VOLUME I

‘OPENING HEARTS AND HOMES’: AN INTERPRETIVIST STUDY OF THE SOCIAL SUPPORT RECEIVED BY UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN IN A MULTICULTURAL URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITY

By Katherine Laura Towers

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

APPLIED EDUCATIONAL AND CHILD PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORATE

School of Education
The University of Birmingham
August 2019

ABSTRACT

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children ('UASC') are some of the most vulnerable young people in our society and face challenges before, during and after their journeys to their countries of settlement. Nevertheless, relationships and social connections have been found to be instrumental in supporting UASC to reconcile their past experiences and adapt to life in their new country. Drawing on identified areas for development within 'Middleworth' Local Authority (LA), a large multicultural urban LA in England, this small-scale interpretivist study investigated how social support could be optimised in the LA to support UASC's wellbeing, settling and integration. A preliminary focus group explored five foster carers' (FCs') conceptualisations of their experiences of developing trusting relationships with UASC. A nested case study was subsequently conducted with three UASC who had been fostered by the same family. Within individual semi-structured interviews, their perceptions of the formation and function of their relationships with the key people in their lives in Middleworth where explored. Themes were generated from each data set using qualitative analysis methods. A final synthesis of findings proposes how components of a UASC's social environment can facilitate their pathway towards integration and self-actualisation within the context of a tolerant, diverse community.

DEDICATION

To all the young people and foster carers who generously shared their stories with me in the course of this research.

Also, to my grandfather, Daniel Pullen.

Courage and inspiration personified.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt thanks go to the following three ladies for their support throughout the last three years.

My formidable university tutor, Sue Morris; a wealth of knowledge and experience.

My incredibly encouraging and attuned placement supervisor, Dr. Katie Callicott; a wonderful role model from whom to learn the tools of our trade.

My long-suffering mother, Keilah Towers; an incomparable source of both ‘buffering’ and ‘main effects’ support.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Introduction

Within this chapter, background and contextual information related to the study of refugee children is presented prior to an explanation of the rationale for this particular study's area of focus and an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Contextual information

1.1.1 Historical context

There are numerous examples throughout history of war and upheaval resulting in large numbers of young people being separated from their families. Since policies in World War Two saw millions of children evacuated from their homes to areas of relative safety, either in their own countries or abroad, academics have recognised the importance of investigating the impact of war, trauma and separation upon this displaced population (e.g. Freud and Burlingham, 1943). Unfortunately, research which seeks to understand and support such young people continues to be 'urgent and necessary' (Thommessen et al., 2017, p.293) in the present day as continuing conflicts, human rights violation, persecution and violence in some parts of the world have resulted in an estimated 65.6 million people being forcibly displaced (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2017a). Included in this number are hundreds of thousands of young people under the age of 18 who have had to leave their countries of origin in order to avoid presenting dangers and have travelled, without the support of parents or another adult who in law or by custom has responsibility for them, to seek asylum in their own right in another country (Department for Education [DfE]/ Home Office [HO], 2017). This highly vulnerable population are known as 'unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people' (UASC).

1.1.2 The UASC experience

Due to alterations in the flow and pace of refugee movement and high numbers of 'underground' journeys and arrivals, it is difficult to calculate exact numbers of UASC (Rogers et al., 2018). However, in the most recently published statistics, it is estimated that between 2008-2016, around 198,500 UASC entered Europe (Eurostat, 2016), and in 2016, 3175 asylum claims were made by UASC in the United Kingdom (UK). This was double the number recorded in 2010 (see Table 1.1) and comprised approximately 11% of all asylum claims that year (HO, 2017). Almost half of these UASC were from Afghanistan, Albania and Eritrea, with significant numbers also from Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh (HO, 2017). Consistent with trends recognised in the broader UASC population (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008; Wade et al., 2012), the majority of those seeking asylum in the UK in 2016 were male (90%) and between 14-17 (89%) (HO, 2017).

Table 1.1 Numbers of UASC applying for asylum in the UK between 2010-2016. (source: Home Office, 2017).

Year	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Number	1515	1248	1125	1265	1945	3253	3175

There are numerous circumstances which may contribute to young people taking the drastic step of leaving their homes and countries of origin and travelling without the support of friends or family to seek asylum in another, safer country. These are summarised in Table 1.2. Sometimes the young person actively chooses to remove themselves from a dangerous situation by leaving, however, this choice may also be made by the young person's family or by abductors. England may be chosen as a destination because of historical connections between it and UASC's countries of origin or because English is an internationally spoken language (Wells, 2011). Furthermore, Gulwali Passarlay, who published an account of his experiences as an Afghan UASC, explained that because England was the hardest European country to get to, he considered that it must be the best country to settle in (Passarlay, 2016).

Table 1.2 Possible circumstances through which young people may become UASC.	
Circumstance	**Contributing authors**
1. Escaping from recruitment to, or harm from, a dangerous regime	Kohli and Mather (2003); Derluyn and Broekaert (2008); Passarlay (2016)
2. Escaping from a dangerous family	
3. Escaping from economic hardship that has resulted from armed conflict	
4. Abduction or trafficking (for exploitation, sexual or otherwise)	
5. Being separated (unintentionally) from family members during migration	
6. Separating from family as part of a planned survival strategy	
7. Being sent ahead to prepare the way for others	

The nature of UASC's journeys varies widely depending upon whether they can or cannot take a legal route to cover the often tens of thousands of miles between their country of origin and eventual country of settlement. Several international resettlement programs, including the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, currently bring individuals judged to be amongst the most vulnerable directly to the UK through official channels (DfE/ HO, 2017). For those not eligible or selected for such schemes, journeys have been reported to take anything up to forty-two months (Thommessen et al., 2017) and involve individuals and/or their families paying traffickers to illegally and clandestinely smuggle the young people to Europe in dangerous and unsanitary conditions on overcrowded trucks, trains, boats and lorries, as well as on foot. These journeys involve a high level of physical risk and mental stress, and there is the constant threat of interception and incarceration by law enforcement officers in addition to exploitation or abandonment by the traffickers (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008). Further details of the potentially trauma inducing components of such journeys are explored in Table 2.1.

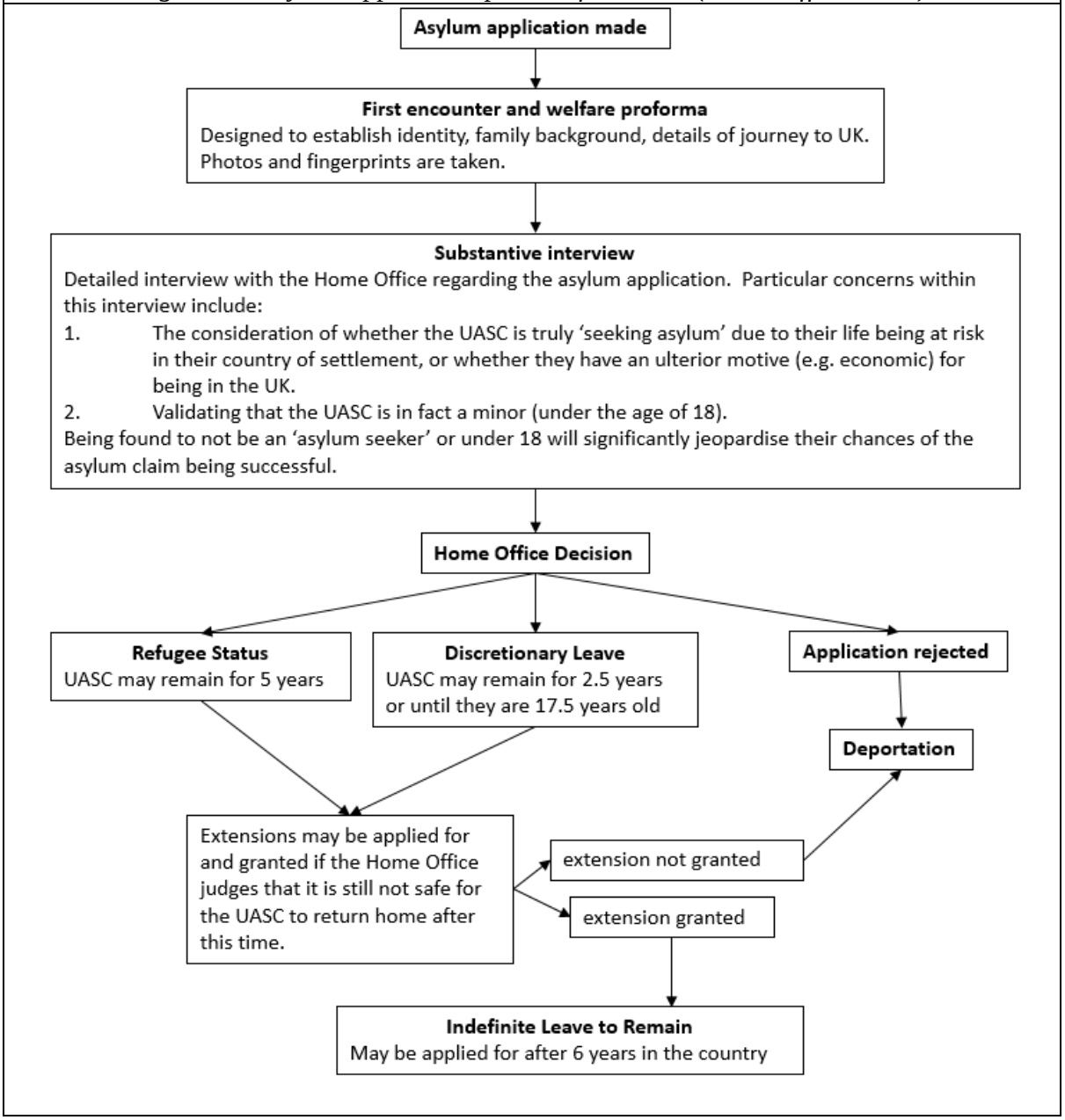
Those UASC entering the UK through legal routes are usually transported to asylum intake centres on first arrival and are supported in gaining their legal 'Refugee Status', which

entitles them to five years of humanitarian protection and key rights and benefits including welfare, health, education and the right to work. Conversely, the first authorities who those using clandestine routes will likely come to the attention of are the police; either because the young people have handed themselves directly to these officials, or because police officers have intercepted UASC during their patrols (DfE/ HO, 2017). The asylum-seeking process is more arduous for this section of the UASC population and is outlined through the flowchart in Figure 1.1.

Consistent with the United Nations' (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, which identifies refugee minors in need of special protection and assistance, the majority of UASC who are not immediately given 'Refugee Status' do not have their claims rejected outright, as would be the case with adults, but instead are granted 'Discretionary Leave'. This temporary residence status lasts until UASC are 17½ years old, after which time, full 'Refugee Status' may be applied for again, and eventually, 'Indefinite Leave to Remain'. However, their application may be rejected at any point if the Home Office judges that it is safe for the UASC to return home, or due to the age of the young person being called into question. These decisions can be appealed in court (HO, 2015).

Through their situation of being under 18 and not accompanied by a legal guardian, the responsibility for the care of UASC is placed with the social services of the Local Authority (LA) in which they first present (Wade et al., 2012; DfE/ HO, 2017). Following assessments, the young people may become 'looked after' by a foster carer (FC) under section 20 of the Children Act (1989), or they may be supported under Section 17 and provided with financial assistance and a placement in 'supported accommodation' where many young people are housed together in staffed lodgings (DfE/ HO, 2017).

Figure 1.1 Asylum application process for UASC (Home Office, 2015)



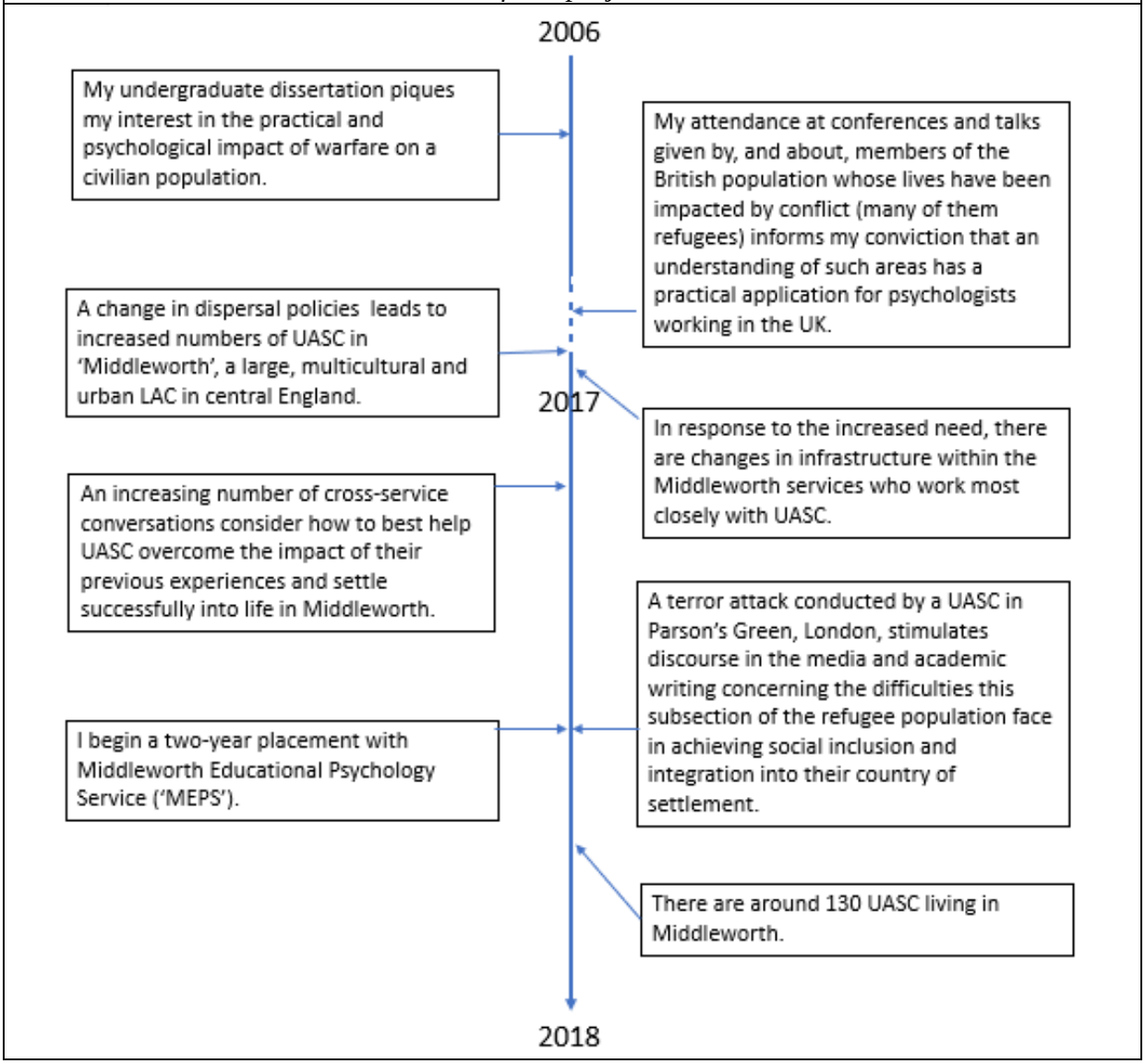
Where UASC are under 16 on arrival, it is recommended that they are placed with a foster family, with the potential to 'Stay Put' (DfE, 2013) in the placement after they turn 18 (Rogers et al., 2018). However, there are ongoing shortages of foster placements for UASC in the UK. This is partly due to some LAs' subscription to UNCHR (1994) guidance that UASC should be given 'matched placements' with families of similar ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, but there being a lack of cultural and ethnic diversity amongst FCs

(Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017). Additionally, FCs may be reluctant to foster UASC due to 'myths' about this population being especially vulnerable to radicalisation (Rogers et al., 2018).

1.2 Rationale

The rationale for focusing this thesis on UASC's experiences in their country of settlement arose from a combination of personal, professional factors and national occurrences which are summarised in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Timeline of personal, professional and national factors leading to the development of this project.



The focus of this research was subsequently developed through consultation with the relevant services of social care, fostering, the Virtual School and MEPS who, in addition to being concerned with the academic wellbeing of the UASC population, also had queries about how social support could be optimised to enhance UASC's successful settling and psychological wellbeing. Craig (2015) identifies that in migrant literature, what is often missing is the voice of the migrant themselves. In order to investigate the queries that arose from consultation about the role of social support, a key aim of this research was therefore to investigate the perceptions that UASC themselves had about the value of their social relationships and to consider whether this had any bearings on their experience of maintained wellbeing, settling and integration.

The necessity and usefulness of such research was confirmed by the small body of literature which has explored UASC's perceptions of their experiences in their country of settlement and the role of social support within this. This has highlighted that UASC are not a homogenous population and recently, Horgan and Raghallaigh (2017) and Rogers et al. (2018) called for further exploration of members of this population's individual lived experiences in order that an understanding of how their needs can be met can continue to be worked towards.

Previous research has additionally concluded that although social support can be instrumental in helping UASC to overcome their trauma and settle successfully into their country of settlement, their previous experiences may have resulted in UASC becoming overly self-reliant and therefore the process of forming relationships may not be easy (Thommessen et al., 2015). To add a further dimension to understanding the UASC's experiences of social

support, a subsidiary aim of the current research therefore became to explore FCs experiences of forming relationships with UASC. It was determined that FCs would be a particularly useful population to work with as especially little appears to be known about UASC's experiences in care and their relationships with FCs (Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017).

Consequently, a mixed methods nested case study design (Thomas, 2016) was developed harnessing an interpretivist paradigm to explore the multiple truths that a small number of UASC and FCs living in Middleworth constructed of their experiences. The perceptions that three UASC, who had all been fostered by the same FCs, had about the function of the important people in their lives in England were explored through individual semi-structured interviews, whereas an understanding of the barriers and facilitators that five FCs experienced in forming relationships with their UASC foster children was sought through their contributions to a focus group. Conclusions were drawn about the value of support to UASC in Middleworth through qualitative analysis.

1.3 Structure and key terms

The remaining six chapters in this thesis proceed as follows: Chapters 2 and 3 explore the findings of literature reviews focused on the challenges faced by UASC (Chapter 2) and the potential of social support in helping UASC to overcome these (Chapter 3); Chapter 4 outlines the study's methodology; Chapters 5 and 6 present and analyse key findings from the FC focus group (Chapter 5) and UASC interviews (Chapter 6); finally, Chapter 7 provides a concluding synthesis of findings and explores limitations of the study as well as implications for future research and the role of the educational psychologist (EP). Table 1.3 explains how certain frequently used key terms are defined in the context of this thesis.

Table 1.3 Definitions of key terms	
Term	**Definition**
Migrant	A foreign national settled, or seeking to settle, (semi-)permanently within a country other than their country of birth.
Refugees	A subgroup of 'migrants' who have been forced to leave their country of origin due to threat, persecution, fear, war or violence (UNHCR, 2009).
'UASCs'	A subgroup of 'refugees' who are 'under 18 years of age when the claim is submitted; applying for asylum in their own right; separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or by custom has responsibility to do so.' (DfE/ HO, 2017, p.7).
Country of origin	The country which a refugee has been forced to leave.
Country of settlement	The country in which a refugee is seeking asylum.
Culture	The ideas, customs, symbols, morals, rules and social behaviours of a particular group of people or society (Parekh, 2000).

2. Literature Review I: Challenges faced by UASC

This chapter presents research findings concerning the challenges UASC face before, during and after their journeys to their country of settlement. Particular consideration is given to post-journey experiences and the impact that these may have on the wellbeing of UASC is explored in the context of psychological theories including Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2008a), Maslow's (1987) Hierarchy of Needs, Erikson's (1959) psychosocial developmental theory and Berry's (2017) theory of acculturation.

2.1 A vulnerable population

It has been claimed that UASC are one of the most vulnerable populations in the UK (Groark et al., 2010). Early psychological, psychiatric and medical research with child refugee populations highlighted the potential for their prolonged exposure to repeated stressors and traumatic events to result in 'sequential traumatisation' (Keilson and Sharpati, 1979, cited in Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008). Although it can be difficult to gain a full picture due to under-reporting by UASC (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2007), empirical studies investigating the emotional wellbeing of UASC have identified a range of behavioural, emotional and developmental problems including anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, somatic symptoms and substance abuse (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008). It has been suggested that there are higher levels of these conditions amongst UASC compared to refugee children who arrive in the UK with their families as UASC's separation from the protection of adult caregivers renders them additionally susceptible to adversity (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008; Mels, et al., 2008; Thommessen et al., 2017).

2.2 Stressors experienced by UASC

UASC literature draws attention to a range of social, psychological, cultural, developmental

and practical challenges that UASC may face. A summary is presented in Table 2.1 which highlights that, additional to stressors experienced before and during their journey, events experienced once in the country of settlement can continue to contribute to their emotional vulnerability (Groark et al., 2010).

Table 2.1 Summary of stressors experienced by UASC before, during and after their journey from their country of origin to their country of settlement.

Time period	Experience	References
Before journey	• Eyewitness to war • Eyewitness and/ or direct experience of violence and abuse (e.g. physical, sexual). • Persecution of self and/ or family members, and experience of hiding • Poor economic circumstances and limited availability of food • Loss and separation (through displacement or death of loved ones) from individuals and/or community networks. • Limited educational opportunities • Recruitment or trafficking	Ajdukovic (1998); Sourander (1998); Kohli and Mather (2003); Thomas et al. (2004); Hodes et al. (2008).
During journey	• Long journeys in primitive and unsafe conditions on trucks, trains, lorry containers, boats or by foot. • Dangers and inadequate provisions within refugee camps • Basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, clothing) not being met • Loss/ absence of loved ones and rejection by others • Reliance on, and being let down by, human smugglers and traffickers • Loneliness and no-one to look after them • Craving connections and not being understood (e.g. due to language barriers or others not sharing same experiences) • Losing sense of self • Becoming mistrustful and atypically self-reliant • Helplessness and uncertainty; lack of agency • Exploitation and abuse • Heightened arousal levels due to constant fears (e.g. related to illegal status and potential police intervention, and physical dangers)	Sourander (1998); Goodman (2004); Thomas et al. (2004); Derluyn and Broekaert (2005); Derluyn and Broekaert (2008); Mbabaali (2012); Passarlay (2016).

cont…

After journey	• Processing traumatic experiences • Difficulties adjusting to and accepting improving conditions • Complex and confused feelings about family • Loss of family, community networks, home, language and culture • 'Cultural bereavement' and adapting to a new society, language and culture • Loneliness and isolation • No caregiver to respond to basic needs, and provide protection and social support • Erosion of identity, competence, autonomy, agency, self-efficacy and sense of belonging • Uncertainty e.g. about legal refugee status	Rousseau (1995); Sourander (1998); Berman (2001); Ferenci (2001); Groark et al. (2010); Hutchinson and Dorsett (2012); Farmbrough (2014); Brar-Josan (2015); Majumder et al. (2015); Thommessen et al. (2015); Passarlay (2016).

These post-journey difficulties are now explored as two categories: reconciling past experiences and adapting to life in a new country.

2.2.1 Reconciling past experiences

On reaching their country of settlement, UASC may continue to be overwhelmed by their previous adverse experiences to the extent that they are unable to accept their improving conditions (Majumder et al., 2015; Passarlay, 2016). Furthermore, ongoing concerns for family left behind can lead to a sense of guilt at having achieved sanctuary, and pressure or confusion can result from UASC's attempt to actualise their family's best hopes for them whilst struggling to understand the circumstances and events that led to their being sent away (Kohli, 2002; Kohli and Mather, 2003; Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008).

2.2.1.2 Loss

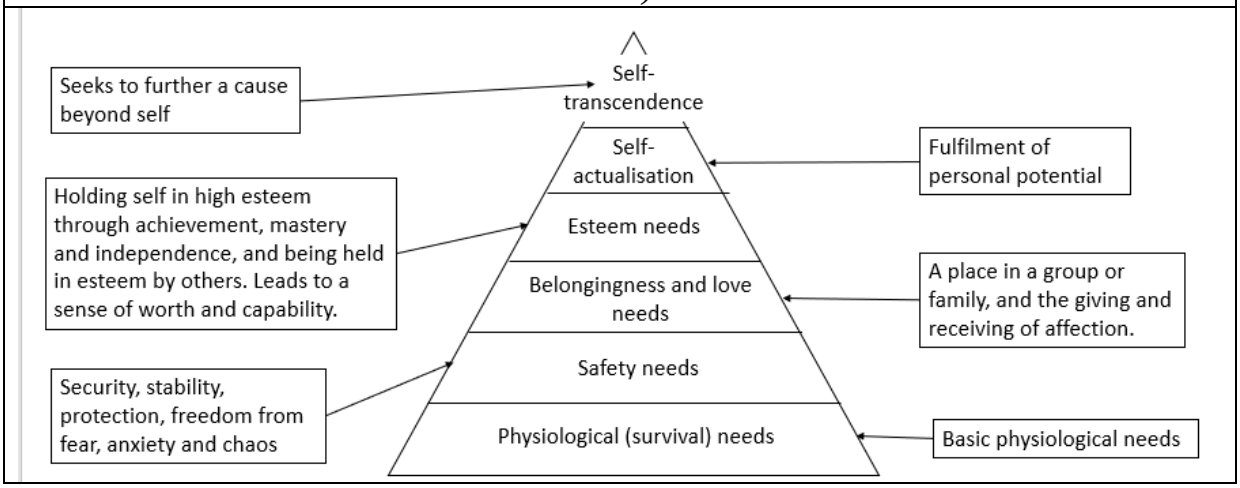
The refugee experience has been described as a 'journey of multiple losses' (Brar-Josan, 2015, p. 26), both tangible and internal, all of which need to be mourned (Groark et al., 2010). On the broadest level, a UASC is a displaced individual who is separated from their

country of origin and is stateless (Mbabaali, 2012). Additionally, they have lost their home, school and many personal possessions (Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Brar-Josan, 2015).

With the additional loss of the UASC's social infrastructure, including family and friends, neighbours, teachers and acquaintances, goes an important mediator of the child's sense of safety, stability and security (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008) and UASC often report loneliness and a real or perceived sense of isolation (Howard and Hodes, 2000; Doggett, 2012). It is probable that they will not be surrounded by individuals in their new country who speak their language and in these instances, the language barrier will deny their ability to make themselves understood, find out what is happening to them and engage in self-advocacy (Ferenci, 2001; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Mbabaali, 2012).

The separation from family and community can also result in UASC experiencing the loss of aspects of their identity as they become uncertain of their place in society and the wider country (Groark et al., 2010; Mbabaali, 2012). The loss of country and society of origin can lead to 'cultural bereavement' (Eisenbruch, 1990) as UASC mourn their separation from and lack of recognition of their roots, way of life and associated values (Blackwell and Melzak, 2000; Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008). In addition to feeling safe, it has been reported that without the security of attuned people, familiar places, values and culture, a refugee's sense of belonging can also be challenged (Kohli and Mather, 2003). This is consistent with Maslow's (1987) assertion that in times of chaos, change and war, the active and dominant mobilisers of an individual's resources may become 'survival' and 'safety', rather than any of the superordinate motivations detailed in his 'Hierarchy of Needs' (for details, see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (adapted from Maslow, 1970, 1987; Koltko-River, 2006).



Harnessing 'Self-Determination Theory' (Deci and Ryan, 2008a), Farmbrough (2014) hypothesises that the psychological impact of UASC's losses and the challenges of settling in a new country and culture can be partly explained through the disconnection they experience from three universal psychological needs upon which healthy development and psychological wellbeing depend: competence, autonomy and social connectedness. These needs are explained in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Three universal psychological needs proposed in Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2008a).

Need	Description
Competence	Experiencing a sense of mastery when carrying out activities.
Autonomy	Being able to initiate activities through one's own choosing.
Social connectedness	Being socially connected to others, including caring for others and having a sense of belonging. This builds upon humans' innate motivation to form stable and strong relationships.

Groark et al. (2010) and Doggett (2012) also propose that the erosion of perceived competence can result from UASC feeling powerless and without agency, which can additionally lead to low self-efficacy and can exacerbate difficulties UASC may have with adapting to life in their new country.

2.2.2 Adapting to life in a new country

UASC experience numerous practical and psychological challenges as they attempt to settle into their new country. These include navigating the processes of integration, acculturation and adaption, which can involve not just reconnection with, but changes in their cultural identities, as well as navigating systems which may be organised differently from those in the country of origin, such as schooling and the health, care and legal systems.

2.2.2.1 Integration

Historically, the process of an immigrant managing the cultural challenges associated with living in a new country was viewed as one-directional and one-dimensional; the 'optimum' outcome was viewed as the *assimilation* of the immigrant into the country of settlement's pervasive culture as they overhauled their living habits to resemble those of the country's established population (Sam, 2006). However, more recently, bi-dimensional and bi-directional models have been proposed as it has been theorised that there are psychosocial benefits for immigrants in integrating by retaining aspects of their original culture as well as participating in the culture of the country of settlement, and that to facilitate this process both the migrant community and the host community must change (Horenczyk et al., 2013; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013; Berry, 2017). It has also been acknowledged that integration is a personal process that can be navigated in innumerable ways (Cheung and Phillimore, 2013).

Integration has been studied from numerous perspectives, both in terms of its 'domains' (e.g. Ager and Strang, 2008) and as a possible outcome of the acculturation process (e.g. Berry et al., 2006).

2.2.2.1.1 Domains of Integration: (Ager and Strang, 2008)

In 2002, the UK Home Office commissioned an 'Indicators of Integration' study as part of a drive to support the integration of refugees in the UK. Researchers gained the views of refugees through interviews and written survey methods and, following a verification period, identified ten core domains which the refugees identified as indicative of successful integration. These are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Domains of Integration (Ager and Strang, 2008)

Area	Domain	Description
Markers and Means	Employment	• Promotes economic independence • Provides an opportunity to meet members of society of settlement and develop language skills
	Housing	• It is important to have a place to live, not just a place to stay • A home is a place of safety, security and stability
	Education	• Provides children with the opportunity to meet and form relationships with members of society of settlement, and develop language skills • Difficulties can arise where education system and pedagogic methods are different from those in the home country
	Health	• Accessing healthcare required refugees to overcome language barriers and understand how the systems work
Social Connection (after Putnam, 1993)	Social Bridges	• Connections between diverse groups • Facilitated through the development of a common group e.g. involvement of refugees in activities shared with members of society of settlement, as well as refugees' acceptance of mainstream values • Confidence and a sense of safety are needed to encourage groups to approach each other
	Social Bonds	• Connections between individuals who share country of origin, religious identity and/or ethnicity (including 'like-ethnic groups', Hale [2000]) • Enables the maintenance of familiar customs, patterns and language • The maintenance of these does not necessarily preclude or restrict contact with society of settlement
	Social Links	• Links between refugee and structures of the state e.g. doctors' surgeries, schools, government services

cont…

Facilitators	Language and Cultural Knowledge	• Being able to speak the language of the country of settlement is essential to the integration process • Interpreters can facilitate communication in the early stages of settlement • It is also important to gain 'cultural capital' which refers to 'knowledge of national and local procedures, customs and facilities' (p.182) as well as cultural norms in wider society • Refugees also described the importance of being able to build mutual understanding through sharing their cultural traditions with others.
	Safety and Stability	• Without feelings of physical safety, refugees were not able to feel integrated • Maintaining relationships and communities over time contributed to developing a sense of familiarity (e.g. with people, places and services) and tolerance/ acceptance.
Foundation	Rights and Citizenship	• A barrier to integration is where refugees do not perceive that they have the same rights as others

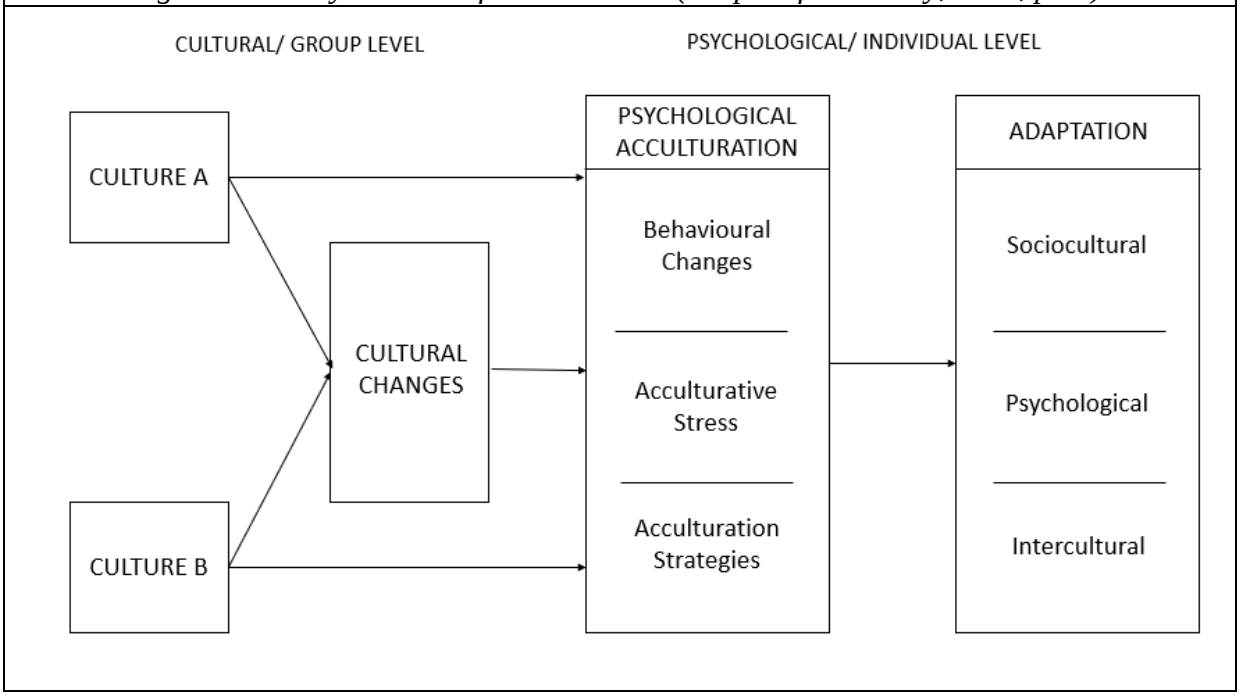
Although they presented and described the domains discretely, Ager and Strang (2008) propose that there is interaction between them. The 'Facilitator' domains of 'Language and Cultural Knowledge' and 'Safety and Stability' describe ways in which barriers to the other domains can be reduced, and the 'Social Connection' domains in particular are described as the 'connective tissue' between different areas of integration. Within Ager and Strang's (2008) research, 'social bridges', 'social bonds' and 'social links' were often advocated as defining elements of an integrated community which contribute towards the refugee's ability to derive a sense of belonging through participating in the life of the country of settlement, whilst also maintaining bonds with their own cultural values and practices. The conceptualisation of, and names given to, the three 'Social Connection' domains were derived from Putnam's (1993) theory of social capital. Although these definitions have been contested (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Bourdieu, 2000), it has been argued that they have explanatory value when harnessed in the context of integration (Zetter et al., 2006). However, Ager and Strang (2008) call for further work to investigate the role of social capital within

integration, including ‘clarifying if key elements of multiculturalism are compatible with a greater emphasis on social cohesion’ (p.186).

2.2.2.2 Acculturation (Berry, 2017)

Berry defines integration within his cross-cultural psychological theory of acculturation. Acculturation is a significant ethnocultural challenge for immigrants settling in new countries as it concerns the changes to their behaviours, attitudes and values that result from their coming into contact with the new culture of settlement, which mediate their attitudes concerning the extent to which they would like ‘to retain their ethnic culture [i.e.. the culture of their country of origin] and the extent to which they wish to become involved with the larger society [i.e. the society of the country of settlement]’ (Phinney et al., 2012, p.72).

Figure 2.2 Berry’s model of acculturation (adapted from Berry, 2017, p.11).



Berry’s (2017) model, as outlined in Figure 2.2, presents his theory of how an individual’s experience of living between two cultures can lead to ‘adaptation’ through a process of

'psychological acculturation'. Berry studied numerous migrant populations to confirm that his model could be reliably applied to a range of cultures, however, although his participants included refugees, none were explicitly UASC (Berry, 1997). Nevertheless, this framework has been judged to be useful in understanding the experiences of UASC (e.g. Maegusuku-Hewett el al., 2007).

2.2.2.2.1 Psychological acculturation

Within Berry's (2017) model, psychological acculturation comprises three components: behavioural changes, acculturative stress and acculturation strategies.

a) Behavioural Changes

Berry (2017) reasoned that when an individual encounters a new culture, both 'cultural' and 'psychological changes' can occur, as outlined in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Behavioural changes described in psychological acculturation (Berry, 2017).

Behavioural change	**Description**
Cultural Changes	• Superficial or surface changes such as diet, clothes and ways of speaking • Stimulated by an immigrant's recognition of differences between the cultures of origin and settlement leading to a desire to develop 'cultural capital', or an understanding of the culture and organisation of the society (Ferenci, 2001). • Can set the scene for psychological changes (see below).
Psychological Changes	• Involves the alteration of deeper psychological processes such as attitudes, values and cultural identities. Cultural identity will be explored further in Section 2.2.2.2.3.

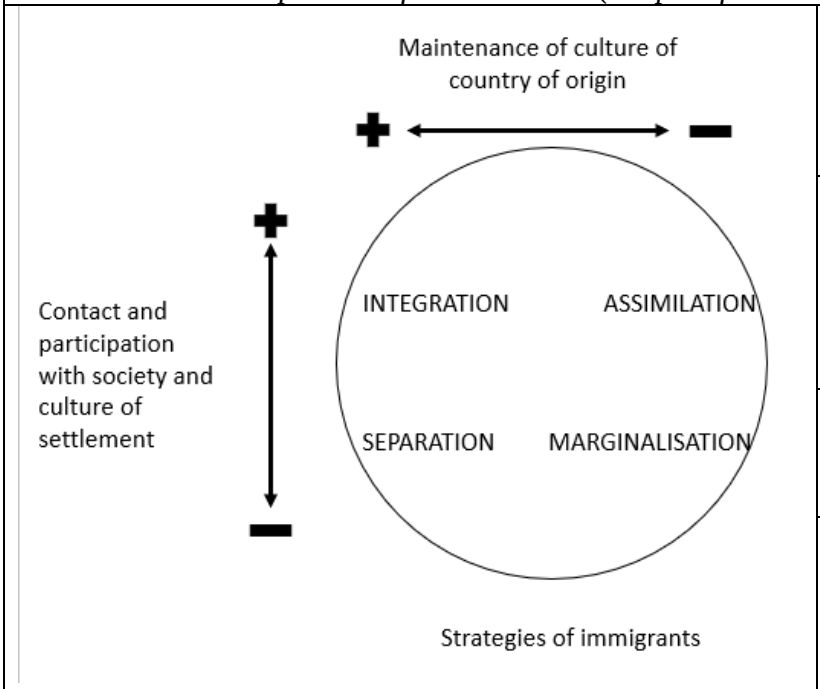
b) Acculturative Stress

Berry (1970) theorised that immigrants may experience stress during the acculturation process as they contend with the challenge of resolving how they will manage living between two cultures.

c) Acculturation Strategies

Research shows that different immigrants have different preferences for involvement in the two cultures that they live between (Berry and Sam, 1997; Berry et al., 2006; Berry, 2017). Berry (2017) defines these preferences in terms of two independent dimensions: links to the society of origin or 'cultural maintenance', and links with the society and culture of settlement or 'contact and participation'. Drawing on cross-cultural research, Berry (2017) proposed that individuals have positive or negative orientations to each of these dimensions, which, as Figure 2.3 illustrates, intersect to define the four acculturation strategies of 'assimilation', 'separation', 'marginalisation' and 'integration'.

Figure 2.3 Strategies and outcomes for immigrants and society of settlement during the process of acculturation (adapted from Berry, 2017).



Assimilation: Total immersion in the culture of settlement and rejection of the culture of origin.
Separation: Total maintenance of the culture of origin and minimal contact with the culture and society of settlement.
Marginalisation: The rejection of both the cultures of settlement and origin.
Integration: Maintenance of aspects of the original culture while at the same time, making contact with and adopting some of the practices of the country of settlement.

However, the strategies are not discrete (Berry, 2017) and empirical evidence indicates that immigrant adolescents' strategies change over time (Ho, 1995, cited in Berry, 2017; Berry et al., 2006). Berry et al.'s (2006) study found that a majority of immigrant youth in the early

stages of settlement in thirteen different societies across the world held 'separation' strategies; this is consistent with the finding that on arrival in a country of settlement, UASC typically initially seek to maintain continuity when faced with a changed context (Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010). However, studies with both adolescent immigrant and UASC participants indicate that, over time, large numbers will begin to identify more with 'integration' strategies as they expand their understanding of their host society and are better able to overcome challenges to achieve a good level of emotional wellbeing and adapt to life in their country of settlement (Wallin and Ahlström, 2005; Berry et al., 2006). However, 'integration' is not the only possible adaptive outcome (Maegusuku-Hewett el al., 2007).

