WHAT COUNTS? AN EXPLORATION OF ENGAGEMENT WITH SIX YOUNG PEOPLE ESCAPING HOMELESSNESS.

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is situated in the uncertain and complex territory of homelessness. The industry tries to tidy up complexity with measurement, foreclosing difficult debates that involve blame, shame and stigma.

Tom, Max, Braden, Akira, Holly and Mark are all participants in a Payment by Results programme for young people seen to be 'essentially too hard to help' (Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2014, p.5). This thesis explores their past and current attempts to engage.

Engagement, trust and care are all terms written about in homelessness literature, but they need to be applied in a more rigorous and theorised way to advance real understanding relevant to practice.

This thesis has reassembled a whole picture of experience otherwise fractured by the gaze of discrete services, relationships and time using a unique multi-perspectival and co-produced methodology which tracks the young people's experiences over 15 months. The research with young people is augmented by interviews with significant people in their lives including their Support Workers.

The analysis demonstrates that trust is foundational for engagement, and four elements foster trust, including 1. responsiveness, 2. empathy and reciprocity, 3. flexibility and choice. However, these elements are not always appropriate and not always helpful. It is the final element — that I am calling 4. caring attention or attentiveness — which shapes practices and qualities to the individual and the context and helps to produce full-on engagement.

However, trust is difficult to win and harder to sustain and the paradoxical nature of helping work, especially on the frontline, causes anxiety and displacement activities that take our attention away from the person before us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The original impetus for this thesis was to understand what I experienced as some invisible, unarticulated force that perpetually, perniciously stopped help from happening. I had been working in London from the early days of New Labour up until the mid-term of the coalition government. My work took me across children and young people's services, drug and alcohol services, the criminal justice system and mental health; through the voluntary sector and local government; in frontline, management and consultant roles. Once in the homeless sector there were five years of travelling across the UK working on deliberative consultations, client involvement and peer research projects and in the final three years a focus on health and homelessness. In this way I am positioned as an insider (Taylor, 1994). Throughout I was perplexed by how the will for 'good practice' was so great and yet implementation mostly fell short or produced unintended and unwelcome results. No matter the number of training days or enthusiasm, or the strength of carrot or stick motivation, things remained largely the same. Where was the resistance coming from? I asked this question also from personal experience of trying to do good, having a little success, some failure, a few brilliant moments and a lingering anxiety that some of my interventions were bad, thwarted by things inside and outside of myself, making a mess of my motivations.

This PhD is an attempt to explain how things get stuck: why it is so difficult, not just in the homelessness sector but across helping sectors, to embed practices that successfully engage those in need of help. The concept of 'engagement' within helping services is widely used (and measured) but under-theorised. In the existing literature (and echoed in my empirical findings), the development of trust is key to encouraging and maintaining engagement.

Engagement, trust and care are all terms written about in homelessness literature, but they need to be applied in a more rigorous and theorised way to advance real understanding relevant to practice.

Engagement has been imagined as the extent to which a user uses services effectively, measured through quantifiable outcomes. But what is clear to me is that engagement is a process - the connection or relationship between the (potential) helper and the (potential) helped. When it is good, help can happen, but this 'help' is not given by one to the other but achieved together. Engagement is experienced as a combination of intentions, feelings and behaviours that operate dynamically in response to an intervention aiming to address need and support positive 'outcomes'. When considered this way, engagement is a meaningful relationship that promotes growth.

This PhD is an exploration of the factors that enable and inhibit engagement with help. Empirically, it is the story of six young people's experiences of trying to engage with help over time, of what and who did and did not help, and how they felt and behaved then and now.

Part of the context is homelessness. Despite prominent actions by politicians and professional actors to end homelessness in England, since 2010, according to all measures, it has persistently worsened. It is evident from research into social and youth work, with people experiencing homelessness, mental health and addiction that the longer problems are left unresolved (help is not activated), the more complex the needs become, and the more difficult, time consuming, and expensive they are to address. People experiencing

multiple disadvantage typically have a long history of involvement with different services.[1]

Often, help may have been offered, but they haven't engaged, the process has not *helped them*. This thesis is especially concerned with this small and significant group.

The fieldwork occurred following nearly 10 years of austerity which has left helping services thin on the ground, facing increasing need and subject to reorganisation and retrenchment. All areas of state provision have been affected, including housing, education, health, mental health, criminal justice, welfare and Social Services. I am not saying that we don't need more direct and long-term investment and that if only we had this thing I call full-on engagement the young people in this story would have flourished – but rather that if we had the conditions that full-on engagement requires, I claim they would. There is no doubt that the welfare settlement is out of balance, and critical services, for mental health for example, are desperately remote from meeting the need that exists (Tyler, 2020). But what we invest in (when we can) is significant. What we choose or are compelled to pay attention to matters, as I hope this thesis will illustrate.

The Context for the Study

This is a collaborative PhD with a well-established and nationally influential youth homelessness charity called Futures[2] which works with close to 5000 young people aged 16 to 25 who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and employs nearly 300 staff. In 2013, 90 percent of the young people who accessed Futures were prevented from being homeless. Support Workers (SWs) who were interviewed for this study describe Futures as more successful than other organisations doing similar types of work in the region. In an

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[1] See Chapter One p. 28
[2] All names of people and places have been anonymised

interview, one explains that Futures is *'known as quite gold standard'*. Commonly, SWs

assert that the organisation, in comparison with others they have worked with, is more

'caring and passionate' more *'individual'* or shaped around the client's needs. Another says

that the Futures team are *'pleasant with young people'* explaining that managers in other

organisations where they have worked *'would refuse to go within a country mile of a client'*.

They also emphasise what they experience as *'quite level'* and *'horizontal'* operational

structures, with senior staff treating SWs with *'respect'*. Also, as a more *'liberal'* organisation

than some, characterised by a willingness to *'change structures'* in response to SWs' ideas

for improvements; they leave *'a lot of room for individual creativity'*. A number of the SWs

mention the opportunities Futures makes available to young people; training and

development programmes both internally facilitated and externally with local businesses

and training providers. One believes Futures understands *'what makes them [young people]*

engage'. Here they specifically refer to financial incentives, used to motivate young people

to take up and sustain training and employment, discussed at length in Chapter Eight.

 SWs indicate that Futures has a history of learning and evolving – that it is a responsive

organisation. One mentions an historical evaluation that highlighted a need for greater user

involvement which was met wholeheartedly with the allocation of resources to rapidly

develop this area of work, as a result they are now recognised as leaders in the sector.

Resonating with the notion of a respectful and horizontal organisation, most talk about the

opportunities for young people to have a voice and be heard. I want to make the point here

that Futures, by all accounts, is among the very best of providers of help for young people

experiencing homelessness that exist in Britain.

In preparation, I conducted a small empirical study exploring homelessness prevention with Futures staff and clients and a review of the literature on prevention of homelessness and beyond. This Masters dissertation (Helleren, 2014, unpublished) produced findings that took my interest away from the focus on the value of preventative initiatives and towards learning more about engagement.

The significant findings from that pilot were as follows:

1. **The narrative of prevention is seductive**. Who can argue with *"stopping bad things from happening"* (Freeman, 1999, p.23) or at the very least *"stopping bad things from getting worse"* (DfES, 2006, p.11)? Frequently large-scale preventative programmes come in the wake of a terrible incident and scrutinise what occurred and who and what must change – as was the case in Laming's investigation into the death of Victoria Climbié (Laming, 2003, p.13).

2. **Prevention is emotive** and singling out characteristics to target intervention towards is inevitably blaming. Mobilising outrage and horror, preventative interventions must identify exactly what caused the 'bad' outcome to be prevented and target individuals and practices which appear to be the site of the cause. Targeting is more or less effective depending on the certainty of causal associations between the group and the problem, and in this way, prevention is "…*built on scientific understandings of cause and effect and the possibility of prediction…"* (Freeman, 1999, p.231) but is applied to a fluid social world and complex unfathomable actors.

3. **Prevention is frequently *'slippery'*** (Billis, 1981). In order to appropriately target preventative services research, screening and assessment of populations is undertaken, frequently *uncovering* new problems. In practice, many preventative

programmes only kick in when a problem becomes visible, so in effect are preventing things from getting worse or happening again. As Alex Fox argued in the Joint Committee on the Draft Care and Support Bill in 2013, *"things labelled prevention often had no clear idea of what they were preventing, for whom and how they knew whether they had prevented it…"* (cited in Miller, 2014, p.13).

Interviews with staff at Futures emphasised this slippery profile of prevention as staff explained that the service was preventing young people from leaving home, creating a reactionary response to their needs and preventing their needs from escalating, entering into the 'revolving door' (moving from one service to the next, commonly the criminal justice system, substance misuse and mental health services), and young people accessing (frequently unsuitable) temporary accommodation. Furthermore, that while timing of interventions is important, and early intervention preferred, the success of the work is dependent on young people's and families' willingness to engage with the interventions offered.

4. **Preventative programmes are notoriously difficult to evaluate;** they are beset by problems of attribution and the counterfactual (estimating what would have happened if the intervention did not occur). As Shinn et al. writing on evidencing prevention in homelessness services warn, *'Even a carefully designed experiment, in which a group randomly assigned to receive preventative services experiences less homelessness than a control group, may not demonstrate net prevention (overall reduction in incidence or prevalence) if homelessness has merely been reallocated'* (Shinn et al., 2001, p.103).

The warning here has played out in the evaluations of a number of nationally significant preventative programmes including Sure Start (Melhuish et al., 2012, p.8) and, more recently, Troubled Families (DCLG, 2016).

From these findings I knew that I was not able to conduct an investigation of sufficient size and sophistication to make robust claims about factors that directly caused young people not to become homeless. Rather, as Baker et al. (2003) recommends, I adopted a qualitative approach to analysing an individual's experience of interventions to develop deeper knowledge about how the intervention enabled prevention. Moreover, support staff work to unpick and unpack young people's needs, risks and circumstances then offer up interventions, the success of which depends on what the staff, the young people and the organisation called *engagement*. Rather than testing the efficacy of interventions I wanted to focus on engagement; what causes it to flourish or wilt away. This is not to say that I am opposed to efforts to prevent homelessness. But as a frame for research, the prevention discourse, prominent in homelessness policy over time, stimulates the search for 'complex explanations' (see causes) which I fear take us away from seeing individuals and *their* complexity in the present moment. Or, as Ravenhill citing Carter describes it,

> 'individualistic discourses', which deny or obscure any ability to recognize real need even when confronted with rough sleepers (Ravenhill, 2008, p.5).

As a frame for research, prevention leads to a splicing up of people's actual whole experiences into causes, needs, interventions and outcomes (mostly in the short term). In turn, our response to homelessness has been similarly spliced and as we act on one need we notice, from the corner of our vision, something else unravelling.

Subsequently, I proposed a research design building on participatory methodology where the young people become research collaborators, rather than the subject, and together we tried to unpick the nature of 'engagement with help' based on their experiences. They nominated others who they thought had insight into their engagement over time, and those perspectives add depth and detail. The young people's SWs and the paperwork accumulated on the young people was accessed to add another layer, crucially allowing insight into the helping relationship from multiple perspectives. The longitudinal element and creative methods used enables consideration, reflection and reconsideration, assisting the emergence of a fine-grained understanding of what makes the difference when trying to engage with help in the 'encounter' (Bartels, 2013). To my great relief, the change in focus and methodology was agreed by the organisation partners and the question became which young people?

At this time Futures were months into the delivery of one of seven streams of a nationwide Payment by Results (PbR) programme, funded through Social Impact Bonds (SIB). The Programme aimed to 'improve accommodation and work outcomes' (DCLG 2014, p.4) for a group of young people who had fallen 'through the net and receive little support because of the complex and interlinking problems they are experiencing' seen to be 'essentially too hard to help' (DCLG 2014, p.5). The Programme aspired to 'turn their lives around' away from 'increasing involvement in crime, rough sleeping, substance misuse and long-term benefit dependency' (DCLG 2014, p.5) through the provision of innovative support over a period of three years. As the first Social Investment PbR programme for youth homelessness in England it was undoubtedly a test of whether the model would deliver the aspirations as laid out in the service specification, 'encouraging enterprising, local and results focused

approaches… unlock[ing] innovative ways to tackle local issues' and ensuring 'better value for money' as the government 'funds only the interventions that work' while the risk of interventions not working falls to the private sector. The Programme made up a small part of Futures' overall work with young people, a mere 351 participants of a close to 5000 total cohort, the majority being within supported housing provision across an English region. The Programme participants seemed like the best possible cohort to recruit from for two key reasons. Firstly, the cohort profile: people who had run out of chances and as a result had likely experienced many and mostly failed attempts to engage with help. Secondly, The Programme anticipated three years of funded support for each of the young people (whereas other parts of Futures were funded for six to 12 months support) enhancing the possibility of retention of participants throughout a longitudinal investigation.

While I met the young people as Futures' beneficiaries, we explored their experiences of needing and engaging (and not) with help over their lifetime and with a huge variety of services, institutions and people. The present and recent past naturally comes into much sharper focus, and in this way Futures as a service, The Programme and the staff employed to deliver The Programme for Futures are central players in their narratives. **However, Futures and The Programme are not the subject of the thesis. Experience of engagement with help over six lifetimes is the subject of this research.**

In this thesis I develop the concept of *engagement* as a focus for helping practice. I am by no means the first to recognise engagement as an area of concern, especially when services' efforts are directed towards those who are experiencing multiple disadvantage, but it is rarely, if ever, the focus of research. When it is used in policy documents and monographs,

evaluations and service specifications it as an everyday term that does not require explanation. It is often measured by attendance, adherence/compliance and achievement, and therefore defined by how it is operationalised.

Through this research I have come to understand engagement as first and foremostly occurring in relationship; that is, relationship with others, environments, programmes and interventions and with ourselves. It is commonly used to describe what we *hope* to occur in the relationship between a person in need and individual in a position to help and The Programme of help they are offering. Engagement is a meaningful relationship that promotes growth wherein it is experienced as a combination of intentions, feelings and behaviours that operate dynamically in response to an intervention aiming to address need and support positive 'outcomes'. Finally, there are degrees of engagement; more or better engagement increases the value of the helping encounter.

The literature clearly points to trust as the essential foundation for enabling and increasing engagement and highlights elements that serve to enable and foster trust, including responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity, and flexibility and choice. I have a hunch that nothing listed here would be surprising for people doing or managing helping work, but these are not simple or easy things to apply. Also clear from the literature is that these elements are not always appropriate and not always helpful. It is the fourth element, that I am calling caring attention or attentiveness that makes the significant difference to the effectiveness of the other three elements. Attentiveness shapes practices and qualities to the individual in need and the context. Furthermore, for people who take on these helping roles, there are gaps between what we actually do in practice and what we imagine we are doing, what we

are told we should be doing, what we aspire to do (Hunter, 2016, video) between 'expectation and accomplishments' (Lipsky, 2010, p.78). I hone in on these gaps to understand the struggle frontline workers face in trying to do a good job and handle the paradoxical nature of helping work.

In summary, engaging people with help can be difficult and frustrating especially for those who have had failed attempts. Engagement occurs in relation, affects the value of the 'public encounter' and is largely the job of the frontline worker (Bartels, 2013). Engagement is underpinned by trust, which is facilitated by the four elements, which includes and is shaped by attention. The empirical exploration behind this thesis verifies this knowledge and contributes a nuanced picture of why what we know is important and why it is difficult to implement; what full-on engagement feels like and might look like from the outside and how services and frontline staff can be supported to enable it.

Chapter One provides an overview of how homelessness is variously defined and measured; the known extent of the problem and an overview of policy and practice solutions implemented to address it. It is a long-contested territory and in the good-willed fight to pin down answers to the many questions it poses, I argue a damaging tendency towards blame and shame is endemic. This is not surprising as the horrors of homelessness and the continuing failed attempts to stop it in this very rich nation of the UK easily produce anger and anxiety. Throughout the thesis I search for a way that we can better manage these understandable affective responses and bypass the tendency to blame and shame.

Trust is identified as essential to effective client-worker relationships. However, there is little theorisation on how this develops in relationship within the context of service

provision. **Chapter Two** draws on social work, anthropology, social theory and Science and Technology Studies literature to examine how trust and care can be developed. It explores tensions and troubles which 'care' presents, especially considering how it has been configured within capitalism and homelessness where the fear of dependency and focus on self-reliance are significant drivers of policy and practice.

Chapter Three responds to my personal questions about why sometimes when I tried it went wrong and what inside and outside of myself contributed to a less than valuable encounter, making use of Klein's developmental theory, Object Relations, as a heuristic device to understand how power 'in here' and 'out there' can disrupt helping work. I uncover some irreconcilable paradoxes in helping work and illustrate how they produce anxiety and a range of displacement activities that easily consume time and attention, taking us further away from enabling full-on engagement.

The stubbornness of the problem is not due to a dearth of research into homelessness; in fact, across the global north, the field is crowded. In **Chapter Four** I describe how my methodological approach aspires to look at the phenomena in a (albeit slightly) different way; moves towards complexity and the individual against the greater tide of homelessness research which pursues ever more positivistic approaches. In the tradition of homelessness scholars Hall (2003), Gowan (2010), McNaughton-Nichols (2009) and Jackson (2015), I take a qualitative and longitudinal approach to get behind what is going on, be sensitive to the complex human mess rather than clean it up into data sets that ring with certainty and to present as whole as possible a picture of the unique complexity of the participants and their helping encounters.

Chapter Five introduces the characters in the research, the young people's autobiographical narratives of needing and trying to get help. I aspire to get some purchase on the relational dynamics that play out between those in need of help and those in a position to provide it. They are stories dominated by violence and precarity. This chapter explains how the young people's Support Workers came to their roles, what motivates them and how they experience the young people's engagement. They all proclaim the need for trust, some struggle to be trusting or trustworthy.

The young people persistently told stories about 'fitting in' and feeling different, often on the outside, and consistently seeking belonging. **Chapter Six** focuses in on their experiences of seeking belonging, how this has failed and made them vigilant, and reluctant to seek out help or to appear vulnerable. Instead, they hide away, self soothe, turn rage and fear on themselves, or rage against weakness in others that they fear in themselves. This chapter illustrates the fragility of webs of trust and the effect of blame and shame on them.

In **Chapter Seven** we see the young people, from a place of precarity, employing tactics to get help. They adjust their behaviour to the system, they comply, but not always in 'intended' ways. They stretch the truth, which undermines trust and makes it harder for the young people to recognise a consistent truth in their own accounts, but often proves a successful tactic. When stretching the truth does not work and effective advocates are not available, young people act out the 'violent', 'vile', 'angry', 'threatening' young person/client that homelessness and related systems may be expecting. The young people are shaped by these experiences, as are their workers. This reinforces stigma. Sometimes, by chance, the consistently idiosyncratic systems they are required to engage with to get help work to the

young person's advantage. More often than not they don't, and the young people give up, drop out and cease to care.

Chapter Eight explores the tactics and strategies employed by Support Workers, Futures and The Programme to encourage and support engagement. Support Workers are the single most significant tactic in the arsenal of homelessness sector services to engage their clients. They, along with other frontline workers, 'straddle the gap between the realities of practice and service ideals' (Lipsky, 1980, p.xvi). They improvise, drawing on their knowledge and personal judgements (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003), 'fixing' (policy and processes so that they actually work for the community), 'reaching', and 'enabling' partnership (Durose, 2011). There are gaps between what they think they do, what they are told they should be doing, and what they actually do (Hunter, 2016). They describe their role as 'parenting', 'mentoring', 'friendship', 'working the mechanics of the system' and enabling young people to 'have a voice'. They apply organisational tactics to engage young people, mediated by the Outcomes-Based Performance Management framework of the PbR Programme. While there is some indication that this framework supports attainment, it also hampers the positive effects of pre-existing innovative trauma-informed practice and encourages avoidance of issues that do not explicitly count towards outcomes (for example mental health issues). This turns Support Workers' attention towards 'gaming' a system based on a linear and simplistic account for something that is of infinite complexity (Lowe and Wilson, 2017). The use of incentives to motivate engagement were effective, but the depth and value of that engagement was variable and sometimes had a troubling effect on relationships.

Chapter Nine reveals the qualities of people, practice and environments that work to support young people's engagement, what engagement feels like to them and how it makes them behave. It fleshes out the four elements fundamental to building trust with examples from their stories and explains how together the six young people are looking for help in a context where they are 'seen and understood'.

Chapter Ten concludes that what we need is reliability. A safe space from which we can face the inevitable ambivalence in ourselves and in the work and begin the lifetime task of building trust, experiencing rupture and repairing. This goes for all of us, so there's a lot of work to do. Solidarity in the shame that will build resistance against what is a much trickier customer than the Commissioners in your local authority. Becoming is at the heart of engagement and loss is at the heart of becoming (Hunter, 2008). There is no quick fix for enabling engagement, but there are measures we can take to make it more likely. This thesis argues that these measures resist measurement – 'what works' is not countable.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HOMELESSNESS INDUSTRY

Introduction

The term 'homelessness industry' was developed by Ravenhill to specify 'statutory and voluntary sector organisations, campaigners, churches and charities, plus academics, intellectuals, research organisations, authors and even university or college training courses' (2008, p.14). It is a useful term because the demarcation between parts of the industry is persistently blurred as senior staff from provider organisations are co-opted to the civil service; providers conduct research; campaigning organisations deliver services and clients become workers. This industry also sits within changing structures of finance with public grant and charitable funding being increasingly blended with social investment and Payment by Results bringing new actors into contact with the 'industry' and in the process changing its operational, norms and working assumptions. Yet all these parts work together in response to one another. In this thesis, I am exploring what these structures within structures that constitute the 'homelessness industry' do to the possibility of engagement with help from the perspective of those seeking help.

There is very little stable territory in homelessness. From definition to quantification, through to policy and practice, things are rarely what they seem. What we are talking about when we talk about homelessness depends very much on the perspective from which it is viewed and how knowledge about it is produced, echoing Hutson and Liddiard (1994) when they say that definitions tell us more about the source than the phenomena.

By all measures homelessness in England is a persistent problem; while Britain saw a gradual reduction between 2002 and 2010, it has worsened from this point. People experiencing homelessness for a long time frequently have multiple needs (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011); Ravenhill, 2008); homelessness makes these worse (Ravenhill, 2008). Homelessness has always been and continues to be a problem triggered by and maintained because of poverty, inequality and a failing housing market (Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2017; Fitzpatrick et al, 2018).

Iterations of practice models are determined by funding and policy shifts which respond to how homelessness is conceptualised. Prevention is a common focus of policy and practice and while we should definitely aspire to addressing problems as soon as we possibly can, in practice sufficient funding is not made available to address people's needs before they reach crisis. This is coupled with the requirement to evidence achievement which encourages focus on outcomes that are achievable over addressing more intractable problems. The sector is increasingly professionalised, marketised and focused on outcomes-based performance management (OBPM). Payment by Results (PbR) and Social Investment Bonds (SIB), motivated by saving money and achieving outcomes; frequently (as in healthcare) 'hitting the target but missing the point' (Marmot, 2010, p.86). Support work in homelessness is difficult, sometimes dangerous, precarious and poorly paid. Individuals working on the frontline are additionally responsible for making sense of changes in practice and delivery models while handling the complex realities their clients face (Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010).

1.1 Defining homelessness

The term 'homelessness' is a floating signifier that is filled and given meaning by the dominant political philosophy (Blachin, 1998, cited in Seal, 2005), academics (Ravenhill, 2008; Williams & Cheal, 2002) and homelessness services providers (Cloke et al., 2010). Furthermore, there is consistent discord between how people experiencing homelessness are defined and how they define themselves (Bramley 1988, Jacobs et al., 1999; Gomez et al. 1999; Nichols, 2014). They, as with the public in general, think that being 'a homeless person' means sleeping rough with all the attendant connotations. I have been to dozens of supported accommodation hostels (defined as single homeless provision), where the first comment (after delivering a description of the focus group to follow) was 'but we're not homeless'. It was only dozens of times because we[3] changed the description script. I think that it was these incidents of a trembling, or forthright, blushing or outraged person saying this, that made me evangelical about abandoning the use of 'homeless people' - I want to say, 'people experiencing homelessness'. Typically, policy makers look to *narrow* the definition and providers of homelessness services *broaden* it. The former seeking to reduce the burden of their duty to provide assistance, particularly in times of austerity or attempts at state retreat; the latter, aware of the actual face of every different need and circumstance, widening the full extent and complex nature of the problem in order to inform evidence-based policy and justify resource allocation.

This was the case with the European Observatory on Homelessness when they developed The European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS), launched by the

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[3] My former employer

European working group on homelessness (FEANTSA) in 2005. A 'continuum definition,' ETHOS seeks to include all possible types of homelessness (Meert et al., 2004; Bramley, 1988). It includes four conceptual categories: rooflessness, houselessness, insecure accommodation, and inadequate accommodation. These are split into 13 'operational categories' which are defined and associated with a further 24 'living situations'. Since it was launched there have been a plethora of attempts to critique and improve the typology in its coverage of types of housing exclusion (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010; Amore et al., 2011; Brändle & García, 2015; Busch-Geertsema, Culhane & Fitzpatrick, 2016).

1.1.1 Homelessness defined by its absence: home

In the uncertainty around definition many fall back on what homelessness is not; secure accommodation that is free from violence or the threat of violence as described in the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act or having a 'home' (Williams & Cheal, 2002; Ravenhill, 2008). However, 'accommodation' is but a part of what is absent in the case of homelessness (Ravenhill, 2008, p.13), and 'home' is itself a socially constructed, contested notion (Neal, 1997), the definition slips here too. A notable development within ETHOS is to include a definition of 'home' as crossing three domains: **physical** (a decent space that adequately meets needs), **social** (being able to have privacy and enjoy social relations) and **legal** (having exclusive possession, security of occupation and legal title). 'Homelessness' in this definition includes people experiencing 'rooflessness' where none of the domains are satisfied; and 'houselessness' where the individual has a place to live that is fit for habitation but has no legal title or private, safe space for social relations. 'Housing Exclusion' then includes other ways in which individuals are inadequately or insecurely housed across the three domains (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010). While this definition captures the broad

particularities of homelessness and housing exclusion, identifying and counting individuals

across this detailed typology is out of reach for even the most socially committed

governments. Moreover, some maintain that as the definition broadens it also becomes

more 'opaque and meaningless' and actually 'prevents cohesive action' (Ravenhill, 2008,

p.5). In the case of a very broad definition where everyone not securely housed is included,

it becomes difficult to take action to address the problem; and in encapsulating such a wide

variety of circumstances there is a tendency to suggest there are similarities in a group that

actually are not there (Pawson, 2007, p.870). Furthermore, without a detailed agreed

definition of services, local authorities and their combined authorities (health, Social

Services etc.) fill in the gaps, arriving at different criteria and impeding their ability to work

together regarding an individual or family. A broad definition, which is teleological and

storied, might be less 'opaque and meaningless' if these elements of the contribution and

why they matter (alongside other variants of how you might address homelessness as an

experience) are made explicit.

1.1.2 Demarking thresholds for assistance: eligibility, priority (vulnerability), intentionality

In England today the definitions used are far less sensitive; they demarcate the thresholds

individuals must meet in order for the state to accept a duty to assist, that is, for them to

qualify as statutory homeless. Statutory homelessness refers to people who are eligible for

support, in priority need and not intentionally homelessness. While eligibility is a clearly

delineated threshold (those who have legal recourse to public funds), priority because of

vulnerability and intentionality are notoriously problematic. The term's subjective fringes

make negotiating help for homelessness a perilous activity with which even the most

competent Support Workers and even lawyers struggle. People who are able to claim for

benefits are **eligible**, this includes all people who have a legal right to live and work in the UK. People automatically in **priority** need are pregnant or between 16 and 17 years old, care leavers up to the age of 20, or people made homeless because of an emergency like a flood or fire. People may also be considered priority need if they are 'vulnerable' for example, suffering from poor mental health, elderly, disabled, fleeing domestic abuse or violence (Homelessness Act, 2002). Individuals must provide evidence that they are experiencing these issues and undertake an assessment conducted by their local housing authority who will investigate evidence brought.

People are considered 'Intentionally Homeless' if they are seen to have deliberately done or failed to do something that caused them to lose their home. This includes being evicted for not paying rent/mortgage or because of a member of their household's behaviour and refusing accommodation that has been offered. While individuals will get some assistance, it will be short term and may amount to advice, a referral to Social Services (if they have children) or a local charity. It is possible to argue against intentionality, but victories are rare. Since the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, which places duties on local authorities to 'take reasonable steps' to 'provide help' to all eligible homeless applicants, the situation should be improved (Homelessness Reduction Act, 2017). However, there is little evidence available as yet. The Crisis Homeless Monitor team conducted a small study with housing authority practitioners which found that 62% believed the Act has enabled a shift to a more person-centred approach, although nearly a third agreed that 'the Act has no impact on our pre-existing practice...' (Crisis, 2019, pp.28 & 29).

People who are not accepted as statutorily homeless are commonly described as 'single homeless', but this is confusing as many are not single. This broad term encapsulates people who are living in supported accommodation, are street homeless (sleeping rough or squatting), or hidden homeless (sofa surfing or in overcrowded accommodation). There is significant diversity within this group and a recognition that for some, homelessness will be a transient experience (an 'episode or episodes in an individual's housing pathway' (Clapham 2003, p. 123), while for others it is linked with 'complex and chaotic life experiences' (McDonagh, 2011, p.2) and is more likely to be chronic or ongoing (episodic bouts) (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, p.16).

1.1.3 Multiple disadvantage

This 'single homeless' group, especially those who experience homelessness in a chronic or ongoing way, are sometimes referred to as multiply excluded homelessness (MEH). MEH refers to people who have experienced homelessness and one or more domains of deep social exclusion including: institutional care, mental health issues, substance misuse and street culture activities (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013). A large scale, multistage, predominantly quantitative study by Fitzpatrick et al., found that 47% of people currently homeless and accessing low threshold services[4] experienced all four domains (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011, p.506). There were considered to be five distinct 'experiential clusters' within the MEH population, with the most complex forms of MEH associated with childhood trauma (2013, p.148). MEAM, in their 2009 study, use the term; 'multiple needs and exclusions' to take in to account more fully the nature of this experience; '... a combination of issues that impact

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[4] For example, day centres, night shelters and soup runs where users do not need to meet specific criteria in order to access them. As a result it is possible that some participants might not have been homeless at the time.

adversely', routine exclusion 'from effective contact with services'; 'chaotic' and 'costly' lives (p.8 2009). The most recent insight around this group comes from Lankelly Chase in 2015, to 'establish a statistical profile of the extent and nature of this form' of [what these authors call] severe and multiple disadvantage (SMD) (people who are involved with at least two out of three of homelessness, substance misuse and criminal justice systems) in England and to ascertain the characteristics and experiences of those affected…' (Bramley, et al., 2015, p.9). Bramley, et al., (2015) research, which exceptionally drew on data sets captured by a wide range of agencies, has produced the most comprehensive picture we have of this group to date. They found that each year over a quarter of a million people have contact with at least two of the three systems, and at least 58,000 people have contact with all three (Bramley, et al., 2015, p.6). They find that in addition to a background of poverty, and social exclusion this group have very difficult family relations, in most cases childhood trauma and very poor experiences with education (ibid). Throughout this thesis I will use yje term 'multiple disadvantage'.

Irrespective of the precise language used multiple disadvantage commonly pushes individuals towards the 'revolving door' (Nichols, 2014; Homeless Link, 2010). Here people become 'stuck in motion', 'fixed in mobility' (Jackson, 2012 and 2015 p.6) from the street into hostels and back to the streets again (Ravenhill 2008) and/or prison, mental health institutions and addiction treatment.

Because of the complexity in the disadvantages this group faces, partnership working is essential (Shinn et al., 2001, p.97). Negotiating with and between different providers makes up a large part of frontline work. The 'gaps' as in 'people falling through' that are commonly referred to are most frequently created by failures in partnership working. They are due to

the many varied agencies including the criminal justice system, addiction treatment

agencies (the prescribers are NHS), Social Services etc. collecting, storing and using

information in different ways with different professional boundaries, legal responsibilities

and access thresholds. In addition, within homelessness we see a highly mobile staff and

client group. Some would say that policy approaches that increase competition among

service providers are among the most significant barriers to great working across services

(Scullion, 2015, p.421; Ravenhill, 2008).

Young people experiencing multiple disadvantage are the target for 'The Programme', from

which the participants in my study are drawn. The Programme aims to provide 'innovative

and intensive support' so that they do not go on to 'increasing involvement in crime, rough

sleeping, substance misuse and long-term benefit dependency' (DCLG, 2014, p. 5),

ostensibly taking action to prevent young people with complex and multiple needs from

getting stuck in the revolving door.

1.2 Measuring homelessness

There are many problems when it comes to measuring homelessness: the contested

definition, many are 'hidden' and, in the main, the experience is transitory. Moreover,

because of these issues the industry is perpetually tinkering with the methodologies

applied, so, in addition to the hopeless task of packaging up the diversity and mess of

homelessness, the reliability[5] of evidence is undermined. Despite the recognised issues with

quantifying homelessness, the industry in England works with and from trends measured

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[5] In particular the 'stability' ('whether the measure is stable over time'; for example if the definitions of what is being measured changes) and 'inter-observer consistency' (when 'subjective judgement' is involved, especially when there is more than one observer 'there is a possibility that there will be a lack of consistency in their decisions') (Bryman, 2012, p.169).

over 9 years (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012-2019; Homeless Link, 2014-2017). 2010 is used as a comparator as it marks a low point in both recorded statutory and street homelessness, a change of government, and the beginning of austerity.

Between 2000-2010 there was a general decrease in all types of recorded homelessness which can be explained by investment and reform thanks to the New Labour government's 2002 Homelessness Act. Since 2010 there has been a steady increase across all forms of homelessness attributed to austerity, welfare reform, abandonment of preventative policies and massive disinvestment in homelessness (in particular the removal of ring-fencing of Supporting People funding)[6] and other support and care provisions. This rapid and significant increase appears to have flattened out over 2017/18 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019).

The statistics for people accepted as being owed a duty to statutory help to secure accommodation[7] indicate an increase of 42% between 2009/10 and 2017/18, and the total number applying for assistance in the same period rose by 23% as depicted in Figure 1, below, taken from the Crisis Homeless Monitor, 2019 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019).

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[6] From 2003 all supported housing services that were previously funded through Housing Benefit had the support element of their funding switched over to Supporting People (Seal, 2005, p.18). This funding was ringfenced at Local Authority level and used for a broad range of support for people experiencing issues with housing or in danger of experiencing issues with housing - a key preventative measure. While the ringfencing was removed by the Coalition government some local authorities maintain a 'supporting people' service.

[7] This is based on administrative data returns by local authorities based on their decisions of all 'presentations' by people claiming homelessness assistance.

