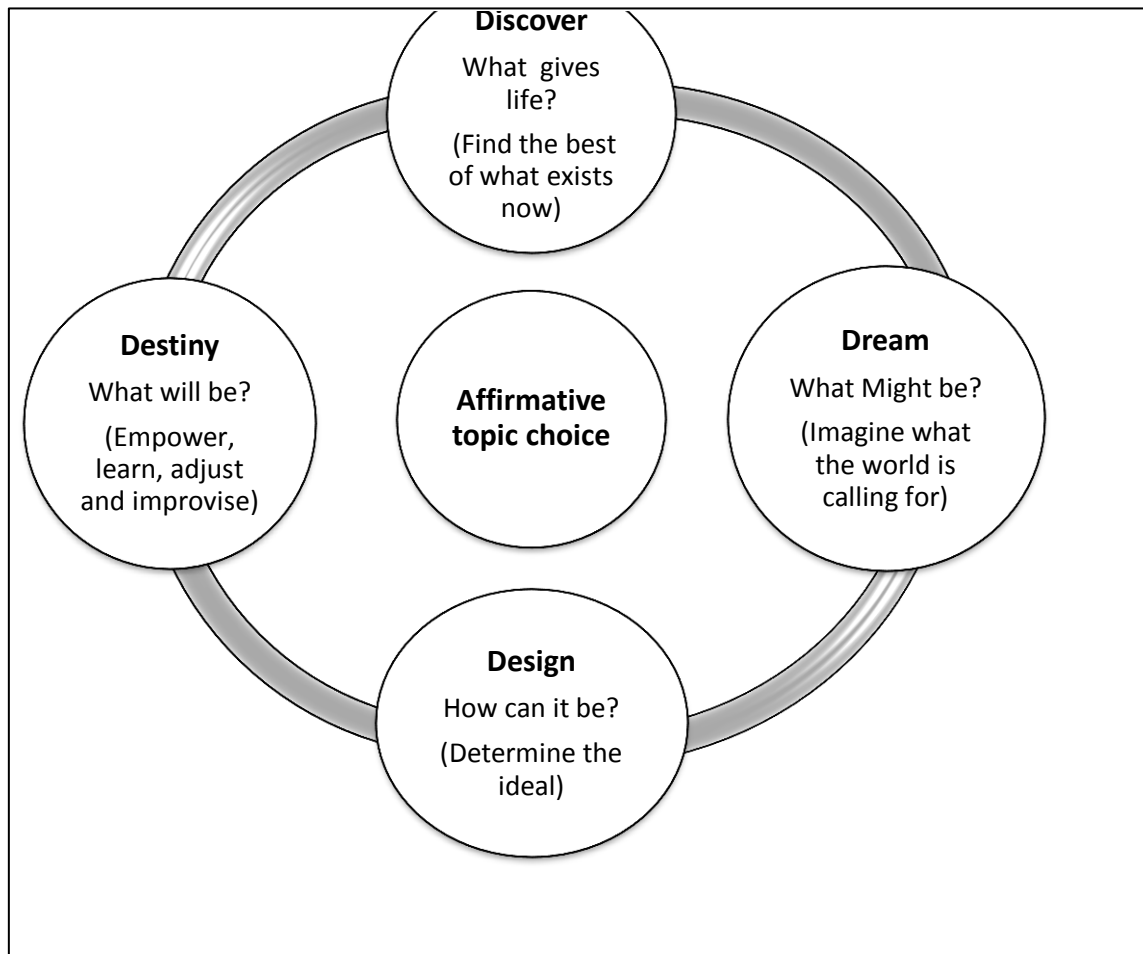
The rationale for using Ai is based on Cameron's (2006) assertion that the role of the EP should be one which supports others to view their strengths and consider what

they are able to do, rather than describing what they cannot do, which can be successfully achieved through the application of Positive Psychology. Also, as Ai is a participatory approach, which encourages involvement at all levels of an organisation, it was perceived that this approach would enable collaborative involvement as opposed to the top-down process of change which Hordern (2012) suggests implicitly infers a sense of being controlled (p.3). The following sections outline the present study in further detail.

3.2 The 4-D Appreciative Inquiry Model

The Ai process comprises of four key stages: Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny. (Whitney et al., 2002; Cooperrider et al., 2003; Ludema et al., 2003) but how the process is applied in practice is dependent on the context and circumstances of the organisation in which the model is applied. The 4-D model of Ai is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.



The 4-D model of Appreciative Inquiry, adapted from Bright et al. (2006)

The 4-D model of Ai begins with a topic choice which focuses attention on the outcomes that are desired through a collaborative change process. The 'Discovery' phase aims to search for and highlight those factors which give life to the organisation, thus enabling a consideration of new possibilities, by shifting away from focusing on analysing problems (Ludema et al. 2006). The second phase relates to the 'Dream' for the topic choice, focusing on what could be, which is followed by the 'Design' phase which focuses upon thinking about the future and how to move

forward. This phase incorporates dialogue and debate to develop a vision for the organisation which is shared by all those involved in the process. The final phase, 'Destiny' enables an action plan to be constructed with other organisation members in order to build on the discussions relating to positively-framed change and development.

3.3 Context of Current Study

The current study originated from discussions between the EP service and Area Special Educational Needs Coordinators (Area SENCOs) who work with groups of Early Years settings based in one locality. Based on indices of economic deprivation (Census, 2011) two localities in the Borough were focused on, in regards to needing further support from the EP service, although there was no specific remit of what that support would look like. Across both these localities, four Children's Centre managers' expressed concerns about how effectively they were supporting children's social and emotional development, particularly in light of changes made by the current Government to reduce statutory guidance and guidelines about supporting children and families.

Following individual meetings between the Children's Centre managers and an EP to discuss how the EP service could support these settings, it was agreed that the four Children's Centre managers would benefit from undertaking a group discussion, utilising the Ai 4-D model as a process framework, to help clarify what was currently

working well and designing how they could move forward to enable successful organisational change and development.

3.4 Participants

As the first phase of supporting these Children's Centres to focus on the type of support they would require from the EP service, the four Children's Centre managers agreed to participate in the group discussions, which were conducted over two sessions, each session lasting for approximately two hours. Alongside the Managers, either a senior member of staff from each centre attended the two sessions or an Area SENCO. The total number of participants in this study was 8. It was agreed that, following an initial iteration of the Ai process, further support could then be provided to each individual Children's Centre in order to focus on issues pertinent to each setting. Thus, using Ai was a time efficient way of gaining views from each Centre which could be built on through further support from the EP service.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Working with a number of different Children's Centres posed some challenges for ensuring the study adhered to appropriate ethical considerations, particularly in relation to retaining confidentiality and anonymity. Ethical considerations were based on the BPS code of ethics and conduct (BPS, 2009) and the EP service protocol for

undertaking research. In accordance with the EP service protocol, an informed consent form for EP involvement was signed by all participants prior to commencing any discussions with the managers. Prior to the start of the group sessions copies of a recent Ai presentation were given to each Centre, in order for participants to understand the phases of the approach that would be undertaken in the group sessions (Appendix 1). At the start of the first session, ground rules were discussed, written down and shared with the group (Appendix 2) in order to remind participants about confidentiality, respecting each other's views and recognising that participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to leave at any time during the sessions. The sessions were recorded through written activities and no audio recording was taken.

3.6 Research Questions

This study focused on using Ai to enable participants to discuss and agree on the direction that they wanted the sessions to focus on. Thus, rather than specific research questions, the four phases of the Ai process were framed as positive questions, to ensure that participants remained focused on the topic within the Ai process.

The questions used at each phase are set out below:

Discovery: What's working well within your work?

Dream: What are your greatest hopes for the future?

Design: What will the dream look like in action?

Destiny: What short term targets and actions could be focused upon?

3.7 Ai Process in Current Study

Within the current study, the Ai process was conducted through the use of group and paired discussions. Two facilitators (an EP and TEP) supported the Ai process. At the start of each phase, one facilitator briefly explained the objective of the phase and then stated the related question for participants to discuss with their colleagues from the same Children's Centre.

Participants were asked to write down key ideas from their discussions onto post-it notes which were collected by the facilitators and grouped, as far as this was possible, on flip-chart paper with broader theme names given to the groups of notes collected (for an example, see Appendix 3). These themes were then discussed by the group, with the key emerging themes being drawn and written onto a large poster on the wall (shown in Figure 2, below). The second session ended with participants formulating their individual short-term action plans which were relevant to their own settings.

3.8 Outcomes of the Ai process

At each phase of the Ai process, themes that emerged were discussed and verified with the group, to ensure their views were accurately captured within the theme labels, before moving on to the next phase of the Ai. Section 3.8.1 presents the themes emerging at each phase of the Ai process, and Figure 2 presents the overall Ai process that was drawn on a large poster for the participants to view throughout the whole Ai process. The Ai process shown in Figure 2 was recreated on computer, in order to retain the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

3.8.1 Themes emerging from each phase of Ai process

The four phases of the Ai process were: Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny, with some time also spent on defining the topic choice, or 'Definition' that was the overall focus topic of the Ai. This section presents the themes emerging from each phase, which were elicited through asking the research questions. For the positive topic choice, the participants agreed on:

“Supporting staff to develop a consistent approach to responding to childrens’ social and emotional development.”

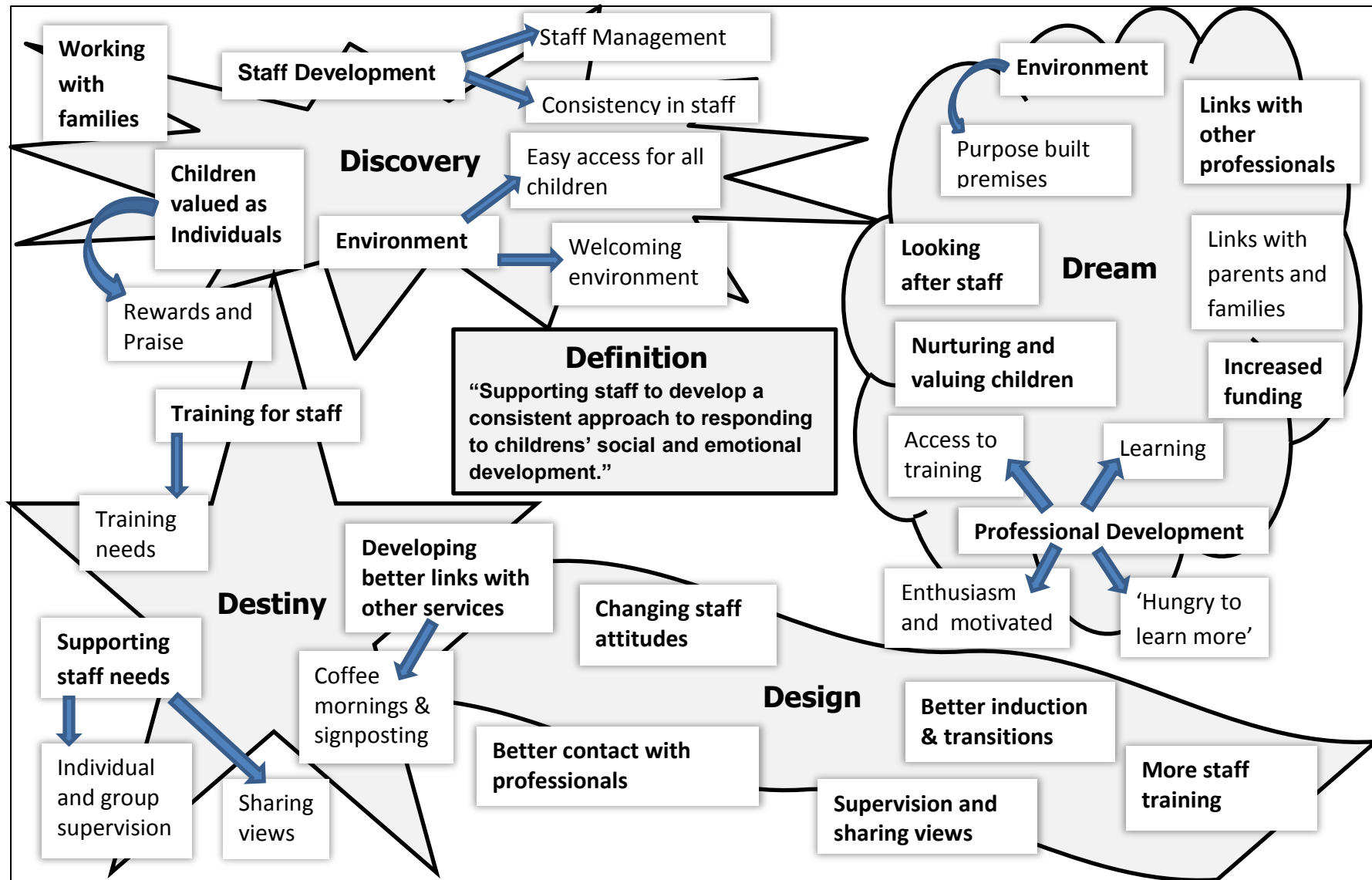
Table 2, below, sets out the key themes emerging from each phase and the main comments elicited in regards to this theme by participants Figure Section 4 discusses these themes in greater detail.