2.2.2.2.2 Adaptation

As potential outcomes from the acculturation process, Berry (2017) identifies three different forms of adaptation: psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation and intercultural adaptation, which are summarised in Table 2.5. The distinction between psychological and sociocultural adaptation was made by Ward (1996) and is based on two of the major theoretical mechanisms within acculturation research: culture learning (sociocultural adaption), and stress and coping (psychological adaptation). However, Berry's model has received some criticism for oversimplifying the range of explanatory psychological mechanisms that may mediate immigrants' coping and wellbeing as a result of conceptualising stressors in predominantly cultural terms (e.g. Pantiru and Barley, 2015). It is possible that the quantitative research methods that Berry used limited his potential for discovering and exploring further non-culturally based concepts.

Table 2.5 Types of adaptation within Berry's (2017) theory of acculturation.	
Adaptation	**Description**
Psychological adaptation	*'Feeling well'* • Refers to psychological processes which enhance an individual's emotional wellbeing. • The process of psychological adaptation may be challenged by initial contact with the culture of settlement. • It is predicted by factors such as personality variables, life change events and social support.
Sociocultural adaptation	*'Doing well'* • Refers to processes of transmission and behaviour whereby an individual develops the culturally appropriate skills that are required to carry out the activities of daily intercultural living. • Sociocultural adaptation generally improves from the moment of initial contact. • It is predicted by factors including cultural knowledge, extent of contact and intergroup attitudes.
Intercultural adaptation	'*Relating well*' • Refers to an individual's ability to form tolerant, accepting and harmonious intercultural relationships. • This process is facilitated where individuals accept the benefits of cultural diversity and are 'willing to change [themselves] in order to accommodate those who are culturally different' (Berry, 2017, p.22).

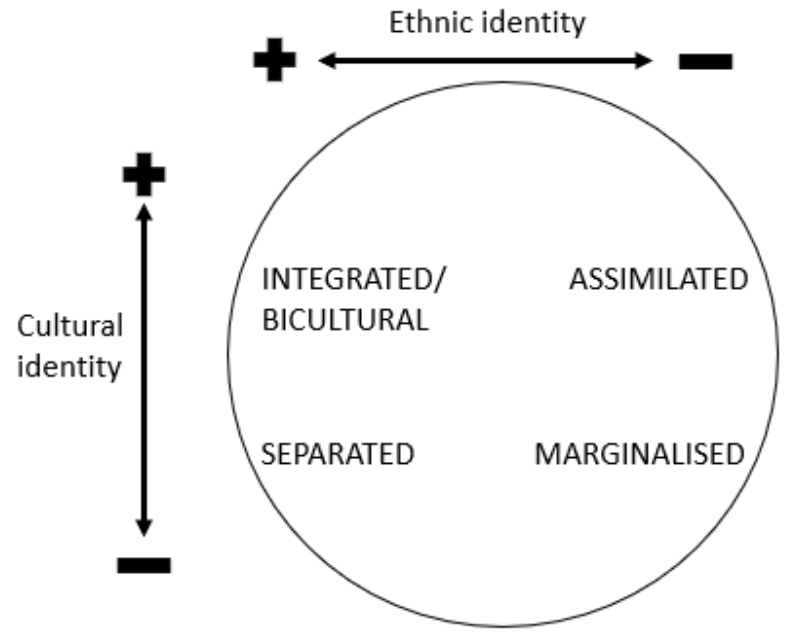
2.2.2.2.3 Cultural identity

A component part of the process of acculturation and adaptation involves the changing nature of the immigrant's sense of self. Phinney et al.'s (2012) theory of 'cultural identity' describes this process in relation to an individual's exploration of the extent to which they have a sense of belonging to, or with those of, their country of settlement: their 'national identity', and/or to those with whom they share a country of origin, language, religion, culture or kinship: their 'ethnic identity'.

Similar to Berry's acculturation strategies, Phinney (2014) reasons that cultural identity is a two-dimensional process whereby an individual navigates a pathway between ethnic identity

and national identity to one of four possible outcomes: separated, assimilated, marginalised or integrated ('bicultural') identity (see Figure 2.4). Investigations of multiple immigrant populations have repeatedly observed that maintenance of a strong ethnic identity is related to positive self-esteem and psychological wellbeing (Phinney et al., 1997; Roberts et al., 1999). However, a 'bicultural identity', where the immigrant is able to derive a sense of belonging to both the cultures and populations of origin and of settlement, is argued to render the most positive psychological outcomes (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2013; Phinney, 2014).

Figure 2.4 Possible outcomes for cultural identity (adapted from Phinney, 2014).



Integrated or bicultural identity: Sense of belonging to both the cultures and populations of origin and of settlement.
Assimilated identity: Sense of belonging to the culture and population of settlement.
Separated identity: Sense of belonging to the culture and population of origin.
Marginalised identity: No sense of belonging to either the cultures or populations of origin or settlement.

Phinney (2014) proposes that environment and context are important influences on the nature, duration and timing of cultural identity formation and it has been advocated that being an adolescent refugee makes cultural identity development especially challenging (Jones and Rutter, 1998). This can partly be understood through Erikson's (1959) psychosocial developmental theory. This proposes that adult identity begins to emerge during adolescence as the need to belong heightens, and although peer groups become increasingly important in mediating individuals' evolving sense of identity at this developmental point (Kovacev and

Shute, 2004), families continue to play a part in socialising children into adult roles (Erikson, 1968), which includes aspects of their ethnic identity (Phinney, 2014). For UASC therefore, the absence of birth parents, and others who might naturally share the same patterns of meaning, greatly diminishes their access to 'ethnic' role models (Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh, 2015).

2.2.2.2.4 Intercultural attitudes of society of settlement

Consistent with theories of social psychological intergroup relations (Tip et al, 2012), Berry (2005) proposes that members of the country of settlement will have views about how newcomers should acculturate, as well as how the wider society should adapt to accommodate them. Subsequently, he argues that it is not just their own preferences which lead to immigrants developing a particular acculturation outcome but the interaction of these preferences with the perceived and/or actual level of acceptance for immigrants they encounter within the country of settlement (Berry, 2017). Integration of immigrants, including their development of a bicultural identity and sense of belonging within the new country, is only considered possible where there is both actual and perceived openness and acceptance for cultural diversity within the society of settlement, and where immigrants do not experience discrimination, exclusion or rejection (Berry et al., 2006, Phinney, 2014). This finding has been replicated where the immigrant participants are exclusively refugees (Kovacev and Shute, 2004; Cheung and Phillimore, 2013).

There is some tentative evidence that the smaller the cultural, religious and visible differences between an immigrant and the members of the society of settlement, either because there are genuine similarities between the countries of origin and settlement, or because the individual is living in an area where there is a pervasive culture that is influenced by their country of

origin, the less likely are problems with intercultural relations, and this will facilitate the individual developing a sense of being both part of their culture of origin and part of the wider society (Phinney et al., 2012; Phinney, 2014). There has been little research to date exploring the process of acculturation where the society of settlement is multicultural and does not have one dominant group. However, what evidence exists indicates that such a society gives immigrants the option to assume various 'national identities' (Berry and Sabatier, 2010, cited in Berry, 2017; Verdasco, 2018).

2.2.2.3 Accessing services

As indicated in Ager and Strang's (2008) 'Social Links' domain, lack of cultural capital can make it difficult for refugees to access services, especially securing health care and education placements (Majumder et al., 2015; Yohani, 2013). Furthermore, there is evidence that many teachers have neither the training nor the resources to provide adequately for the specific needs of UASC (Office for Standards in Education, 2003; Craig, 2015) whose underdeveloped spoken and written English can act as a further barrier to educational participation (Miller et al., 2005; Cefai et al., 2015). Consequently, though sources report that UASC are often highly academically motivated (e.g. Allsopp et al., 2014), many are not in education, employment or training (Craig, 2015).

2.2.2.4 A child in care

UASC also face challenges associated with being a 'child in care' (Sirriyeh and Raghallaigh, 2018). The nature of these challenges may vary according to the type of placement they are given; for example, those in supported accommodation may experience higher levels of isolation than those experiencing family-based support within the context of good quality foster care (Hodes et al., 2008; Passarlay, 2016). However, not all such care is 'good quality',

especially where the placement is not 'family-like' and could be defined as a 'temporary home base' or 'lodgings' (Wade et al., 2012) (for details, see Table 2.6).

Table 2.6 Three forms of foster placement proposed by Wade et al. (2012).

Form of placement	Description
Family-like relationships	• Characterised by both UASC and FCs making adaptions and adjustments to structure, relationships and practices, which result in the UASC developing a sense of settlement. • Includes an expectation that meaningful contact and support will continue after the placement ends.
Temporary home bases	• FCs and UASC make adjustments to make the placement work. • A sense of emotional distance is maintained which prohibits the development of a sense of 'family life'. • Meaningful relationships are unlikely to endure after the placement ends.
Lodgings	• FCs provide the UASC with the basics of daily living. • Firmly drawn boundaries indicate that the arrangement is purely functional which affords no real prospect of settlement.

Furthermore, being separated from the biological family and entering care as an adolescent creates potential challenges for UASC development. As explored in Section 2.2.2.2.3, these can include difficulties with adult identity formation. Additionally, adolescence is a period associated with the development of increased autonomy (Crittenden, 2005). For UASC and adolescents in care respectively, this process may be challenged by a lack of cultural capital (Kohli and Mather, 2003) and a parallel need to form a 'safe base' through establishing close and dependent attachment relationships with their new carers (Farmer et al., 2004). This process and inherent challenges are explored further in Section 3.1.

Indeed, unlike children born in the UK, the challenge for UASC is often not just to settle into life in another household and family but to do this in a radically different cultural environment from that to which they have previously been accustomed (Sirriyeh, 2013; Carlson et al., 2012). There is some debate about the virtue of placing UASC with carers who

share a similar cultural background (e.g. Rogers et al., 2018). Certainly, culturally 'unmatched' placements can necessitate more complex negotiations of innumerable aspects of daily life including the understanding of family relationships, boundaries, food, religious practices and the UASC's continued exploration of their ethnic identity (Carlson et al., 2012; Wade et al., 2012; Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh, 2015; Passarlay, 2016). However, where placements are culturally 'matched', there are concerns that this may hamper UASC's opportunities to make connections and contact with their country of settlement (Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh, 2015).

2.2.2.5 Uncertainty

UASC face high levels of uncertainty, and associated anxiety and frustration, especially related to the status of their asylum claim (Laban et al., 2004; Derluyn and Broekaert, 2008). Until they are granted an 'Indefinite Leave to Remain', there is no surety about how long they will be able to stay in their country of settlement and there are implications regarding their citizen rights, such as not being able to open a bank account or secure a job (Derluyn and Broekaert, 2007; Groark et al., 2010).

2.3 Conclusion: Coping with adversity

Numerous practical, psychological, developmental and cultural factors experienced before, during and after their journeys challenge UASC's abilities to maintain their psychological wellbeing and integrate adaptively into their new country of settlement. However, despite facing these challenges, a substantial minority of UASC do not develop significant mental health problems (Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012). This may be due to their having experienced less severe events (Hek, 2005), however, research has also begun to consider the diverse ways in which UASC harness personal and cultural resilience strategies that help

them cope in the face of adversity (Blackwell and Melzak, 2000; Doggett, 2012; Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017). There is additional evidence that UASC's building of social networks and perceptions of social support can contribute to their well-being and adjustment to living in a new country through mediating the impact of pre- and post-migration stressors (Kovacev and Shute, 2004; Raval, 2005; Denov and Akesson, 2013; Thommessen et al., 2015). This postulation that resilience develops in interaction with social context is supportive of an interpretivist stance (Blumer, 1992).

However, it has been frequently cited that UASC may have difficulties forming relationships in their country of settlement due to language barriers and cultural differences as well as unusually high levels of mistrust and self-reliance that can result from their ongoing experiences of being let down, rejected, exploited, not understood, not trusted, and being suspicious of others' values as well as wanting to keep their previous histories to themselves (Groark et al., 2010; Doggett, 2012; Ward et al., 2012; Thommessen et al., 2015; Passarlay, 2016; Verdasco, 2018). Understanding both how UASC can be supported to build constructive relationships and the value that UASC attribute to these relationships in enabling them to address the difficulties described in this section is therefore important and is explored in Chapter 3.

3. Literature Review II: The role of social support

The social support that UASC receive in their country of settlement is multifaceted. This chapter proceeds by examining the role that FCs of UASC consider that they have in supporting and building positive relationships with their foster children. The perceptions that UASC have about the functions of their key relationships are then investigated.

3.1 The role of foster carers

As outlined in Chapter 2, it has been proposed that adolescents in care can face the dual and potentially conflicting challenges of forming a safe base and developing their sense of autonomy (Farmer et al., 2004). Farmer and colleagues have proposed that FCs can employ two particular strategies to support their foster children within this process which are describe in Table 3.1. The virtue of these strategies can be explained in the context of adaptive developmental models of attachment and relationships, such as Bowlby's (1998) 'Attachment Theory' and Crittenden's (2005) 'Dynamic Maturation Model' (DMM) as well as principles related to Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2008a).

Table 3.1 Supportive strategies for foster carers aiming to develop a child in care's safe base formation and sense of autonomy (Farmer et al., 2004).

Aim	Strategy
To support the development of young people's emotional security and attachment with their FCs.	FCs should be sensitive and responsive in their interactions with foster children.
To support young people's emerging sense of autonomy, mastery and control.	FCs should impose boundaries in a consistent and non-aggressive way.

Attachment Theory and the DMM propose that children and young people's development and ability to cope in the face of adversity is influenced by an interaction between their current developmental state and the social environment they are experiencing. Within a 'typical' developmental trajectory, young children may form 'affectional bonds' with sensitive and

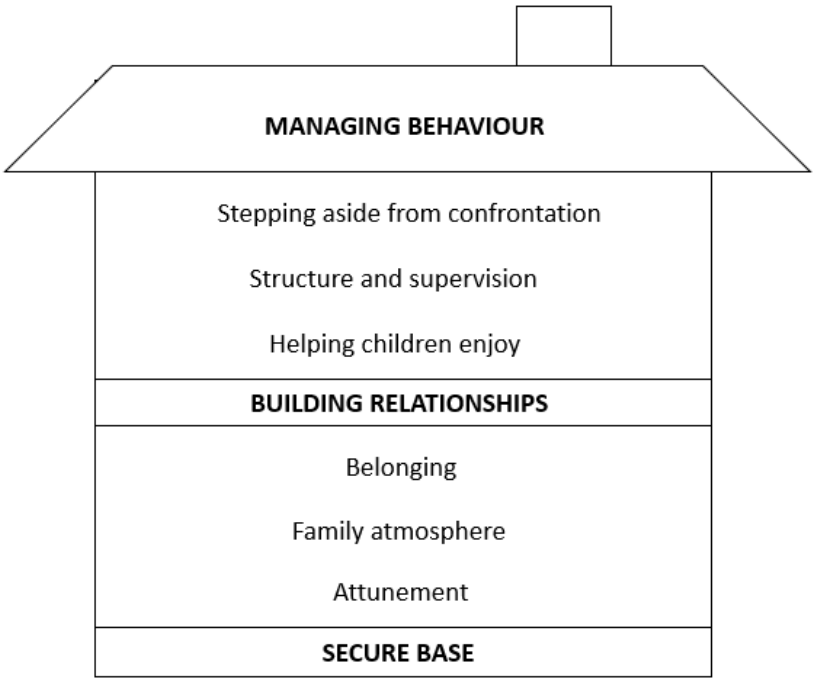
responsive caregivers, which can assist the young people to develop an internal sense of safety and security. This development, in turn, can initiate children's emerging confidence to function in the world separate from attachment figures (Bowlby, 1998). However, this process continues into adolescence where, through helping them to make sense of the information that they are receiving about the world as well as reflecting upon and integrating past experiences, attachment figures can have a key role in supporting young people to develop the skills to act autonomously and make independent decisions (Crittenden, 2005). Being separated from caregivers during childhood or adolescence, as UASC are, can therefore cause disruption to a young person's developmental trajectory, including their ability to solve problems and cope with stress.

Fostering literature claims that where a separated young person forms an attachment relationship with a FC, there is the potential that the negative effects of such disruption may be reduced (Farmer et al., 2004). However, Crittenden (2003) argued that where major negative life events have been experienced, an individual's ability to form subsequent relationships may be impeded as the experience can result in changes to their representations and expectations of relationships. Consequently, it could be hypothesised that UASC's frequently reported 'mistrusting' nature (e.g. Thommessen et al., 2015) could be mediated by representational changes following negative interpersonal interactions experienced on their journeys.

Consistent with Farmer et al.'s (2004) two strategies, Golding's (2008) 'House Model of Parenting' (Figure 3.1) suggests how components of social support may assist a child in care to overcome their representational changes and develop affectional bonds with their FCs, come to view them and their home as a 'secure base' and be helped to retain a sense of

regulation and control through FCs imposing structure and supervision, and stepping aside from confrontation.

Figure 3.1. The House Model of Parenting (adapted from Golding, 2008, p.95)



However, Golding, like Farmer et al., developed her model based upon work with fostered young people who were not UASC, and who had therefore not experienced the same types of 'negative life events'; the difficulties with relationship formation that Golding's young people experienced was hypothesised to be rooted in neglectful or dangerous parenting, rather than, for example, being exploited by traffickers. Consequently, Golding's children may never have had the experience of forming affectional bonds previously, which may have made it harder for them, than UASC, to develop such relationships in later childhood and adolescence (Bowlby, 1998; Crittenden, 2005; Farmbrough, 2014). It could therefore be argued that Golding's (2008) model is not appropriate for guiding the formation of relationships between FCs and UASC; however, evidence from the limited research which explores FCs' experiences of fostering UASC attests to many components of the 'House

Model' being appropriate in supporting the relationship formation and adaptive development of this population also, given some modifications to account for their specific circumstances.

3.1.1 Literature overview

Much of the current understanding of FCs experiences of fostering UASC in Britain and Ireland comes from two studies: Wade et al. (2012) and Raghallaigh (2013). Details of these studies are given in Table 3.2, and findings are explored below.

Table 3.2 Overview of participants, epistemology and methods of Wade et al. (2012) and Raghallaigh (2013)

	Wade et al. (2012) (results also presented in Sirriyeh, 2013)	**Raghallaigh (2013)**
Country of study	England	Ireland
No. participants	156 FCs	16 FCs (3 male; 13 female)
Further participant details	None given	10 born in Ireland; 6 born in Africa. All Judeo-Christian
Recruitment	FCs chosen by social services as examples of good practice.	FCs were carers of UASC who had previously been invited to participate in the research.
Epistemology	Interpretivist	Interpretivist
Data collection	Postal survey (133 FCs) Semi-structured interviews (23 FCs)	Semi-structured interviews
Data analysis	Survey: unknown Semi-structured interviews: qualitative analysis	Qualitative analysis

3.1.2 Emotional security and attachment: Building a secure base

The first building block of the secure base within Golding's (2008) model is 'attunement', whereby a caregiver seeks to understand and empathise with a child and to be responsive to their needs. Through this behaviour, a child can learn that a caregiver is dependable and this

can enhance their sense of safety (Bowlby, 1998). FC participants in Wade et al.'s (2012) investigation considered one component of their good practice to be the ability to provide sensitive and appropriate care by finding creative ways to overcome the language barrier, empathising with the UASC, trying to understand things from UASC's perspectives and taking their side (Sirriyeh, 2013). In Raghallaigh's (2013) study, FCs reported that this empathy should include recognising factors related specifically to their experiences as UASC, including giving them space to recover from trauma and being sensitive about the impact of their uncertain legal status.

Golding (2008) reasoned that such attuned care, alongside experiencing a positive family atmosphere where the child feels safe, nurtured and has fun, can help fostered children to develop a sense of belonging to the foster family. FCs judged that such feelings could be inculcated from the beginning of UASC's placements through the FC ensuring their physical comfort and understanding of how appliances in the house worked (Sirriyeh, 2013). Furthermore, FCs also recognised the importance of communicating to UASC that they were a valued part of their foster family through including them in existing family routines and rituals, and providing opportunities for them to shape new ones (Wade et al., 2012; Raghallaigh, 2013; Golding, 2008).

3.1.3 Setting boundaries, fostering mastery and a sense of control

FCs judged that imposing boundaries on UASC's behaviour could also help UASC to feel safe and, as Golding (2008) proposed, this could mediate the further deepening of their relationships with UASC (Wade et al., 2012). However, FCs also reported that boundary setting could obstruct relationship formation if UASC perceived that they were attempts to control the UASC rather than keep them safe (Sirriyeh, 2013). This supports Farmer et al,'s

(2004) advocation that FCs should set consistent boundaries in a way that also fosters mastery and a sense of control. Crittenden (2005) argues that such can be achieved where boundaries are set in a way that helps young people make sense of their experiences.

However, further understanding of how FCs can initiate meaningful, secure relationships with UASC, whilst setting boundaries and encouraging mastery and a sense of control in the young people, can be gained through recourse to the 'autonomy-supporting parenting style' ('A-SPS'; Deci and Ryan, 2008a; adapted from Joussemet et al., 2008), the components of which are described in Table 3.3. In addition to promoting the importance of responsive parenting, the A-SPS advocates that parents should make clear their reasons for required behaviour, whilst also encouraging the young person's initiations and sense of choice.

Table 3.3 Autonomy-supporting parenting style (A-SPS)

Component	Description
Theoretical background	Within the context of their Self-Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (2008a) advocated that parents could support the adaptive development of their child through employing an A-SPS. They proposed that this parenting style could be characterised by Joussemet et al.'s (2008) model.
Purpose	Deci and Ryan (2008a) proposed that receiving an A-SPS could facilitate the child's internalisation of their social-cultural context as well as skills related to the three needs that are viewed as essential within Self-Determination Theory: the development of social connectedness, a sense of competence and an autonomy orientation.
Components of an A-SPS	1. Encouraging initiation
	2. Supporting a sense of choice
	3. Recognising and being responsive to the child's thoughts, questions and initiatives
	4. Explaining reasons for required behaviour
	5. Limited use of controlling approaches

Deci and Ryan (2008a) theorised that receiving an A-SPS could help young people to internalise their social-cultural context and there is some limited empirical evidence that the A-SPS is a useful framework through which to understand how FCs' care of migrant

adolescents can facilitate the young people's psychological wellbeing, maintenance of ethnic identity and incremental participation in, and internalisation of, their new culture (Downie et al., 2007). Indeed, FCs in Wade et al.'s (2012) and Raghallaigh's (2013) studies suggested that one additional barrier that UASC faced in attaining a sense of mastery and autonomy was the limited cultural capital they possessed when entering the country, and one additional factor that they, as opposed to FCs of non-UASC, must consider was how to support their foster children's acculturation process. Strategies consistent with components of the A-SPS appeared to be helpful within this process as FCs judged that UASC's wellbeing and cultural competence could be supported through FCs explaining to UASC why it was important for their behaviour to conform to the practices of the country of settlement, such as views about the role of women (Component 4, see Table 3.3), as well as encouraging UASC's desires and initiations to continue to explore the culture, customs and values of their ethnic culture (Component 1, see Table 3.3). An American study concluded that this latter process was greatly facilitated where placements were culturally matched (Carlson et al., 2012).

3.1.4 Conclusion: FC literature

Due to limited research in this area, the views of FCs have been drawn from only two main studies. It is therefore not possible to draw firm conclusions regarding the generalisability of the findings presented, especially as few details are given about the process of data analysis in Wade et al.'s study.

However, consistent with identified challenges for adolescents in foster care, FCs of UASC in these studies perceived that key components of their role included helping UASC to attain a sense of safety through the formation of attuned, responsive affectional bonds, whilst also supporting their burgeoning sense of autonomy and mastery (Farmer et al., 2004; Golding,

2008). FCs recognised that the support UASC required to achieve these outcomes differed to some degree from non-migrants and needed to encompass a degree of cultural learning and sensitivity regarding previous and ongoing stressors. Although not initially developed as cross-cultural frameworks, there is some tentative evidence that recourse to adaptive developmental models of attachment and relationships (Bowlby, 1998; Crittenden, 2005) and principles associated with 'Self-Determination Theory' (Deci and Ryan, 2008a) can be useful in contextualising these findings.

UASC's own perceptions are now investigated in order to more fully understand the role that social support has in assisting UASC to reconcile their past experiences and adapt to life in their new country

3.2 UASC perceptions of the function of social support

3.2.1 Literature overview

The body of research which has explored UASC's perceptions is small and only two published studies have explored UASC's perceptions of their social networks in England through a psychological paradigm: Groark et al. (2010) and Thommessen et al. (2017). For an overview of these studies' methodologies, see Table 3.4.

I therefore judged it helpful to supplement the findings of this research with that conducted in the field of social care, unpublished doctoral and PhD psychology theses concerned with UASC, and studies of UASC settled in other Western countries as well as the broader UK child refugee population. As with Groark et al.'s (2010) and Thommessen et al.'s (2017) studies, the majority of this research has been conducted with the purpose of informing interventions and policy concerned with supporting UASC in overcoming stressors and

settling successfully into life in their country of settlement. Most studies have taken an interpretivist epistemological stance, acknowledging the diversity of both the young people's experiences and their reactions to this, as well as the need to be culturally and ethnically sensitive (German, 2004; Cox, 2017).

Table 3.4 Overview of participants, epistemology and methods of Groark et al. (2010) and Thommessen et al. (2017).

	Groark et al. (2010)	**Thommessen et al. (2017)**
No. participants	6 (genders not recorded)	6 (5 male; 1 female)
Age	16 – 18 years	18 – 28 years
Time in country	6 – 12 months	Data not collected by researchers
Recruitment	Through social workers	Through a therapeutic setting
Epistemology	Interpretivist	Interpretivist
Data collection	Semi-structured interviews	Personal Construct Psychology methods (Kelly, 1955/1991)
Data analysis	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith et al., 1999)	Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Although the studies in this area commonly used semi-structured interviews to collect data, some researchers acknowledge the value of supplementing or stimulating discussions with visually-based tasks or objects, especially where interviews were not conducted in participants' first languages. In a Belgian study, such methods included the use of a 'Social Support Instrument' where UASC were asked to sort the names of important people into the four life systems of 'family', 'school', (leisure time) 'friends' and 'asylum centre' (Mels et al., 2008).

3.2.2 Perceived social support

Doggett (2012), who conducted her doctoral research into the resilience-building mechanisms of three UASC in England, suggested that her participants did desire to be self-reliant, but also recognised the need for relationships and connection. This acknowledgement is shared by many UASC throughout the literature who identified that members of their social

networks, including friends, foster carers, social workers and teachers, could have valuable but different roles in meeting their various needs (Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017). This variability is consistent with Thoits' (1995) theory of the role of social support in enhancing an individual's coping capacity.

Thoits (1995) described social support in terms of the 'functions' which significant others fulfil for an individual and classified these functions according to House et al.'s (1988) four categories of emotional, instrumental and informational support, and social companionship, which are defined in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. House et al.'s (1988) Four categories of social support.

Category	Definition
Emotional support	Soothing and support which indicates that an individual is respected and valued.
Social companionship	Spending time with others in recreational activities.
Informational support	Support to understand and resolve problematic events.
Instrumental support	Provision of resources, including material, services and financial.

House et al. (1988) argued that receiving social support can boost an individual's wellbeing either through a 'buffering' model whereby the support will act as a distraction from stressful events, or through a 'main effect' model where the support brings positive experiences, directly enhances self-worth and generates a sense of stability. This latter model builds upon theories which posit that it is through social networks that individuals may perceive that they are valued, loved, cared for and belong (Cobb, 1976).

UASC participants in Groark et al.'s (2010) and Thommessen et al.'s (2017) studies indicated that social support helped them to reconcile past events and settle in England through providing both buffering and main effect support. A summary of the themes generated in the

analysis of their data is presented in Table 3.6, with each theme explored further in the following sections with reference also to broader research in this field.

Table 3.6 Summary of themes from Groark et al. (2010) and Thommessen et al. (2017)

Social support theme	**Studies**	
	Groark et al. (2010)	**Thommessen et al. (2017)**
Buffering	Avoiding distressing thoughts and remaining in the here and now	Friendship as an escape from distress
Main effects: Stability	The presence of a 'father figure'	Relationships that resemble family bonds
	Working towards 'stabilisation' and a secure base	The family as a means of stability.
Main effects: Self-worth	Adjustment: Regaining a sense of control	n/a
	Fitting in and learning about UK culture	n/a
Main effects: Positive experiences	The views of the community	Social vulnerability and fear of rejection

3.2.2.1 Buffering

Participants in Groark et al.'s (2010) and Thommessen et al.'s (2017) studies both identified that social companionship grounded UASC in the 'here and now' which helped distract them from pain, distress and difficult thoughts and feelings. The value of social companionship and distraction is frequently attested to throughout UASC research, with further outcomes including the reduction of loneliness (Kohli and Mather, 2003) and the foundations of social connectedness (Beirens et al., 2007), both of which could 'buffer' UASC through reducing their sense of loss.

Friends were cited by both Groark et al.'s (2010) and Thommessen et al.'s (2017) participants as particularly effective in distracting UASC in this way. It has been proposed that this is due to the importance of friends as social companions for adolescents (Kohli and Mather, 2003), and thus the sense of 'normalcy' that spending time with peers can bring for UASC

(Thommessen et al., 2017). However, doing nice things with foster families can have a similar 'buffering' role (Doggett, 2012; Farmbrough, 2014).

Although there is evidence that it can continue to be an important coping mechanism for UASC beyond this time (Farmbrough, 2014; Doggett, 2012), it has been argued that distraction through spending time with others is especially important for UASC within the first stages of settlement, and until they attain a sense of safety and stability (Mels et al., 2008; Groark et al., 2010).

3.2.2.2 Main effects: Stability

Expanding Ager and Strang's (2008) theory that 'Safety and Stability' is a key facilitator for integration, both Groark et al. (2010) and Thommessen et al. (2017) proposed that for UASC to reconcile their past experiences, and settle and integrate into their new society, they must first attain a sense of safety, security and stability. Harnessing an attachment model, Groark et al. (2010) theorise that this is because attaining a point of 'stabilisation' (Herman, 1997) may help UASC to achieve a state of mind which allows them to relax enough to focus not only on numbing the pain, but to process and make sense of their emotions and experiences, come to terms with their losses and begin to cope with their current situation by moving forward and building a new life for themselves. Groark et al. (2010) judged that their participants, who had been in England for less than a year, had not yet achieved 'stabilisation'; however, they theorised that the UASC were working towards this state through forming secure attachment relationships with responsive, consistent carers.

Consistent with adaptive developmental models of attachment and relationships (Bowlby, 1998; Crittenden, 2005) and the FC views described in Section 3.1, factors which UASC

perceived to assist them in forming affectional bonds included ‘attunement’ and ‘belonging’.

3.2.2.1.1 Attunement

Although not always attested to in the context of child-caregiver dyads, research evidences that experiencing attuned interactions can help UASC to form meaningful, trusting relationships which facilitate a sense of stability.

Validating FCs’ perceptions (Wade et al., 2012), UASC have reported that a key facilitator in building trusting relationships with FCs, teachers and peers was where these people listened to, understood and accepted their needs (Doggett, 2012; Raghallaigh, 2013). In the early stages of settlement, UASC particularly appreciated people who met their basic needs of shelter and sustenance which can also be viewed as a stepping stone to achieving a sense of safety and stability when considered in the context of Maslow’s (1987) Hierarchy of Needs (see Figure 2.1) (Carlson et al., 2012; Doggett, 2012). However, beyond these physiological concerns, UASC expressed warmth for those who were attuned and responsive to their specific, individual circumstances (Passarlay, 2016). Relationships with emotionally engaged adults with whom UASC could share problems and who would then assist in the problem-solving process also helped UASC to feel understood and protected (Doggett, 2012; Connolly, 2014). Furthermore, Mbabaali’s (2012) participants explained that, in addition to others understanding what was important to them in the present, they experienced deeper connections with those who also listened to descriptions of their previous traumatic experiences. Blackwell (1997) describes this process of securely holding, containing and bearing witness to the pain of others as acting as a ‘therapeutic witness’. However, it is argued that until UASC develop trusting and emotionally reliant relationships, they may not

have the emotional resilience to have these conversations, especially with those who have not had similar experiences (Sirriyeh, 2013).

However, UASC in Goodman's (2004) study, who had been in their country of settlement for less than a year, explained that they gained encouragement from speaking of their previous experiences with other UASC as this helped them to harness the coping mechanism of 'collectivity', which pertained to the sense of togetherness that developed with other refugees during their journeys, and reminded them that they were not suffering alone. Although Goodman hypothesised that 'collectivity' may be especially important within the early stages of settlement, Maegusuku-Hewett et al.'s (2007) UASC participants, who had been living in Wales for over a year, suggested that it had enduring importance in helping UASC feel understood and emotionally supported.

Similarly, research has also noted a trend for UASC to focus on forming 'social bonds' on first arrival (Beirens et al., 2007). Although it may be natural for relationships to form between those who speak the same language when in a foreign country, it has been seen that UASC did not pursue the bonds for the purpose of social companionship alone but with the logic that those of similar ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic backgrounds would be better able to understand and empathised with their experiences (Wade et al., 2012). The sense of stability wrought through interactions with those of similar cultural backgrounds is explored further in the following section.

3.2.2.1.2 Belonging

Although their lives can be overshadowed by change and uncertainty, studies have indicated that relationships can create stability for UASC through providing 'anchoring points', or a

sense of belonging (Verdasco, 2018; Kohli and Mather, 2003), which in turn, enhances their feelings of social connectedness (Farmbrough, 2014). Consistent with Golding's (2008) theory and FCs' views (e.g. Wade et al., 2012), UASC stated that perceiving that others were attuned to their needs and being included in the foster family's routines and rituals helped them to develop a sense of stability, security and belonging (Raghallaigh, 2013). However, they also identified further facilitators of belonging within the foster family and to the wider community.

a) Belonging within the foster family

UASC explained that a sense of belonging within the foster family could be instigated through a warm welcome which included FCs providing some symbols of the UASC's country of origin, such as familiar, traditional food (Sirriyeh, 2013). However, what sustained and deepened this sense was where relationships moved 'through and beyond hospitality to relationships of family-like intimacy' (Sirriyeh, 2013, p.5), where UASC perceived that FCs genuinely cared for them like a loved family member, rather than merely discharging the responsibilities of a job for which they were being paid (Farmbrough, 2014). This was also reported by participants in both Groark et al.'s (2010) and Thommessen et al.'s (2017) studies, who reflected that many of their closest relationships were with those who inhabited genuine 'family-like' roles.

Consistent with the FC literature, UASC cited being included in and influencing routines communicated to them that they were genuinely valued and cared for by their foster family. This emotional support facilitated the UASC's sense of belonging within the family as it helped them sense that their relationships were reciprocal and that they were 'there for each other' (Wade et al., 2012; Farmbrough, 2014). Reciprocity is considered an important

component of positive relationship formation (Cialdini, 1993) and is advocated by Maslow (1987) to be a significant characteristic of relationships that are underpinned by feelings of love and belonging.

However, UASC identified additional indictors of FCs' 'genuine care' including carers being 'kind to them' (Doggett, 2012), frequently spending time together, and including UASC in wider family events (Raghallaigh, 2013). Furthermore, through 'claiming behaviours' (Golding, 2008) such as buying UASC nice things and demonstrating to them that they trusted them, for example by giving them a set of house keys, FCs communicated to the UASC that they were there to stay (Sirriyeh, 2013).

b) Belonging within the wider community

Researchers who have explored UASC's (Brar-Josan, 2012) and newly arrived child refugees' (Cartmell and Bond, 2015) sense of belonging have identified numerous pathways which are summarised in Table 3.7. The pathways of 'feeling comfortable' and 'feeling accepted' include elements of attunement and the 'secure base' which have been discussed previously. However, these researchers argued that true belonging would evolve from an interaction with the multiple spheres and layers that exist in the young people's pre- and post-migration environments. Consistent with Berry's (2017) conceptualisation of 'integration', these researchers reason that 'belonging' at the community level involves the young person fitting between the cultural norms of the country of origin as well as the country of settlement. This also supports Ager and Strang's (2008) theory that sharing cultural knowledge through social bridges, social bonds and social links is required for immigrants to develop a sense of belonging in their new country and integrate successfully.

Table 3.7 Brar-Josan's (2012) 'Pathways to Belonging', with corresponding components identified by Cartmell and Bond (2015).

Pathway	**Brar-Josan (2012) description**	**Cartmell and Bond (2015) corresponding components**
Feeling comfortable	• Feeling secure and at ease in their new home	
Feeling confident	• Being able to look to the future and make positive progress	
Feeling accepted	• Developing caring, mutual relationships with those who show interest in them • Identifying with a group	• Experiencing that others are positive orientated towards them. • Feeling understood • Experiencing respect for cultural and religious differences
Sense of purpose	• Being able to give back	
Integration	• Maintaining cultural continuation as well as becoming involved with the culture of settlement	• Fitting in • Adjusting to the new context

Conversely, although they explored UASC's views about the importance of cultural factors related to the new country, neither Groark et al. (2010) or Thommessen et al. (2017) investigated support related to cultural maintenance and continuity. This may be because such support was not important to these UASC at the point of data collection. However, it may also be that as both studies had their origins in clinical and therapeutic work, they were focused more on exploring within-child, rather than environmental or ecological components of settlement. Certainly, other research has supported Brar-Josan's (2012) and Cartmell and Bond's (2015) position that both maintaining a sense of belonging to the community of origin and developing a sense of belonging to the new community are important for UASC.

i) Maintaining a sense of belonging to the community of origin

The value of social bonds in mediating UASC's experiences of being understood, both literally and emotionally, has been mentioned previously. However, additionally, it is

proposed that such interactions comprise a crucial mechanism through which UASC can attain a sense of stability by reducing feelings of threat or loss and facilitating a continued sense of self in an otherwise changing context (Beirens et al., 2007; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Farmbrough, 2014). This is consistent with Phinney's (2014) and Berry's (2017) claims that cultural maintenance can enhance migrants' emotional wellbeing. Although advocated by many to be especially important in the initial stages of settlement (e.g. Doggett, 2012), two studies in which UASC participants had been in their country of settlement for ten years both found that the most important members of the young people's small social networks remained those who UASC defined in terms of their shared ethnic origins (Wallin and Ahlström, 2005; Smyth et al., 2015).

However, experiencing a sense of cultural continuity has also been noted in instances where friends, teachers and FCs with no shared cultural background try to understand UASC's experiences, are respectful of their cultural and religious differences (Cartmell and Bond, 2015) and support the UASC in maintaining their cultural practices and values (Kohli and Mather, 2003, Mbabaali, 2012). This was highlighted by UASC participants in Wade et al.'s (2012) and Raghallaigh's (2013) studies who identified that although having FCs who were from the same or a neighbouring country of origin facilitated cultural continuity, as there was a greater chance that there would naturally be similarities between their religion, values, language and food, it was also possible to derive a sense of continuity in some unmatched foster placements where carers made concerted efforts to understand UASC's traditional culture and practices. In particular, UASC have explained that FCs cooking them favourite dishes from their country of origin can help them to feel at home, loved, cared for and understood, which can lead to a sense of security and belonging both to their new family and

their culture of origin (Kohli et al., 2010; Wade et al., 2012; Raghallaigh, 2013; Sirriyeh, 2013).

ii) Belonging to the community of settlement

UASC reported that forming social bridges provided informational support through helping them to make contact with the culture of settlement and accumulate cultural capital (Wells, 2011). Many UASC mirrored the often-seen transition from separation to integration acculturation strategies (Berry et al., 2006), with the motivation to form social bridges following on from the establishment of social bonds (Beirens et al., 2007; German, 2004). However, some UASC make a conscious choice to pursue connections with those born in the country of settlement from the start (Wade et al., 2012). Such choices were often stimulated by the desire to improve English language skills, which UASC recognised would help them progress with their cultural integration, education and relationship-formation (Craig, 2005; Hek, 2005). In addition to English-speaking peers, UASC credit English language teachers and foster carers with facilitating the development of their language skills (Mbabaali, 2012; Passarlay, 2016).