Figure 1. England Local Authority homelessness assessment decisions 08/09-17/18
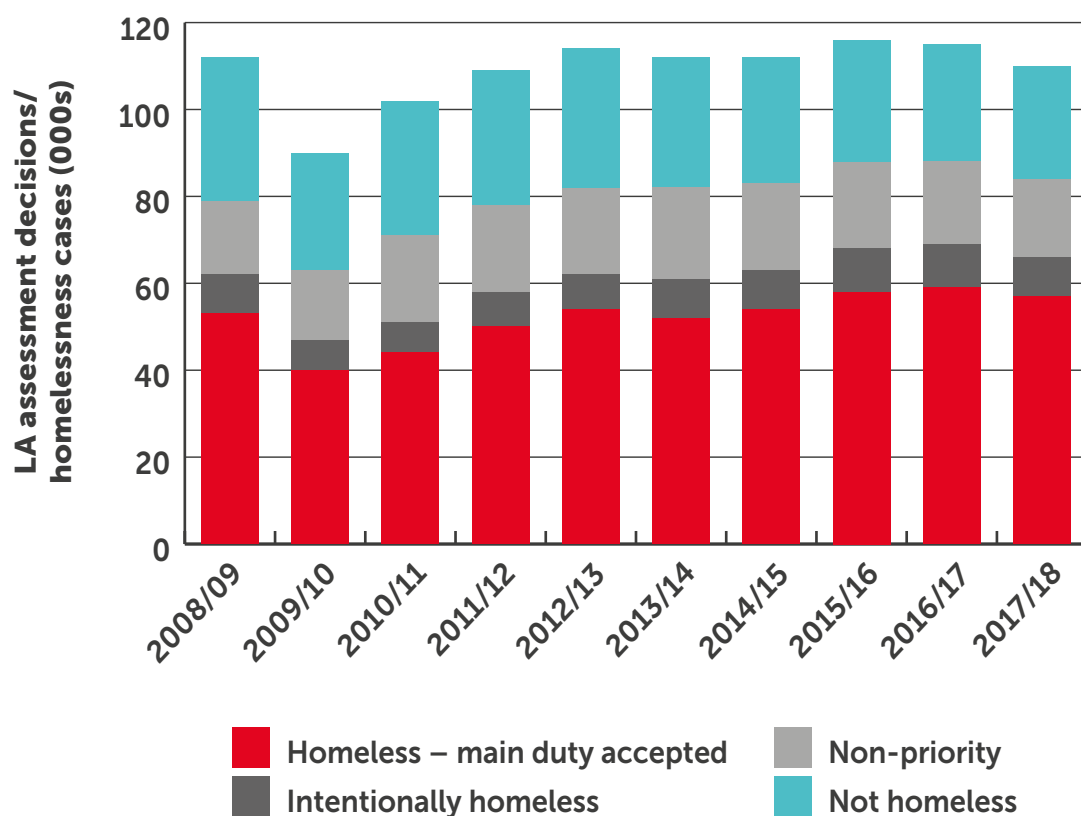
Source: MHCLG statutory homelessness statistics

Figure 4.7: Homelessness acceptances, 2008/09-2017/18: trends at broad region level – indexed

4.7

Despite improvements to the Rough Sleeper Count[8] methodology in 2010, to this day it is contested. The major issues are related to the potential for double counting and completely missing individuals. The 2010 changes included: a duty for local authorities to at least submit a 'robust estimate' when previously it was optional; neighbouring authorities should count on the same night; the time of the count should be in consideration of the geography (i.e. in cities people won't bed down until late in the evening) (CLG, 2010, p.3). The most recent counts saw the first reduction (of 2%) in the national total for 10 years, still 165%

[8] Which had been in operation since 1998.

higher than in 2010 (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019, p.57) (see Figure 2. below taken from the Crisis Homeless Monitor, 2019 (Fitzpatrick et al., p.58)).
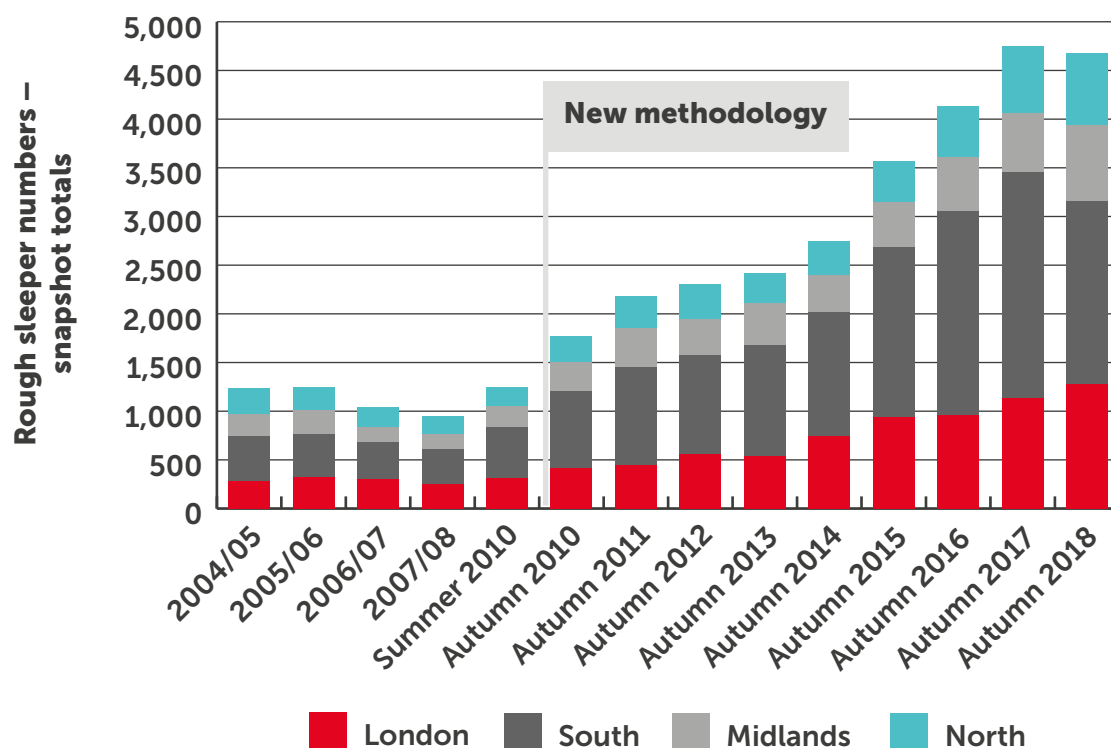
Source: 2004/05-2007/08 – collated from Audit Commission Best Value Performance Indicators returns; Summer 2010 onwards – MHCLG

Figure 2. Rough sleeper snapshots 04/05 - 2018

Both sets of available statistics should be viewed in the light of a 2015 assessment by the UK Statistics Authority which concluded that the official Homelessness Prevention and Relief and Rough Sleeping statistics do not currently meet the required standards to be designated 'National Statistics'[9] (Crisis, 2016 p.i). The newly named Ministry of Housing Communities

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[9] The Rough Sleepers count is a national head count of people sleeping rough. Issues pertaining to the Rough Sleeping statistics include how decision making is under the leadership of policy officials rather than independent statisticians and reporting does not make use of information captured by local authorities, charities and other agencies and does not use of other data sources such as the Census and household surveys. In the case of Prevention and Relief statistics: that while this data was collected every quarter it was only published annually and if not integrated with Statutory Homelessness data could be 'misleading'. A total of nine requirements are elaborated on to be addressed before both sets of statistics can be requalified as National Statistics (UK Statistics Authority, 2015).

and Local Government (MHCLG) are trying to address the issues, including, as a part of the HRA 2017, a new data collection system for local authorities (Fitzpatrick et al., 2018, p.xvii).

There are new attempts to address the scant information about the numbers of people using supported accommodation hostels and mostly conjecture regarding 'hidden' homelessness. Crisis, working across ten different data sources, produce an 'estimate' of what they are calling 'core homelessness' (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019, p.61). Core homelessness (Figure 3. below) includes those: sleeping rough (on the street and in cars, tents and squats), in hostels, sofa surfing and in unsuitable temporary accommodation.[10]
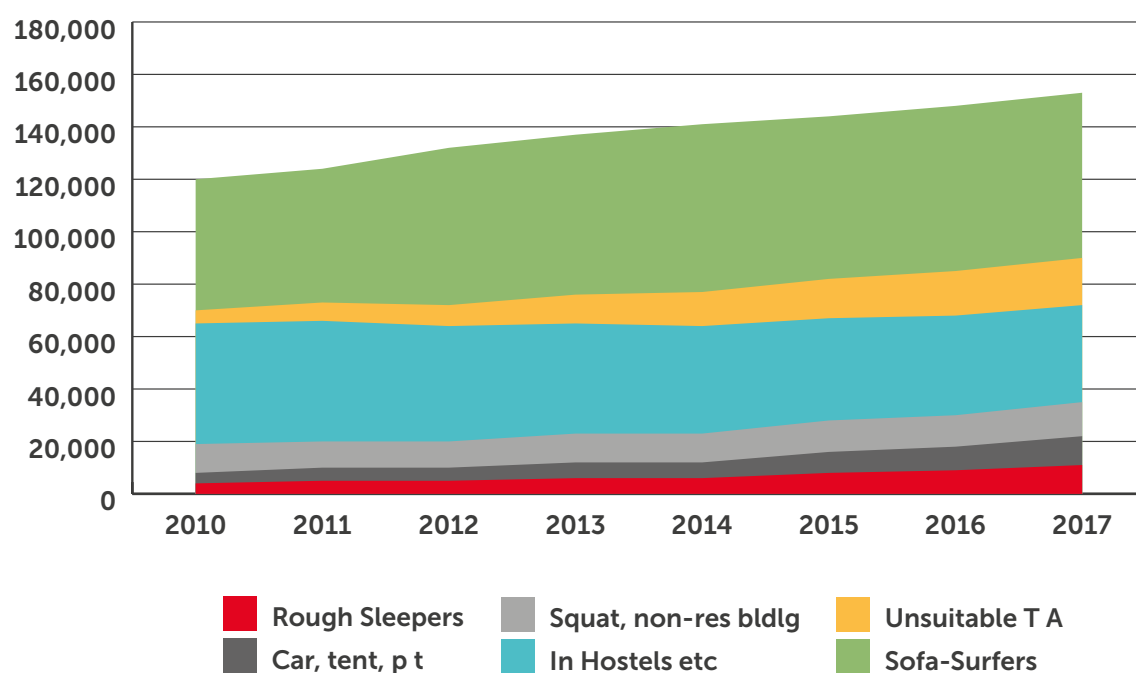
Figure 3. Core Homelessness by Category in England, 2010-17 (Fitzpatrick et al. 2019)

Among the data the Crisis Monitor team draw on for this new estimate of core homelessness is a 2015 study undertaken with CenterPoint,[11] designed to estimate hidden

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[10] Including B&Bs and other nightly let non-self-contained and out of area placements.
[11] A youth homelessness provision in London.

homelessness amongst young people (Clarke et al., 2015). In addition to the secondary data

they mine, which the Crisis team do use, the CentrePoint team conduct a survey with a

representative sample of 2,011 16–25-year-olds which estimates that 1.3 million young

people in the UK have slept rough or in unsafe places during the last year, and that on any

one night around 216,000 young people are sofa surfing and around 40,000 sleeping rough

(Clarke, et al., 2015). This represents a massive increase on the Crisis estimate of youth

homelessness of between 78,000 and 80,000 over the past 10 years (Clarke, 2016).

Notwithstanding the differences in expert opinion concerning methods for producing

estimates, it is clear that homelessness and housing insecurity in England is increasingly

common, and it is likely that we are underestimating the full extent of the problem. The

main issues attributed to its prominence and growth are housing market failures and the

shrinking welfare state. The lack of social housing, in particular, pushes many into

temporary (overwhelmingly substandard and expensive) accommodation, or privately

rented accommodation, which is notoriously volatile to access and maintain, especially for

people who depend on housing benefit. Welfare reform, including a freeze on Local Housing

Allowance, the Bedroom Tax, rapid changes to Disability Living Allowance and Job Seekers

Allowance, not to mention the disastrous failures of the Universal Credit roll-out, has left

people vulnerable to accruing debt and losing their housing. Low wages and insecure

contracts compound these issues and make losing the security of decent affordable housing

more likely and the escape from homelessness more difficult (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019).

1.3 Conceptualising homelessness: The new orthodoxy and beyond

How is it that people come to homelessness? Is it something to do with them; innately

hopeless and dependent, or shaken by trauma; or the fault of structural conditions outside

of their control? Is it possible that the homelessness industry is in some ways responsible?

Historically, theories around understanding the causes of homelessness were dichotomised into structure (for example the employment market or housing supply) and agency (individual actions, attributes or circumstances; addiction or mental ill health for example) explanations. Individual agency explanations tend to be divided into two strands where individuals are seen as responsible and personally blamed, or as people experiencing inadequacy of some sort that makes them vulnerable (deserving) but not culpable (undeserving) (Neal, 1997, p.36); bad, mad or sad (Seal, 2005); 'sinful' or 'sick' (Gowan, 2010). The cleaving of structure and agency explanations of homelessness allowed for artificially polarised explanations, attitudes and political responses to homelessness swinging between the two, without accounting for the complex interactions between structure and agency. For example, in the 1960s the interplay between structure and agency was apparent in the Ken Loach film *Cathy Come Home,* serialised by the BBC in 1966 and watched by millions across the UK. This film documented agency in the insensitive treatment of ordinary families experiencing homelessness and the individual consequences for them. This led to pressure for more structural solutions including public support for Shelter (coincidently formed in the same year) and Crisis (formed in 1967) campaigning over a lengthy period that contributed to the development of the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. Whereas by the late 1990s New Labour's discourse of 'social exclusion' focused in on the vulnerabilities of people experiencing homelessness and policy aimed at training or treating them to 'independence'. This is a rather simplistic distinction, as Anderson (2004, p.374) argues, the 1977 Act reinforced the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' analogy through the mobilisation of intentionality and priority in homelessness legislation and New Labour's reforms included massive investments to address poverty (if not

housing). Informed by, among others, Giddens' theory of structuration (1984), academics, if not policy makers and services providers, sought to conduct research that better tapped into and explained this complex interaction between people and what they do and the structures that force action and are resisted.

Homelessness research is now moving beyond the artificial distinctions between structure and agency. In this section I track the developments from the 'new orthodoxy' (Pleace, 2000, p.583) and beyond, clarifying my position within these developments. Some methods used, including 'pathways' and 'life course' are capturing more nuanced understandings of how individual and structural forces work dynamically to create and perpetuate homelessness and explain its episodic nature for individuals far more clearly than traditional cross-sectional approaches. My own research follows a life course perspective, allowing the impact of wider structural forces and experiences of engaging with help through the life course to help understand engagement with help regarding homelessness and other problems. I also attempt to move beyond the orthodoxy of structure/agency interaction include work on the 'homelessness industry' and its interconnected nature with other financialised structures such as incentive-based Payment by Results programmes.

In the late 1980s, Britain saw a steady increase in all types of homelessness (Cloke et al. pp.29-30). Research conducted through this period indicated that individuals were not merely victims of what were considered to be 'structural factors'; beyond their need for a roof, individuals were experiencing 'high levels of health and social support needs' (Fitzpatrick et al., 2009, p.4) that were 'complex and multiple' (Ravenhill, 2008, p.19) and widespread (Seal, 2005). Research conducted for the government by Randle and Brown

(1999) estimated that up to 80 percent of hostel dwellers needed support in addition to accommodation and that 70-80 percent of homeless families had needs beyond housing. Furthermore, the issues experienced were acting more like triggers than causes. Triggers occur in a non-linear dynamic fashion (Fitzpatrick, 2005, p.14) suggesting that homelessness is a result of an accumulation of factors rather than a sudden event (Ravenhill 2008, p.19), without patterns or clear relationships 'variation above all else rather than a central tendency' (Pleace, 1998, p.56).

During this period scholars began to refer to the emergence of a 'new orthodoxy' (Pleace, 2000, p.583) which aimed to account for the prevalence of individual problems such as substance abuse and institutionalisation in the homelessness population. Under the new orthodoxy structural factors 'referred to the operation of markets, cultural and political factors contributing to inequality and stigmatisation and the operation of statutory services (ibid). Individual factors included needs, characteristics, experiences and behaviour (Pleace, 2018, p.20). The new orthodoxy proposed 'the idea that structural factors 'caused' homelessness only when someone had limits to their personal capacity and insufficient access to informal support' (Pleace, 2000; Lee et al., 2010 in Pleace, 2016, p.22) or because of a newly developed vulnerability which makes the individual especially unable to cope with the changes (May, 2000, 613–614).

The new orthodoxy received abundant critique, as a theoretical basis for understanding how structural and individual factors work together to cause homelessness, it lacks the precision required for the heterogeneity of homelessness, the people who experience it and how they experience it. Problems with the new orthodoxy are summarised by Somerville (2013) with three main critiques as well as arguing that the structure/agency framework was not new.

The first critique suggests that neither structural or individual factors are clearly delineated – as McNaughton (2008) argues, the new orthodoxy 'theoretically sidesteps' the fact that the structural is simultaneously experienced individually as with increased family fragmentation which will be experienced individually as domestic violence and family breakdown (p.10). The second problem, according to Somerville, is that the new orthodoxy deploys the term 'homelessness' as 'social fact':

> 'That is, a truth about social relations that can be measured or quantified independently out of our experiences of those relations, and a "housing fact" that is, understood one-dimensionally as a physical condition only' (2013, p.388).

Somerville argues that this way of talking about homelessness is perpetuated by governments in order to justify the targeting of services and that, as it is disconnected from the reality of human experience, it discounts or attempts to reduce actual lived experience of social relations in to a single dimension (lack of housing) (ibid).This argument resonates with my own reluctance to fracture individual whole experiences and leap towards a cross-sectional analysis that sees people as parts of problems, that we then target services to, leading to what Stevenson (2014) calls 'anonymous care' (discussed further in Chapter 2). This critique can help to challenge administrative categorisation and models of causation where they impede the way we think and act in relation to need.

 Somerville's third critique is that the new orthodoxy operates with an 'inappropriate understanding of causation'; namely an epidemiological approach in which homelessness as the dependent variable is seen against the independent variables of individual 'risk factors' can tell us simply that they occur together (i.e. mental ill health and homelessness) but not

about *how* the personal and structural interact to create homelessness. He argues that it is only possible to respond to this question by taking account of the context-infused biographies of individuals (2013, p.389). It is an argument I support and want to develop in this study. The question becomes how.

In 2002, Clapham wrote an influential paper promoting a different approach to understanding homelessness that was better suited to postmodernity and resolved the problem of positivistic research in housing that did not deal with the relationship between structure and agency. The approach, 'housing pathways' merges social constructionism and its fundamental tenet that 'social life is constructed by people through interaction' with structuration which addresses the structural dimension of interaction, plus a conceptualisation of power to help explain the outcomes of interactions (Clapham, 2002, p.61). Defined as 'patterns of interaction (practices) concerning house and home, over time and space' (Clapham, 2002, p.63) Clapham's approach has informed a number of influential studies in homeless research with the nomenclature 'homelessness pathways' (including: Fitzpatrick, 1999; Anderson and Tulloch, 2000; Martijn and Sharpe 2006; Crane, Warnes and Fu, 200). Crucially, his approach favours biographical and ethnographic methods over time to tap the complex interplay between structure and agency as it plays out in interactions (Clapham, 2003), for example, between a tenant and landlord or perhaps Support Worker and client, that serve to reproduce or resist wider structures. In my empirical work the interactions between the research participants, their workers and others over time are key moments in understanding their engagement with help. However, it turns out that this is no easy task, and Clapham (2003) while applauding the efforts of Fitzpatrick (1999) and Anderson and Tulloch (2000) for successfully highlighting the dynamic nature of

homelessness and the diversity of experience, and, in Fitzpatrick's case, the focus on the participants voice, argues both pay too little attention to the interaction between the biographical and structural.

> When confronted with the individual biographies and the pathways identified, the focus is on the behaviour of the individual and not on the structural factors which may have influenced this. Although it is clearly not the wish of the authors, the impact is to reinforce the minimalist conception of homelessness (Clapham, 2003, p.121).

This is a useful warning by Clapham here that the focus on biography can achieve the opposite intent and, unintentionally, reproduce the idea that homelessness is caused by sickness or deviance of the homeless individual. Fitzpatrick, Somerville (2013) argues, like Clapham (2003), does not effectively resolve the problems, and more specifically by assembling clusters of risks and interpreting them as 'causes' lands us with the same problem; with lists of structural and individual factors and no sense of how they interact to get people into, through, out of and maybe into again (potentially, sadly, indefinitely) episodes of homelessness.

Somerville (2013) called for research that provides a more whole and 'real' understanding of the production of homelessness in our society now (p.408). He argues that we can achieve this by engaging with life stories within the context of significant others and *their* life stories, and that of the researcher herself and by considering what these life stories tell us about the 'construction and maintenance of different cultures'; by being alert to evidence of cultural reproduction as it appears in discourse and interaction and analysing the relationship

between different cultures (ibid). This thinking has influenced my own research practice leading to fresh insights, for example, the young people in this research talked a lot about the spaces they lived in and how they kept them. Tidiness and organisation were described as aspirations, and they felt pride when they had accomplished this. There was something moral in the way they felt about the spaces they lived in. They craved order and permanence and mostly met chaos or at least uncertainty.

An earlier longitudinal project 'understanding the lives' of people experiencing homelessness within the City of Stoke on Trent (Brown et al., 2012) had already begun to develop this approach. Brown, Somerville and colleagues described the project as occurring within the knowledge that 'A complex interplay of processes creates social conditions within which homelessness tends to occur' homelessness as an episode in life rather than homelessness as *the* life (p.2)*. They explicitly describe 'counting' occasions of homelessness, analysing 'people's lives in respect of their social economic status' and 'identifying simple correlations between homelessness and other experiences and correlations' outside the frame of the exploration (p.7). The authors explain that through the recognition of the complexity of the interplay of processes and the complex and very individual biographies of the participants (workers and clients) they will produce 'solutions' and strategies that are sensitive to these complexities (p.7). People's lives are the focus rather than attempting to reduce them to risks or packages of risks, highlighting instead patterns which are grounded in the experience of individuals and backed up by existing literature.

There was another significant turn in understanding homelessness illustrated by Ravenhill (2008), who saw homelessness more as a cultural phenomenon. In this respect,

homelessness pathways are produced not by underlying causal mechanisms but through complex and sometimes contradictory influences and encounters. She identifies a homelessness 'culture' and also an industry culture that interact. Critically Ravenhill, highlights how homelessness can be perpetuated by the very activities and relationships established to resolve it as she explores the 'co-dependence of the homeless and the homelessness industry on each other' (Ravenhill, 2008, p.2). Based on evidence from her ethnography,[12] she suggests that the competitive environment of homelessness sector provision stimulates crisis management, a lack of partnership working and unwillingness to refer clients when their needs would be better supported by another organisation; a common occurrence considering the multiple and complex needs associated with homelessness. Ravenhill (2008) argues that it is the 'accumulation of triggers' that result in homelessness rather than something specific about the attributes of an individual. She adopts structuration as a position to understand the 'complex and interconnected nature of the homelessness process' by exploring how 'individuals interacted within the social structures of conventional society and the homeless culture, plus their motivations and reasoning for making choices/decisions' (p.75).

Ravenhill's observation calls for a situated industry analysis taking into account the main influences and actors as I do through the lens of SW/YP relations and the structures in which they are embedded. She is not alone in directing the focus of the causation and perpetuation of homelessness past people experiencing it, towards sections of the homelessness industry. She cites Carter (1997) who claims that social policy itself has

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[12] Including 48 life story interviews with people experiencing homelessness, 86 interviews with staff, and 754 hours of observation, 318 hours of participant observation and 77 informal interviews with staff and clients.

become so 'embroiled' in finding complex explanations that it has created 'individualistic discourses', which deny or obscure any ability to recognize real need even when confronted with rough sleepers' (Ravenhill, 2008, p.5).

While most deride any sign of a collapse back into an individual/pathology understanding of why people become, remain, enter and exit experiences of homelessness again, there are some who believe that structural factors have been overemphasised and want to see agency 'written back in', McNaughton-Nichols for example, who, writing in 2009 suggests that the structural constructionist argument is still dominant theoretically and politically, and, citing Pleace (2000), that

> 'This refusal to engage with agency may be due to political sensitivities as scholars and researchers do not want to be accused of adding to a stigmatising pathology of homelessness' (McNaughton-Nichols, 2009, p.X).

McNaughton-Nichols (2009) points to the interdependence of structures and individual subjectification and agency like Ravenhill (2008), but specifically as an internal process that is integrated with biography and creates the self we experience, creating a role for the individual in the process of structuration and a possible site for resistance. She describes agency as '…the internal decision-making process that leads to the acts of a person, which will produce effects' (2009, p.69) and argues that from this view it is possible to better '… understand the role that agency and transgression play in the generation and sustainment of homelessness' (2009, p.82) taking the actions and motivations seriously, without blame.

Contrary to the views of Pleace and McNaughton-Nichols regarding the apparent 'writing out of agency' (McNaughton-Nichols, 2009, p.75), the perception that homelessness is something someone has perpetuated themselves is detectable in policy, practice and the media. Firstly,

in legislation within the 2017 HRA in England, which, though it softened rules around intentionality, clearly reasserts what Lowe (1997) recognised in the legislation 10 years previously as 'a divide between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' (in Pleace, 2000, p.585):

> Applicants who have a priority need, and whose homelessness has not been successfully relieved, are owed a lesser duty if they have become homeless intentionally than would be owed to them if they were homeless unintentionally. This reflects the general expectation that, wherever possible, **people should take responsibility for their own accommodation needs and not behave in a way which might lead to the loss of their accommodation**. (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018, p.67)

Moreover, this attitude is not merely present in legislation but evident in the media and perpetuated by homelessness organisations. In a 2018 report by Crisis about ending homelessness there is a chapter dedicated to 'Public attitudes and homelessness' populated by data from a study independently commissioned (p.58). The analysis of media and sector materials reveals that:

> 'Individualistic framing of homelessness is dominant, but also that this cultural model faces no opposition. So, we [charities and the media] not only tell stories reinforcing individual choice as a primary force in homelessness, we also fail to describe the systemic causes of the problem or its consequences for society' (Crisis, 2018 p.71).

The characterisation of people experiencing homelessness as somehow 'on the make' or

doing quite well for themselves, earning big and returning to cosy flats, is contemporary. On the 3rd of March 2018, *The Guardian* published an article expressing concern about 'open season' on homeless people following tough language by police and political figures and vigilante threats to people begging. This followed claims by police in Cambridgeshire that homeless beggars are making 'substantial amounts of money', a campaign in which people were photographed and outed as 'fake homeless' through Facebook and in posters, and the leader of Windsor Council calling for rough sleepers to be cleared from the town before a royal wedding.

As a final attempt to counter this agency position on homelessness it is sometimes argued that 'we are all two pay cheques away from homelessness', building on the proverbial 'there by the grace of God go I' account of need. Is this actually the case? Not according to the findings of a multivariate analysis of the Scottish Household Survey, the UK-wide Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey and the British Cohort Study (commenced 1970) by Bramley and Fitzpatrick (2017). They claim that "...the probability of falling into homelessness is slight in the extreme because they [not systematically disadvantaged groups] are cushioned by many protective factors" (2017, p.112). While the evidence is compelling the '2 cheques' discourse is perpetuated as a response to the stigma associated with homelessness wrought by the old individual pathology understanding, but this argument obscures more fundamental questions about the unequal distribution of distress in our society. Exactly the same problem exists with attempts to destigmatise mental ill health by conflating it with being 'unwell' (Tyler and Slater, 2018). The point being that some attempts to destigmatise stigmatising conditions have the effect of hiding the way that structure does not apply force equally.

The hunt to identify 'explanations' of the impossibly diverse and transient state of homelessness is a theoretical question for academics, a push and pull factor regarding the development of homelessness policy, and I argue it is also a massive part of the atmosphere in which a single worker meets a single person in need and attempts to engage them. Is it possible to arrive at a very different conceptualisation of homelessness that breaks the industry and the individuals at the sharp end of homelessness out of this cycle, spinning from structure to agency explanations and back again? Or, like Williams suggests in 2001, should we cease trying to count the multifarious and dynamic experiences of housing insecurity into a 'conceptual unity', and instead see it as something that occurs as a 'symptom' of other problems (p.1)? He argues 'that this implies a [need for] different methodology for explaining and predicting 'homelessness', based upon data built from single cases (ibid). In addition to *how* we approach knowledge production, is there a need to consider *what* we are exploring? Is there something additionally to be learned from Tyler, coming from cultural studies and employing a psychosocial lens in order to develop 'accounts of how power is lived and the mechanisms through which subjects come to collude with those political and social forces that curtail freedom and reproduce inequalities' (Tyler, 2013, p.10)? And would these accounts of how power is lived tell us something we have previously missed about experiences of homelessness?

With Somerville (2013) and McNaughton-Nichols (2009) I am interested in the individualised experiences of homelessness over time embedded in the context of a 'life story' and fight against the categorisation of that experience that drowns the actual heterogeneity of the group and particularity of an individual's experience. I am also interested in exploring over time how individuals come to respond to the world in the way that they do and how they

situate/explain their response. Furthermore, McNaughton's take on agency does begin to stretch into the more affective territory that I am interested in exploring, she says:

> …agency does not refer to the actual "doing", but the internal narratives that people have of their lives that affects how they act and are embedded in the course their life has and will take... Exercising "agency" relates to each individual's ability to construct a narrative (and narratable) identity – a conceptualisation of who they are, over time. (McNaughton 2008, 46–7)

Here McNaughton links the way that individuals understand themselves as affecting how they act, making understanding how individuals see themselves in the world as a necessary site for exploration in order to understand agency and how it contributes to how homelessness is produced.

If there is anything we know for certain about homelessness it is that the more time you spend not getting what you need from helping services the more likely it is that you will become one of the unfortunate ten, maybe 20, percent of people who go on to be increasingly excluded (described as MEH and 'chronic or on-going') who experience episodic bouts of homelessness) (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2010, p.16). Moreover, the focus on causes of homelessness, pathways into and out of homelessness (an overcrowded field to begin with), makes it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid fracturing individuals' experiences into needs and interventions to address those needs, as if a life were broken up this way. I am interested in the quality of the encounter between need and intervention and how it might be possible to increase the value of that encounter. An understanding of what people bring to these encounters, from both sides, and how what they bring is structured and how the

encounter itself reproduces and resists that structuring helps to explain why the helping encounter is difficult and often fails.

My approach reflects Clapham's conceptualisation of a 'homeless pathways approach' (2003), particularly in the recommended focus on the face-to-face interaction between provider and user over time. Young people need to engage with the encounter in order to get their needs met. While Clapham suggests using participant observation to capture the interactions taking place, I rely mostly on the young person's recollections of interactions in the past, interviews with the young people's current SWs and exploration of the documentation by Futures of these encounters. Interviews with SWs reveal Futures' values and frameworks and how they are interpreted by SWs through their own biographies. In this way something like 'structures within structures' emerges as the two parties (influenced by structure as it is evident in both the organisational framework and their own internal narratives) act together. The research is sensitive to time, with up to four interviews with the young participants over a period of 15 months. This qualitative longitudinal methodology also allows for the young participants to reflect back and forward on how they have changed and stayed the same, how workers and providers over time are similar and different and, in this way, builds on the life course or life story approach.

The key message in this section is that the cleaving of structure and agency explanations has allowed artificially polarised attitudes and political responses to homelessness. However, the 'new orthodoxy' does not adequately deal with the problems of a structure/agency spilt. Beyond the new orthodoxy are approaches that seek out a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic interaction between structural and agency forces by being sensitive to

individual biography, context and time which can be found in pathway and life story approaches. There is a danger that, when engaging with a client's agency within their biography, structural factors are overlooked, and a minimalist view of homelessness reified. Furthermore, pathway approaches may still turn up bunches of structural and individual risks without saying much about how they interact to produce homelessness. McNaughton-Nicholls (2009) goes deeper, adopting a critical realist approach to locate underlying causal mechanisms and to engage with the internal narratives of participants, and Ravenhill (2008) identifies the production and maintenance of cultures. Both lean towards a conceptualisation of 'structures within structures'. For example, the homelessness industry is interconnected with other structures such as incentive-based Payment by Results programmes and discourses around deservedness which interact with a client, their biography, shaped by their resistance to and reproduction of structures, for example discourses around value and deservedness. Within this complex and individual interplay, a danger remains that researchers, on the lookout for themes, highlight a motorway rather than a scantly used track (Clapham, 2002), the detail of the complexity in the knowledge produced is silenced.

In this thesis I work to avoid fracturing the lived experience of individuals into needs and risks, instead drawing on their experiences to learn what has worked in engagement with help and by exploring their experience of structure and agency over the life course (and not just in relation to homelessness). A focus on the relationship between SWs and their clients and being sensitive to the immediate and wider context in which these relationships exist, I hope to make some comment on 'structural and unconscious elements of meanings and actions' (Clapham, 2002). Significantly, in conducting two to four interviews, participants

revisit experiences of need and help and reinterpret or revalue interactions in light of their immediate context, refining themes to help produce the findings. Power, and how individuals come to collude with the reproduction of a social order that is detrimental to their survival is discussed further in Chapter Three.

To return to my questions at the start of this section: how is it that people come to homelessness? Is it something to do with them; innately hopeless and dependent or shaken by trauma; or the fault of structural conditions outside of their control? Is it possible that the homelessness industry is in some ways responsible? This thesis will demonstrate how diverse and individual the experience of homelessness is. I say experience emphatically: it is clearly something that **most** people pass through, even if they have periods of returning to it. I say *most* because I think that there is something in the abjection of people experiencing homelessness (particularly those sleeping rough) that we make a culture of in a purposive manner. I use 'abjection' borrowing from Imogen Tyler's (2013) reworking of Kristeva's use of the term where she argues that abject figures are 'mobilized to do the dirty work of neoliberal governmentality' (p.4).[13] Cloke et al., (2010) use the analogy of homelessness services as a cog in a revanchist machine within neoliberalism. Paul Willis in 1978 tried something similar. My question is what can we learn about the machine from a small deep exploration of an even smaller cog in the gear of homelessness and other services in a revanchist framework within neoliberalism?

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[13] See further discussion in Chapter Three p.104

1.4 Solutions? Approaches to practice and policy in homelessness

This section shifts the focus from research to policy and practice. It provides a brief introduction to some key themes in homelessness policy and practice that form an important part of the context for my study. While it draws on a review of the policy and practice literature on homelessness, it does not aim to provide a comprehensive history of homelessness policy and practice (for which see Cloke, May and Jonson, 2010; Ravenhill, 2008) but rather to provide relevant context for this specific study of young people engaging with help on homelessness. Seven key themes are identified as having most resonance for the experiences found in the case study organisation, Futures. They represent distinct but overlapping and sometimes conflicting, approaches to addressing homelessness. These themes are discussed in the following order in the remainder of this section:

1.4.1 Containment and Control

1.4.2 Kindness and Faith-Based social action

1.4.3 Prevention

1.4.4 Continuum of Support towards Independence

1.4.5 Client Involvement

1.4.6 Trauma-Informed Practice

1.4.7 Outcomes-based performance management: Payment by Results (PbR)

In the discussion I identify the tendency for these approaches to be recycled over time in slightly different forms in response to wider social change, media and political framing, industry lobbying, finance and legislation. I analyse these approaches to address three main questions:

1. What do they tell us about how homeless people are seen by policy makers and practitioners?

2. How do the approaches clash with or overlap with each other?

3. Is there a gap between how we talk about and imagine (discourse) the approaches to legislation in the media etc. and what they actually look like in practice (how they are performed)?

1.4.1 Containment and control

Over time it has been most common to frame homelessness practices as examples of containment and control. Scholars have referred to the revanchist thesis to explain coercive and controlling practices found in work around homelessness (De Verteuil, 2006; Cloke et al., 2010; Scullion et al., 2015). Drawing on Neil Smith's (1996) idea of the 'revanchist city' a new punitive turn in the context of the retrenchment of the welfare state, the 'hardening' of social and economic inequality, gentrification and the 'backlash' against the visible signs of poverty in public spaces manifested in policing and control. Taking action to force or coerce people experiencing homelessness out of sight or into 'meaningful' occupation and treatment programmes is a strategy underpinned by a 'mad (illness), bad (defiance) or sad (victimhood)' (Seal, 2005, p.7) conceptualisation of people experiencing homelessness. From the most overt expression of force to very subtle forms of coercion the assumption is that the individual is not cognitively aware of their own best interests, do not or cannot know what is good for them or do not care. In order to take a 'long look' at the use of containment and control it is useful to take a snapshot over a long timeframe before considering the New Labour contribution to the contemporary field.