Table 2.

Phase of AI	Key themes	Examples of Comments
Discovery	Working with families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging parental involvement • Positive links with families • Daily communication
	Valuing children as individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using rewards and praise • Encouraging children to resolve confrontations • Developing friendships
	Staff development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking support • Training / meetings • Consistent staff-child relationships
	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access for all • Free flow environment • Welcoming environment
Dream	Links with other professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger networks with outside professionals
	Increasing funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For LAs to have enough money to provide sufficient support • Increase in funding
	Nurturing children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible routines • 1-to-1 support • Key person for each child • Value children and support creativity
	Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion for excellence held by staff • Staff 'hungry' to learn more • Think outside the box (staff) • Professional development priority for all staff • Improving salary for improving dedication and commitment
Design	Changing staff attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending more time with individual staff • Staff visiting other settings • Building a positive shared ethos amongst staff • More staff for small group work and better child-teacher interaction
	Better contact with professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open door policy with other professionals
	Supervision and staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meetings to share aspirations • Supervision meetings
	Better inductions and transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visits for child induction (key person) • Quality transitions to school
Destiny	Developing better links with professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using coffee mornings, open door policy and signposting other agencies to parents and families
	Supporting staff needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing staff views • Group and individual supervision
	Training for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking a training needs analysis to ensure any needs are addressed

Key Themes emerging from the AI process used in the Current Study

Figure 2. AI Process Diagram



4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to facilitate organisational change in four Children's Centres, concerning how effectively they were supporting children's social and emotional development. This process was undertaken by using Appreciative Inquiry to encourage a positively-focused discussion to clarify what was currently working well and ascertaining how they could move forward to enable successful organisational change.

Table 2. illustrates the themes that occurred at each of the four phases, thus in order to discuss the findings, this section addresses the questions used at each phased, by viewing the themes that emerged, along with pertinent issues relating to the Ai process at each stage of the study.

4.1 Discovery Phase : What's working well within your work?

The purpose of the Discovery phase was:

'to search for, highlight and illuminate those factors that give life to the organisation, the 'best of what is' in any given situation'

(Ludema et al., 2006, p.158)

This phase relates to initiating the discussion regarding what is working well and any positives within the organisation, in order to identify and talk about what makes these

positives possible. The key themes that emerged within this stage were: *Working with families*, *Valuing children as individuals*, *Staff development* and *Environment*.

The themes elicited at this phase centred on the importance of taking a holistic approach to supporting young children through working with their families and valuing children as individuals. *Working with families* was a theme that related to comments made by participants relating to encouraging parental involvement, building positive links with families, and maintaining daily communication with parents. Encouraging greater parent engagement is one of the key areas mentioned in the recent government report focusing on the Early Years: '*Supporting Families in the Foundation Years*' (DfE, 2011b).

Staff development related to the importance of maintaining communication within the organisation and maintaining practitioners' professional skills through on-going training. Alongside this the participants mentioned that they paid a great deal of attention to the environment of the Centres to ensure they were welcoming and accessible for all children. Both these themes relate closely with Melhuish et al., (2008) assertions that providing a high quality early education produces more benefits for children, thus it is important for Children's Centres to continue to work towards improving the provision it provides through staff training and developing the environment within the centre.

Cooperrider (1990) suggests that the underlying assumption of the Discovery phase is that positive images are created which suggest how participants would want their organisation to be, which he argues, generates an '*atmosphere of energy, focus, and anticipation for alternative possibilities and assumptions.*' (Boyd and Bright, 2007, p.1029).

The themes that emerged within this phase did appear to emphasise a sense of what participants' would like to see in their Centres, as opposed to solely focusing on what was working well; however within the Ai approach this positivity is argued to be necessary to maintain momentum when moving into the next phases of Ai (Cooperrider, 1990).

4.2 Dream: What are your greatest hopes for the future?

This second phase of Ai is: '*to dream about what could be*' (Ludema, et al. 2006, p.158). The Dream phase enables participants to create a vision of where they would like to go, prior to utilising the Design phase to develop how the Dream can become a reality (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2008). Within this phase the key themes that emerged partly followed on from the discussion within the Discovery phase: *Links with other professionals, Increasing funding, Nurturing children and Professional development.*

Nurturing children developed from the theme of *Valuing children as individuals* which emerged in the 'Discovery' phase, in relation to what participants felt was currently working well and what their greatest hope was for the future. This theme underlined the sense that nurturing and supporting children was central to the focus of the Children's Centres as organisations, but also something that they felt that could be reviewed, worked upon and improved. The theme links with the current Government's drive to ensure that Early Years settings provide positive early educational experiences (DfE, 2011b) and the evidence-base of studies featured in this report indicated the long term benefits of medium to high quality child care (Sammons et al., 2008; Tickell, 2011) for young children and their families.

The other three themes mentioned within this phase: *Links with other professionals*, *Increasing funding and Professional development*, appeared to be underpinned by the need to nurture children and support their positive experience of early education. It was interesting to note that the type of comments that related to these three themes were not as specific or practical as the *Nurturing children* theme. For instance, *Increasing funding* was discussed in relation to the local authority providing sufficient money for resources. This was an issue that practitioners themselves would not be able to change, unless they could find alternate strategies for how their funding was utilised. Similarly, within the theme of *Professional development* four participants suggested that the experiences for children could be improved if staff were 'hungry' to learn more, which related to discussions about the role of practitioners and prior qualifications and experiences before working with young children. Ludema et al., (2006) argue that the Dream phase enables participants to:

'illustrate the organisation at its best and paint a compelling picture of what the organisation could and should become.' (p.158)

By releasing participants from the constraints of the organisation's structure, it is suggested that they are able to think more widely about change across the organisation. Thus, the comments made by participants, although not necessarily practical, were in keeping with the ethos of Ai as a liberating process, free from the constraints of the organisation (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987).

4.3 Design: What will the dream look like in action?

The third phase of Ai relates to:

'Design the future through dialogue...The key to this phase is to create a deliberately inclusive and supportive context for conversation and interaction.'

(Ludema et al., 2006, p.158)

Within the Design phase, organisational change centres on three key questions: *What are we designing? Who needs to be involved? And how do we describe our ideal organisation?* (Collister, 2011, p.11). The key themes that emerged within this phase continued to develop from the discussions and themes arising in the previous phases: *Changing staff attitudes, Better contact with professionals, Supervision and staff training and Better induction and transitions*. It was clear that this phase enabled participants to begin to focus on developing practical ideas concerning areas that they would more specifically like to develop.

The theme from the Dream phase: *Professional development* was discussed and branched into two specific focus areas: supervision / training and changing staff attitudes. These discussions elicited comments that were specifically related to how these areas could be developed, such as staff visiting other settings, sharing aspirations within meetings and managers spending more time with practitioners.

These themes are also highlighted within research conducted by Cottle (2011) where findings from her study indicated that '*quality*' is a notion that is used to judge practitioners activities; however this is an elusive concept which can be better encapsulated by focusing on: '*positive relationships, open dialogue and critical reflection*' (p. 261), in order to develop a shared understanding of the type of service that the Centres wish to provide for children and families.

During the Design phase practitioners were able to commence this open, positive dialogue and also begin to appreciate the difference in perspectives between management and practitioners. Hence, it was regarded by participants, that this phase highlighted a significant turning-point in their thought-process and perspectives on organisational change, which up to this point had mostly developed the notion that practitioners needed to provide quality educational experiences without any discourse about the managers role.

4.4 Destiny: What short term targets and actions could be focused upon?

The Destiny phase is described as: '*an invitation to construct the future through innovation and action*' (Ludema, 2006, p.158). Within this phase, Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) assert that participants are made to reflect on the Ai approach through:

'identifying, communicating, and celebrating positive changes, innovations, and results'

(Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p. 219-220).

This process enables participants to begin to actualise the Designs that have begun to be developed in the previous phase, thus there is an increased emphasis on further narrowing down the focus to create a practical action plan. Due to the range of Children's Centres that this study was conducted with, participants retained a much broader action plan, which developed the themes of: *Developing better links with professionals, Supporting staff needs and Training for staff*. The recurrent nature of these themes based on the comments and views of the practitioners highlighted the importance of developing practitioners' skills whilst providing the right level of supervision and support in order to create a positive ethos within the Children's Centres.

Links with professionals was also a recurrent theme that participants repeatedly mentioned in relation to the difficulties they often experienced in linking up with professionals, aside from those who regularly visited the Children's Centres, such as

the Specialist Early Years team, Health Visitors, Area SENCOs etc. One of the reasons given for this was the lack of awareness on the practitioners' part of the range of services, both specialist and general that were available.

This was an interesting theme, as the rationale behind the development of Children's Centres was the drive for joined-up working to ensure information concerning children was shared and to provide support and information which could be easily accessible to parents, particularly those living in the most disadvantaged areas (Laming, 2003). The impetus for information sharing and multi-agency working was viewed as central to the purpose of Children's Centres (DfES, 2007) and the creation of multi-agency teams.

One of the significant changes that the Coalition Government brought about in regards to the multi-agency working agenda was to revoke the statutory guidance concerning some Labour Government policies which enforced joined up working, such Children's Trusts and the Children and Young People's Plan:

'Through interagency governance and strategies, shared processes and multi-agency front line delivery, Children's Trust would ensure services covered all aspects of children and young people's lives to avoid issues going undetected or unaddressed.'

(Devanney and Wistow, 2013, p.67)

It is argued that the removal of this guidance was done in order to increase the autonomy and streamlining of services, however this has also had a detrimental

effect on working in partnership with other agencies (Hudson, 2011; Perkins et al., 2010). The participants in this study stressed their concern regarding the lack of joined up working, as there is evidence from Laming's Report (2003) and other significant child protection inquiries, which have emphasised the importance of working together with other professionals to safeguard young children.

4.5 Summary: Facilitating Organisational Change

The Ai process was used in this study in order to facilitate change within Children's Centres, by working with senior members from each organisation and discussing what was currently working well and what their hopes for the future were for their settings. Framing the questions and discussions in a positive light seemed to move participants forward in their thinking, and also helped to focus their perspective on to the more specific issues which they could begin to develop within their individual settings.