It has also been argued that being placed with an English foster family can accelerate the process whereby UASC learn about and develop an affiliation with the culture in the country of settlement (Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh, 2015) as they are exposed to family relationships (Passarlay, 2016), moral values (Carlson et al., 2012) and new food (Kohli et al., 2010). However, consistent with Erikson's (1959) theory that adolescents may be overly concerned with how they are perceived in the eyes of others, for some participants in Groark et al.'s (2010) research, an important function of their 'English' friends was to help UASC 'fit in' to their new community through helping them understand the norms and rules, as well as

modelling how they should look and behave (Thommessen et al., 2015). In acculturation terms, this is akin to making 'cultural changes' and working towards 'sociocultural adaptation' (*carrying out the activities of daily intercultural living*) (Berry, 2017). Where society is multicultural, the benefit of interacting with, and learning from, those from a representative range of backgrounds is also reported (Farmbrough, 2014).

Gaining an understanding of 'how things work' in the country of settlement was also important to UASC's sense of connection to their country of settlement and an exploration of how key people provided this informational support is outlined in Section 3.2.2.3.

3.2.2.3 Main effects: Self-worth

The de-humanising experiences of the UASC's journeys, as well as the uncertainty that they face in their country of settlement can result in the young people experiencing poor self-worth and low self-esteem (Mels et al., 2008). It has been suggested that developing a cultural identity that retains components of their original ethnic identity can help to ameliorate this state (Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007; Doggett, 2014) as can UASC perceiving that members of their social networks believe in them and their abilities (Smyth et al., 2015; Thommessen et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Groark et al. (2010) reason that an important way in which their UASC participants were able to begin to overcome feelings of uncertainty and lost agency was through regaining a sense of competence, self-belief and gaining control over aspects of their lives. Regaining a sense of self-efficacy is also understood to assist UASC in developing feelings associated with autonomy and agency (Blackwell and Melzak, 2000; Doggett, 2012; Smyth et al., 2015), and has been linked to reduced anxiety and more successful cultural

adaptation in adolescent migrants (Jerusalem and Mittag, 1995). Although some UASC researchers have not identified social support as a facilitator of UASC's evolving sense of control and self-efficacy (e.g. Blackwell and Melzak, 2000), Smyth et al. (2015) reason that such feelings result from the sense of hope that positive interactions with others can bring, and Groark et al. (2010) suggest that UASC can gain an internal sense of control through first receiving informational and instrumental support in the form of education and knowledge from an external body: 'someone who knows'. In addition to the guidance about 'fitting in' behaviourally described in Section 3.2.2.1.2b, the education and knowledge most frequently cited by UASC includes an understanding of how systems work in the country of settlement, and support with problem solving and personal development. A summary of these research findings in presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Summary of important education and information that UASC gain from the people in their social networks.

Type of information or education	Examples of support received	References
Understanding how systems work	• Information facilitating access to leisure activities and places of education • Explaining school organisation, expectations and rules • Guidance throughout the process of UASC's asylum claim • Guidance on navigating the care and health systems	Doggett (2012); Mbabaali (2012); Wade et al. (2012); Raghallaigh (2013)
Personal development	• Problem solving • Helping UASC to remain on a respectable path through others acting as moral role models or setting boundaries • Support to develop independent skills for living • Careers advice	Raghallaigh (2013); Farmbrough (2014); Sirriyeh and Raghallaigh (2018)

An additional factor which helped UASC in Groark et al.'s (2010) study to recognise that they had attained some sense of control in their lives was where they were able to do things

that helped others. Similarly, having responsibility for others was also a component of Goodman's (2010) 'collectivity' coping mechanism, which acted to enhance UASC's determination not to succumb to despair. 'Feeling confident' and attaining a 'sense of purpose' are additional pathways to belonging advocated by Brar-Josan (2012; see Table 3.7). Helping others, meanwhile, is a key component of social connectedness (Deci and Ryan, 2008a) and, according to Maslow (1987), being motivated to help is an indication that an individual has attained a sense of self-actualisation (see Figure 2.1).

3.2.2.4 Main effects: Positive experiences

UASC explained that having fun with their friends and foster families could help to enhance their positive outlook (Doggett, 2012; Farmbrough, 2014). Furthermore, consistent with Berry's (2005) and Phinney's (2014) theories pertaining to the impact of the intercultural attitudes of the society of settlement, Groark et al.'s (2010) participants highlighted the importance of being positively evaluated by others as protective to their self-esteem, and UASC in Thommessen et al.'s (2017) research reported that where evaluation was not positive, they experienced higher perceived levels of social vulnerability and a fear of rejection.

3.2.3 Conclusion: UASC literature

The small body of UASC research indicates that although UASC do face a range of stressors once they arrive in their country of settlement, some of the key people whom they meet there can support their ability to reconcile past events and adapt to their new life. The functions of this support appear to be diverse, including: social companionship providing distraction from bad memories; informational and instrumental support facilitating the transmission of cultural capital, and social connectedness with emotionally attuned others helping UASC to regain a

sense of stability, belonging to both countries of origin and settlement, identity, esteem, control and self-belief.

As was suggested in FC studies, UASC researchers have also proposed that adaptive developmental models of attachment and relationships can facilitate an understanding of how UASC can positively adapt to their new environment. It is hypothesised that their development of positive attachment relationships can assist their emerging capacity to overcome any mistrusting tendencies, attain a sense of stabilisation and emotional reliance, and begin to mobilise their own resources of agency and powerfulness to a degree that places them in a position where they feel secure enough to explore their emotions, to seek emotional support from others and begin to make choices about how to integrate within their new country (Groark et al., 2010; Farmbrough, 2014). Furthermore, Farmbrough (2014) suggested that this process is mediated by affectional bonds providing an 'enabling context' through which UASC's fundamental human needs for autonomy, competence and connectedness, as advocated in Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000), could be met.

Although it has been possible to identify broad common themes from the literature's findings, there are some inconsistencies. In addition to individual differences between the experiences of the UASC including their countries of origin and settlement, these may be partly due to discrepancies between studies' methodologies, including variety between the length of time that participants had been in the country of settlement, the demographics of the area in which they were living, their current living arrangements and pathways through which they were recruited, as well as the theoretical mechanisms proposed by the researchers. Indeed, principle researchers in this field acknowledge that further exploration is required in order to clarify factors facilitating UASC's development of trusting relationships and the support that

these relationships offer in mediating UASC's experiences of integrating and settling into their new country, and restoring and maintaining their emotional wellbeing (Thommessen et al., 2017). Particular propositions are described in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Propositions for future UASC research.

Proposition	Key authors
1. In order to develop an understanding upon which interventions can be based to support UASC, it is most important to gain first-hand accounts of the young people themselves.	Horgan and Raghallaigh (2017)
2. Further understanding of how trust can be facilitated in UASC is essential.	Thommessen et al. (2017)
3. Research needs to be designed to consider specifically whether and how UASC's desired support changes over time	Thommessen et al. (2017)
4. There is currently very limited research offering a systemic, rather than clinically positioned psychological perspective of the UASC experience in their country of settlement, and there would be value in expanding this research body.	Doggett (2012)
5. There is some confusion about the role that culture plays for UASC and limited understanding of how UASC's social networks mediate their experience of acculturation, including their development of cultural identity, community and belonging especially where the country of settlement is multicultural.	Carlson et al. (2012); Maegusuku-Hewett el al. (2007); Ager and Strang (2008); Pantiru and Barley (2015); Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh (2015); Verdasco (2018)
6. Given the increasing numbers of UASC being placed in foster care, it is essential that research focused specifically on UASC's experiences in foster care, including their relationships with FC is conducted.	Horgan and Raghallaigh (2017)

The influence of these factors on the development of the current study's aims are considered in Chapter 4.

4. Methodology

This chapter investigates the study's aims, epistemology, research design and methodology before considering ethical implications and the validity of findings.

4.1 Research aims

As outlined in Chapter 1, the specific focus of this research was stimulated by a multi-agency desire to understand better how to optimise social support for UASC in Middleworth. Influenced by previous research and theories which attest to the value of gaining first person accounts when striving to understand social phenomena and develop interventions (Gottlieb, 1992; Thommessen et al., 2017), the primary aim of this study therefore became to investigate the important functions attributed by UASC to key people in their lives in England.

In addition to contributing to the existing body of research, the value of conducting this study in Middleworth was necessitated by the understanding that UASC are not a homogenous group and their testimonies and perceptions are constructed through numerous factors including their unique experiences in the country of settlement (Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017). In order to investigate the potential for social support to facilitate the successful settling, integration and psychological wellbeing of UASC within the specific context of Middleworth, it was therefore necessary to capture the situated views of UASC who lived there.

A particular feature of Middleworth, which is sparsely considered in other research, is that it is a multicultural LA; it was therefore hoped that this study would also contribute to an understanding of how an ethnically diverse social network mediated UASC's experiences of

settling and acculturation. Furthermore, consistent with additional previously identified gaps in the literature, this research sought to retrospectively investigate how UASC's perceptions of their required social support changed over time (Thommessen et al., 2017).

Finally, a subsidiary component of the study, which investigated FCs' experiences of forming relationships with UASC, aimed to explore UASC's experiences in foster care (Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017) and how UASC could be assisted in overcoming any untrusting tendencies to form close bonds with others.

My resultant research questions (RQs) are detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Research Questions.

No.	Question
1.	How do foster carers conceptualise their experience of developing and maintaining trusting and adaptive relationships with UASC?
2.	How do UASC describe the formation, development and function of their relationships with important people in England? a) Who do they form their most important relationships with? b) What factors facilitate and inhibit the development and sustainability of these relationship? c) What do UASC perceive to be the function of these relationships? d) Does the relative importance of different types of relationship and support change over time?
3.	How do these relationships mediate UASC's experience of psychological acculturation and adaption within a multicultural environment?

4.2 Epistemology

Consistent with most of the previous research in this field, this study was conceptualised and constructed within an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism advocates that each individual's knowledge and understanding of the social world, as well as the choices that they make about how to interact with this world, are constructed through their interpretations of the actions of others and the connotations that they attribute to these actions (Blumer, 1992). This position

is appropriate for an investigation focused upon human interactions and in particular, the meanings and understanding that individuals derive from their relationships. Additionally, interpretivists posit that there is the potential for knowledge to take different forms when it is constructed in this way, and consequently, there can be 'multiple realities' (Cohen et al., 2016, p.19; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Thomas, 2017). Taking this stance therefore acknowledges that each UASC's experience, and their perceptions of these, is unique (German, 2004). Finally, interpretivists theorise that knowledge that is mediated by an individual's social context will be influenced by factors relating to culture, history and language (Willig, 2008); this is suitable for a study concerned with change over time, including the process of acculturation and the evolution of cultural identity (Berry, 2017; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007).

Within interpretivist research it is important for the researcher to understand not just individuals' thoughts but how their ideas are formed. This necessitates the use of a methodology which facilitates a close examination of a particular situation (Thomas, 2017). The research design and methods which I used in order to examine the experiences of UASC and FCs are now presented.

4.3 Research design

In addition to epistemological considerations and consideration of the existing literature, the conceptualisation and development of the research design and methods were initially informed by conversations with key members of Middleworth's fostering services, social services and the Virtual School about the presenting concerns related to UASC.

4.3.1 Case study

The main body of this research comprised a 'multiple nested' case study (Thomas, 2016): including three UASC fostered by the same family. By examining a small number of cases, case study designs are considered to facilitate a rich, detailed understanding of participants' experiences through learning directly from their individual voices (Robson, 2002; Stanley, 2001; Thomas, 2017). Consequently, they offer a useful design through which to investigate the multifaceted 'workings of the relationships and social processes within social settings' (Denscombe, 2014, p.55), rendering it particularly appropriate for interpretivist research.

Within this study, the individual experiences investigated afforded a 'snapshot' of the current state of participants' relationships, as well as a 'retrospective' reflection upon past experiences (Thomas, 2016). The research also sought to consider not just what was occurring but how and why this had influenced participants' perspectives, which is consistent with Yin's (2009) assertion that a case study can be both exploratory and explanatory in purpose. The nested nature of the design also allowed individual units to be compared as part of the wider case, which facilitated the drawing of deeper conclusions (Thomas, 2016).

This study employed a range of data collection methods which is permitted within a case study. However, it has been reasoned that such flexibility indicates an 'absence of design' (Gorard, 2013, p.198). Additionally, critics have reasoned that the case study is not the only design through which to explore a case in depth and that by focusing on only one or a small number of cases, the findings can only ever be anecdotal (Gorard, 2013). However, these views have been countered by arguments that the case study is a valuable design for individual researchers concerned with capturing 'situated knowledge rather than universals' (Taylor, 2002, p.3; Bell, 2005), which was the situation in this study. It has also been

advocated that it is possible to generate 'analytic' and 'theoretical' generalisations from qualitative case studies (Yin, 2005; Johnson, 1997), and Section 4.7.1 explores the extent to which this has been achieved in this research.

4.4 Data collection

Data collection comprised two phases: a focus group with FC participants and individual interviews with UASC participants.

4.4.1 Foster carers

In order to explore RQ1, I conducted a focus group with five FC participants in an LA building. Details of recruitment, participants and data collection session are now described.

4.4.1.1 Recruitment and participants

Consistent with common recruitment arrangements for focus groups, FC participants were identified and invited to attend by a third party (Parker and Tritter, 2006), which in this case was Middleworth LA's fostering service. To facilitate their identification of prospective participants, service members were briefed about the nature of the project and the inclusion criteria for participants (see Table 4.2) in a meeting I led and the recruitment sheets I distributed (see Appendix 1). To help them decide whether they wished to be involved, potential participants were subsequently given information sheets (see Appendix 2)

Table 4.2 Inclusion criteria for FC participants.

Criterion	Details
1	To be a registered foster carer with the local authority.
2	To have previous or current experience of fostering a child who is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.
3	To have good enough English language skills to be able to participate fully in the discussion.

containing an overview of the research aims, the nature of their involvement and their rights as participants.

Purposive sampling (Cohen et al., 2016) was also used to ensure that the group comprised individuals who had opinions about the focus topic, the confidence to discuss these within a group context and experience of successful UASC placements. Attempts were also made to include participants of different ethnicities and genders and with a range of fostering experience. Unfortunately, this diversity was reduced by the non-attendance of one relatively inexperienced White British male FC. Table 4.3 provides a summary of FC participant details. There is some debate concerning optimum numbers of focus group participants, however, I judged that five was large enough to encompass a range of views but small enough for the discussion to be manageable (Denscombe, 2014).

Table 4.3 Summary of focus group participants' details.

Name	Male/ Female	Ethnicity/ Religion	Fostering experience	No. UASC fostered in total (and currently)
F1*	F	Pakistani-British Muslim	15 years	5 (2)
F2*	M	Pakistani-British Muslim	15 years	5 (2)
F3	F	Jamaican Christian	17 years	2 (1)
F4	F	Indian Sikh	18 years	4 (4)
F5	F	Pakistani Muslim	28 years	4 (2)
N.B. * A married couple who fostered together.				

4.4.1.2 Focus group

The focus group is considered a valuable data collection method within interpretivist research as it can explore the views of a group of participants who have a 'relevant characteristic or feature of their lives in common' (Thomas, 2013, p.204). Specifically, the focus group facilitates an exploration of 'attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a specific topic' (Denscombe, 2014, p.188). The specific discussion topic for FC participants in this study was: '*What are your experiences of forming relationships with foster children who are*

UASC?' with a particular focus on challenges and facilitators. The discussion lasted for 1¾ hours.

In contrast with a group interview, the emphasis in a focus group is on the discussion within the participant group, rather than between participants and moderator (Parker and Tritter, 2006). However, participants in any group method may find it difficult to discuss personal experiences with others present (Willig, 2008). I therefore took steps to encourage participants' participation; these are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Steps taken to encourage participants' participation in the focus group.

Step	Details
1	Breaking the ice by asking all those present, including myself and a colleague who was also in attendance, to introduce ourselves to the group before the main discussion started (Parker and Tritter, 2006).
2	Encouraging a feeling of trust between the group through discussing the importance of mutual respect and confidentiality. Additionally, consistent with the interpretivist stance of the research, I also posited that everyone would construct their own reality in different ways and consequently, it would not be possible for anyone to express a 'wrong' opinion (Denscombe, 2014).
3	Redressing the potential for a power imbalance between myself and participants by emphasising that I was there to learn from them about their experiences (Denscombe, 2014).
4	Reducing the potential for the discussion to be dominated by more confident members of the group by occasionally interjecting into the conversation to invite some of the quieter participants to speak when their non-verbal cues were indicating that they had a contribution to make (Willig, 2008).
5	Occasionally drawing participants' attention to a graphic summary of the discussion, which my colleague was constructing simultaneously, facilitated my ability to strike a balance between ensuring that participants remained on task while also allowing them freedom to explore their views and experiences (Cohen et al., 2016; Newby, 2010). For a sample of the visual summary, see Appendix 3.

4.4.2 UASC

In order to explore RQs 2 and 3, I conducted semi-structured interviews with three UASC participants. All participants declined the offer of an interpreter and were interviewed in

English. Details of recruitment, participation and the structure of the interviews are now presented.

4.4.2.1 Recruitment and participants

Middleworth's fostering services, Virtual School and social services supported the process of identifying potential UASC participants and were briefed about the nature of the research and inclusion criteria (see Table 4.5) through conversations with me and the accompanying recruitment sheets (see Appendix 4).

Table 4.5 Inclusion criteria for UASC participants.

Criterion	Details
1	To have entered the UK as an unaccompanied asylum seeker i.e. as a minor without an adult or guardian.
2	To be currently aged 14 or above.
3	To have been in the UK for at least two years.
4	Not to be experiencing flashbacks or other symptoms of psychological distress affecting their daily lives.
5	To be showing some evidence of adapting to and participating in life in England e.g. attending school/ college, making friends, taking up hobbies and engaging in social activities.
6	To have 'good enough' English i.e. basic interpersonal communication skills in spoken English (Cummins, 1999). Criterion 6 is an 'ideal', and participants may also be considered who do not have good enough conversational English.

Prospective participants and their FCs and/or social workers as appropriate, received project details through information sheets (see Appendix 5). The three young people who subsequently consented to participate following a 'Briefing and Consent' meeting with me (see Table 4.10 for details) were recruited through the fostering services and were current or previous foster children of F1 and F2. Their details are given in Table 4.6.

It cannot be claimed that these three participants were representative of the UASC population

in Middleworth. However, their different durations in England contributed towards the diversity of experiences captured and added an additional dimension to investigations of change over time; in addition to considering participants' individual timescales, it was possible to make comparisons between participants' current standpoints and settlement trajectories to date.

Table 4.6 Summary of UASC participants' details.

P	Age	Time in the UK	Country of origin	Education/ Employment	Placements prior to F1/ F2's home	Other details
U1	22	13 years	Afghanistan	Left education after college. Manager of shop.	One short-lived placement with a family in another English city.	Left foster placement 18 months previously to live with friends. Maintains frequent contact with foster carers.
U2	19	6 years	Bangladesh	University student	Stayed with family friends for the first year in England.	'Staying Put' placement meaning he will stay with foster carers until age 21.
U3	16	3 years	Afghanistan	Further Education college student	Placed with F1 and F2 on arrival in England.	
N.B. It is understood that all three participants entered the UK through clandestine routes.						

4.4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are argued to be consistent with an interpretivist paradigm because they afford a powerful method of investigating intricate and sensitive phenomena through providing interviewees with the opportunity to speak their mind in relation to their opinions, emotions and experiences (Denscombe, 2014). This power is generated by ensuring that interviewers have a clearly defined focus, while also allowing for flexibility in the order

of questioning and the freedom to follow up participants' interesting or unexpected responses (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2017).

Compared to fixed or written methods, this flexibility also contributes towards face-to-face semi-structured interviews being judged an appropriate, culturally sensitive method for gathering the views of UASC, especially in circumstances where data collection takes place in a language that is not participants' mother tongue (Cox, 2017). This is because interviewers can enhance participants' understanding through re-phrasing questions and using visual gestures and/or other prompts if required. Additionally, interviewees' ability to express themselves fully may also be supported through their use of non-verbal cues and the probability that they have greater command of their second language when speaking rather than writing (Gillham, 2008; Breakwell, 2012). Furthermore, the level of control over the direction of questioning that semi-structured interviews allow participants, as well as the potential for rapport-building during the initial stages of the interview, have been identified as contributing to UASC feeling comfortable to share experiences with interviewers (Kohli and Mather, 2003; Cox, 2017). Additional factors that I considered in order to enhance participants' understanding and participation are outlined in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Guidelines for questioning (collated from Robson, 2002; Breakwell, 2012 and Thomas, 2017).

Purpose	Guidelines
To facilitate participants' understanding	• Avoid double-barrelled questions • Avoid jargon or complex wording • Avoid double-negatives
To allow participants to express own views	• Use open questions • Avoid leading questions
To encourage participation	• Do not make questions so broad that participants do not know where to start • Use non-directive prompts, probes and summaries of views expressed so far • Communicate openness and acceptance through body language

All the interviews took place on the same day in a quiet room in the foster family's house where we would not be overheard or disturbed (Oppenheim, 2003; Denscombe, 2014). Each lasted between half an hour and one hour; durations judged to be 'valuable' (Robson, 2002). Although the direction of each interview varied according to the responses given by participants, the overall structure of each was consistent, having been determined by my pre-written 'interview schedule'.

4.4.2.2.1 Interview schedule

Table 4.8 Overview of semi-structured interview structure, based on the sequence proposed by Robson (2002).

Section	Details
1. Warm up	• Easy, less sensitive questions about participants' name, age, length of time in the country and current education/ employment details (Fowler, 2014).
2. Main body	• Two 'Social Connections Grids' (see Section 4.4.2.2.2) were used to explore participants' social networks at 'Time 1' (the present day) and 'Time 2' (within the first year of arrival in the UK). Related questioning investigated how relationships were formed with the people identified and why they were important to the UASC. • The important relationships of 'Time 2' were investigated before those of 'Time 1'. This is consistent with advice that when discussing changes over time with UASC, the potential for evoking distress can be minimised through exploring the present first, and then, if they are willing, the past (Hopkins, 2008). • Participants were asked to comment on any changes to their social networks between Time 1 and Time 2.
3. Cool-off/ Closure	• A small number of straightforward multiple-choice questions were posed in the 'Acculturation Questionnaire' (see Section 4.4.2.2.3). • Participants were provided with an opportunity to ask any further questions they may have (Oppenheim, 2003).

The interview schedule was a 'framework of issues, leading to possible questions, leading to possible follow up questions, leading to probes [and prompts]' (Thomas, 2013, p. 198). Consistent with the structure proposed by Robson (2002), the interviews were in three parts:

warm up, main interview body and closure. The questions in the 'main body' pertained to the important people in the UASC's lives in the present ('Time 2') and during the first twelve months of settlement ('Time 1'). Conversations within this section were stimulated through a 'Social Connections Grid' (see Section 4.4.2.2.2). For the full interview schedule, see Appendix 6. For a summary of the structure, see Table 4.8.

4.4.2.2.2 Social Connections Grid

At the beginning of the questioning about 'Time 1' and 'Time 2', participants were guided in communicating something of the structural nature of their social support systems (Thoits, 1995) and organising their initial thoughts about the important people in their lives at the corresponding time point through the use of two 'Social Connections Grids' (see Appendix 7). The Grid was adapted from Mels et al.'s (2008) 'Social Support Instrument' and comprised three concentric circles with the participant's name in the centre. UASC were asked to place the names of up to six important people in their lives on the grid, with level of perceived importance indicated by proximity to the central circle. Placement on the grid was also structured by the quadrants into which the circles were divided, and which were labelled 'school/college', 'foster family', 'professionals' and 'other'.

The Grids acted as visual reference points throughout the interviews. Using visual methods to support data collection with young people and those with English as an additional language is common (Barker and Weller, 2003; Mbabaali, 2012). It has been argued that such methods can undermine, rather than enhance participants' abilities to engage in research as capable, 'competent social actors' (Punch, 2002, p.321). However, Smyth et al. (2015) concluded that asking UASC to create their own visual social network map as part of an interview placed

participants in the position of ‘expert’ and thus acted to empower them; an outcome which I sought to promote through the inclusion of my Grid.

4.4.2.2.3 Acculturation Questionnaire

In order to gain a further sense of the UASC’s acculturation attitudes, participants completed a short, multiple-choice questionnaire at the end of the interview.

There is no one specific standardised tool for assessing immigrants’ acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997; Phillimore, 2017). A frequently-used method is the posing of questions related to areas of life that Berry (1997) found to be relevant to individuals’ acculturation experiences. These questions are followed by four possible multiple-choice answers, each of which described a different acculturation strategy: integration, assimilation, separation or marginalisation. However, Berry reasoned that the specific questions and answers should vary according to the cultural and situational differences of the immigrants themselves and the country of settlement (Berry, 1997). Therefore, although numerous empirically trialled acculturation questionnaires exist, I judged that none were appropriate for my participants as they had not been developed specifically for UASC or for adolescents.

The questionnaire that was presented to my UASC participants therefore comprised an amalgamation of questions and corresponding multiple-choice answers from Berry et al. (2006), Sodowsky and Plake’s (1991;1992) ‘American-International Relations Scale’ and Pantiru and Barley’s (2015) ‘Acculturation in the UK’ questionnaire, to which I made slight alterations in order to be relevant to my participants’ experiences. The four questions covered the areas of social activities, friendships, language and cultural traditions, and for each,

participants could select a corresponding answer which related to one of the acculturation strategies (see Appendix 8 for an example).

As one of the aims of this research was to investigate cultural factors relating to UASC's experiences, the purpose of the questionnaire was to ensure that I had gathered at least some information specifically related to participants' acculturation attitudes, and that the four answers given by the UASC would give some tentative indication of what these attitudes were. However, as it was beyond the scope of this research to trial the questionnaire and ensure reliability and validity with an Afghani and Bangladeshi UASC adolescent population, I intended that any findings would, where possible, be interpreted with recourse to, and triangulation with, the interview data (Phillimore, 2017).

4.5 Data analysis

Whilst data from the interviews were analysed separately from the focus group data, a similar course of qualitative analysis was used for both and harnessed a 'double hermeneutic' process. The double hermeneutic describes a procedure whereby participants first present their interpretation of a phenomenon, and the researcher then interprets the participants' interpretation and presents their own understanding of this in their own words (Giddens, 1976). There are numerous proposed methods for completing this process, with Cohen et al. (2016) advocating that the researcher must ensure that theirs is fit for purpose for their data set. Consequently, although my analysis method was principally influenced by Saldana and colleagues' process (Saldana, 2013; Miles et al., 2014), Thomas' (2017) constant comparison method was instructive during the cross-case comparisons of interview data. The stages of transcribing, coding and theme development are outlined below, with a more detailed summary of the 'paper trail' in Appendix 9.

4.5.1 Transcribing

With the permission of all participants, the interviews and focus group were audio-recorded. Before transcribing them, I listened to the recordings several times on the days immediately following data collection and noted my immediate perceptions (Thomas, 2017). During the transcription process, I used the consistent conventions detailed in Table 4.9 to retain information about *how* things were said (Cohen et al., 2016).

Table 4.9 Consistent conventions used when transcribing.

Indication of:	Transcription convention
Who was speaking and what was said	The transcription was written using a 3-column grid method whereby the initials (for me) or pseudonym (of participants e.g. F1, U2) of the speaker were written in a left-hand column and the dialogue in a central column (for an example, see Appendix 10). In the focus group, where participants spoke at the same time, all their pseudonyms were placed before the dialogue. At all times, this was in instances where participants were saying similar things (e.g. affirmatives); there were no instances of participants speaking over each other.
Hesitations and small pauses	Ellipses (…)
Stresses in speech	Italics (e.g. 'me and him had a *big* journey')
Mood of speaker	During data collection, I made brief field notes concerning the mood of the speaker or the way they spoke at pertinent points (Denscombe, 2014). These were noted in the right-hand column corresponding to the appropriate piece of dialogue (see Appendix 10).
Laughter	'(laughs)' was inserted in the appropriate place in the dialogue.

Listening to the recordings repeatedly and completing the transcriptions myself helped to bring me 'close to the data' (Denscombe, 2014, p.278), which is of paramount importance where studies are conducted across cultural and linguistic boundaries (Wallin and Ahlström, 2005). This process stimulated my emerging reflections and interpretation of comparisons,

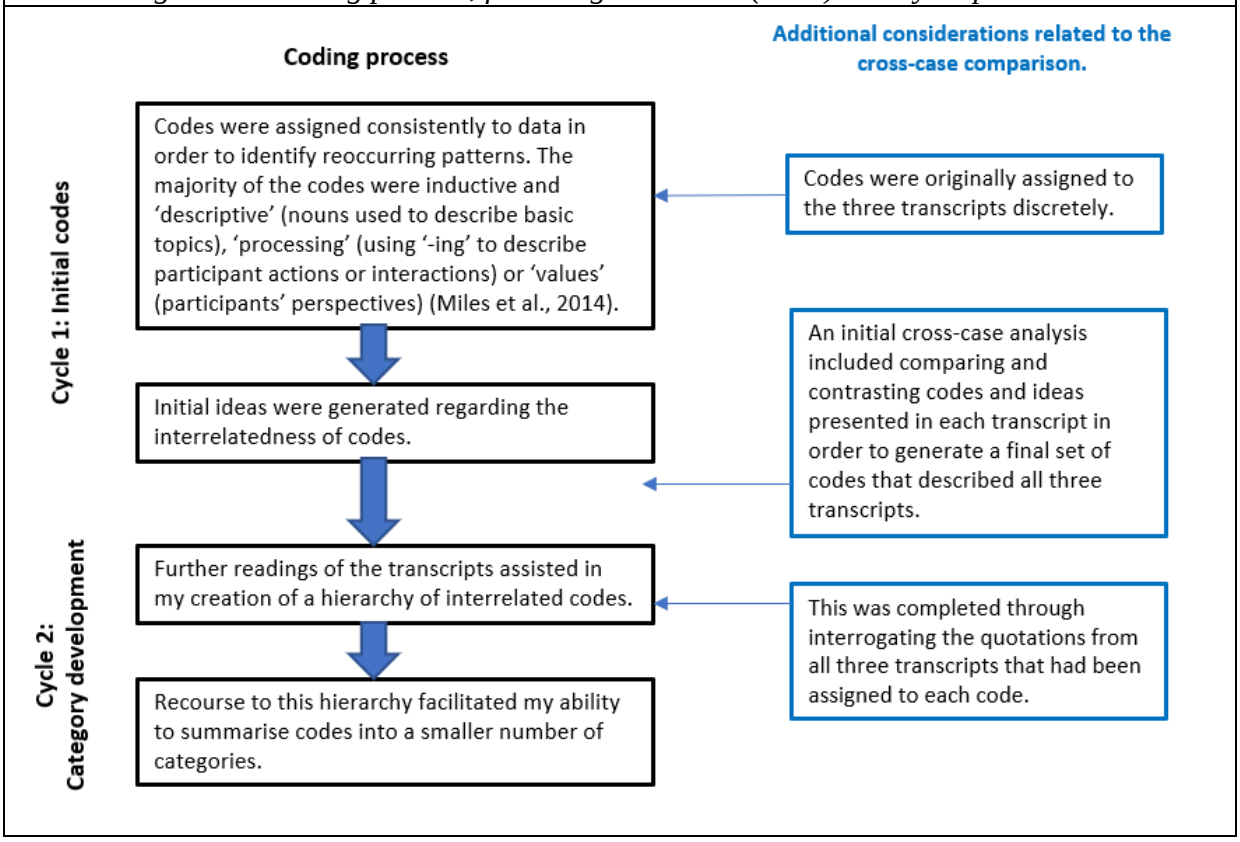
codes and themes, which I continued to note in jottings and analytic memos throughout the course of data analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

4.5.2 Coding and category development

Coding describes a process through which data is reduced into manageable portions, whilst retaining its complexity and comprehensiveness, through attaching names or labels to describe individual words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs (Miles et al., 2014; Cohen et al., 2016). Although some suggest that coding is just technical preparation for later higher-level data exploration, I would argue that, consistent with Miles et al.'s (2014) proposal, this process formed a component part of my heuristic analysis because my identified codes evolved with each reading of the transcripts as I discarded temporary constructs that were not reinforced by the rest of the data, and created new ones. For both my data sets, I followed the two-cycle procedure advocated by Saldana (2013), which is described in Figure 4.1.

However, consistent with the constant comparison method (Thomas, 2017), I took a 'case-oriented approach' (Ragin, 1987, cited in Miles et al., 2014) to coding the UASC interview data by considering each of the three interviews as separate whole entities before beginning to form more general explanations through comparing underlying similarities and associations. The additional considerations necessitated by this cross-case comparison are also described in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Coding process, following Saldana's (2013) two-cycle procedure.



4.5.3 Theme development

Through an analysis of the inter-relationships between the identified categories, I created a number of higher-level constructs which became my themes. These themes represented my interpretation of the participants' views (Thomas, 2013).

Throughout the data analysis process, the integrity of the themes, as well as the subordinate categories and codes, were continually assessed through my interrogation of the quotations initially assessed to correspond to each and the extent to which categories were accurately described by themes. A more detailed summary of the data analysis and theme development process is given in Appendix 9.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Permission for this research to proceed was received from both the University of Birmingham's and Middleworth City Council's Ethics Committees (for the Application for Ethical Review that was used for both committees, see Appendix 11). This approval was subject to the research conforming to the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and involved the separate submission of a 'Data Protection Impact Assessment' and a 'Research Data Management Plan' detailing arrangements for the secure storage of data on an encrypted University of Birmingham platform which could only be accessed through two-factor authentication. The ethical considerations for UASC and FC participants are now considered.

4.6.1 UASC participants

Authors considering ethical implications of conducting research with UASC have proposed that a multi-layered approach should be taken in order to reduce the risk of research triggering upsetting memories and thoughts related to participants' previous experiences (Vervliet et al., 2015). Furthermore, the process of gaining freely given informed written consent from potential participants must be handled sensitively as UASC may be wary of signing or committing to anything official, following potentially difficult and traumatic experiences with the Home Office (Hopkins, 2008). Consistent with the advice from these authors, Table 4.10 outlines both the key considerations I addressed when eliciting and confirming the UASC participants' consent prior to the interviews, and key components of my risk management plan.

4.6.2 Foster carers

Although not judged to be presenting the same potential for emotional distress as UASC participants, I remained conscious that asking FCs to reflect on their experiences of forming

Table 4.10 Key ethical considerations in relation to gaining informed consent and risk reduction (based on the advice of Hopkins, 2008 and Vervliet et al., 2015).

Ethical area	Considerations
Gaining informed consent	1. The purpose of the research and nature of participants' participation was explained to UASC in an information sheet that they received prior to our meeting (Appendix 5b). This gave them time to consider the implications of their involvement before the interview and meant that they could ask informed questions during our 'Briefing and Consent' meeting, which took place before the interview and in which I again outlined the purpose and process of the research, as well as their rights as participants. Only after this meeting had taken place were participants asked whether they would consent to be involved in the research and sign the consent form (see Appendix 12a). 2. As UASC research participants may be suspicious of the intensions of the researcher, it was important that I was transparent about my motivations for conducting the research. Being able to present myself as a university student also helped to minimise the power dynamic between us. 3. It was made explicit to participants that involvement in the research was voluntary and that they could refuse to answer any question or withdraw fully from the project up to one week after the interviews. 4. I explained the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality to the participants in the context of this research, including the secure storage of the audio recordings and transcripts. 5. I made it clear to participants that I was in no way connected to the Home Office and that their decision to participate or not participate in the research would have no bearing upon their asylum application.
Risk management	1. To minimise the potential for evoking distressing memories, participants were not asked about the circumstances around which they left their country of origin and the focus was on the people in their lives in England, rather than those in their country of origin or those who they met on their journey. 2. In order to meet the inclusion criteria for this research, professionals working with the participants attested to the young people not currently showing overt externalising or internalising indictors of emotional distress. Additionally, participants had been in the country for two years, which enhanced the likelihood that they had attained a 'stabilisation' phase (Groark et al., 2010). 3. Participants had the option of asking a trusted friend or foster family member to be present during our meetings if this would help to put them at ease. However, none of the participants requested this. 4. My ability to question the UASC sensitively was facilitated by the understanding I had gained about the UASC experience through detailed reading of the relevant literature as well as in-depth conversations with professionals and organisations working with UASC in Middleham. I had also been attending a focus group for UASC and therefore had had the opportunity to become acquainted with other members of the population prior to the interviews. 5. I have received training and experience in the use of counselling and therapeutic practices which meant that if participants did appear to start becoming distressed, I would be attuned to this and be well positioned to help them restore an emotional equilibrium.

relationships with UASC may generate uncomfortable memories; the need for sensitive questioning therefore remained pertinent for this participant group as well.

Key differences in the process of gaining informed consent from FCs compared to UASC related to the nature of focus group research: it was important for FC participants to agree prior to the focus group that confidentiality would be maintained by them not discussing the views of other participants outside of the group. Furthermore, although FC participants, like UASC, had the right to withdraw from the project up to one week after the data collection, it was explained that given the group conversational nature of the data, it might not be possible to remove any individual participant's contribution completely from the data analysis (Denscombe, 2014; Thomas, 2017). For a copy of the FC consent forms, see Appendix 12b.

4.6.3 Compensation

All participants were given a £20 'Love2Shop' voucher to thank them for their participation, and, for FCs, to offset their travel costs (The British Psychology Society, 2009; Vervliet et al., 2015).

4.7 Validity

The purpose of considering a study's validity is to evaluate how well the research has been conducted and to what extent findings can be considered trustworthy and useful (Yardley, 2008). Within quantitative research, assessments of validity involve considerations of standardisation, replicability, objectivity, reliability and (statistical) generalisability. Such measures may however be inappropriate criteria for research such as this study, which is interested in the complexity of individual views and accepts the potential for innumerable 'true' perspectives on reality (Robson, 2002; Lawson and Philpott, 2008; Yardley, 2008).

Criteria for evaluating the validity of qualitative and interpretivist research must therefore capture the process through which new meanings are revealed and be flexible enough to encompass research conducted in different contexts and harnessing different methods. Yardley (2008) proposes that this can be achieved through assessing a piece of research in relation to the core principles of 'sensitivity to context', 'commitment to rigour', 'coherence and transparency' and 'impact and importance'. The measures taken within this study to enhance validity and trustworthiness in line with Yardley's (2008) framework are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Measures taken to enhance validity and trustworthiness of research (based on Yardley's [2008] framework).

Core Principle	Definition	Demonstration of principle
Sensitivity to context	• Sensitivity to existing research and theory during research development • Sensitivity to the extent to which participants feel able to take part in the research and express themselves freely • Sensitivity to the socio-cultural context of participants • Sensitivity to the data	• Research questions were developed from critical reading of existing research and theory. • It was made clear to UASC participants that the research had no bearings on their Home Office applications. • Open questions (UASC) and an open discussion focus (FCs) encouraged participants to talk freely • Cultural experiences of both UASC and FC participants are considered throughout the analysis of data (see Chapters 5 and 6). • Data analysis involved constant cycles of assessing and interrogating the integrity of codes, categories and themes and the related quotations. For the UASC data set, one cycle of this interrogation was performed in collaboration with a colleague (see Appendix 9). *cont…*

Commitment and rigour	• Commitment and rigour in participant recruitment to represent an adequate range of views • Commitment and rigour within data collection and analysis	• Purposive sampling was used to select FCs, including a range of genders, experiences and ethnicities. • UASC participants represented a diverse range of time periods in England. • Piloting with a migrant who arrived in England 10 years previously resulted in the changing of the wording in key questions to facilitate clarity and understanding. • Qualitative analysis was used consistently to analyse all data gathered. • Some limited cross-validation and triangulation between and within participants' views was afforded through the comparison of UASC participants' interview comments with both their 'Acculturation Questionnaire' data and their FCs' narratives (Robson, 2002).
Coherence and transparency	• There is coherence between the epistemology, theory, methods and interpretation • The methods of data collection and analysis are transparent • The likely influence of the researcher on the study is considered through reflexivity	• The theory, methods and interpretation of data were consistent with the interpretivist stance of the research; findings are not presented as 'reality' as they would in positivist research. • The methods for data collection are described in section 4.4 and the interview schedule used with UASC participants is presented in Appendix 6. • A paper trail of the data analysis (Flick, 1998) was kept (see Appendix 9 for a summary), ensuring transparency of the analytical methods on which interpretations were based. • Reflexivity is considered in Chapters 1 and 7.
Impact and importance	• The contribution of the research to practice and theory development	• Findings of the research are to be communicated to Middleham's fostering services, social services and Virtual School to help inform their practice with UASC. • Findings are already informing EP-led training and consultation with teachers and FCs. • Implications for EP practice are presented in Chapter 7 and contributions to theory development are considered in Chapters 5-7.

Additionally, Yardley (2008) advocates that the validity of findings can be enhanced through participant feedback allowing 'respondent validation', (Silverman, 2008; Cohen et al., 2016) where participants can verify that their views are accurately represented and comment on the analysis. In order to ensure that I had an accurate record of participants' responses, I sent

them individual letters or emails prior to entering the main data analysis phase; FC participants all received the same letter detailing the key points of the focus group as a whole, whereas UASC participants' summaries included points relating to their individual interviews (see Appendix 13). This form of validation can be problematic as participants may want to alter or not recall what they previously said (Cohen et al., 2016). However, all participants confirmed my initial understanding.