The 1824 Vagrancy Act which made it an offence to sleep rough or beg went out of public attention for decades, but it continues to be used to prosecute rough sleepers in England and Wales. In 2016/17, a Freedom of Information request reported 1,810 prosecutions under the Act, and as recently as 2015 the number was more than 3,000 (The New Statesman, 2018). There are existing petitions to repeal the Act, but cities are wont to take ever more inventive measures to move rough sleepers out of sight including 'defensive architecture' for example, anti-homeless spikes; Public Space Protection Orders and Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

A century on from the Vagrancy Act, in 1933 George Orwell wrote a memoir that told of his experience of being homeless in *Down and out in Paris and London*. In it he gives one of the few literary accounts of the 'Spikes' that were the country's solution to homelessness at the time. They ran from Glasgow to Canterbury, 20 miles apart, with a maximum one to two nights length of stay. They were ironically referred to as 'resettlement units' (Goodall, 1999 cited in Seal, p.8) but the aim was to keep these 'tramps' and 'vagabonds' moving, working and (however meagrely) fed (ibid).

Jumping forward to the New Labour Government's Social Exclusion Unit, for whom rough sleeping was among the key priorities, the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) was tasked with reducing the numbers by two-thirds in two years. Outspoken civil servant Louise Casey was at the helm, she was 'hands on', her mission to shake up a system that she perceived as failing. On the street herself, Casey narrowed in on failures in services and local authorities.

Additionally, the approach of the RSU to rough sleepers was described as 'assertive'[14] and is used to this day as nomenclature for coercion. In December 2001, the BBC reported that there was in fact a sharp fall in street homelessness numbers and that the RSU delivered its objective months ahead of schedule (BBC, 2001). The article also reported concern from services that rough sleepers had been threatened with arrest if they did not take up places in hostels, that many who did go into hostels would be shortly back on the streets, and that on the night of the street count efforts were made to 'fiddle' the numbers. Louise Casey strongly denied the claims and the allegations were never proven. Nevertheless, in the context of New Labour's mantra of prevention, participation and partnership working this was the beginning of the uncomfortable tension between the aspiration for client-centred practice and the continued use of coercion to control the conduct of people experiencing homelessness.

For a contemporary response to the use of coercion in homelessness sector provision, Watts et al. (2017) 'attempt to unsettle any intuitive assumption that non-interventionist approaches are *necessarily* more morally defensible than interventionist ones' (p.1). Their three categories of 'power over' include: force, coercion and influence and they usefully discuss interventions that fall within them. In the case of 'force' the example is arresting people for begging, sleeping rough or associated activities; 'coercion' where compliance is ensured via the threat of deprivation like making access to accommodation conditional on signing a care or treatment plan; and 'influence' where compliance is sought via persuasive

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14 'approach which actively and persistently aims to challenge the mindsets and behaviours of rough sleepers' (Johnsen, Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2018, p. 1116)

efforts to shape people's beliefs, judgements or behaviour, for example, motivational interviewing or assertive outreach.

The authors propose a framework or 'normative criteria' by which it is possible to assess the legitimacy of the use of different modes of power informed by the writing of philosopher, Grant (2002, 2006, 2012) (discussed further in Chapter 3). Their criteria in four parts includes: legitimacy of purpose; whether the intervention allows for a voluntary response; the effect on the character of the individuals involved; and whether the intervention is effective (as measured in outcomes) proportionate to the degree of force used. While they recommend 'a high bar' for the use of 'force', they do not dismiss it (p.2). The author's argument regarding *legitimacy* rests upon the many and deep harms associated with sleeping rough versus the libertarian argument that individuals have a right to choose this life, stating that while it might not be perceived as ethical it may well be legitimate to use force if harms are prevented. Regarding allowing for a *voluntary response* the authors support a view that 'paternalistic responses' may not just be legitimate but not taking forceful action, especially in the case of substance abuse, appears more like 'moral abnegation' than an ethical stance on autonomy. This assumes that in some cases, especially for those sleeping rough and experiencing addiction and poor mental health, individuals do not have the cognitive capacity or sufficient awareness of their 'real interests' to make an autonomous decision on their own behalf (p.7). Naturally 'real interests' is debatable and in this case the authors draw on Nussbaum's (1922, p.200) central capabilities required to lead a good life (p.8, see further discussion in Chapter 2) arguing that if taking away an individual's autonomy will restore their capacity to safeguard themselves in the future it might be legitimate. The authors add to Grant's conditions one of

their own pertaining to the legitimacy of focus on potential 'just outcomes' (p.10) resulting

from coercion of the client other. In other words, if the coercive practice produces an

excellent outcome, it may well be justified; the authors consider that of the four tests this

should be given priority.

Ostensibly, the production of a framework to consider the 'power over' element in any

approach to address homelessness and to make an assessment about its legitimacy is useful

in this ongoing moral and ethical debate. As is the aspiration to create awareness about the

existence of more subtle deployments of power, significantly, their analysis does not

discount low, or no-threshold access services (for example soup runs) citing the harms

possible through not-intervening (p.7). This is important considering that 'while overt resort

to domination has become repellent over time' other more hidden or acceptable ways to

secure control of populations, workers and clients, are employed (Hoggett, 2000, p.105).

However, Watts, et al.'s (2017) argument depends heavily upon the possibility of a) drawing

a causal link between interventions and outcomes and b) some prescience on the part of a

worker or service, that outcomes evidence will apply in a particular and individual case,

which, as discussed in section 1.3 is not by any means taken for granted.

Cloke et al., (2010) and Scullion et al., (2015) have a different take on the revanchist

tendencies evident in work around homelessness. They argue that homelessness industry

players, while unavoidably complicit in neoliberal and revanchist projects, also resist them.

Resistance comes in the form of 'spontaneous acts of kindness' where staff with some

autonomy can act 'beyond the more formal relationship of a keyworker' and build trust

(Cloke et al, p.177) and 'being receptive to the other' (Scullion et al.,). While resistance is

more likely in smaller or outsider agencies that are not dependent on government funding and therefore duty-bound to government policy and regulation; it can still be found in larger insider agencies. Furthermore, Cloke et al., (2010) and Scullion et al., (2015) consider that 'containment' or 'maintenance of traditional boundaries' may also be a necessary element for emancipation and empowerment, providing it is pursued with these higher purposes in mind. So unlike Watts et, al., (2017) legitimacy of control is assured not by evidence that the result is improved but that it is motivated by and dependent on this 'something else', the 'voluntary attitude' that clients understand as a 'genuine' attempt to care (Cloke et al., 2010, p.245). Coercion and control are a theme I return to in Chapter Three and Chapter Eight regarding how it figures in engagement.

1.4.2 Kindness and faith-based social action

Given the Christian doctrine of charity it is not surprising that faith-based services have been at the cornerstone of providing help and care since medieval times (Page, 1996, p.17). Provision for people experiencing homelessness up until the mid-1960s was largely from faith-based groups; mostly driven to shelter, feed and provide friendship, frequently in large dormitory style hostels. Homelessness up until this point was seen politically as a welfare rather than a housing issue. To this day in the homeless sector, faith-based provision (not all Christian) is associated with a non-interventionist stance that seeks to establish 'non-judgemental sanctuary' and 'patient challenge' deemed to enable improvements in individuals' motivations and life circumstances (Bowpitt et al., 2014 cited in Watts et al., 2017, p.3). Where this is the case, the other is viewed as down on their luck, unfortunate but can be saved and should at the very least be kept alive.

Faith-based provision is routinely derided as ineffective and without the rigours and professional boundaries of government funded third sector agencies (Watts et al., 2017). It is often described as giving 'hand outs' rather than the more lauded 'hand up'. I think, unfairly, faith-based services have been lumped together in a way that masks their actual diversity. Emmaus, for example provide their residents with employment in a variety of small enterprises, while they collect housing benefit, they avoid collecting employment benefits and maintain a working history (Bretherton and Pleace, 2012). For some this particular transitional process is favoured as a more radical approach to enabling 'independence' than most state funded homelessness services. However, the general critical view is that in these services clients are not expected to 'engage' with opportunities to 'correct' their situation of drug use, unemployment, and poor health, for example persists, despite the fact that research conducted reveals a much more complex picture where big and small, 'insider' and 'outsider', faith-based and secular services are just as likely to seek to control the conduct of clients or not (Cloke et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, the critical view has led to determined and often successful attempts to rid city centres of soup kitchens and day centres on the grounds that they are seen to 'enable' individuals to maintain a life on the streets, supporting dependency on drugs and alcohol and avoiding engagement in the sort of move-in-move-on, developing independence activity proffered by the funded and increasingly professionalised third sector. As Johnsen et al. articulate it, '... the State has for centuries questioned both the degree to which recipients of such welfare are "deserving" of the assistance offered and the "appropriateness" of that provision' (Johnsen et al., 2005, p.324).

The centre of campaigns against this sort of provision in England was in the borough of Westminster, the Local Authority-facilitated 'Soup Run Summit' of 2005 led to a scoping and mapping exercise and an unsuccessful bid to outlaw the distribution of free food on public land. In their 2007 Rough Sleeping Strategy they aspired to 'reduce the overprovision of soup runs' (Lane and Power, 2009, p.7). The derision and marginalisation of voluntary help for people experiencing homelessness has not diminished their presence, in fact they have been joined by an army of secular groups who provide food, clothes and friendship mostly to rough sleepers. Nor has the fight against this sort of help diminished; in fact, it has spread out across the country and has turned its fury beyond organised voluntary giving to individual giving, demonstrated in the 'Killing with Kindness' campaign (see Figure 4).
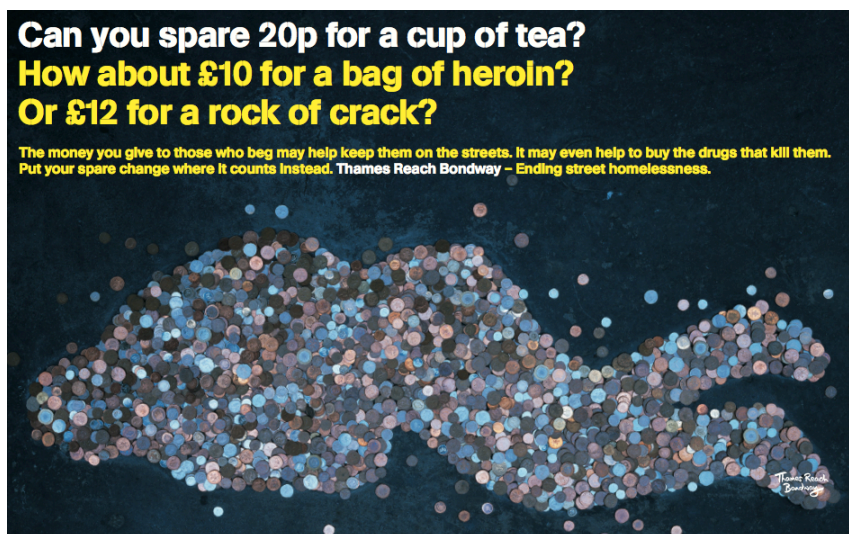
Figure 4. Killing with Kindness Campaign 2003

This poster portraying a presumably dead rough sleeper made from our spare change is from 2003, but the campaign continues across the country (Robson and Lander, 2015). In April 2018, the Birmingham Crime Commissioner, David Jameson said of posters using exactly the same image as is seen here from 2003 'they are insensitive, crass and should not have been produced in the first place'. The posters also have nearly identical text apart from

in this case 'Your Kindness Could Kill' is in bold and fills a quarter of the poster and in smaller

text underneath it says, 'give responsibly, support local charities instead' (Birmingham Mail,

2018). My analysis of this campaign is that individual generosity/altruism/kindness is

considered to fuel the 'bad' behaviour of people begging, it is 'irresponsible' (2018), and

caring individuals are instead encouraged to donate to local charities 'where it counts'

(2003). Other more recent posters tell the reader that 'people sleeping rough don't beg'

encouraging us to not just question how our spare change might be used, but to scrutinise

and suspect the validity of the need of the individual in front of us asking for help.

While 'kindness', 'voluntary attitude' and 'receptiveness to the other' (Cloke et al., 2017;

Scullion et al., 2015) is still very much deployed throughout the industry and seen as

'powerful forces of charity and care' (Cloke et al., 2010, p.10), as an approach, it continues

to face critique and co-ordinated removal, in the case of the Killing with Kindness campaign,

by services who no doubt employ the approach.

1.4.3 Prevention

Prevention has been a key homelessness policy driver ever since the 1977 Act (Pawson,

2008), but it wasn't until the end of the 20th century that the shift in focus from 'crisis

management and containment of roofless people' to prevention was notable (Ravenhill,

2008, p.65). The turn to prevention gained momentum in 2002 with the New Labour focus

on targeting interventions downstream and revived following the increase in homelessness

under the Coalition and Conservative governments in the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

Mobilised in the wake of increases in homelessness and societal and industry outrage, and

with the allure of 'stopping bad things from happening' (Freeman, 1999, p.23), prevention is

a logical response, but it is 'slippery' (Billis, 1981, p.368). Prevention assumes that the causes of homelessness are known, and it is possible to act and stop it from happening in the first place. But social problems are rarely so clear-cut as, for example, the cholera epidemic in London halted by removing a tap, as John Snow did in Broad Street London in 1854. In the case of homelessness the evidence is that needs are multiple and interact with risks in complex ways (see Ravenhill and others cited above). As a result, preventative practice in homelessness and other social problems is mostly concerned with 'stopping bad things from getting worse' (Morris and Barnes, 2008, p.11), targeting people who are already presenting to services in need. Moreover, in the absence of significant additional funding, what can occur is simply a shifting of attention from people 'in need' to people 'at risk', while the burden to evidence progress creates a shift of focus from addressing more intractable social problems to achievable outcomes that can be measured.

The July 1998 spending review 'Modernising Public Services for Britain' put '…a new emphasis on preventing problems' (HMT, 1998). Prevention was seen as key in tackling poverty and social exclusion and the motivation behind increasing child benefit, Education Action Zones, New Deal for Communities and the implementation of Education Maintenance Allowance. The 1999 white paper 'Modernising Government' called for 'forward-looking' policies that 'tackle causes not symptoms' informed 'by evidence rather than a response to short-term pressures' (Cabinet Office, 1999). Critically linking prevention with its nemesis – measurement. This prevention-focused development must be seen in the context of, if not as a response to, a peak in homelessness applications. The peak was fuelled by a combination of rising house prices and stagnant wages, the sale of council property and changes in the definition of priority introduced into the Housing Act 1996,

encompassing a number of new groups (Pawson et al. 2007, p.26). With placements rising 125% between 1997-98 and 2003-4 (Wilcox, 2004 cited in Pawson et al. 2007:26) local authorities were forced to make greater use of costly temporary accommodation. There was no hiding from the intentions of the 2002 Act; in the ODPM good practice guide local authorities are encouraged to 'spend to save' (Pawson et al, 2007:21).

Under the Homeless Act 2002 local authorities were required to produce prevention-focused homelessness strategies (Pawson et al 2007, p.24). There were several attempts to enable primary prevention in the form of school programmes but, in practice, prevention measures were mostly the job of local authority Housing Options teams. They offered secondary prevention programmes including family mediation, rent deposit schemes and debt advice (Pawson, 2008). The bulk of the preventative work was tertiary, i.e. preventing people from staying homeless for long or becoming homeless again.

The prevention practices of Housing Options teams implementing the 2002 Act were questioned fairly early on. There were accusations of 'unacceptable gatekeeping' (Roof Magazine cited in Pawson et al., 2007, p.31), a suspicion that local authorities were using the prevention focus to shirk their legal duties by referring people on to private accommodation *before* they made an application for housing relief. Following a successful challenge against a London borough and a public warning from the housing minister there is little doubt that the suspicion was justifiable. However, it seems 'highly unlikely that the entire recorded reduction can be accounted for in this way' (Fitzpatrick and Geertsema, 2008, p.77). Despite no change to housing affordability both homelessness applications and

acceptances began a downward trend, and between 2003 to the end of 2006 acceptances

fell by over 50 per cent (Pawson et al., 2007, p.877).

The manner in which each local authority handled their new obligations, and continue

handling them, is finally determined by the local context, including housing supply, levels of

deprivation and ways in which the intention to prevent is interpreted. Ultimately

"prevention is one of the ways in which a system decides which risks it will process and

which it will deny or allocate elsewhere" (Freeman, 1999, p.239) and while the prevention

of homelessness sounds all good, the way in which it manifests is not always. Many are

concerned that the focus on prevention will lead to homelessness being 'decoupled with the

housing market and supply' (Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2014), that we will look away from the

real need for affordable, decent accommodation and focus on 'good enough' housing

solutions for the feckless.

Despite concerns about the efficacy of the preventative push at the end of the 20th century,

by 2017, homelessness campaigners including Shelter and Crisis celebrated as the new

Homelessness Reduction Bill was driven through the House of Lords with prevention as the

central message. Meanwhile, Inside Housing reported that the city of Birmingham was

making changes to their allocations policy to reduce their waiting lists for social housing in

preparation for implementation of the Act. In Birmingham the plan was to wipe 4000 people

off the list if they had 'savings of above £16,000 or an annual income above £57,880, or no

local connection to Birmingham', which is difficult to object to, but in addition people who

have "demonstrated unacceptable behaviour or actions in the past, including serious

breaches of tenancy agreements and committing a crime in a property, may also be barred

from the waiting list" (Inside housing, 2017). This was an early sign that gatekeeping would be mobilised again to address the increase in numbers of people who would be owed a duty of assistance, especially those who had the most challenging issues. As local authorities began to implement the 2017 Act there were concerns that the funding allocated was not sufficient. A 2019 study by the Local Government Information Unit found that this was the case regarding the implementation of the 2017 HRA:

> the small injection of cash that accompanies it [new prevention duty] is both
>
> inadequate and temporary. The new duties are applied at a late stage, and as such
>
> they are reactive, rather than preventative … (2019, p.3).

As an approach understood to shift the focus from people in crisis to people in need, to spend in order to save, the performance of prevention policy has the tendency to do the opposite. Furthermore, some argue that some preventative policies adopted by local authorities, for example family mediation, exemplify control (Pawson, 2007, p.880) as the state intervenes and attempts to address family dynamics in order to (cynically) avoid applications for homelessness.

1.4.4 Continuum of Support towards Independence

Support towards independence has been a central driver of practice since the 1980s. Through the 1980s and into the early 1990s, there was widespread closure of the old-style hostels and services and support was focused on *moving people on* from supported accommodation and towards independence, providing ad hoc support around developing 'independent living skills,' 'good housekeeping' … 'teaching' people skills such as how to cook and keep a household budget' (Randall and Brown, 1994). 'Staircase[ing]' people experiencing

homelessness 'towards independent living through training and treatment' (Pleace, 2016, p.22). Many services provided, and still do, tapered support where individuals move from semi-independent, to independent living arrangements. This approach suggests that people experiencing homelessness are unable to take care of themselves and need help to learn the skills of independent living. While this was the discourse, the decimation of social housing provision under right-to-buy meant that many were left to 'silt up' hostels with nowhere to move on to (Cloke et al., 2010, p.163). Exactly *how* services enabled growing independence was a matter for the individual providers to decide, and funding was provided in relation to the numbers of people worked with.

The early 1990s saw the beginning of the professionalisation of support work in the homelessness sector. Professionalisation 'mostly involved bureaucratisation and managerialisation…[including] more formal line management control structures, standardised procedures, paid staff and associated systems of monitoring, [evaluation] and administration (Scullion et al, p.423) more skilled at meeting the needs prioritised by government (Cloke et al. 2010, p.45). In this environment questions of how best to support independence were debated and formalised. In 1992 CHAR established the National Resettlement Forum which facilitated 'good practice conferences' in 1994, 1995 and 1996. Randall and Brown, in 1994, worked with Crisis to produce 'The Move in Experience: Research into Good Practice in Resettlement of Homeless People'. The National Resettlement Forum drew together the good practice shared in the form of the *Resettlement Handbook* (Bevan, 1998) which was later used as the basis for a training programme for resettlement workers facilitated by Homeless Link, a national body representing homelessness organisations that grew out of The National Homeless Alliance,

formally CHAR. The training programme ceased after three years and since then services tend to buy in training or source it from organisations like Homeless Link.

Mike Seal, who developed and facilitated the Support Worker training programme for Homeless Link, highlights principles for effective client-worker relationships. The fundamental goods in the work include: seeing the whole person; not pathologising need or perpetuating it towards dependency; believing in an individual's abilities to 'adjust' (using Biestek's terminology); possessing and sharing knowledge of services and programmes that are available to help facilitate adjustment; recognising and reflecting on the power imbalance and addressing this through transparency ('confess your ignorance and human feelings') both to build relationships with the clients and, as in reflective practice, the worker's development (Seal, 2005, p.46).

Further professionalisation of the sector and the work of frontline staff came in with the 'Supporting People' programme 2003. Guidance for services on how to move people on to independence became linked with funding and service survival via the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF), which in establishing standards expected in the delivery of services, was used as a contract management tool for 'ensuring continuous improvements in the areas of: assessment and support planning; security; health and safety; safeguarding and protection from abuse; fair access, diversity and inclusion, client involvement and empowerment ' (Sitra, 2010, p.3). Support was imagined as: 'flexible and layered or administered at stages that reflect the individuals' changing needs' (Ravenhill, 2008, p.3-4). Not all existing services had the expertise or will to win contracts (Buckingham, 2012) and those services who were not willing or able to comply were mostly weeded out. It was a toe in the sea of competition between services for funds, and the driver to reach new standards and grow. The sector saw

an interest in and uptake of some more (theoretically) evidence-based practice. Services

were engaged in more recording, more paperwork, more reporting, beginning an era of the

measurement of outcomes as evidence, which progressed to increasingly competitive

tendering arrangements, towards what we see today, with the use of Payment by Results

where outcomes as opposed to people and time are the unit of measurement on which

payment is based.

While the QAF promoted a client-led process, the Outcomes Star (OS), created by St.

Mungo's and the London Housing Foundation in 2003 (and later developed and marketed by

Triangle Consulting), is a tool to aid in the development and measurement of 'self-reliance,'

and to provide evidence of impact for commissioners (Triangle Consulting, 2019). In 2011,

Homeless Link estimated that over 20% of homelessness agencies use Outcomes Stars

(Johnson and Pleace, 2016, p.34). The aspiration is to complete at least three Outcome Stars

in order to obtain a score denoting improvement, regression or stasis (Triangle Consulting,

2019). The development of the OS grew from a 'service user as an active agent' philosophy

and some believe it underemphasises the role that social and personal resources play in

addressing need (Johnson and Pleace, 2016, p.35) as the emphasis is on what the individual

can do to address their needs. For example, in the case of poor mental health, there must

be recognition of how little support or capacity an individual might have to face the difficult

task of accessing diagnosis and treatment (especially if they have addiction issues) let alone

compliance with treatment if they can possibly get it. Advertised as making 'new

conversations possible' and as giving 'new hope' to service users, some argue it further

pathologises individuals, determining what they should be interested in changing and

suggesting all can be overcome with motivation (Johnson and Pleace, 2016, p.37). This argument might be valid in the case of an inexperienced, unskilled Support Worker who lacks the confidence to enable this sort of 'new conversation', so the form becomes a guide to cling to. While a more confident and skilled worker could use the form as the background to developing a relationship to further understand the context of the individual, their needs, aspirations and the barriers they face in reaching them. OSs are used by The Programme in my study and there is further discussion in Chapters Five and Eight as to their potential as a useful tool and their actual application.

The shift to focusing on building self-reliance and independence often took place in the institutional environments of supported housing. The old-style hostels were seen as a barrier to the sort of outcomes the sector was trying to achieve (ODPM, 2005, p.5). In 2005 the CLG launched The Hostels Capital Improvement Program (HCIP) which came to be known as Places of Change. £90 million was invested in 80 hostels to reduce their size and provide more space for staff to effectively engage with clients. The hope was that these improvements would make hostels 'centres of excellence and choice that would positively change lives' (CLG, 2005, pp.4-5). In addition to improving the physical environment, The Programme aimed to value and motivate staff and support meaningful activity (ibid, p.7). Receptions were ripped out and replaced with sweeping desks, open to residents to approach as they wished, in 'welcoming and positive spaces' (ibid, p.5). Entire buildings were remodelled, decked out in greys with swathes of bright colours aiming to 'break down institutional barriers' (p.5). Attention to the physical surroundings that helping work in the case of homelessness takes place in suggests that it is not merely individual problems causing people to remain homeless. Many hostels,

however constructed, remain frightening places. Many who stay on the streets, in cars, on sofas, in dangerous relationships are avoiding hostel accommodation (Cloke et, al, 2010).

Housing First moves away from the continuum of support approach, arguing for settled housing prior to support interventions. Originally developed in New York in 1992, HF has come to prominence globally partly because of a great wave of research that continues to add weight to its 'evidence-base' (Melnik and Dunn, 2016). Advocates believe that stable housing is essential for individuals to address other issues in their lives and that programmes that restrict self-determination are problematic (Tsemberis et al., 2004 cited in Melnik and Dunn, 2016). Critics focus on the need for individualised support, and highlight historical knowledge that putting someone with complex needs, used to sleeping rough, in accommodation without support rarely works out well. In their systematic review of published research on Housing First, Meknik and Dunn (2016) concluded that there is strong, consistent evidence that HF is successful in improving housing retention for groups considered to be hard-to-house (ibid, p.295). That generally there were reductions in crime perpetuated (ibid, p.293) and emergency and substance treatment service use (ibid, p.294) and increased tenant satisfaction and quality of life. They temper these results by cautioning that the context, quality of support, and degrees of scope for self-determination may well make a difference to success (ibid).

Nicholas Pleace, a respected scholar on homelessness, also issues caution. Writing in the *Guardian*, he says that while the results are promising it is a 'small step', and that the complex and chaotic people for whom HF works best make up but a small percentage of the population in need of housing. Furthermore, he addresses the conditions that are required to make HF successful: firstly, sufficient consistent funding (initial HF pilots in England

collapsed because the money ran out); second, a supply of affordable, adequate and secure housing (which is not the case in many English cities); and third, it needs to be a part of a broader, integrated strategy that includes prevention, new housing and engagement with health and social care (*Guardian*, 2018).

Housing First assumes to a significant degree that people just need housing and, as discussed here already, this is the case for many experiencing homelessness. It also highlights concerns about the potential damage caused by any period of time spent in hostels with regimes that restrict self-determination. In other cases, where needs are more complex, good quality support is required to help address the issues that have contributed to an individual's homelessness in the first place. Furthermore, as Pleace points out above, the success depends on the actual availability of affordable adequate and secure housing and an integrated strategy that is well funded for the long term.

It is easy to see why so many see Housing First as a panacea for homelessness but, as with all the other approaches, its success in reality depends on so much more. It assumes that housing is the predominant issue but overlooks the complexity of need some people experiencing homelessness present with. Without the right support and accommodation, an individual could be placed far from their own support systems in accommodation that does not meet their needs.

1.4.5 Client involvement

From a socially oriented perspective, listening to people using services, involving them in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the services they use, and empowering them to have more control over their lives has a logical rationale. This is less clearly allied to

individualising approaches which pathologises people experiencing homelessness, therefore also potentially pathologising their own expressions of and understandings of the experience. As the views of people experiencing homelessness changed so did the attitude towards what they had to contribute to both understanding homelessness and developing solutions. This approach assumes that people experiencing homelessness have something to offer, can be the solution to homelessness rather than the problem and — critically — have rights. Moreover, the approach follows an awareness that many experiencing homelessness have been disempowered and that offering empowering experiences, where their experience is recognised as valid, will support independence. Client Involvement became the term used in the sector, encompassing notions of democracy and rights, consumer notions of choice, and empowerment: 'personal growth and increase in power over all aspects' of life' (Hoggett, 2000, p.104). However, when seen as part of a larger push towards increasing marketisation of social welfare services where consumer choice is promoted but in the context of stripped back public services, choice can be seen as merely rhetoric which hides the actual degradation of rights, power and protection (Pawson, 2008). Emerging in the mid-1960s, this approach has been slow to embed, perhaps because of the way ideas of empowerment clash with marketisation and the continuing revanchist undertones of the homelessness industry.

The 2003 Supporting People QAF forced the most decisive steps towards increasing and improving quality of client involvement activity. In most provision it took the form of a client forum and resident representatives. These groups would, in the main, discuss issues they were experiencing in their service provision - frequently repairs and key worker relations.

While the sector saw some good practice in this area,[15] many attempts were tokenistic; and efforts collapsed into a 'whinge fest' or were 'co-opted' with a few clients given positions on the boards of charities, for example, but without any real clout (Hoggett, 2000, p.103). On other occasions clients were given responsibilities for facilitating groups and attending staff meetings, often without receiving support or remuneration for their work. Resentful and struggling they – and client involvement as a practice - could end up being a problem rather than a solution that would forge empowerment and improved service provision (Seal, 2008).

A key success of initiatives has been to harness clients' desire to 'give back'. As providers experienced the competency and enthusiasm of their clients, some overhauled policy that prevented people who had used services being volunteers or employed. In 2005 a group of UK homelessness sector organisations went to North America and brought back a scheme called Giving Real Opportunities for Work (GROW). It was a programme that recruited, trained and supported people with experience of homelessness to work in the sector, starting small but with fanfare at Thames Reach in London in 2005, and in 2007 the Department for Communities and Local Government provided funding for the scheme to be rolled out nationwide. It proclaimed a number of outcomes: firstly, it was a direct path into employment for successful candidates; secondly, it was apparent that people with direct experience of homelessness were more able to build trusting relationships with clients and provide inspiration ('if I can do it'…); thirdly, services reported that it enabled a culture change, that staff teams increased the expectations they had of the client group as a direct result of clients becoming colleagues. It was a concrete challenge to the pathologising view.

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[15] Groundswell and The National Homeless Alliance's (2000) publication *Don't Agonise, Organise* describes the birth of a user-led network and their support of involvement initiatives across the country.

While the GROW label has disappeared, many homeless sector services either proactively or happily recruit staff and volunteers with direct experience of homelessness, extolling the notion of 'expert by experience'. The thing is, as described when seeking to define and conceptualise homelessness, experiences of homelessness are diverse. Individuals are expert in their own very individual experience. The ability to then build trust and aspiration in someone else experiencing homelessness differently is not a given; while empathy driven from personal experience is helpful, it is not sufficient to provide support for a very diverse group of people. Furthermore, this particular take on client involvement keeps many in the sector, no longer directly receiving support for homelessness and related issues but reliving the experiences associated day in and day out as they work to support their clients.

1.4.6 Trauma-Informed practice

Despite the efforts in practice to support people to independence it was clear that some faced barriers that could not be addressed through shiny new spaces, skills for living or client-centred support. Existing research had identified a prevalence of complex needs and prior experience of abuse and institutionalisation, but even long-term practitioners were taken aback by a 2007 study claiming that, '…up to 70% of homeless people have personality disorders' (Philippot et al., 2007). Others argued that there was strong and consistent evidence supporting an association between homelessness and complex trauma (Maguire et al., 2009).

> 'Writers on complex trauma emphasise that recovery can only occur in a relational
> context, through which disempowerment and disconnection from others are

mended and the capacity for trust re-built' (Herman, 1997; Van der Kolk, 2014 cited in Phipps et al., 2017, p.36).

In July 2010, the DCLG, in conjunction with the National Mental Health Development Unit (NMHDU), responded to these findings with guidance for frontline services and for those who commission such services on better ways of meeting the psychological and emotional needs of people who are homeless (CLG & NMHDU, 2010 cited in Johnson and Haigh, 2010, p.31). Psychologically-Informed Environments (PIE) provided services with a way to work towards building trauma-informed practices and environments.

PIE practice is based on Therapeutic Communities developed in North America initially by the Quaker community and brought into large scale use for returning second world war veterans (Johnson and Haigh, 2010, p.30). PIE aims to:

> 'identify, adapt and consciously use those features of the managed environment in such a way as to allow the resources and the day-to-day functioning of the service to be focused on addressing the psychological needs and emotional issues thrown up by the residents' (ibid, p.31).

While there is no recommended underlying psychotherapeutic approach to PIE, reflective practice is seen to be central. The CLG and NMHDU guidance highlight three advantages of reflective practice:

> 1. aiming to develop recognition and understanding in staff, clients will feel better understood and heard.

2. it enables staff to obtain perspective on the emotional challenges of the work, reducing anxiety and burnout.

3. it provides a forum to share learning and obtain corrective feedback (CLG, 2010).

In 2017 a group of PIE practitioners and researchers produced a paper for the Housing Care and Support journal, in which they argue that establishing therapeutic relationships can be exceptionally demanding for keyworkers (Phipps et al., 2017. p.30). They quote a staff participant who exposes a paradox in the provider's intention:

'I think what's happening [...] is a muddling up of dependency and attachment issues – for someone to become dependent on a place is a 'thoroughly bad thing' so we keep them moving, moving, moving, moving, whereas the way of understanding attachment is for someone to become attached to something in order that they can build a secure base [...] I think the moving on problem is rooted in anxiety about dependency' (ibid, p.34).

The authors highlight that frontline workers responsible for adopting this new model do so in an environment of scarce resources, alongside unrealistic externally imposed goals and targets, which do not match the complexity of the task and could dehumanise their role as carers (2017, p.35). They note that the sector privileges 'doing things' over 'thinking about things' and that there is a pattern of short-term contracts which lead to anxieties about achieving outcomes. While they highlight the 'double bind' of the paradox above, they do not extrapolate on the effect this has on the relationship between client, Support Worker and provider.

In summary of these sections, trauma-informed, and client-centred practice and client involvement together are regarded as the building blocks for help that is effective in the long term. Focusing upstream, before issues become more complex, is supported across the industry. However, the nature of the sector (funded in the short term, fearful of creating dependency, evermore competitive with ever-dwindling resources, conflicted in their use of stigmatised images of their clients) confounds success and creates anxiety that is borne most heavily by the keyworkers and clients. These tensions seem to propel perpetual reinvention of strategies to 'end homelessness'.

1.4.7 Outcomes-based performance management: Payment by Results (PbR)

Outcomes-Based Performance Management (OBPM) is a manifestation of New Managerialism and the basis of PbR and Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) (Lowe and Wilson 2017, p.982). In a PbR SIB the emphasis is on achieving outcomes that are paid for in the first place by a Social Investor, who recoups funding from central government as and when targets are reached. In 2011 the Coalition government announced their strategy to improve the efficacy of public services centrally through the widespread use of PbR and leveraging additional funding from the private sector in the form of SIBs. As explained in the Open Public Services White Paper (HMG, 2011) PbR demands robust evidence that specific outcomes are being achieved before payment is released, providing a 'constant and tough financial incentive for providers to deliver good services throughout the term of the contract' (HMG, 2011, p.32). There is an assumption that the focus on outcomes distinct from activity will incentivise providers to 'focus on what works' (HMG, 2011, p.34) and in order to do this (with added pressure from the Social Investor to make a return), providers will innovate and 'work more

closely with individuals and communities…' so that services are 'oriented' around the end user (HMG, 2011, p.32).

While implementation of New Managerialism in homelessness trails behind other public service provision, it has become increasingly evident (Johnson and Pleace, 2016). The justification for the leveraging of social finance is to transfer risk (HMG, 2011, p.29) from the government to providers and investors. One interpretation of the White Paper is that the problem behind the failure of past solutions to eradicate homelessness is the absence of significant external motivation to provide 'good services' that are also efficient. Services surviving under other commissioning models can be depicted as not listening to clients or mindful of innovations that might provide better outcomes. However, the most significant change is to transfer risk to an external funder with an incentive to deliver specified outcomes.