Some participants reflected that using Ai was like going on a journey, where the outcomes developed from the previous phases, making the Destiny phase a natural conclusion from the themes that emerged from previous phases. Other participants felt that in order to bring about effective change across the whole organisation it would be useful to apply the Ai framework with all practitioners within one setting, so that they could also feel part of the change and development process, rather than

feeling a sense of disempowerment of having change inflicted and forced upon them (Hordern, 2012).

Martinetz (2002) suggests that the act of asking positively-framed questions has a positive effect on an organisation (p.35), thus, to encourage this positive effect across an organisation it would appear necessary for all individuals within an organisation to participate in the Ai process to enhance organisational change and development.

4.6 EP role in Organisational Change

This study has highlighted that, for the EP service, using an organisation change framework, enabled participants to view the EP role in a broader way, than one solely focused on individual children (Boyle and Lauchlan, 2009; Farrell et al. 2006) and perceived the advantages of EPs working at the level of the organisation to bring about changes in the practitioners' thinking which would consequently, impact upon the experience of children and families (Jensen, et al. 2002).

As mentioned earlier, many writers have discussed the benefits for EPs to work at the level of the organisation, in order to bring about systemic change (Fox and Sigston, 1992; Stobie, 2002; Dennis, 2003); however the challenge lies in promoting and 'advertising' the EP role as more broader than one focused on working

individually with children, primarily with SEN. The Traded EP service in which the present study took place, has begun to develop a 'menu' of activities that promote what EPs can offer, but these need to be advertised and distributed in a similar vein to other businesses, in order to reach a wide range of services and ensure others are aware of the range of support services that EPs can deliver.

5. Conclusion

This study has used Appreciative Inquiry to support managers and senior practitioners across four Children's Centres in order to facilitate the development of how they were supporting children's social and emotional needs. The key themes that emerged from this study were: *working with families, valuing children as individuals, professional development, and links with other professionals.*

As an alternative to problem-solving approaches, Ai provided an inclusive framework for capturing the views of participants through different means, including discussions, written comments and developing themes emerging from responses. In summary, the Ai process provided a creative, positive framework which enabled participants to focus on a topic which was pertinent to their settings and share ideas about how to develop the best possible future for their organisation.

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Appendix 1

Appreciative Inquiry Powerpoint

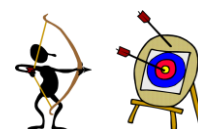
Appreciative Inquiry

Educational and Child Psychology
Service

Aims of this Session

To provide:

- An overview of the approach
- A worked example



What is Appreciative Inquiry?

- To **appreciate** means: to value; recognise the best in people or the world around us; affirm past and present strengths, successes and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems. Appreciate is synonymous with value, prize, esteem and honour.
- To **inquire** means: to explore and discover; to ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Inquire is synonymous with discover, search, systematically explore and study.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

- Ai is a **collaborative search** to identify and understand an organisation's **strengths**, its potentials, the greatest opportunities, and peoples **hopes for the future** (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.151).
- Ai is a **philosophy** that incorporates an approach, a **process** (4D cycle of **Discovery, Dream, Design & Destiny**) for engaging people at any or all levels to produce effective, positive change (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.xv).

The 4D Cycle



Affirmative Topic Choice

- A collaborative team of representatives from all levels of the organisation work on the desired topic choice and the wording of the questions.
- Questions are carefully worded to focus attention on what the desired outcomes are of working together.
- Negative topic choices are turned into what everyone wants to see instead.
- Topics are driven by genuine curiosity.

1. Discovery

- All participants are paired with people they know well mixing levels and areas of work. They have a set of questions to focus their conversations, sharing personal stories about times when they have experienced the best of the organisation and their contribution to it.
- The pairs then form small groups of 6 to 10 participants, share stories and decide on the most powerful ones to report back to the whole group. They begin to find themes in the key success factors that are embedded in the stories.

2. Dream

- The same small groups share and analyse their greatest hopes and wishes for the future of the organisation, referring to the common themes from the stories and creatively developing some images of the future, e.g. In the form of art, role play, song, etc.
- The ideas are presented to the whole group who then vote for a small number of the most powerful and attractive of the ideas presented. These will form the focus of the next two stages.

3. Design

- The participants choose which of the selected ideas they feel most interested in and form new groups that are each dedicated to a particular area for development.
- The new teams work together to create 'provocative propositions' that describe what the dreams would look like when operating successfully. The whole group makes suggestions for further improvements to make them even more powerful.

4. Destiny

- The groups start working on the provocative propositions, creating short term targets and key actions for implementation after the session.
- Volunteers from each group are asked to form part of a steering group that will monitor the implementation of the ideas over the next 6 months and share best practices
- People can end the session by saying what they have felt about the process.

A taste of Ai in action!

- Topic Choice:
- - What are we looking to work on today?
 - How do we work collaboratively?
 - How do we work with the ECPS?

A taste of Ai in action!

- 1. Discovery:
- What's working well?
- Think of a time when you felt really enthusiastic about an aspect of your work:
- Pair up with someone you know least well in the room
- Tell the stories to each other
- Form a small group to share stories and identify theme. Provide feedback on post it notes.

A taste of Ai in action!

- 2. Dream
- In your groups share your greatest hopes for the future. Based on themes.
- Feedback on post it notes.
- Vote for the group's favourite dreams



A Taste of Ai in action!

- 3. Design
- Form a new group.
- Choose a Dream.
- Create 'Provocative Propositions' that describe what these Dreams will look like in action and write it on post it notes.



A taste of Ai in action!

- 4. Destiny
- In your groups create short term targets and actions for your 'provocative propositions' on yet more post it notes!



Any Questions?



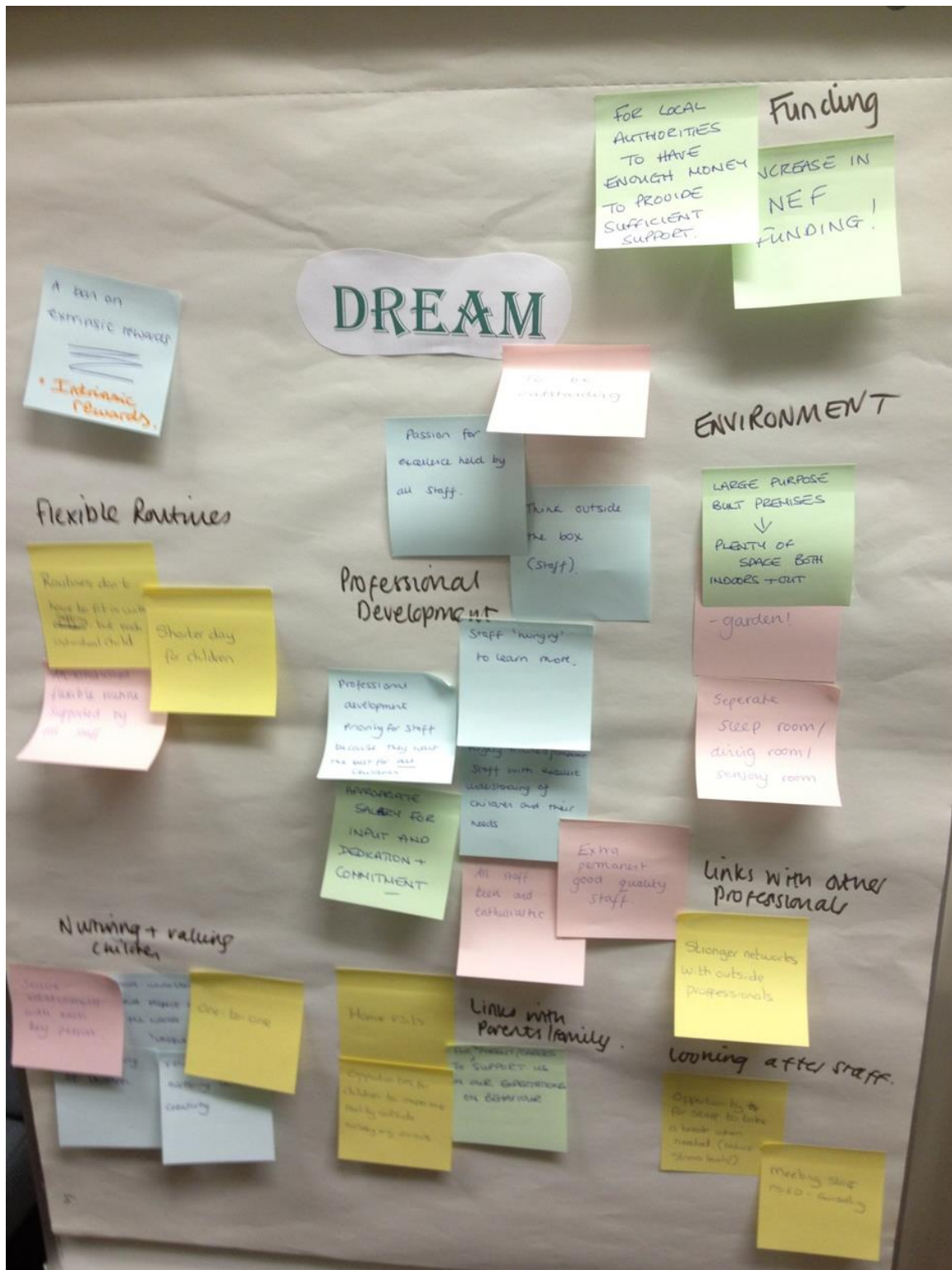
Appendix 2

Ai Session Ground Rules

These rules were agreed and written up at the start of the first session with agreement from all participants. The rules were also shared at the beginning of the 2nd session, where they were recapped and asked if further rules needed to be added.

1. Respect each other's views and opinions
2. Maintain confidentiality at all times
3. Free to leave group at any time during the session
4. Listen to one another.
5. Have Fun

Appendix 3



An example of collating post-it notes and initial grouping into themes

Chapter 4

Professional Practice Report Four

Ethnicity and Identity: The Role of a Bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist in supporting Families of Pakistani Origin with little or no spoken English

Abstract

This paper focuses on the experience of a bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist (EP) working with families from minority ethnic groups who have little or no spoken English. An action research study was conducted with parents of Pakistani origin, using a qualitative, multiple case study design (Robson, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents (n = 9), regarding support services involvement for their child's needs, experiences of support received in their home language, and their expectations of EP service involvement. The information gathered was thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and five superordinate themes emerged: 'extended family as an asset' 'loss of power', 'language as a barrier', 'advocacy' and 'poverty and deprivation'

Support from extended family and wider social networks was viewed as valuable for participants, whereas support services involvement highlighted a 'loss of power' for participants' with feelings of reduced control in addressing their child's needs. 'Language as a barrier', was viewed as a key theme regarding support in the home language, due to feelings of being undermined in regards to their lack of proficiency in English. Supporting issues around 'poverty and deprivation' and providing 'advocacy' emerged as expectations from EP service involvement.

The findings and experience from this study were discussed in relation to the role of the bilingual Trainee EP, including implications for future professional practice.

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on my experience, as a bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), in working with families who speak little or no English. The work described within this paper was conducted in a Midlands Metropolitan Borough where the demographics of the population (Census, 2011) indicate that Pakistanis are the largest ethnic group, making up 3.3 per cent of the population. The Census information also highlights that 1.7 per cent of the total population, in this Borough, are not proficient in spoken English, or are unable to speak English at all.

This paper begins with a literature review, in Section 2, which discusses the terms 'ethnicity' and 'identity' and examines the issues that affect the identity of minority ethnic groups, with particular reference to the South Asian community. Section 3 presents an action research study which focuses on Pakistani parents' who do not speak English, in relation to their experiences of support and interpreter services and their expectations of the EP service, to understand their perspective and highlight issues which could increase professionals' awareness of working with minority ethnic groups.