UASC participants did not have the opportunity to feed back on the cross-case analysis. Yardley (2008) concedes that such feedback is not always appropriate and as UASC participants were all well known to one another but had spoken to me separately, sharing with each some the views of the others would contravene the assurances of confidentiality that I had given the young people. Therefore, remaining true to the double hermeneutic, I conceded that it was my right as the researcher to draw conclusions from data I had collected according to my own interpretations (Whyte, 1993, cited in Cohen et al., 2016).

4.7.1 Generalisability

As in quantitative research, an important test of the validity of qualitative studies is the extent to which findings are generalisable. Yet, the statistical generalisation that it is a cornerstone of quantitative research is mostly impractical for qualitative research in which it is rarely possible to gather and analyse data using a sample that is representative of the wider population (Yardley, 2008). Statistical generalisation was not my intention in this case, and analyses of the representativeness of my participant groups have been previously presented in Section 4.4 and Table 4.11. However, I hoped that my findings may expand and generalise theories and prove useful in other contexts with some similarities. These aspirations are consistent with conceptualisations of 'analytic generalisation' (Yin, 2009) and 'theoretical

generalisation' (Johnson, 1997) which are appropriate for qualitative research with a case study design. The extent to which findings from this research can claim to be analytically and theoretically generalisable is assessed through recourse to the 'common sense' approach to generalisation (Elliot, 2005): the usefulness of findings and the contribution to theory expansion.

Consistent with Elliot's approach, I have been transparent about factors related to the demographic context of my research, my sample, methods and analysis which will facilitate future practitioners' abilities to determine how far findings can be applied to other contexts. Details of the current impact of my findings on work being conducted in 'MEPS' are presented in Table 4.11 and Section 7.3. However, the understanding of the extent to which my conclusions are useful in practice will continue to develop as I disseminate them further amongst appropriate services in Middleworth LA. The question of how the results have contributed to the expansion of theory is considered in Chapters 5 and 6 which present findings and analysis of the FC and UASC data respectively.

5. Foster Carer Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter discusses themes that were generated from the FC focus group relating to the first research question: *How do foster carers conceptualise their experience of developing and maintaining trusting and adaptive relationships with UASC?*

5.1 Overview

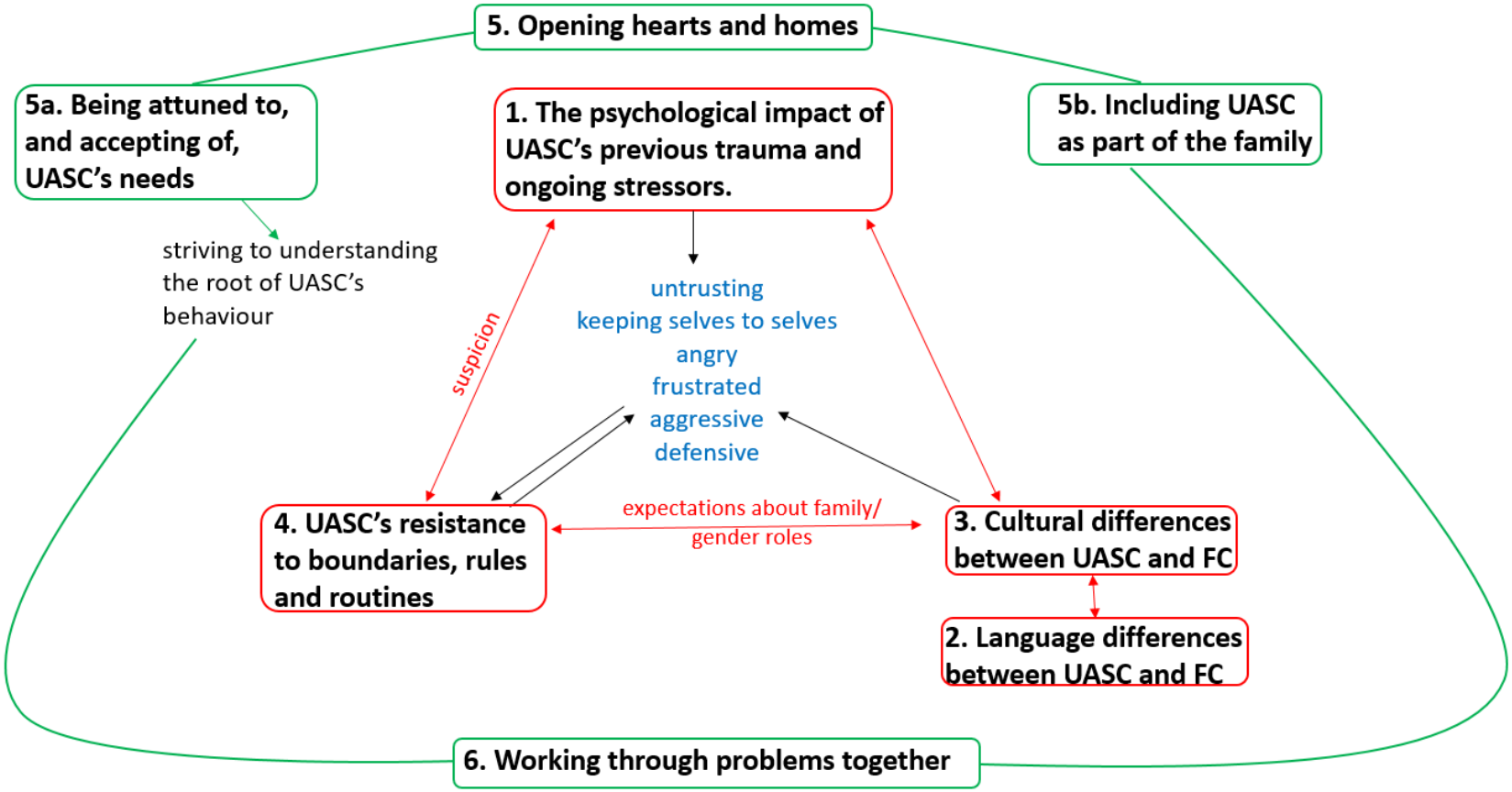
FCs were united in having experienced challenges to forming and maintaining trusting and adaptive relationships with UASC. They described these challenges as the outcomes of several interacting factors which are presented in Figure 5.1 and investigated below as Themes 1-4: 'The psychological impact of UASC's previous trauma and ongoing stressors'; 'Language differences between UASC and FCs'; 'Cultural differences between UASC and FCs' and 'UASC's resistance to boundaries, rules and routines' imposed by FCs. However, FCs identified actions that helped to overcome these challenges. These are also presented in Figure 5.1 and described further below as Themes 5-6: 'Opening hearts and homes' and 'Working through problems together'.

5.2 Trauma and stress

5.2.1 Theme 1: The psychological impact of UASC's previous trauma and ongoing stressors

As found in previous research, FCs reported that their UASC foster children had experienced traumatic events prior to and during their journeys to England, where they continued to face high levels of uncertainty, especially regarding their refugee status. FCs reasoned that the psychological and behavioural representations of both this trauma and uncertainty led to the greatest challenges in forming relationships with UASC. Consistent with Kohli and Mather's

Figure 5.1 An overview of FC's perceptions of the challenges and facilitators to them developing and maintaining adaptive and useful relationships with UASC foster children.



Key

Challenges Identified emotional and behavioural representations of distress Facilitators

(2003) and Raghallaigh's (2013) findings, FCs suggested that these representations included internalising behaviours such as UASC keeping themselves to themselves, finding it difficult to trust their FCs, and not being willing or able to interact with them, least of all to discuss previous experienced (Quotations 1a, 1b and 1c; Table 5.1). However, F1 and F2 had also experienced externalising representations of UASC's stresses, including them being angry, frustrated and aggressive towards their FCs (Quotation 1d; Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 FC's experiences of UASC behaviour relating to the impact of trauma and ongoing stressors.

Theme	UASC behaviour	Illustrative quotations
The psychological impact of UASC's previous trauma and ongoing stressors	Finding it hard to open up	**Quotation 1a: F3** *…and because she's been travelling to different countries trying to get into the UK, I tried to talk to her to find out where she is mentally; you know, all the other things that goes with it, but, you know, she finds it very difficult to speak about her experiences.*
		Quotation 1b: F4 *…they don't open up sort of thing, but when they trust you, they will open up and explain what the problems are and things like that, so…we trust them, and we've opened up our hearts and homes to them and they in return to us give respect.*
		Quotation 1c F1 and F2 F1: *He's settled in….when he first arrived, he very much kept himself to himself.* *F2: Very timid, wasn't he?* *F1: Very timid – not opening up.*
	Frustrated and aggressive behaviour	**Quotation 1d: F1** *They get very challenging towards their visa time, with Home Office status, going to solicitors…if, if someone – if they've said the wrong thing to the interpreter and it's misinterpreted, that gets them very, very, very frustrated. It plays on their mind – it comes back, you know – they don't want to eat; they can be sort of, very, very aggressive towards you in terms of language – the way they speak – and they're slamming doors. It's all around their Home Office. But as foster carers, now we understand why they're doing that.*

5.2.2 Theme 5: Opening hearts and homes

In order to build trusting, respectful and reciprocal relationships with their UASC, F2 cited the importance of FCs demonstrating their own trust in the young people: a strategy supported in fostering literature (Golding, 2008; Sirriyeh, 2013). However, further than this,

Table 5.2 Summary of FC strategies for building relationships within the themes of 'Being attuned to and accepting of UASC's needs' and 'Including UASC as part of the family'.

Theme	FC strategy	Example quotations
Opening hearts: Being attuned to, and accepting of, UASC's needs	Demonstrating that they have trust in the UASC in order to engender a reciprocal sense of trust by the young person	F1: *…all the young lads go – they get their card out, they go to the cash point – he's [UASC foster child] got nothing [he is not eligible to open a bank account]. So what J done, he give him his spare card to use so he can put money in there and at least – nobody has to look at the name there – but at least he can go to the cash point with them, or at least he doesn't have to carry money around, and he can go and use that.*
	Taking time to find out what is important to UASC	F1: *and I actually asked them what they would like from their stay, what they would like us to do and then that opened them up.*
	Taking a credulous approach and believing what the UASC tells you	F2: *I think, me and [wife], what we've done from day 1, is we've just been foster carers – we've never been solicitors or age assessors or anything, we've just done our role as foster carers, because I think when you start playing Devil's advocate: he's older than he says he is, to be honest with you, you are causing problems for yourself. And what it is, to gain that trust, it takes for ever. If you just be the norm as a foster carer, it's a lot easier.*
	Seeking to understand UASC's behaviour through empathising with them and considering things from their perspectives	F2: *With the status, if you put yourself in their shoes…we had one…was it 10 days ago? Yeah, I was in court about 2 weeks ago, he got his decision in his favour, so he's got the 5 years…so even with that, if you put yourself in their shoes, you have no idea, you don't know whether you're coming or going. So you can see how daunting it would be for them as a child.*
	Showing acceptance for what the UASC is experiencing and how they are feeling; and supporting a sense of choice	F1: *But it's being that non-judgemental, because what we will do in our house is I will open our fast and go and pray and he would go, "Aunty, I'm just going in my room to pray." And then it was after…it was on, um, Eid, and he says, "Uncle I don't want to go to that Mosque…"… I think we left it to him… And then he opened up and he says, "I don't really want to – I don't want to pray, I just want time." And I says, "that's fine. Has anyone said anything to you?" And he says, "no – nobody's said anything to me." And I says, "but nobody ever will because you need your own time; you need time to understand yourself."…And they need to have that sense of acceptance.*

cont…

Opening homes: Including UASC as part of the family	Including the UASC in family routines and events	F2: *He's part of the family. I mean, I mentioned it in court to one of the judges, he's like my older son. When my son was doing GCSEs, he was there up till 3, 4 o'clock in the morning helping him to revise and that…so he's got that family that morale…and plus we do lots of family stuff together – weddings, birthdays and everything, he's part of it.*
	Helping UASC to feel comfortable and 'at home' through cooking familiar food for them from their country of origin	F4: *There is a slight difference in the food as you say, but we try to cater for their religions as well….because I'm a Sikh and they're Muslim and so we have halal food.* F1: *I think he thought I wouldn't make his sort of food but I just went and brought it out. He likes fish, white rice, whereas my children won't have fish – they just have that separate and we have more chapatis and that more Asian, Pakistani side, but I bought his food so that he knows…he actually feels comfortable and I says to him, "this is our home and your home".*
	Helping UASC to feel comfortable in the home through allowing them to maintain cultural routines and traditions	F5: *I told them, as long as you enjoy your food, then you can eat it with your hand – it doesn't matter. As long as you know how to use a knife and fork, you known, when other people are there. But it you enjoy it with hands, because, you know, we eat chapatis with hands, why don't we eat rice by ourselves with hands – it's normal….Yes, they should know how to use knife and fork…* F3: *But let them do whatever they feel comfortable at home.*
	Continuing to maintain bonds with UASC after they have left Care	F3: *But she's been with me for about…over a year, and she's in semi-independent living now and she's fine – you know, she calls me and she'll come up and see me.* F2: *we say [about 2 UASC who have left Care], "You two, we've actually still got you two…"* *F3: They've still got your house as their home.* *F1:…If I don't hear from them, say a week's gone – I text them and they say, "Oh I had a flu, I couldn't come round, you've got the baby." So checking up on them.*

FCs reasoned that the development of such relationships was also facilitated through their helping the young people to manage their emotional distress by opening their 'hearts and homes to them' (Quotation 1b; Table 5.1). FCs considered that they achieved this through being attuned to, and accepting of, UASC's needs as well as including them in the family and making adaptions to help them feel comfortable and generate a sense that they belonged (see illustrative quotations in Table 5.2). Congruent with the views of FCs in Raghallaigh's (2013) study, F1 advocated that it was this attunement that was most important in building trust and developing relationships from the start of a UASC's placement but did not mention practical matters as highlighted by Sirriyeh (2013).

5.3 Resistance to boundaries, rules and routines, and cultural and language differences

FCs also reported practical factors which risked undermining the formation and maintenance of relationships. These included language and cultural differences between UASC and FCs, as well as UASC being resistant to boundaries, rules and routines imposed by FCs. FCs perceived that it was important for them to work with the UASC to overcome their differences.

5.3.1 Theme 2: Language differences between UASC and FCs

FCs cited an inability to communicate in a shared language as a common challenge to their initial relationship formation and ability to understanding UASC's needs (Quotation 2a; Table 5.3). Like Sirriyeh's (2013) participants however, they had found alternative means of overcoming this difficulty (Quotations 2a, 2b and 2c; Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Strategies used by FCs and UASC to overcome a language barrier		
Theme	**Strategy**	**Illustrative quotations**
Language differences between UASC and FC	Google Translate	**Quotation 2a: F3** *…because I have been trying to get her language on Google, and it's not there (laughs) because we she first arrived, it made our communication very, very difficult because she speaks very little English…she was really struggling to speak English with me and I was really struggling to understand her as you can imagine.*
	Sign language	**Quotation 2b: F4 and F5** F5*: The first time asylum seeker came into my house, he says, he doesn't know how to speak Urdu and he doesn't know how to speak English as well so he used to…* F4*: We used to use gestures and things…* F5*: …use gestures when hungry. He says, "Aunty [mimes eating with fingers]." (all laugh).*
	Pictures	**Quotation 2c: F1** *They could understand me but what we done was find common ground, you know, we started, just a little bit. Whatever…I said, whatever, we're not aliens, let's start and it's like vegetables – they wanted me to make a certain vegetable but I couldn't understand what they were telling me… So what I did, I actually went to the library and I got the books for the children, for the younger children to explain. And I brought that home and I said, "right, from here, tell me." And it worked well.*

5.3.2 Themes 3 and 4: Cultural differences between UASC and FCs, and UASC's resistance to boundaries, rules and routines

A further factor which had the potential to lead to discord in the relationship between FCs and UASC was UASC being resistant to the boundaries, rules and routines imposed on them by FCs. However, FCs reported overcoming these difficulties most successfully where they understood the basis for the UASC's resistance; be this because, consistent with Wade et al. (2012), they had different expectations of family roles including the authority of women (Quotation 2d; Table 5.4) and the extent to which UASC should help in household chores (Quotation 2e; Table 5.4), or because UASC had become so accustomed to being resourceful and independent that they reacted negatively and suspiciously when someone else tried to exercise influence or impose parental authority (Quotation 2f; Table 5.4). This latter finding adds further understanding to why, as Sirriyeh (2013) proposed, UASC may perceive the imposing of boundaries as an attempt by FCs to control them.

Table 5.4 FCs' perceptions of reasons for UASC's resistance to boundaries and cultural differences.

Theme	Reason	Illustrative quotations
Cultural differences between UASC and FCs; and UASC's resistance to boundaries, rules and routines	Different cultural expectations about the role of women	**Quotation 2d: F1** *I wouldn't say disrespected, but they didn't want a woman telling them what to do. So that would be, I'd say, one of the hardest things, and I've been speaking to F3 a lot and other foster carers who are single carers. One of the things about our UASC boys who are quite mature, because their mothers and sisters back home, you know, they're indoors, they cover up when they go outside. It's very different for them…But when F2 was at work, I noticed they didn't get up for school and I was like, "come on, get up for school," just being a bit like, "oh you can't tell me what to do." You know what I mean? I don't let a woman talk to me like that." So it was after educating them, lots of chats with them.*
	Different expectations about UASC's contribution to chores	**Quotation 2e: F4** *It was hard at the beginning to set boundaries…to go on and on and say you can't do this, you can't do that…but gradually, they've come to terms with the fact that there are rules and regulations…So yes, we give them chores to do and say, you know, "do this and that," and sometimes they're a bit lazy and say, "no, we'll do it later," – you know, it takes time, but they will do it.*
	UASC being suspicious of FC's motives	**Quotation 2f: F4** *The challenges that I had was that because they had been so used to doing things themselves and not somebody telling them what to do...* *… And it's trying to relay that to them that there are rules and regulations that we all have to follow. And there's me sitting there and writing everything down and they're like: "why do you have to write everything down? Why? Why?" And I'm like: "I'm accountable for you, because you are in my care and so I have to do this.*

5.3.3 Theme 6: Working through problems together

As Wade et al. (2012) also found, an essential strategy that FCs identified to help overcome discord in their relationships with UASC was to work through problems together with their young people. This included FCs discussing with UASC the reasoning behind, and importance of boundaries, rules and routines (Quotations 2d and 2f; Table 5.4). However, FCs also suggested that their relationships could be strengthened through helping UASC to overcome problems they were having outside of the home, including school and legal status (Quotations 2g and 2h; Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Examples of FCs working through problems together with UASC.		
Theme	**Context**	**Illustrative quotations**
Working through problems together	School	**Quotation 2g: F1 and F2** *F1: One of our boys had to start a…um….that was quite difficult for him and for us…he had to start a primary school and he was in Year 6... At that time, the headteacher called me in and he said, you know, these were his words: "he sticks out like a sore thumb – the parents are all asking, whose child is he?"* *F2: We brought it up at the PEP [Personal Education Plan meeting] and the Headmaster, he came down a peg or two.*
	Legal status	**Quotation 2h: F2** *He's [UASC foster child] Staying Put with us and we're basically fighting for him…I was in court this morning and my neighbour…we've had, sort of, half a dozen statements from friends and family…because of his legal status, he had to fight to get him a place at university.*

5.4 Conclusion

FCs experienced numerous potential challenges to developing and maintaining trusting and adaptive relationships with their UASC foster children, including not speaking the same language and having difficulties with managing UASC's internalising and externalising expressions of stress. Nevertheless, all the FCs had experienced successful UASC placements, and they were therefore able to reflect upon strategies which they perceived had helped them overcome these challenges. These broadly corresponded to Farmer et al.'s (2004) strategies for supporting adolescent foster children: fostering emotional security and attachment, and imposing boundaries in a non-aggressive way.

FCs evidenced that on occasions where they were able to respond to UASC in an attuned manner through demonstrating an understanding of what was troubling them and important to them, helping them feel comfortable in their new home and communicating belief in and acceptance of them, UASC were more likely to open up to FCs. FCs interpreted such increasing openness as indicative of growing trusting relationships. This phenomenon can be understood in the context of developmental models of attachment and relationships (e.g. Bowlby, 1998; Crittenden, 2005) which would advocate that experiencing attuned and

responsive care facilitated UASC's formation of affectional bonds with caregivers, from which they could derive a sense of safety and stability. From this point of 'stabilisation', it could be understood that UASC were subsequently able to re-establish their ability to reflect upon and regulate their emotions, and consequently, 'open up' (Crittenden, 2005; Groark et al., 2010).

FCs also perceived that working through problems with a degree of collaboration with UASC, such as helping them to understand why certain behavioural boundaries were required, assisted in overcoming challenges and deepening their relationships. This is consistent with Golding's (2008) strategies for affectional bond formation, as well as Crittenden's (2005) theory that an important maintaining factor for adolescent attachment relationships is where carers support young people to reflect upon and make sense of their experiences. Through Crittenden's theory and the A-SPS (Joussemet et al., 2008), it is understood that being responsive, explaining reasons for required behaviour, encouraging initiation and supporting a sense of choice can support the emergence of young people's sense of autonomy. Although it is indicated that FCs viewed themselves to be harnessing these strategies, the impact upon UASC's sense of autonomy was not discussed. This area will however be explored further in Chapter 6.

All FCs were currently experiencing culturally 'unmatched' placements. Although this increased the potential for differences of opinion relating to cultural norms, contradictory to Carlson et al. (2012), the FCs in this focus group perceived that difficulties need not prove intractable if they were sensitive to UASC's religious and cultural needs. As FCs in Wade et al.'s (2012) and Raghallaigh's (2013) studies advocated, these carers were actively aware of the acculturation challenges that UASC faced, and recognised the importance of helping them

to negotiate their evolving cultural identity through facilitating the maintenance of their ethnic identity, whilst also encouraging participation in, and understanding of, the new culture.

Although the themes generated from the focus group data comprise the views of all FCs, F1 and F2 contributed the most to the group discussion. Consequently, the analysis of the FC data presented in this chapter contains a disproportionate representation of their perceptions and experiences. However, F1 and F2 were the FCs of the UASC participants and thus it was helpful in seeking to understand the views of U1, U2 and U3 to be able to contextualise their experiences through having some insight into the social environment that their FCs believed they had created for their foster children. An analysis of the UASC data is presented in Chapter 6.

6. UASC Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter begins with consideration of the people identified by UASC participants as important to them in their lives in England, before investigating themes connected to RQ2: *How do UASC describe the formation, development and function of their relationships with important people in England?* The discussion of the final theme, will also include a reflection upon RQ3: *How do these relationships mediate UASC's experience of psychological acculturation and adaptation within a multicultural environment?*

6.1 Overview

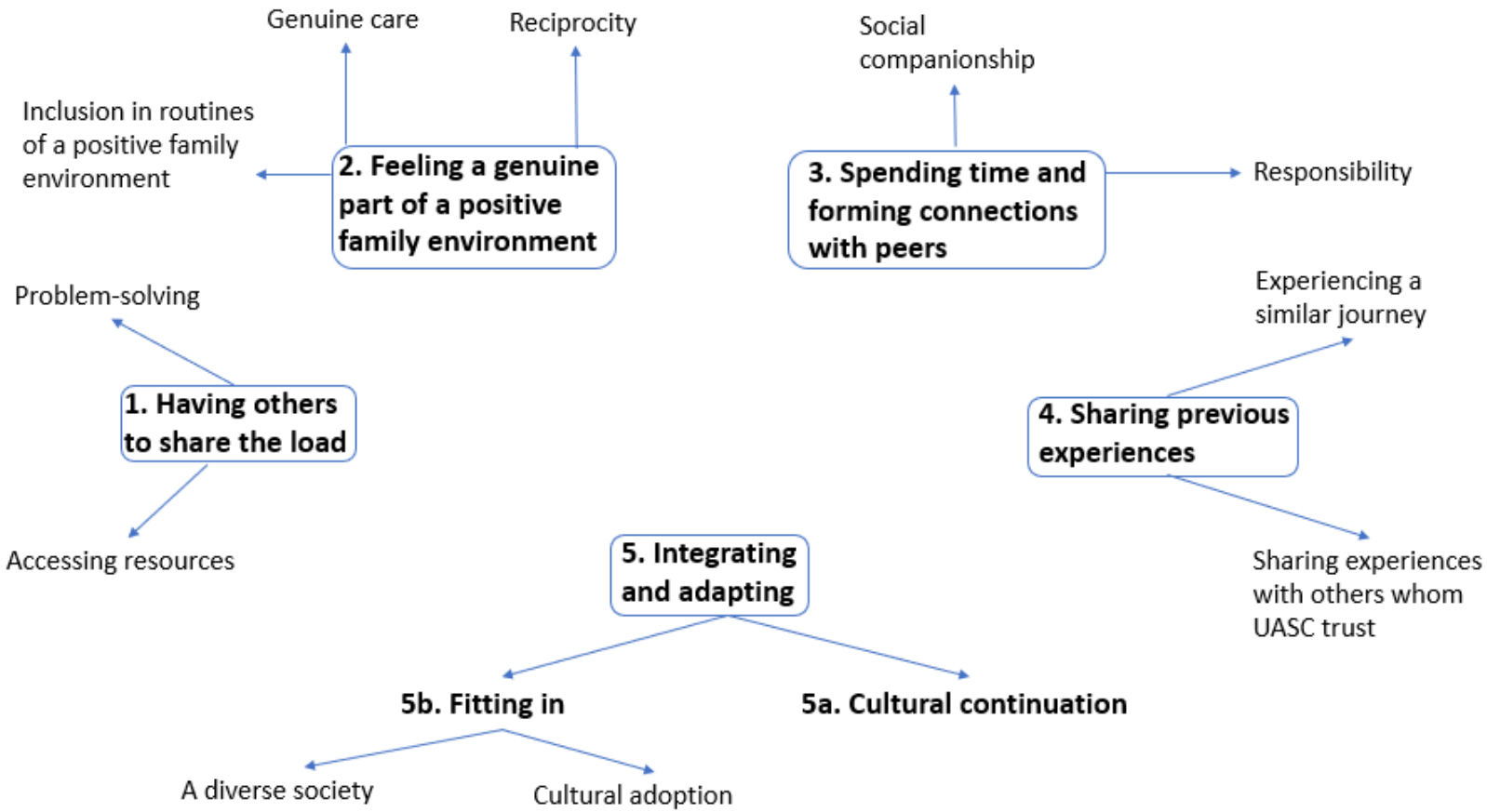
Using the Social Connections Grids, UASC in this study reported that there were a range of important people in their lives in England, including foster carers and siblings, friends, teachers and social workers. These important people are presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Important people identified by UASC participants using the Social Connection Grids.

UASC participant	**People identified with rankings indicating hierarchy of importance**	
	'Time 1' (first year of settlement)	**'Time 2' (present day)**
U1	1. Friend R (met on journey) 2. Social worker	1. Foster carers (F1 and F2) 2. Friend I (school friend and housemate) 3.= Friend M (school friend) 3.= Friend A (met through other friends)
U2	1. 'Uncle' (family friend with whom U2 lived for the first year in England) 2. Head of House at school (with pastoral care responsibilities) 3. Friend T (school friend)	1. Foster carers (F1 and F2) 2.= Friend T (school friend) 2.= Friend O (college friend) 2.= Friend A (nephew of foster mother) 3. Foster siblings
U3	1. Foster carers (F1 and F2) 2. Social worker 3. School teacher 4. Friends from UASC youth group	1. Foster carers (F1 and F2) 2. School and college friends 3.= Social worker 3.= College teacher

Although UASC's experiences differed, it was possible to identify five broad and interacting themes concerning their perceptions of the formation, development and function of their relationships with these people: 'Having others to share the load'; 'Feeling a genuine part of a

Figure 6.1 An overview of themes describing UASC's perceptions of why key people in their lives in England were important.



positive family environment'; 'Spending time and forming connections with peers'; 'Sharing previous experiences' and 'Integrating and adapting'. These themes, and related subthemes, are presented in Figure 6.1 and are elaborated below.

6.2 Theme 1: Having others to share the load

All three UASC identified the importance of having others in their lives in England who were 'in a good position' (U1) to help them with practical aspects of their lives, such as accessing resources and problem-solving.

6.2.1 Accessing resources

In line with the findings of Carlson et al. (2012), and consistent with Maslow's (1987) Hierarchy of Needs, the UASC identified that on arrival in England, they appreciated adults who helped them to access resources that fulfilled their basic needs. Being given somewhere to stay was paramount, with U1 recalling his social worker's important role in facilitating this (Quotation 1a; Table 6.2a), and U2 expressing gratitude to his family friends for taking him in and supporting him financially (Quotation 1b, Table 6.2a).

U1 and U2 also explained the importance of their respective social worker and family friend in assisting them to access education establishments, through financing it and knowing how to enrol them respectively (Quotations 1b, 1c; Table 6.2a). Beyond the initial stages of settlement, the UASC also valued the practical support that their foster parents gave them in accessing leisure and social activities, with U1 recalling his foster father 'driving me down' to friends' houses.

Table 6.2a UASC's perceptions of the role of others in helping them access resources		
Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Illustrative quotations**
Having others to share the load	Accessing resources	**Quotation 1a U1** *KT: Okay, so your social worker….* *U3: They took me there and they find me a house because, for one week, two weeks, I couldn't find a place to live. So they find me a place to live down there.*
		Quotation 1b U2 *U2: So he was a family friends…my dad was really close to him and stuff like that, and when I first arrived, I lived with him. And he supported me for like a year and a half. That's regardless of any help from the council or anything else like that, so obviously without him as well, so he was very important as well in my life.* *KT: So what kind of support did he give you in those early days?* *U2: Everything – financial support. At that time, I wouldn't have had anywhere to stay, do you know what I mean?* *KT: Yes, so a roof over your head?* *U2: Yes, so him, his wife, kids as well, they were really nice and they helped me through as well. And he's the one who enrolled me to school. I didn't know how to enrol to school do you know what I'm saying? He's been a big part of my life as well, do you know what I'm saying?*
		Quotation 1c U1 *I went to another centre here and the social worker was paying for it. I went for 2 hours, 3 hours and I learned English and that was it.*

6.2.2 Problem-solving

Consistent with findings in Connolly's (2014) and Farmbrough's (2014) research, the UASC valued having people in their lives with whom they could share their difficulties and who could help them to solve problems. Common problems for all three UASC concerned their uncertain legal status, with both U1 and U3 referencing the leading role that their social workers took in dealing with the Home Office (Quotation 1d; Table 6.2b). At the time of U2's interview, his foster parents were appealing in court for him to be granted 'Refugee Status', and U2 was anxious about the outcome. In Sirriyeh's (2013) research, UASC reported that a key occurrence that initiated their development of a close, trusting relationship with their FC was the FC helping to solve problems related to the UASC's asylum claim. In U2's case, the involvement of his foster carers, and the trust he placed in them, alongside

their assertions that the claim would 'get sorted eventually', helped him to manage his associated anxieties (Quotation 1e; Table 6.2b).

Table 6.2b UASC's perceptions of the role of others in problem-solving

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Having others to share the load	Problem-solving	**Quotation 1d U3** *But social worker, she can, yeah, she can do whatever you want her to do…and do it for me. But if I ask her to and she can help me with Home Office and things like that – that's why she's important to me.*
		Quotation 1e U2 *KT: And you said that they've [FCs] helped you think about your education….* *U2: Education and my career and stuff like that…cos like, they've always said to me…don't worry about any of the like you know, cos like, I've got stuff, like immigration stuff going on at the moment and they say, "don't worry about all of that, focus on your education – that will get sorted eventually and whatever and you've just got to carry on with your education. You do have the brain to work towards, like you can do it if you put your mind to it so why would you waste your potential basically?" So, yeah – that's good at well.*
		Quotation 1f U2 *This teacher – he was the Head of the House um, in my school and he…..knew me from the start…like since I started….and he helped me through….like….if I had any problems…..if I had any learning difficulties, he would help me – I could just go to him…and I could talk to him about anything. And he kept asking me as well if everything was okay at home… Cos obviously he knew that I could be vulnerable in that environment… Because I was like, new to the country, new to the system, to the school…because the system is totally different to how it was back home, do you know what I'm saying?*

U2 also referenced the importance of adults helping with problems in the school environment. Alluding to some previous difficulties that he had with his classmates, he credited his foster father with being open to discussing his concerns and then getting 'on the case' with the school where needed. This mirrors Wade et al.'s (2012) finding that UASC appreciate their foster families' involvement with school matters. Additionally, further to Mbabaali's (2012) finding that, through a clear explanation of the rules, teachers could help UASC feel more comfortable in the classroom, U2 recalled that his Head of House in his first English school did help him to understand the school system. However, a factor which appeared to contribute more significantly to the formation of a trusting relationship with his teacher and U2's sense of wellbeing during 'Time 1' was that this member of staff helped to

find solutions to '*any* problems', including matters outside of the school environment (Quotation 1f; Table 6.2b).

6.2.3 Summary

Although it was understood from F1 and F2 during the focus group that at least some of the UASC participants had appeared untrusting and self-reliant when they had first arrived, it was clear from the UASC interviews that despite this, from the start of their time in England, they appreciated adults taking some responsibility from their shoulders. Having the protection from a powerful 'adult who knows' (Groark et al., 2010; Connolly, 2014) meant that UASC could have their basic needs met, as well as receive cultural capital that they did not yet possess and assistance with problem solving. U2 indicated that without such support and the structure imposed by his foster family, he would not have found it as easy to retain a positive trajectory (Quotation 1g; Table 6.2c).

Table 6.2c UASC's views about having others to share the load

Theme	Illustrative quotation
Having others to share the load	**Quotation 1g U2** *If I didn't have this system in place – I probably wouldn't have time to revise. I probably would have been going gallivanting…you, know, messing around.*

UASC appeared to judge that the provision of this instrumental and informational support was the key function of their relationships with some of the important people identified, such as the social worker who found U1's first educational placement. However, with others, such as FCs, these occurrences contributed towards UASC developing meaningful, trusting relationships with these people. The role played by the foster family in facilitating a sense of 'togetherness' and mutual dependence will be discussed within the next theme.

6.3 Theme 2: Feeling a genuine part of a positive family environment

The UASC appeared to be experiencing 'family-like relationship' placements (Wade et al., 2012) with all three referring to their FCs in familial terms, including 'my family' (U1), 'fill[ing] the boots of my parents' (U2) and 'my home' (U3). This was a sense that had evolved from UASC feeling a genuine part of the foster family, which mediated the development of positive relationships with their FCs and foster siblings over time.

6.3.1 Inclusion in the routines of a positive family environment

U1 had experienced an unsuccessful foster placement prior to being placed with F1 and F2. A key reason that he had immediately felt more comfortable with F1 and F2 was that he liked the family atmosphere where there were 'more laugh, more jokes', where he had numerous foster siblings to play with, was included in family routines and was not alone (Quotation 2a; Table 6.3a). For him, this environment appeared to fulfil a similar function to that discussed by Kohli and Mather's (2003) and Beirens et al.'s (2007) participants: spending time with others in the initial stages of settlement helped him to stay positive, reduce a sense of loneliness and initiate social connections.

However, spending time as a family and 'having a laugh' (U2: Quotation 2b; Table 6.3a) was an important enduring theme for all three participants. U3 explained that he most liked playing football with his younger foster brother (Quotation 2c; Table 6.3a). U3 has younger siblings in Afghanistan and it may be that playing with his foster brother therefore allowed him a sense of 'normalcy' (Thommessen et al., 2017) and reduced his sense of loss through re-inhabiting his 'big brother' role.

Table 6.3a UASC's perceptions of being included in family routines.		
Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Illustrative quotations**
Feeling a genuine part of a positive family environment	Inclusion in the routines of a positive family environment	**Quotation 2a U1** *KT: So what was it about them that made you want to stay [with F1 and F2]?* *U2: …And….plus, family as well here. Playing with the kids as well… And some families just have their mum and dad and brothers and sisters…that's good as well and when you come here you make a family as well – it's like a family. And down there [in the previous foster family], they just said "wake up" and "sleep". Here, you know, it's more laugh, more joke, more going out. So like, you don't feel that you are alone.*
		Quotation 2b U2 *We like go cinema all the time…we play football, like with my foster brothers…we have Sunday football as well. We're really close, and like, right now everyone's got college – they're in college and stuff, and school as well and uni, and so we're quite busy right now, do you know what I'm saying? Everyone's quite busy doing their own stuff, but we know that when we're at home, we're having a laugh, do you know what I'm saying?*
		Quotation 2c U3 *KT: What kind of things…so when you're here with the family, what kind of things do you like doing with the others?* *U3: You know, in the summertime, playing football with the little boy. Yeah…you know in the summertime, he just comes to me and says "can you play football?" Yeah, you know, we go in the garden and play football. We've got a pool in the back, yeah?*

6.3.2 Genuine care

From the focus group, it appeared that F1 and F2 were not simply doing their paid job but genuinely cared for their foster children. For U1 and U2, recognition of this helped them to feel like valued members of the family (Quotations 2d and 2e; Table 6.3b). As FCs intended, all UASC reported a sense of feeling understood by their carers which they perceived was demonstrated through FCs adjusting their home environment and routines in order to make the young people more comfortable; this included putting a television in U1's room to help him at night-time and finding a quiet part of the house for U2 to work. U2 additionally explained that when his foster grandmother made Bangladeshi fish dishes especially for him, it was not the food itself that was important but her thoughtfulness (Quotation 2f; Table 6.3b). This tentatively broadens Sirriyeh's (2013) theory that providing UASC with traditional food can mediate their progress towards a sense of stability due to the food acting

as a symbol of continuity; for U2, the food was symbolic of him being 'an important part of the family'.

However, UASC identified factors additional to those reported by FCs as communicating FCs' genuine care: U1 identified 'claiming behaviours' (Golding, 2008), such as his FCs buying him nice quality bedding, which is consistent with Sirriyeh's (2013) findings; and U2 reported that FCs helping him to plan for his eventual career conveyed to him that they believed in him and his potential, and that he had choices in how he constructed his future (Quotation 1e; Table 6.2b). This may offer further insight into how the belief of a supportive adult can help UASC to overcome hardship (Smyth et al., 2015) and, through helping them look to the future, enhance UASC's sense of belonging (Brar-Josan, 2012).

Table 6.3b UASC's perceptions of being genuinely cared for

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Feeling a genuine part of a positive family environment	Genuine care	**Quotation 2d U1** *Like I said at the beginning to you, trust, yeah? And some foster carers, you know, they just do for the money – it's their job, you have that one, you have that one and that's it. Here [with F1 and F2], it's not like that, it's not like that, so here's completely different. Yes – and some people are very tight for the money; we're not buying that one, we're not buying that one. So here's different…. So, like, for example, some people for bed, sheet on bed, pillow, some they get you cheap quality, but here it's not like that. They get you good things.*
		Quotation 2e U2 *They [F1 and F2] do things that……your parents would have done for you, so basically, filling their boots. So that's the most important thing, you know and it's when you realise that it doesn't have to be a blood relationship. Even though, at the end of the day, it's their job, but they are still more than that when you create that sort of a bond with someone.*
		Quotation 2f U2 *…her mum [F1's mother; U2's foster grandmother] would, you know, cook fish and send it to me, do you know what I'm saying? That's so thoughtful of someone, do you know what I'm saying? You know, like…my grandma probably wouldn't have done that for me, do you know what I'm saying? So, it's stuff like that…little, little things. It's not about the stuff she made – it's about the thought that she put into it.*

6.3.3 Reciprocity

As a result of the support that U1 perceived his FCs had given him, he had also developed the motivation to help them by 'Time 2' (Quotation 2g; Table 6.3c). Similarly, 'being there for each other' or 'togetherness' was an important component of U2's current relationships with his foster carers and siblings (Quotations 2h and 2i; Table 6.3c). Such reciprocity was attested to by Farmbrough's (2014) UASC participants as an important part of the social support they received from their foster families; in the case of U2, part of the importance resulted from the indication it gave that the relationships would endure after he left foster care (Quotation 2j; Table 6.3c).