The London Homelessness PbR SIB launched in 2012, was a test case for further roll-out in the sector. It was a four-year programme designed to address the problem of rising rough sleeper numbers in London. The 'innovation' of The Programme was to use 'navigators', Support Workers who would adopt a 'personalised and flexible approach' (DCLG, 2017, p.9). The two contracted suppliers had over 20 years of history of delivering outreach work with rough sleepers in London. The impact evaluation of The Programme used a comparison group drawn from the same cohort but based on statistics from previous years and found that individuals in the treatment group fared better than those in the comparison group. The qualitative evaluation showed that providers did not meet any of the three targets they set (DCLG, 2017, p.7). Despite the success recorded by the impact evaluation they explain that this does,

not necessarily prove that social investment and payment incentives drove the

results. This is because it was not possible, within this impact evaluation, to

disentangle the effect of the social investment model from the intervention service

(DCLG, 2017, p.8).

Furthermore, evaluators explain that there were 'significant differences' in reported needs

between the treatment and comparison groups, which they attributed to needs assessment

processes improving over time. They used propensity score matching to account for these

differences and remain 'reasonably confident' that the difference in outcomes can be

explained by the intervention (DCLG, 2017, p.23). While time and money allocated to

homelessness is spent on robust quantitative studies to measure the effect of interventions

on outcomes, a single certainty is proved over and over; as quoted before, homelessness is

'…more like suicide than polio… ambiguously defined, multiply caused, questionably

responsive to interventions and difficult to assess' (Shinn et al., 2001, p.96).

It is common for quantitative evaluations of OBPM to produce results that support its

efficacy while qualitative evidence regularly indicates that 'OBPM distorts and undermines

the practice of social interventions' (Lowe and Wilson 2017, p.983). The distortion Lowe and

Wilson refer to here is often called 'gaming' (ibid). Gaming does not mean cheating but, as

staff have little control over the outcomes, they take opportunities to control what they can,

namely the production of data. For instance, finding what people are already doing and

counting it, and cherry-picking clients who are likely to achieve outcomes (ibid p.995).

Moreover, critics maintain that:

'Outcomes are emergent properties of complex, non-linear systems. It is untenable to claim that an outcome is created by any one organization or programme (or even a combination of organizations/programmes)' (ibid, 2017, p.990).

However, this approach is fully embedded, and this seems unlikely to change. The 2018 Rough Sleepers Strategy states the government's 'determination' for social investment to 'become business as usual', and reflects on the second homelessness related PbR SIB, from which the young people in my study are drawn, proclaiming that, 'the Payment by Results system appeared to incentivise staff to achieve outcomes, with no evidence of perverse incentives or a focus on quick wins' (MHCLG, 2018, p.26).

They claim the model 'drives innovation' giving providers 'freedom and flexibility' 'while the taxpayer only pays for successful outcomes' (ibid, p.26). Curiously, the single most significant innovation of The Programme was the use of incentives to motivate young people to reach outcomes which had a payment attached to them. This innovation is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

What OBPM certainly does drive is the requirement for ever larger, multivariate, longitudinal, Randomised Control Trials (RCT); epitomised by launch of Crisis' Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI); with the unarguably worthy vision of 'a society where the experience of homelessness in instances where it cannot be prevented, is only ever rare, brief and non-recurrent' (CHI, 2019). CHI have mapped international 'quality' evidence on homelessness interventions (ibid). Their standards of evidence range from: high reliability (RCT and natural experiments), medium to high reliability (regression and discontinuity

design and interrupted time series); low reliability to medium reliability (instrumental

variables and propensity score matching); low reliability (other forms of matching,

difference-indifference without matching, pre and post-test designs) and not included (case

studies and qualitative assessments) (ibid). The aspiration is to enable access to 'reliable'

evidence to inform decisions regarding the sorts of interventions pursued to obtain

particular outcomes. These are all focused on interventions aimed at changing the person

experiencing homelessness, not on the structural issues of poverty, inequality or a failing

housing market. Finally, as all the evidence considered as reliable is quantitative, none will

measure soft, especially relational, inputs or outputs. While OBPM purports to improve the

delivery of services, it undoubtedly shifts the attention of services from the means to the

ends, establishing a real danger that the complex work of engagement with people in need

will be overlooked.

1.5 Discussion

All the approaches discussed here have merit, as such, many of them will be practiced

within any one service and, as argued by Watts et al., (2017), should be scrutinised.

However, some of them actively clash; attempts to control and contain the behaviour and

expectations of clients does not sit well in an environment promoting active involvement,

empowerment and client-centred practice; teaching and training towards independence

(however it is imagined) and forcing outcomes could challenge the much slower and more

skilled therapeutic approaches seeking to address a long history of poverty, disadvantage

and trauma; therapy in itself can be seen as coercive as Watts, et al., (2017) argue. In this

way providers, SWs and clients are faced with 'ambiguity' (Cloke et al., 2010) if not

'ambivalence' (De Verteuil, 2006 and Scullion et al.,2015) in approach and the way the 'other is seen; both oppressive and caring' (Scullion et al.,2015). Furthermore, the approaches make different assumptions about why people are homeless in the first place, so while a SW is employed to train and treat to independence individuals lacking the power to make good decisions for themselves, they are also, through the OS for example, required to imagine that, irrespective of individual needs, the person before them should be able to motivate themselves towards independence. This ambivalence and how individuals manage it is discussed further in Chapter Three.

As policy, legislation, methods for estimating the size of the problem and the cost of the problem shifts and there is another iteration of a focus on prevention, or partnership working (for example) the work occurs between an individual in need and others in some way disposed to help. Together they share an encounter shaped by policy, legislation, ideas around who 'the homeless' are, what being in need means, ideas around who they are, what they're trying to do and their capacity.

 Implied in all the approaches above is that they all occur within relation, but the quality of that relation — who the approach is performed by and how they manage — receives less attention in the literature than the approach itself. In exploring the experience of young people facing multiple disadvantage and others working with them, Lankelly Chase concede that: '…relationships between helper and helped has been neglected by public systems and largely overlooked by the outcomes paradigm. It's time to redress the balance' (Lankelly Chase, 2015, p.98). My conclusion from this literature and policy review was similar to

Lankelly Chase, that research now needs to focus more on the relationships and the context in which these relationships are constructed.

With Cloke et al., (2010) and Scullion, et al., (2015) I recognise that many homelessness services are engineered and operated by people who care and there is exceptional practice that makes a real difference and innovation that has been used well to really help. But it remains, as Ravenhill states when describing the period following significant investment in homelessness from the 1990s on, 'a lottery' (2008, p.66). Is it possible to undertake a more sophisticated analysis of what frontline staff can do to gain the trust of clients and work with them towards emancipation and empowerment and a deeper analysis of what makes it difficult? I respond to this question in Chapter Four.

Engagement is built from many moments in such encounters. This is the area I am interested in exploring, not in the absence of discussion about types of approaches, nor the severity of the many different forms of homelessness, the experiences that commonly predate homelessness or even attempts at quantifying the extent of the problem. But above them, or perhaps below them, are a series of encounters between individuals, their biography and values.

This thesis explores the experience of engaging with help within the context of approaches to address homelessness and other social ills, the experiences of the young people and those around them, including workers and significant others who are themselves precarious and often have experience of homelessness. If we continue to pursue positivistic methodologies as the 'gold standard' to understand what is going on here, what will we

miss in the knowledge we produce? I aspire to get at some part of what is missed, by looking at the biography of people rather than reducing their complexity to episodes of homelessness, or simplistic notions of cause and risk; recognising the multidimensionality and storied nature of need and engaging with help; and attempting to capture some of the context this is embedded within, especially the encounter between people in a position to help and those in need.

There is hope. In October 2014, Support Workers for the homelessness charity then known as St Mungos Broadway took 'unprecedented' strike action (Third Sector, 2014). Unprecedented, as in there had not been industrial action of this magnitude from the homlessness sector – ever. Following a merger between St Mungos and Broadway the staff brought across from Broadway were offered terms and conditions which were less favourable than St Mungos' existing workers. Simon Bennett, a St Mungo's Support Worker writes in the *Guardian*:

> 'It was known and loved as an organisation that offered recovery to people who've experienced homelessness, mental health problems, drug or alcohol dependency, offending behaviours, and histories of complex trauma, to live to their full potential. Slashing the pay offer to new starters in front line roles by as much as 19% will damage our ability to recruit and retain high-quality staff, with outcomes for clients and wider society declining as a result' (*Guardian*, 2014).

This is compelling evidence for burgeoning co-ordinated resistance and solidarity on the part of frontline staff against the marketisation of the sector that further diminishes the already limited understanding of the complexity and value of their work. The following

chapter, Engagement, Trust and Care focuses on just this, the complexity and value of

frontline helping work.

CHAPTER TWO: ENGAGEMENT, TRUST AND CARE

In this chapter I begin by highlighting the problem of 'engagement' as identified in the homelessness literature and clarify how I am using the term in this thesis. I go on to look at literature exploring the complex tensions, ambivalence, contradictions and what I call irreconcilable aspirations inherent in engaging with help or in practices of help, for both Support Workers and people experiencing multiple disadvantage. These are extremely challenging to navigate in practice and, as my empirical data suggests, are often at the heart of failures to sustain engagement. I then review literature concerned with 'trust' and its strong link with engagement with help (van den Berk et al., 2014) and explore the conditions that make it more, or less, possible. I focus on literature on homelessness and other support services to explore the personal qualities and practices that appear to underpin the development of trust in worker/client relationships. I set off from the homelessness literature that provides a list of good **practice** and human **qualities** that are seen to develop trust, which is the starting point for engagement. I suggest that while the practices and qualities are known, they are under-theorised within the homelessness sector; that is to say there is little detailed work in the homelessness literature focused on why, how and in what circumstances such practices enhance successful or sustained engagement. For this reason, I draw from literature exploring care and caring relationships, which addresses more directly the question of why certain qualities and practices are important in developing trust as a platform for engagement as well as why they are really difficult to manage, and some ideas about managing them. While literature on care ethics (Tronto 1993; 2013 and Sevenhuijsen, 1998; 2000; 2003 and Noddings,1986) provides a broad picture of the promises and promise of care in the world, Science and Technology Studies

(STS) scholars Mol (2008) writing on health and Lavau and Bingham (2017) on food safety inspection, take us to the visceral heart of care as it is applied. Anthropologists (Stevenson, 2014 and Povinelli, 2015) offer a long view of how care gone wrong accumulates harm over time and the qualities of care that might be drawn upon to repair historical failures. Their perspectives are valuable in picking out the facets of care (and its absence) in policy, practice and relationship and how it can become distorted and end up reproducing oppression.

By bringing together literature concerned with care and trust from different disciplines and perspectives I have attempted to draw out key themes or elements which are widely understood to have the potential to enable trust and increase the chances of sustained engagement in helping interventions. These three themes include **responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity, flexibility and choice**. Each theme is too large to cover comprehensively in one thesis, however, I touch on some of the key debates, benefits and potential dangers of each. In the final part of this chapter, I focus on a fourth element emerging from the care literature which I feel is particularly useful: caring attention, or attentiveness. In the discussion section, and with reference to my own empirical observations, I develop this notion of attention, arguing that it provides a framework/lens through which academics and practitioners can better understand and work with the contradictions and 'irreconcilable aspirations' which can so fatally undermine trust, and hence engagement in interventions intended to help young people experiencing multiple disadvantage, including homelessness.

2.1 The challenge of engagement

In Tom Hall's (2003) landmark ethnography of youth homelessness, a worker observes that young people 'slide into and out of' wanting to be helped, 'can't really be bothered' and are sometimes 'pissing us around' (p.45). Hall describes staff teams' efforts to provide more 'structure and discipline' hoping that it will address the lack of engagement (p.43). He reflects that the staff team revisit this conversation and do attempt greater structure and discipline but that 'it never seems right and always unravels' (p.44).

The challenge of engagement is an important and well-recognised area of concern for practitioners and scholars working with homelessness, especially when services' efforts are directed towards those who are experiencing multiple disadvantage.[16] In a study with workers and young people from a London branch of Kids Company (an organisation that, before their demise, adopted new, therapeutically-informed practices with young, excluded people and their families), Lemma (2010) states 'those who work with young people will recognise only too well the difficulty of *engaging them in receiving help*' (p.201 emphasis added). Archard and Murphy (2015) in their study of homeless peoples' experiences of mental health services state that they are '…known to frustrate professionals with wariness about, or resistance to, *engagement*' (p.366 emphasis added). Ravenhill (2008) finds that people experiencing homelessness are 'vulnerable and accustomed to rejection' and commonly have 'problems with self-esteem and confidence' and that 'without support and guidance, many lacked the ability, or found it difficult to assert themselves and proficiently use the help that was available (Ravenhill 2008, p.186). In the 2012 Marmot Review Sir

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[16]See further discussion on Multiple Disadvantage C 1.1.3 p. 28

Michael Marmot claimed that, in relation to health prevention services, the most advantaged groups are more likely to take advantage of population-wide interventions (2010, p.86). These sources describe "engagement" as difficult and frustrating, and those who are most excluded are most likely to 'resist' engaging. This certainly chimes with what I found when talking to staff and young people at Futures. The Data Manager at Futures reported that programme staff 'were being run ragged' trying to meet the target of 10 hours support for each of the circa 25 young people in their case load. They were 'spending lots of time chasing people that had disengaged…'. The young people who participated in this research clearly articulate the dangers (of being pitied, shamed, disappointed, taken advantage of) they associate with engaging in help. Among research participants there are examples of relationships between young people and Support Workers that appear to support sustained engagement in The Programme and examples where the young people and their Support Workers struggle to connect. Is this simply luck? Or are there approaches attitudes and practices which make engagement more likely to succeed?

Part of the aim of this thesis was to work with young people participating in Futures and their significant others to come to a more complex understanding of what engagement means, from their perspective.That is because although engagement is an everyday term in helping services, it is nebulous and unwieldy. It is often measured by attendance, adherence/ compliance and achievement, and therefore defined by how it is operationalised. This is exemplified in how Futures attempt to understand and operationalise it. Hoping to make the workload more manageable for SWs and local managers, The Programme created four categories of engagement:

Category 1. Young people in crisis with whom staff were spending a lot of time but who were not achieving any outcomes. Attending but not achieving.

Category 2. Young people engaging and achieving.

Category 3. Young people who had disengaged either for positive or negative reasons i.e. refusing help because they did not need or want in.

Category 4. Young people who had permanently disengaged i.e. they had moved abroad or had a long-term prison sentence.

But does engagement mean showing up and sitting at the back of the room? Showing up and participating? Achieving the goals of a programme? Long-term change in behaviour? It is evident from category 1 that showing up/attending and staying in contact a lot is possible without 'achieving' thus is not a certain indication of engagement. In a small section on engagement, the year two evaluation lists some strategies to increase engagement including focusing on individuals who showed 'steady progress' and being 'much tougher' on those who were 'most difficult' (DCLG, 2017 pp.28-29). Other strategies were directly about keeping in contact including texting, tapping into social media, regular phone calls, creating a hub structure (presumably a single physical point of contact), and tracking young people via services and social networks (ibid). Some providers note that the people most likely to disengage had 'already been through the system and been failed by other services' (ibid). Later in the document incentives are mentioned as 'motivation' for young people to engage in volunteering or training (ibid, p.37). The final evaluation reports that the 'key to maintaining engagement was the development of trust…' (MHCLG, 2019). Emerging from these evaluations is a *sense* that engagement is more than a condition measured in contacts

and achievements. Rather, it is something an individual has greater or lesser propensity and 'motivation' or more or less ability and desire for. Engagement is affected by historical attempts to get help, is underpinned by the development of trust and is something an individual can be more or less open or 'receptive' to. However, this is the extent of the conceptualisation of engagement across the three evaluations of The Programme and while providers are able to estimate percentages of their cohort who engaged there is little more on what it is and how it can be encouraged or maintained.

Following Bartel (2013), this thesis focuses primarily on the 'public encounters'; that is to say 'face-to face contact between professionals and citizens' which are core to engaging individuals in programmes. As Bartel notes, what happens in such 'public encounters' has been recognised as a key challenge for 80 years through the writings of (among others) Weber (1922/1978), Lipsky (1980) and more recently Durose (2011/2009), Maynard-Moody, and Musheno (2003), but there is still little to suggest 'how to enhance the quality of the encounter' (Bartel, 2013, p.427). Trust, as the Futures evaluations begin to recognise, is central to these public encounters and to engagement more widely.

Oddly, while concepts of care and trust highlight the relational aspects of engagement, most accounts report from primarily one or other 'side': the cared-for (e.g., the clients) and or the one caring (e.g., the frontline workers) (Noddings, 1986). This makes it difficult to keep in mind the webs of experiences of trust and mistrust and of care, of both parties, that infuse the one-to-one relationship. While many studies give voice to frontline workers and clients, they focus rarely — if ever — on what the comparison of these narratives can tell us about qualities and practices that support a more valuable encounter and what conditions might help and hinder development and sustainment of those qualities and practices. This is an

absence I attempt to remedy by exploring how the empirical data I have collected resonates with the aforementioned five elements and develops what we know about the practices and personal qualities likely to encourage engagement with help in Chapters 5, 6, 8 and 9.

This chapter will examine more closely literature concerned with trust, what the existing research finds enables and obstructs the development of trust between Support Workers and their 'clients'. But first, in order to contextualise these later discussions, I turn to the complex and often un-recognised contradictions of engaging with or practising help.

2.1.1 *The paradoxes of helping and engaging with help*

'it's hobbling, it's trying not to hobble, because if the crocodile sees it, it's going to go for it, but eventually they've got to get into the water and go across... (Holly)

Holly, one of the young research participants, compares engaging with help with migrating wildebeest faced with a river full of crocodiles. They must do it, they need to do it, but it is frightening and extremely dangerous. The dangers of engaging with help is a theme which runs through the interviews with the young people who participated in this research: the danger of being let down (again), of being seen as weak, of being taken advantage of and of being judged (see Chapter 6). As outlined in my empirical chapters, the need to avoid these dangers, to stay 'hidden', seems to be continuously struggling with the desire and need to engage with help, to trust, to be seen. This is the complex reality which the Support Workers and young people have to navigate, and it is fraught with paradoxes and irreconcilable aspirations. Support Workers, for their part, are navigating a system which often requires them to be paradoxically and simultaneously supporter and judge/monitor 'pedagogue and prison guard' (Willis 1978 p.72). Lipsky highlights four levels to this paradox. Firstly, workers

are expected to use their 'knowledge, skill, and position to secure the best treatment or position for clients, but this is inconsistent with the constraints of the service and tendency to 'hoard' resources (2010, p.72). Secondly, services intend to treat clients equally, yet the worker is explicitly looking for special treatment. Thirdly, the advocate is required to make judgements on the credibility of the client's claim (especially when advocating on their behalf) as well as serving them, thus combining the roles of 'judge and server' (ibid, p.74). Frontline workers do not set out to be inconsistent, but it is inevitable and, as described in Chapter Three, it produces two types of response, paralysing anxiety or displacement of that anxiety by establishing a believable narrative to 'underwrite and stabilise assumptions' (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003, p.30).

2.2 Trust

In the homelessness literature, and in literature concerned with helping interventions more generally, trust is placed at the core of effective client-worker relationships (Seal, 2005; Phipps et al., 2017) and practice (van den Berk-Clark and McGuire 2014; Ensign 2004; de Winter and Noom, 2003; Chen and Ogden, 2010; Archard and Murphy 2015; Groundswell, 2009). It is also recognised as a central problem for young people experiencing homelessness and their relationships with others (Barker, 2014; Farrugia, 2011). Yet there is little theorisation on *how* trust develops in relationship within the context of service provision, the uncertain territory of homelessness and an individual's biography, nor has there been a nuanced exploration of the tensions and troubles it presents. Tom Hall's aforementioned 2003 ethnography on youth homelessness refers to the relationship between workers and clients as the 'imponderabilia of helping'. Of the workers he says, 'they are there to help… and helping is a collaborative exercise, it takes trust, time, humour

and reciprocal understanding… a muddy exercise… inscrutable sometimes' (p.44). As discussed in the previous chapter, homelessness policy tends to focus on supporting independence and measurable outcomes. The sector mantra of 'move on' and the concern with the dangers of dependence, has left staff wary of boundaries and focused on harder outcomes. It has become common to look away from 'soft', 'inscrutable', and difficult to measure activities like building trust.

Yet engagement with services, programmes and treatment to help/meet need, depends to a significant degree on trust. In their longitudinal quantitative investigation with 260 homeless army veterans about trust in healthcare providers, van den Berk-Clark and McGuire note that people with 'higher levels of trust' are more likely to 'seek care' when in need and 'comply with treatment' (2014, p.1278). Cloke, May and Johnson (2010) note that staff are aware that in order for clients to engage with support 'they must first feel emotionally safe and trust the person they are working with' (p.177). Chen and Ogden use Grounded Theory to '... generate a working relationship model that influences motivation for stable housing among homeless people with serious mental illness...' (2012, p.373), and find that using '...practical strategies to develop client trust...enhanced client interest in obtaining housing and the commitment to the transformation crucial for retaining housing' (ibid, p.376). In fact, one is hard pressed to find literature on engagement or the success of interventions in education, social work, mental health, psychology, or health, that does not point to developing and sustaining trust as crucial.

But trust is difficult to win; it is '...accepted vulnerability to another's power to harm...' (Baier, 1994, p.133). By engaging with help, the individual in need makes herself reliant '... on another's competence and willingness to look after, rather than harm things one cares

about...' (Baier, 1994, p.128). Our vulnerabilities and frailties make it necessary to depend on, to trust others to survive, but at the same time, putting our trust in others makes us all, to some degree, vulnerable and dependent. This tension underpins many of the challenges the young people I interviewed, and their Support Workers experienced in engaging with help. Irrespective of this tension we continually interact with the social world, exercising trust when we open our mouths to the dentist, when we hand over our credit card details, when we cross the road. Trust and mistrust are the very first psychosocial tasks for an infant (Erikson, 1963), tested and shaped as we react to failures of 'reliability' in relationships and in our environment (Winnicott, 1965, p.97). This continues through life, each experience of failure of reliability (when needs are not met), each experience of what occurred following trusting or mistrusting comes into the next situation where we meet this psychosocial task. The aforementioned van den Berk-Clark and McGuire study found that trusting is dynamic; once won it can be damaged and repaired and damaged again. While the findings confirm a strong link between trust and engagement there is no certainty about particular experiences or demographics that might predicate high or low levels of trust. However, what is certain is that we do not all come to situations that demand trust from the same place.

It is salient to consider what young people experiencing homelessness might bring with them as they approach asking for and engaging with help. Tyler (2006), in the literature review for her US study into the pathways of young people experiencing homelessness, offers the bleak statistics that at least 33% have experienced sexual abuse and more than 50% physical abuse and/or neglect (p.1385). Watts et al. (2015) note the well-evidenced factors associated with 'higher risk of homelessness' which include the 'experience of domestic violence, mental health or substance abuse issues within the family home...

'(p.11). While Crane et al. (2014) echo these findings, they also cite Toro et al. (2007) to add that triggers including leaving statutory care or young offenders institutes are common for people experiencing homelessness. Collectively, these experiences could be described as trauma. The NICE guidance for the management and treatment of post-traumatic stress acknowledges the negative impact trauma, like physical and sexual abuse, can have on trust in relationships with others (2005 cited in Achard and Murphy 2016, p.366). Barker (2014) in his ethnography of youth homelessness describes the interconnected strategies of autonomy and relatedness developed by young people in response to their biography as on a continuum. The desire for autonomy, exacerbated by a lack of trust due to experiences leading to homelessness, can lead to isolation and provoke the need for belonging and closeness (relatedness) sought with great expectation, more than often not met, provoking the corresponding desire for autonomy. Barker describes a 'swing between the poles of best mate or lover and enemy' (2014, p.770) and back again. This resonates with my own empirical findings.

Services which exist to help these young people in need require them to *open up* in order to be able to know how they can help. Without trust, services and staff are unlikely to get near to what is really going on for an individual choosing to keep themselves safe in isolation and revealing only parts of themselves, let alone prescribe appropriate activities and programmes that might address needs, facilitate and maintain engagement in them. But my interviewees were clear that trusting and engaging with help involves taking the risk of being disappointed, shamed, pitied, seen as weak and taken advantage of (see Chapter 6). So, under what conditions might they risk trusting someone seeking to provide support?

2.2.1 On what grounds would we risk trust?

The philosopher Baier, in her 1994 essays on ethics, explores trust and antitrust, and situations in which risking trust might be seen as a rational choice. She arrives at three possibilities: alignment in the understanding of 'good'; a transparent and agreed contract; and love. Here, I describe them, and show how these strategies are relevant in homelessness services by outlining interventions that I see as aspiring to establishing these situations.

2.2.2 What's good for me is good for you?

The first situation is where there is alignment in what is understood as 'good' between the one entrusted and the one trusting (Baier, 1994, p.108). Consider perhaps how and why your children are disciplined at school or how your parent's needs are prioritised when they are frail. We look for assurance that the services and individuals within them share our notions of good. Our notions of 'good' let alone 'normal' are hugely complex; inherited, structurally and culturally determined. So, in policy and practice the tendency is to zoom way out in an attempt to isolate 'goods' and 'evils' that are universally difficult to disagree with. In homelessness, at the tail end of ringfenced funding for the Supporting People Programme what was then called the Department for Communities and Local Government replaced the Quality Assessment Framework with a marginally edited version of the Every Child Matters five outcomes: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing (DFES, 2003). Like the flipside to Beveridge's 'evils' they are difficult to disagree with as broad terms. Adopting these outcomes meant that services were able to devise provision that contributed to achieving these outcomes, ideally, in a way that was suitable to their client group, and the resources and expertise available. Coupled with client-centred practice this outcomes-based approach is made

transparent to clients who are encouraged to map out their own path towards the outcomes. Practically this approach is illustrated most clearly by the Outcomes Star, a paper-based tool used commonly in support sessions where clients assess themselves on a numerical scale regarding how well (and how independently) they are managing in ten areas representing the outcomes, for example, staying healthy. With their Support Worker they then go on to plan actions to address the problems they have identified.[17] Depending on the facilitation, outcome focused work may well simulate something like alignment of notions of common good in the first place or during initial interaction with a helping service. However, as Baier points out this '... usually will not ensure agreement on what best should *be done* to take care of that good...' (1994, p.108, emphasis added). Furthermore, it is likely within homelessness services that the actions agreed will involve other service providers, for example GPs, mental health and substance misuse providers, with whom trust will need to be established.

2.2.3 Contract

The second situation where Baier suggests that trusting is accepted as rational is where there is a contract that enables us to be explicit about '...what we count on another person to do, in return for what, and should they not do just that, what damages can be extracted from them' (1994, p.117). Contracting prior to and throughout a service intervention in the homelessness sector is common., in which a provider seeks to clarify what the client wishes to achieve through their engagement, frequently balanced with responsibilities of paying the service charge in a hostel, attending support work sessions, and potentially more

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[17] As discussed in Chapter One p.38

specific expectations like addressing substance misuse or anger issues through a named

programme. Even if there is not an actual contract, there is very often an 'unwritten' one

where clients recognise that if they aren't able to keep to the rules, they may jeopardize

getting the support they hope to receive (Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.176). In my

opinion, there are a number of reasons why contracting in the homelessness sector does

not effectively build trust. To begin with, in the case of 'unwritten contracts', there is an

issue of lack of transparency; if it is not written down how are any of the players supposed

to be assured of what is to be done in return for what? Furthermore, as indicated by Baier

the 'contracting game' is only really effective when played by people who are more or less

'... equal in power to secure the enforcement of the rules...' (1994, p.121). While it is likely

that there will be consequences if the client does not do what is agreed, it is unlikely to

work the other way around. This equality in power is unlikely in the situation when there is

an individual in a position to help and another in need. Then there is the issue of

competence, availability and resources. Workers in the homelessness sector are regularly

overwhelmed with staggering caseloads, precarious employment status and often lack the

skills, knowledge or influence required to act on a client's expressed needs. They, therefore,

regretfully, often end up reneging on their side of the contracted expectations (Cloke, May

and Johnson, 2010, p.159). Furthermore, the Support Worker has the dual role of support

and enforcement, so the possibility of 'contracting' leading to trust in this problematic

dynamic is unlikely and may actually serve to *undermine* it, potentially fostering deception.

2.1.4 Love

Finally, Baier posits that the best reason for confidence that another's sense of what is good

is aligned with one's own, is love (ibid, p.108). Love is a curiously troubling term when it

appears in the context of work with people in need. Looking for examples of the effects of love from the homeless sector I anticipated I would find the common critiques of faith-based interventions (see Chapter One). Cloke et al., however, provide a refreshingly nuanced and hopeful view of voluntary sector provision including many faith-based and voluntarily operated services (2010). They helpfully illustrate blurred boundaries between 'professional' and 'voluntary' services working with people experiencing homelessness and consider the various effects they have.

Their book opens with a quote from a user of a daycentre run by volunteers, who comments on the food being cooked 'with love' and, crucially, tied to this feeling of love and 'genuine' 'care' is volunteerism. The authors follow with the statement, 'love' is not a word one comes across very often in writings on homelessness' (Cloke et al., 2010, p.1). They, as if following in step, go on to dissect the love sentiment into caritas, compassion, kindness and volunteerism. They articulate the traditional critique of faith-based and voluntary services as unchallenging environments, unprofessionally managed, sometimes evangelical and providing for basic needs to keep people alive, rather than enabling service users to 'move on' and 'increasingly stigmatised for keeping homeless people 'on the street' (Cloke, Johnson and May, 2007 p.1098; Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.39). However, their thesis, grounded in months of observation in day centres and night shelters across Britain and hundreds of interviews with volunteers and staff, finds that there is less of a difference between secular and faith-based organisations than is often assumed. Their values are often consistent and there are 'wide variations' among secular organisations regarding professionalism, expectations of social responsibilities on behalf of clients and rules-based regimes. Their investigation focused on the motivations and performances of volunteers in

this context and how they align or not with the values of the organisation. They argue that 'volunteering can best be interpreted as a way of bringing ordinary ethics [complex everyday caring] into extraordinary circumstances' (Cloke et al., 2010, p.250). I would say that what they describe as 'voluntary attitude', which includes some identification with the needs of others that generates feelings of responsibility and 'spontaneous acts of kindness', is what gives clients the trust required to engage with a Support Worker (ibid, p.177). Akin to 'going above and beyond' (the act of kindness they use as an illustration is a Support Worker giving a client a haircut), 'voluntary attitude' describes something of a personal commitment, a characteristic of an individual who is not there *just* for the money, is somehow personally invested in the other. Perhaps this means that the helper in this case is risking something of themselves, addressing, to some degree, the power and vulnerability imbalance between them and the one in need. This recalls Boal citing Che Guevara when he said that 'solidarity means running the same risks' (1995, p.3). Froggett (2002) also draws a line from recognition to solidarity to compassion to love which she helpfully goes on to unpick as caritas and eros. She explains that talk of compassion in helping work became more 'suspect' as services became more professionalised. Developing this distinction of eros and caritas as part of compassion/love using Klein she argues that eros,

> 'despite its passionate energy and romantic investment in an idealised other, it is
> fundamentally greedy, taking what it can from the object of its desire for its own
> use' (2002, p.117).

In this position she says that we 'project something of ourselves into the other' delighting in the correspondence with *ourselves* in the other we feel good in ourselves - '... a sense of exhilarating omnipotence'. When this sense of sameness is not met, we are offended and

'attempt to manipulate the other in being what we need them to be' (ibid p.117). Caritas, on the other hand, and its '...recognition of the uniqueness and separateness of the other leads to concern that their integrity be respected and that they be loved... for who they are.' (ibid p. 118).

Frogett argues that this is by no means an easy task as any honest appraisal is bound to include imperfection, the unearthing of which can be very fraught and cause apprehension, 'frustration and aggression' in both parties (Froggett, 2002, p.118). Recognition that includes seeing and accepting imperfections and contradictions is an important theme which will be returned to in my discussion of 'attention' in the following section, and in my empirical chapters.

2.2.5 Trust in practice

The ideas outlined above resonate with homelessness and other helping work literature concerned with the qualities and practices that win trust and promote engagement.

The qualities of a person who is able to encourage trust are often the qualities that make services worried about boundaries. That is to say, they are often associated with behaviours which blur boundaries between formal Support Worker and friend or family, perhaps through what Cloke et al call 'spontaneous acts of kindness' (2010, p.177) or that 'difficult to define 'something else' – a sense of engagement with the 'real person' and a genuine expression of care (ibid). They are qualities that are impossible to quantify, encapsulating the characteristics that for Cloke et al. and Froggett are proxy for love: compassion, recognition, selflessness, care, and hope. They are people who **care** (Finfgel-Connett et al., 2012, p.417; Finfgel-Connett, 2010; Chen and Ogden, 2010, p.376; Groundswell, 2009, p.38),

who are able to establish **authentic emotional engagement** (Fisher and Freshwater, 2014, p.767; Lemma, 2010, p.409 & p.420; Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.177), are **non-judgemental and respectful** (van den Berk-Clark and McGuire 2014, p.420; Ensign 2004, p.701), and **good-willed and altruistic** (van den Berk-Clark and McGuire 2014; Fisher and Freshwater, 2014, p.767). Lemma also talks about the power of **humour** (2010, p.413) and **providing hope** that something better is possible (Lemma, 2010, p.409; de Winter and Noom, 2003; Finfgel-Connett et al., 2012, p.424; Groundswell, 2009, p.29).

The literature also identifies several practices that encourage trust; things that a Support Worker can *do* as distinct from the qualities outlined above. When considering ways to better foster trust and enable engagement, there are a number of common practices. Workers that **'do-with'**, undertaking activity with a client, helping to paint a new flat, participating in arts or sports, relating in an informal environment as well as sitting down and talking (Chen and Ogden, 2010, p.377; Lemma, 2010, p.414; Archard and Murphy 2015, p.364; Fisher and Freshwater, 2014, p.771). A **personalised approach**, giving clients choice and control also helps build trust (Chen and Ogden, 2010, p.377; Ensign, 2004, p.695; Finfgel-Connett et al., 2012, p.417; van den Berk-Clark and McGuire 2014). These two practices go some way to addressing the asymmetry in power relations by entrusting the client and 'doing with' rather than 'to' or 'for'. Having **continuity** with an individual staff member or 'Support Worker' who 'sticks with' a client is important (Groundswell, 2009, p.57; van den Berk-Clark and McGuire 2014; Ensign 2004, p.704; de Winter and Noom, 2003). Concretely **providing support in the first instance** (Lemma 2010, p.416) and being **transparent and fair** when it comes to rules and expectations (Sysko, 2000 in Fisher and Freshwater, 2014, p.422; Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.176). Finally, being **reliable**,

simply showing up when you say you will and undertaking tasks agreed (Chen and Ogden, 2010, p.377). These final four practices indicate a propensity to follow with integrity one's side of the *contract*, so to speak, a connection with Baier's second condition.

While trust exists between two parties, primarily in a support/key work relationship between a staff member and client, significantly, it also sits in webs of past experiences of trust (both trusting and being trusted) with others, institutions, the 'other in ourselves' (Sevenhuijsen, 2003, p.186). Baier describes it as a '*network...*any person's attitude to another in a given trust relationship is constrained by all the other trust and distrust relationships in which she is involved' (1994, p.126). She refers to 'climates of trust' and reveals that her 'tests', which I make use of above, are not well designed for application to the entire network (ibid p.126). There are a number of questions arising from this insight in addition to the network of trust a client might experience. To begin with, so much of what Support Workers do is referral, so while establishing trust over time with a client, what occurs in the process of referring them on? Given that trust can be established by the worker entrusting the client, how does their own network of trust play out in their work to enable engagement? Furthermore, how do the policies and procedures of the *organisation* mitigate and enable the establishment of trust? If, as suggested by Baier, '... disrupting one single strand often rips apart whole webs' (ibid, p.149) what do we do to maintain the delicate webs of trust?