Section 4 discusses the themes arising from the information gathered in relation to the literature review. The paper concludes, in Section 5, with critical reflections on my professional role and broader implications for educational psychology practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Ethnicity

The term 'ethnicity' is used as a label to reflect perceived membership of belonging to a specific social group which can change over time (Frederickson & Cline, 2009). Ethnicity is a term which is often used loosely, without providing further elaboration, which can lead to misunderstandings and, at worst, can have demeaning or derogatory connotations (Zagefka, 2009). Therefore, clarifying what 'ethnicity' means and how it is used is necessary to avoid problematic or derogatory usage of the term.

In terms of the confusion between various associated terminologies, Zagefka (2009) asserts that:

'...“ethnicity” is often used interchangeably with a number of other terms such as “nation” and “cultural group”, “minority group”, and “race”...Scholars have long tried (and failed) to disentangle the terms. However, clearly delineating them might not be crucial if scholars are simply more explicit about the definitions they endorse when they employ the respective concepts.'

(Zagefka, 2009, p. 231)

Defining ethnicity carries with it notions of language, culture, religion, nationality, and a shared heritage (Ahmad & Bradbury, 2007; Modood, et al., 1994). It is increasingly recognised as a political symbol, that does not just exclude, but also serves as a

mode of identity, a symbol of belonging and political mobilisation (Werbner, 1990; Song, 2003).

Baumann (2004) suggests that in colonial and immigrant history 'ethnic' is associated with the dichotomy of 'Them' and 'Us'. He claims that 'Us' refers to the *majority* who are viewed as 'non-ethnics' whereas 'Them' relates to immigrants, who form the *minority*, and are defined as 'ethnics'. For Baumann (2004) ethnicity is viewed as one level of social stratification or social inequality that includes factors such as race, class, age, gender and caste.

Ethnicity is often associated with the notion of 'race' which is described as another level of social stratification based on physical and cultural characteristics, which are defined by 'outside' groups, and therefore more likely to be inaccurately defined (Berreman, 1981). Ethnicity, on the other hand, is argued to be defined by the groups themselves, therefore it is claimed that this notion provides a more accurate definition of the group (Baumann, 2004).

Ethnicity is also claimed to be '*as much the product of internal arguments of identity and contestation as of external objectification.*' (Werbner, 1990, p. 18). Thus, it is argued that ethnicity should not be defined as fixed notion as it is open to redefinition by the social group it characterises, and is contingent on power and political forces, which shape the definition of ethnicity for groups and individuals over time (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2011).

Social psychological research asserts that ethnicity is an under-conceptualised notion (Zagefka, 2009, p. 232) which conflates ethnicity with a number of other related terms, which is felt to cause some terminology confusion. To clarify the notion of ethnicity, Jones (1997) summarises two key theoretical paradigms of ethnicity – ‘Primordialism’ and ‘Instrumentalism’, which aim to explain where ethnicity derives from in order to provide a clear description and understanding of the term.

Primordialists believe that ethnicity is a natural phenomenon with its foundations in kinship and family. This paradigm asserts that ethnicity emerges from reproductive fitness, thus narrowing the concept of ethnicity down into biological terms. The primordial stance suggests that ethnicity is assigned at birth, rather than viewing it as a socially-constructed label placed upon diverse groups within a population (Isaacs, 1974). Primordialism is criticised for representing a static and naturalistic view of ethnicity, which does not account for cultural and social factors, emphasising ethnicity as an inherent quality an individual is born with, thus is predefined and fixed in nature.

In contrast, the instrumentalist stance views ethnicity as socially constructed, and that people can develop unique ethnic identities, based from a variety of ethnic heritages, sources and cultures, to form their own individual or group identity (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996). Jones (1997) argues that the instrumentalist paradigm espouses a belief that ethnicity is negotiated through socio-cultural factors and cultural dimensions of ethnicity; therefore this paradigm adopts a holistic view of ethnicity by focusing on the cultural influences affecting individuals and groups.

Instrumentalism is criticised for taking a reductionist stance to ethnicity (Jones, 1997) as it can lead to neglecting the psychological dimensions of ethnicity.

Within this paper, ethnicity is viewed as a socially-constructed term, incorporating the importance of psychological processes in influencing how individuals define themselves, from *within* their social group.

2.2 Ethnicity and Identity

Associating identity with ethnicity, emphasises the notion of 'ethnic identity' which is regarded as a malleable concept that develops and changes over time (Berry, 1997; Phinney, 1992). Categorising identity, through the attitudes, beliefs, values and social roles that individuals' embody, represents how ethnicity can have a marked effect on views on identity (Phoenix, 2002).

Ethnic identity is an area that is much researched due to its implications for intergroup relations (Verkuyten, 2005) and psychological wellbeing (Phinney, et al., 2001). Breakwell (1986) regards ethnic identity as a dynamic social product which resides in psychological processes. These psychological processes are further elicited through theories related to the development of identity. Most notable theories of identity development are: Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Identity Development and Tajfel's Social Identity Theory.

Erikson's psychosocial theory of identity development considers the importance for individuals to be accepted as the 'same' from within their social group. However, individual and social identities are viewed as separate systems from this theoretical perspective (Phoenix, 2002). Erikson (1968) asserts the importance of the influence of social, as well as psychological factors, on the development of identity. Phoenix (2002) suggests that the psychosocial theory of identity emphasises:

'...the development of a stable, consistent and reliable sense of who we are and what we stand for in the world that makes sense for us and for our community.'

(Phoenix, 2002, p. 53)

Thus, Erikson (1968) proposes that individuals strive to achieve a 'core identity', through developing a continuity of identity, which affirms the individual's sense of self.

Further psychological research into the field of identity, undertaken by Tajfel (1978; 1981), also considers identity to be a divided entity between two separate sub-systems: personal identity and social identity. He identifies social groups as those comprising of two or more individuals who share a common identification or are members of the same social category. Tajfel's stance asserts that knowing who one is requires knowing who we are not, thus emphasising the significance of recognising difference and diversity.

Tajfel (1981) argues that individuals build social identities through developing a group membership which satisfies the psychological needs of individuals to feel a

high sense of belonging to a particular social group. It is suggested by Tajfel, that in order to maintain this sense of belonging and group membership, individuals try to maximise the differences between their own '*Ingroup*' and perceived '*Outgroups*' in order to validate their own social identities in a positive light, in comparison to other social groups.

This concept of maximising the sense of belonging to an '*Ingroup*' by highlighting the differences with an '*Outgroup*' is at the heart of Social Identity Theory, (SIT), as proposed by Turner and Brown (1978). SIT developed through findings from controlled minimal group experiments (Erikson, 1968), which were experimental groups set up in SIT research to identify the minimal conditions necessary for group identities to form (Phoenix, 2002).

SIT findings have been criticised for trivialising differences between various social categories such as: gender, disability and race, as minimal group experiments were regarded to simplify social processes to a level that was unlike the complexities of everyday social contexts and situations (Phoenix, 2002; Henriques, 1998) thus, reducing the generalisability of the findings. Inherent in the findings of the SIT experiments was the notion that the findings could be applied, generically, across all social groups; whereas more recent research stresses that social groups function in different ways, therefore findings cannot be readily applied to all social groups (Aharpour & Brown, 2002; Deaux, et al., 1999).

Unlike psychosocial theories of identity development, social constructionist theories reject the idea that individuals have one core identity to define who they are and argue instead that identities are multiple, de-centred and changeable over time.

Wetherell (2001) argues that social psychology should focus on:

‘... gender, ethnicity and class and the way that structuring and organisation of society (including conflicts between groups) directly impact upon people’s experiences, thought and feelings. Social relationships are complex and multi-layered.’

(Wetherell, 2001, p. 11)

Stevens (2005, p. 21) suggests that people often respond to others on the basis of images and assumptions made about their social group (related to ethnicity, class and other forms of social categorisation). These assumptions and social expectations are socially-derived and have a significant influence over the ways in which members of social groups construct both their personal identity and how they relate to a particular social group.

Thus, as a dimension of the self, ethnic identity has a significant effect on the sense of belonging and membership to a social group, which can encourage motivation and positive outcomes, as it is suggested that membership to one group can buffer individuals from the effects of rejection from another social group (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2011, p. 8). Thus, the effects of a group or social identity, whilst emphasising diverse categories of people, can also help affirm a positive view of the self.

The following section moves on to discuss some of the issues that influence and affect the well-being of minority ethnic group identity, with a particular focus on South Asian communities.

2.3 Minority Ethnic Groups and Identity Issues

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 have highlighted some of the key theoretical perspectives underpinning the concepts of ethnicity and identity. The literature reviewed thus far has shown how both ethnicity and identity are viewed as components of the 'self' and can be usefully conceptualised as socially-constructed concepts which interact with psychological processes to develop a notion of 'ethnic identity' which is unique to individuals and different social groups.

This section develops a focus on minority ethnic groups, originating from the Indian sub-continent, in order to view the key issues arising from research related to supporting this group. The term 'South Asian' is used here to denote minority ethnic groups originating from the Indian sub-continent; however I am aware that using the term 'South Asian' implies the notion of a homogenous group and generalises issues regarding culture, religion and social factors which vary substantially across the Indian sub-continent (Shah, 1995).

According to the 2011 Census, Pakistanis are the third largest minority ethnic group in the UK, comprising approximately two per cent of the total UK population. Statistics from the 2001 Census highlighted that Pakistani communities in England, particularly in the North and Midlands regions, were most affected by poverty, social exclusion and unemployment. A review of poverty and ethnicity in the UK found that the poverty rates for Pakistani communities were the second highest (55 per cent) (Palmer & Kenway, 2007).

Poverty and unemployment within minority ethnic groups are reported to significantly impact on health outcomes (Nazroo & Karlsen, 2001; Barnard & Turner, 2011). It is argued that a disadvantaged social economic position, along with discriminatory practices, can also lead to poorer health:

‘as a result of the psychological processes that might result from either the direct experience of racism, or that perceptions of living in a racist society might set off.’

(Nazroo & Karlsen, 2001, p. 3)

To combat discrimination, legislation in the UK has been put in place to safeguard the wellbeing of minority ethnic groups. The Macpherson Report (1999) identified the need for public services to identify the extent to which services appropriately responded to the needs of minority ethnic groups. The Race Relations (amendment) Act (RRAA, 2000) imposed duties on all public organisations to actively combat discrimination through auditing racial equality practices. This legislation is now

encompassed in The Equality Act (2010) which emphasises the notion of ‘positive action’ which relates to the steps that should be taken by services and organisations to encourage individuals who are disadvantaged due to a variety of factors, including race and ethnicity.

The identity of minority ethnic groups is often wrongly reflected as fixed; however it is important to acknowledge that these communities do not have ‘unchanging essences’ (Bose, 2000, p. 47) rather, they are responsive to change and as malleable as the individual identities that comprise the group itself. In relation to minority groups from South Asian communities, social identity is reported to shift and change due to migration to ‘developed’ western countries, such as the UK (Chattoo, et al., 2004).

Bose (2000) succinctly summarises this issue:

‘South Asians experience loss of power and status, as a minority group – especially as a non-western minority group from developing countries. Yet in relation to their families from their place of origin, they have increased economic power, status and influences.’

(Bose, 2000, p. 48)

Turner (1991) argues that the losses that minority ethnic communities have to deal with when they move from their home countries; including removal of traditional networks, racism and economic deprivation, are not always recognised within research associated with acculturation and change.

Bose (2000) asserts that using the notion of '*cultural differences*' is unhelpful for families who are trying to adapt to new cultural contexts, rather it is beneficial to recognise the demands these groups face, without access to their social support networks, in order to help them to settle into a new society. The experiences of minority ethnic groups can also be constrained by difficulties in being able to express their needs in English and, it is argued, that there are links between English-language disadvantage and social exclusion and deprivation (Alexander, et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is reported that individuals tend to seek support from within their communities when they cannot speak English, rather than turning to professionals for support and interpreter services (Alexander, et al., 2004; Qureshi, et al., 2000).