Table 6.3c UASC's perceptions of reciprocal relationships in the foster family

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Feeling a genuine part of a positive family environment	Reciprocity	**Quotation 2g U1** *U1: But they [foster carers] help me more to be honest, you know? I can help them any time, you know? I can help them if they ask me something that I can do for them so that could be any day, any night. Can you do this for me? And I won't say, no, I'm tired, I'm sleeping – I come straight away.* *KT: Mmmm….so it works both ways doesn't it? So you would do anything for them.* *U1: Yes, because they have done a lot of stuff for me. So many things, you know.*
		Quotation 2h U2 *And I feel the same as well, like, I don't know…some things I might do for them [foster carers] that I don't have to do maybe, do you know what I'm saying? But that's how it works doesn't it? That's the most important thing really.*
		Quotation 2i U2 *KT: Is there anything else about your foster siblings that makes them important to you?* *U2: Just like….the 'togetherness' yeah… I don't know, it's like – I know that if I'm in some sort of trouble then they'll be there for me and I know that if they're in some sort of trouble then I'll be there for them. And like, if they're going through something difficult then I'll be there to support them. Do you know what I'm saying? It's like – know that even if I like, move out from here, I'll still have, like this good contact and good relationship with them [foster siblings and FCs], do you know what I'm saying? Cos, like we've lived together for like 5, 6 years now, so it's not going to go away, do you know what I'm saying?*

6.3.4 Summary

Being included in a positive family atmosphere had various outcomes for the UASC. The laughter and social companionship initially helped them to 'buffer' against loneliness and stimulated an initial sense of belonging to the family (Farmbrough, 2014). However, in line with Brar-Josan's (2012) 'feeling comfortable', 'feeling accepted' and 'sense of purpose' belonging pathways, the sense of belonging and connectedness to their family grew over time as they formed deep, meaningful and reciprocal 'family-like' relationships (Sirriyeh, 2013) which, like true affectional bonds (Crittenden, 2005), UASC were confident would endure once they left the family home. Consistent with Golding's (2008) theory of 'secure base' development for children in care and Wade et al.'s (2012) findings with FCs, the formation and deepening of these relationships was, at least in part, mediated through UASC perceiving that their FCs were attuned to their needs and accepting of them, and that they valued the young person as part of their family.

The reciprocity that UASC attested to in 'Time 2' additionally gives further indication of a growing sense of reciprocal reliance in UASC's relationships with their foster family (Cialdini, 1993; Maslow, 1987). Harnessing an attachment framework, it could be hypothesised that this was further mediated through the responsive care that UASC experienced which helped them to redress negative representations of relationships that may have evolved from traumatic interpersonal experiences on their journeys (Crittenden, 2003).

The comments made by U2 about his future education indicate his FCs were additionally having some success in deploying both Farmer et al.'s (2004) second strategy ('*supporting young people's emerging sense of mastery and control*'), and elements of the A-SPS (Joussemet et al., 2008) in that they were communicating to him that he had the skill and

freedom to make choices about his future. In turn, this appears to have enhanced his sense of autonomy, self-belief and efficacy (Smyth et al., 2015). It could therefore be concluded that, in addition to 'buffering', interactions with the foster family were helping UASC to cope through 'main effect' support including generating a sense of stability and providing positive experiences as well as enhancing self-worth (House et al., 1988).

6.4 Theme 3: Spending time and forming connections with peers

After those with their foster families, relationships with friends were of particular importance to the UASC. In addition to the benefits of social companionship, these relationships had the additional function of supporting UASC in remaining positive and helping them to reconnect with a sense of competence.

6.4.1 Social companionship

U1 recalled that during his first months in England, he did everything with 'Friend R', who he had met on his journey to England. His musing on this, that 'it's nice to do things with friends' (Quotation 3a; Table 6.4a), could be understood in the context of his previously presented comment that spending time with his foster family helped him to buffer against loss and isolation as it meant that he was not 'alone'. Similarly, during his first months of settlement, some of the most important people to U3 were a group of UASC whom he spent time with at a youth club and he described the importance of other Afghan UASC particularly in terms of being able to communicate easily in Pashtu with them (Quotation 3b; Table 6.4a). These occurrences support Kohli and Mather's (2003) and Wade et al.'s (2012) conclusions about the importance of social companionship during the early period of settlement and the particular value of spending time with others from the same country of origin as well as other UASC.

Conversely however, U2 maintained that from the start of his time in England, he formed peer relationships with and spent time with those with whom he 'clicked'. To him, this process of 'clicking' appeared to be governed by recognition of shared characteristics other than those directly linked to cultural, religious or experiential similarities (Quotation 3c; Table 6.4a) and all the same-aged peers that he identified as 'important' were born in England. Unlike U1 and U3, U2 already spoke 'quite good' English on arrival to England and therefore it is possible that one reason for the young people's different experiences of forming peer relationships on first arrival to England was differing competence in communicating with English speakers.

Table 6.4a UASC's experiences of social companionship

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Spending time and forming connections with peers	Social companionship	**Quotation 3a U1** *We had the same friends together, we meet together, go out together, come back together…it's nice to do things with friends.*
		Quotation 3b U3 *U3: Yeah, yeah, I have Afghani friends cos I used to go Youth Club, innit, used to play football in there and basketball and everything and that…and I found them there. There used to come people from Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, everywhere. But then these (other people who he met at the Youth Centre) – they're good people, yeah – I still meet up with them sometimes.* *KT: Is there anything different though about your friends who are Afghani? Is there anything different about why they are important?* *U3: We're all the same to be honest with you – all the same…Yeah, at first cos I couldn't speak any English, yeah.*
		Quotation 3c U2 *I've got Muslim friends as well…other friends as well but it's not about religion or background or any of that, if you click with someone then it just happens.*
		Quotation 3d U2 *KT: So when you go out then, where do you go, what do you do?* *U2: Loads of places – they drive now, so it's even easier to go places. So like in the summer a couple of months ago, we went Bournemouth…Not only him and me but 6, 7 other boys. We went Bournemouth. Like chilling out with Friend A and that…we go Leicester all the time and like cinemas, bowling, all the time…* *KT: Lots of things* *U2: Yeah, like 2 weeks ago we went to this party, whatever, laughing and joking, do you know what I'm saying? It's alright. Like, I feel particularly with the space of time – I've made good friends, formed a good connection I guess…. You get to know people through people. That's the best thing.*

All three UASC recounted the ongoing importance of spending some of their leisure time with their friends. U2 appreciated that this time helped him to deepen his social connections and expand his social networks (Quotation 3d; Table 6.4a). Additionally, although he does not make this explicit, it is possible that U2's frequent mentions of 'laughing, joking' could be interpreted in the context of Thommessen et al.'s (2017) theory that time spent in the company of others continued to have an important function in the enhancing of mood to escape from distress years after arrival.

6.4.2 Responsibility

Table 6.4b UASC's experiences of responsibility in their friendships

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Spending time and forming connections with peers	Responsibility	**Quotation 3d U1** *Then we [friends] come together and where we can help each other, we help each other.*
		Quotation 3e U2 *KT: So when you first met Friend T, what was it that drew you two together?* *U2: What it was, was that, I don't know if you can tell, but I was kind of…loud, like I was quite loud in school. Not even that, but I was quite outgoing – I'd talk to everyone and anyone (laughs). I'm confident as well so it's fine…and he was like, quite reserved and quiet and stuff…and you know how they say that, like, opposites attract and stuff, so I was like his confidence booster, like I'm here for you. But then this one (Friend O) is like another level …he's like that friend, yeah, who you need to take care of cos otherwise he'll go off the rails, do you know what I'm saying? But he's a good friend and he'll be there for you.*

Similar to their relationships with their foster family, U1 (Quotation 3d; Table 6.4b) and U2 (Quotation 3e; Table 6.4b) described reciprocity as a key maintaining factor for their important peer relationships. Additionally however, U2 identified that a significant reason for the formation and maintenance of his relationships with two of his friends was that he was a responsible role model for them. This could be understood in the context of Deci and Ryan's (2008a) theory that being able to help others is a key facet of social connectedness. U2 spoke

of this role with pride which may be due to the sense of competency that UASC can derive from being able to help others (Groark et al., 2010).

6.4.3 Summary

UASC's formation of reciprocal peer relationships was mediated by numerous factors, including having opportunities to spend time and have fun together, sharing important skills and characteristics, such as language or more individual personality traits, and, for U2, having the opportunity to look after others. This is consistent with findings that having 'common ground' and opportunities to 'hang out' are important mediators of adolescent friendship formation (Blatchford, 1998; Scholte and Van Aken, 2008).

Social companionship appeared to be an important function of these relationships and there is tentative evidence to support Farmbrough's (2014) assertion that this continued to fulfil an important 'buffering' function beyond the initial stages of settlement as well as form the basis for the development of real connections. Additionally, it is possible that U2's relationships were providing him with indirect 'main effect' support (House et al., 1988) through providing him with the opportunity be a responsible role model for his friends, thereby enhancing his sense of control, competence and self-worth (Groark et al., 2010; Goodman, 2010).

6.5 Theme 4: Sharing previous experiences

It appeared important to all the UASC participants that others knew about and understood their experiences prior to arrival in England. These people included those who had been on the same or a similar journey and others whom UASC trusted and with whom they chose to share their stories.

6.5.1 Experiencing a similar journey

Of the three UASC, only U1 mentioned an enduring relationship with someone whom he had met on his journey. When asked why this person ('Friend R') continued to be important to him, U1 stated that they had had 'a *big* journey' and 'a long journey…*together'* (Quotation 4a; Table 6.5). Although this was not made explicit, I interpreted his emphasis on the words 'big' and 'together' in the context of Goodman's (2004) concept of 'collectivity', as indicating that one thing that bound them together was the fact that they had both experienced the same journey. It is possible that U3's assertion that his Afghan UASC friends were important to him because they were '*the same*' (Quotation 3b; Table 6.4a) implies that to him, a key component of their relationship was that he recognised a similarity between their backgrounds and experiences, although this is not made explicit and could have been a reference to other cultural and linguistic congruences.

6.5.2 Sharing experiences with others whom UASC trust

Of the three UASC, only U2 made a (non-verbal) reference to his mental state during his first few years in England (Quotation 4b; Table 6.5). He made no mention of UASC friends, however, talking to those he trusted, including his Head of House, his FCs and English friends did appear to be an important coping mechanism for him. Although the topic of this 'talking' included factors related to his present situation in England, he had also chosen to share his story with his FCs and close friends (Quotation 4c; Table 6.5). In this way, although these individuals had not experienced a similar journey themselves, they would be able to act as a 'therapeutic witness' to U2's pain and suffering (Blackwell, 2001).

Table 6.5 UASC's perceptions of sharing previous experiences		
Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Illustrative quotations**
Sharing previous experiences	Experiencing a similar journey	**Quotation 4a U1** *U1: We came to UK together, we went to Wales together, we went to [first English city] together and we was here together as well. We had a long journey…<u>together</u>. We are friends, yeah. He was living with me as well but now he is gone.* *KT: Ah, okay so he was living with you but he's not any more.* *U1: Yeah, he is coming back in a bit. He is on holiday now. So he's a friend, you know that, a friend. He's a good friend as well…Yeah, me and him had a <u>big</u> journey.*
	Sharing experiences with others whom UASC trust	**Quotation 4b U2** *You've got to remember that when I first came here, I wasn't really [grimaces and touches head]…*
		Quotation 4c U2 *…lots of people from school and stuff, they don't even know, they probably see that he's been here a long time cos you don't go off asking people….Like Friend T knows, Friend T, Friend O, Friend A they know, like they're my close friends – they do know a lot, <u>a lot</u> of things about me…what I've been through, do you know what I'm saying?*

6.5.3 Summary

There is some tentative evidence that a key function of the important people in the lives of the three UASC is that they were able to understand and be a witness, therapeutic or otherwise, to the difficulties that they had previously experienced, and the UASC gained some form of comfort and a sense that they were not suffering alone from this (Goodman, 2004). In the instances of relationships with other UASC, this shared history appeared to mediate the initial formation and deepening of connections.

However, U2 told his story to those non-UASC with whom he had already formed intimate relationships: his FCs and 'close' friends. Sirriyeh (2013) argues that UASC may require a higher degree of emotional resilience to talk about their past with non-UASC than other UASC, and this is only made possible within the context of trusting and emotionally reliant relationships. That U2 was able to talk to his FCs and 'close' friends about his past therefore

indicates that the genuine care and deepening connections he had experienced from both groups had mediated the forming of mutual trusting relationships within which he felt safe and emotionally stable enough to recall and begin to make sense of his experiences.

6.6 Theme 5: Integrating and adapting

An important factor in the formation, development and function of UASC's relationships was the mediation of participants' experiences of integration into life in England, a process which can be understood in the context of psychological acculturation and adaptation. Consequently, the following discussion of Theme 5 is also related to RQ3: *How do these relationships mediate UASC's experiences of psychological acculturation and adaption within a multicultural environment?*

Comparing UASC's explanations about the important functions of key people in their lives at 'Time 1' and 'Time 2' indicated that, similar to Ho's (1995, cited in Berry, 2017) and Berry et al.'s (2006) findings, participants' acculturation strategies had changed during the time that they had been in their country of settlement, from an initial emphasis on cultural maintenance and retention of their ethnic culture to a more 'integrated' attitude that combined elements of cultural maintenance with a desire to become involved in the larger society ('contact and participation').

Despite this, each UASC had individual attitudes towards, and experiences of, acculturation (Berry and Sam, 1997), which was further evidenced in their responses to the Acculturation Questionnaire (see Table 6.6). At the point of data collection, U3 appeared to have the most purely integrated attitude, with U2 placing slightly more emphasis on contact and participation, and U1 on cultural maintenance. There was some consistency between these

attitudes and the people who participants identified as most important to them at 'Time 2' outside of the foster family: U3 described his school and college friends as 'English', but stated that he still saw his UASC friends from the youth group; U2's Friends T, O and A were all British born although from Muslim families of Asian heritage, and U1's Friends I, M and A were all Afghan UASC.

The ways in which both these and other key people supported the UASC to retain elements of their ethnic culture are detailed in Theme 5a ('cultural continuation'), whilst their role in helping them fit in and become involved with the larger society are investigated in Theme 5b ('fitting in').

Table 6.6 UASC participants' responses to the Acculturation Questionnaire.

Question/ Acculturation indication area	**Participant's response indicating integration, separation, marginalisation or assimilation strategies.**		
	U1	**U2**	**U3**
1. Social activities	integration	integration	integration
2. Friendships	separation	integration	integration
3. Language	integration	assimilation	integration
4. Cultural traditions	separation	integration	integration
Overall indicated acculturation attitude	integration/ separation (importance of both cultural maintenance and contact and participation with greater emphasis on the former)	integration/ assimilation (importance of both cultural maintenance and contact and participation with greater emphasis on the latter)	integration (equal importance of both cultural maintenance and contact and participation)

6.6.1 Theme 5a: Cultural continuation

Maegusuku-Hewett et al. (2007) identified that cultural continuation was especially important for UASC's emotional wellbeing during the initial stages of settlement and certainly, all three UASC noted the value of spending time with people who were of the same or similar

cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds during their first few years in England. In addition to the family atmosphere, U1 reported that he had felt immediately comfortable with his current FCs (F1 and F2) because they, unlike his previous carers, were Muslim and of Pakistani heritage, which meant there were similarities between the festivals they celebrated and cultural routines they followed (Quotation 5a; Table 6.7a). U3 also remarked on the 'sameness' between himself and his foster parents, and, as previously mentioned, additionally identified this as important in his relationships with his Afghan UASC friends (Quotation 3b; Table 6.4a, and Quotation 5b; Table 6.7a). Furthermore, despite describing the process of forming friendships with peers at the start of his time in England in non-cultural terms, U2 also explained that living with his Bangladeshi family friends when he first arrived in England set a good 'foundation' because he understood their language and culture, which gave him a 'link to home and who I am' (Quotation 5c; Table 6.7a),

Table 6.7a UASC's perceptions of the role of others in facilitating cultural continuation I.

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Integrating and adapting	Cultural continuation	**Quotation 5a U1** *KT: Okay, so what I would really like to do would be to go back to when you first met F1 and F2. I know that it was a long time ago…So what was it about them that made you want to stay?* *U1: Important yeah? Hmm…..down there [in previous foster placement], I was living with a family from here…. that was not Muslim….Here, we have the same food, so we eat in…we have the same, we have the same and they are Muslim as well so religion was the same as well.*
		Quotation 5b U3 *U3: Cos you know, Aunty, yeah – she cooks nice food, yeah – really nice food.* *KT: Does she cook you Afghani food?* *U3: No, Pakistani and Afghani are the same.* *KT: So food that you're familiar with.* *U3: Food, yeah, same everything - everything is the same.*
		Quotation 5c U2 *U2: …and obviously, he [family friend] was Bengali as well so that helped as well because it meant that I wasn't straight away put into, like a family where I don't understand that language or culture, do you know what I'm saying? It was like, he was like…..they could understand what I was saying, do you know what I'm saying? They'll eat the same food as I eat, do you know what I'm saying? So that was a good start, I guess. They set the foundation, I guess.* *KT: What a brilliant way of putting it….so you kind of feel?* *U2:…a link to home and who I am.*

Consistent with Phinney's theory of ethnic identity, interacting with those of similar cultural backgrounds within the first months of settlement therefore appears to have had the potential to validate the UASC's ethnic identities through allowing them to experience a continued sense of self and a perceived sense of fitting and belonging with others of a similar ethnic culture. It is indicated that this process had the potential to begin to compensate for the loss of participants' homelands and evoked a sense of continuity and stability (Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010). Furthermore, U1's and U3's comments about their FCs support Raghallaigh's (2013) finding that cultural continuity can still be naturally facilitated where FCs were of a similar, rather than an identical heritage.

Consistent with Maegusuku-Hewitt et al.'s (2007) theory, U2 stated that at the time of data collection, six years after he had arrived in England, it was no longer as important to be surrounded by others who supported his ethnic identity; his FCs and closest friends were Muslim, which meant that he could attend Mosque with them (Quotation 5d; Table 6.7b), but he did not perceive their shared religion to be an important mediator in the formation or development of their relationships.

However, for U1, cultural similarity did appear to still be a defining mediator in his relationships twelve years after his arrival in England, which paralleled Smyth's (2015) findings with UASC who had been in Ireland ten years. At the time of data collection, U1 indicated that he had retained many traditional Afghani ethnic values, such as not smoking or drinking. His closest friends were other Afghans who shared these values and U1 explained that he would never be close to those whose values did not 'match' (Quotation 5e; Table 6.7b).

Table 6.7b UASC's perceptions of the role of others in facilitating cultural continuation II		
Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Illustrative quotations**
Integrating and adapting	Cultural continuation	**Quotation 5d U2** *I mean, maybe we [FCs and friends] do [talk about religion] around about Ramadan…Sometimes he [Friend A] picks me up and we go prayers together.*
		Quotation 5e U1 *U1: And he's a really good guy…he does taxi, he's doing some pizza shops…and we worked together as well in one place as well, you know? For a few months. And then he started taxi. Good things about him: no smoking, no drinking, stable guy.* *KT: So you don't smoke, you don't drink?* *U1: I don't drink, no. And it's like about being there as well, so like, I am there for him as well. So you know when you're with nice people…all thing are coming good, you know both ways as well. If you have one good one and one bad one, you're never going to go a long way….Yes, and I have other friends too….. like [name], I met him in this house, He came here for 1 year, 2 year. But me and him, we didn't have that good relationship like I do with the others. Everything was separate. We spent time together and we hung out and watched movies and stuff but we were separate. It's completely different people. This one [referring to Friend B], he is a good boy. This one [name], he is okay with me but he like different life, I like different life. It wasn't matching.*

6.6.1.1 Theme 5a Summary

Berry's (2017) theory of acculturation and Phinney's (2014) theory of cultural identity propose that factors which facilitate cultural maintenance and an ethnic identity can enhance the emotional wellbeing of UASC. A mechanism through which the wellbeing of UASC in this study appeared to be enhanced included interactions with those of similar cultural backgrounds. This provided UASC with recourse to cultural symbols and practices and helped them develop a sense of belonging to the family and wider community, as well as to ethnic role models who assisted with UASC's maintenance of a continued sense of self in an otherwise changing context and mediated ongoing ethnic identity development (Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh, 2015). This appeared especially important to all UASC at the start of their settlement, however the relative importance of cultural similarities in mediating the development of relationships over time varied for each participant.

Smyth (2015) reported that during the middle of the time in which his participants had been in Ireland, many had been part of wide and culturally diverse social networks, but that UASC's relationships with those who were Irish-born had not endured due to deep-rooted cultural differences and UASC's ongoing uncertainties about their legal status which made it difficult for them to derive a sense of belonging with Irish peers. It is possible that a reason for the different attitudes that U1 and U2 displayed towards the importance of culture in relationship formation at the time of data collection was partly due to the differing amounts of time they had been in England: U2, having been in the country for six years, was in the 'middle period' of diverse social networks, whereas after 12 years, U1 felt the greatest sense of belonging with his Afghan peers. However, U1 made no mention of significant friends ever having included those other than Afghan-born peers, although as the interview organisation did not specifically ask him to discuss those who were important to him in his middle years in England, it cannot be concluded with certainty that this did not occur.

Moreover, U1 and U2's differing views about the important role of cultural similarities in the formation of relationships, and the need for these relationships to continue to support the maintenance of their ethnic identity appeared to derive from genuinely different attitudes about the extent to which they wanted to retain their ethnic culture and become involved with the wider society which they held from the start of their time in England. This is explored further in Theme 5b.

6.6.2 Theme 5b: Fitting in

All three UASC discussed how others had helped them to make 'behavioural changes' and thereby, fit in and participate with the wider society in the country of settlement. However, the depth of these changes varied with the young people's disparate acculturation strategies

and attitudes concerning 'intercultural adaptation', or the extent to which they perceived they should change themselves in order to form intercultural relationships (Berry, 2017).

6.6.2.1 Cultural adoption

Learning English was an important milestone for all the participants, however their perspectives about this process varied. U1 had appeared to view learning English as a functional necessity that initially allowed him to be less dependent on an interpreter, and he credited his development of this skill to English language teachers (Quotations 6a; Table 6.8a).

Table 6.8a UASC's perceptions of the role of others in facilitating cultural adoption I

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotations
Integrating and adapting	Fitting in: Cultural adoption	**Quotation 6a U1** *U1: While we were down there [in first placement], I couldn't speak English at all. I went to another centre here and the social worker was paying for it. I went for 2 hours, 3 hours and I learned English and that was it.* *KT: Was that helpful at school? Talking with the other children?* *U2: School- no. So when we had meetings and things, we always had an interpreter. And then I learned my English and so we cancelled the interpreter.*
		Quotation 6b U2 *Yeah, yeah. Most of my friends were born and brought up here really. But again that helps cos I feel that like, if I had decided to be around, like Bengali kids, like the same as me, who'd come from a different country, like we probably would have spoken in Bengali…and would have restricted me from learning about English and culture, do you know what I'm saying?*

Although the formation of social bonds was important to U2 and U3 when they first arrived in England, U2 with his family friends and U3 with his UASC friends, both explained that from early on, they had also deliberately aimed to befriend native English speakers (Wade et al., 2014). These people could provide instrumental and informational support by helping them learn English but also act as role models for how to behave and adapt to life in England (Craig, 2005; Quotations 6b; Table 6.8a).

U2 considered that one way in which his friends had helped him to adapt was that they had introduced him to English culture and music. However, he additionally volunteered in fairly defensive tones that he still also knew his ethnic values, culture and religion (Quotation 6c; Table 6.8b). This gives some indication that the 'cultural changes' he was making to his behaviour at a surface level were possibly also beginning to affect internal 'psychological changes' (Berry, 2017) but that, perhaps evocative of 'acculturation stress' (Berry, 2017), this was an anxiety provoking and complex process.

U3 had been in England for less time than U2 and his comments about English friends teaching him rules about 'how to live your life' possibly indicates that his behavioural changes were still at a superficial 'cultural change' level, although this was not explicitly explored. He did however, emit pride as he stated that after three years, he was able to teach 'the rules' to others (Quotation 6d; Table 6.8b), and it is possible that, similar to U2's previously discussed responsible role in supporting his friends, these occurrences supported a growing sense of competence (Groark et al., 2010; Thommessen et al., 2017).

Although the UASC mostly attributed their evolving understanding of their new culture to peers, which can be understood in the context of Erikson's (1959) theory that peers play an important role in mediating adolescents' identity development, there was also a small acknowledgement that the FCs were helping the boys to come into contact with traditional British customs as U3 explained that he liked it when they got a Christmas Tree (Quotation 6e; Table 6.8b).

Table 6.8b UASC's perceptions of the role of others in facilitating cultural adoption II.		
Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Illustrative quotations**
Integrating and adapting	Fitting in: Cultural adoption	**Quotation 6c U2** *And obviously, they've [friends] helped me through settling in as well cos, you know, it's different, like life back home, compared to here – do you know what I'm saying? Like things what we do is different to things back home, so like hanging out with them, like you see how they be, to adapt to the life here you know. So obviously, that helps as well, to adapt to life here really. Yeah, like everything, culture, music – like that all changes, like my music taste wasn't anything like the way it is now, like what it was before, do you know what I'm saying? Like all of that changes doesn't it as time goes…. I mean, that doesn't mean that I have forgotten my language, do you know what I'm saying? I still know my values, I still know my culture, I still know my religion – I respect all of that, do you know what I'm saying? Like, you know – it was important for me to adapt to this country as well. Yes, the culture to this country as well. Cos obviously, I consider myself to be British or whatever…so it was important that from the start I decided to make friends with people who were English…and I fitted in quite well (laughs).*
		Quotation 6d U3 *U3: I used to look at people….yeah, and copy them, do you know what I mean? Yeah, that's how you get knowledge of life. Cos when you go first to some country, for the first time yeah, you don't know what to do, you don't know the rules properly. When you go school, or go out with friends, yeah, you just go by yourself – that's what I did.* *KT: So who was it that you looked to copy then? Was it people at school….?* *U3: School, yeah - but copy good things, no bad things.* *KT: Yeah that's important. So what sort of good things did you copy do you think?* *U3: Just the rules – how the rules are here. And…how you live your life here…Not now, because I know the rules now really – what they're like here so I don't copy anyone now. People copy me now!*
		Quotation 6e U3 *U3: To be honest with you, I don't really celebrate Christmas, yeah, but I like it. I can't wait for it to come!* *KT: Do you get a tree?* *U3: A tree, yeah – just everything is nice in town.*

6.6.2.2 A diverse society

U2 reasoned that the highly culturally and ethnically diverse area of Middleworth that he lived in, with its 'good mix of everyone', had made it easier for him to fit in than if he had lived in a non-diverse area (Quotation 6f; Table 6.8c). This offers support for Phinney's (2014) theory that living in an area where there are smaller cultural, religious or visible differences between an immigrant and society members can minimise the potential for poor

intercultural relations and facilitate the immigrant's sense of being part of the wider society as well as their culture of origin.

Table 6.8c UASC's perceptions of Middleworth's multicultural society

Theme	Sub-theme	Illustrative quotation
Integrating and adapting	Fitting in: A diverse society	**Quotation 6f U2** *It's [Middleworth's] diverse, it's so diverse and that's a really good thing and that has helped me as well do you know what I'm saying? I feel like if I was in an area that was predominantly White people or predominantly black people then I would probably find it difficult to fit in, do you know what I'm saying? But here, there's a good mix of every one…every kind, do you know what I'm saying? So it's kind of easy – you get to know people through people. That's the best thing.*

6.6.2.3 Theme 5b Summary

All three UASC had taken steps to 'fit in' to differing degrees with the wider community in their country of settlement and important people in their lives had supported this process. Whereas U1 described the practical support of teachers in helping him learn English, U2 and U3 deliberately formed social bridges with peers in order to accumulate cultural capital (Wells, 2011). Harnessing social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1999), it could be understood that UASC were able to internalise culturally acceptable norms and practices through observing their peers, and this subsequently generated a sense of mastery, and the modification of values. Furthermore, as the society of Middleworth was culturally and ethnically diverse, there appeared to be more than one way in which the UASC could 'fit'; this is explored further in the following section.

6.6.3 Theme 5 Summary

According to Berry's (2017) conceptualisation of acculturation, it can be surmised that, at the time of data collection, all three UASC participants were harnessing integrative acculturation strategies that included some combination of 'cultural maintenance' and 'contact and participation'. Despite this, they retained different attitudes about the extent to which they

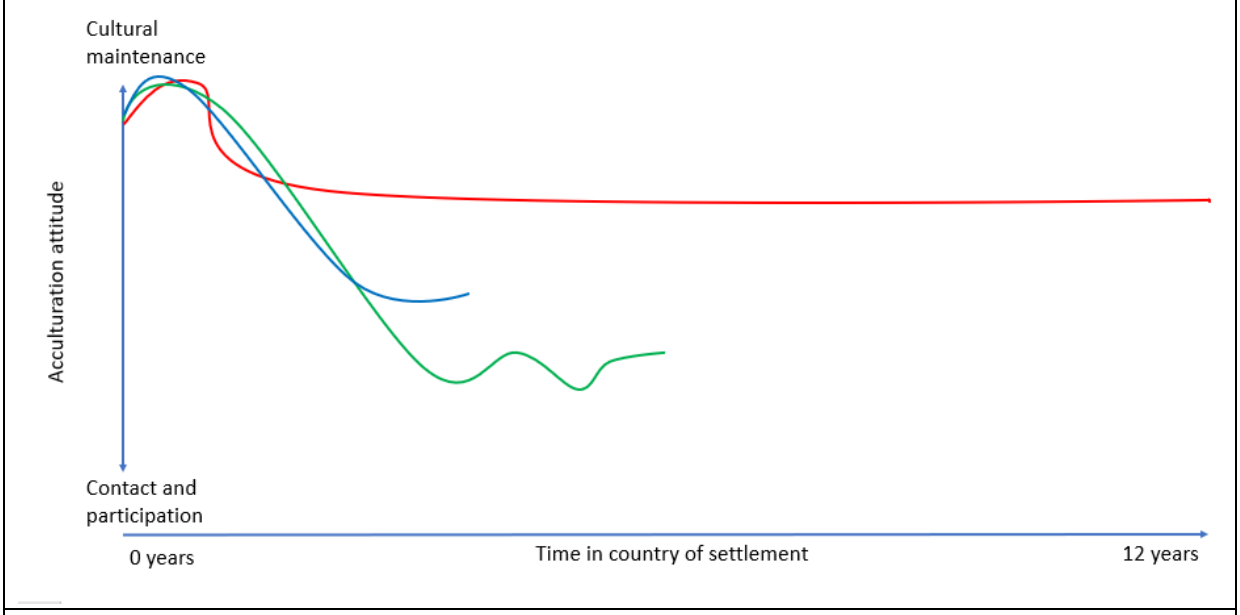
wanted to retain their ethnic culture and become involved with the wider society, which had led to: different priorities regarding the extent of their cultural and psychological changes; different views about how they perceived they should change themselves to accommodate those who were culturally different (intercultural adaptation), and different experiences of coping with daily intercultural living (sociocultural adaptation) and resultant emotional wellbeing (psychological adaptation). What is known about their individual acculturation 'journeys' is broadly summarised in Figure 6.2. A universal finding, however, was that a key function of the important people in the young people's lives was that they helped and mediated UASC's connection to the way that they wanted to live their lives, culturally.

To differing degrees, it was important for all three participants to make superficial 'cultural changes' and gain cultural capital through being shown how to act in order to 'fit in' with the pervasive society of settlement and (as was referenced in Theme 1) by being supported to make contact with national infrastructure, such as places of education. U2's comments during his interview indicated that such behavioural modifications had also led to acculturation stress as he began to make 'psychological changes', and this occurrence was also reported on by F1 during the focus group. However, F1 perceived that U2 had recently appeared more emotionally robust indicating that he was working towards a level of psychological adaptation ('feeling well').

Contrary to the findings reported by Groark et al. (2010) and Thommessen et al. (2017), it was also important for all the UASC to have people in their lives who could facilitate the maintenance of their own ethnic culture and identity through sharing traditional cultural and religious practices and values. For U2 and U3, this had been especially important in

maintaining their sense of wellbeing during their initial stages of settlement, whereas for U1 it continued to be important to the point of data collection.

Figure 6.2 UASC participants' preferences for involvement in the culture of origin (cultural maintenance) and culture of settlement (contact and participation) over time.



Key and explanation

U1: 10 – 22 years old (12 years in England)

- The maintenance of his traditional Afghani ethnic values has continued to be important to U1, although he did make 'cultural changes' in the first years of living in England, including learning English, beginning to eat some Western food and dressing in Western clothes.

U2: 13 – 19 years old (6 years in England)

- During the first year in England, it was important for U2 to experience cultural continuity and preserve his ethnic identity.
- Soon after arrival however, he also began to seek out opportunities to make 'cultural changes' and develop his understanding of English language and culture. He implied that this may have led to some 'acculturation stress' and 'psychological changes' as the new practices and values conflicted with the old.

U3: 14 – 17 years old (3 years in England)

- It has continued to be important for U3 to experience cultural continuity and be surrounded by people who are culturally 'the same'.
- However, soon after arrival, he, like U2, deliberately sought out opportunities to develop his understanding of England language and 'rules' and consequently experienced 'cultural changes'. He gave no indication that these changes had yet resulted in significant 'psychological changes'.

Middleworth is a very ethnically and culturally diverse LA and U2 perceived that in the area he lived, there was not a dominant cultural group (Quotation 6f; Table 6.8c). However, one of

the larger groups is a British-Islamic-Asian community who, I understand from my work within this community during the last three years, integrate traditional 'English' and traditional Muslim and Asian values and practices to various degrees. The young people's foster family acted as a microcosm of this community, where F1 and F2, 'born and bred' in England, spoke English in the house, possessed considerable social and cultural capital, and marked English religious and cultural occasions such as Christmas. However, their Islamic-Asian family heritage was evidenced in the food they cooked and their maintenance of their faith and its practices, such as the festivals they observed. Consequently, the UASC were facilitated in their sociocultural adaptation and evolving sense of competence as the skills they needed to carry out activities of daily living in their local community had greater resemblance to those of their countries of origin than if they lived in a completely White British area. Furthermore, it could be argued that a contributing factor to all UASC demonstrating some degree of 'integration attitude' was that their FCs and members of the wider community provided role models of integration which influenced UASC's perceptions of how to assume an adult identity and role in England (Erikson, 1968).

However, the diversity within the population of Middleworth, and within the British-Islamic-Asian community, also appears to have created a sociocultural context whereby the young people had choices when it came to developing a sense of 'fitting in' and belonging with a particular sub-group of society. This facilitated U1 and U2's abilities to construct and negotiate different bicultural identities that were consistent with their acculturation attitudes and aspirations of intercultural adaption whilst both stating, as they did during the interviews, that they considered themselves to be 'British'. Less is known about U3's conception of his cultural identity, although he did appear to have attained some sense of national identity as he

referred to England as his ‘second country’. It is possible that these differences are due to the shorter amount of time that U3 had been in England for.

Previous researchers have proposed that there is not yet a clear understanding of the role of culture in UASC’s experiences (Carlson et al., 2012). However, these different pathways to a sense of stability and belonging give further understanding related to Maegusuku-Hewitt et al.’s (2007) theory that there may be plural acculturation pathways through which migrants can achieve psychological adaptation and emotional wellbeing. It has been hypothesised that when there is not one dominant culture within a society of settlement, migrants have different options as to the national identities they may assume (Verdasco, 2018). From the findings of this current research, it could be tentatively suggested that within a multicultural community of settlement such as Middleworth, there may also be options about *how* these specific national identities are constructed.

6.7 Chapter conclusion

All three UASC identified that the important people in their lives since arriving in England had assisted them in feeling well and settling. Who the important people were varied both over time and between individual UASC as the young people’s needs evolved and they encountered a broader spectrum of society. Within the first year of settlement, UASC identified a higher proportion of professionals such as social workers and teachers as *most* important, whereas at the time of data collection, friends and the foster family were more frequently identified.

6.7.1 The development and sustainability of relationships

UASC mostly attributed the importance of social workers and teachers to their provision of

essential instrumental and informational support aimed at meeting the UASC's basic needs and helping them to access services. Apart from U2's teacher, the UASC did not appear to form significant attachments to these people and their relationships were defined in purely practical and professional terms. However, deeper relationships with other important people were developed and sustained through a range of different mechanisms.

Having the opportunity to spend time together and have fun appeared to be important to the UASC's burgeoning relationships with friends and foster siblings. Additionally, relationship formation appeared to be mediated through UASC's identification of similarities between themselves and others, including religion, language, cultural traditions, favourite pastimes, values and experiences. Similarities of a cultural, linguistic and experiential nature appeared especially important to all participants during the first year of settlement and mediated the formation of some of their additional key relationships during this time: U1's journey companion, 'Friend R'; U2's Bangladeshi family friend and U3's Afghan UASC youth club friends. Such similarities continued to be important facilitators for UASC's relationships beyond their first year, for example, with their culturally similar FCs. However, especially in the case of peers, what became increasingly important was UASC identifying parallels between their aspirations for how they wanted to live their lives and others who affirmed and modelled this.

From the focus group, it was evident that F1 and F2 genuinely cared for their UASC foster children and viewed them as one of their family. As the FCs intended, this was communicated to the UASC through their FCs 'opening their hearts and homes', which included being attuned to what was important to the young people, being responsive to this, helping them make sense of information and including them in family routines. Further to

FCs views, U1 also cited FCs' use of 'claiming behaviours' (Golding, 2008) in mediating his sense of belonging to the family. As can be understood through developmental models of attachment and relationships (e.g. Bowlby, 1998; Crittenden, 2005), such attuned and responsive behaviours were key facilitators in the development of reciprocal affectional bonds between UASC and FCs.

Reciprocity was also a key maintaining factor within U1's and U2's significant friendships (Cialdini, 1993). In addition to the recognition of similarities between themselves and peers, these relationships were maintained through UASC perceiving that their friends also genuinely cared and were 'there for them'.

6.7.2 The function of relationships

Consistent with Thoits' (1995) and House et al.'s (1988) theories of social support, different people appeared to perform a range of different functions which, directly and indirectly, helped UASC to cope through reconciling past experiences and adapting to their new country.

Social companionship and inclusion in a positive social environment were enduring functions that UASC attributed to their important relationships and there is some indication that, in the early stages of settlement, this helped UASC to develop an initial sense of 'social connectedness' and 'buffer' against loneliness and uncertainty. Whereas Groark et al. (2010) theorised that peers usually played the key role in this buffering, findings from this study indicate that spending time with the foster family could also have a similar effect (Farmbrough, 2014).

There are indications that functions of the mutual, trusting attachment relationships that UASC formed with FCs and close friends also included the enhancement of their sense of safety, stability and emotional security (Bowlby, 1998). For U2, one way in which this latter function was characterised was in having the emotional resilience to recall his story with his closest friends and FCs, and this verifies the FC focus group participants' perceptions that where UASC trusted others, they would be more open with them. That U2 was able to talk to friends and FCs about such personal matters indicates that the emotional security he derived from these trusted people may have facilitated his attaining a point of 'stabilisation' where he was able to begin to come to terms with his losses and begin to move forward (Herman, 1997). The depth of relationships within the foster family also mediated UASC's perceptions that they were experiencing a 'family-like' placement.

A further way in which peers and the foster family mediated UASC's growing sense of stability and belonging was through the support they gave in relation to UASC's acculturation process and evolution of their cultural identity. Although the three UASC navigated this process and constructed their cultural identity in different ways, there are some similarities in the way in which others supported them. During the first year of settlement, 'social bonds' were important in helping the UASC retain a sense of continuity and connection to their ethnic identity (Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Phinney, 2014). However, increasingly but to differing degrees, 'social bridges' became important in transmitting cultural capital and helping the UASC to fit in. FCs perceived that one of their key roles, and an important facilitator in developing relationships with UASC, was to instruct UASC in the practices of their culture of settlement. UASC attributed their initial contact with cultural infrastructure to FCs and social workers, however, apart from this, U2 and U3 especially attributed most of their culture learning to the modelling of their peers. This can be

understood in the context of Erikson's (1959) theory that the need to belong to the peer group heightens during adolescence, and thus, at this developmental point, peers can play a significant role in the mediation of adolescent identity development.

Finally, contrary to Blackwell and Melzak's (2000) findings, this research supports the argument that important people can mediate UASC's evolving sense of control and self-efficacy. Previous adolescent migrant research has found that receiving support which enhances self-efficacy (Jerusalem and Mittag, 1995), and embodies elements of the A-SPS such as responsiveness and supporting a sense of choice and initiation (Downie et al., 2007), can mediate positive cultural adaptation. This research indicates that such support may also help UASC, a specific subgroup of adolescent migrants, to overcome the specific challenges and stressors that they face. Becoming competent in how things work in their new country, being provided with choices as to how to live their lives and having people around them who believed in their potential appeared to help UASC gain a sense of control, self-esteem (Groark et al., 2010) and autonomy which facilitated their abilities to move forward with their lives, as they wished, towards self-actualisation.

A concluding synthesis of these findings is proposed in Chapter 7.

7. Conclusion

This chapter begins with a concluding synthesis of the research findings. Limitations of the study and implications for EPs' practice and future research are subsequently considered.