I would like to bring forth a suggestion Baier herself makes to reveal and secure the trusting relationship and work with the webs associated by communicating that '... in addition to whatever else is entrusted, **knowledge of each party's reasons for confident reliance on the other to continue the relationship could in principle also be entrusted**...' (Ibid, p 128

my emphasis). This could perhaps be achieved through reflective analysis between worker and client of their own networks/webs of trust and distrust, described well as 'Mentalization' in Fonagy and Bateman's edited book on the subject (2012). Sevenhuijsen, for example, argues for 'combinations of public and private forms of deliberation, reflection and responsibility' to advance 'cultures of trust' (2003, p.186). Baier warns that trust is fragile and might not withstand such inspection, but perhaps this depends on how such a reflective exercise is approached. I think this approach (i.e. *how* we deliver this intention to learn about each other) can be informed by the literature on care, particularly the notion of 'attention' which I outline later in this chapter.

Above, I have drawn out some qualities and practices that are recognised in the homelessness literature as enhancing the development of trust between Support Workers and people who need to engage in helping interventions in practice. To flesh out and nuance these observations, and to think about why and how they are important, I now turn to literature that is concerned particularly with care and caring relationships. The relationships between the young people and their Support Workers are caring relationships, and while much of the literature looked at below is interested in 'care' in a much broader sense, it provides insights that are pertinent to these particular relationships.

The intersections between care and trust are complex and numerous. Trusting provides an opportunity to care and be cared for, feeling cared for might be the thing that makes trusting a more reasonable risk; caring 'well' might be a reason to maintain trust and trust might mean we overlook inconsiderate, hurried, misplaced care. Here, I refer to care and

feminist care ethics scholars including Noddings (1986), Tronto (1993), Sevenhuijsen (1998; 2000; 2003) and Engster (2004) and to social theorist Simone Weil. These more philosophical approaches are grounded in a number of empirical studies by the anthropologist Stevenson (2014), and STS scholars Lavau and Bingham (2017), and Mol (2008). I highlight elements of their cross-disciplinary contributions and follow some threads that seem to me to be instructive in my attempt to understand what encourages and stops people from engaging with help.

2.3 What is care?

Care is a complex and contested term. For Joan Tronto, care indicates some kind of 'engagement', it differs from 'interest' and implies '...reaching out to something other than the self: it is neither self-referring nor self-absorbing' (1993, p.102). There is an implicit suggestion that it will lead to action (ibid, p.103). Significantly, Tronto does not see care as dyadic, as Noddings does, or focused on the relationship between two people. She understands care as both a disposition and a practice, resonating with the conceptualisation of trust above. She notes that activity associated with it is 'culturally defined' and 'ongoing', she suggests that '...we can recognise care when a practice is aimed at maintaining, continuing or repairing the world' (1986 ibid, p.103). This can help us think about trust also: care is practice that can help mend ruptures, build and maintain trust. Sevenhuijsen, like Tronto, sees care as 'relocated' beyond the classical associations; from women to men since the 1970s, from inside to outside the home, from the concern of governments to that of private enterprise (Sevenhuijsen, 2003). While remaining an activity, it is also imagined '...as a moral orientation—as an ethics or a set of values that can guide human agency in a variety

of social fields' (2000 p.6) including social policy (Young, 1997, p.75). For Noddings, care is an intense interaction that the 'one caring' does to the 'cared-for':

> 'Caring involves stepping out of one's own personal frame of reference into the other's. When we care, we consider the other's point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. Our reasons for acting, then, have to do both with the other's wants and desires and with the objective elements of his problematic situation (Noddings, 1986, p.24).

Thus, Noddings sees care as a personal relationship that doesn't consider the needs of the 'one caring' and is, controversially, something women are naturally inclined towards (Engster 2004, p.34).

Literature from Science and Technology Studies (STS) tell us more about the activity of care:

> 'care is figured as socio-technical tinkering that seeks to improve situations by providing local solutions to the problem of how different goods might coexist in practice... that is a 'tending of the tensions' between goods (Bingham & Lavau, p.21).

This tending and tinkering appeals to me; it handles the time and fluidity within a care intention and resists packaging care up into a pithy 'how to' guide. Stevenson, in her exploration of care within an Inuit community still in the shadows of the Canadian Government's response to the tuberculosis epidemic in the 1940s through to the early 1960s, explains that she '... conceives of care as the way someone comes to matter and the

corresponding ethics of attending to the other that matters' (p.3). It is interesting because it shifts our understanding of care away from

> '... good intentions, positive outcomes, or sentimental responses to suffering'
> (Stevenson 2017, p.3).

This 'allows us to nuance the discourse on care so that both the ambivalence of our desires and the messiness of our attempts to care can come into view' (Stevenson, 2017, p.3). Foregrounding the messiness and ambivalence in this way is helpful.

Fisher and Tronto (in Tronto, 1993) attempt to 'package' the complexities of 'care' in their four phases of care and values which cross the phases. **The first phase, *caring about*,** is the point at which we recognise a need for care. This might occur in close proximity when we see a change in the face of someone we know, slightly further away when we are approached on the street by someone needing money and looking rough, and still further away when we see images of people detained in camps in Turkey. Regardless, our attention is drawn to recognise a need. ***Taking care of* or 'caring for' is the second phase** and is about accepting responsibility to do something about the need and crucially determining what should be done to meet it. It is the recognition that action is possible and particular. ***Care giving* is the third phase** and is the practical response. Here the competency of the action is vital – the expertise of individual staff and services in meeting need, whether it is legal, welfare, employment, education, housing, mental health etc. **The final stage, *care receiving***, is focused on the interaction between care giver and receiver, a process of evaluation; that the care is working. Here, as through all the phases, 'attention' and 'responsiveness': a readiness and *ability* to change the nature of the action to address the

need (Tronto, 1993, p.160). Inspired by Sevenhuijsen, Tronto (2013) adds **a fifth phase 'caring with'**; a commitment to 'plurality, communication, trust, solidarity' building on the values of attentiveness and responsiveness to ignite the potential of the one cared-for as an equal partner in collective responsibility for the caring needs in society (p.35). Fisher and Tronto note that we go back and forwards through these phases; care resists a linear progression (Tronto, 1993). Cloke, May and Johnson (2010) cite Fisher and Tronto's framework and suggest that, for volunteers, paying attention to needs and feeling the responsibility to do something about them is commonplace but they question if they always have the competency and capacity to respond (p.159). In a recent publication for the Care Collective, Rottenberg and Segal (2020) argue that while Fisher and Tronto's distinction between the phases of care is useful, it fails to register the 'conflicting emotions' and complexity present in caring relationships. They argue that the 'intense attachment and stifled resentment' in mothering, how care is often mixed up with feelings and expressions of guilt or shame over whether the care is good or even adequate and the challenge of confronting frailty in an another must be acknowledged in order to establish conditions that will promote care. Like Stevenson, Rottenberg and Segal call for a foregrounding the complexity of caring relationships.

2.4 Why we care?

Here I am asking, what motivates us to care, is it a purely altruistic act sitting opposite to the Hobbesian notion of our totally self-interested core where acts of care can be seen as avoidance of a life which is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (cited in Page, 1996, p.4)? Or is it more complex than a point across a flat continuum between the two, something that flutters across and deepens to contain contradictory motivations, moment

by moment. How do we deal with this possibility if, as Le Grand maintains, motivation ('the internal desires or preferences that incite action') and agency ('the capacity to undertake that action') are key to the way public policies are constructed and implemented (2003, p.2)? Le Grand argues that different dispositions and orientations are inevitable and should be accounted for by policy makers. Here I consider what draws individuals towards working in homelessness and how the motivations of faith, empathy, and financial survival might play out.

2.4.1 Faith

As homelessness services have professionalised, the stake faith-based organisations have in the provision of care has reduced but they remain significantly involved, especially in low-access threshold services such as soup runs, day centres and night shelters. These are sometimes seen as enabling and perpetuating homelessness and as a site of resistance against the professionalisation of services. While an evangelical spirit of purposeful conversion exists, it is rare (Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.59). But where this *is* the case the spiritual needs of individuals are prioritised over physical or emotional needs. In this case faith becomes the 'technology of attention' (Lavau and Bingham, 2017), it prescribes both the justification for help and the means for salvation, narrowing down the scope for apprehending the uniqueness individuals present with.

However, as discovered by Cloke, Johnson and May (2010), the distinction between secular and faith-based organisations is not as neat as, for example, can be seen in Romand Coles' (1997) 'ideal types of ethos in charitable organisations' namely: Christian "caritas", secular humanism and post-secular charity' (Cloke, Johnson and May, 2007). They find that staff

bring their own personal values to the work through which are filtered institutional ethics. Individuals motivated by faith can be found across secular as well as faith-based organisation and that motivation is evident in the way they talk about the work, and in practices and performances. They find that the distinction between services, the 'principle fault-line', is not whether they are faith-based or secular, but the expectations they have of service users (2010, p.59). On one side are organisations (both secular and faith-based) that desire or expect particular behaviour change (either religious conversion or increased self-responsibility), and where there exists an ethos of care given dependent on changes in attitude and lifestyle. On the other side are organisations (both secular and faith-based) that do not have expectations – care is provided regardless and there are no underlying conditions. They describe these organisations as 'emergent spaces of *postsecular* care' (Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.60), in which *any* expectation of change in return for help is seen as troubling.

2.4.2 Empathy and desire to 'give back'

As a reason for caring, empathy, 'giving back' is something especially relevant to clients becoming workers, but it is a motivating force for many in helping work (Cloke et al 2007). It is worth reiterating here that the complex balance of using one's affective and cognitive experience to assist in the engagement process is not simple or danger free, even in the case of trained therapists as Reder and Fredman in their 1996 exploration of the relationship between therapists and clients discover. They find that each party brings beliefs about the helping process which influence the interactions. Helpfully they describe the well-used concept of the 'wounded' healer as one '...who believes implicitly that people need warmth, understanding and love and should be helped to overcome earlier mistreatment

(as the therapist was once helped)' and additionally the 'missionary' healer who '...intends to pass on to others the ideal healing that they consider they received in their own family' (Reder and Fredman, 1996, p.462). Reder and Fredman argue that these very personal beliefs about help which enter into the relationship are a) unavoidable and b) might just be a good match for an individual, and that fundamentally, before embarking on a therapeutic (see helping) relationship a number of questions should be posed about past experiences of receiving help in order to configure who and what might help in the present. This conclusion mirrors mine above pertaining to trust and suggests that the mess in relations of help cannot be tidied or avoided but processes of 'deliberation, reflection and responsibility' can both advance the establishment of trust and shape excellent care (Sevenhuijsen, 2003, p.186). It also suggests that empathy on its own can potentially be dangerous (see below).

2.4.3 It is the work we can get

In the UK, 95 % of 'hands on' care workers are women (Hayes, 2017). Caring work tends to be a poorly paid, hence not a sought after or widely respected career. This is evidenced by the National Audit Office where their assessment of the adult social care workforce finds that caring and helping work and the individuals undertaking it are undervalued and poorly rewarded (2018, p. 47). Skeggs in her response to navigating care for her elderly and disabled mother notes the appalling working conditions of agency provided carers (zero hours contracts, no travel time, nearly half of what the client pays goes directly to the agency) and registers 'sheer resentment' which she describes as 'affectively contagious.' (Skeggs, 2019)). This care work, including within the homelessness sector, is associated with staff burnout, low wages and precarious conditions. Schrecker and Bambra (2015) suggest this has intensified under the state adoption of neoliberal policies promoting the

marketisation of services and competitive funding structures. The complex act of caring

seems to be left to people who are not very well cared for. Without the sorts of conditions

or respect that might motivate individuals to take up frontline work in homelessness, the

sector relies heavily on individual's more intrinsic motivations, whether they be empathy,

the desire to give back, or faith. But because of the precarious, low wage context, there is

little space to deliberate and reflect on what effect intrinsic motivations or 'ordinary ethics'

have on the way that care is practiced.

2.5 How care goes wrong

The insights pertaining to care and trust above are important because as Joks and Law

caution, '...what looks like [and indeed counts as] care from one point of view may look like

and be domination from another' (2017, p152). People engaged in care, including Support

Workers in the homelessness sector, must walk the 'fine line between care and oppression'

(Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010 (p.58-9). Literature on colonial 'care' (Povinelli 2015,

Stevenson 2014), including institutionalisation, deinstitutionalisation and 'care in the

community' (Dodds 2013) detail the slide that can happen between care and coercion.

Other examples include documenting of abuse and financial scandal in contemporary

international 'development'[18] (Charity Commission, 2019) and neuroscience informed

parenting 'care' (Gillies, Edwards & Horsley, 2016). There are a number of threads running

through these historical and contemporary examples of care gone wrong. The cause is often

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[18] For example, the recent revelations of sexual misconduct by Oxfam staff in Haiti (Charity Commission, 2019)

skewed motivations for help, misrecognition of the complexity of individuals' whole selves, and misconstrued conceptualisations of 'good'. Consumerist principles trip us into these wrongs and intensify the damage they do.

Povinelli (2015) succinctly and chillingly describes the injuries caused to Australia's Indigenous people as the government between 1910 and the late 1960s forcefully removed children whose skin was lighter. The children were interned, many physically, sexually, and psychologically abused, then placed into servitude with white families in an attempt to hasten assimilation into white European Australian ways. All along the government claimed they were acting for the good of indigenous people and the country. Povinelli cites a report highlighting the horrors that the actions were motivated by white Australia's 'embarrassment' about the indigenous race (ibid p.4) and their determination that even a little bit of white in an indigenous child gave them the right and duty to train, shame and work the 'embarrassing' and inferior black out of them.

Stevenson following the trails of colonial 'good' perpetuated in Canada shows how the trembling breath of colonial care gone wrong can, over half a century later, be reproduced. She says of anonymous care, 'by turning people who are suffering into 'clients' who become objects of suicide risk management tools, the counsellor no longer has to cope with existential anxiety...' (2014, p.86). This makes pronounced the effects of interventions applied to 'populations', turning care into domination, what Weil describes as force, 'that x that turns anybody who is subjected into a thing' (War and the Iliad, 2005, p.3) using coercion to *help* an individual already struggling must be questioned, vigorously.

Noddings (1986), similarly warns against shifting attention from the cared-for to 'the problem' (p. 25) arguing that this transforms the 'essentially nonrational' act of caring 'into abstract problem solving' (ibid.). 'Those entrusted with the caring may focus on satisfying the formulated requirements for care taking and fail to be present in their interactions with the cared-for' (1984, p.26). The person becomes a form of 'disturbance'; the problem, the embarrassment becomes the focus of the care dangerously overlooking the care of the unique differences in each whole individual (ibid, p. 7). It is both Stevenson and Nodding's concern that the client becomes reconfigured as the 'problem'; for example, the person becomes a suicide risk and suicide risk tools are administered. The whole messy 'plenitude' of the individual is overlooked but the existential anxiety experienced by workers is mollified.

Dodds (2013) describes the deinstitutionalisation of mental health services in Australia, recognisable in the UK as Care in the Community. The motivation in both nations was twofold; to save money and to end the documented abuse and institutionalisation of people experiencing poor mental health. However, as Dodds points out, these individuals were 'released' into an environment of inadequate and fragmented social and health care services which has resulted in people being isolated, self-medicating with illicit drugs and falling victim to a criminal justice system which is poorly resourced to handle the large number of people with mental ill health. She describes this as an example of 'pathogenic vulnerability'; ostensibly vulnerability that has been wrought by poorly supported or unrealistic policy (ibid p.24). In the midst of the structure and agency debate in Chapter One I referred to a period where research about people experiencing homelessness began recording high levels of needs. Furthermore, it was apparent that some needs and issues

began while experiencing homelessness. Criminalisation, for example, as survival required

theft and that people sleeping rough and using substances are a target for police; the

development of physical health needs as a result of being homelessness and arguably

'wrought by poorly supported and unrealistic policy' is well named by a St Mungo's

publication *Homelessness Makes You Sick* (2008). It is always possible to make things worse.

It is likely that if an individual attempts to engage and the experience goes badly, attempting

to engage again will be affected by the other experiences.

The increasing marketisation of 'caring sectors', including the homelessness sector, as a

result of the adoption of neoliberal policies, complicates things further. Sevenhuijsen citing

Knijn (1999) suggests that while the uptake of market principles may lead to an increase in

'productivity' it is at the expense of the quality and quantity of care (2003, p.183; see also

Lowe and Wilson, 2017). Cloke, May and Johnson (2010) register an increase of 'market

principles' in the homelessness sector in Britain including 'performance indicators' used to

demonstrate success and top-down management of admissions to services. According to

research undertaken by these authors some organisations feel that as a result, they

> 'have lost the flexibility that is necessary to respond to the varying needs of different
>
> service users, and the continuity and care that was once a hallmark of their
>
> approach' (p.243).

Skeggs argues that care can become the site of resistance to marketisation; 'caring offers us

a different way of being in the world, relating to others as if they matter, with attentiveness

and compassion, beyond exchange' (2014, p.13). Cloke, May and Johnson (2010) arrive at

similar conclusions. As discussed above they argue that organisations (both secular and faith-based, in receipt of government funding and not) can be 'emergent spaces of *postsecular* care' (Cloke, May and Johnson, 2010, p.60). Providing they resist the governmental drive to shape the 'conduct of the conduct'[19] of clients they can be sites of resistance in the revanchist machinery operating in a neoliberal environment because they are a cog in that very machinery, though they are ones that are 'engineered' and 'operated' or implemented by people who care (2010, p.11).

2.5 Promoting trust and facilitating engagement

In this chapter I pick up on key themes and elements that emerge from the interdisciplinary care literature I have reviewed, that are thought to be crucial to the development of trusting relationships of care and facilitating engagement with help – that help us better articulate 'the complex and dynamic interweaving of the 'you' and 'I' in caring relationships and how this impacts on the value of the 'public encounter' (Bartels, 2013). These include reciprocity and empathy, which I address by developing the previous discussion regarding love and the need for a personalised approach to care where flexibility and the possibility of choice appear essential. Here, I question if flexibility is always possible and if choice is always good.

Finally, in this section I review literature on the notion of 'attention', a notion developed in the care literature, which I think is particularly useful for both scholarship and practice in the homelessness sector.

2.3.2 Reciprocity and empathy

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[19] The authors cite Raco (2005) but 'conduct of conduct' clearly a Foucauldian phrase used to describe Governmentality and its effect of narrowing in on controlling the conduct of populations

Empathy, recognition, solidarity and even compassion lead us towards specifically considering how it is possible to situate the self in caring relationship with another. Bartel (2013) argues that the studies that approach the subject of 'public encounter' do so with an 'individualist ontology' (imagining people as separate beings who have fixed social positions) rather than a '*relational* ontology' which better captures the complex reality of the relationship. He cites Follett (1924) to describe the 'ongoing dynamic' of interaction as: 'I' become 'I-plus-you', 'you' become 'you-plus-I', I become 'I-plus-you-plus-I', 'you' become 'you-plus-I-plus-you-plus I' (p. 476) and so on. He emphasises that it is the 'thou' rather than an 'I' and 'you', or them and us, that he finds interesting and potentially valuable in the public encounter.

How much, how strong, how dominant the 'I' and 'you' are in the 'thou' relationship is contentious. Benhabib (1992) argues for symmetrical reciprocity (cited in Young, 1994) as does Frank (1991) who compares care with understanding, arguing that it must be symmetrical. Others are more wary about the complexity of power play. Young makes a useful contribution here with her theory of 'asymmetrical reciprocity' as an alternative to Benhabib's view. She addresses the issues of inequality within the relationship, the fallacy of 'completely seeing the world through someone else's eyes' as well as making a claim for a 'willingness to be open' to difference, aspiring towards 'more or less extensive forms of "mutual understandings" (cited in Sevenhuijsen, 2003, p.186) as distinct from *identification*. However, if aware of this impossibility, our inability to transcend our own experience, and able to be upfront about it, it is possible to 'interpret', as Young says '... because I am open and suspend my assumptions in order to listen' (1997, p.53), which resonates with the previous discussion on engrossment. She argues that as we 'cannot take the other person's

standpoint and imagine that perspective as our own... there is always a remainder... a great deal I do not understand' (ibid).

Empathy, on the other hand, draws out the potential of knowing the other from some sameness and being driven to help/care because of this. It is common that individuals working and volunteering in homelessness services come to the work motivated by 'identifying with the needs of others' (Cloke, Johnson and May, 2007, p.1090). As discussed in Chapter One the homelessness industry has embraced the value of empathy, associated with involving, coproducing and employing people with experience of homelessness. Support work and/or care work has become a common move on option for people who have experienced homelessness and use of other helping services. This phenomenon builds on the desire of people who have had good care to 'give something back', the possibility that someone who has experienced a similar need might be better able to develop trust with others in need, and the reality that people who have been homeless for a long period or used mental health or drug and alcohol services, know quite a bit about that work. Employing people with direct experience of the needs of those accessing the service can additionally increase hope of the one in need. 'Here I am in this terrible situation, but you once were also' creates hope that things can get much better. It is certain that however remote worker's experiences might be from the individuals cared for, workers draw on it to establish some sort of level playing field- a symmetry, or a way to ascertain and empathise with their client.

This is not the beginning and the end of empathy. The Psychologist Carl Rodgers, who developed the 'person-centred' approach to psychotherapy, defines empathy as:

'To perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition.' (1975, p.2 in Cuff et al., 2014, p.147)

The emphasis here on the 'as if' brings us usefully back to the conceptualisations of love and the danger of seeing the other *as* the self, as in eros driven love and Young's point above that there will always be a great deal not understood. Cuff et al., (2014) conduct a review of the concept of empathy and conclude that it is both an affective and cognitive process. Empathy in this way calls upon the one caring to both affectively and cognitively leave themselves out and bring themselves in to their relating with the other; understanding both the opportunity to recognise the other better and impossibility of recognising the other entirely. On the face of it, empathy might appear as a simple combination of sympathy and role-modelling. It is indeed at times viewed in that way in the homelessness sector, which may explain the very basic training and experience required for the bulk of frontline posts in the homelessness sector. I would argue that the work is difficult and skilled, and that mobilising empathy can be useful in the development of trust.

2.3.3 Flexibility and choice

In consideration of the value attributed to *recognising* the uniqueness in individuals, and the impossibility of knowing it entirely, the way in which care is delivered needs to be flexible and responsive. Under the phase 'caring for' Tronto talks about a 'flexible notion of responsibility' that leaves room for 'cultural nuance' in order to decide what is to be done (p.133). Stevenson suggests that as caring becomes an 'operationalizable concept-

something that can be measured and evaluated, fed through a system of best practices and evidence-based science – simultaneously becomes invested in **a certain way of being in time**' (emphasis added p. 134), undermining a flexible and responsive approach. Noddings (2002) argues for flexibility as well, for example, 'social workers should be able to tinker, within limits, with amounts, deadlines, eligibility requirements, and the like' (cited in Engster, 2004 p. 119).

In practice this flexibility in responsibility leaves open space for client-centred work, specifically involvement and participation which, as discussed in Chapter One, involves rights, choice and empowerment. Engster following Tronto suggests participation '...is absolutely necessary not only for ensuring that the particular needs of diverse individuals are met, but also for preserving caring practices in the delivery of goods' (2004, p.132). Mol, ethnographer and philosopher concerned with the body, problematizes the notion of 'patient choice' in her 2008 monograph 'The Logic of Care'. She highlights a frequently overlooked consequences of choice; the shifting of risk and blame on to the individual making the 'choice'. In the introduction to this monograph she recalls getting a prenatal test for Downs syndrome - the injection can cause abortion – she says, 'I hope it's ok' the nurse says, 'well, it's your own choice' (2008, p. xii). Mol refers to patients being called 'customers', turning their relationship with care into consumerism.[20]

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[20] This recalls for me when the homelessness sector took a similar turn, a colleague brought this up in a workshop with people experiencing homelessness and one participant balked saying, 'the day I can go to a shop and select the home and the service I want I will become a customer'.

Mol (2008) suggests that patient/customer/client choice promises more than it can deliver and merely leaves the most vulnerable and in need feeling like it is their own personal fault when things don't work out as perfectly.

Moreover, a client/patient might choose a course of action and then find it difficult to follow through. Mol does not presume that this must be because they have changed their mind or do not want the ends the action was supposed to achieve- but explores, without instilling guilt, what happened and how it could be different.

2.3.1 The 'art' of attention (Stengers 2015)

Attention is at the same time a very simple-seeming and very complicated idea. The notion of attention as discussed in the care literature goes beyond the colloquialness of 'paying attention' or being 'attentive'. There is the idea of 'attention' as a quality of being open and blank; ready to receive and not judge the whole complexity of another. The flavour of what I experience as 'attention' when considering the data from this thesis is best described by Lisa Stevenson who takes the creative form of song to communicate what happens when we engage around help and need. Song captures both the complexity and familiarity we feel about the idea of attention. The 'withness' without knowing 'the truth' (2014, p.156), ears and eyes peeled, mutual consent 'void of violence or force' (2014, p.157) seen and given space to be as whole a self as one can muster. But unlike the idea of being blank – one is inhabited by the illusive 'something' we credit for art. Attention, is undeniably foundational in all Buddhist traditions and behind meditation and mindfulness – attention delivers us. It is a *way* of approaching a job and it's a creative way of approaching a job. Human, somatic, individual, powerful.

Attention is the base line in the literature on care. Care is not inherently good, and forms of inattentiveness are seen as the behaviours that lead to misrecognition and care gone wrong. Starting with Tronto's conceptualisation of attention which draws on Weil I will develop it further with particular regard to the work of Noddings for whom the quality of attention is described as 'engrossment', and to Lisa Stevenson who associates attention with becoming. Finally, a brief diversion into an article by Lavau and Bingham where attention is understood to shape care both the means *and* the ends to a caring intervention.

Tronto (1993) first describes 'inattentiveness' as moral failing. The problem of inattentiveness, says Tronto, goes back to the emergence of instrumental rationality foregrounding the spread of capitalism (Tronto, 1993) ignoring the moral value of means and prioritising ends above all else. In the literature there is a notion of attention being exercised by an individual emptied out of self, totally open to embrace the differentiation of the individual. Weil extols 'a suspension of thought... seeking nothing, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object that is about to penetrate it' (Tronto, 1993, p.128). The notion of attention as only possible by an individual who is somehow blank themselves and are entirely there for the other is mirrored in Nodding's conceptualisation of the state required for what she calls this particular quality of attention, 'engrossment', as 'present' and 'disposable' (1984, p.19).

Stevenson (2014) also pushes forward attention as the counter action to what she calls 'anonymous care' and talks about 'the way a particular kind of attention, figured by song, can make the space for the existence of another' (ibid, p.157). Linking this with the notion of 'interpellation' as used by Butler and Althusser, but illustrates 'song' as becoming, which is void of violence or force, where one is at once seen and 'called into being' (p.157)

intentionally more reciprocal than interpellation. Anonymous care as a concept emerges from her ethnographic fieldwork, on current suicide prevention programmes with the Inuit in Nunavut, Canada juxtaposed with an archival review of the Canada's response to the tuberculosis epidemic. She spent time collecting stories, witnessing the traces of people who went away in ships for treatment, and the programs now in place to deal with the contemporary crisis of suicide. She talks about anonymous care as something directed towards populations not people, a myopic blundering action aspiring to keep people alive. Flanking and rising through the emergence of her conceptualisation of anonymous care are the things that she alternatively encounters as 'connecting', 'soothing', 'supporting'. She talks about 'withness' and experienced forms of recognition '... that did not depend on knowing the 'truth' about – or fixing the identity of – another person...' as song (p156- 157). Here attention becomes a thing we do together, lyrically, lively.

Lavau and Bingham's 2017 article on practices of attention and the possibility of care usefully, practically and theoretically resists the conflation of care and attention and draws attention out, as a central player. They argue that attention operates in a more fundamental way offering 'the conditions of possibility for care' and as 'significantly shaping' care (2017, p.21). Following many other social science scholars, they find that attention is much more than 'focused mental engagement' (ibid p. 23) and is actually something that exercises the mind and body then outwards and across: 'from individuals to cultures, from commodity to economies, from perception to politics' (ibid). Citing Stengers (2015, p. 62) they describe the 'art of paying attention' as something that creates an obligation to imagine, to check, to envisage, consequences that bring into play connections between what we are in the habit

of keeping separate (ibid p. 25-6). More than collecting, storing and reproducing knowledge, they identify how attention is pedagogical.

To disentangle attention from care they explore it across three dimensions: ecological, economical, and educational. Ecologically, the care potential is released through a food inspector thinking, feeling, hesitating and acting (p 26). The authors describe what she does as not 'performing a food safety "health check'' 'but patching together a composite picture from the variety of knowledges she has generated' (p.25). Economically, a trading standards officer's competency and capacity to care is limited by new measures to manage significant cuts to the provision. The new measures are apparent in forms that guide his attention and shape the care the officer is able to deliver. 'The form is a material technology of attention' (Lavau and Bingham, 2017, p.27). Educationally, the authors focus on the dual role of enforcement and education, and observe the inspector *demonstrates* paying attention, tutoring the other on how to pay attention themselves. They note that care

> '... can take the form of improving the competence of others to improve those
>
> situations for themselves, in particular by helping them pay attention' (p.30).

Attention as the means and the ends and as pedagogy. It becomes something they observe as chiming with Heidegger's distinction between care as 'leaping in' and care as 'leaping ahead' (p.32). While 'leaping in' denotes that the one caring is taking charge or taking over, 'leaping ahead' encourages growth and autonomy; care that has an eye to the future and is concerned that the care given does more than soothe the immediate pain but seeks to develop capacity in the other to be attentive to themselves. There is an issue pertaining to trust the authors do not develop. They note the dual role of educator and enforcer, similar

to what I describe above in Support Workers role of support and enforcement which makes

building trust difficult. To be able to fathom how and to what to pay attention to in this

problematic and common duality needs to be negotiated so that some territory of trust can

be agreed on. The one caring needs to be able to draw out why the individual in need might

not be paying attention and what is getting in the way of them taking care of themselves

(Mol, 2008, p, 42). I wonder if an exchange without trust can enable this 'leaping ahead' in

the form of learning to pay attention to your areas of concern, care for yourself. I would say

that it is certainly less likely in a great deal of 'helping' work where there is this tension

between support and enforcement, and it is difficult to build trust with an individual who

might also be responsible for regulating behaviour and reporting 'offences'.

I want to come back to this Stengers' quote because her notion of the 'art of paying

attention' (as opposed to the 'capacity') (Stengers, 2015, p.62) as 'something that creates an

obligation to imagine, to check, to envisage, consequences that bring into play connections

between what we are in the habit of keeping separate' (Lavau and Bingham, 2017, p. 26). It

feels like an instruction to how to 'think, feel, hesitate and act'. I want to suggest that in the

bringing things together that we are in the habit of keeping separate and this resonates with

Stevenson's conceptualisation of song above, that attending is something we can all do to

support others endless becoming as they meet change in their lives. That it helps to

establish a 'potential space' where people can reflect and imagine – it should look and feel

like 'liveness' (Philips, 1988 on Winnicott). Is it not obvious that we need to pay attention to

care well? I guess on the surface it is, but there is a lack of emphasis on how important it is

and the emotional complexity of the task, as Rottenberg and Segal 2020 explain above, and

how easily it is disturbed. This is especially the case in helping work that is liable to occur in chaotic and pressured environments. As explained by Cloke, May and Johnson (2020),

'the threat of physical violence is draining [but] it is the emotional pressure of working in such environments that can lead to staff to shut themselves off from those they are supposed to be supporting' (p.172).

The next question is attention to what? Well, to begin with the complex whole of the person as it unravels, which can't be easy if one feels threatened, pressured, possibly conflicted and if the person before you is possibly painfully frail. It would be easier to stick with the form that forces attention on to bits of a person. In fact, it is much easier to know what not to waste attention on, as it is distracted and consumed by a whole series of activities that are less exhausting but not about attention towards the one in need. For example, the heavy administration of multiple funding streams, maintaining rules, the management of admission criteria, pathways that an individual must fit into, and one's own need to be seen and loved. This reflection on attention also brings me to clarify the difference between recognition and attention. For me attention is an active process; thinking, feeling, hesitating, imagining, checking, envisaging and acting are ongoing whereas recognition implies a destination as opposed to an end (discussed further in Chapter Four).

2.6 Discussion

In this chapter I have set out the problem which lack of engagement in helping interventions presents to the homelessness sector, particularly when it comes to young people

experiencing multiple disadvantage. I then discussed literature concerned with trust and the fundamental part it plays in, 'public encounters' in the helping relationships that facilitate engagement in interventions. I then, drawing on literature from different disciplines concerned with caring relationships, outlined what seem to be key elements of developing trust and therefore engaging with help. These include reciprocity, empathy, flexibility and choice. I noted the benefits and possible dangers of these elements as set out in the care literature reviewed.

The literature emphasises the messy, complex reality which young people and Support Workers navigate, the 'muddiness', 'inscrutability' (Hall, 2003), 'conflicting emotions' (Rottenberg & Segal, 2020) and 'ambivalence and messiness' (Stevenson, 2014). We need to find ways of facing, articulating and thinking about this reality. I started this thesis feeling like there is something that feels impossible to pin down which one is trying to get to when explaining the quality of an interaction – and perhaps acknowledging the contradictions, the multiple truths, will help us see the creativity and work required by a constellation of people and things to enable the possible heights and depths of engagement. To an extent, the qualities and practices that people attempt to 'package up' the problems with, and help to enable engagement, allude to a capacity to cope with the messy reality but don't always manage to spell that out. When they do, they often lose the us-ness of the problem.

Another important idea in this chapter is that of recognition of the whole unique and imperfect individual and a warning against focusing too much on the problem or the issue. The concept of attention, drawn from the care literature, offers a way to start thinking and talking about that complex reality and an approach that encourages us to see the whole unique and contradictory individual.

What *can* be done to address the policies, practices and behaviours in homelessness that thwart the development of trust, the experience of care and engagement with help?

The literature reviewed in this chapter supports the view that trust is foundational for engagement and that there are some stand-out practices and personal qualities that really serve to foster trust, including responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity, flexibility and choice; but also clear from the literature is that these elements are not always appropriate and not always helpful. It is the fourth element, that I am calling caring attention or attentiveness, which shapes practices and qualities to the individual and the context. More than mental focus, caring attention requires 'withness' that is 'not dependent on knowing the truth' (Stevenson 2003, p.156-7). Focusing on the problem over the person instead requires a suspension of judgement (Young, 1997) in order to see the whole person; rather than pathologising need or perpetuating it towards dependency (Seal, 2005, p.46). A practice and quality, it is a *way* of being in the world; a form or 'art' (Stengers, 2015) rather than a 'capacity' (p.62). Attention shapes care (Lavau and Bingham, 2017, p.21), seeing that there is a problem, 'caring about', determining what should be done about it, 'caring for', taking action, 'care giving', checking if it worked, 'care receiving' and reflecting with the other so that the experience is pedagogical and political. How especially difficult it is (Rotenberg and Segal, 2020). What did I do just there, what did you do just there, how did it feel, what are we going to do next? Allowing things to come together that you would usually separate — non-judgemental — hope that things can be different and better. Believing in an individual's abilities to 'adjust' (using Biestek's terminology) (Seal, 2005, p.46). Believing in an individual is one thing but, for this to inspire hope, seeing and recognising

them as whole (ambivalent) and complex selves needs to come first. There is a significant difference between saying 'I believe in you' with only a very basic understanding of that person and 'knowing you, I believe in you'.

Accepting that offers of help can look like care and feel like domination it also seems essential to create space for deliberation and reflection. Application and facilitation of the four elements help to repair and strengthen the webs of trust (foundational for engagement) and can teach self-care; but this is complex work, which is not reflected in the social value associated with the work of caring and frontline staff, especially, need a space to honestly explore their attempts and the affects.