Proficiency in spoken English can act as a mediating factor in both supporting and hindering minority ethnic groups from diverse linguistic backgrounds from being able to access support services (Qureshi, et al., 2000; Shah, 1997). In their research into providing support for families of Pakistani origin, Chattoo, et al., (2004) found that:

'Language was an important marker of local, ethnic origin for parents and grandparents, embodying a particular idiom of culture, a specific vocabulary of values and behaviour, a common bond that enabled people across generations to share certain values and experiences.'

(Chattoo, et al., 2004, p.36)

This research highlights the significance of learning and retaining the home language, which is viewed as an essential embodiment of the social and ethnic identity and cultural values, which operate within particular social groups.

Conversely, other research has highlighted the profound effects that not being able to speak English has on minority ethnic groups and the anxieties that arise from this (IAPT, 2009; Qureshi, et al., 2000; Shah, 1997), including the negative effect of accessing support services and relationships between service users and professionals (Mir, 2007).

Whilst some research identifies professionals' lack of confidence in working with minority ethnic groups as a barrier to supporting people with little or no spoken English (Qureshi, et al., 2000), there is also research to suggest that support services do not always meet the needs of non-English speaking communities (Audit Commission, 2001; Robinson, 2002). Therefore, to support and work effectively with minority groups with little or no spoken English, it is suggested that robust policies and frameworks should be put in place to ensure accessibility and inclusivity of support services (Tribe & Lane, 2009) in order to encourage a higher degree of engagement from all communities.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review has highlighted some of the debates and issues that arise from the notions of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic identity'. Although the notion of ethnicity is a much discussed and debated area, research has shown how descriptions of ethnicity vary, from being viewed as a fixed and inherited notion (primordial stance), to a socially constructed perspective, which emphasises that ethnicity forms through

individuals' experiences and interactions, and is open to change over time depending on both environmental changes and psychological processes (instrumentalist stance) (Jones, 1997).

I have argued that 'ethnic identity' can also be viewed as a result of the combined influences of social and psychological processes (Breakwell, 1986). This is the stance I have taken when viewing minority ethnic group identity. This paper specifically focuses on my (Trainee EP) involvement with parents from a Pakistani minority ethnic group community, who are affected by changes to their individual and group identity due to their limited proficiency in spoken English or being unable to speak English at all.

Section 3 describes a small-scale action research study which aimed to elicit Pakistani parents' views on the support services and support they have received in their home language, including the EP service. The purpose of this study was to develop my professional practice as a Trainee EP, particularly when supporting families from minority ethnic groups.

To ensure my position, as the Author of this paper, is transparent, it is important to mention my ethnic identity, as this influenced the way in which I was perceived and related to by participants within this study. Although my parents originated from Pakistan, my identity relates more with my country of birth, Britain, along with a broader sense of Asian ethnicity, rather than specifically Pakistani. Thus, I identify

myself as a 'British Asian' as I feel this encapsulates my parents' heritage along with the country of my birth and residence.

Although I describe myself as bilingual, I am able to speak some common languages from the Indian sub-continent: Urdu and Hindi, along with local South Asian dialects: Mirpuri and Punjabi, which are referred to as the 'home language' of the parents who have participated in this study, which has helped extend my knowledge and understanding of the needs and issues arising within this community.

2.5 Current Study

2.5.1 Context

The work described within this paper was conducted in a Midlands Metropolitan Borough where the demographics of the population (Census, 2011) indicate that Pakistanis are the largest ethnic group, making up 3.3 per cent of the population, followed by Indians as the next highest group at 1.8 per cent of the total population. The graph in Appendix 1 provides details of the range of ethnicities within this Borough. The 2011 Census also highlighted that 1.7 per cent of the total population within this Borough are not proficient in spoken English, or are unable to speak English at all, which is a significant group (see graph in Appendix 2).

At the start of my placement within the Educational Psychology Service serving this Borough, I was involved in writing psychological reports for the statutory assessment process for two children under the age of four, with identified special educational needs. In one case, both parents spoke Urdu, as the family had recently arrived from Pakistan. In the other case, the father had newly arrived from Pakistan to join his spouse in England. This child's mother spoke a little English and both parents spoke Punjabi as the home language.

These two cases highlighted my awareness of the opportunities to engage with families who were not proficient in spoken English and lacked a clear understanding of the statutory assessment process and my role as a Trainee EP. This action research study stemmed from the initial meetings with these families which acted as instigators for the research process.

2.5.2 Action Research

Action research is an inquiry-based methodology that is used to act and reflect on practice with the aim of improving and developing practice. Action research was chosen on the basis that it enables individuals:

- to investigate systematically their problems and issues;
- to formulate of powerful and sophisticated accounts of their situations; and
- to devise plans to deal with the problem at hand.

(Stringer, 1999, p.17)

This study is presented using the action research process described in Box 1 (below)

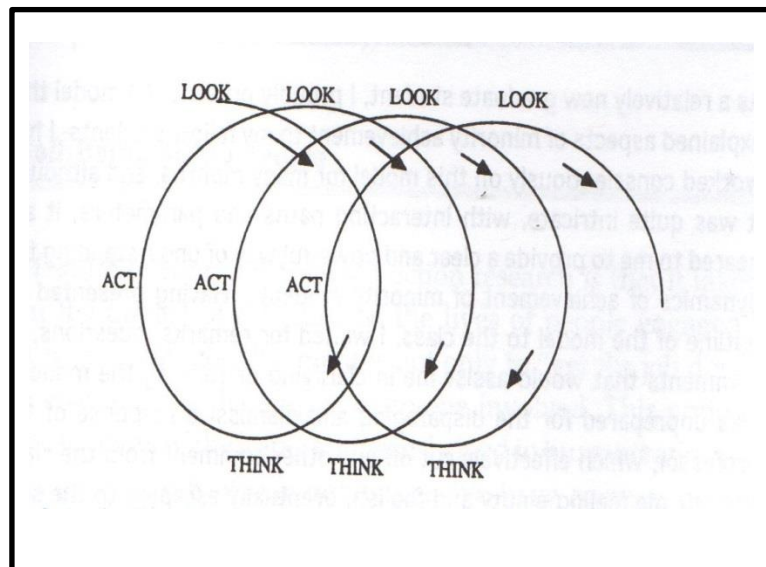
Box 1.

AR Stage	Process	Methods used in this study	Section of this Paper
Look	➤ Gather relevant information	• Parent interviews in home language	• Section 3.2
	➤ Build a picture (Describe the situation)	• Review information with participants.	
Think	➤ Explore and analyse	• Themes emerging from interviews	• Section 3.3
	➤ Interpret and explain (Theorise)	• Link themes to literature review	• Section 4
Act	3. Plan 4. Implement 5. Evaluate	• Reflect on practice to look at areas that could be Improved	• Section 5

Action Research Process (adapted from Stringer, 1999, p.18)

The approach outlined in Box 1, is one of many different ways in which the action research process can be described and used within social research (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Although the research process set out in Box 1 appears linear, action research is a cyclical process (see Figure 1), which encourages reiteration after cycling through one 'look, think act' routine, in order to reflect and gather further information, before implementing any changes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998).

Figure 1.



Action Research Spiral (Stringer, 1999)

2.5.3 Researcher's position

Over the course of the second and third year of the Doctoral EP Training programme, I have worked with children, parents and families from diverse minority ethnic groups as part of my professional role to support children with special educational needs (SEN). As a bilingual TEP I have felt some uncertainty about the perceptions of the families about what how my professional role is perceived and have been referred to by parents in different ways: Psychologist, Interpreter, Support worker. In many ways my professional role has encompassed all of these roles, which has heightened my awareness and the realisation that to work effectively in the capacity of a bilingual psychologist I need to examine my practice to ensure that the service I provide to families who speak little or no English is effectively understood and transparent.

In light of these factors, this action research study was undertaken in order to develop my awareness and understanding of the needs of minority ethnic group families and to reflect on my professional role and practice as a Trainee EP, through eliciting parents' views of their experiences of working with services that aim to support them and their children.

3. Action Research Study

3.1 Methodological Considerations

The current study uses an Action Research methodology as the main aim of this study was to improve and develop my professional practice. The study uses semi-structured interviews with parents who described their ethnic group as Pakistani, and also spoke little or no English. The parents interviewed for the purpose of this study had children who had been referred to the Educational Psychology (EP) Service for a statutory assessment of their child's needs, or were cases that arose from school referrals to the EP service.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select cases where the families were of Pakistani origin and spoke little or no English, in order to address the aims of the study. The total sample size was nine: seven mothers and two fathers. The action

research study aimed to gain parent's views about their experiences of services supporting them and their child. The study aimed to elucidate the following:

- 1. What were parents' experiences of support they had received for their child?*
- 2. What support had parent's received in their home language?*
- 3. What did parent's expect from the EP service?*
- 4. What were parents experiences of working with a bilingual Trainee EP?*

The semi-structured interview used was shared with a colleague within the EP service and piloted with a parent, in order to ensure the questions were clear and easy to follow. The semi-structured interview schedule is presented in Appendix 3, with questions also written in Urdu. Throughout the study, the language was slightly adapted depending on the home language of the participant.

Ethical considerations were accounted for by ensuring participants were fully informed about the study and the how their responses to the interviews would be used. An information sheet was provided (Appendix 4) and verbally discussed in the home language before gaining informed consent (Appendix 5). The confidentiality and anonymity of participants was ensured through removing all personal information and identifiers from notes taken during the interviews. Most participants refused to be audio-recorded, thus, for consistency, hand-written notes were made during interviews and checked back with each participant to ensure their views were accurately represented. As the interviews were not conducted in English, direct

quotes from participants are not provided in this paper, as the quotes would be my interpretation of what participants had said rather than their providing their views; however examples of the notes taken during the interviews are provided in Appendices 6 and 7.

The focus of the study was on the elaboration of emergent themes and their consistency across the cases. These themes are discussed in relation to the literature review in Section 4. The following Sections describe the findings from the first iteration of an action research cycle.

3.2 Gathering information

As mentioned in Section 2.5.1, the current study was instigated through involvement with two cases where parents' proficiency in spoken English was limited, or they were unable to speak English at all. In order to gather information to address the aims of this study, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed and piloted on a parent that I had already met. The questions were framed clearly and kept as simple as possible, in order to ensure ease of understanding for participants and also to enable an open response from participants' (see Appendix 3 for semi-structured interview schedule).

Details of the participants involved in this study are provided in Table 1, below. Table 1 highlights the range of participants who took part in this study and shows that the

majority of the participants were Mothers, with only two Fathers participating in the study. All participants completed the informed consent form in order to participate in the study, after the information sheet was read to parents and any questions they had were fully discussed.

Table 1.

Participant	Relation to Child	Child's Yr Group	Child's identified SEN	Home Language	No. of Siblings	Extended Family support	EP Involvement
P1	Mother	Nursery	Physical / Medical needs	Mirpuri	2	Yes	Statutory Assessment
P2	Mother	Nursery	ASD / Lang & Comm needs	Urdu	1	No	Statutory Assessment
P3	Mother	Nursery	ASD / Lang & Comm needs	Punjabi	3	Yes	Statutory Assessment
P4	Mother	Nursery	Hearing impairment & speech delay	Urdu	0	Yes	Statutory Assessment
P5	Mother	R	Moderate learning difficulties & ASD	Urdu	0	No	Statutory Assessment
P6	Mother	3	Severe learning difficulties & Physical needs	Urdu	5	Yes	Annual Review
P7	Father	6	Hearing impairment and learning difficulties	Mirpuri	2	Yes	Annual Review
P8	Father	8	Profound and Multiple learning difficulties	Urdu	3	No	Statutory Assessment
P9	Mother	9	ASD & Severe Learning needs	Punjabi	1	No	Statutory Assessment

Details of the participants involved in this study

In each of these cases I had met both parents prior to conducting the interviews, either as part of the statutory assessment process, or for annual review, as noted in final column of Table 1. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes to 40 minutes. Information was recorded in hand-written notes which were in English not the home language. To ensure their views were accurately recorded, responses to each question were shared with participants once the interview was completed. The interviews were not recorded verbatim and personal information which could identify the participants were not reported; rather the key issues and information stated by participants were noted in order to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant.