7.1 Concluding synthesis

A significant inducement for the development of this research was the desire to understand how social support could be optimised to facilitate UASC wellbeing, settling and integration in Middleworth. This exploration of three UASC living in Middleworth in 2018 has found that these young people were assisted in working towards achieving these three outcomes through the social systems surrounding them providing an 'enabling context' (Farmbrough, 2014) that supported their reconciliation of past experiences, positive adaptation, self-actualisation and ability to live their lives in the way they chose, consistent with their differing senses of self. This process involved cultural adaptation, but, building on previous critics of Berry's (2017) acculturation theory, it has been seen that there were numerous other drivers of a psychological, developmental and emotional nature that supported UASC's progress towards 'feeling well'.

Although this study focused on exploring interpersonal interactions, it was found that these relations also constituted a 'connective tissue' (Ager and Strang, 2008) mediating UASC's interactions with symbols and infrastructure. Additionally, the nature of these interactions was influenced by wider systems including the broader community and culture. Such a compound web of inter-connected influences suggests that a useful framework through which to conceptualise the findings of this study may be an open systems theory, such as the 'Bioecological model of human development' (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006), which advocates that human development is mediated over time through reciprocal interactions that

occur between an individual and the people, objects and symbols within their immediate environments (the 'microsystem' and 'mesosystem') as well as between the individual and components of more distal systems, such as Home Office policy and the cultural context (the 'exosystem' and 'macrosystem'). Furthermore, the open systems theory concepts of 'equifinality' and 'multifinality' (Cicchetti and Rogosch, 1996; see Table 7.1) can support an understanding of how three young people who were part of the same 'nest' and had started on comparable major pathways as UASC seeking to build lives for themselves within the same city, with the same foster family, at not dissimilar times, were working towards this through routes that differed in places as they made individual choices about how they wanted to engage with the systems surrounding them.

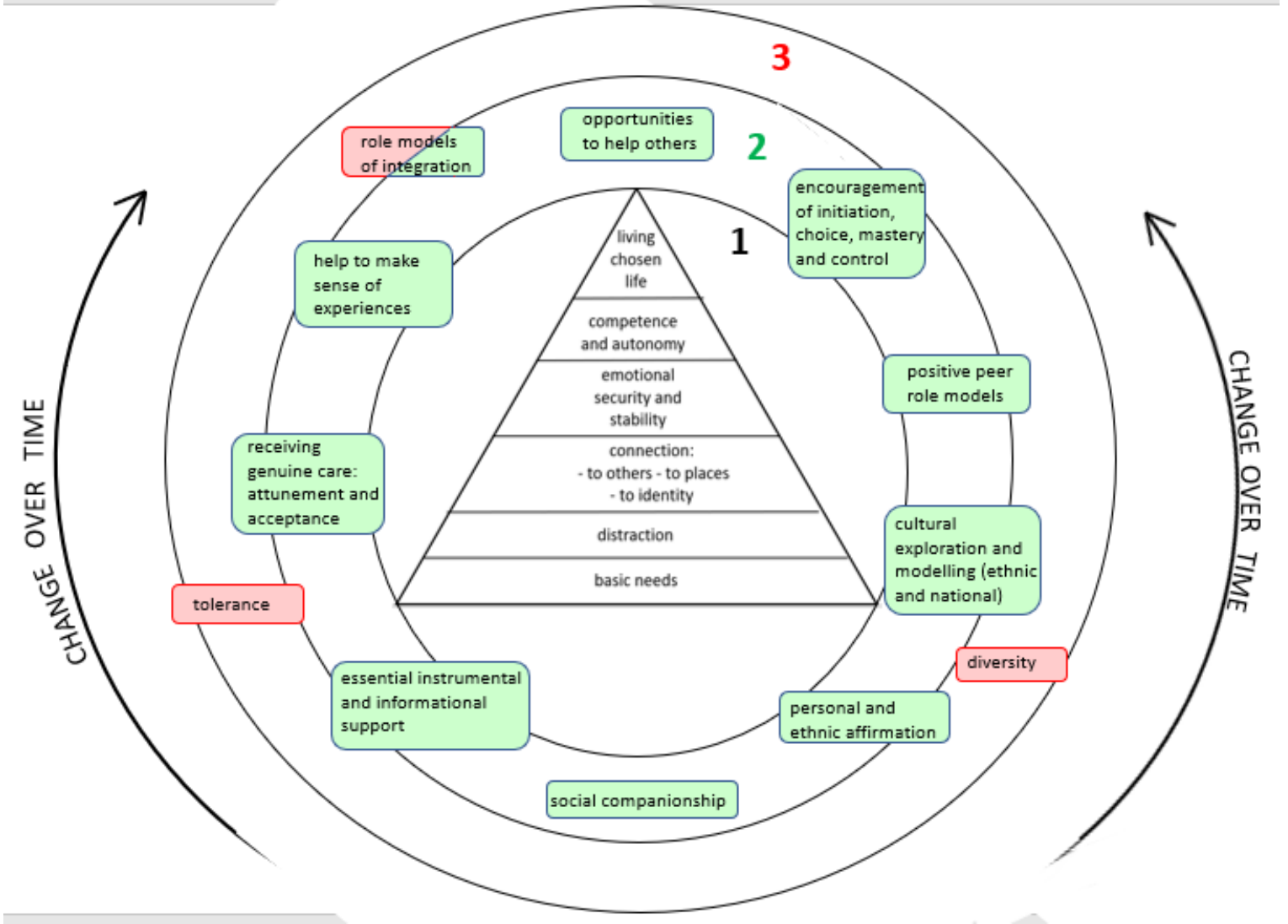
Table 7.1 Definitions of equifinality and multifinality (Cicchetti and Rogosch, 1996).

Concept	Definition
Equifinality	Within an open system, the same end can be reached from different initial conditions and through different pathways and interactions.
Multifinality	Within an open system, a particular event will not necessarily result in the same outcome as individuals make different choices about how to interact with the systems around them.

Figure 7.1 presents a concluding synthesis of the enabling context that UASC experienced, including the cultural environment and the type of support that their interpersonal interactions provided. It also suggests a pathway of needs that this context fulfilled for UASC over time which supported their progression towards learning to adapt successfully and 'live their chosen life'.

The outer system (red 'Section 3') identifies enabling components of the wider community and cultural environment that U2 described. Living within a society that is tolerant of diversity has previously been suggested as essential for migrants to develop a sense of bicultural identity and belonging in their new country, which all three participants appeared

Figure 7.1 Concluding synthesis of UASC's 'enabling context' and pathway to wellbeing, settling and integration.



Key

Section 1
A temporal pathway of key needs met through UASC's social interactions and which mediated their positive adaptation.

Section 2
Enabling products of UASC's interpersonal interactions which facilitated UASC's positive adaptation.

Section 3
Enabling components of the wider community and cultural environment which facilitated UASC's positive adaptation.

to be achieving to differing degrees (Berry et al., 2006, Phinney, 2014). From the findings from this study, it is hypothesised that where society is not just tolerant of diversity but diverse itself, this context may provide UASC with bicultural role models as well as facilitate options for how integration and belonging may be negotiated.

The inner system (green 'Section 2') describes the products of UASC's interactions with the important people in their lives in England that were identified as facilitators of their positive adaptation. Items' positions within the system correspond to their suggested temporal importance, beginning with social companionship as an initial concern during the early stages of settlement and ending in having opportunities to help others. However, as has been seen, different UASC required different progression pathways. Although drawn from the findings of this research, these facilitators all have a theoretical basis, including Erikson's (1959) theory of the role of peers in adolescent development (see Section 2.2.2.2.3), Golding's (2008) 'House Model of Parenting' (see Section 3.17.3), Farmer et al.'s (2001) strategies for supporting the development of fostered adolescents (see Section 3.1), the A-SPS (Joussemet et al., 2008; see Section 3.1.3), House et al.'s (1988) theory of the role of social support on wellbeing (see Section 3.2.2) and Berry et al.'s (2006) and Phinney's (2014) theories of acculturation and cultural identity (see Section 2.2.2.2).

The central pyramid identifies a temporal pathway of key needs that were met through UASC's interactions with their immediate and distal social environments, which contributed to their successful settling, integration and wellbeing. Harnessing 'equifinality', it can be understood that UASC will create their own unique route through the pathway and, consistent with Maslow's (1987) Hierarchy, with which there are some similarities in identified needs, it is not proposed that each need must be completely fulfilled before the individual is able to

progress to the next.

In her original conceptualisation of the ‘enabling context’, Farmbrough (2014) reasoned that important people facilitated UASC’s wellbeing through meeting the three essential psychological needs proposed within Self-Determination Theory: social connectedness, competence and autonomy. My pathway also acknowledges the importance of these needs and within the context of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2008a), it can be understood that their fulfilment enabled UASC to develop through internalising their social context: a process which allowed them to make sense of themselves and the world around them. This generated the potential to be ‘autonomy-orientated’; that is, act in a way that was consistent with their sense of self and do so in a way that harnessed a degree of social relatedness, rather than being ‘self-reliant’ and acting alone (Deci and Ryan, 2008a/b).

However, in order to attain this level of self-actualisation, the pathway also proposes the importance of preliminary considerations such as meeting basic needs and guarding against anxiety through distraction, the need to be connected to an evolving identity and generate a sense of emotional security and stability. This harnesses elements of Thoits’ (1995) and House et al.’s (1988) theories that social support can help individuals cope and attain a level of emotional wellbeing through providing ‘buffering’ alongside ‘main effects’ such as stability.

Groark et al. (2010) and Thommessen et al. (2017) hypothesised that a sense of emotional security and stability is required before UASC can work towards settling and integration, and this mirrors Ager and Strang (2008) suggestion that ‘safety and stability’, as well as ‘culture learning’, are primary facilitators of refugees’ successful integration. The findings from this

study endorse the importance of these facilitators. However, further than this, it is suggested that there were a range of additional mediating processes which supported three UASC in one particular area of Middleworth to attain the practical and psychological resources necessary to experience sufficient emotional wellbeing, reconnect with a sense of normalcy, make decisions, plan for the future that they wanted and live in a way that was consistent with their bicultural identity. In this way, they could reconnect with a personally meaningful developmental trajectory that had been interrupted by their experience of leaving their homeland and going into the world unaccompanied.

7.2 Limitations

Key limitations of this study's research design and methodology are presented below.

7.2.1 Research design

Limitations inherent in the research design relate to participant recruitment, the nested case study design and exploring change over time and social systems, as summarised in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Research design limitations.

Limit-ation	Details
Participant recruitment	*FCs*: All FCs had a family history of migration within the last few generations. Although this demographic of FCs may be representative of those who most frequently foster UASC (Rogers et al., 2018), it limited the extent to which findings could be drawn about experiences of forming relationships with UASC in a range of matched, semi-matched and unmatched placements.
	UASC: Previous researchers (e.g. Doggett, 2012) have considered that UASC's tendencies to be mistrusting and wary of having their views recorded have rendered them a 'hard to reach' population. Consistently, although there were approximately 130 UASC living in Middleworth at this time, only three UASC were recruited with-in the six-month data collection period, rather than the initial target number of 4-6. However, although this limited the range of views drawn, valuable understanding has been drawn from other peer-reviewed UASC research studies with small numbers of participants, such as Doggett (2012) whose doctoral research included only three participants, and Verdasco (2018) who conducted a case study of one UASC. *cont.…*

Nested case study	The nested case study design facilitated the detailed exploration of complex social phenomena related to one family context (Denscombe, 2014). However, this inevitably limited the potential of this study to explore the wide range of placements, experiences and cultural contexts that UASC can experience in Middleworth, or England more generally. Although it was never the aim of this research to claim generalisations from its findings, this context does limit the extent to which findings can be applied elsewhere in Middleworth or the rest of the country; for example, it should not be assumed that the same interpersonal support would mediate UASC's adoption of integration strategies in a non-diverse area, or without a 'family-like' foster placement. It has been important throughout the analysis to make frequent recourse to the findings of previous research in order to consider how the experiences of other UASC compare and judge to what extent legitimate theoretical generalisations can be made (Johnson, 1997; Robson, 2002).
Exploring change over time	This research was conducted as part of my doctoral studies and consequently, there was a fixed time frame within which it was required to be completed. In order to meet this requirement, it was necessary that UASC's perceptions of change over time were investigated retrospectively rather than longitudinally. The flexibility of the semi-structured interviews and the visual representations provided by the Social Connections Grids facilitated UASC in recalling key people, events and emotions at any point throughout the interview as they came to mind. Yet, it is possible that the reliability of the Time 1 data was compromised as UASC's memories from previous years may be incomplete, especially as the experience of traumatic events may cause difficulties with recall (Hart, 2009). Additionally, social systems within the 'middle' years were not specifically investigated.
Breadth of study	Choosing to focus on the role of their social support in helping UASC feel well and settle was informed by the need highlighted in my preliminary conversations with key Middleworth services as well as Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptualisation of social connections as the 'connective tissue' between different areas of integration. Although the influence of some of the symbols, infrastructure and capital that important people brought UASC into contact with have been analysed within this thesis, the primary focus on relationships has limited the extent to which a full range of resilience strategies that might help UASC cope has been explored.

7.2.2 Methodology

Limitations with the study's methods included the development of the interviewer-participant relationship and factors associated with qualitative analysis as well as the impact of steps taken to minimise the potential for causing UASC distress. These are explored in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Methodology limitations	
Limit-ation	**Details**
Trauma minimisation and management	Due to the ethical considerations outlined in Chapter 4, I was careful throughout the UASC interviews to contain risks of triggering upsetting memories through sensitive questioning and not asking about people and experiences prior to arrival in England (Vervliet et al., 2015). However, it is possible that this limited my ability to understand the mechanisms through which social influences affected the experiences of UASC in England as it is argued that investigations of relationship formation, cultural identity development and acculturation are maximised where there is also exploration of formative roles and relationships, or previous involvement in cultural practices (Berry, 1997; Farmbrough, 2014). Additionally, there is evidence that social media may allow people from the country of origin to continue to be very 'present' and influential in UASC's lives as they settle into their new country (Wells, 2011). However, I did not investigate this possibility with the UASC participants.
The interviewer-participant relationship	Two particular factors, related to a lack of similarity and familiarity, may have limited the extent to which UASC and FCs were open about their experiences: 1. It has been reasoned that participants may speak more openly with those with whom they perceive cultural, ethnic or religious similarities (Hopkins, 2008: Breakwell, 2012). As a White British female atheist with a southern English accent, there were many surface differences between me and FC and UASC participants. 2. Researchers have counselled that UASC research participants will talk most openly where they are familiar with the interviewer (Connolly, 2014). Despite initially aiming to recruit some participants from a Middleworth UASC group that I had been attending and offering young people the option for their participation to be mediated across numerous meetings (see Appendix 5b), which would facilitate our chance to get to know each other a little before data collection, the three UASC who consented to participate were not members of the UASC group and all opted to proceed with the data collection interview on our first meeting. It is possible that this resulted in the young people being more guarded in their responses to me than if we had met previously. Seeking ongoing involvement with participants should be a consideration for future researchers; this may also allow change over time to be explored longitudinally.
Data analysis	Qualitative analysis and the double hermeneutic process do involve subjectivity and it is probable therefore that my data could have been interpreted in multiple different ways, leading to different conclusions. For the steps taken to ensure the validity of my data analysis, see Sections 4.5 and 4.7.

7.3 Implications for EPs' practice

This study has supported previous findings that UASC's relationships with those in the different systems that surround them, such as foster family members, friends and teachers, can have invaluable roles in supporting UASC to work towards psychological wellbeing and self-actualisation. However, there are occasions when UASC do not get the support that they require (Roger et al., 2018) and this may be a consequence of relevant organisations, such as schools and FCs, not receiving specific training and assistance which then enables them to meet UASC's needs (Craig, 2015; Rogers et al., 2018).

It has been suggested that EPs are well placed to work systemically to develop the knowledge and expertise of the important people in UASC's lives (German, 2004) and thereby optimise UASC's social support. Within MEPS, this development work has recently begun to include consultation and training within the schools and colleges that UASC attend, as well as contributions to FC training. In response to the needs identified within this LA work, I have developed several key recommendations based upon my findings, with recourse also to the wider UASC literature. These recommendations are described in Table 7.4 and it is planned that they will continue to be harnessed by EPs in their planning and provision of support for UASC both in Middleworth and beyond as appropriate.

It is suggested that many of these recommendations are congruent with recent wider developments in public policy for social care and education, including an increased awareness of attachment and trauma-related issues for young people (Department of Health/ DfE, 2017).

Table 7.4 Recommendations for work with UASC	
Recommendation	**Details**
A hierarchy of needs	UASC are first and foremost young people who will likely be traversing similar developmental phases as their non-refugee peers as they seek to actualise their evolving adult identity. People in their lives can support the UASC by helping to fulfil a range of needs, which will change according to the stage of settlement that UASC have reached (see the central pathway in Figure 7.1). In schools, it is important that relationship formation, emotional security and the enhancement of competence and autonomy are prioritised in the first instance because, until these needs are met, it is unlikely that UASC will be ready to learn (Geddes, 2016).
Promoting emotional security and attachment	Forming attachment relationships can be an important, protective mechanism for UASC, and can be a significant facilitator of the formation of a 'family-like' foster placement. In order to assist with such relationship formation, it is important that others provide attuned, responsive care (Farmer et al., 2004), and in order to facilitate this, it may be helpful that specific instruction is given to key adults about common behavioural manifestations of stressors, cultural sensitivities and the processes involved in, and difficulties around, gaining Refugee Status. Narrative approaches, such as 'Talking Stones' (Wearmouth, 2004) and 'The Tree of Life' (Ncube, 2006) may provide opportunities for UASC to talk about their past experiences with adults who may otherwise feel uncertain about how to respond to such conversations (Hulusi and Oland, 2010; Hughes and Rees, 2008).
Encouraging autonomy, mastery and control	In order to encourage UASC's evolving sense of autonomy, mastery and control, it may be helpful for key adults to set clear boundaries that UASC understand the reasoning behind, as well as promoting opportunities for initiation and choice. It may also be helpful for UASC to have opportunities to have responsibilities and/or assume a position where they can be the expert.
Supporting UASC's cultural identity negotiation	Culture is not a static entity (Kohli and Mather, 2003); as such, UASC will seek their own individual way of adjusting to life in their new country and negotiating the evolution of their cultural identity and sense of belonging in a way that is meaningful to them. Those working with UASC should provide opportunities for the young people to maintain and explore their culture of origin as well as facilitate the transmission of cultural capital. *cont…*

Creating diverse social networks	Different people will have different roles in providing UASC with different types of support (Thoits, 1995). In order to support UASC's settling and integration, it will be helpful for key adults to help UASC expand their social networks to enable them to form social bridges and bonds, friendships with peers (discussed further below), and where possible, connections with those who can provide role models of integration. This may be more challenging in non-multicultural areas (Doggett, 2012). It should be noted however, that the ethnicity of others should not limit the nature of the support they can offer; for example, semi/un-matched foster carers can facilitate cultural continuation through taking an interest in the UASC's country and culture of origin.
Forming friendships	Opportunities should be found for UASC to spend time and have fun with a range of different peers (for example, in school extra-curricular clubs; in UASC youth groups). This may serve the purposes of distracting UASC from uncomfortable thoughts, instigating meaningful connections and providing UASC with models of how to 'fit in'.
Self-care	Working with young people who have had traumatic experiences can be emotionally taxing. It is therefore important that key adults actively practise self-care through being reflective and reflexive, taking time for themselves and seeking further support where necessary (Golding, 2008).

7.4 Implications for future research

Hopkins and Hill (2010) suggest that in order to overcome their past traumas and settle into their new country, UASC 'don't need therapy, they need life' (p.404). In this chapter, a model has been proposed describing how UASC could be provided with an 'enabling context' from within their naturalistic social interactions which could support them on a pathway towards wellbeing and self-actualisation through reconciling past experiences and facilitating settlement and integration in their new country. However, conclusions have been drawn from a very small-scale study in a very specific ecological context and, consistent with the concepts of equifinality and multifinality, it should be understood that there will be innumerable pathways which UASC can take to achieve positive adaptation and innumerable enabling contexts (Wooten, 2013). In order to determine to what extent the findings drawn from this study can be helpful in supporting the development of interventions for other UASC, it will be important that social support-focused research continues to be conducted

which investigates the social systems surrounding UASC. It has been observed earlier in this chapter that the 'Bioecological model of human development' (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) affords a useful framework through which to conceptualise research in this area. This may be a useful starting point for future researchers.

Additionally, attention should continue to be paid to gaining the first-hand accounts of different subgroups of UASC in different demographic contexts. Girls (Wells, 2011), and those leaving care (Raghallaigh, 2013) have been identified as sub-groups of UASC underrepresented in research. Although U1 was a care-leaver, it was not possible within the scope of this study to focus explicitly on this experience.

Furthermore, the process of acculturation has been seen to be an important, but not the only, component of adapting to life in a new country. In response to identified shortcomings in Berry's theory (Pantiru and Barley, 2015), this thesis has considered a range of social and psychological processes which were seen to support UASC in developing and actualising integration strategies. However, it must be remembered that this occurred within a tolerant, diverse context where young people had 'integration role models' within their immediate acquaintances and the wider community. England is a multicultural country, but the diversity of its population is not equally reflected within its constituent communities and neither is the cultural tolerance that the three UASC participants reported experiencing in their particular area of Middleworth. In this one area, multiculturalism did appear to be compatible with social cohesion (Ager and Strang, 2008); however, in order to continue to work towards such cohesion in other localities, it will be important that future research continues to investigate how UASC and other migrants living in less diverse communities can be helped to live successfully and peaceably between two cultures, including how the wider community can,

where needed, be supported to ‘open their hearts and homes’ (F4) and allow UASC the guidance and social capital but also the freedom and choice to achieve this.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. RECRUITMENT SHEET FOR FOSTER CARER PARTICIPANTS

My name is Kate Towers. I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham and am training to become an educational psychologist. This information sheet has been given to you in the hope you may be able to identify foster carers, who have had experience of fostering unaccompanied asylum seekers, and who may be willing to take part in a research project that I am conducting. I would be very grateful if you would be able to read this brief overview of the study and consider whether you might work with any potential participants. If you would like further information, or would like to ask any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details given at the end of this leaflet.

A brief description of the project

The project aims to explore the relationships that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) form on arrival in England. In addition to speaking to UASC, I am hoping to make contact with foster carers who have had experience of fostering UASC in order to gain their perspective on the relationships that they have formed with their UASC foster children. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the small body of literature which considers how we, and other professionals working with UASC and/or their foster carers, can maximise our effectiveness in helping these young people to settle happily into life in England.

Participation details

The study would involve participants attending either:

1. An individual interview with me
2. A one-off focus group which would be attended by myself and other foster carers with experience of fostering UASC.

The aim of the interview or focus group would be to reflect upon the challenges and facilitators that the foster carers have experienced in forming relationships with their UASC foster children.

Participant details

Participants for this study should meet the following profile:

1. To be a registered foster carer with the local authority or private foster service.
2. To have previous or current experience of fostering a child who is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.
3. To have good enough English language skills to be able to participate fully in the focus group.

Next steps

If you are aware of any established groups run by your organisation, where foster carers who foster UASC meet on a regular basis, please would you pass on a copy of this leaflet and the 'focus group' information packs to the organiser. If you are the organiser, please would you pass on the 'focus group' information packs to any members who you judge to meet the criteria and may be willing to be involved in this research.

If you work with any other foster carers who do meet the criteria and you judge might be willing to be involved in this research, please would you pass on the 'interview' information pack to them.

If you have any further questions about this research, please contact me using the details below.
Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter.
Kind regards,
Kate Towers.
Mob: _____ email: _____

APPENDIX 2. INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOSTER CARER PARTICIPANTS

My name is Kate Towers. I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham and am training to become an educational psychologist. This information sheet has been sent to you because I would like to invite you to become involved in a project that I am carrying out which is investigating experiences of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC) in the UK. As part of this project, I will be speaking to some UASC, but it is also very important to me to hear from foster carers like you who have had experience of fostering UASC. Hopefully the findings of this project will help other people working with unaccompanied asylum seekers to understand better how they can assist these young people settle happily into life in England.

In order to help you decide whether you would like to be involved, please do take time to read this leaflet which explains why the research is taking place and what your participation would involve. If you would like further information, or would like to ask any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details given at the end of this leaflet.

A brief description of the project
The project aims to explore the relationships that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children form on arrival in England. Part of this will involve investigating the views that foster carers have in relation to their experiences of forming relationships with UASC.

Why is this research being conducted?
With the UASC population in England increasing, it is important that those working most closely with them have a realistic understanding of their experiences. This is particularly important so that we may be aware of factors that support this population's adaptation to life in England and their psychological wellbeing. However, only a limited amount of research in this area has been conducted specifically with UASC as a discrete group. Although there will be many additional factors that contribute to unaccompanied asylum seekers' adaptation and wellbeing, relationships are an important contributory factor, which is why they are being studied here. Furthermore, the focus on relationships is especially important as UASC potentially enter the country knowing no one.

What would participation involve for me?
Participation would involve you attending a one-off focus group which will be made up of me, you, a colleague of mine from _____ Educational Psychology Service who will be there to help me, and some other foster carers with experience of fostering UASC. The focus group will take place at _____ on the _____. It will last for approximately 1-1 ½ hours.

Unfortunately travel expenses cannot be reimbursed, however, you will receive a £20 Love to Shop voucher to thank you for your participation.

What will happen in the focus group?
The aim of the focus group will be to give you an opportunity to discuss your thoughts relating to your experiences of forming relationships with foster children who are UASC. In particular, we might explore factors that have helped you form these relationships and those that have posed challenges.

You will probably know the majority of the other foster carers in the group, although there may be some that you don't. Either way, it can be daunting to share your experiences with a group of other people. Before the group begins, we will all make sure that we come to an agreement about how to carry out our discussion so that everyone is able to contribute as much or as little as they feel comfortable with. You will not be asked to disclose personal details about yourself or your foster

child during this process and everyone taking part will agree not to disclose who took part in the group or discuss the findings of the discussion outside of the group.

What will happen to my contribution?
In order to ensure that I have an accurate recording of the views of the group, my colleague will write down some of the key points that we discuss on big bits of paper that everyone can see. Ideally, I would also like to audio record the session to remind me of who said what. I will be the only one who hears the video.

The research will comply with the 1988 Data Protection Act and the 2018 GDPR regulations, which assure the safe storage of personal information and restrictions on communication of personal information, in order to safeguard privacy. Your name will be kept anonymous and anything said within the interview will be kept confidential; neither I nor my colleague will disclose any information to third parties. The only exception where this wouldn't occur would be in the unlikely case of disclosure of information suggesting that either you or others are at risk of harm. If this were to occur, I would have a duty to report such information, within the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures.

Once I have analysed all of data gathered from the focus group, I will write up a summary which I will send to you to make sure I have understood your views correctly. I will then use the findings within my doctoral thesis. All data relating to you will be stored electronically for 10 years on the University of Birmingham's secure data storage platform. You have the right to ask for access to this data as well as the right to ask for rectification of inaccuracies in the data.

What if I say "yes" now, but then I change my mind about taking part?
Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and as such, you are free to withdraw from the research process at any point before, during or up to one week after the focus group. If you make this decision during or after the focus group, every attempt will be made to remove your contribution from the transcript, but please be aware that due to the interactive, discussion based nature of the focus group, it may be impossible to remove every trace of your involvement.

I would like to be involved. What do I do next?
Please contact me! You can do this directly using the contact details at the end of this leaflet, or complete the contact form, including a contact detail for you and the best time for contact, and post this to me using the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope. I will be in touch shortly to speak to you about the process in more detail and answer any questions that you might have.

I would like to be involved but I am unavailable for the focus group. Can I still contribute?
Yes! Please contact me through one of the methods described and we will arrange a time to speak, either over the phone or face-to-face at a time to suit you.

What if I have more questions or want further information?
If you have further questions about the research or would like more information before making a decision about your child's participation, please do contact me by phone (_____) or email (_____). You may also contact my supervisor at the University of Birmingham, _____ at _____.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this leaflet and considering its contents.

CONTACT FORM

I have read the information sheets provided and I would like to take part in Kate's research project. I agree to be contacted so that Kate and I can discuss the project in more detail.

My contact details are as follows:

My name:_____

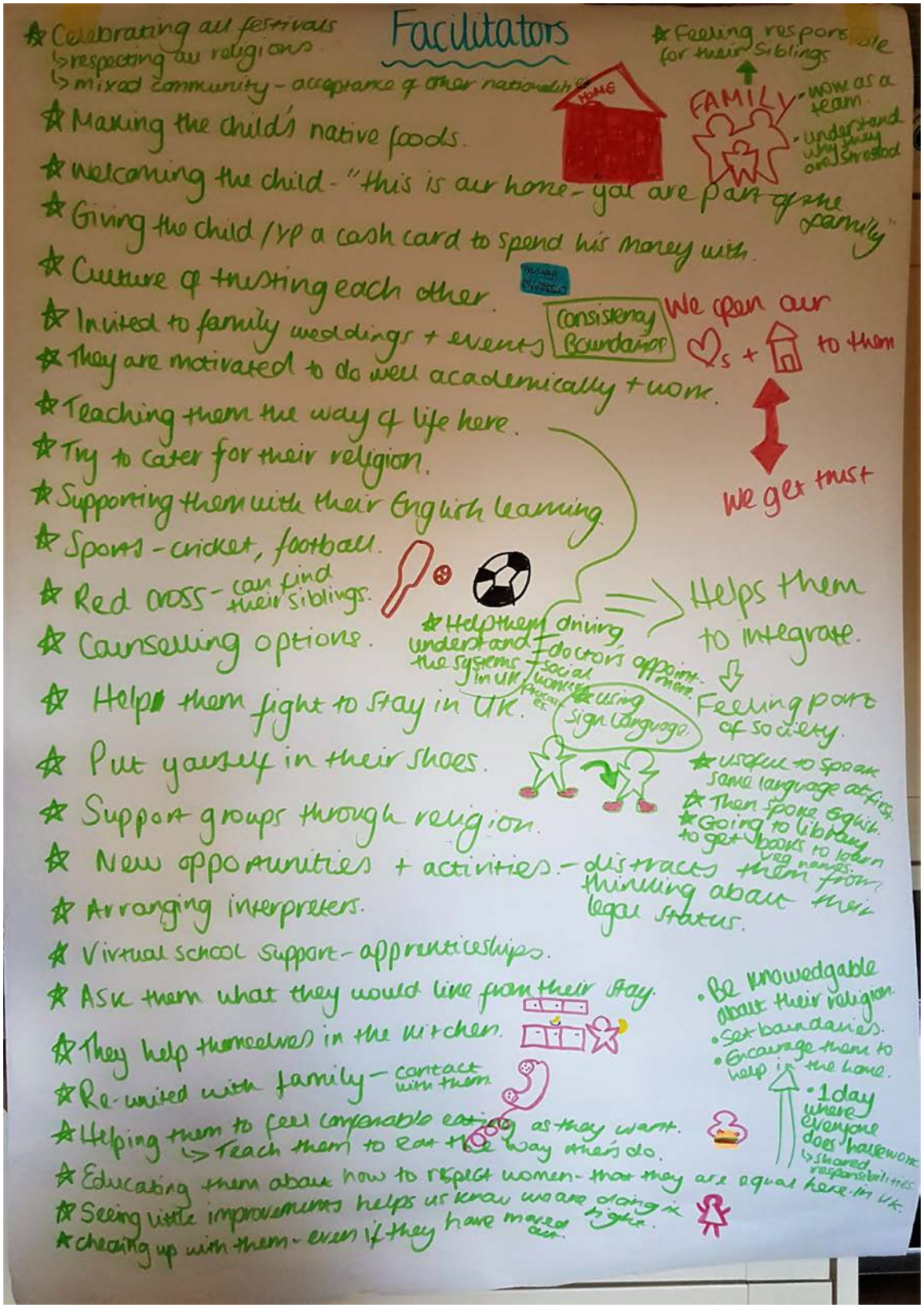
Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

When it is best to contact me: _____

_____

APPENDIX 3. SAMPLE OF GRAPHIC FACILITATOR'S VISUAL SUMMARY



APPENDIX 4. RECRUITMENT SHEETS FOR UASC PARTICIPANTS

My name is Kate Towers. I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham and am training to become an educational psychologist. This information sheet has been given to you in the hope you may be able to identify young people as prospective participants in a research project that I am conducting with unaccompanied asylum seekers. I would be very grateful if you would be able to read this brief overview of the study and consider whether you might work with any potential participants. If you would like further information, or would like to ask any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details given at the end of this leaflet.

A brief description of the project

The project aims to explore the relationships that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children form on arrival in England. In particular, the focus will be on who the relationships are formed with, how they are formed and what the young people perceive the function of these relationships to be (e.g. providing emotional support, providing links to their home culture, companionship). It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the small body of literature which considers how we, and other professionals working with this population, can maximise our effectiveness in helping this population to settle happily into life in England.

Participation details

The study would involve participants meeting with me on at least 2 occasions. During the first meeting, we would talk more generally about what the project would involve and on the second, I would conduct a semi-structured interview with the young people about the important people in their lives in England.

Participant details

Participants for this study should meet the following profile:

1. To have entered the UK as an unaccompanied asylum seeker i.e. as a minor without an adult or guardian.
2. To be currently aged 14 or above
3. To have been in the UK for at least 2 years
4. To not be experiencing flashbacks or other symptoms of psychological distress affecting their daily lives.
5. To be showing some evidence of adapting to and participating in life in England e.g. attending school/ college, making friends, taking up hobbies and engaging in social activities.
6. To have 'good enough' English i.e. basic interpersonal communication skills in spoken English (Cummins, 1999).

Criterion 6 is an 'ideal', and participants may also be considered who do not have good enough conversational English.

Next steps

If you do work with any young people who do meet the criteria and you judge might be willing to be involved in this research, please would you pass on the appropriate information pack to them.

1. If they are under 16, please pass on an 'under 16' pack, which includes a leaflet for the young person, their foster carer and their social worker as well as consent forms for the foster carer and social worker.
2. If they are 16 or over, please pass on a 'post 16' pack which just includes a leaflet for the young person.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter.
Kind regards, Kate Towers.
Mob: _____ email: _____

APPENDIX 5a. INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOSTER CARERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS OF UASC

My name is Kate Towers. I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham and am training to become an educational psychologist. This information sheet has been sent to you because I am seeking your foster child's agreement to be involved in a research project that I am conducting. If your child is under the age of 16, they will require your consent if they wish to be involved.

In order to help you decide whether you and your child would be willing for your child to be involved, please do take time to read this leaflet which explains why the research is taking place and what your child's participation would involve. Please give your child their information sheet and discuss what is included with your child. If you would like further information, or would like to ask any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details given at the end of this leaflet.

A brief description of the project

The project aims to explore the relationships that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children form on arrival in England. In particular, the focus will be on who the relationships are formed with, how they are formed and what the young people perceive the function of these relationships to be (e.g. providing emotional support, providing links to their home culture, companionship).

Why is this research being conducted?

With the refugee population in England increasing, it is important that those working most closely with them have a realistic understanding of their experiences. This is particularly important so that we may be aware of factors that support this population's adaptation to life in England and their psychological wellbeing. However, only a limited amount of research in this area has been conducted specifically with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as a discrete group. Although there will be many additional factors that contribute to unaccompanied asylum seekers' adaptation and wellbeing, relationships are an important contributory factor, which is why they are being studied here.

What would participation involve for my child?

Participation would involve your child having 2 (or 3) meetings with me. These meetings could be in your home or anywhere else that your child feels comfortable (such as your child's school/ college) and there is a quite space that we can use. The nature of the meetings will be as follows:

Meeting 1: Briefing and consent (approx. 30 mins)

This meeting will provide your child and me to get to know each other a little bit. I will explain in more detail the purpose of the project and the methods I will use to understand their views. Your child will also have the opportunity to ask any questions they have about their involvement. At the end of the meeting, I will seek the child's written consent to be involved in the project, however, if they would like more time to think about it, then of course this will be fine.

Meeting 2: Data collection (approx. 1 hour)

In this meeting, I will conduct an interview with your child. The questions will ask your child to reflect on the relationships that they have made since arriving in England. The direction of the interview will be very much lead by the young people; we will only talk about the people and the aspects of their relationships that they want to talk about.

At the end of the interview, I will ask a few specific questions about other factors associated with adaptation to life in England and wellbeing, such as their use of English language and their maintenance of cultural traditions.

(Potential) Meeting 3: Feedback (approx. 30 mins)
By this meeting, I will have analysed all the information I received from your child in the interview and summarised the most important points. I will write up this summary and post it to your child. If it is convenient and your child would like this, I will also arrange a time to come and speak to them about these findings, which will also give them the opportunity to ask any further questions or correct any misunderstandings I may have.

Young people will receive a £20 Love2Shop voucher to thank them for their participation.

What would participation involve for me?
If you and your child would like for you (or any other friend or family member) to be present at any or all of the meetings in order to provide support and encouragement, this is absolutely fine but not necessary. If your child does choose to conduct the meetings with me on their own, it is asked that either you or another trusted friend or family member be nearby or contactable at the time.

What if my child does not have a good understanding of English?
Ideally, the meetings will be carried out in English. If you and your child are concerned that your child does not have good enough English for this to occur, a trained interpreter can be present at the meetings.

What will happen to my child's contribution?
In order to ensure that I have an accurate recording of your child's views, if you child is happy with this, I will audio record the data collection interview. The audio recordings will be accessible only to me.

The research will comply with the 1988 Data Protection Act and the 2018 GDPR regulations which assure the safe storage of personal information and restrictions on communication of personal information, in order to safeguard privacy. I guarantee that your child's name will be kept anonymous and if I require your child's address in order to attend a meeting at your home, I will not share this with anyone other than an interpreter, if required. Anything said within the interview will be kept confidential and neither I nor the interpreter will disclose any information to third parties. The only exception to this would be in the unlikely situation of information being given during the interview suggesting that either your child or another is at risk. If this were to occur, I would have a duty to report such information, within the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures (as has been the case throughout your child's period of time in England).

I may need to talk to my university tutor about my findings while I analyse my data, but I will not disclose your child's name. Once I have analysed all of the interview data that I gather from your child and other research participants, I will write up my findings for my doctoral thesis which will be available to other students through the University of Birmingham's online library services. Within my thesis, I may include information about your child's country of origin and/or religion and/or ethnicity, if they have given me this information. All data relating to your child will be stored electronically for 10 years on the University of Birmingham's secure data storage platform. You and your child have the right to ask for access to this data as well as the right to ask for rectification of inaccuracies in the data.

What if my child or I change our minds about taking part?
Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and as such, you child is free to withdraw from the research process at any point before, during or up to one week after the data collection interview. If the decision to withdraw is made after data collection, I will delete and destroy all data relating to your child.

My child and I are happy for my child to be involved. What do we do next?
Please contact me using the contact details in the next section.

What if I have more questions or want further information?
If you have further questions about the research or would like more information before making a decision about your child's participation, please do contact me by phone (_____) or email (_____). You may also contact my supervisor at the University of Birmingham, _____, or the Data Protection Officer at the University of Birmingham, Carolyn Pike at dataprotection@contacts.bham.ac.uk. If you have any complaints, you may also contact the national Information Commissioner's Office (0303 123 1113**).**

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this leaflet and considering its contents.

APPENDIX 5b. INFORMATION SHEETS FOR UASC PARTICIPANTS

Hi! My name's Kate – that's me in the photo. I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Birmingham. This information sheet has been sent to you because I would like to invite you to become involved in a research project that I am carrying out with young people like you who have arrived in England from other countries and without their parents. I am interested to listen to the stories you have to tell about the relationships you have formed since then and the important people in your life in England. Hopefully the findings of this project will assist people working with unaccompanied asylum seekers understand better how others like you can settle into life in England.

You do not have to be involved in this project – to help you make up your mind, you can read the information on this sheet.

Our meetings

If you would like to be involved, we will arrange 2 (or maybe 3) meetings. You can tell me where and when you would like these meetings to take place and if you would like to, you can bring anyone you like to the meeting with you. This is what will happen at the meetings:

Meeting 1: 'Briefing and consent' (about 30 minutes)

- We can get to know each other a bit!
- I will explain more about the project
- You can ask any questions you have about the project.
- If you are ready to, you can sign a consent form saying that you are happy to take part in the project…or you can think about it some more.

Meeting 2: Data collection (about 1 hour)

- I will ask you some questions about the important people in your life in England and what makes them important.
- We will only talk about people who you want to talk about.
- If I ask you a question that you don't want to answer, you don't have to.
- There are no right or wrong answers!

(Possible) Meeting 3: Feedback (about 30 minutes)

- I will write you a letter after Meeting 2 about the things that you said about your relationships. If you want to meet to talk about this, then we can.