Finally, competition, marketisation and outcomes-based performance management *appear* to clear up the messy discretion of humans. But, in helping relationships, by pursuing a contracting relationship between the state and providers, providers and staff, staff and clients, it is thwarted by a lack of specificity in how to get to that place (motivation) for an agreed good, and an inherent power imbalance between the one in need and those in a position to help. Furthermore, it undermines care as the value of means is trumped by ends; irrespective of a helping individual's competence, as in the trading standards officer in Lavau and Bingham (2017), it has no value. It makes us look away from care. As Lipsky (2010) argues 'care and responsibility' become 'conditional', he registers the change in the use of the word 'care' from a verb to a noun, levels and amounts of care are discussed 'but rarely who will care and how they will express their care' (Lipsky, 2010, p.71-2).

We are burdened by personal, national and global failures to care and help. I maintain that this is in part because of how care has been configured within capitalism (Care Collective,

2021), the individualising effects of neoliberal capitalism's emphasis on self-reliance (hence blame and shame) and ever-present responsibilisation in social policy. I consider, like Skeggs and Audre Lorde here that care can be seen as resistance 'caring for myself is not a form of self indulgence, it is self preservation, and that is an act of political warfare' (Lorde, 2017, p.130). But what is being resisted and why? Is the promotion of care a political fight? In the following chapter I look further at why and how our attempts to do good are thwarted.

CHAPTER THREE. EMBRACING THE PARADOXES OF HELP

Having mapped the landscape of the homelessness industry and explored the literature on engagement, trust and care, I now turn to some core questions that this thesis tackles. Why does a relatively small group of people get stuck in the revolving door? What forces the hand of help and why does it become oppressive? We know pretty well the elements that underpin trust and forge engagement. There is also much good will and support to engage people with multiple disadvantage in strategies to help them become independent and empowered. Yet still there are barriers, especially for this group, to getting value from the many helping encounters they experience. This chapter is an exploration of the psychological, social and service issues that make engaging with help and mobilising attention towards those in most need difficult, in particular drawing out the paradoxes evident in personal development, the stigmatisation of need and the delivery of public services.

Hoggett (2000) argues that 'we cannot understand powerlessness without some sense of how domination gets internalised and becomes a part of our emotional makeup' (p.208). This chapter is my attempt at reckoning with this question. How does power 'in here' and 'out there' get in the way of systematising practices that could (more universally) foster engagement with help and how people come 'to collude with' it (Tyler, 2013, p.10)?

I suspect that the conflicting drivers of homelessness work and stigmatising ideas about who 'the homeless' are, as discussed in Chapter 1 are not made benign because people running this particular cog in a revanchist machine are kind. I suggest that the four elements identified in the previous chapter, which underpin trust and enable engagement, are made

much more difficult as individual workers try to manage the contradictions in the work i.e. seeking to support empowerment and independence when the approaches used to achieve this indicate that homeless people are unable to know what is best for them and need to be corrected.

Willis' (1978) landmark ethnographic study into the experience of 12 working-class kids in their final years of school and 6 months into their working lives begins with questions that similarly suggest that unequal treatment and availability of opportunities are somehow *permitted*, asking:

> Why middle class kids get working class jobs and why others let them? Why working class kids get working class jobs and why they let themselves? (p.1)

This resonates with my original impetus for returning to study and conducting this research: to understand what I experienced as 'some unarticulated force that perpetually, perniciously stopped help from happening'. Like Willis, I am interested in a dynamic that seems to force a result despite a clear expectation to avoid it. Willis' argues that the school or teachers in his study are 'in no sense machiavellian' but unwittingly responsive to the underlying 'axis of moral authority' and thinking and behaviour that perpetuate the ongoing social reproduction of class (p.69). This dynamic is made visible, to some extent, through talk of and acts of compliance and non-compliance. Willis achieved this through linking the young people's experience to structural and systems-level issues by exploring their encounters within the school and working environment, observing the 'grey and confusing daily pattern of institutional life' (Willis, 1978, p.85), in addition to their home and social lives.

Winnicott (1896-1971), on a similar mission but with different tools, also finds compliance to be central to how people become. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Winnicott is keen to understand how the social and structural intervene in an individual's becoming and sees 'being' not as a solitary state but as a fundamentally social one, 'it is equivalent to the development of a sense of a benign and reliable human environment which is not just out there, but which is also inside oneself' (Hoggett, 2000, p.6).

It is not that the homelessness literature is not concern regarding the way structure and agency relate to produce homelessness as discussed in section 1.3 but the 'what is the cause' or 'who/what is to blame' questions derail reflection on the fundamental ambivalence in homelessness work including: the aspiration to repair trust *and* move people on; the promotion of independence *and* the fact of human fragility; the concern for boundaries to keep the work safe *and* knowing that going above and beyond them is evidence of solidarity which can establish the trust required to do the terrifying work of growth and change. What stops us from being able to hold multiple and sometimes contradictory truths, how are they managed and what do they do to the encounter?

In facing the deep and seemingly irreconcilability of the hard-fought for but paradoxical objectives of our aspirations there is personal, social, political and practical discomfort in the realisation that there is no winning or working it out. The rules of the game crumble – the reliability of our environment is compromised. In order to avoid that discomfort and anxiety the tendency is to collapse into a position, foreclosing the debate by shifting the focus; by ascribing shame and/or blame; in choosing good/bad, right/wrong,

insider/outsider positions. While these actions enable momentary displacement of discomfort (Jones, 2013) they also disable our faculty to trust, thwart our ability to recognise the other and absorb out attention in the tending of them. It is not about *solving* the paradoxes because it is not possible; but to find a new relation to them.

While desperate to escape the uncomfortable anxiety, it is exactly here – in embracing the ambivalence (good and bad, right and wrong, insider and outsider) that we can begin to understand what is going on - we can access what Winnicott called 'real' (Phillips, 1988, p.110). The young people in this study talk about a fight inside themselves between 'good' and 'bad' parts, they talk about the desire for what compliance promises, and frustration when it doesn't deliver. As they go spaces back in the (housing, training, access to therapy) queue they differentiate themselves — they kick off — and become the worst of their selves and, very often, kick themselves for it.

In this chapter I draw on literature from psychology, sociology, philosophy and finally public management help me to think about power 'in here' and 'out there'. My reading suggests that the avoidance of uncomfortable paradoxes and resort to blame, shame and compliance are windows through which to view the mechanics of 'inequality' (Tyler, 2020) and 'revanchism' (Cloke et al., 2010) that uses 'stigma power' to make most of us abject, just unevenly.

The first section of this chapter explains Object Relations, Kline's theory of development, and how it, at least, provides a language to describe and get behind what goes on inside the encounter relationally. The following section addresses stigma, a mark or wound, as well as

a technology of governance used politically to justify inequality. Misrecognition, like stigmatisation, can be a form of oppression, shackling an individual or a group to a distorted mode of being. The next section looks at the concept of recognition in relation to significant others and in the public sphere. I explore whether it is possible to recognise the complexity of selves and communities or if attempts at recognition always leave something out, and if this is the case is it still worth the work?

The final section illustrates how paradoxes manifest in frontline helping work and the work it takes to 'game' them and reason them away. Most of the authors here speak to the experience of Lipskey style Street Level Bureaucrats (SLB), and although there are some significant differences between them and SWs in the homelessness sector, the work and tensions in it are much the same. Homelessness workers have a great deal of discretion which should helpfully enable some flexibility to respond to the individual, the bit that hurts in the context of their biography. This is a positive thing but there is too little help and there are more or less experienced workers who have more or less self-awareness regarding (for example) how they bring themselves into the work regarding empathy and judgement. Unlike social workers, teachers and police, the role is often undefined, they enjoy fewer protections and poorer remuneration, I wonder if the pressures elaborated on so far are doubly manifested in their case and if there is a way through, nonetheless.

3.1 Paradox in becoming

Paradox 1. Loss is at the heart of becoming (Hunter, 2015, p.6)

Through the paradox above I want to draw attention to the possibility that experiences we want to avoid – loss, for example, as well as anxiety and guilt cannot just be faced but, in a reliable environment, can be put to good use in developing greater awareness and acceptance of ourselves and others.

Thinking about how power 'out there' gets 'in here' recalls for me Augusto Boal's 1995 book on theatre therapy, originally called 'cop in the head' and elaborated in the 1995 book Rainbow of Desire. Boal, a Brazilian theatre maker and political activist influenced by Freire; developed a unique set of techniques, known as Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) to highlight and understand situations of oppression in order to transform them. The Rainbow of Desire technique was developed after Boal was released from prison as a political dissident in Brazil and exiled to France. When working with his TO methods in Paris he wondered how people could still be experiencing oppression when the oppressors were not visible, he proclaimed, the cops have moved inside! Rainbow of Desire works with the individual's unconscious to reveal how and what in society is the source of this oppression. Group exercises using drama are used to explore the struggle. Practically the work looks like groups of people telling and then enacting their stories of oppression. The enactment begins with a literal performance and is gradually populated with 'images': physical, audible, moving representations of unseen feelings and desires. The enactment is created with help from the 'multiple mirror' of audience, who are asked, 'do you recognise this? Does this resonate with you? Do you identify with this?' Participants confirm their recognition by taking the place of images created by the protagonist who accepts or rejects their rendition. It is an

exercise in attention, studying how experiences and relationships in the world make us and, ideally, how we can remake them through a process which is both embodied and cognitive; Winnicott would say, psycho-somatic (Phillips, 1988, p.78).

Having touched on Boal's awakening to power's presence when it is tangibly absent and how it makes us, here it is useful to explore the conceptualisation of 'subjection': how power both oppresses and makes the subject. As Butler explains, 'subjection' signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject. Whether by interpellation, in Althusser's sense, or by discursive productivity, in Foucault's, the subject is initiated through a primary submission to power' (1997, p.2). Althusser's notion of interpellation speaks to the process of becoming in interaction with the social world; the process of, 'making up people' (Hacking 1996). Being named, or 'hailed' as Althusser has it, calls the subject into being. The 'hail' of a policeman toward an individual that at once identifies and calls for the individual to account for themselves - or as Stevenson differently configures it - the call 'figured by song that makes space for the existence of another' (2017). The turning around or response to the call is read as a desire to 'be beheld' (Butler, 1997, p.112) or recognised, and the action of interpellation is read as alienating but ultimately as forming the subject into the shape of particular subject positions and social existence. We are constantly experiencing interpellation and it is a process of our own conceptualisations of self; of what is good and right rubbing up against difference - a slightly or radically different conceptualisation of what is good and right – and in that we feel alone, feel anxious, like we don't fit in. In the constant process of remaking ourselves it is inevitable that we will experience loss. But what is going on here?

To understand how this interior process occurs in response to the outside Butler and others (Froggett, 2002; Hoggett, 2000) call on the development theory of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, specifically her conceptualisation of Object Relations. Object Relations help us think about how social forces are experienced deeply, internally, and relationally. In addition, they explain how that happens and that we all deal with the internal/external paradox – all the time.

The theory of Object Relations grew from Kline's observations of infants (Froggett,2002, p.36). The 'objects' refer to relations with primary care givers that are internalised by the infant; Object Relations encompass the object, the internalised representations of the self and the feelings that connect the two. In this relation the self is developed. The infant experiences being either completely loved, nourished and cared for or persecuted, cold, hungry and in pain (Froggett, 2002, p.36). To handle uncomfortable and bad feelings the infant employs the defence of 'splitting', which involves separating the good from the bad keeping the good separated from and uncontaminated by the bad.

As the infant becomes aware of herself as separate to her care giver there are feelings of anxiety and fear that the good and bad are together and guilt at past raging against the bad though to be separate. The feelings of guilt are the source of the desire to repair. I'm using this formulation to explain how fear and rage and guilt and desire to repair are all a part of the 'I' and 'you' relations in the encounter. I suggest that the encounter can serve as more than a way to obtain a service, but also as a way to develop. This complex and fraught beginning of anxiety, loss and guilt when faced with good and bad merged inextricably into

one object (ambivalence) continues to be at the heart of a perpetual becoming in the world as we search for recognition, belonging and connection.

While the infant develops a *capacity* for ambivalence, the adult continues to experience ambivalence and 'splitting remains an integral part of the defence repertoire – always the first to be mobilised when under threat' (Froggett, 2002, p.37). Because the object has both an internal and external representation the act of splitting also involves the good and bad parts of the self. Splitting in adulthood appears when the ambivalence (ambiguity, contradiction and complexity) faced is unbearable and unwanted attributes of the self are split off and projected onto others where they can safely be attacked (Froggett, 2002, p72) (see blame). This, argues Froggett, can explain raging at one worker while idealising another (or client, or client group) and latching on to polarised representations of reality (white/non-white, male/female for example) (ibid). Polarisation becomes a defence to contain and relieve us of the anxiety of ambivalence.

We are perpetually in relation (whether material, social or cultural) and 'the subject is constantly being recreated through difference' (Hunter, 2015, p.6). Winnicott, who conducted a continuous critique of Klein's work, understands the developing self differently, talking about the mother as the first environment of the child who actively adapts to its needs. This first relationship is seen as 'reciprocity' rather than conflict or submission (Phillips, 1988, p.4). Winnicott noted that the infant relies on its mother who in turn relies on people around her – bringing in the environment and suggesting that 'human development was an often-ruthless struggle against compliance with the environment' (Phillips, 1988, p.5). For Winnicott a compliant act is one that runs counter to 'health'

manifested in creativity, spontaneity and aliveness (Phillips,1988, p.127). And that growing

confidence will be reflected in his [the individual's] increasing willingness to be difficult'

(Phillips, 1988, p. 69).

Psychosocial approaches drawing on Object Relations often narrow in on the

destructiveness to the self and others (Hoggett, 2000; Froggett, 2002); the violence in

becoming. As does Hunter (2015) extrapolating out from Object Relations using Freud's

(2006 [1917]) paper 'Mourning and Melancholia' for her analysis of power. 'Melancholia,

she explains, is *one way* of responding to

> 'this unbearable ambivalence towards the object one is dependent on for self-
>
> definition, but from which one also desires autonomy, outs as rage and anger and
>
> violence towards that lost aspect of the self' (Hunter 2015, p.7).

Critically, the individual wants to stop these feelings and the shortest route out of it, barring

self-harm or suicide, is to locate an external object which one can attribute blame/cause

(see splitting) which can then be addressed with a solution. Hunter argues that:

> The issue is to recognise practices of ambivalence as part of a powerful blame
>
> culture which blocks and disadvantages *governing subjects themselves* as well as the
>
> range of others they are looking to help, fixing them into good/bad silos,
>
> user/professional, policy maker/activist (2015, p. 172).

It is clear to me that applying psychoanalytical perspectives as a lens in order to unpick the

relational and track its traces inside and outside of the individual is a useful way to proceed

in my analysis of engagement with help. It helps to understand the homelessness industry's

reflex to find fault through trying to determine cause (blame). It also goes some way to

explaining why it is so difficult to establish and maintain climates of trust and to promote

and value care.

But it is not without dangers; many are sceptical of psychoanalysis in practice arguing that it

individualises social problems and pathologises individuals making their social situation a

problem of personal psychology/biology, erasing the macro-level structural powers and

their manifestations in the micro – material, symbolic, affective, relational realities of

individuals. Lynne Froggett describes an 'assault' and 'attack' on the use of psychoanalysis

to explain the relationships between the individual and their environment particularly

because of its concerns with internal life at the expense of the material considerations

(2000, p.33). Nevertheless, as Hunter explains that for her, and a dizzyingly expansive array

of psychosocial theorists, 'drawing on psychoanalytic Object Relations theories … can help

think about experience as 'dispersed, continuous and exceeding representation' as

'exceeding discourse' without 'collapsing back onto a version of the singular ordinary

subject' (2015, p.28). She explains that Object Relations is useful as a heuristic device

because of 'the way it elucidates 'private' desires as (materially) enmeshed in social

relations, constituted through and constitutive of them (ibid p.32). It is useful because of

what it explains about the social, not as a visor to cut it out of view.

3.2 Stigma and the abject

Paradox 2. What is hated and regarded with disgust also makes and legitimises the normative fantasy we are able to see difference against.

Stigma has many harmful effects and handling the effects is important. However, strategies to do this will fail unless we face the function stigma serves to demarcate 'normal' and attempt to resolve the uncomfortable ambivalence of the fantasy of normativity (or the 'normal' and 'abnormal' in us all). 'Stigma isn't an attribute it is a relationship; one is normal against another person who is not.' (Hartman, 2019, p.53). It is a 'dehumanising force' that deflates the targets sense of self (Tyler, 2020, p.187). In Chapter One I refer to how stigmatisation plays a role in legitimising neoliberal policies; particularly responsibilisation and austerity (Brown, 2015, p. 70-1). It is apparent in Ravenhill's work on pathologies of the sector in terms of competition between agencies (p.16) and the stigmatising representation of clients in order to obtain donations and funding (p. 22). Let's go back to the *Killing with Kindness* campaign (p.60), just one example of a barrage of media products that helps to establish an underserving subject that should be controlled and punished which has helped to obtain public consent for austerity policies ripping the heart out of the welfare state (Tyler 2020, pp.5, 194-5). Stigma strategies that inculcate humiliation and shame are common. In order to access help, people experiencing homelessness have to show that they are deserving/genuine; distinguish themselves from the undeserving or, as Ravenhill (2008) observes, must 'act in ways that proved they deserved housing because of vulnerability' (p.65). Here I want to explore this further, to expose the paradoxes in stigma.

Tyler, in her 2013 book *Revolting Subjects* works from Kristeva's notion of abjection, redefining it with input from Bataille and others to give an account of abjection 'as a lived social process' (ibid, p.4), 'a mode of governmentality' (ibid, p.21). Focusing 'on the

mechanisms through which public consent is procured for policies and practices that effect

inequalities and fundamentally corrode democracy' (ibid, p.5), Tyler describes

> '… how national abjects become enmeshed within the interpellative fabric of
>
> everyday life… These abject figures are ideological conductors mobilized to do the
>
> dirty work of neoliberal governmentality. They are symbolic and material
>
> scapegoats, the mediating agencies through which the social decomposition effected
>
> by market deregulation and welfare retrenchment are legitimized (ibid, p.9).

Tyler's conceptualisation of the process of abjection and stigmatisation illustrates how it is

doing work — relationally — in-between and on the fantasy subject position of normativity

and the stigmatised position made abject.

To fathom the result of stigmatisation, Tyler draws on, among others, Link and Phelan's

(2014) study with 65 people from psychiatric hospitals. They investigate stigma as a

resource used by people who have an interest in keeping people 'down, in or away' (p.1).

They refer to: colonisers who 'keep people down' to obtain 'wealth, power, and high social

status'; enforcers of social norms who use 'written and unwritten rules' to regulate

populations by 'keeping people in' and 'keep people away' who possess physical and

behavioural 'abnormalities' (p.2). Link and Phelan use Bourdieu's concept of stigma as

'symbolic power' which 'is the capacity to impose on others a legitimatized vision of the

social world…' (ibid, p.3). Following Bourdieu they argue that 'cultural distinctions of value

and worth are critically important mechanisms through which power is exercised' that

people experiencing stigma can be influenced 'without realising it' and that 'symbolic power

is often buried in taken-for-granted aspects of culture and thereby hidden or

'misrecognized' by both those causing the harm and those harmed (Link and Phelan, 2014, p.3). They describe the processes through which discrimination occurs, commonly person-to-person or structural discrimination through laws and social policy. Less obvious, they describe interactional discrimination (where an individual's 'expectations or schemas' affect the way they relate to a stigmatised person - hesitancy, uncertainty, excessive kindness for example - or from a stigmatised position - acting 'with less self-assurance or warmth' causing the other to dislike them) (ibid, p.4).

Link and Phelan's empirical work supports their three-part conceptualisation of the motivations behind stigma and find that individual's respond to stigmatisation by: 'staying in' avoiding connection with stigma, in this case their mental illness; 'being kept away', withdrawing from the social world; and 'being kept down', believing themselves to have lower social value (Link and Phelan, 2014, p.6-7). While Tyler (2013) is more concerned with *resistance* to the political and cultural mobilisation of stigma, Link and Phelan evidence the oppressing *effects* of a hidden, often misrecognised, mobilisation of stigma spun from a concern with value and worth manifested structurally, person-to-person and interactionally within relationships.

In later work, Tyler goes on to unravel the concept of stigma: where it is produced, by whom and for what purposes. With collaborator Tom Slater she begins to address these questions through an examination of the Heads Together[21] mental health anti-stigma campaign (Tyler and Slater 2018). As discussed in Chapter One there have been some attempts to publicly address the stigma associated with homelessness albeit without the celebrity backing or the

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[21] Launched in 2016 and 'spearheaded' by members of the British Royal Family Heads Together aims to tackle stigma and change the conversation on mental health. https://www.headstogether.org.uk/

uniting of charities to formalise and sustain it. Nevertheless, Tyler and Slater's analysis of

Heads Together is resonant of and provides learning for attempts at destigmatising

homelessness. There is value in addressing a standardising and simplifying narrative of

homelessness that persists (particularly in the media see Chapter One, pp.45-6). There is a

history of people with experience of homelessness, as with mental ill-health, sharing their

experiences in more[22] and less[23] protected positions and affected differently by the

exposure. While the notion that 'we are all two pay cheques away from homelessness' may

change some minds and relieve some people experiencing homelessness of an internalised

stigma, some of us are more resilient thanks to our social positions. Like the 'acceptable

migrants', the Doctors, nurses and engineers who were promoted on billboards in an

attempt to counter anti-immigrant sentiments (Jones et al., 2017, pp.133-4). The effect is to

distinguish between a deserving and undeserving excluded group, to divide on a continual

basis, in order to foment 'electoral and popular consent for deepening inequalities' (Tyler,

2020, p.267).

As with mental ill health, there has been vociferous commitment on the part of Theresa

May's pledge to 'tackle stigma' in the 2018 Green Paper, *A New Deal for Social Housing*

(MHCLG, 2018) with the absence of recognition of how Thatcher's Right-to-Buy policy and

nearly a decade of Tory instigated austerity has massively intensified the problem. Tyler and

Slater's analysis of the Heads Together campaign illustrates how the deeply personal is

connected to the social, and how strategies to address the problem can displace underlying

paradoxes which require attention. The very same government whose flagship austerity

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[22] See John Bird, founder of the Big Issue
[23] See the many 'service users' fronting campaigns for various homelessness charities telling their stories of hellish homelessness to 'moved on' thanks to the support of service provider X,Y or Z.

policies are fuelled by stigmatising discourses pertaining to the poor and unwell, now publicly campaigns to 'tackle stigma'.

Tyler and Slater argue that

> 'stigmatisation is intimately linked with neoliberal governance', that is with attempts to manage and/or change the behaviour of populations through deliberate *stigma strategies* which inculcate humiliation and shame (2018, p.727).

Tyler and Slater go on to follow Paton (2018) and urge us to 'gaze up' in order to fathom where stigma is manufactured and to what ends. They consider the marketisation of mental health provision and question who is both profiting and profiteering on the back of stigma. While this analysis falls outside of this thesis, the macro picture is the context for the micro experience of asking for and engaging with help and I am interested to explore how it plays out.

Stigma and abjection undoubtedly operate in homelessness. This is demonstrated by the employment of the 'intentionality' ruling in legislation, illustrated by the Killing with Kindness campaign, and fortified by media and homelessness charity communications perpetuating pathologised, stigmatised, images of homelessness (see Chapter One, pp. 45-6). Within the stigmatised position of homelessness there is a distinction between genuine and false, deserving and underserving, perpetuating and intensifying blame and shame. To access help, individuals are required to illustrate and evidence the 'genuine' and 'deserving' parts of their need and hide anything of themselves that could be associated with the false and undeserving parts. For example, promoting their 'acceptable' vulnerabilities — mental

ill health and experience of abuse — and hiding those deemed unacceptable and associated with anti-social behaviour, especially drug and alcohol addiction.

People experiencing homelessness are (like other stigmatised groups) 'both excluded and at the same time at the centre of public life' (Tyler, 2013, p.20), perpetually proffered in the media as massively more mentally and physically unwell than the majority, dying in much greater numbers than their housed counterparts, as victims of austerity and a failing housing market, and as cunning drug addicts, taking advantage of individuals' kindness then returning to their flats. While concerned volunteers gather each night in city centres with food and sleeping bags, others set fire to encampments, prank, piss on and violently assault people sleeping rough. As discussed above, it is necessary to explore what we do with such paradoxes in care and help (how we handle them, how they motivate our thoughts and actions) rather than simplifying them too quickly in a jump to resolve the paradox.

Tyler remains hopeful. She says, '…understanding the wounds of stigma as social and political injuries can assist in the forging of networks of care and solidarity'. Tyler quotes from a film made by participants in the Leeds Poverty and Truth Commission:

> 'It's important that people hear about the shame. It's about living the shame, feeling it, living on, inspiring people through that shame' (p.29).

This is additional evidence for the need for trust in the encounter around help that allows expressions of shame without the fear of blame. Tyler's work helpfully avoids fragmenting the problem into service, needs, or roles — even more so than Nichols (2014) — this helps

her to bring into view the big picture – the machinery of inequality and the role stigma plays

in it. It also helps us to see the potential for solidarity across services, needs and roles. In the

Morecambe Bay Poverty and Truth Commission, at the centre of Tyler's ethnography,

people from across the piece stand together to create testimony of the effects of inequality.

It is clear that we are not 'all in this together' but there are more of us in it than not and this

certainly includes all the people who get a voice in this thesis. When I use 'we' in this thesis,

I am referring to a collective of people in the helping industries, with and without

experience of disadvantage, getting and giving help. Or at least trying to.

3.3 Recognition

Paradox 3. claims for equality and distinctness

I started to think about recognition when 'being seen and understood' emerged from the

interviews with the young people as something that helped them to engage. I returned to a

text I had read nearly 20 years ago 'The Politics of Recognition' (Taylor, 1994). Recognition

would have been a long section, but I learned through the care literature that attention

needed the space as a more active and ongoing process of seeing and responding and

checking rather that the destination of recognition (see Chapter Two). Nevertheless,

Taylor's essay on recognition and some of the responses to his argument, enlighten us to

the stubbornness of the paradox here, the way recognition operates at a personal and

public level and the impact of misrecognition. He begins his 1994 essay stating:

> 'Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression,
>
> imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being' (Taylor, 1994,
>
> p.25).

Misrecognition occurs when attention fails. And on a large scale as when nations fail to recognise their colonial past and provide adequate compensation and repair to the people who were there before them- demonstrates the difficulty of the task and ongoing impact on a misrecognised, marginalised and excluded (stigmatised and abject) population.

Taylor describes recognition as a constitutive force occurring across two levels: 'in the intimate sphere' in relationship 'through dialogue and struggle with significant others' contributing to identity formation and in the public sphere[24] regarding the politics of equal recognition and rights-based claims on the part of marginalised groups (p.37-38). Taylor goes on to deliberate the complexities of recognition in the public sphere in the context of 'the politics of difference' (p.38) in parallel with notions of 'authenticity' described as, following Trilling (1996), a certain way of being human 'that is my way' and 'if I am not' able to live this way 'I miss the point of my life; I miss what being human is for *me*' (p.30). Here, Taylor identifies the problem of the paradoxical claims for both equality and 'distinctness' (p.52) in relation to the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and the aspiration of survival (protection and promotion of cultural distinctiveness) and freedom of Indigenous Peoples, English and French Canadians. From this paradox Taylor goes on to deliberate forms of liberalism, juggling the question of ends and means, procedural and purpose driven forms of governance, to respond to the problem of squaring claims for survival and freedom in multi-cultural liberal democracies. Despite recognising the ever-changing, intersecting and sometimes contradicting cultural and identity claims, it seems to me that he concludes with something like a moral imperative to *think* our way into valuing the breadth of difference.

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[24] Hoggett (2000), following Honneth (1995) describes this 'public sphere' as 'the universalised other that is the state where the struggle for 'self-respect' revolves around abstract relations particularly 'recognition of one's legal personhood' (p.7).

Povinelli (2015) analyses Aboriginal recognition in 'Settler Australia' and, responds directly to Taylor and Habermas[25] arguing that recognition cannot contain the complexity of the subjective self. She asserts that Taylor and Habermas know this but persist in arguing 'that a form of domination free communication will lead, in the last instance, to a 'convergence,' or 'horizon', where universal Truths about this good life reside' (Povinelli, 2015, p.8).

Hunter (2015) is equally sceptical about the possibility of recognition to be resolved in the context of the equality/distinctness paradox. In her concluding chapters she describes the promise of liberal modernist projects to resolve the problem of difference and belonging by bringing the outsider in to 'sameness' through recognition and goes on to say that this 'can never be fulfilled because of the conceptual closure achieved through recognition' (p.178). That while some aspects of the self will be allowed inside

> '… other aspects… need to be smuggled in via the back door, hidden, not faced and encountered; which identifications you bring in, which you leave behind, how they intersect and configure are matters of power and choice' (ibid).

Finally, Povinelli argues that policies of recognition 'shifts the burden and responsibility of maintaining a fantasy of national social harmony from dominant to subaltern and minority members (ibid,1999, p.633). It becomes the job of those experiencing disadvantage and stigmatisation to do the work that could lead to some partial recognition of what is seen to be 'different' in comparison to a 'sameness' (or wrong in comparison to correct) that is in actuality an empty fantasy.

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[25] Habermas responds to Taylor's essay in the aforementioned edited collection Multiculturalism, largely supporting Taylor's analysis and conclusions.

Hunter and Povinelli here are arguing that a scene of recognition is going to be a scene of compliance – where individuals and groups must foreground and hide parts of themselves. Willis (1978) finds that compliance indicated by 'deference and subordination to authority' 'conformity' 'obedience, politeness and respect' (p.69) is described as **'integration',** denoting a move from informal to formal (p.62-64). While **'differentiation' is** indicated by 'non-conformity' (formal to informal) and that this is 'the central axis through which power and the reproduction of class can be seen' (p.58). While I accept Hunter and Povinelli's analysis, perhaps they look away too fast because it is not enough to identify the challenge and restriction of this partial recognition. There is a need to engage with how to enable greater visibility and understanding of those seeking help. People's diversity their need to be seen and the demand for recognition is not going away. Recognition and redistribution are intimately related (Fraser, 1995). All of the young people in this study are trying to be seen and understood, their complex selves and needs recognised and met. They both conform and resist, as they attempt to get help. Chapter 7, illustrates their efforts to comply, to integrate, and the points at which they differentiate themselves. They talk about what influences their different approaches, the result and how it makes them feel about themselves and engaging with help.

3.4 Power and paradoxes in public administration practice

Paradox 4: the work of frontline staff is often highly scripted to achieve policy objectives, but *requires* responsiveness to individual cases (Lipsky, 2010, p.xii)

People working on the frontline, doing helping work, encounter paradoxes daily and they are under pressure to respond and respond quickly. As discussed in the previous chapter

'responsiveness' is an essential element to establish the trust required for engagement.

Paradox 4 above suggests that frontline workers are required to work out what to be responsive to in any given moment. Faced with the infinite complexity of an individual in need coupled with the boundaries and expectations of the organisation that employs them (and others they may be negotiating with) they are both responsible and out of control (Lipsky, p.78).

They must build trust and make judgements about the validity of the individual in need's story. They are required to support the individual and enforce the rules of their employers. This produces anxiety leading to time spent covering over, hiding inevitable aberrations in the face of paradoxical tasks. There is good cause for hiding; often enough workers, managers and CEOs have been vilified and even imprisoned in the past trying to manage the paradoxes in helping work[26]. This section considers some theories explicating the agency staff in helping work have, what it is mediated by, and the possible effects. A significant mediating feature is increasing administration which I highlight because of its growth over time, its prominence in homelessness, and especially in the Payments by Results (PbR) frame of my empirical study.

People in helping roles are conductors of their biography, motivations, emotions, organisational culture and policy. They are 'Street Level Bureaucrats' (SLB) and become the policy they are responsible for implementing (Lipsky, 2010 [1980], p. xiii). They are 'Citizen-Agents' bringing their own experience into the judgements they make (Maynard-Moody and

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[26] For example Ruth Wyner and John Brock managers of a day centre in Cambridge who were imprisoned for a year in 1999 for not taking 'reasonable' steps to stamp out drug dealing. They were reprimanded 'for not installing closed circuit television and mirrors to observe clients, and for failing to close the centre down when they thought dealing may be going on' (Snell 1999).

Musheno, 2003), and they are 'Civic Entrepreneurs' making strategies out of the muddle and mess of policy (Durose, 2011). They do 'youth work' with their clients, together engaging in 'social relations' that are 'co-ordered' by the institutions they must interact with (Nichols, 2014, p.5). Hoggett (2000) describes the 'neo-liberal rhetorics which constitutes public-sector workers as an enemy within' seeing workers solely as 'agents of control, bearers of discourses of domination...' when in fact workers and clients are 'bound to each other in a relationship of conflictual interdependence' with 'rights and expectations which at times clash' (p. 15).

Most of the authors referred to above focus on police and teachers, counsellors and community development workers. I propose that these roles are similar enough to frontline work in homelessness and it is useful to bring this literature into homelessness. Furthermore, this project is 'situated' in homelessness but is more broadly concerned with 'engagement' with help for needs, of which housing, for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, is entwined with multiple other needs. I discuss the possible tensions later in this section.

Lipsky's work on SLBs usefully draws out the common elements of these roles: they have contact with the public and 'have wide discretion over the dispensation of benefits and sanctions' (1980, p. xi). The 'limitations of the work structure' prevents them from doing their job 'according to ideal conceptions of the practice' (ibid p. xvii). Crucially they are the face of government policy; they become the way that, as citizens, we experience government. Despite their specific roles they experience common pressures including the 'existence of physical and or psychological threat' (Lipsky, 1968, Abstract) and

chronically inadequate resources; an ever-growing demand for services; vague or conflicting organisational expectations and policy goals; difficulties in measuring their performance; clients who do not voluntarily choose the services (Gilson 2015, p. 2 [on Lipsky]).

They are perpetually straddling 'the gap between the realities of practice and service ideals' (Lipsky, 1980, p. xvi) as well as their personal expectations of themselves. Lipsky ventures, like Hunter (2015) and Gibson (2018), that their responses to these pressures in the day-to-day materiality of the work '*become* the public policies they carry out' (Lipsky,1980, p. xiii) shaping the institutional space. Owing to the complexity of tasks, contexts and people they interact with it is not feasible to establish guidelines or instructions that would rule out their discretion being central to their work. Discretion is central, the point at which the SLB is able to make a choice about taking action or not (Gilson, 2015, p4).

Maynard-Moody and Musheno's (2003) study addresses workers discretion as they locate a Citizen-Agent narrative where frontline workers imagine themselves as allied with the Client-Citizen. They suggest that this narrative coexists with a state-agent narrative, more akin to Lipsky's description, but consider particularly how the Citizen-Agent's personal biography and moral standpoints inform the judgement they make with the discretion they have. Their illustration of workers indicates more personal agency, they overcome paradoxes by occasional flouting of the law and policy more citizen centred than rule centred (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003, p.18). Citizen Agents 'improvise' on the basis of their 'practical knowledge and judgements' (ibid, p.23). They describe a cynicism and disdain for more senior decision makers as an 'impractical and ineffectual elite' (ibid, p.24) and a 'group identity' that establishes solidarity fortified by a shared language and stories

that reflect values and 'underwrite and stabilise assumptions for decision making' in the various frontline roles (ibid, p.30).

Durose (2011) contributes to the theorisation of frontline workers from the British New Labour period. She perceives the local authority workers in her study as dynamically developing 'strategies' to 'reconcile policy priorities with community demands' (p. 979). They do this through **fixing** (bringing together government aims with community priorities and focusing on the synergies); **reaching** (signposting excluded groups to local resources) and **enabling** (building capacity- supporting building new social networks). She builds on the concept of Civic Entrepreneurs following Leadbeater and Goss (1997), establishing the presence of creative individuals who find ways to patch together the fractured map of voluntary and state need and resources. In this hopeful account, workers are not wedded to central government expectations in a tiresomely bureaucratic way, they are allied to the community, committed to understanding their needs and both able and free to find the spaces in central government priorities and the flexibility, to address them.