3.3 Limitations of Semi-structured Interviews

Although I had met and introduced myself to families prior to inviting them to participate in this study, I was aware that the participants I was interviewing were vulnerable to issues of feeling powerless and discriminated against, particularly as I could be perceived as a 'professional' with a higher status of power and authority (Cohen , Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

It is argued that when working with powerless or vulnerable groups it is important not to add to their disempowerment (Munro, et al., 2004). Cohen, et al., (2011) suggest that the researcher should work to actively empower such groups and take care not

to act in a condescending manner, which can be demonstrated through the: *'...non-verbal behaviour, dress and, significantly, choice of language, such that it beomes inclusive rather than exclusive yet without being contrived or artificial.'*

(Cohen, et al., 2011, p.175)

To ensure the participants felt comfortable to respond within the interview, a pilot was conducted, to check the questions were appropriately worded, and time was allowed to discuss the interview process with participants, following completion of the interview. The aim was to ensure the research process was rendered transparent to participants. In order to make participants feel at ease, the interviews were conducted in their homes, and I ensured that I had met with parents at least once prior to conducting the interviews, so that they were familiar with me.

3.4 Analysing Information

The information gathered from interviews was analysed thematically to view key themes that recurred across participants. The notes made during the interviews were then thematically analysed, using the 6 phase approach as set out by Braun and Clarke (2006). These phases are:

1. Familiarisation with data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Reporting themes.

Across all the interviews emergent themes were coded and grouped into superordinate themes in relation to themes emerging from participants' responses to the research questions. These themes illuminated pertinent issues arising from this study. Table 2 shows the superordinate themes elicited within this study.

Table 2.

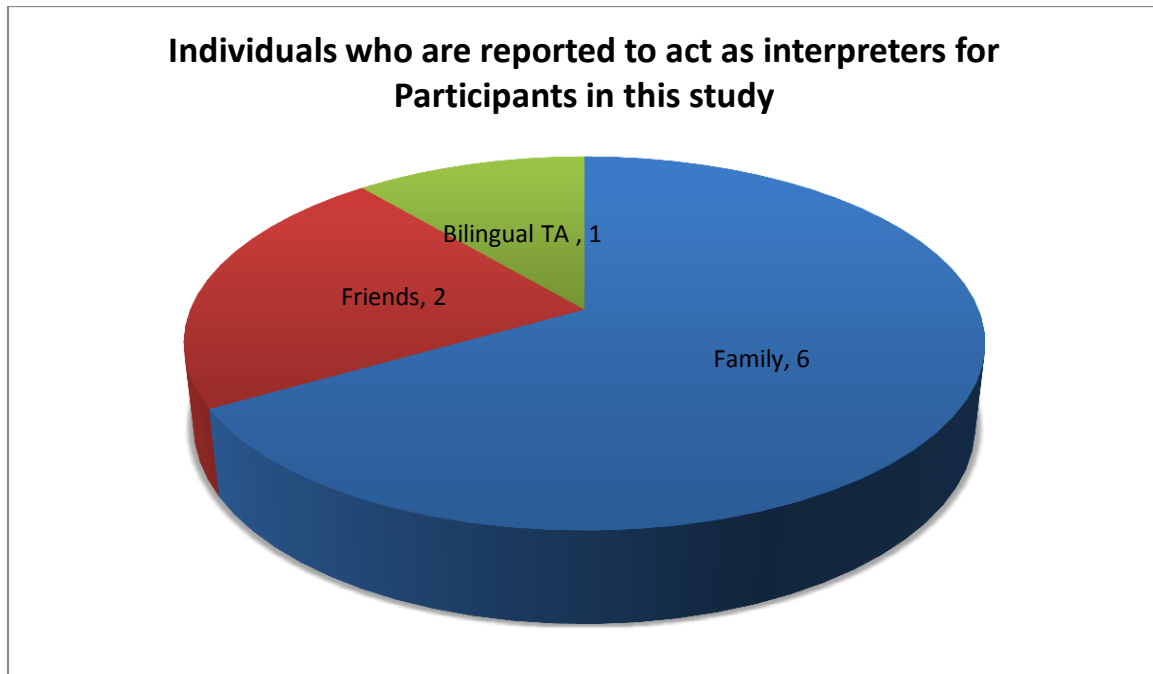
Superordinate Theme	Summary of Semi-Structured Interviews
Extended family as an asset	Having access to family support from the extended family was viewed as strength when taking care of a child with additional needs. Where there is no support network, participants described feeling alone, socially excluded and stressed.
Poverty and Deprivation	Inadequate housing and overcrowding were described as problems which participants felt they needed support with. It was generally felt that there was a lack of advice and support given regarding benefits and how to look for jobs etc.
Advocacy	Professionals able to speak the home language were viewed by participants as people who could help advocate for parents and explain their perspective to others. It was felt that family and friends who interpreted for participants could not fulfil this advocacy role.
Language as a Barrier	The need to acquire English was reported to be fundamental for explaining themselves and understanding others. Many mentioned that they felt disadvantaged by being unable to speak English and believed they were perceived as ignorant or unintelligent by some professionals. Some participants stated that their views had been misrepresented by interpreters in the past and were cautious about asking for a professional interpreter during meetings.
Loss of Power	Moving to England was reported to have reduced the sense of power and choice that participants felt they had had over their own lives and their children's lives. There was a sense of caution and anxiety about meeting professionals, who participants were mostly not able to understand, and appeared to hold all the control in regards to what would happen with their child's future.

Superordinate themes emerging from semi-structured interviews.

As part of the responses to Question 4 '*Have you received any support in your home language?*' participants provided details of who had most often acted as interpreters

for each participant. Figure 2. below presents the responses given in regards to who acts as the main interpreter for each participant.

Figure 2.



Pie chart showing who acts as interpreters for participants in this study.

Figure 2 shows that, for the participants in this study, mainly family members acted as interpreters. Friends who were well-known to the family were also asked to interpret on their behalf, whereas only one participant mentioned being supported by a Bilingual Teaching Assistant and none mentioned that they regularly received support from professional interpreters. This information is further discussed in Section 4.2, regarding support that participants' have received in their home language.

Section 4 examines the findings from this study in relation to the study's aims and the literature reviewed in Section 2, before moving on to discuss the implications that these findings have for EP practice.

4. Discussion

This action research study aimed to gain parent's views about their experiences of services supporting them and their child. The study aimed to elucidate

1. *What were parents' experiences of support they had received for their child?*
2. *What support had parent's received in their home language?*
3. *What did parent's expect from the EP service?*
4. *What were parents experiences of working with a bilingual Trainee EP?*

The following sections report and discuss the findings emerging from the analysis of the information gathered. Each research aim is addressed in order to maintain coherence and clarity. This is followed by review of the action research process and what the next iteration of the action research process may involve.

4.1 Participants' experiences of support received for their child

The support that participants experienced related to the superordinate themes: 'extended family as an asset' and 'loss of power'. Participants viewed support from family as a key aspect in regards to feeling well-supported. P1's son had significant medical needs which meant that he required around-the-clock care and to address these, P1's parents had moved into the family home to offer additional support. P4, regarded having a wide circle of relatives and friends from the local community around her as a positive factor in enabling her to cope when she had discovered that her child had a hearing impairment.

Seeking support from within the community of family and friends that individuals are familiar with is reported to be the first step families take to seek help (Qureshi et al., 2000; Chattoo, 2004; Salway et al., 2007) which is underlined by a sense of belonging to a group, that Tajfel (1981) asserts acts to reassure individuals through satisfying psychological needs. In addition to this, participants stated a sense of mistrust in professionals due to various experiences and, therefore felt more comfortable in asking for help and support from people that they knew (Alexander, et al., 2004).

Four participants (P2, P7, P8 and P9) mentioned concerns about feeling a lack of power and control in regards to choices made for their child's needs and that professionals mostly informed parents of what was going to happen, rather than

having a discussion and explaining what choices they had. P2 and her family had recently arrived in England and she stated feeling overwhelmed by the number of professionals working with her son since the initiation of the statutory assessment process.

The issues around minority ethnic groups feeling a lack of power and control in relation to social interactions with professionals can be linked to the shift in identity and status that individuals reportedly experience through the process of migrating from a developing country (Turner, 1991). Bose (2000) argues that, on the one hand, minority ethnic groups experience a loss of power and status when arriving in the UK, but on the other hand have an increased status and economic power in relation to their country of origin. To balance these shifting notions of identity, it may be reassuring to gain support from individuals within the social group, who share a familiar group identity, whereas professionals may be viewed as the 'other' or the '*Outgroup*', (Turner & Brown, 1978) who are deemed untrustworthy as their role and purpose for involvement is not always clearly identified.

4.2 Support received in participants' home language

The overarching theme for responses to this question related to 'language as a barrier'. Four participants (P2, P6, P7 and P9) referred to receiving interpretation support from various professionals, although experiences varied substantially. P6 shared that she had received support from a bilingual teaching assistant who worked

in her child's school, which she had viewed as a useful and positive experience, whilst P9 had received support from a male family support worker which she found to be awkward and ineffective in terms of supporting her understanding of her daughter's needs. P2, P6, P8 and P9 also mentioned that they felt that they were perceived to be ignorant because they could not speak English. These participants stated that often cultural and religious practices required additional explanation to bilingual professionals who were described to lack awareness of customs and practices.

Bose (2000) regards addressing the notion of '*cultural differences*' as an unhelpful strategy to support minority ethnic families who are trying to adapt to new cultural contexts. But, it is clear from participants' views in this study that they regard an awareness of cultural practices to be as equally important as being able to converse with them in their home language.

P2 and P8 mentioned the value of learning English; however it was felt that there were other more pressing issues, relating to income, housing and their child's needs which were a priority before learning English. It was interesting to note that generally participants with support from extended family and friend networks did not mention the need to learn English, whereas some of the participants, who reported to have no extended family, stated the importance of speaking English; viewing acquisition of the language as a necessity.

Alexander et al., (2004) suggest that the desire and motivation to learn English is more complex than a simple need to 'integrate' into society and assert that it is:

'rooted in the concrete and practical context of people's lives, experiences and feelings'

(Alexander et al., 2004, p.16)

Also, Chattoo et al., (2004) found that the language spoken by a particular social group is perceived to embody the cultural and ethnic heritage that minority ethnic groups originate from. Thus, just as the home language emphasises a sense of belonging to a social (Howitt and Owusu-Bempah (1999), similarly speaking English emphasises a culture of individualism where an emphasis is placed upon prioritising 'loyalties to the self' (p.20). Chattoo et al., (2004) assert that the language spoken by minority ethnic groups is '*an important marker*' for their ethnic origin.

P7 stated that he had struggled to understand the statutory assessment process and had been provided with an interpreter who he felt had misrepresented his views to school staff. This experience had made P7 very cautious about using interpreters, and preferred asking family or friends to act as interpreters as he felt he could not trust professional interpreters. These findings highlight the effect of views not being accurately represented (IAPT, 2009; Qureshi, et al., 2000; Shah, 1997) and it is suggested that:

'Failing to communicate effectively can create a vacuum in accurate knowledge about service users from minority ethnic communities. This can result in professionals falling back on stereotypes and assumptions that compromise the quality and effectiveness of services provided.'