Other things you need to know

- If you feel you would like help speaking or understanding English, I can arrange for an **interpreter**.
- If you decide you **don't want to take part** in Meeting 2 either before or during it, that's absolutely fine and you don't need to give me a reason why. If you decide that you don't want our conversation in Meeting 2 to be part of my research, then that's fine too but you need to let me know this within 7 days of this meeting.
- I will not tell anyone else about the things we talk about in our meetings unless I am worried that you or someone else is in danger.

- All your information will be stored electronically for 10 years on the University of Birmingham's secure data storage platform. You can ask to see or make changes to this information at any time.
- To say thank you for taking part, you will receive a **£20 Love to Shop voucher** at the end of Meeting 2. You can keep the voucher if you don't want our conversation to be part of the study after this.

Important!
Finally, it is very important to say that taking part in this project (or choosing not to) is completely separate to your application for refugee or asylum status. I am a researcher based at The University of Birmingham and not linked to the Home Office in any way whatsoever.

Contact
If you would like to be involved in this research or would like any more information, please contact me! You can do this:

1. By calling me on _____
2. By emailing me on_____
3. By speaking to the person who gave you this letter – they can contact me.
4. By completing the 'contact form' below and posting it in the stamped, addressed envelope – I will then get in touch with you!

If you would like to speak to my university supervisor (_____), then you can email her on _____.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this leaflet and considering its contents.

CONTACT FORM

I have read the information sheets provided and I would like to be involved in Kate's research project. I agree to be contacted to arrange an initial briefing and consent meeting so that we can discuss the project in more detail.

My contact details are as follows:

My name:_____

My phone number: _____

My email address: _____

When it is best to contact me: _____

_____

APPENDIX 6. UASC INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule

Section 1: Background

Section	Issue / topic	Possible question	Possible follow-up questions [Prompt]	Probes
Background	Context	How long have you been in England? Where have you lived during this time? When did you start school/ college? What are you studying at the moment? Where are you currently living?	Is there anything else you think it would be useful for me to know?	

Section 2: Relationships

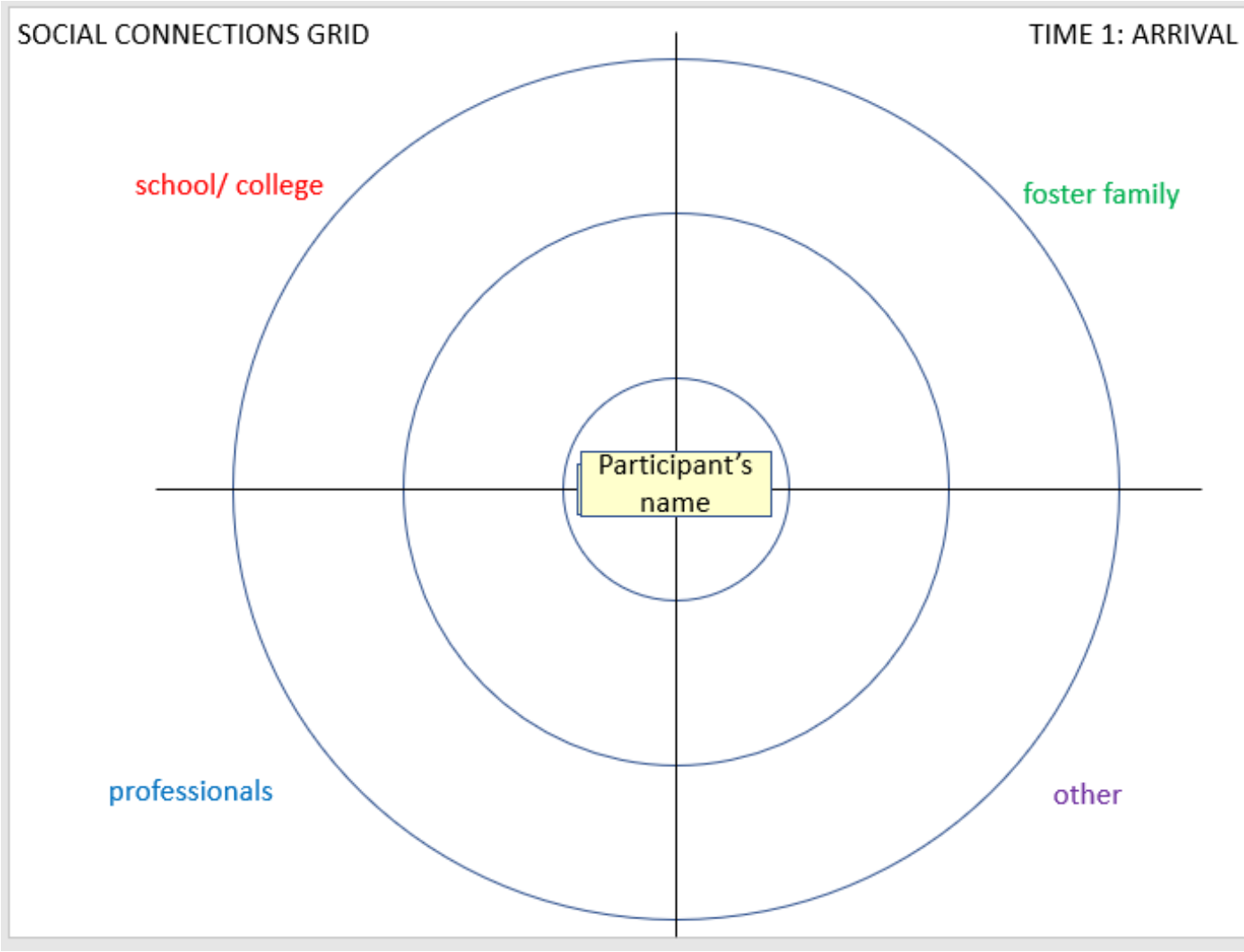
Section	Issue / topic	Possible question	Possible follow-up questions [Prompt]	Probes
Time 2: Now	Who?	Think about the people you know in England. Who are the most important people to you?	Who are the people you spend most time with? Who do you look forward to seeing most? Is there anyone who helps or supports you in any way? (If many names are given:) Who are the most important 4-6 people?	Is there anything/ one else you'd like to add? Go on… Carry on… Right Keep going…
		Can you tell me a little bit about them?	What do they look like? What's their personality like? (give examples) What do they like and not like? What do they do? Were they born in the UK? Have they lived here their whole lives?	
		How important are they to you?	Can you place them on the grid? The closer in to the middle, the more important they are.	

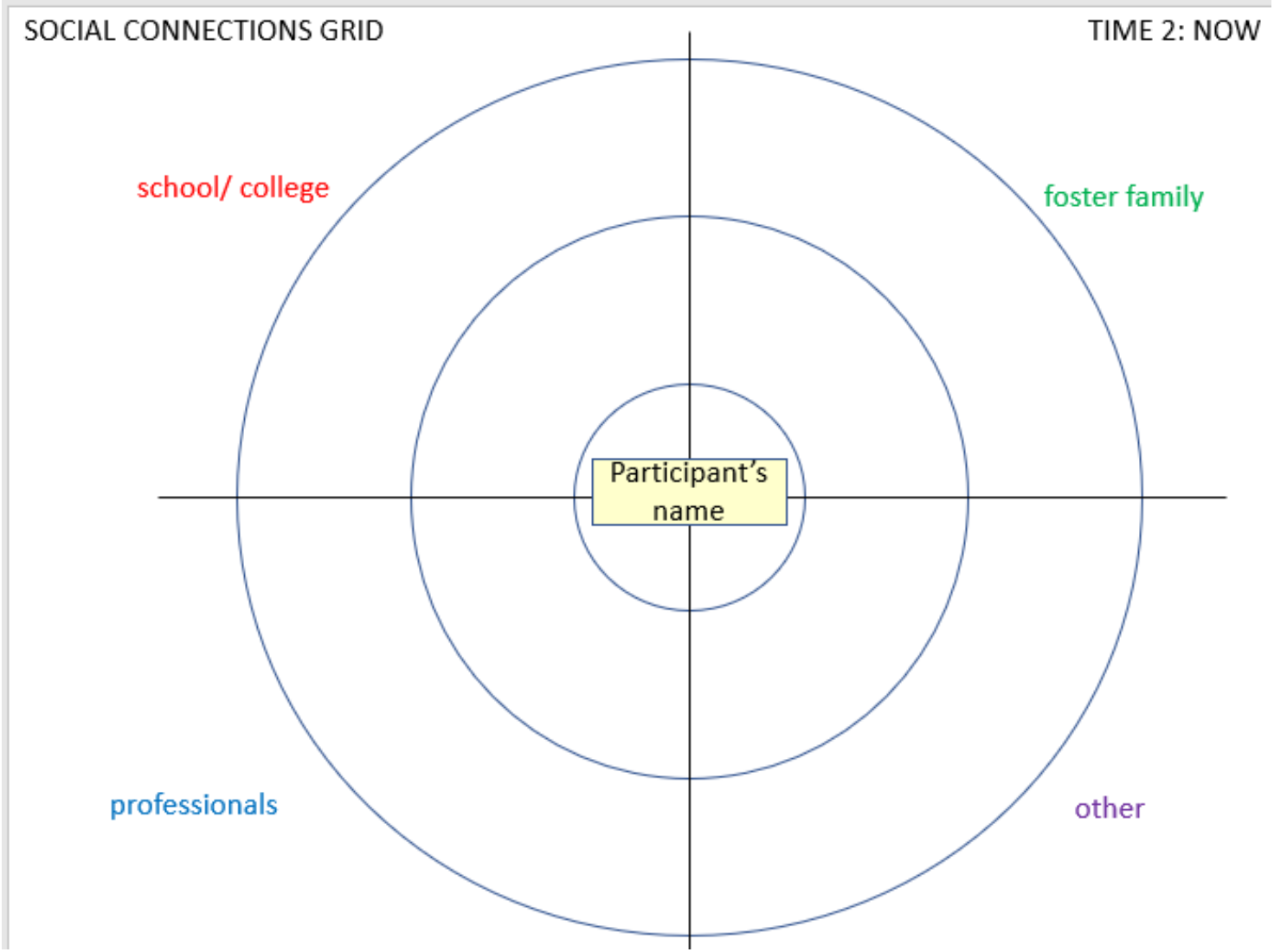
	How?	How did you meet them?	Were you introduced by someone else? Where were you? How did they first make contact with you/ you make contact with them?	
		Was there anything that helped you build a good relationship with them?	Did you discover that you liked similar things/ were going through a similar experience?	
			Did you keep meeting? Were you able to contact them easily? Were they nice/ kind/ helpful to you?	
		Was there anything that made it difficult to build a relationship with them to start with?		
	What?	Why is this person important to you?	What sort of things do you do when you're together? What might you talk about? How do you feel when you're with them? Why do you look forward to seeing them? Do they help or support you in any way? If they weren't in your life now, how might it be different?	
	Groups	Thinking about why these people are important to you, is there anything that is the same about any of them? What is it?	Could you group them in any other way than we already have done on the grid? (Interviewer to group identified people together): is there anything about this group of people that is the same? Is this true of any of the other people on your grid? Why (not)?	
Time 1: Arrival	Who?	Now think back to the first [6 months] of your life in England. Who were the most important people in your life then?	Interview schedule to repeat stages of 'Now' section. N.B. Omit the remainder of the 'Who?' section for individuals previously identified and discussed in the 'Now' section.	
Change over time	What?	Look at both the grids. Do you notice any differences? What are they?	Think about: - what's important about the people you're spending time with - the type of person that you're spending your time with. - the help and support that people give you	

			- how you spend your time with these people	
	Why?	Why do think that there are differences?	What has changed since you have been in England? How have you changed? Is there anything about your needs that have changed?	

Section 3: Acculturation strategy See Appendix 8 for statements.

APPENDIX 7. SOCIAL CONNECTIONS GRIDS




SOCIAL CONNECTIONS GRID
TIME 2: NOW
school/ college
foster family
Participant's name
professionals
other

APPENDIX 8. ACCULTURATION QUESTIONNAIRE (BANGLADESHI VERSON)

Quick Questionnaire

Circle the statement that best applies to you

Social activities

1. I don't want to attend either English or Bangladeshi social activities.
2. I want to attend Bangladeshi activities only.
3. I want to attend both English and Bangladeshi activities.
4. I prefer attending English only.

Friendship

1. I don't have any friends.
2. Most of my friends are Bangladeshi.
3. Some of my friends are English and some are Bangladeshi.
4. Most of my friends are English.

Language

1. I only/ mostly speak Bengali.
2. I speak English and Bengali equally.
3. I speak only/ mostly English.

Cultural traditions

1. I don't celebrate English or Bangladeshi religious or cultural festivals.
2. I celebrate Bangladeshi festivals only and prefer [ethnic] customs and traditions to English.
3. I celebrate both English and Bangladeshi festivals and take part in English and Bangladeshi customs and traditions.
4. I celebrate English festivals only and prefer English customs and traditions to Bangladeshi.

APPENDIX 9a. DATA ANALYSIS AND THEME DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY: FOSTER CARER FOCUS GROUP

1. Cycle 1: Coding

a) Through reading and re-reading the full transcript, codes were assigned consistently to the focus group transcript in order that reoccurring patterns could begin to be identified.
   - Through the prefix of either an F or C, codes included an indication of whether they represented a 'facilitator' (F) or 'challenge' (C) to FC/ UASC relationships.

b) A visual representation of the codes was created by writing the names of individual codes on small pieces of paper and grouping those with similarity in meaning or topic together. This was a dynamic representation which assisted with the following:
   i) identifying where different code names had been given in different places to represent the same concept or idea. In these instances, one code name was chosen to represent the code. An example is given below:

Initial codes	Final code name
Part of the family Like-family member	Part of the family

   ii) discarding codes that referred more broadly to FCs' perceptions of the UASC experience, rather than factors specifically related to their relationships with FC.

   iii) initial considerations about potential categories through an examination of the interrelatedness of codes.

The final set of codes that emerged from 'Cycle 1' were as follows:

Facilitators

Giving answers	Working through problems together	Wider family involvement
Working through problems together	Alternative means of communication	Understanding root of behaviour
Explaining systems	Our home, your home	Doing things together
Treating all the same	Part of the family	Family roles
Clothes	Credulous approach	Enduring care
Eating habits	Attunement	Trust
Welcome	Acceptance	Spare card
Available to listen	Family routines	Asking what's important
Hindi films	Giving answers	Putting self in their shoes
Familiar food	Eating habits	Understanding what's important
Belief in young person	Respect	Understanding new community

Challenges

Suspicious	Eating different food	Aggression
Not willing to listen/ change	Education	Others won't understand
Resistance to boundaries	Healthcare	Keeping selves to selves
No shared language	Clamming up/ Quiet	Frustrated
Cultural differences	Angry	Role of women

2. Cycle 2: Category development

Codes were grouped together, according to their interrelatedness, into a smaller number of categories. As categories were identified, the quotations that had been assigned to all of the subordinate codes were read as a whole to ensure consistency and integrity within the category.

a) Some categories were constructed through the subordination of some codes under a super-ordinate other. For example:

Superordinate code/ Category	Subordinate codes
Part of the family	Our home, your home Wider family involvement Family routines Doing things together Family roles Enduring care
Cultural differences	Eating different food Role of women Healthcare

b) Some categories were constructed through grouping codes together and giving this category a new name to reflect their content. For example:

Category	Subordinate codes
Behaviour of the young person	Clamming up/ Quiet Keeping selves to selves Aggression
Cultural continuation	Familiar food Hindi films Eating habits

c) Some codes were re-defined as categories in their own right.
For example: 'Enduring care', 'Acceptance', 'Working through problems together'

d) One code was re-defined as a category in its own right but was re-named to better represent its meaning:

Initial 'code' name	Final 'category' name
No shared language	Language difficulties

e) In a number of instances, categories that had initially been created as discrete during the early stages of 'Cycle 2' were combined as over-lap in their contents was latterly identified through the re-reading of the quotations that had been assigned the subordinate codes. For example:

Previous categories	Unified category
Understanding what's important Attunement	Attunement
Part of the family Adaptations	Part of the family

3. Theme development

As relationships were identified between them, categories were grouped together to form themes, some of which represented challenges to FC/UASC relationship formation and some which represented facilitators.

a) One 'challenge' category was discarded as a discrete category and combined with the other four challenge categories to form Themes 1-4 (see table below). See brief explanation below: *Upon review of the 'challenge' categories, including the subordinate codes and quotations, I conceded that the behaviours being described by FCs within the 'behaviours of the young person' category were usually being described in the context of a particular challenge that FCs identified e.g. the impact of previous trauma; cultural differences. I therefore discarded 'behaviours of the young person' as a discrete category and instead integrated behaviours with the challenge categories that described the FC's views of the root of the behaviour.*

b) One 'facilitator' category was also discarded as a discrete category and instead, components were grouped with other categories to form Themes 5a and 5b (see table below). See brief explanation below:
Upon review of the codes and quotations within the category 'a safe base', I acknowledged that some components of this category naturally grouped with categories concerning attunement and acceptance, and others had more similarities with categories that described the physical safety the UASC gained from living in the FC's house and being included in the family. Consequently, the data associated with 'a safe base' was split between these two groups which eventually became Themes 5a and 5b.

c) Themes 5a and 5b were initially identified as separate themes, but latterly were combined under the superordinate theme of 'Opening hearts and homes'.

The final 6 themes and related subordinate categories are detailed below in full. Themes 1-4 relate to challenges and Themes 5-6 to facilitators.

Theme	Subordinate categories
1. The psychological impact of the UASC's traumas and ongoing stressors.	The impact of trauma and stressors Behaviours of the young person
2. Language differences between UASC and FCs	Language difficulties Behaviours of the young person
3. Cultural differences between UASC and FCs	Cultural difficulties Behaviours of the young person
4. UASC's resistance to boundaries, rules and routines	Resistance to boundaries Behaviours of the young person
5a. Opening hearts and homes: Being attuned to and accepting of UASC's needs	Attunement Acceptance A culture of trust Understanding root of behaviour A safe base
5b. Opening hearts and homes: Including UASC as part of the family	A positive and welcoming start Feeling comfortable Enduring care Part of the family Cultural continuation A safe base
6. Working through problems together	Working through problems together Alternative means of communication

APPENDIX 9b. DATA ANALYSIS AND THEME DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY: UASC INTERVIEW DATA

1. Cycle 1: Coding

a) Codes were assigned first to U1's transcript during numerous read-throughs. Following this, a list was made of all identified codes.

b) These initial codes were held in mind, added to and assigned consistently in the coding of U2's and finally, U3's transcripts.
   - Through an additional prefix, it was also identified what type of person the code was relevant to e.g. 'FC' for foster carer, 'SW' for social worker.

c) For each transcript, a visual representation of the codes was created by writing the names of individual codes on small pieces of paper and grouping those with similarity in meaning or topic together. Codes were written in different colours according to the type of person that the UASC participants had been referring to (e.g. red = peers; blue = teachers). Where a code had been assigned to quotations concerned with more than one type of person, the name of the code was written in each of the corresponding colours. This was a dynamic representation which assisted with the following:
   i) identifying where different code names had been given in different places to represent the same concept or idea. In these instances, one code name was chosen to represent the code. An example is given below:

Initial codes	Final code name
Helping with school Involvement in education	Involvement in education/ school

   ii) initial considerations about potential categories within each of the transcripts discretely through an examination of the interrelatedness of codes.

   iii) comparing and contrasting the codes and ideas presented in each transcript in order to find similarities and differences between the participants' conceptualisations of the important roles played by the key people in their lives. The analytic memos below capture some of my thoughts which informed the creation of 2 codes:

21/12/2018
'Being understood'
Both U1, U2 and U3 had people right from the start who understood them as they had some sense of their story and what they had been through: U1 – friend who had been on the same journey; U2 – family friends also from Bangladesh; U3 – Afghani UASC friends from youth club.

'Fit'
All the boys identify that it is important to 'fit in' with others in their new environment, but they all conceptualise this differently. U1 – fitting in is to do with others matching your ethnic values; U2 – fitting in concerns something more to do with assimilating into English culture; U3 – fitting in is to do with knowing what rules to follow.

The final set of codes that emerged from 'Cycle 1' were as follows:

Going out	Held in mind	Doing things for me
Religion	Unconditional support	Legal support
Fasting	More than FC's job	Roof over my head
Lifestyle	Belief in me	Confiding

Being valued	Helping others	Buffering
Genuine care	Responsibility	Academic success
Football	Being there for each other	Parental role
Playing with younger siblings	Understanding what's important	Involvement in education/ school
Cinema	Not on your own	Trust
Going on holiday	Fitting in	Wider family involvement
Copying others	Following the rules	Being understood
Family bonds	Diversity	Respect for culture
Cultural capital	Structure and supervision	Enduring relationships
Planning for the future	Regulating emotions	Doing things together

2. Cycle 2: Category development

Codes were grouped together into a smaller number of categories, according to their interrelatedness. As categories were identified, the quotations that had been assigned to all of the subordinate codes from across the three transcripts were read as a whole to ensure consistency and integrity within the category.

a) Some categories were constructed through the subordination of some codes under a super-ordinate other. For example:

Superordinate code/ Category	**Subordinate codes**
Doing things together	Going out Football Playing with younger siblings Cinema Going on holiday
Genuine care	Held in mind Unconditional support More than FC's job Belief in me

b) Some categories were constructed through grouping codes together and giving this category a new name to reflect their content. For example:

Category	**Subordinate codes**
Instrumental support	Doing things for me Legal support Roof over my head Involvement in education
Shared values	Religion Fasting Lifestyle

c) Some codes were re-defined as categories in their own right
For example: 'Talking' and 'Self-reliance'

d) Some categories which had been originally conceptualised as discrete were discarded or merged with others as the re-considering of the subordinate codes and associated quotations revealed significant overlap. For example:

Original categories	Final combined category
Genuine care More than their job	Genuine care

3. Theme development

As relationships were identified between them, categories were grouped together to form sub-themes and themes.

a) Some sub-themes were developed through the direct subsuming of 2 or more categories

Sub-theme	Categories
Sharing experiences with others whom UASC trust	Others knowing your story Talking
Social companionship	Doing things together Fun

b) Some sub-themes were developed through the re-dividing of some broader categories

Sub-themes	Category
Cultural adoption A diverse society	Fitting in
Inclusion in routines of a positive family environment Genuine care	Making adjustments

c) In addition to my constant cycle of interrogation, a further analysis of the categories, themes and sub-themes was facilitated by a colleague who interrogated the supporting quotations assigned to each. Following this:

i) Some changes were made to the names of themes and sub-themes to better reflect their content and meaning

Initial (sub-)theme name	Final (sub-)theme name
Not coping along	Having others to share the load
Social companionship to help remain positive	Peer relationships to form connections and enhance positivity

ii) The themes of ‘Cultural continuation’ and ‘Fitting in’ were combined within one super-ordinate theme of ‘Integrating and adapting’.

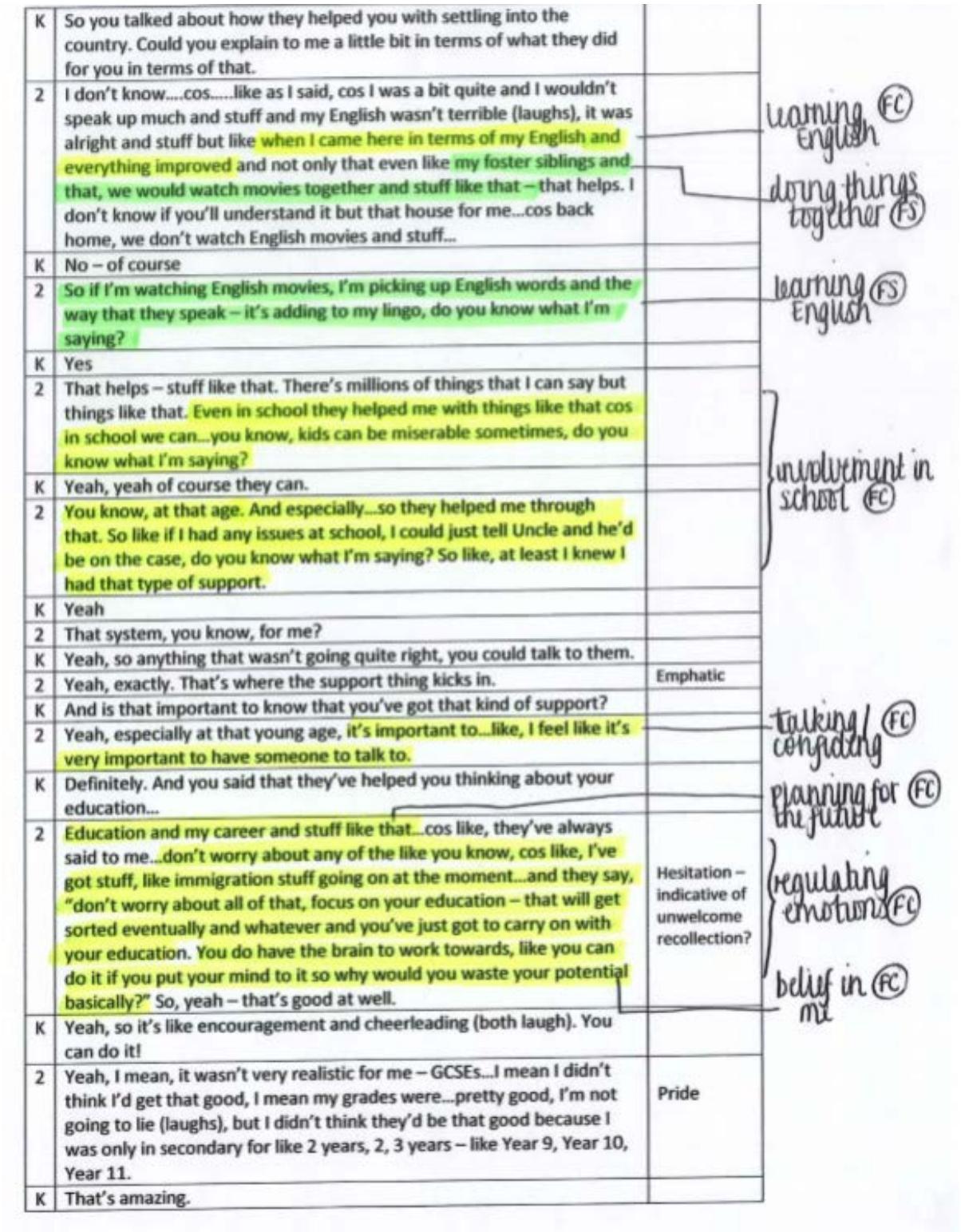
iii) It was temporarily judged that Themes 1-3 and 5b (see below) could be subordinated under a superordinate theme of ‘factors relating to present experiences’ and Themes 4-5a (see below) under ‘factors relating to past experiences’. However, this idea was eventually dismissed as it was judged that all themes related to current challenges for UASC and many aspects of Themes 1-3 and 5b also included factors relating to past experiences. For example, Theme 2: ‘Feeling a genuine part of a positive family environment’ includes some aspects of dealing with the past loss of social connections.

The final themes, sub-themes and related subordinate categories are detailed below in full.

Theme	Sub-themes	Subordinate categories
1. Having others to share the load	a) Accessing resources b) Problem-solving	Trust Instrumental support Social links Self-reliance Importance of someone who knows Role models
2. Feeling a genuine part of a positive family environment	a) Inclusion in routines of a positive family environment b) Genuine care c) Reciprocity	Genuine care Attunement Making adjustments Life planning Inclusion in a positive family environment Reciprocity
3. Spending time and forming connections with peers	a) Social companionship b) Responsibility	Doing things together Fun Reciprocity Responsibility
4. Sharing previous experiences	a) Sharing experiences with others whom UASC trust b) Experiencing a similar journey	Others knowing your story Talking Previous shared experience
5a. Integrating and Adapting: Cultural continuation		Shared cultural practices Shared values
5b. Integrating and Adapting: Fitting in	a) Cultural adoption b) A diverse society	Cultural contact Learning English Fitting in Diversity

APPENDIX 10. TRANSCRIPT EXAMPLE WITH CODES

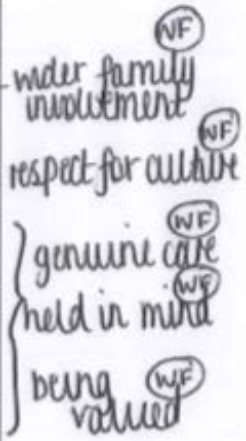
Yellow highlighting and 'FC' next to the code = reference to foster carers
Green highlighting and 'FS' next to code = reference to foster siblings
Pink highlighting and 'WF' next to code = reference to wider family members



K	So you talked about how they helped you with settling into the country. Could you explain to me a little bit in terms of what they did for you in terms of that.	
2	I don't know....cos.....like as I said, cos I was a bit quite and I wouldn't speak up much and stuff and my English wasn't terrible (laughs), it was alright and stuff but like when I came here in terms of my English and everything improved and not only that even like my foster siblings and that, we would watch movies together and stuff like that – that helps. I don't know if you'll understand it but that house for me...cos back home, we don't watch English movies and stuff...	
K	No – of course	
2	So if I'm watching English movies, I'm picking up English words and the way that they speak – it's adding to my lingo, do you know what I'm saying?	
K	Yes	
2	That helps – stuff like that. There's millions of things that I can say but things like that. Even in school they helped me with things like that cos in school we can...you know, kids can be miserable sometimes, do you know what I'm saying?	
K	Yeah, yeah of course they can.	
2	You know, at that age. And especially...so they helped me through that. So like if I had any issues at school, I could just tell Uncle and he'd be on the case, do you know what I'm saying? So like, at least I knew I had that type of support.	
K	Yeah	
2	That system, you know, for me?	
K	Yeah, so anything that wasn't going quite right, you could talk to them.	
2	Yeah, exactly. That's where the support thing kicks in.	Emphatic
K	And is that important to know that you've got that kind of support?	
2	Yeah, especially at that young age, it's important to...like, I feel like it's very important to have someone to talk to.	
K	Definitely. And you said that they've helped you thinking about your education...	
2	Education and my career and stuff like that...cos like, they've always said to me...don't worry about any of the like you know, cos like, I've got stuff, like immigration stuff going on at the moment...and they say, "don't worry about all of that, focus on your education – that will get sorted eventually and whatever and you've just got to carry on with your education. You do have the brain to work towards, like you can do it if you put your mind to it so why would you waste your potential basically?" So, yeah – that's good at well.	Hesitation – indicative of unwelcome recollection?
K	Yeah, so it's like encouragement and cheerleading (both laugh). You can do it!	
2	Yeah, I mean, it wasn't very realistic for me – GCSEs...I mean I didn't think I'd get that good, I mean my grades were...pretty good, I'm not going to lie (laughs), but I didn't think they'd be that good because I was only in secondary for like 2 years, 2, 3 years – like Year 9, Year 10, Year 11.	Pride
K	That's amazing.	

2	Like, I did some of my GCSEs in Year 10 as well and I did pretty well.	
K	Oh my gosh.	

K	And you've talked about them cooking you nice food....food that you like.	
2	Yeah, yeah, yeah.	
K	Is that Bangladeshi food, or is that.....	
2	You know what, Bangladeshi food and Pakistani food is quite similar but like, even my Aunty's mum like..like, you know, we're *really* close. Like, I go to their house on any function and, you know...cos, like, you know – Bangladeshi food, you eat fish quite a lot...	
K	Oh, okay!	
2	...and Pakistans, they don't. But, like – her mum would, you know, cook fish and send it to me, do you know what I'm saying?	
K	That's so nice.	
2	That's so thoughtful of someone, do you know what I'm saying? You know, like...my grandma probably wouldn't have done that for me, do you know what I'm saying? So, it's stuff like that...little, little things.	With real feeling
K	It is the little things isn't it?	
2	It's not about the stuff that she made – it's about the thought that she put into it.	



APPENDIX 11. APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM **APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW**	*OFFICE USE ONLY:* Application No: Date Received:

1. TITLE OF PROJECT

The formation, function and nature of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people's social connections.

2. THIS PROJECT IS:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ☒
Other ☐ (Please specify):

3. INVESTIGATORS

a) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS OR SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	Mrs Sue Morris
Highest qualification & position held:	M. Ed. (Ed Psych) **/** Programme Director of Professional Training in Educational Psychology
School/Department	School of Education (Disability, Inclusion and Special Needs Department)
Telephone:	0121 414 4880
Email address:	s.k.morris@bham.ac.uk

Name: Title / first name / family name	
Highest qualification & position held:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

b) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY CO-INVESTIGATORS OR CO-SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	Dr. Colette Soan
Highest qualification & position held:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

c) In the case of PGR student projects, please give details of the student

Name of student:	Katherine Towers	Student No:	
Course of study:	Applied Educational and Child Psychology	Email address:	
Principal	Mrs Sue Morris		

4. ESTIMATED START OF PROJECT Date: May 2018

ESTIMATED END OF PROJECT Date: June 2019

5. FUNDING

List the funding sources (including internal sources) and give the status of each source.

Funding Body	***Approved/Pending /To be submitted***
N/A	

If you are requesting a quick turnaround on your application, please explain the reasons below (including funding-related deadlines). You should be aware that whilst effort will be made in cases of genuine urgency, it will not always be possible for the Ethics Committees to meet such requests.

I am in Year 2 of a three-year, full-time postgraduate professional training programme, of which completion of this research forms one of the assessed research requirements. The thesis needs to be submitted in June 2019 for viva voce examination in July/August 2019. The sooner I can begin the empirical/ fieldwork components of the study, the more feasible will my timely completion and submission of this work be.

6. SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to explore the relationships that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC) form following their arrival in England. In particular, the focus will be on who the relationships are formed with, how they are formed and what the young people perceive the function of these relationships to be (e.g. providing emotional support, providing links to their home culture, companionship).

Background rationale

Due to continuing conflicts, human rights violation, persecution and violence in the Middle East and parts of Africa, the numbers of UASC in Europe are increasing (gov.uk, 2015/2017), and, once in the UK, it falls largely to the social care and education sectors, including educational psychologists, to help members of this growing population overcome trauma, depression and facilitate a positive trajectory through supporting integration and psychosocial wellbeing. Following the Parson's Green terror attack in September 2017, much was made in the press of the fact that the bomber had entered the country as an unaccompanied asylum seeker, which lead to heightened discourse about the extent to which this population is not integrated into mainstream British society.

'Integration' is defined in many ways. Berry's (1984, 2005) seminal work defines integration as one of four possible 'acculturation outcomes' or ways an individual settles into a new country and culture, with integration positioned as the outcome which best supports psychosocial adaptation and wellbeing. For an individual to be 'integrated' they must be experiencing both of the two independent dimensions of 'cultural maintenance' as well as 'contact and participation' with the society of settlement. Berry (2005) states that the process of acculturation can be observed through the behaviour of acculturating individuals, including the relationships they form, this is supported by Wells' (2011) conclusion that 'social networks are a useful concept for understanding the experiences of young refugees' (p 328). Furthermore the 'domains of integration' model commissioned by the Home Office and developed by Ager and Strang (2008) identifies 'social connections' as one of the four main domains.

The small body of research that has investigated UASC's social connections (e.g. Thommessen et al., 2015/ 2017; Wells, 2011; Mels et al., 2008; Kohli and Mather, 2003;) has overall found that the creation of meaningful relationships does support UASC's psychosocial wellbeing and positive adaptation to life in a new country and culture. However, there is some discrepancy about which groups of people UASC perceive as being most important and supportive and what it is about the relationships that mediates these judgements. This diversity has been hypothesised as being due to individual temperament (Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017) or the participants being at different stages in their process of settling and thus requiring different types of support (Kohli and Mather, 2003). Consequently, my own research aims specifically to investigate how UASC's perceptions of the function of their important relationships has changed since they first arrive in the UK.

The limited research with foster families of UASC has concluded that the best UASC-foster carer relationships are formed when the carers are able to instil trust in their foster children, but there are many barriers to their achieving this (Wade et al., 2012). It has been proposed that the trajectory of the UASC's relationships may be hampered by the untrusting nature and self-reliance with which many of them present: attitudes they may have developed or depended upon to mediate the many well-documented challenges and hardships of their past lives and migration experiences (Thommessen et al., 2015).

This research aims further to develop this understanding by gaining insight into foster carers' experiences of developing relationships with UASC, and how this has differed from their experiences with other young people whom they have fostered.

Key Research questions

1. Who do UASC perceive their most important relationships to be within their host country?
2. How are these relationships formed?
3. What do UASC perceive the function of these relationships to be?
    a) How (if at all) do these relationships support integration (through contact and participation and/or cultural maintenance)?
    b) How (if at all) do these relationships support psychosocial wellbeing?
    c) Are different functions attributed to different relationship groups (i.e. teachers v. friends/ host community v. ethnocultural community)?
4. How do UASC experience changes in the nature and function of their relationships over time?

Expected outcomes

The proposed research will illuminate UASC's perceptions of the function of the relationships that they form in the country of settlement and how this changes over time. By analysing the views of the young people in relation to the existing literature concerning mediators of integration and wellbeing, and considering the views of the young people themselves about what it is about relationships that has helped them to adapt positively to life in the UK, it will be possible to gain a better understanding about how UASC's positive integration and psychosocial wellbeing can be better supported.

Exploring foster carers' perceptions of their relationships with foster children who are UASC will generate a further level of understanding.

7. CONDUCT OF PROJECT

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used

UASC participants

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the young people. Interviews will comprise 3 main sections (see Appendix 6 for interview schedule).

Section 1: Background

Questions will be asked to gain background information about the young person, including their current living and education arrangements.

Section 2: Relationships

The UASC's perceptions of the important people in their lives now ('Time 2') and during the first few months in England ('Time 1) will be explored, including a consideration of why any changes have occurred over time. In particular, the young people will be asked to reflect upon who the most important people are/ were, how their relationship was forged and what the function of the relationship is/was.

To facilitate reflection and comparison, the young people will write the names of their important people on a 'social connections' grid (adapted from Mels et al., 2008), comprising 3 concentric circles with the young person's name in the centre. The grid will be split into 4 quadrants, which will act as prompts for the people that they might include: 'school/ college'; foster family; professionals; other. Young people will place names on the grid in the appropriate quadrant, with those closest to the centre deemed the 'most important'. Separate grids will be used for Times 1 and 2 (see Appendix 7).

Section 3: Acculturation

To inform understanding of the young person's acculturation strategy, an adapted form of Berry et al.'s (2006) assessment methods will be used. Participants will be asked to rate statements (adapted from Berry et al., 2006; Sodowsky and Plake, 1991/1992; Pantiru and Barley (2014) on a 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). The topics of the statements will be 'social activities', 'friendships', 'language' and 'cultural traditions' (see Appendix 8 for a list of statements).

The interviews will be audio recorded, subject to the participants' agreement (see section 11 for further details), and then transcribed. Interpretive phenomenological analysis will be used to identify themes relating to the research questions.

Foster carer participants

Having consulted widely with different fostering agencies, I have been advised that the most appropriate methods of gaining these participants' views are either:

1. focus groups in instances where there is already an established group of foster carers meeting on a regular basis.

or-

2. individual interviews where participants are not part of an established group.

Potential foster carer participants will therefore be invited to either a focus group or individual interview depending upon whether they are or are not members of a pre-existing group. Whether both or just one of these data collection methods is used will therefore depend upon who is recruited to participate in this section of the research (see section 10). Ethical considerations relating to both methods will be considered.

1. Focus group

A focus group will be conducted with a group of foster carers who have had experience of fostering UASC and other children. These foster carers do not need to be the carers of the UASC participants. The group will focus on exploring participants' experiences of forming relationships with UASC, including a consideration of barriers and facilitators, and reflection upon to what extent this is the same for UASC compared to non-UASC foster children (see Appendix 9 for focus group schedule). The key ideas discussed in the focus group will be written down on large pieces of paper which everyone can see, and will be used as reference points and prompts throughout the process of the focus group. To facilitate this graphic representation of the discussion, a colleague of mine from the educational psychology service in which I am on placement will also be present. This colleague will, like me, be a mature psychology graduate.

If consent is given by all participants, the conversation will be video recorded. The discussion from the focus group will be transcribed and key themes identified relating to the 2nd research question, concerned with how UASC form relationships.

2. Individual interviews

Individual interviews will be conducted with foster carers who have had experience of fostering UASC and other children. These foster carers do not need to be the carers of the UASC participants. The interview will focus on exploring participants' experiences of forming relationships with UASC, including a consideration of barriers and facilitators, and reflection upon to what extent this is the same for UASC compared to non-UASC foster children (see Appendix 9 for interview schedule). If participants give consent, the interviews will be audio recorded.

The audio recording will be transcribed and key themes identified relating to the 2nd research question, concerned with how UASC form relationships.