Civic Entrepreneurs stand in stark contrast to the workers (shelter staff, police, teachers, probation workers, youth workers, mental health practitioners) in Nichols' (2014) institutional ethnography on youth homelessness in Ontario Canada. She discovers that measures such as 'accountability discourses, punitive audit practices, professional framing' (p.86) produces in staff and volunteers 'cover your arse work' (CYA). That is activity designed to protect the professional reputation of an individual or organisation (Nichols, 2014, p.86). Nichols finds that CYA work takes 'analytic attention' from the young people towards textual exercises for example, 'programme marketing, outcomes management,

data collection, fee-for-service structures' (2014, p. 108-9). The very systems and

regulations established to keep the practice of help fair, safe and accountable are in reality a

huge time and energy drain pulling attention away from the people they are supposed to be

helping.

Especially pertinent for this section is that Nichols delivers a life skills programme in

response to her findings, meets this challenge and fails to act differently. Her programme is

designed to draw 'young people into relations where their actions can be observed, tracked

and transformed' but in order to show accountability for the project she must record

'observable changes in the actions and life circumstance' of the participants (2014, p.109).

She says,

> this focus on producing measurable change in individual young people's lives shifts
>
> the professional focus away from the ways in which institutional relations contribute
>
> to a young person's experience of marginalization and places the burden of
>
> responsibility for "positive social outcomes" squarely on the shoulders of the
>
> individual young people and the one-to-one workers with whom they work (ibid,
>
> pp.109-10).

Nichols describes her discomfort and surprise at the result foretold by Willis (1978) that

innovations or 'progressive thinking' is 'taken up on very different and more ancient

grounds' which thwarts the results and, while new 'techniques seemed revolutionary they

were profoundly post-revolutionary solutions to pre-revolutionary problems' (p.71) and can

unintentionally cement the very dynamics they hope to change (p.84).

Lowe and Wilson's (2017) examination of Outcome Base Performance Measurement (OBPM) provides further evidence of how CYA type work increases within NPM systems and how it undermines practice by overlooking the complexity of it. As discussed in Chapter One, Lowe and Wilson find that OBPM produces 'gaming tactics', for example cherry-picking (creaming), making up and reclassifying data, and teaching to the test' (p. 996). Furthermore, while 'gaming' is not cheating, and it *may* involve aspects of delivering services well – it ultimately, 'distorts and undermines the practice of social interventions' (p.983) as it represents the complexity of experience and change as linear and simple, which for people experiencing multiple disadvantage and their workers, it clearly is not.

While the homeless sector, in some ways, is further from central government than Social Services or the NHS, most[27] services depend on a core of central government funding and have been drawn into to the NPM systems. Despite this the role homelessness sector SWs diverge from SLBs in a number of ways that I think are important to clarify. To begin with, there is no tertiary training programme for the homeless sector SWs, their role remains much less scripted and theoretically grounded. Also, their responsibility is limited, while SWs will input into and support applications for benefits, access to education, legal support etc., they are usually not responsible for making final decisions unless it is pertaining to the sanctions or resources of the organisation they work within. Finally, they are not always proximate to central bureaucracy, thus, may be less aware of their roles as instruments of the state when compared with nurses, teachers, police etc. However, within a PbR national programme, this divergence decreases; as it will become clear, the workers represented in

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[27] There are numerous exceptions; small medium and large charities sustained mostly by individual and corporate giving (for example small and medium example Crisis, Emmaus, Shelter). But their continued existence is entangled with central government and shifting motivations and expectations of social policy.

this study have a keen sense of how their monitoring activity is responsive to central

government policy, albeit mediated by social investors.

Aside from these three distinctions, the pressures are similar, but there is an additional,

potentially troubling, element to the discretion SW's exercise. Partly *because* their role is

not recognised, they enjoy fewer protections and poorer remuneration than SLBs, so the

pressures above are doubly manifested, (especially in small third sector agencies required to

compete for funds). Consequently, they are more likely to be oblivious to the influence they

have, the responsibility they have and are less able to develop practices and experience in

response to the difficult position they are working in. They are much more likely to see

themselves as agents of citizens than the state as is apparent in Nichols' (2014) findings, and

my own findings show that they very much draw on personal experience to make decisions

with the discretion they have. While they do not seem to have the agency of the Civic

Entrepreneurs their work involves a great deal of 'fixing', 'reaching' and 'enabling' (Durose,

2011). Their agency, as with other SLBs, is limited by the rigours of their caseloads and

administrative expectations, especially related to outcomes accounting (Lipsky, 2010, p. 81).

They are frequently engaged in CYA work (Nichols 2014) or 'concealing lack of service and

generating appearances of responsiveness' in order to protect their own or their

organisation's reputation in response to the contradictions they face and discretion they

have to respond (Lipsky, 2010, p.76).

'Gaming' tactics and 'covering your arse work' stem from worry about being shamed and

produce shame. Protecting our professional reputation, organisationally and individually,

distracts us from behaving as 'professionally' as we want, as Nichols has it, applying our

'analytical attention' to the people we are working with (2014, p.108). If we attend instead

to the other, we are deviating from the cultural and administrative norms of the workplace.

Gibson (2018) finds that 'The displeasurable experience resulting from negative self-

evaluations that threaten one's identity, … is often associated with a desire to hide'

(Goffman, 1963; Lewis, 1971; Lynd, 1958 in Gibson, 2018, p.2). Moreover, Hunter, like

Gibson (2018), sees the 'negotiation of fear and anxiety as a matter of *making* the

institutional space' rather than merely 'managing and negotiating' an existing space' (my

emphasis 2015, p. 172). If we instead try a new way, from new thinking about the

immediate problem (as Nichols does), we have little chance against the effects of the much

older source of the problem, as Willis (1978) observed. Emotions 'interfere' with and

'transform the ways policy ideas get taken up and worked through…' (p.78).

I agree with Cloke et al (2010) and Scullion et al (2015) that there is an effective response to

this and that skilled and experienced workers are able to manage the contradictions. Like

Civic Entrepreneurs they find strategies to 'fix', or reconcile contradictory pressures (Durose,

2011, p.979); for example, using the Outcomes Stars or risk assessments as a backdrop to a

useful discussion; the use of incentives to relive an individual's immediate poverty and

crafting of a narrative that makes it *seem* to fulfil an outcome. But there are others that will

not have the skills, or the time and will use it as a way to avoid the difficult interaction that

requires trust, the four elements and the stabilising effect of reflection on practice.

Bureaucracy and its hallmarks do not address the contradictions in the job of managing the

encounter for a SLB or SW — it just begets more bureaucracy — as it has formalised the

pressure to 'finish the forms', record outcomes, participate in evaluations that produce

recommendations that require new and different forms and processes.

The alternative is to close the paradox down by establishing a believable narrative and following it: the construct of religion seems like an effective one, so too is a strict belief in positivistic naturalism – i.e. if we get the numbers right regarding 'what works', we can solve the problem. Another alternative is to embrace the notion that 'people will not always be aware of their own best interests' (Watts et al., 2017, p.8) and apply coercion and force to obtain behavioural change outcomes. As Hoggett points out that while in democratic societies overt resort to domination is repellent, the use of rewards and sanctions remains a potent and culturally acceptable means of maintaining control over workers and service users (2000, p. 105).

Useful for this study, Grant's (2012) writings on power specifically address the use of incentives which are central to the PbR model and used by The Programme as a tactic to motivate the attainment of outcomes and engagement of the young people. Grant argues that the use of incentives 'may inhibit deliberation and judgement ... circumnavigating the need for persuasion by giving people an *extrinsic* reason for the choices they make' (emphasis added p.137). Incentives in this way save the time required for persuasion, which involves the critical skills of deliberation and judgement, a potential short cut to outcomes. Nonetheless, Grant believes use of incentives can be ethically justified providing a set of two criteria are met: when it serves a legitimate purpose, allows a voluntary response, and that the effects on the character of all parties involved are monitored (Grant, 2006, p.73). She quotes Samuel Bowles, arguing that the use of incentives commonly fails because 'they conflict with people's desires for autonomy, for self-determination, and to be respected as a member of the community – the very desires associated with democratic virtues' (2011, p. 139). Grant believes that incentives used in a way erodes empowerment as bad as more

obvert forms of coercion and should not be an alternative to approaches which that

enhance the qualities of autonomy and agency (ibid). Unlike Watts et al (2015) as discussed

(p. 58) who believe that control is a price worth paying if the result will safeguard the future

autonomy of the other.

I would argue, as a long-term advocate of, that client involvement is among the practice

narratives that can displace the paradoxes in helping work, rather than addressing them.

However, unlike faith, belief in the efficacy of OBPM and coercion, it (potentially) *works*

with rather than distracts from the uncomfortable paradoxes as, done well, it raises the

questions who has the power and why. Sometimes without meaning to, client involvement

type activity exposes every-day dishonesty which stems from the paradoxical nature of the

work as well as requiring its address. An organisation keen to develop this 'good practice'

but feels discomfort at the contradictions that show up when they try to do things

differently and share power. They claim it is good if clients have choice and autonomy but

not in regard to this thing that we must do because our funding depends on it. Or we want

you to feel that your experience is valid but, really, we believe that you don't know how to

handle yourself, let alone decisions pertaining to the running of this organisation that you

are living within. It is possible to adjust practice in a way that isn't uncomfortable or even

affirms the status quo; some client designed artwork, a survey to capture some testimony

for funding applications. As discussed in Chapter One, client involvement is open to co-

option. However, as Hogget argues, despite the ambiguous efficacy of client involvement

work, it is 'worth preserving… because it highlights the way in which human emancipation

and the exercise of power are intrinsically mixed up' (2000, p.103). Client involvement is

directly about power, reveals the contradictions and, perhaps even done badly, will enable a

new relation to the paradoxes in help and helping work. The fact it is done badly is not because of 'machiavellian intent' (Willis, 1978), but done well it puts a spanner in the works of the revanchist machine that doesn't much mind kindness but will hiss and spit at resistance.

3.5 Discussion

Instead of really helping people workers seem to be focusing a lot of attention on self-justification: gaming, CYA work and locating a believable narrative to escape the anxiety in ambivalence. How did help which we hope to be productive, become so harmful?

Lipsky (1980); Hunter (2015); Nichols (2014) and Hoggett (2000) all acknowledge the true but impossible (paradoxical) aspirations of essential human services. Lipsky (1980) points out a host of these including the fact that workers need to both advocate for their clients *and* make judgement on the credibility of their claims, both fighting for *and* scrutinising of them; that services tend to 'hoard' resources (including the time spent with a client) while the worker is expected to obtain the best results for them; that services aspire to treat clients equally and seek special treatment for them (p.74). This is where Hunter picks up the debate. She begins from the 'central paradox' which, in her mind, hangs around the aspirations of 'inclusion' (insuring all have equal access to power and provision) and 'differentiation', that service management, design and delivery must account for all the many and varied differences people present (Hunter, 2015, p.4). The problem is as access is made possible for one 'group' or 'need' or 'difference' another group, need or difference is left out. Her, point, is not remote from Povinelli's (2015) that is also illustrated by Taylor (1994) that differences are vast and often mutually exclusive – for example to support gay

marriage *and* acceptance of Muslim or Christian doctrines requires paradoxical thinking; to recognise Australia's Indigenous people's rights to land, others must have their 'rights' dismissed or at least curtailed.

Furthermore, Povinelli, Nichols and Hunter all find that the most marginalised and disadvantaged end up doing the heavy lifting when it comes to addressing misrecognition and inequality. They become the problem, are stigmatised and, according to Tyler and co-authors, provide justification for the entrenchment of the welfare settlement; stigma as 'a governmental technology of exploitation' (Tyler, 2000, p.29). The effect of stigma is dehumanising and shameful, luring folk to hide away, where it is more difficult to find the solidarity they need and belonging they crave. In the analysis to come, specifically Chapters Six and Seven, I consider how stigma impacts on how the young people see themselves and their encounters with those in a position to help; how they experience stigmatisation and how this impacts on their engagement.

Following Hunter (2015), I look for the affective responses to these paradoxes in aspiration in the work and highlight in Chapter Two how frontline staff are required to manage a highly scripted role and be responsive to clients (Lipsky, 1980) which creates a sort of liminal space where they have 'discretion' and are required to manage the difficult juggling of paradoxes themselves (as poorly paid and precarious as they most often are), also feeling the effects of stigma.

Trust seems to be key (again), and it is a web-like phenomenon which exists not just between the 'worker' and 'client' but throughout an organisation. Trust takes time to build, and it would help if funding arrangements and contracts in the sector responded to this. We

will need trust to openly reflect on the paradoxical and respond differently (not hiding or CYA) but working through the contradictions as they arise.

I propose that NPM technologies are a response to the anxiety created from the fact these paradoxes are unresolvable, designed to punish the inadequacy of being human and trying to help (a series of impossible tasks). Bureaucracy and technologies can never solve the paradoxes it just reproduces itself. How can we be empowered to live with paradox rather than being punished for the contradictions that inevitably come with the work?

For Tyler (2020) it is solidarity, and, for Winnicott, who believes that while the inside/outside contradiction cannot be resolved, in a **reliable environment** it can be faced and tolerated. While violence is seen by Freud and Klein, as a result of the inability to handle ambivalence, as a step towards self-annihilation, Winnicott sees it as inevitable and a good sign of growing confidence for the individual to differentiate and be at home with the 'real'. I want to believe this.

I worry that if we are unable to find a new relation with paradox by looking into how it affects the helping encounter, we will see increasing administration to provide a cover story to simplify the problem away and develop a long line of 'new' interventions that succeed some of the time but more often fail because they are not sufficiently supported; tacked on, rather than built in. Knowing, as we do, that responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity, flexibility and choice, with caring attention will enable the quality of encounter that is promising of a good result is obviously not enough to make a good result for people experiencing disadvantages as the norm. Hoping that kindness will win out, that there are

enough exceptional workers who will direct all their 'analytical' (Nichols, 2014) and caring attention towards the encounter (despite the pressures to do otherwise), and 'fix' (Durose) the contradictions they face, is not a good enough strategy considering the complexity and undervaluing of the role.

PIE and client involvement provide opportunities for solidarity, they are not panaceas, and both can be co-opted to derail the conversation and cement divisions. However, they both, at least, create space to talk about and reflect on what we are doing, why we are doing it and how we feel about that. The following chapter describes how I managed my encounter with the research participants and the subject of engagement; what I did, why I did it and how I feel about that.

CHAPTER FOUR. METHODOLOGY

I do not want to turn away from the complexities in needing, looking for, (sometimes) getting and providing help. In fact, I particularly want to uncover and work with these complexities.

The overarching objective of my research is to explore engagement with help and consider how we can more systematically and earlier engage people in need by:

- reassembling the experience of multiple exclusion homelessness from the perspective of individuals experiencing it, and

- exploring the dynamics of engagement through capturing the traces from individuals' reported experiences and those of people close to them

This chapter begins by considering what can be learned from landmark studies of engagement with help in the homelessness literature. The remainder of this chapter lays out where I chose to travel in this exploration and how I travelled, in four parts. The first describes my assumptions about the nature of the social world and how, given these assumptions, it is possible to learn something about it. That is, how the ontology and epistemology I apply inform the research questions and design. The second section clarifies the development of methods applied to tap accounts of what is going on for these young people escaping homelessness and trying to engage with help. In the third section I produce an account of the research in action, including commentary from the young people. I give some examples of where I did not live up to my aspirations: where glitches became innovations and where they became unhelpful detours. Here in particular, I reflect as much as I can on my positionality – and its possible effects. In other words, I attempt to account

for my humanness (Dean, 2017). Throughout this section, and throughout the thesis, I aspire toward transparency, noting that research is never a pipe facilitating the clean transfer of knowledge from an uncomplicated source to the pool of a thesis, and as the researcher I am a fair bit of the muck clouding the water. The limitations specific to the methodological approach are discussed separately below. The final section of this chapter describes the process of analysis and how it informed the structure of the thesis and drove the themes of the following empirical chapters.

4.1 Learning from key methodologies in homelessness literature

In Chapter One I explain my discomfort with homelessness research that is either positivistic or constructionist in the extreme. One hides all the hows and whys of homelessness in (mostly estimated) numbers of people; the other drops momentarily into lives that illustrate structural and/or deviant causes and proposes structural or individualised solutions. Such research is frequently cross-sectional and service- or needs-specific, thereby failing to capture the dynamics of experiences of homelessness (Pickering et al., 2003, Gerrard and Farrugia, 2015). Furthermore, the predominant use of structured interviews imposes on participants questions based on existing knowledge about homelessness (Ravenhill, 2008, p.20), filtering and standardising unique and complex experience into support or critique of existing theories. Despite the wave of homelessness scholars pursuing ever more sophisticated quantitative approaches to understanding homelessness, I am not alone in choosing approaches of knowledge production that go deeper and very much qualitatively into the experience of homelessness. In this section I consider the work of Hall (2003), Ravenhill (2008), McNaughton (2009), Gowan (2010) and Jackson (2015) as examples of ethnographies conducted over time in order to capture the complexities of individuals'

experiences of homelessness. This group of authors are also explicitly trying to get to an understanding of the story of homelessness that does not collapse into an individualised, pathologised, stigmatised image of homelessness and the 'homeless person' as a 'exotic subterrain other' (Hall, 2003, p.6) but highlights the structural forces at work in their experiences. They use different methods to try and get there, but I do question whether they meet Clapham's (2003) concern discussed in Chapter 1, that is, do the 'alluring' (Ravenhill, 2008, p.1) details lead us to focus on behaviour but lose sight of the structural and 'reinforce the minimalist conception of homelessness' (Clapham, 2003, p.121)?

Hall's (2003) ethnography centred around an emergency hostel for young people in Liverpool is a lively, rich and compelling account of young people who are insecurely housed. From the outset, Hall is keenly aware of and committed to not falling foul of Clapham's (2003) concern. He distances himself from the 'moralising' and pathologizing standpoint of Charles Murray (1990; 1994), for example, and attempts to avoid the position of an outsider by immersing himself daily in the lives of over 100 young people. Hall succeeds to a point, but the sense of the sustained experience of any particular person are diluted by scale; flashes of individuals that pass through the piece become collections of types of incidents and behaviours. For me, this limitation becomes apparent in contrast with Hall's narration of one young person, Ritchie, who becomes more fully written (he is introduced early, has numerous stays at the hostel and writes to Hall from prison). Hall's success in representing the complexity of Ritchie's experience is the most appealing part of his study for me, and something I aspire to in using a qualitative longitudinal approach.

Gowan (2010), like Hall, undertook ethnographic and immersive research over a much longer period of five years, exploring the survival strategies of a group of men experiencing homelessness in San Francisco's Tenderloin. This ethnography was set against her discourse analysis of texts from the homelessness industry, which enabled her to test the framing of homelessness problems and solutions against the lives of people experiencing homelessness. This combined approach enabled her to effectively keep the individuals and their uniqueness in view while teasing out how the way we have historically thought about and talked about homelessness has a profound effect on the people experiencing it.

Ravenhill's (2008) study aimed 'to get behind the presented persona to find a more accurate picture of what the roofless process really meant for individuals' (Ravenhill, 2008, p.76) by combining 48 life story interviews with people experiencing homelessness, 86 interviews with staff, and 754 hours of observation, 318 hours of participant observation and 77 informal interviews with staff and clients. Using the combination of case study methodology and life story interviews, and this extensive amount of data, enabled Ravenhill to see patterns over time and to identify the production and maintenance of cultures.

McNaughton-Nichols' (2009) study, as discussed in Chapter 1, was longitudinal and narrative, involving interviews with 28 participants two or three times over 18 months, adopting a critical realist approach to locate underlying causal mechanisms and to engage with the internal narratives of participants. She describes agency as '…the internal decision-making process that leads to the acts of a person, which will produce effects' (2009, p.69) and argues that from this view it is possible to better '…understand the role that agency and

transgression play in the generation and sustainment of homelessness' (2009, p.82), taking the actions and motivations seriously without blame. This repeated, narrative approach allows McNaughton-Nichols to engage more thoroughly with the specifics of particular lives, in contrast to the larger scale studies like those of Ravenhill and Hall which can lose the connected understanding of a particular life trajectory.

Most recently, Jackson's (2015) ethnography with young people experiencing homelessness and accessing a day centre in London aims to explore the 'spaces' that her participants move through "in order to pick apart how institutions, structures and biographies intervene in and create spaces of homelessness that in turn shape future trajectories and possibilities" (p.2). Jackson uses creative methods including map-making – focusing on places and journeys rather than problems and causes. Jackson's starting point is like mine in that she is not asking why homelessness, who homelessness or how homelessness, but trying to understand what it is like to be homeless, and she does this through working actively *with* her participants to create materials that help them to understand and explain together what it is they are living through.

Turning to my own research, as with all the authors above, I knew that to get at the complexity of the problem a lengthy intervention was required, along with a combination of approaches including observation and interviews. Life story interviews in some form are essential to understand pathways and how biography intervenes to effect how and why people act. It is one thing feeling strongly that biography is a rich stream of knowledge to tap, but the analysis of the data produced and writing from what amounts to vast and rich testimony and reflection is something I struggled with. I used a combination of cross-sectional and narrative analysis and tried not to fracture the young people's experience and

enable patterns to emerge that revealed some of the structural forces at play as these young people seek out help. Stevenson (2014) and Nichols (2014) in my mind excel at this, partly to do with time but also the *breadth* of the knowledge they draw from; Stevenson's long periods of interaction with the entire, albeit small, Inuit community as well as historical records and Nichols' (2014) volunteering and working in services and giving voice to the multifaceted response to youth homelessness in Ontario. Like Willis and Gowan, their research participants are lively and rounded and the depth of articulation of their specific lives *adds* to our understanding of the structural factors that push and pull them rather than distracting from those factors.

I am motivated by their work to push a gap open rather than filling one. I am trying to avoid taking a touristic, 'minimalist' (Clapham, 2003), pathologizing view which, it seems, is not simply remedied by spending more time, over time, with people. Perhaps this is in part because of what Gowan calls discursive logic's 'magnetic force' (2010, xxi); that is, a way of thinking and talking about homelessness that is so catchy it has global resonance. I am trying to sidestep this problem by moving attention from 'homelessness' and need, to help and engagement. I hope to help participants communicate and feel safe in communicating what is going on 'inside' or what Goffman (1959) and Ravenhill (2008) describe as 'behind the scenes' (p.86) by using creative methods, working iteratively as Jackson (2015) and Stevenson (2014) do. I place less emphasis on observation, preferring, like Willis (1978), to allow the participants to speak for themselves and explain themselves. Like Hall (2003) and Willis (1978), I hope that I avoid collapsing into blame. If there is something notably different it is my attempts to get at the relational elements of engagement by accessing

multiple perspectives, the combination of methods used and the focus on co-producing the knowledge generated.

4.2. The nature of the social world: what is 'out there' (Law, 2003) and what I want to learn about

The way we seek to understand a phenomenon in the world depends on how we see the world. The world is increasingly complex, and I broadly agree with Archer that the 1980s were a 'tipping point' with the 'structural development of multinational enterprise' and the 'cultural invention of the World Wide Web' (2013, p.13). Our relations stretch further than was imaginable 60 years ago; sovereigns are further away and disguised; and we are interwoven with people and things more and more remote. I do not accept the positivistic naturalistic view of a social world that is entirely knowable, measurable, conforming to essentialised boundaries, labels and dualities. This view is not fit to apprehend complexity; rather, as Latour (2005) argues, it reduces 'matters of concern into matters of fact too fast, without due process' (p.256). Simply expressed by Law (2003), 'the world is largely messy' and many methodological approaches to knowing it try to make it 'clean and neat' (ibid, p3).

In my research I attend to the complexity and fluidity of what is out there by developing a methodological approach which avoids fracturing experience into service or needs perspectives by making engagement the central subject, tapping networks with the inclusion of significant others in the young people's lives and making use of objects (interactive tools) within interviews.

4.2.1 How do things become in the world

I am an anti-essentialist. So, if things aren't somehow inherently or essentially the way that they are, how do they become? It is a question of causation. Elder-Vass (2015, p.13, using Hume 1977 [1748], p.50) explains that a causal relation is one in which an event type A always leads to a further event of type B; when this is the case, A is taken to have caused B, and there is nothing more to be said about how this might have happened. He goes on to explain the realist account of cause following Bhaskar (1975):

> 'there is no guarantee of empirical regularity' because 'actual events are caused by the interaction of multiple causal powers, and since on any given occasion a particular causal power may be frustrated by the operation of conflicting powers' even if A tends to produce B (Elder-Vass, 2015, p.14).

For ANT theorists '...entities take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities' (Law and Hassard, 1999, p.3). This account of multiplicity in combination with the ANT preoccupation with relationships between different entities means that an ANT-informed study must cross disciplines. This is particularly useful for me when exploring engagement as it is not located in a particular discipline. It informs my decision to use Object Relations as a tool to get some grip on the relational; how our decisions, behaviour and feelings are shaped by our relations with others and actants in the social and political environments we inhabit.

4.2.2 How it is possible to learn something about the social world?

So, the social world is messy, not fixed, comprised of more than people who are moving and being moved, in a network of associations that don't conform to spatial metaphors (close and far, up and down, local and global, inside and outside) and the task is to avoid the tendency to standardise, order and simplify. How then is it possible to learn something about 'engagement with help'?

The job becomes one of rehabilitating 'parts of the mess. Of finding ways of living with and knowing confusion' (Law,2003, p.3). What we need is a 'disciplined lack of clarity' (Law, 2003, p3). This is about avoiding foreclosure – turning into paradox rather than away from it. Attentiveness, as described in Chapter Two, is required. As a researcher I have sought to capture and describe spaces, and the routes in-between. I avoid rushing to foreclose and make a grand list of things that help and get in the way of full-on engagement. When attempting to arrive at such a list the exercise fails; nothing fits exactly as inside or outside; many things are helpful and harmful either at once or they mutate across time.

Figure 5. Wall Work

For Latour, to explore the structural for example, attention is not drawn away from the 'very local, very practical, very tiny locus' but towards it (1999, p.17&18). Each cell tells us about the whole it is operating within. This has driven my attempt to immerse myself in the young peoples' experience, aware that it will not inform generalisable findings but does establish a rich picture of a whole experience of engagement; the very local, relational and structural. The reliability of the picture established would be best validated by young people experiencing homelessness and those at work in the industry's resonance with it.

Latour argues that 'actors know what they do, and we have to learn from them not only what they do, but how and why they do it' (1999, p.19). This, for me, prompted the need for establishing an environment where the young people were clear about the problem I was trying to address, and the questions that fell out of that, and felt able to respond to them. To accomplish this, I drew on everything I had learned in practice and from the literature about trust and care: paying attention (the 'obligation to imagine, to check, to envisage, consequences that bring into play connections between what we are in the habit of keeping separate' (Stengers in Lavau and Bingham 2017, p.26); 'finding ways to make space for the existence of another' (Stevenson, 2014 p.157); sharing control; being open; suspending assumptions without imagining, I could take their standpoint; having a sense of humour; and being reliable.

4.2.3 Research questions

Just as the authors discussed above try to get behind, or underneath, or backstage to increase our understanding, the research questions of this thesis reflect my aspiration to tap into the messiness of engagement, to understand more about how individual biography and

the layers of inside (thoughts and feelings), and outside (behaviours, relationships, systems and structures) play a part in engagement. I am led by a desire to produce knowledge that might help to inform how we could help earlier and better.

The overarching research question is: **What factors inhibit and what factors enable young people with experience of complex and interlinking disadvantages, including homelessness, to engage with help?** Within this, there are five sub-questions:

1. What does engagement look like and feel like?

As discussed in Chapter 2 while engagement is a concern, we know more about what fosters it and what makes it difficult than what it actually feels like inside the helping encounter and looks like from the outside.

2. What gets in the way or increases the likelihood of full-on engagement?

I am interested in understanding the sorts of things that are going on around the times that the young people felt *really* engaged and really *not* engaged with helping interventions, and ask them to consider what was going on inside themselves, outside themselves and with the people around them. I am also interested in understanding more about how frontline workers' and significant others' past experiences influence how they go about encouraging and supporting engagement in the other, and why they think it is effective or not.

3. How do past experiences (biography) of needing help and trying to get it shape (or not) ongoing attempts to access help?

While we are aware that very bad family relationships, experiences of childhood trauma, very poor experiences of education and poverty are behind multiple exclusion (Bramley et al., 2015) and that repeated failed attempts to get help diminish trust, I am interested in exploring how experiences of help go on to shape and colour further helping encounters.

4. What can comparison of the narratives of young people with those of frontline workers add to our understanding of needing and getting help (or not)?

Engagement happens in relationship. Relationship with others, environments, programmes/interventions and with ourselves. I want to explore how the young people and those trying to help them appear to each other, I want to understand how they manage the space in the encounter; how they bring themselves in and how they make space for the other. The way I try and reveal this is through interviewing the young people's Support Workers and Significant Others, hoping to get some sort of handle on the 'dynamic of interaction' in the helping encounter (Bartels, 2013, p.476)

5. How does power 'in here' and 'out there' (Hoggett, 2000) get in the way of systematising practices that could more universally foster engagement with help and how people come 'to collude with' it (Tyler, 2013, p.10)?

The final question responds to a concern that some unarticulated force perpetually, perniciously stops help from happening, despite good intentions. Like Willis (1978) I am interested in a dynamic that seems to force a result despite a clear expectation to avoid it.

4.3 Research design and development

In this section I describe how I arrived at the final research design and how that process is driven by a participatory mindset that thinks bottom-up, is mindful of power dynamics and tuned to the ANT slogan 'follow the actors themselves' (Latour, 2005, p.11). I position myself in the fluid theorisation of participatory and co-produced research and explain the limitations of its actualisation in the project. I touch on the Scoping Study I undertook and how it shaped the final research design.

4.3.1 Participatory and co-constructed

I use a similar approach to Willis (1978) and Jackson (2015) regarding the transparency of approach and iterative development of knowledge which engages research participants. However, I hope that the participatory approach I take sees the participants as more active co-producers of knowledge. Together we tried to unpick the nature of 'engagement with help' through the prism of their experience.

The last 40 years have seen a swing towards collaborative approaches in research (Aldridge, 2016; Beebeejuan, 2015). Associated with democracy and empowerment, the paradox here is that the 'elasticity' of the term 'co-production' is the source of both the limitations and strengths of the approach (Durose et al, 2017). Participatory research has its roots in the work of the Brazilian educator Freire (1970) working in Latin America from the 1960s up until the 1990s to enable impoverished and oppressed communities to explore their situation and simultaneously know it better, with the aim of transforming it. The use of participatory research techniques grew in anthropology and international development during the late 1960s. Research participants' experiences, culture and language were so

unfamiliar to the researchers that new methods were required to enable communication of experience. Commonly called Participatory Rural Appraisal, these techniques are still used in international development contexts (Chambers, 1997). Despite being tainted by their association with colonially-infused anthropology, this work drew researchers' attention to the artefacts of research and the complications of knowledge production across difference.

Very early on it became apparent that 'participation' could be done both badly and well; theorists established hierarchies to capture this, most notably, Arnstein (1969) much later Pretty (1995), and later still Goodson and Phillimore (2012) and Aldridge (2016). While I find these hierarchies problematic in their over-simplification of the process and the intonation that as we pass a rung we leave behind the previous one, or that the top rung is somehow 'better', they do express one clear and useful sentiment: the top rungs, the 'high' end of the continuum is marked by the maximum independence, self-reliance, autonomy, 'user led', 'user control'; the oppressors, the privileged, the powerful get out of the way.

> '...the fundamental difference between PR and other research methodologies lies in "the location of power in the various stages of the research process" (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995, p.1667), and the fact that, in the main, the stories and 'voices' of participants are placed center stage, both in the design and objectives of participatory approaches.' (Aldridge, 20-16, p.9)

Enabling participation is, without doubt, about power. While, as Pain et al. (2012) highlight, it is not possible to 'circumnavigate the paradoxes of power in research and representation' (in Beebeejuan et al, 2015, p.553) it is possible to shift the processes of 'theorising and knowing' outside of academic spaces and towards the people who are the focus of the

research (ibid). Beebeejuan et al. go on here following Robinson and Tansey (2006) to talk about 'transformational research' where participants 'actively alter the situation in which they find themselves' (2015, p.553). My research was not designed to achieve such socially transformative potential (although participants do report that involvement in the research 'helped' them to reflect and potentially take decisions that they would not have otherwise). However, participants were involved at the 'problem definition stage' (Beebeejuan et al, 2015, p.553).

My approach nonetheless required heightened sensitivity to power and where and when it flipped or subtly drifted from one person to another throughout the research process. It required a commitment to locating power in thoughts, actions, use of language and space. This is about painfully unravelling the strands of power that run through relationships and adjusting, minutely and drastically - realising where it is going awry and that you might be wrong. It is a 'mindset', a set of attitudes and behaviours shared by all stakeholders (Chambers in Seal, 2018). Kumar (2002) provides a good list of the attitudes that help:

> Self-critical awareness of one's behaviour, bias and shortcomings; respecting others; not interrupting, not lecturing, but being a good, active listener; not hiding but embracing error; passing initiative and responsibility to others; having confidence in the ability of others and open–ended flexibility. (Kumar, 2002, p.45)

It is a process of perpetually learning, adjusting, checking, learning and adjusting again. It is attention (see Chapter Two). I have no illusion that the research participants in this study are 'in control'. However, if I was to enable an authentic voice, sit with them as they tell and re-tell their stories of need and engagement, obtain learning that surprises rather than

confirms or denies existing theories, I needed to seek out ways to get out of the way as much as possible and perpetually check (check with them, honestly check myself) and adjust in planning, in real time, in reflection, and in writing. It is a quiet process that continually hums in the background of this study, demanding reflexivity and creativity. The approach is both a question of (a) ontology/epistemology (what is truth and how to get to it) and (b) ethics.

The results of participatory research are not consistently valued as a knowledge production methodology, and critiques, in the main, circle around rigour. Others see it, especially within a development context, as a tool that may enable further oppression by overlooking structural issues and diversity in communities and underestimating the power and ambitions of states and corporations (among other points of contention) (Cook and Kothari, 2001). Furthermore, considering the complexities of power, and the sensitivity participatory research is required to have, it often goes wrong, and in unanticipated places and ways. A thoroughly implemented participatory project requires long-term commitment, flexibility and a *team* of people with different strengths and expertise to respond as things change. It is with this in mind that I have limited[28] the participatory elements of this project.

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[28] I originally planned to establish an advisory group made up of Support Workers, Management and young people who were not involved as participants. I planned to meet with them between Waves, present interim findings and invite response and contribution for the direction of the following Wave. While Futures was very supportive of the research, all members of staff were extremely busy; I felt that taking their time for the research was taking it from the young people or contributing to the pressure and stress of the work. I also planned to have a final stage where I would use Image Theatre techniques with a larger group of people with experience of working in and experiencing homelessness, using the stories of the young people to explore resonances and consider how the issues arising around enabling and inhibiting engagement might be addressed in the sector. This proved too ambitious in respect to my own time and resources.

4.3.2 Scoping Study

In order to check my assumptions regarding the relevance and value of the topic and related questions, and to obtain feedback and ideas on methods, participant selection, recruitment and engagement, I undertook a Scoping Study with Futures' staff and their young clients. I gathered data over a three-month period through one-to-one interviews with staff (N3) and young people (N2); participant observation on a three-day residential with a group of young people (N21) and staff (N12); and a focus group of young people (N7) from Futures' Client Involvement Group.