(Mir, 2007, p.2)

Research suggests that these miscommunications can be overcome through increasing the cultural competence at every level of organisations, from policy and guidance frameworks, to developing the skills of staff to make services accessible and service user-friendly (Mir, 2007; IAPT; 2009) for minority ethnic individuals and groups.

4.3 Participants' expectations from the EP service

The themes of 'advocacy' and 'poverty and deprivation' were highlighted within the responses to this question. Other than P3 and P4, all other participants regarded the role of the EP service as one which could accurately represent parents' views, including advocating for them, and supporting them with issues that were felt to be exacerbating or effecting their child's difficulties. These views may have been due, in part, to their positive experience of working with me (bilingual TEP) which may have influenced their opinion of the service provided by EPs more generally.

Within their research into the use of interpreters, Alexander et al., (2004) found that participants preferred interpreters to be more proactive in regards to *'pleading the user's case and giving advice'* (p.22). I experienced this directly in my involvement

with P6's child who had severe learning difficulties. This child attended a mainstream primary school; however an annual review was arranged in order to discuss, with parents, the possibility of their child moving to a special school. P6 stated that she did not want her child to attend special school, as her elder daughter had attended special school and had not returned to mainstream school. P6 felt she had been misled by professionals and had not been able to express her concerns and desire for her child to remain in mainstream education. P6 expressly asked if I could present her views at the annual review and explain her concerns to others. The outcome of this meeting was that the child was able to remain in her school, with outreach support being provided by special school staff, which P6 felt happy with.

The issue of support services not always effectively meeting the needs of non-English speaking communities and individuals was highlighted through this case (Audit Commission, 2001; Robinson, 2002) where professionals or interpreters were unable to advocate parents' views which led P6 taking a defensive stance about choice of educational provision for her child. Research emphasises the importance of robust policies and frameworks that enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of support services (Tribe & Lane, 2009) in order to encourage a higher degree of engagement with all communities.

Alongside the theme of 'advocacy' participants who had newly arrived in the country expected the EP service to provide support and advice regarding housing and income support. Economic deprivation, unemployment and poverty are factors which are reported to have a significant effect on the health and well-being of all social

groups (Mir, 2007). Poverty and unemployment within minority ethnic groups are reported to significantly impact on health outcomes (Nazroo & Karlsen, 2001; Barnard & Turner, 2011). This disadvantaged social economic position, can further be complicated by perceptions of discriminatory practices that marginalise groups that are coming to terms with adjustment within a new culture and society.

4.4 Participants' experiences of working with a bilingual Trainee EP

Five participants (P1, P3, P4, P6 and P7) stated that representing their views to other professionals and school staff had enhanced the communication and understanding between services involved with their respective children, had been a positive experience of working with the bilingual Trainee EP. As mentioned by Alexander et al., (2004) and Mir (2007), developing a trusting relationship with minority groups reduces an emphasis on the differences in power and status between professionals and minority ethnic groups.

The notion of 'ethnic identity' and perceived membership of belonging to a specific group (Frederickson and Cline, 2009) appeared to play a significant role in facilitating participants responses and engagement within this study. Ahmad and Bradbury (2007) suggest that ethnicity relates to the concept of a shared heritage, culture and religion. Participants felt able to talk with some degree of openness with me during both my initial meeting and when undertaking the interview for this study.

P8, who was an Imam (the leader of worship in a mosque) felt that he was able to talk openly with me as I understood his language, religion and also the culture that he had originated from in Pakistan, as he stated that I was perceived as a member of the same social group (Turner & Brown, 1978). Of the nine participants, five explicitly mentioned my ethnicity being the 'same' as theirs, which they felt helped them to talk to me and to gain a better understanding of their perspective.

Participants' views closely related to the primordial notions of ethnicity; that 'you are born into your ethnicity' (Jones, 1997; Zagefka, 2009) and also demonstrated the importance of ethnic identity for the participants within this study. These views raised some questions for how my ethnic identity could influence my professional practice, which I discuss further in the following section.

5. Reflecting on My Role and Implications for Practice

An iteration of the action research process is completed by acting on findings emerging from the research process. This section reflects on this study's findings and the implications for practice, which could lead to action or another iteration of the action research process.

As mentioned in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 my position, regarding how ethnicity and ethnic identity is defined, was situated in a broadly instrumentalist stance (Jones, 1997; Baumann, 2004) which asserts that ethnic identity is socially constructed and

incorporates psychological processes (Breakwell, 1986). A key aspect of this stance was that ethnic identity is dynamic and can change and develop over time, due to a various factors.

Tajfel's (1981) notion of social identity developing through processes of group membership which satisfy psychological needs seemed to link closely to the position taken by the participants in this study who mentioned that they could talk to me as I was perceived to be from the 'same' social group as them. Thus, there was an implicit assumption made that I could relate to and understand their customs and values, as I was not being viewed as an 'Outgroup' member.

These perceptions and assumptions emphasise the importance of making individuals from minority ethnic groups feel at ease and enable them to talk about issues openly, by 'matching' professionals to service users of the same ethnic origin. Alexander et al., (2004, p.19) suggest that matching interpreters to service user characteristics is important for interpreting provision, although not all minority ethnic groups have the same requirements for what they view as the most important characteristics that such a professional should possess.

For example, in the present study, P6 and P9, who are both Mothers, stated their preference for interpreters to be female when working with them, particularly when sharing more personal information. Other participants felt that interpreters who were unable to speak the same dialect spoken in the home made it difficult for participants

to communicate and express themselves as freely as they would like, due to worries about the interpreter not understanding all that was said. Therefore, accurate prior knowledge of the language and dialect spoken within the home is noted to be important to ensure individuals are able to express their views as fully as possible, without fear of being misrepresented or misunderstood (Qureshi, et al., 2000; Audit Commission, 2001; Robinson, 2002).

An alternative stance, to supporting minority ethnic groups, could be developed from a Social Constructionist perspective. This view suggests that ethnicity and a sense of belonging to a particular group is socially derived and, by encouraging and supporting families from different ethnic traditions to work and socialise with individuals from other ethnic groups, they can develop an identity of belonging to new groups, along with retaining their traditional roots (Stevens, 2005). Encouraging the development of new shared group membership, Jaspal and Cinirella (2011) argue that this can promote positive outcomes and affirm a sense of the self.

The findings from this study have indicated that some participants who were not proficient in spoken English, expected that I would act as an advocate for them, by presenting their views to other services and sharing their perspective within multi-agency meetings, rather than simply directing or sign-posting them to support services available to them.

Acting as an advocate, requires having a good knowledge of the families' background in order to ascertain their perspective. The time taken to develop an understanding of the parents' perspective is viewed to have more successful outcomes for service users (Tribe and Lane, 2009) and also helps minority ethnic groups overcome a sense of lacking control, choice and power. Bose (2000) asserts that the loss of power and status felt by South Asian families, as a minority ethnic group, need to be taken into account when referring to other services for support, as they may feel as though the opportunity to choose and control what happens in their life has been severely limited by professionals making decisions for them.

Developing parents sense of power and choice in addressing their child's needs is particularly pertinent for EPs who are involved with families during the statutory assessment process, where parents may not have a complete understanding of the process, or indeed the role and purpose of EP involvement. Thus, using interpreters or bilingual professionals from the initial meeting can reduce any misunderstandings and allow a positive relationship to be built, where parents are able to trust the professionals and share their feelings openly (Alexander et al., 2004).

Day (2013) suggests that engaging parents requires: '*...the development of constructive relationships, communication and partnership with schools.*' (p.49). Within the context of the present study, the themes emerging from the interviews have shown that parents of Pakistani origin valued the time taken to get to know them and their child, which helped them to feel at ease to talk about issues which were either directly or indirectly causing problems for the family and their child (such

as the language barrier, issues around poverty and deprivation or the sense of a loss of power).

In their paper, Tribe and Lane (2009) set out 'positive practice guidelines' to support professionals when working with non-English speaking service users (pp. 236 – 239) which is a helpful checklist that EPs could incorporate into practice to ensure ethical practice is maintained and the needs of non-English speaking individuals are appropriately met and effectively supported.

On reflection, this study has highlighted the implications for my role, as a bilingual Trainee EP, in terms of being viewed as a minority ethnic group member for parents of Pakistani origin. Although being viewed as an '*Ingroup*' member affords me a stronger position to help understand non-English speaking families of Pakistani origin, I also feel that, as a bilingual professional, I could help to raise awareness among families about the opportunities for developing a sense of belonging within their new communities, along with helping colleagues with the particular issues that are central to parents of this minority ethnic group in order for them to feel well supported. The next step, therefore, from this study will be to share findings with EP colleagues in order to view how to utilise best practice with non-English speaking minority ethnic groups.

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined the findings from a qualitative study undertaken with non-English speaking parents of Pakistani origin, in order to understand their experiences of support service involvement, support provided in their home language and expectations from the EP service. The themes emerging from the action research process have highlighted that parents do feel disadvantaged due to being unable to speak English, feeling a loss of power and choice, and facing issues relating to poverty and deprivation. However, the extended family network is viewed to help support families during difficult times.

Findings suggested that the EP service could play a central role in supporting families from minority ethnic groups, through representing their views to others to ensure their perspective was acknowledged. As a bilingual Trainee EP, I have been able to converse with parents in their home language, and ensured their views are represented. As one of the few services who can visit families in their homes, EPs are well placed to help parents from minority ethnic groups, by working with interpreters, and ensuring best practice guidelines are utilised (IAPT, 2009; Tribe & Lane, 2009) to provide an effective service to all parents and families who are supported by EP services.