8. DOES THE PROJECT INVOLVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS?

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

If you have answered NO please go to Section 18. If you have answered YES to this question please complete all the following sections.

9. PARTICIPANTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH

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

UASC participants

It is proposed that 4-6 participants will be interviewed for the study. Participants' appropriateness will be determined according to the following inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria

1. To have entered the UK as an unaccompanied asylum seeker i.e. as a minor without an adult or guardian.
2. To be currently aged 14 or above
3. To have been in the UK for at least 2 years
4. To have 'good enough' English i.e. to be able to engage in meaningful communication through the medium of oral English (Cummins, 1999).

N.B. This criterion is an 'ideal', and participants may also be considered who do not have good enough conversational English. In these instances, their active participation will be supported with input from a skilled interpreter (see section 20).

5. To show some evidence of adapting to and participating in life in England e.g. attending school/ college, making friends, taking up hobbies and engaging in social activities.

Exclusion Criterion

1. To be experiencing flashbacks or other symptoms of psychological distress affecting their daily lives.

Foster carer participants

It is proposed that 4-8 foster carers will participate, either within a focus group or through individual interviews. Participant appropriateness will be determined according to the following inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria

1. To be a registered foster carer with the local authority or private foster service.
2. To have previous or current experience of fostering a child who is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.
3. To have good enough English language skills to be able to participate fully in the discussion.

Exclusion Criterion

1. To have no experience of fostering a child who is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.

6. RECRUITMENT

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student).

Note: Attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

UASC participants

In order to identify appropriate UASC participants, I will approach third party organisations in the local authority in which I am on placement as a trainee educational psychologist, which have direct involvement with UASC. Key people in each of these organisations will be identified and I will communicate with them directly, explaining the purpose and nature of the research study and asking them if they would consent to be involved by helping to identify appropriate UASC known to them or their organisations. They will be given copies of the UASC recruitment sheet to clarify the key points (Appendix 2).

The key people in these organisations will act as gatekeepers for the research in that they will distribute information sheets (Appendices 3a-c) to colleagues, potential participants and/or the foster carers/social workers of potential participants as appropriate. The information sheets will outline the purposes of the research study as well as details relating to confidentiality and participants' right to withdraw at any time up to one week after the data gathering interview, and request volunteers (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.3, 1.4 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 15, 2011).

1. UASC
   - Where participants meeting the inclusion criteria are known to the gatekeepers themselves, and the participants are aged 16 or over, they will distribute the participant information sheets directly to them.
2. Foster carers/ social workers of potential participants
   - Where participants meeting the inclusion criteria are known to the gatekeepers themselves, and the participants are aged 14-15, they will distribute the carer, social worker and participant information sheets directly to the carers or social workers as appropriate (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 1.3, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 18, 2011). The carers may pass on the participant information sheets to the UASC if they consent to the young person being involved in the research.
3. Colleagues
   - Gatekeepers will give copies of the recruitment and information sheets to colleagues who also work with the USAC population. These colleagues will distribute the sheets directly to potential participants or their carers as appropriate. The colleagues will also be supplied with the UASC recruitment sheet (Appendix 2) which details the inclusion criteria for potential participants as well as my contact details should they have any questions.

Any foster carers/social workers (where the UASC are aged 14-15) or potential participants who express an interest in being involved in the study will be asked on their information sheets to contact me, either directly or through the return of a contact form in a stamped, addressed envelope. Where foster carers/ social workers are involved, I will speak to them and answer any questions they may have before having any direct contact with their foster child.

Before the data collection interviews take place, 'briefing and consent' meetings will be held with each potential participant in order to explain in more detail the aims of the study, how the research will proceed, and answer any questions they have (BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 2011; BERA Ethical Guidelines 10, 11, 2011).BPS Code of Ethical Conduct, 1.3, 2009). At the end of the meeting, if UASC are still interested in participating, they will be asked to sign the written consent form (Appendix 5b) and a date and time will be arranged for the data collection interview. If they wish to take the form away to consider further, this will be allowed. Where the potential participants are under the age of 16, these meetings will only take place if their foster carer and social worker have given written consent for their participation (Appendices 5a-b).

Where gatekeepers indicate that this will be helpful, the information letters will be translated into the young person's first language and interpreters will be made available for the 'briefing and consent' meetings (BPS Code of ethical conduct, 1.2, 2009; Hill et al., 1996; Connolly, 2014).

Foster Carer participants

Potential participants will be identified by third parties who work directly with foster carers of UASC. As with arrangements for recruiting UASC participants, I will brief key people within these organisations about the purpose of the research and inform them about the inclusion and exclusion criteria for UASC participants. I will also ask them to consider whether they are aware of any pre-existing established groups for foster carers of UASC who meet on a regular basis and who might be appropriate for a focus group. The third-party intermediary will be given copies of the foster carer recruitment sheet summarising the key points (Appendix 10) and will distribute information sheets to potential participants. Different sheets will be given out depending upon whether participants are being invited to a focus group (Appendix 11a), or an individual interview (Appendix 11b).The information sheets will outline the purposes of the research study as well as details relating to confidentiality and participants' right to withdraw at any time up to one week after the data gathering focus group/ interview, and will request volunteers (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.3, 1.4 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 15, 2011).

On the foster carer information sheet, interested participants will be encouraged to contact me either directly or through the return of a stamped, addressed envelope. Following this, I will speak to each potential participant in order to explain in more detail the aims of the study, how the focus group or interview will proceed and answer any questions they have (BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 2011; BERA Ethical Guidelines 10, 11, 2011).BPS Code of Ethical Conduct, 1.3, 2009). At the end of this conversation, if participants are still interested in being involved, they will be formally invited to the focus group, or arrangements will be made for a time and place for the interview to be held.

7. CONSENT

a) Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why**.** If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent.

UASC participants

The BERA ethical guidelines (2011) advocate that in accordance with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children should be supported to express their views freely. Consequently, all UASC participants will be facilitated to give their informed consent regardless of whether they are under the age of 16 and therefore a 'minor'.

Information about the aims and methods of the study will be initially sent in the UASC information sheets (Appendices 3a-c) for potential UASC participants through identified third-parties. If required, the information will be translated into the UASC's first language by a trained translator (BPS Code of ethical conduct, 1.2, 2009; Hill et al., 1996; Connolly, 2014).

Any interested participants will be invited to a meeting with me in a private space of their choice (such as in their home or school/college) where I will explain in further detail the process of data collection and the types of question they will be asked in the interview, as well as offering assurances of secure data storage, confidentiality and the rights of the young person to withdraw from the study at any point up to one week after the interview (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 15, 2011). The young person may bring a trusted friend to the meeting and an interpreter will be present if either they or the third-party intermediary has indicated that this is required. This will also be an opportunity for the UASC to ask me any questions about the process. Once potential participants have asked all their questions and confirmed that they understand the information that they have been provided with, they will be asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 5b). This form will ask whether the young people have understood the information that they have been given about the research project and whether they consent to being involved (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 1.3 BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 2011). Through this process, I aim to ensure that participants are given ample opportunity to understand the nature and purpose of the project before confirming their involvement (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.3, 2009).

By the very definition of being an 'unaccompanied' asylum seeker, it is highly likely that the biological parents of the young people will not be resident in the UK and contacting them in this instance will not be practical. Where the potential participants are under the age of 16, I will seek the informed consent for their participation from those carers in 'loco parentis' (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 1.3, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 18, 2011). This will most likely be the young person's foster carer and social worker (Hopkins, 2008). A separate information sheet will be sent to the carers and social workers to explain the aims of the research, expectations of participation, the nature of voluntary consent and the right to withdraw, procedures for confidentiality ([BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 15, 19, 2011), audio recording and data storage. Carers and social workers will also be given the opportunity to speak with me and/or my research supervisor about any concerns or queries before giving their written confirmation of consent for their young person's involvement (Appendices 5a-b). In these instances (i.e. where the UASC has not reached the age of 16 years), I will not contact the young people directly before receiving consent from their carers and social workers.

Foster carer participants

Information about the aims and methods of the study will be initially sent in the foster carer information sheets (Appendices 11a-b) to potential foster carer participants through identified third-parties. Any interested participants will be invited to have a conversation with me, on the telephone or in person, where I will explain in further detail the process of the focus group or interview as well as assuring them of secure data storage, confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the study at any point up to one week after the focus group/ interview (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 15, 2011). This will also be an opportunity for them to ask me any questions about the process.

1. Focus group

Once the focus group is convened, at its outset, participants will be given an additional opportunity to ask any questions, and guidelines for the focus group will be established to ensure that the discussions proceed with equal respect for the voice of all participants and tolerance for differences. Participants will also be asked to agree to maintain confidentiality of all information discussed throughout the process of the focus group (Denscombe, 2014). Once participants have asked all their questions and confirm that they understand the information that they have been provided with, they will be asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 12a) before the group begin their discussion of the questions related to the research (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 1.3 BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 2011).

2. Individual interview

Participants will be given an additional opportunity to ask me any questions when we meet for their interview. Once participants have asked all their questions and confirm that they understand the information that they have been provided with, they will be asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 12b) before the interview begins (BPS Code of ethical conduct 1.2, 1.3 BERA ethical guidelines 10, 11, 2011).

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

b) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study?
Yes ☐ **No** ☒

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and who will administer this feedback.

8. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Explain what feedback/ information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research. (For example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

UASC participants

At the end of each interview, I will give a brief debrief/ summary of the participant's stated views. This will afford the participant the opportunity to ask further questions at this stage or comment on the validity of my interpretation (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 3.4, 2009). Following the interview, the participants will also receive a letter thanking them for their participation and giving a more formal, written summary of their individual contribution. This may include individual quotations if appropriate (BERA ethical guidelines, 31, 2011). If convenient for them, I will arrange a one-to-one meeting with each participant in order to discuss the summary with them.

Foster carer participants

1. Focus group

At the end of the focus group, I will give a brief debrief/ summary of the participants' synthesised views, which will allow the participants to reflect further on what has been said and add further views or comment on the validity of my interpretation (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 3.4, 2009). Once I have fully analysed the data collected from the focus group, I will write to each participant thanking them for their participation and giving a more formal, written summary of the focus groups' findings. I will include my contact details, and those of my supervisor, and invite participants to contact one or both of us if they would like to discuss the summary with them.

2. Individual interviews

At the end of each interview, I will give a brief debrief/ summary of the participant's stated views. This will afford the participant the opportunity to ask further questions at this stage or comment on the validity of my interpretation (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 3.4, 2009). Following the interview, the participants will also receive a letter thanking them for their participation and giving a more formal, written summary of their individual contribution. This may include individual quotations if appropriate (BERA ethical guidelines, 31, 2011). I will include my contact details, and those of my supervisor, and invite participants to contact one or both of us if they would like to discuss the summary with them.

Once all the participants' data have been analysed, a written summary of the main themes and findings will be sent to them all. Direct quotations will not be used in this summary as there is a chance that participants will know each other and will be able to identify who the quote is from even if it has been anonymised (BERA ethical guidelines, 31, 2011).

9. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

UASC participants

Prior to the interviews, all UASC participants and, in the case of UASCs aged under 16 years, their carers and social workers, will be made aware of the participants' rights to withdraw. This information will be given in the initial information sheets (Appendices 3a-c) and briefing meetings and will be repeated immediately before and after the interviews (Davidson et al., 2005). Hopkins (2008) advises that it is especially important for the researcher to emphasise to the UASC research participant that their right to withdraw is legitimate as 'they may well [feel] compelled to maintain their participation, because of a broad range of assumptions and expectations around adult power and control,…race…and determinants of power and privilege based on their pre-flight experiences as well as their circumstances in [the UK]' (p.40).

UASC participants will be able to withdraw at any point before, during or up to one week after the interview has taken place. After this time, data analysis will have commenced, and it will therefore be difficult to extract individual testimonies from the data set without compromising the analysis. Participants will be made aware of this time frame at the initial briefing meeting with me (BPS, ethical guidelines, 1.4, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines, 15, 2011).

Foster carer participants

1. Focus group

Prior to the focus groups, all participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the study. This information will be given in the initial information sheets (Appendix 11a), initial conversation with me and before the focus group. Participants will be able to withdraw completely from the study at any point up to the commencement of the discussion of the research questions in the focus group. Due to the group conversational nature of the focus group, it may be difficult to extract and withdraw the input of individual participants once the focus group is underway, however participants will be assured that if they are unhappy about certain specific comments that they made forming part of the final data set, these will be identified and removed where possible. Participants will have one week following the focus group to request this removal and will be made aware of this time frame (BPS, ethical guidelines, 1.4, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines, 15, 2011).

2. Individual interviews

Prior to the interviews, all foster carer participants will be made aware of their rights to withdraw from the study at any point before, during or up to one week after the interview has taken place. After this time, data analysis will have commenced, and it will therefore be difficult to extract individual testimonies from the data set without compromising the analysis. This information will be given in the initial information sheets (Appendix 11b), the initial conversation with me, and will be repeated immediately before and after the interviews (BPS, ethical guidelines, 1.4, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines, 15, 2011; Davidson et al., 2005).

b) Explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

There will not be consequences for UASC or foster carer participants if they express the wish to withdraw from the research study.

UASC participants

If UASC participants withdraw during or up to one week after the interview, their transcript will be destroyed and audio-recording erased from storage devices. Any written field notes taken during the interview will also be shredded. Their data will not be included in the data analysis.

Foster carer participants

1. Focus group

If foster carers indicate either during or up to one week after the focus group that they would like discrete comments or sections of their input removed from final data set, where possible these sections will be removed from the graphic representation of the discussion and/or the transcript of the focus group as appropriate, and the data will not be included in the data analysis. It will not be possible to erase their input from the video recording; however, this will be erased following transcription.

2. Individual interviews

If foster carer participants withdraw during or up to one week after the interview, their transcript will be destroyed and audio-recording erased from storage devices. Any written field notes taken during the interview will also be shredded. Their data will not be included in the data analysis.

10. COMPENSATION

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

i) Financial

Yes ☒ **No** ☐

ii) Non-financial **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

If **Yes** to **either** i) or ii) above, please provide details.

All UASC and foster carer participants will be offered a £20 Amazon voucher in compensation for the time given to this project. Researchers are advised in the BERA ethical guidelines (22, 2011) to use incentives which are deemed appropriate through being consistent with good sense and do not have undesirable effects. Against these criteria, I judge this to be an appropriate incentive. Participants will be made aware of the incentive in the initial information letter (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 4.1, 2009).

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

Participants will still receive compensation if they withdraw during or after the data collection interview.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

a) Will all participants be anonymous?
Yes ☐ **No** ☒

b) Will all data be treated as confidential? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

Note: Participants' identity/data will be confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data cannot be traced back to an individual participant.

Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data both during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings.

In their information sheets (UASC: Appendices 3a-c; foster carers: Appendices 11 a-b) and initial briefing meetings/ conversations, all participants and, in the case of UASCs under the age of 16 years, their carers and social workers, will be made aware of issues related to confidentiality (British Psychological Society, ethical guidelines 1.2, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 25, 2011).

UASC participants

Jacobson and Landau (2003) advocate that it is especially important that UASC research participants have a clear understanding of these issues as they may be concerned that parts of their response may be accessed by the immigration authorities. Interviews will take place in a private room in a location of the participants' choice. If the UASC participant chooses to have a supportive friend or family member present during the interview, or if an interpreter is required, they will subscribe to a confidentiality agreement (Edwards, 1998) (Appendix 4). Public confidentiality will be assured by using ID codes for individual participant transcripts (BERA ethical guidelines 26, 2011). Within the transcripts, pseudonyms will be given to each participant, as well as any other named, recognisable person or place (Hill, 2005; Barker and Weller, 2003).

Foster carer participants

1. Focus group

Before proceeding with the research questions, every member of the focus group must agree to treat the information discussed by all participants as confidential (Denscombe, 2014). My supporting colleague who will be present will also subscribe to this confidentiality agreement. Public confidentiality will be assured by using pseudonyms in the transcript of the focus group conversation for each participant, as well as any other named, recognisable place or person (Hill, 2005; Barker and Weller, 2003).

2. Individual interviews

Interviews will take place in a private room in a location of the participants' choice. Public confidentiality will be assured by using ID codes for individual participant transcripts (BERA ethical guidelines 26, 2011). Within the transcripts, pseudonyms will be given to each participant, as well as any other named, recognisable person or place (Hill, 2005; Barker and Weller, 2003).

UASC and foster carer participants

Audio and video recordings and transcripts will be saved on a password-protected computer with a coded name known only to myself. All codes and pseudonyms will be stored separately within a password-protected file. The audio and video files will be listened to/ watched by me only and will be deleted following the completion of the research project. The transcriptions will be viewed by my supervisor, Sue Morris, and me only (BERA ethical guidelines 26, 2011).

It will not be possible to offer total anonymity to the participants because of the unique, personal stories that they may tell. Therefore, despite the use of pseudonyms, it may still be possible to trace information back to the original participant. However, steps will be taken to minimise the chance of being able to identify the contributions of individual participants within the summary reports and final research report by maintaining the use of pseudonyms and not using specific details that may make the participant especially identifiable, unless given express permission by the participant. Consent will also be gained to include direct quotes from the interview in the final thesis (British Psychological Society, ethical guidelines 1.2, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 25, 28, 2011). All participants will be informed that the data gathered in the interview will be presented collectively in the summary reports and final research report.

N.B. It is the intention that if an UASC consents to being involved in the project, their foster carer will not be asked to become a foster carer participant. However, if a situation arises where both parties are keen to participate, this will be permitted on the understanding that I will keep all information that each give me confidential from the other party.

If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, explain, providing details of how all participants will be advised of the fact that data will not be anonymous or confidential.

Participant confidentiality will only be breached in exceptional circumstances where there is a risk to the safety of the participant or another individual (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 1.2, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines 29, 2011). Participants will be appraised of this during the consent gaining process. In the case of concerns about safety, the Local Authority's policy on confidentiality and safeguarding will be adhered to and I will alert the designated safeguarding lead within the educational psychology service in which I am on placement (BPS ethical guidelines 3.1, 2009; BERA ethical guidelines, 29).

In any instances of a breach of confidentiality, a contemporaneous note will be made detailing the circumstances (BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, 1.2, 2009; BERA Ethical Guidelines 30, 2011).

UASC participants

Hopkins (2008) advises that it is possible that UASC research participants may take the opportunity during an interview to ask for help or guidance about a matter that is particularly pressing to them (e.g. access to education, lack of paperwork). In these instances, I will listen and advise as best as they can and suggest other people from whom they can gain support with this issue. If the young person requests that I facilitate this process, I will clarify that they are happy for me to share some of the content of the interview with the identified other person.

12. STORAGE, ACCESS AND DISPOSAL OF DATA

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data.

All data will be kept and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998, modified 2003) and participants will be made aware of the ensuing arrangements (BERA Ethical Guidelines 26, 2011).

Interviews with UASC and foster carer participants will be recorded on a portable audio recording device and the focus group on a portable video recording device. Following the interview/ focus group, the audio or video file will be downloaded onto a password-protected computer and deleted from the recording device. The file will then be transcribed in a Word document with pseudonyms replacing any identifiable names and places. The Word document will be saved on a password-protected computer. Consent forms, field notes and the graphic representation of the focus group will be scanned and saved to the password-protected computer and the original forms/notes shredded. If any transcripts need to be printed, for example, to facilitate the process of analysis, these will be kept in a locked cabinet that only I have access to when they are not being worked upon. All documents and files saved onto a password-protected computer will be backed-up on a secure University of Birmingham network in a password protected folder.

Following the completion of the data analysis, in line with university ethical guidelines, all data will be kept for 10 years: electronic data on a University of Birmingham encrypted memory stick, and hard copies, e.g. of transcripts, in a locked cabinet. During this period, I, my supervisors, university examiners and the research participants may have access to the data (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 27, 2011). After this time, all electronic data will be erased and printed interview transcripts will be securely shredded.

13. OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED? e.g. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks or NHS R&D approvals.

☒ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT APPLICABLE

If yes, please specify.

I, the researcher, have a valid enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check from the University, which is required to visit schools and work with (and interview) children and young people.

14. **SIGNIFICANCE/BENEFITS**

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

It is hoped that this research will have the following benefits:

1. Implications for interventions implemented by educational psychologists and other professionals working with UASC population in terms of helping UASC form supportive and constructive relationships and in so doing support their positive integration and psychosocial wellbeing.
2. Previous research (e.g. Connolly, 2014; Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Mels et al., 20008; Goodman, 2004) has documented that UASC may have an untrusting orientation as a result of their perceptions that they have been let down by adults in the past (e.g. in being sent away from their homeland by their families; by being abused by supposed carers during their journey), and following their experience of 'trial by application' with the immigration authorities, which will most likely comprise their most recent interview experience. It is hoped therefore that involvement in this research where transparency will be key and the aims and methods are made clear from the outset, with the most important component being that the participants have a chance to have their voice heard, may have some therapeutic value and go some way to empowering the young people involved.
3. The research may be beneficial for other researchers who seek to carry out meaningful interpretivist enquiries with UASC or other vulnerable groups, and use interpretivist phenomenological analysis to draw valuable conclusions.

15. RISKS

a) Outline any potential risks to **INDIVIDUALS**, including research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap

Risk to Researcher

There is very little physical risk to me during the process of this project. However, there is a chance that participants may talk about situations and occurrences which have been very difficult for them, which may cause me some emotional distress. Consequently, it will be important for me to seek support through the effective use of supervision to debrief and process the content. Where meetings with participants take place in their homes, I will comply with my Local Authority's safeguarding regulations regarding home visits.

Risk to Research Participants

UASC participants

Involvement in the research will pose no physical risk to participants, however, it is possible that in explaining, recalling or reflecting on details relating to the relationships they have formed since arriving in the UK, they may experience some upsetting thoughts and memories relating to the difficulties they have faced since arriving in England (BPS Human Research Ethics, 3, 2014). Carefully considered steps will be taken to minimise this risk (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 20, 2011):

- One of the inclusion criteria for these participants is that foster carers/ social workers judge that they have reached a 'stabilisation' stage in their adaptation to life in England (Groark et al., 2010) and are not experiencing flashbacks or other symptoms of psychological distress that were interfering with daily life (BPS Code of Ethics, 3.7, 2009).
- In order to reduce the likelihood of causing the participant discomfort or distress, the interview will be positively framed and have an emphasis on 'important' people in the young people's lives. Furthermore, through using semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool, participants will be able to set the agenda and have control over who and what is spoken about within the broad parameters set by the research question. I will not specifically ask them about relationships with those in their home country or those they met on their journey in order to minimise the chance of evoking memories of potentially traumatic events which lead to their departure or which they experienced on the journey (Raghallaigh and Gilligan, 2010; Thommessen et al., 2017). If the participants mention people from these parts of their lives, I will proceed with questioning very sensitively.
- My empathetic understanding of the UASC population will also be supported by the understanding I gain from regular attendance at a focus group for UASC from Autumn 2017 onwards. Furthermore, my training in counselling and therapeutic practices as part of my doctoral course will further facilitate my ability to question participants in a sensitive manner, to listen empathetically to their statements and be attuned in my responses. However, if participants appear to be becoming distressed at any point, they will be reminded of their right to not answer a particular question or withdraw completely from the interview process (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 20, 2011). This will ensure that they are never coerced into speaking about something that will cause them psychological stress (BPS Code of Ethics, 8.3, 2009).
- In order to put participant at ease, throughout all interactions with me, they will be able to have a trusted friend present if they would find this reassuring and enabling. Furthermore, in order to reduce the power imbalance between the participants and myself, I will: use the briefing meeting and initial stages of the interview to build rapport with the participant; present myself as a student researcher rather than an educational psychologist in training; encourage the use of first name terms and encourage participants to ask their own questions.
- If I do suspect that participants are experiencing some underlying psychological distress, I will share this with them and direct them towards an appropriate source of professional advice (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 23, 2011). If the participant is a minor, it will also be appropriate to appraise them of the fact that I may need to share my concerns with their foster carer and/or social worker.

Foster carer participants

There is little physical risk to the foster carer participants, however, there is a chance that reflecting on relationships with their foster children might be an overwhelming or distressing experience for them. As with the UASC participants, my sensitive questioning and participants being empowered to withdraw at any point will minimise the distress experienced. Before the main section of the focus group commences, it will also be essential to discuss and agree to guidelines with all participants concerning the right of all to express their opinions without feeling threatened or challenged and to participate in the discussion as much or little as they want to. I will also share appropriate sources of professional advice with them.

Risk to Individuals not involved in the research

Foster carers and social workers of UASC under the age of 16

There may be a potential risk to the foster carers and social workers of any minor UASC participants in that they may experience some anxiety about how the young person will cope with the demands of the interview. However, the foster carers and social workers will have the opportunity to speak with me about any particular concerns prior to their giving of consent for the UASC's involvement, and they will be able to contact either me or my supervisor at any point during the project through the details given on the information sheet.

Interpreters

In any cases where interpreters are used, it is possible that they, like me, may experience some psychological stress as a result of experiencing the distress of the participants. This may be further exacerbated as there is a chance that the interpreter may have had similar experiences to the UASCs, i.e. they may have been an asylum seeker, and interpreting the UASCs' views may trigger upsetting memories for them (BPS Working with Interpreters, 5, 2017). In order to minimise the risk to them, I will:

- Send information about the aims of the study when booking the interpreter to allow any potential interpreters the chance to decline the work if they judge it will be too distressing for them. The agency through which I book the interpreter will have my contact details and potential interpreters will be encouraged to contact me if they wish prior to the first meeting.
- Meet with the interpreter directly before the first meeting with the participant in order to answer any questions they may have and explain further how the project will proceed. This will be based on the interpreter information sheet (Appendix 4). The interpreter will be assured of their rights to ask for the interview to be paused or terminated if the content matter does cause them to experience distress.
- Pause or terminate the meeting with the participant if I judge that the interpreter is experiencing emotions which are causing them distress and impeding their ability to carry out their job in a full and successful manner.
- Debrief with the interpreter following the meetings and leave them with my contact details in case they need further support (BPS Working with Interpreters, 5, 2017).

My supporting colleague within the foster carer focus group

It is possible that my colleague may experience some psychological stress as a result of being privy to the experiences of the foster carer participants. In order to minimise the risk to them, I will:

- Fully brief them prior to the focus group as to the aims of the study as a whole, and the focus group in particular, and answer any questions that they may have about this.
- Discuss with them in detail the remit of their role within the focus group.

- Assure them of their right to leave the focus group if the content matter does cause them to experience distress.
- Debrief with them fully following the focus group.

b) Outline any potential risks to **THE ENVIRONMENT and/or SOCIETY** and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.

It is not anticipated that there will be any risks to the environment and/or society as a result of this research.

16. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH?
Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, please specify

If possible, I will seek to recruit UASC participants with 'good enough' English for all communications to proceed in this language. However, if this is not possible, language will not serve as a barrier to participation and interpreters will be used to facilitate communication between the participant(s) and me (BPS Ethical Guidelines, 1.2, 2009). This will ensure that the activity is not compromised by participants not fully understanding the line of enquiry or not being able to express their views as fully as possible.

Suitably trained, professional interpreters will be recruited through an interpretation and recruitment agency (BPS Working with Interpreters, 3.1, 2017). In order to enhance the extent to which the UASC feels comfortable working with them, where possible, the interpreter used will be someone with whom the young person has worked previously and efforts will be made for the same interpreter to attend the initial 'briefing meeting' and data collection interview (Argent, 1996; BPS Working with Interpreters, 4, 2017). This will also help in the development of a supportive, professional relationship between myself and the interpreter and allow the participant, interpreter and myself to become used to the nature of our communication within our three-way relationship (BPS Working with Interpreters, 3.2, 4, 2017). To facilitate a full interpretation, the participants and interpreters will be matched as far as possible for ethnic, religious and cultural group (Chester, 2001; BPS Working with Interpreters, 3.3, 2017).

Where used, the interpreter will play an active part in the research process and therefore must have a clear view of the aims of the research and have subscribed to the confidentiality agreement (Edwards, 1998; BPS Ethical Guidelines, 1.2, 2009; BERA Ethical Guidelines, 19, 2011). This will be achieved through a pre-interview conversation between myself and the interpreter (BPS Working with Interpreters, 3.5, 2017) based on the interpreter information sheet (Appendix 4). At the end of the meetings, it will be helpful to have a brief three-way exchange about the experience of having an interpreter present and the impact this had (BPS Working with Interpreters, 4, 2017).

It is unlikely that the interpreter will have access to any formal supervision within their organisation and therefore, following the departure of the participant, I will debrief with the interpreter and leave them with my contact details in case they need to debrief further at a later stage (BPS Working with Interpreters, 4, 2017).

APPENDIX 12a. CONSENT FORM FOR UASC PARTICIPANTS

Consent form

I would like to be involved in Kate's research project which forms part of her doctoral studies at the University of Birmingham.

	Understand	Agree
I have read the information sheet and have had a chance to talk to Kate about what my involvement will involve.		
I am happy to talk to Kate about the important people in my life since arriving in England.		
I am happy for Meeting 2 to be audio recorded.		
I know that I can invite someone to be in the meetings with me, but I don't have to have someone there.		
I give consent for Kate to gain the following information: 1. my name		
2. my address (if this is needed to arrange a meeting at home)		
3. my country of origin		
4. my religion		
5. my ethnicity		
If I change my mind and don't want to take part in the study, I know that this is okay.		
If there are any questions that Kate asks me that I don't want to answer, I know that I can remain silent.		
If I decide after Meeting 2 that I don't want Kate to use the information I have given her in her report, I can do this, but I must let her know within 7 days of the meeting. Kate will then destroy all information relating to me.		
I know that the only people who might hear the audio recording or look at the transcripts will be Kate.		
I know that Kate may talk to her university tutor about her findings, but she will not use my name.		
I know that my name will not be used in the any reports that Kate writes.		
I understand that all information about me will be stored for 10 years and I can ask to see or correct this at any time.		
If I say something that worries Kate, I understand that she may share the information with someone who can help me.		

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 12b. CONSENT FORM FOR FOSTER CARER PARTICIPANTS

Consent form

I consent to taking part in Kate's study.

The project

	Agree
I have read the information provided on the information sheet and have had the opportunity to speak to Kate in more detail about what the project entails.	
I understand that this project is being carried out as part of a piece of University of Birmingham doctoral research which will be written up as a final report, although my contributions will be anonymised.	
I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and I may withdraw from the project at any time up to one week after the focus group.	
If I withdraw during or after the focus group, I understand that every attempt will be made to remove my contribution from the transcript, but it may be impossible to remove every trace of my involvement.	
I understand that all data relating to me will be securely stored for 10 years and I can ask to access or change inaccurate details at any point in this time.	
I understand that Kate will only speak to someone other than her university supervisor about the content of the meetings if she has a concern about my wellbeing or that of another person.	
I give permission for Kate to make a record of my name but I know that this will not be used in her thesis.	

The focus group

	Agree
I recognise the right of everyone in the group to express their opinions and join in with as much or as little of the discussion as they would like.	
I understand that if Kate asks a question that I do not want to answer, I do not have to and I can remain silent.	
I recognise that everything said within the focus group is done so in confidence and I will not discuss the findings of the group with others or disclose the names of others who took part in the group with me.	

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 13a. SUMMARY SENT TO PARTICIPANTS FOLLOWING DATA COLLECTION: FOSTER CARERS

N.B. This summary was attached to an email that was sent to all FC participants. In the body of the email, foster carers were thanked for their participation and encouraged to get in touch with me if they wanted to expand, clarify or query any of the points made in the summary.

What are your experiences of the challenges and facilitators to forming relationships with foster children who are UASC?

Summary of key points

<u>Facilitators</u>

Giving them a positive start and making them feel welcome

E.g. Having food prepared that they will be familiar with
Introducing them to other members of the family

Adapting to the young person

- This is made easier if the foster carers have a bit of information before they meet the young people!
  - Asking their young people what they would like from the placement.
  - Making an effort to get to know their young person and supporting them in their hobbies and interests.
  - Finding out what their favourite foods are and cooking them for them.
  - Where needed, use pictures of foods to help the young people communicate what they would like
  - providing for specific dietary needs e.g. halal food
  - Learning a little bit of the child's home language.

Helping the young person develop relationships with others

- Helping them connect with communities who share their religion
- Helping them meet other UASC e.g. through Virtual School events
- Encouraging them to spend time with native English speakers to improve their language skills and to learn from them about English life.
- Finding extra-curricular activities for them to participate in e.g. sports teams
- Supporting young people in finding and re-connecting with biological family members

Helping the young person to adapt and integrate into life in England and English culture, and feel an accepted part of society

- Teaching them about the way of life here helps with their sense of belonging
  - Introducing them to 'Western' foods e.g. burgers
  - Showing them how to use a knife and fork
  - Helping them understand how to interact with others e.g. with women
  - Introducing them to people from lots of different backgrounds who are representative of multi-cultural Britain (and _____ in particular), and educating them about customs and religions other than their own (e.g. celebrating lots of different festivals: Eid, Diwali, Christmas…)
  - Helping them to understand UK systems e.g. how to book a doctor's appointment and what to expect there

- Helping them to learn English at home and making sure they are taking appropriate English courses at school/ college.
- Taking them to different cities and parts of England.

Providing the young person with a safe base

- 'Fighting for' their young people
  - Helping them with their legal status
  - Finding them schools to go to and universities to accept them
  - Working with schools to help them understand how to the support the young people
- Viewing and treating their young people as one of their family: children/ nephews/ grandchildren.
  - Opening hearts and homes to the young people and in return, receiving respect
  - Telling young people that the house is their home, not a foster placement
  - Inviting the young person to attend family events e.g. weddings and parties
  - Ensuring a 'whole family' approach and helping other foster and biological children to understand them and treat them just like any other family member.
  - Cooking for them and doing their washing (when appropriate!)
  - Caring for their physical wellbeing and health
- Developing a culture of trust e.g. giving them a bank card/ a door key
- Putting themselves in the shoes of the young people and being attuned to their feelings
  - Providing them with a bank card when they are getting frustrated that they don't have access to money as their friends do; helping to find a part-time job just like friends.
  - Ensuring they have interpreters in situations where these are needed
  - Before the young people become proficient in English, using a common language to communicate, or where this is not possible developing your own sign language!
  - It also helps if you have experienced a bit of what they are going through e.g. if foster carer has moved to UK as a child.
- Acceptance
  - Not judging them if e.g. their religious practices begin to change.
  - Accepting what they tell you e.g. not querying their age
  - Giving them chances
  - Not pressuring them to do things that they don't want to do, or aren't ready to do but helping them know that they have opportunities should they choose to take them.
- Being there and available for them at any time
  - Being able to give them answers to any questions they might have
- Ensuring the young people know that they continue to be welcome in the family home even after they have moved out
  - Maintaining regular communication with them e.g. texting.
- Having the same expectations for all the young people in the home.

Helping the young person to maintain their cultural traditions

- E.g. feeling comfortable eating with fingers and wearing clothes in the style of their home country whenever they want
- supporting their young people to continue to practice their religion and celebrate their festivals
- supporting them to (continue to) develop their skills with their own language e.g. writing

but also giving them opportunities to feel comfortable with English cultural traditions.

Helping young people to be able to cope with the trauma that they have experienced and the uncertainty they are continuing to experience

- Finding them counsellors to talk to.
- Encouraging their relationships with other refugees they met on their journeys to the UK.
- Encouraging them to engage in new opportunities and activities
    - Distracts them from thinking about legal status

Individual characteristics of the foster carer

- Respect for the adversities that the young people have faced and understanding the impact that this will have on their manner and behaviour.
- Having knowledge of some of the things that the young person might find difficult and be able to pre-empt this by having conversations with them about it
- Excellent social and interpersonal skills and the ability to have conversations with young people about difficult topics e.g. the difference between religion and culture
- Clear and consistent
- Resilience and willing to persevere

Individual characteristics of the young person

- Hard working and motivated
- Respectful and trustworthy
- Wanting to engage in family life and open up to foster carers
- Wanting to settle in the country and learn about English language and culture

<u>Challenges</u>

Resistance to establishing boundaries

- Especially as the young people will have had to have been so independent and self-reliant during their journey, they may find it difficult to accept the rules imposed on them by others.
- It may also take some time for the young people to accept expectations e.g. in terms of their responsibility to help around the home

Cultural and language differences

- Expectations around the role of women
    - Not being used to taking directions from women
- Not speaking the same language (to start with)

Family views

- Concerns from external family members about the appropriateness of e.g. having young male UASC in a family where there are already young daughters.

The impact of trauma and stressors

- The young people may find it difficult to open up
    - In particular, they may not want to discuss their previous experiences and the impact of this on them.
- Being stressed and preoccupied with concerns about legal status
    - Often leads to frustration and aggression
    - Not getting the leave to remain is their worst fear

Individual characteristics of the young person

- Feeling ‘alien’
- Being quiet
- Not listening
- Not wanting to engage with and learn about English culture.
- Not respecting foster carers.

APPENDIX 13b. SUMMARY SENT TO PARTICIPANTS FOLLOWING DATA COLLECTION: UASC EXAMPLE

Dear _____ [U2],

It was a pleasure to meet you last week and I really appreciated the time you took to talk to me about your experiences in England and the important people in your life here. I have included below a summary of the key points that we discussed. Please have a look through what I have written and do let me know if there is anything important that you feel I have missed, or anything that I have got wrong about what you told me.

To contact me, please call me on my mobile (_____) or email me at (_____), or you could ask _____[F1/F2] to contact me. I would be very happy to talk to you either over the phone or face-to-face at a time and place that suits you.

Thank you again so much for helping me with my research.
Good luck for the rest of this first year at university.
With best wishes,
Kate.

SUMMARY

Key things about you:
In UK: 6 years
Country of birth: Bangladesh
Age: 19 years

Key things you told me about why people in your life are important to you:

Time 2

Foster parents

- Cooking food that you like and that is familiar.
- Also Aunty's mother cooking you fish, which is more traditionally Bangladeshi than Pakistani – so thoughtful.
- Doing things that parents would do for you; "family doesn't have to be blood related."
- Forming such a close bond with you that you realise that for them, this is more than a job.
- Treat you as part of the family and introducing you to the wider family to whom you are now really close.
- Telling you not to worry about your immigration status and to focus on your education.
- Helping you to plan your future e.g. Education.
- Helping you to focus so that you didn't go 'gallivanting'.
- It's nice when they get everyone together at Ramadan.

Foster siblings

- You're really close and enjoy having a laugh together – it's 'easy' and relaxed when you are together. 'Togetherness' is most important: looking out for each other and spending time together.
- Like watching films, playing football together.
- Help each other with school and college work.

3 friends

- Met 1 at school, 1 at college and 1 is a relation of the foster family who is the same age.
- All were born in the UK but share the same religion as you.

    - You made a conscious choice to make friends with English people as this makes sure that you speak English and can find out about English culture; if you had been surrounded by Bengali people, you would have spoken Bengali and not adapted as well.
    - This doesn't mean that you have forgotten your language, your culture and your values, but it has been essential for you to adapt to the English way of life.
    - You have friends who have lots of different ethnicities and religions and for you but if you 'click' with someone and can relate to each other, that is the most important thing.
- Can talk about anything and they know a lot about your journey to England.
- One thing that bound you and your school and college friend together was that you could look out for them; one was quite shy while you were more confident, and one needs looking after to make sure he doesn't 'mess up'.
- Like spending time together and going to lots of different places together e.g. Road trips, cinema, out for dinner and sometimes to prayers at the Mosque.

Time 1

Foster parents

- Help with the transition into life in the UK
- Education is really important to you and they provided you with an environment where you could focus on your work e.g. Finding a quiet space in the busy, noisy house.
- Cooking food that you like.
- Taking time to get to know you, even though you were quiet and didn't speak too much language; helping you to bring you out of your shell, include you in the family like and speak English.
- When you were miserable or things weren't going right, they were the people you would go to and who would help you; "it's very important to have someone to talk to".

Friend from school (same as from Time 2)

- Help you to settle into life in England and show what like is like here and adapt to the lifestyle. Introduce you to new places and e.g. music.

Uncle (family friend)

- Lived with him when you first arrived
- Gave you practical support e.g. Financial, a roof over your head, clothes, enrolling you in school.
- Included you as part of your family
- Bengali – helpful as you could understand and be understood in Bengali while your English was developing; you knew that you would be having familiar food and keeping a link to your way of life in Bangladesh.

Teacher

- Helped you with any problems at school e.g. Learning problems, and also checked up with you how things were at home and with the Home Office.
- Helped you to understand systems which are different in England than Bangladesh.
- Could talk to him about anything.

Summary

- To start with, you needed people who helped you to stay connected to your Bengali values and lifestyle, and then people who could introduce you to English culture and systems.
    - This helped you to settle in.
- Now, having a sense of family and togetherness is most important and having people around you that you trust implicitly and you can trust through and through, and are helping you plan for your future.