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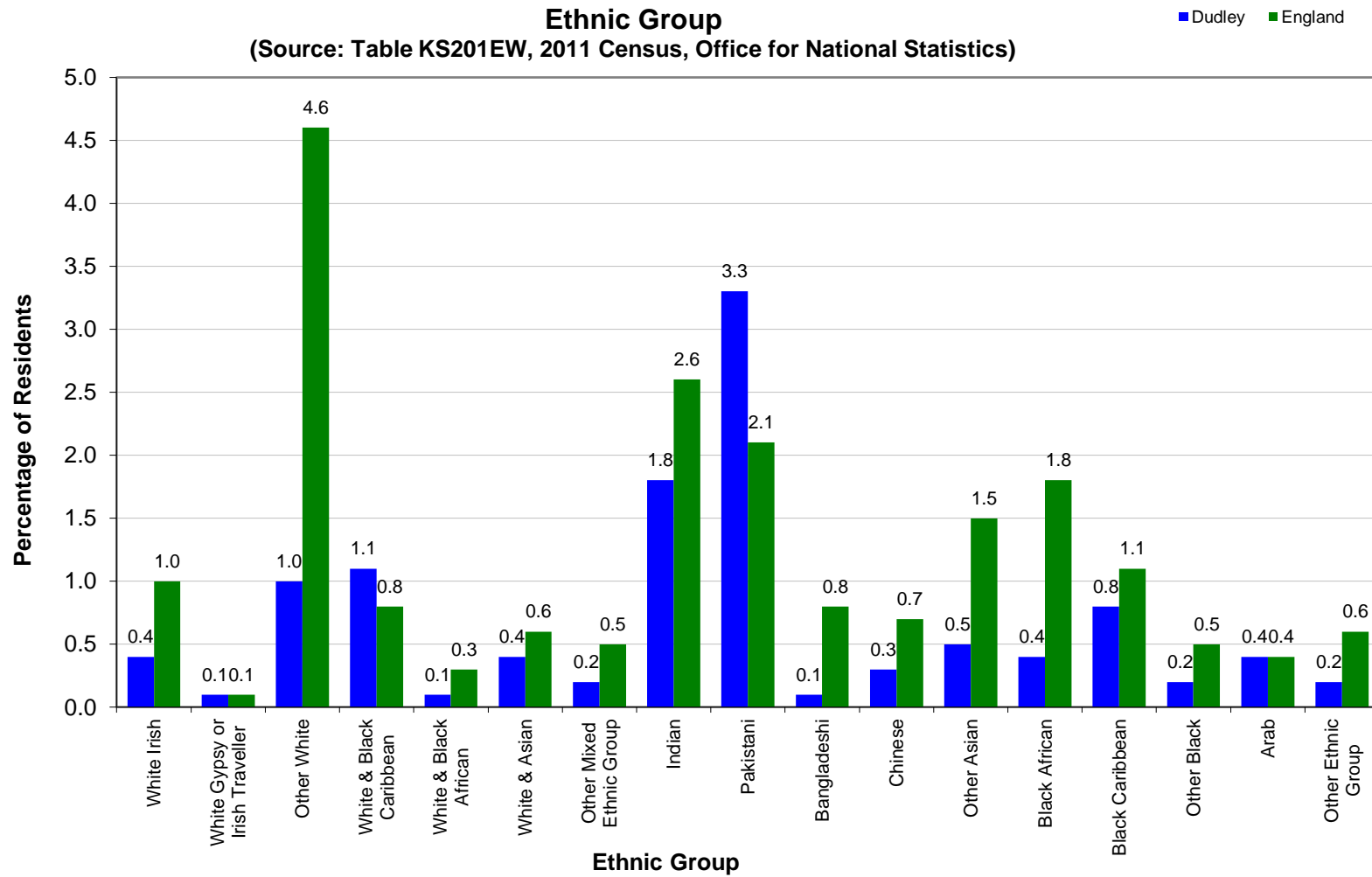
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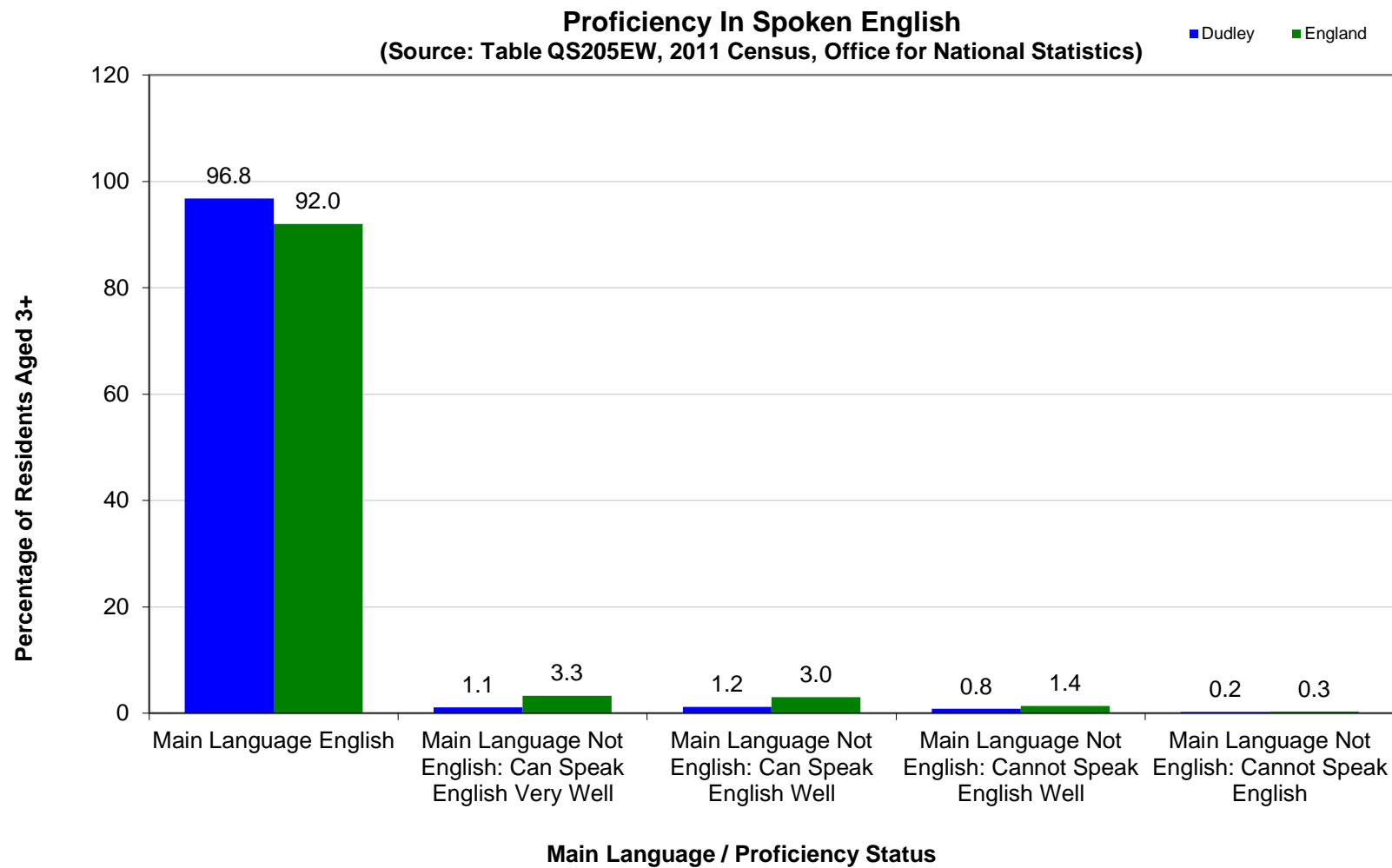
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Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix 3

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

English and Urdu Translations

1. How are you related to (Child's Name)?

۱۔ آپ کا --- (بچے کا نام) کے ساتھ کیا رشتہ ہے؟

2. What are your main concerns for your child?

۲۔ آپ کو اپنے بچے کے ساتھ کیا پریشانی ہے؟

3. What support are you receiving for your child's needs?

۳۔ آپ کو اب تک اپنے بچے کے لیے کیا دمد ملی ہے؟

4. Have you received any support in your home language?

۴۔ کیا آپ کو اب تک اپنی زبان میں دمد ملی ہے؟

5. What are your expectations from my (Trainee EP) involvement in addressing you child's needs?

۵۔ آپ ہمارے ادارے سے کیا امید رکھتے ہیں؟

Following Trainee EP involvement

6. What was your experience(s) of my (Trainee EP) involvement?

۶۔ آپ نے اب تک میرے کام سے کیا اخذ کیا ہے؟

Appendix 4

Educational and Child Psychology Service

EPS Address

Date

Information Sheet.

Dear Parent

My name is Snah Islam (Trainee Educational Psychologist) and I am undertaking a small scale study into Pakistani parents' views of their experiences of services that have been working with your child. As a bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist, I would like to gain your views in your home language which will then be used to improve the service that we can provide for families who do not speak English as a first language.

As part of the study, I would like to interview you to gain your views. I will analyse the information gathered and will then report back the findings to the Educational Psychology service team to improve our practice. I will be taking hand written notes during the interview, but the notes will only be accessed by me, for the purpose of analysing the information. No names or personal details will be stored with any of the information gathered.

Before conducting the interview, I will explain how your information will be used and an informed consent form will need to be signed if you are happy to proceed with the interview. If you are not happy to proceed with the interview, or would like to withdraw your participation at any point during or after the interview you are free to do this, and I shall ensure that any information gained from you is not used. Once all the information is analysed, I shall be in contact with you to arrange a convenient time to discuss the findings of this study.

If you have any questions, or need to contact me following the interview, please feel free to contact me at ***** Educational and Child Psychology Service on: ***** or email: snah.islam@*****.gov.uk. Thank you.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs Snah Islam (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

Appendix 5

Educational and Child Psychology Service

EPS Address

Informed Consent Form

Research Title: The role of a bilingual Trainee Educational Psychologist in supporting families of Pakistani origin who have little or no spoken English

Name of Researcher: Snah Islam (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

6. I have read and understood the attached information sheet giving details of the project.
7. I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher (Snah Islam) any questions about my involvement in the project, and understand my role in the project.
8. My decision to consent is voluntary and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason.
9. I understand that the data gathered in this project will form the basis of a report or other form of publication or presentation.
10. I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my confidentiality.

Participant's signature:..... Date:.....

Participant's name (in CAPITALS):.....

Researcher's signature:..... Date:.....

Appendix 6

Interview Notes P1

Responses to questions, from hand written notes

Question 1: P1 is the mother of three children. Youngest child (son) was born with complex medical and physical needs and he has spent a lot of time in hospital undergoing surgery. Currently he is on a PEG feed and requires around-the-clock care and monitoring. Grandparents live with the family to help support them to look after their son's needs.

Question 2: Main concerns are that son is able to attend a school environment where staff are able to understand and meet child's needs. It would be useful to have access to someone in the school who could speak the home language, otherwise things can get confusing and misunderstandings will occur.

Question 3: Support received through many different services due to child's needs. Hospital doctors, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy. All professionals have been very supportive and understanding about explaining everything that happens with son in home language so that parents know what is being done and why. Very happy with the support provided by services.

Question 4: Language and interpretation support normally comes from family friend who attends meetings. Friend has been known to the family for a number of years and have built up trust that he represents views accurately. Have not had any problems accessing professionals who can talk to me in my language, but sometimes this makes it difficult to remember whether the person was an interpreter or professional from a support service.

Question 5: Hope that EP support will help child get a place at the right school so that he is well-supported and helped to achieve. Also, that my views are shared with school teachers and other professionals so that they know what I want for my child. This can be difficult for me to say properly, because of the language barrier.

Question 6: Found it beneficial to have support from someone who could understand and speak the home language, helped to make clear what the purpose of involvement was and what the outcomes would be. It helped with making sure my views could be represented to other services, without any confusion or misunderstandings, and it would be nice for the EP involvement to continue, although I know there will be support for me in the school that my son attends, when I need it.

Appendix 7

Interview Notes – P2

Responses to questions, from hand written notes

Question 1: P2 is mother of three year old son. Live at home with her husband and elder daughter. Moved to the UK six months ago and have found it difficult to settle. No choice or control over what happens with children. Feel like there is no power for parents to say anything, I am just told what to do and what is best for my son.

Question 2: Main concerns are that child is in a world of his own (diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome) and as a family we don't know how to help him. Not come across these difficulties before in the family and want to get help for him so he can grow up as normal.

Question 3: Supported by the local children's centre where a teacher speaks Urdu so she can talk with parents. Lots of different services involved with P's son, but she does not know what the names of the services or people are. It becomes confusing and I don't always ask people who they are because it's hard to understand what their jobs are and what they will do with my son.

Question 4: Interpretation provided by elder daughter (12 years old) who has picked up English very quickly since the family moved here. Have appreciated support from the local children's centre too. But, she feels that professionals think she is ignorant and lacks intelligence because she cannot speak or understand English. She sees value of learning English but greatest concern is for child's needs. She suggested that I have a better understanding about her needs as I (in her view) am aware of cultural practices. Whereas, she feels criticised by social worker because she is still feeding and dressing her son, but this is normal for her family and feels there is a lack of respect for how they do things.

Question 5: Parent would like TEP to advocate for family and get help for the family, in terms of help for benefits and how to get a job. She stated that there are problems with the house they live in and would like support to move to better accommodation.

Question 6: Pleased with support provided from EPS. Child's needs are being met in school and it is hoped that the family will get further support through social services, as TEP had spoken with the social worker and explained some of their difficulties.