The Scoping Study was instructive. As a direct result I conducted an exploration of literature about trust; I focused on relationships in interviews; and my commitment to co-production and transparency was increased. I made a practice of checking audio recordings for instances where I took over in some way and would come back to this in the following interview, sharing my reflection with the young people. The design and use of interactive tools was shaped through this process and is discussed below. For a longer discussion regarding the Scoping Study see Appendix ii.

4.3.3 The final research design

The spine of the research involves four waves of qualitative interviews with six young people and their significant others over a 15-month period. It is a longitudinal and retrospective case study with a flexible design, using a variety of qualitative methods. Here I discuss these elements of the design.

Case Study

This inquiry is an **'instrumental case study'** in that 'the case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role; facilitating our understanding of something else'; here, engagement with help (Stake 1995, p.3). The individual young people, their telling of experiences of need and help are at the centre of one of a series of collective case studies. The observations of their significant others and the paperwork produced about them by Futures provide me with other perspectives. Together, these sources of data become the instrument for me to obtain better understanding of the general phenomenon of 'engagement with help'. I wanted to diverge from the quantitative methods that show faceless individuals going in and out of the revolving doors of mental health, homelessness, criminal justice and drug and alcohol services, and tap the 'complexity' the case study design affords (Thomas, 2011, p.590-91). To avoid looking through the lens of a singular service used, or singular need experienced, and look instead at the 'richness of the living worlds' (Thomas, 2011) they occupy.

Flexible Design

It is necessarily a **'flexible design'** (Robson 2011, p.132); at its core, it is participatory and iterative, with the opportunity for research participants to influence decisions on methods of data collection and sources. Furthermore, a variety of methods and data assist in obtaining a full, rich, multi-dimensional understanding of what is occurring (Mason, 2006).

Life Story and Story Telling

A part of each interview was 'story telling' (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003) or 'life story' (Adriansen, 2012). In the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to

recall times when they could have used some help. In the first interview I asked participants

to think about the first time they could recall needing help and what occurred; for most of

the young people this took them back to childhood or their early teenage years. In the

following interviews, they filled in the period between the last interview. This retrospective

telling takes the form of 'story'. Some, like Gardner (2001) and Goffman (1959), are critical

of the method because of the possibility that participants will 'convey misinformation' or

employ other 'defensive practices' to protect what they choose to project about

themselves' (Goffman, 1959, p.24). Others, such as Maynard-Moody and Musheno, while

aware that stories are ambiguous and multi-layered, often incomplete, inaccurate and

embellished, choose it because of what they do reveal, 'both rules and morality to defend

decisions and reveal internalised as well as interactive conflicts' (2003, p.25). Stories help to

understand not just how the young people respond to the expectations of help-giving

services but what is occurring in their thinking, the feelings and beliefs behind their

responses and decisions. Maynard-Moody and Musheno go on to suggest that '...the more a

story deviates from historical accuracy, the more fully and richly it depicts norms and values

and beliefs because these accounts more fully embody the story teller's interpretation of

events' (2003, p.32). It is these stories that get at the tension between how the young

people see themselves responding to their circumstances and how this is seen or not seen

by others who then succeed or fail to establish trust, which appears as an essential pathway

to enabling engagement. Maynard-Moody and Musheno's (2003) insights on the values of

employing this method are so helpful in reading the stories of the young people and their

significant others – the bleak, the dramatic, the outrageous and the contradictory.

Moreover, the addition of multiple perspectives, including paperwork, in my research design

helps to overcome the potential problem of a singular slant on the representations of engagement.

It is fair to say that observation offers a different perspective; it could have been an opportunity to see how participants' encounters around help looked from the outside, and it was an option for the participants in my study but one that they did not choose. Or, when they did, the session was cancelled as in the case of Holly, who looked for reassurance that it would not be made obvious I was there to observe her, and was relieved when it was cancelled, and Akira, who invited me on a night out in town to show me parts of the town that would be inaccessible to me as a white middle-aged person, which I chose not to accept because it was not, in his mind, about engaging with help. This did not seem like a great loss as in the Scoping Study, in addition to interviews and focus groups, I spent a week with the Futures cohort on a residential as a participant observer, as discussed in Appendix I (p.418). While the results were helpful in getting a sense of the group and how they interacted with different members of staff, I found it difficult to stay present in the activity as well as mentally keeping note of what was going on. It also felt uncomfortably covert, these young people have been observed and analysed and moved about and acted on repeatedly — by social workers, teachers, police and others — throughout their short lives, experiencing multiple disadvantage, and this is not the relationship I wanted to establish for the research. Furthermore, because the interviews were lengthy and in locations of the young people's choice, I still had opportunities to see participants 'acting' in the word, relating with others who shared their homes, attended their interviews, visited while I was with them, conversed on the phone during interviews and wandered or drove to and from interview

locations to bus stops and train stations. This was also the case with significant others. I reflected on these incidents carefully and bring the insights gained into the analysis.

Longitudinal and Retrospective

The research is qualitative longitudinal research (QLLR) and retrospective. The interviews with each young person span 12-15 months. QLLR in homelessness is not uncommon (see, for example, Craig et al. 1996; McNaughton-Nichols, 2009; Crane et al., 2011). But there is appetite for more as indicated above (Pickering et al., 2003, p.5). I am interested in tracing how things *change* for the participants over time, different needs that arise, different services and individuals that are approached for help, and new insights into what enables and constrains their engagement. Longitudinal research makes change and indeed stasis the focus of attention (Holland et al., 2006). I am also interested in the re-telling of stories, new descriptions of relationships previously discussed, and comparisons between individuals and services and circumstance. As observed by Holland et al., QLLR is a holistic approach and by 'focusing on the individual rather than the issue' it is possible to better understand the often 'subtle interaction of factors shaping', in this case, engagement (2006, p.2). Qualitative longitudinal methods can offer fresh perspectives into established arenas of social enquiry, drawing attention to the psychological and biographical processes 'lived through experience' through which social outcomes are generated and mediated (ibid).

Working over a period of time, in addition to helping build trust with the participants, also gave them time to reflect on their experiences and build their telling of it, to pay attention to their experiences of engagement and come to their own conclusions, to tap the mess rather than push for closure. The interview becomes the site for 'mutual reflection' and

mutual learning (Nielsen and Lyhne, 2016, p.54). One participant, after helpfully sketching the territory of comfort and discomfort and the morality of being on benefits says: 'I've been thinking this whole week how to describe it to you because I really struggle describing it' (Holly, 1084, W4). Furthermore, it gave participants a way to not say something but anticipate explaining in the future, as Akira says in Wave 1:

> Simone: ok, and um, is there, what's, what's - did we talk about what's going on inside of you at this time?
>
> Akira: um, yeah like too much to be fair, I can't put it into words, maybe at our next appointment.

Finally, QLLR allows for development and innovation in sampling, methods, units of analysis and theorisation throughout the research project (Holland et al., 2006, p.33) which directly enabled the iterative, co-produced and responsive study I aspired to.

4.4 From recruitment to interviews: a lively process

In this section I detail the research process from recruitment of participants to interviews. I naturally complied with the university's ethical review procedures for both the Scoping Study and the larger research project. However, I follow Macfarlane when he argues that the most appropriate ethical approach to social research is one of 'ongoing critical engagement' (2009, p.198), not merely procedural. As a result, I refer to the ethical implications of the research, how I addressed them and critically where I could have done better, throughout this section rather than cleaving ethics out as a separate section.

4.4.1 Selection and recruitment of young people: Multiply excluded and not the 'usual suspects'

This study focuses on young people experiencing multiple and complex disadvantages (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013) whose experience of homelessness is ongoing and/or chronic (Busch-Gertseema et al., 2010). All the young people were selected from The Programme. The bid specification for The Programme defines the targeted cohort as:

• Aged 18-24 (21 and over if they are care leavers)

• Not in employment, education or training

• Homeless as defined in the homelessness legislation but not in priority need under that legislation

• A priority for local authority support but unable to be accommodated in a supported housing scheme due to e.g.

o Previous difficulties in, or eviction from, supported accommodation indicating that available supported housing provision is unlikely to succeed

o Security issues e.g. for young people involved in gangs or those who have committed serious offences

o Needs deemed too high/complex to manage within a supported housing scheme because of e.g. substance misuse, significant mental health issues, low/medium learning disability or personality disorders but not reaching the threshold for Adult Social Care services

o Lack of specialist supported accommodation (DCLG, 2014, p.4)

In the introduction to the specification the cohort are described as belonging to a group that:

> 'Sometimes falls through the net and receives little support because of the complex and interlinking problems they are experiencing – they are essentially too hard to help - and many go on to increasing involvement in crime, rough sleeping, substance misuse and long-term benefit dependency' (DCLG, 2014, p.4).

My main concern in the selection of research participants from within The Programme was to avoid working with young people *selected* by Futures, 'the usual suspects'. Three of the four staff participating in the Scoping Study referred specifically to this, and my personal experience working and undertaking research in the sector made me aware that if I broadly promoted the opportunity to participate in the research or left it up to Futures to select young people, 'the usual suspects' would be selected.

> 'You get that skewed sample of everyone knows the 'keen, doing well young person' who will take part in your research and actually the difficulty you've got is that you want to get the non-engagers as they say or the hard-to-reach population' (staff, Scoping Study).

Likewise Curtis et al. note that children who 'communicate well, and in English, or who are regular attendees, are more likely to be given voice in the research literature' (2004, p.168) and therefore 'hard-to-reach' children, who are frequently in greatest need of good services, have tended to be marginalised in enquiries about those services (Hill, 1997).

With these concerns in mind and much trepidation I began considering a 'sampling strategy'. It is possible that young people living in different areas, of different gender and age will have a different experience of engaging with help and, despite my small sample, it was possible to at least represent some of their diversity. Using Quota Sampling (a non-probability method) whereby the cohort has similar distribution of the characteristics to those that are considered to be important in the population (Blakie, 2010, p.177), I worked to find a group which roughly represented the locality and demographics of the 315 young people participating in The Programme. I hoped to recruit at least eight participants and selected 13 in the first round.

Figure 6. Demographic breakdown of The Programme Group N= 351

Gender	Male 77%	Female 22%		Transgender 1%	
Age	18-20 33.3%	21-23 41%		24-26 25.7%	
Location	Ballarat: 32%	Wodonga: 26%	Footscray: 18%	Sheperton: 14%	Williamstown: 9%
Ethnicity	White 77%	Black 10%	Mixed 10%	Asian 3%	

Following the selection, I met with the four programme managers covering the five geographical areas of The Programme, described the research and requested their support

in recruitment. It was decided that I should contact the young people through their Support

Workers in the first place and the Support Worker, using the information sheet would

establish a young person's interest in the research. On rare occasions Support Workers

would respond quickly but inevitably, even when they did, it was some time before they

could speak with the young people, garner their interest, then pass on their contact details

wherein I would begin trying to contact the young person. In four cases Support Workers

informed me that young people had relocated to a different part of the country or were

experiencing especially challenging circumstances (like Social Services investigation) or were

unwilling to participate in the research. There were some who indicated interest but

following an array of visits, phone calls and emails the interest was not sustained. I then

randomly selected participants using Quota Sampling a total of six times, recruiting two

young people. Following this I resorted to 'judgemental or purposive sampling' (Blakie,

2010, p.179), relying on Support Workers to select young people with the relevant

demographic characteristics who had experienced multiple attempts to engage with

different sources of help.

Despite efforts to sample out the 'usual suspects' I may still have exactly these young people

in my cohort. I am comforted by Stake when he says of selection of case studies: 'Balance

and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance (Stake 1995, p.6),

and that 'my choice would be to take that case from which we feel we can learn the most

which may mean taking the one we can spend the most time with' (ibid, p.243).

Figure 7. Demographic breakdown of research cohort

Gender	Male 5	Female 1	Transgender 0	
Age	18-20 2	21-23 3	24-26 1	
Location	Ballarat 3	Wodonga 1	Footscray 1	Shepperton 0	Williamstown 1
Ethnicity	White 5	Black 1	Mixed 0	Asian 0	

4.4.2 Selection of other data sources

Young people's files: Research participants have access to the information maintained about them by Futures. I obtained consent from the young people as to the degree of access I had to their files. All but one participant agreed to full access with one specifying that I only accessed their Outcome Stars and Risk Trackers. The other young people's files included: referral forms, communications with landlords and Housing Associations, Probation and Courts, Training and Education providers, Welfare Agencies.

Support Workers: Because of the interest in relationships in formalised settings of help and their effects on engagement, interviewing Support Workers was a priority. Originally, I planned to interview them in each wave of the study. This was reconsidered on learning that as the three-year Programme progressed staff numbers are reduced, and as a result, there was little likelihood that young people would continue with the same Support Worker. Furthermore, there was early indication that young people were changing Support Workers fairly regularly, which has proved to be the case with the participants involved in the study.

Finally, it was clear from scoping interviews with young people that, although Futures was their main source of support, they were accessing help from elsewhere and in one case the Support Worker that one young person described as 'significant', trusted and helpful, had been moved into another area of The Programme and they had been allocated a Support Worker they did not believe had any insight into them. In the interviews one participant says of his current Support Worker, 'if I'm honest, I don't know him' (Max, W1).

Significant Others: As a result, I decided to give the young people the opportunity to nominate who (significant others) or what (observation of a training session, or a walking interview for example) could give additional insight into their engagement with help in the second to fourth waves of the research. The idea of interviewing individuals selected by research participants is reminiscent of snowball sampling, but different in that the individuals targeted would specifically discuss their experiences of and relationship to the participant. The terminology 'significant others' came from a research project I was involved with called The Escape Plan (Groundswell, 2009).

Futures: A key character in the research and I had many different opportunities to engage with staff, documentation, training and presentations pertaining to it. Data accumulated over the three-year span from conceptualisation to writing up has been used in the Scoping Study and the final research. I met twice with the CEO to present my progress, share early findings and any issues I had experienced. These were supportive and useful sessions and the CEO's feedback contributed to both my thinking and decisions regarding the research.

I met once with Futures' Clinical Supervisor during the fieldwork who provided valuable support around a safeguarding concern I experienced in the First Wave, which led to some changes to the information sheet where I explained that

> 'Because of the nature of the interview it could feel like counselling, but it is not. I am not a counsellor. You do not need to tell me anything you don't want to, please feel free to say – I don't want to talk about that.' (Revised information sheet for participants)

This small change appeared to have a significant effect, with some young people using the exact phrase 'I don't want to talk about that' in interviews.

In the final year of data collection, I had the opportunity to conduct a brief interview[29] with the Data Manager of The Programme, who had been my most consistent contact throughout the research. Additionally, Futures gave me access to the complete series of their monthly reports for the Social Investor. The 35 reports of an average 19 pages included: risk assessments regarding The Programme's operations, numbers of referrals, outcomes evidenced in that month and cumulatively, revenue received for those outcomes, highlights, lowlights and priorities, cash flow, sometimes a case study, incident reporting, sometimes photos.

The table below illustrates how the interviews panned out over time with both young people and their significant others.

Figures 7-12. Participants: the timing and time of their interviews

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[29] For The Data Manager's Topic Guide see Appendix v 151

Holly Black / Ballarat/White/Female/24-26		
Wave 1	Holly 12.10.16 2:28 h/m	Tracy (SW) 21.11.16 1:40 h/m
Wave 2	Holly 14.03.17 2:13 h/m	Milly (SO) 25.09.16 1:51 h/m
Wave 3	Holly 21.07.17 3:00 h/m	Involvement worker 05.12.17 1:05 h/m
Wave 4	Holly 02.02.18 3:34 h/m	

Max Power / Ballarat/White/Male/21-23		
Wave 1	Max 18.11.16 1:26 h/m	Richard (SW) 21.11.16 1:04 h/m
Wave 2	Max 29.03.17 1:45 h/m	Ed (SO) 10.04.17 0:54 h/m
Wave 3	Max 31.07.17 2:24 h/m	Ash (SO) 17.12.17 1:09 h/m
Wave 4	Max 09.02.18 2:57 h/m	

Mark / Ballarat/White/Male/18-21		
Wave 1	Mark 09.03.17 1:18 h/m	Roshni (SW) 08.03.17 1:29 h/m
Wave 2	Mark 09.06.17 1:15 h/m	Kath (SO) 08.09.17 1:51 h/m
Wave 3	Mark 04.08.17 1:39 h/m	Optimus Prime (SW) 06:03:18 1:17 h/m
Wave 4	Mark 06.03.18 3:06 h/m	

Akira / Wodonga /Black/Male/21-23		
Wave 1	Akira 22.11.16 1:27 h/m	Steph (SW) 08.03.16 1:21 h/m

Wave 2	Akira 20.04.17 2:05 h/m	
Wave 3	Akira 09.09.17 1:28 h/m	
Wave 4		

Tom / Williamstown /White/Male/21-23		
Wave 1	Tom 25.11.16 1:27 h/m	Gordon (SW) 28.11.16 0:54 h/m
Wave 2	Tom 05.05.17 2:05 h/m	
Wave 3		
Wave 4		

Braden / Footscray /White/Male/18-20		
Wave 1	Braden 10.03.17 1:48 h/m	Mike (SW) 12.04.17 1:03 h/m
Wave 2	Tom 05.05.17 2:05 h/m	
Wave 3		
Wave 4		

4.4.3 Knowledge production

This section includes descriptions of the methods used:

- Interviews with young people

- Participatory / co-constructed practice

- Interactive tools

- Interviews with Support Workers (SWs) and significant others (SOs)

- Ethical implications of the methodology and methods used

- Limitations of the methodology and methods used

4.4.1 Interviews with Young People

Interviews mostly took place in the young people's homes, some in cafes or other public places. Interviews were audio recorded (transcribed verbatim)[30] and took between one and a half and three hours, not including setting up and breaks. In contrast to Hall, my interviews are deliberative, structured and as transparent as I can possibly achieve. In his interactions with research participants, Hall (2003) does not take lengths to explain why he is there and what exactly he is doing, nor does he attempt to 'direct action' through the use of interviews because he finds they produce 'deliberate and forced' interactions; he quickly abandons using a recorder because it is 'uncomfortable' and 'impractical' (p.12). Instead he jots down notes throughout the days spent with young people and writes extensive fieldnotes each evening. His approach is rippling with a particular kind of rigour as he becomes involved with the young people; taking them to appointments, helping them move, driving them to outlying towns to collect misdirected giros, hanging out with them, lending them money and, on occasion, allowing them stay in his flat. They become 'friends'

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[30] Each of the young people's transcribed interviews included line numbers which I have used throughout reporting. Represented as (Line numbers and Wave numbers), this is to help the reader see how thoughts, feelings and behaviour changed or remained the same within one interview or across interviews. I have not applied this to other interviews as they are not longitudinal and thus do not require the same sensitivity to time.

(p.14). The descriptions of the young people and their day-to-day is rich and compelling; he is very much in their lives as an observer, albeit one with an uncertain purpose.

My approach to the interaction with the participants is very different. I am emphatic that, while I have worked in a support capacity, if issues present in the interviews, I will help them connect with Futures or other services for assistance rather than helping myself. I hope that the relationship is as clear and boundaried as possible – I do not want the young people to think they could get more or less from our relationship depending on what they tell me. I want to know that their participation is voluntary, not that they imagine they can gain depending on what they say. I take pains to clarify in each intervention who I am, what this is about and what I will do with the information. This is an attempt to ameliorate the power difference that exists between us by nature of my age, class, and position – not to mention being the one with the recorder and incentive.

While many of my interviews are narrative and open, even these sections are structured by the focus on the central question. I record each interview, listen to them (sometimes several times in-between interviews) and transcribe verbatim, alert to what can be missed, the significance of tone and pace, the points at which we break and what is going on around us as we speak. In addition, I write a reflection on each interview designed to capture details not apparent in the recording, which I code along with transcriptions. This creates a very different quality of interaction and analysis. The young people note that they understand I am trying to understand their experience of needing help, trying to get it and what does and does not make the difference – they fill in the background that *they* think is pertinent. I do not see them day-to-day – directly observing the wins and the scrapes they experience. The findings then capture how they, over the course of the interviews, understand their own

history of engagement prompted by my recollections of previous interviews and additional questions that I might have. In this way the following narrative has a great deal more to say about need and help than it does about homelessness – or specifically youth homelessness.

I provided incentives (vouchers of their choice to a cash value) in compensation for the young people's time and commitment to the research. I know that the incentives I provided made a difference to the young people and their decision to become involved and stay involved. The value increased at each interview, I felt this was fair considering the increasing benefit of their engagement over time in this attempt to apprehend some of the complexity around engagement. Furthermore, Braden and Tom appeared to value incentives less than the others and were the first to disengage from the research. Considering the poor financial position they were all in it is possible that the offer of voucher with a cash value could have interfered with their participation being voluntary. I hoped to ameliorate this possibility by giving them the vouchers in the beginning of the interview and reasserting throughout that they did not have to answer questions. I would have preferred to offer cash, but it was outside of Futures' working guidelines.

At the centre of the interview is a flip chart where young people inscribe their journey through needing and getting or not getting help, a 'life story' (Adriansen, 2012). Additionally, in each interview I produced a laminated card with the central objective of research 'I want to understand what encourages people to engage with help and what stops them' and three cards prompting young people to consider the people who helped in some way, or did not help, what was going on inside themselves (feelings and thoughts), and 'outside' services and environments.

Each interview was divided into three phases; the first open and narrative as discussed above, the second (from Wave Two) reflecting on the previous interview and an exercise that revealed my analysis and gave them the opportunity to refine, develop and/or reject it. The final phase of the interviews enabled the young people to take on the task of 'defining and ordering the social' (Latour, 2006, p.23) regarding the experience of engaging with help and what it was that made a difference for them. As Latour says,

> We won't try to discipline you, to make you fit into our categories; we will let you deploy your own worlds, and only later will we ask you to explain how you came about settling them... The search for order, rigour, and pattern is by no means abandoned. It is simply relocated one step further into abstraction so that actors are allowed to unfold their own differing cosmos, no matter how counter-intuitive they appear (Latour, 2005, p.23).

In three of the young people's interviews there was another person present, either a girlfriend or a friend; this posed some issues around confidentiality which I described before commencing the interview and all participants assured me that the individual sitting next to them 'knew everything about them' or a similar sentiment,' and in one case that a new girlfriend probably did not know everything. I certainly edited myself here, avoiding mentioning anything I had learned about the participant, despite their confident reassurance. I sensed that they too, in some way, edited their conversation. Additionally, these surprise elements gave me a new insight into their lives and how they related to people in them. The young people also explained and reflected on the research to their friend/girlfriend, which gave me a small window into how they experienced it:

Simone: 'so in that time that you've just been talking about then - can I just put these [the four cards: objective and levels] in front of you, um'

Akira: (to GF) 'this is the interesting part' (W3, 216-218)

4.4.2 Participatory / co-constructed practice

'Actors do the sociology for the sociologists and sociologists learn from the actors what makes up their set of associations.' (Latour, 2005, p.31)

My objective is to avoid re-enacting oppressive practices and allow research participants' experiences to unravel in their own way, avoiding as much as possible my ideas shaping what they disclose; to 'understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences' (Kvale, 1996, p.1-2). This objective grows from recognising that the research participants in this case are doubly disempowered. People experiencing vulnerability tend to be the 'object' in the face of services designed to help. This power dynamic also operates in the context of social research interviews (Whitmore cited in Reason, 1994, p.82) where participants search for the 'right' answers and to please the interviewer. In practice, the participatory tones of this research are expressed through both what I do and how I do it; most obviously in the information and consent procedures, opportunities for the participants to select additional research participants and to influence the design and flow of the interview.

The research Information Sheet and the process of establishing informed consent is a fundamental stage of addressing the natural power imbalance that exists in the research relationship; handled badly they can cast the participant as a vulnerable subject and thwart

any further attempts to democratise the process (Beebeejuan et al., 2015, p.556). The information sheet[35] appears as a document pretty similar to any other of its kind. There are three significant differences: firstly, I make use of questions so that participants engage dialogically from the start rather than being simply told what will occur; secondly, I explain that this is 'a chance for you to tell your story'; finally, it is informally phrased in a question/response format:

> Can I withdraw once the research has started?
>
> Yes! You may withdraw at any time, without any explanation or negative
>
> consequences. (Information Sheet)

In practice, irrespective of the response I received from young people (sometimes impatience and/or boredom), I laboured through it until I got a real sense that they had understood: what the point of the study was, their role as experts in their own experience, their freedom to withdraw without consequence and not respond to questions and my desire to conduct this exploratory study *with* them as opposed to *on* them (Reason, 1994, p.1). I said, 'I want to see this problem through your eyes, there are no wrong answers, you are the expert'. I explained:

> 'I don't understand, there are people and services there to help and people who
>
> genuinely want to move beyond their need, but sometimes it doesn't work – the
>
> help doesn't help' (information sheet).

Co-construction and participatory ethos/mindset are clearly enablers when it comes to 'engagement', so it is unavoidable that the extent to which the young people *engaged* in the

interviews became another way for me to explore the phenomenon. Very early on the young people began to make the comparisons themselves:

> Max:...I didn't really speak so much, I cou- I didn't know how to speak to the init 'cos I just never got taught how to engage properly. Like I said, I can't engage init, my engage is kicking off, like this, this is phenomenal I'm sitting here talking about my life, this never happens, never. Like I can't even do this with my best mate (959-963, W1)

Practically, the young people were involved in the selection of research participants (significant others). I asked them to think of people who they though had 'an insight' into how they had engaged with help over time. This was not always an easy decision for the young people, especially for two who had moved away from the areas where they had grown up.

Participants helped to shape the research tools, as I would present an exercise and suggest a way it *might* work so that they could invent for themselves a way that worked for them. From Wave Two the young people began to assist in the analysis checking, verifying, prioritising and developing ideas I had begun from the previous session. Despite my aforementioned critique of participation hierarchies, this particular research design would be positioned in the middle of Goodson and Phillimore's scale of 'level of involvement and power and control' (2012, p.6) and the 'inclusion' 'participant as actor' stage of Aldridge's Participatory Model (2016, p.156). However, I think the *feeling* of co-ownership of the research started with my genuine puzzlement about the question and my verbalised belief

that their experience could help to work it out, coupled with the interactive tools, which

enabled co-construction and the production of rich knowledge.

Grounded Theory's distinctively bottom-up development of theory and iterative approach

works well in a participatory approach; I used these approaches as well as constant

comparison (Charmaz, 2006). However, on trialling line by line coding between Waves One

and Two, I found that it produced hundreds of themes that were decontextualised from the

young people's biography and even more so from their relationships and relating, which

was exactly the territory I wanted to explore with them. I felt like the data was quadrupling

in size and getting further away from my experience of the young people. I couldn't work

out a way to use this data iteratively with the young people. Instead, I started working by

hand.

4.4.4 About the interactive tools used in interviews

In each of the four waves of interviews I developed a selection of interactive tools. The main

objectives of using these tools within the interview process were to encourage 'co-

construction' (Kvale, 1996). The physicality of the tools appears to have had a number of

benefits. They reduced my ability to influence/guide/control the interview, a salve against

inevitable interviewer subjectivity seeping in. The exercises from Wave Two onward enabled

a degree of transparency; participants could see how I was thinking about what they had

said and how it was getting me closer to some answers. In this section I want to illustrate

the peculiar relevance of the design of the tools used.

Inspired by Q Methodology (Watts and Stenner,2012; Simons, 2015) and the way that

sorting subjective statements in Q creates a kind of aliveness in interviews, I wanted to try

to develop a derivative activity. For the Scoping Study I developed a card-based exercise as the basis, a kind of topic guide, for my scoping interviews with young people and staff[36] and took the learning into the design of the research proper. I was keen to make objects that were nice to handle, clear, well-made but not in a way that would make a participant feel that it wasn't too shiny or precious for them. They were still on coloured card and nice enough to stack and handle, but handwritten and not cut precisely. In a reflection from Wave Three with Max I note that

> 'There is something important about handwriting the cards – my mess - stuff crossed out, uneven, a bit jagged, a bit ruffled – and I am – genuinely messy. I think he might see something of that – and it might be good for our discussion. He is keen to help, and I have indicated that it is ok to be messy and get things wrong.'

I used a variety of tools:

• All Interviews: Life maps with text prompts[31]

- Wave Two: Sorting Statements regarding what helped and got in the way of engagement

- Wave Three: Sorting 42 statements, a combined list of things that help and get in the way of engagement for all of them

- Wave Four: an exercise I called 'Full-on and Fuck all Engagement' about behaviour and feelings associated with different degrees of engagement

I describe each in turn below.

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[31] Discussed above and further in Appendix ii

Life Maps

As with Jackson's (2015) co-production of knowledge through encouraging young people to draw their journeys through space, I asked the young people to work on flip chart paper to map their experiences of needing help. Framing the exercise were prompts written on card including the central research objective: 'I want to understand what stops and encourages people from engaging with help' and the three layers of experience to be explored:[37]

- what was going on inside of you: thoughts and feelings

- what was going on outside of you: accommodation, learning/working environments, services

- who were the people around: how they helped or not; what they did and said that helped or not.

Life mapping created space in the interviews for participants to independently illustrate the individual complexity of trying to get help for needs, reassembling a whole otherwise fractured by the gaze of discrete services, relationships and time. As the centre of the interview, the box of coloured Sharpies[32] on the participant's side, the map became solely their territory and a physical manifestation of the aspiration for co-construction.

They are not 'timelines'. I began by asking when they first remembered needing help, but there was no emphasis on a linear construction of events. While the prompts acted as a frame, I noticed that participants often ignored the layers and or lost sight of the objective. Participants began where they wanted; four out of six began between the age of 14 and 16 but alluded to incidents or situations prior to this that they did not want to revisit or

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[32] Felt tipped pens

elaborate on. Others started much earlier, around the age of four. I purposefully gave little guidance.

> Simone: 'so I'm trying to look through your eyes, so I'm trying not to direct you too much.'
>
> Mark: 'you're trying to stand in my shoes.'
>
> Simone: 'yeah, exactly, and try and get a real feel for what's going on' (Mark, 8-10 W2).

They all took to the map-making differently, confirming the experience of Wheeldon (2002) using 'concept maps'. Mark quickly filled the page. He wrote chains of events, circling some and drawing a mass of lines from one creating a satellite of events or people's names from them. Max's maps are dominated by names with defining characteristics ('garage boy', 'bully', 'massive help') and in the corners he draws literal maps and flow charts as he describes how people and things are connected. Akira's maps are very sparse. The maps connect different experiences, feelings, relationships, people and services, and biography – each is represented by a star that becomes more elaborately coloured as time goes on.

> 'Lives are seen as whole, the public and private cannot be separated, and lives are contextualised and should be studied and understood this way' (Adriansen 2012, p.43).

Their maps are littered with names and places; near enough impossible to anonymise and represent within the thesis. However, they have been a touchstone for me to maintain focus on the stories and characters that *they* think are the most significant. Most powerfully, the visualisation of participants' life stories served as a 'collective memory' (Adriansen, 2013,

p.44) within interviews. They helped participants to recall the ground covered, making it easy to talk about connections between people, services, feelings and thinking that had and hadn't helped over time. Additionally, it is a familiar core of the interviews over time; their own framework, in their own hand, that we climbed about together to further our understanding of what enabled and constrained their ability to engage with help.

> Simone: 'we'll come back to it and I'm going to keep this and when we meet again-
> hopefully in February I'll bring it with me.'
>
> Max: (over talking) 'yes, I want to see this again (the map), definitely, I'll go 'what the
> fuck did I say.'' (laughing) (Max, W1, 1901-1905)

Finally, I recognised that working on or contemplating their maps allowed for an easy silence in the interviews, an opportunity to break from a difficult or troubling conversation for a minute or so, which certainly gave me time to reflect on what was being exchanged. Adriansen, writing on her work with a group of students examining the potential of life mapping as a tool for co-construction in life-history interviews discovers 'the paper in front provided a safe space' (2012, p.50). She describes this space as akin to what Winnicott refers to as 'potential space', relationally an in-between space that is creative allowing for discovery, creation and self-development (Palombo et al., 2009 p.154). I am not certain about this, although all but one of the participants had at least one moment of discovery about themselves and/or their experiences while contemplating their maps. I am certain that the map work, and to some extent all the interactive exercises, did counteract the formality of the interview and provide an alternative to verbally working things out; perhaps breaking out of the structuring effects of language and revealing some things that language on its own cannot.

Sorting Statements

In the First Wave of interviews, I indicated that I would find a way to let them know what their interviews were making me think about the central research question. In Wave Two I brought to the interview statements that represented what I had understood the particular young person had indicated as things that had got in the way and helped their engagement. They were things that other participants had also spoken about, and I called them 'cross-cutting themes'. I wrote these themes up on pieces of coloured card and at this stage I simply asked them to look through them and tell me a bit more about the part these things had played in their engagement currently and in the past. Each participant worked with between five and 12 statements.[39][33] In the Third Wave there were a total of 40 statements based on all the young people's previous interviews and the exercise was to sort them under the three aforementioned levels: inside, other people, the environment.

In Wave Two I either laid the cards out in front of the young people or handed them to the young people to read through. In the Topic Guides I had included quotes from their interview transcription so that I could explain what they had said that made me think that this was an interesting thing to explore further. I said, 'this is also a chance for you to see what I am thinking and for you to say, "you are way off" or "just about there"'.

Each participant responded to this part of the interview differently. Holly accepted it very much as a verification step and responded with 'I told you that would be important' or 'well that's not a surprise'. Akira, on the other hand distanced himself from most of the themes, not owning them and suggesting that there is something not ok with people who would

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[33] See Appendix vii for example of Topic Guide Wave Two

think a particular way. Max was animated at the idea that others might think the same as him then surprised me by pulling two of the themes out and proclaiming 'well, these two are related' and went on to explain how. This was an unexpected but welcome innovation which I took into the following three interviews. I would say that some of the young people had seen some relationship between the cross-cutting themes and perhaps they would too. As Crilly et al. point out, 'participants'...responses to such ambiguous depictions may clarify vaguely understood concepts and hint at previously unconsidered ones' (2006, p.350). This experience played a significant part in the development of the exercise in the following wave which would enable much more of this opportunity to make connections between themes and identify resistance.

In-between Waves Two and Three I refined and developed the statements as I listened back to their interviews. I began to experiment with allocating them to the three layers and things that encouraged or worked against engagement. Where they should go was sometimes not obvious, and in some cases, what helped and did not was also unclear. I tried the exercise out on a couple of colleagues and made a few final changes before placing the stacks of statements in an envelope with the three layers cards for Wave Three.[34] The instruction was to firstly look through the statements and discard those that did not apply to them and then to order the cards from 'big deal' to 'not much of a deal'. I had also decided to give the young people the opportunity to complete another sorting of the statements as if they were their own Support Worker.

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[34] See Appendix viii for example of Wave Three Topic Guide

Holly was always my first interview and she had enthusiastically agreed to help me tweak the exercises. Her insights below on this exercise are from the final interview. She found that this way of expressing herself gave her confidence that I was understanding what she was trying to communicate. She said, 'I could arrange it visually so you would understand' and,

> 'because I know we talked about them individually as well, and I know you're reading exactly the same thing. Whereas, if I tell you something, you might interpret it differently, and that's why you have obviously got questions when you come back - so yeah, it's very good because you can see it.' (3671-3694 W4)

It also served to help her to think through her thoughts and feelings,

> 'if you had just asked me about that I would be like I don't fucking know... whereas, putting those in you're like actually yeah, yeah! I can see what I'm on about now' (3671-3694 W4)

On reflection I think that the most concretely useful outcome of this exercise was as an aid for the participants to sort through their thoughts, feelings and experiences related to needing help and trying to engage. Together with the transcriptions and my notes on how they physically responded to the exercise, the floating statements began to take their place in a network of experience around engagement.

Full-on and Fuck all Engagement

Having completed the first stage analysis of the Third Wave I realised that while young people had hinted at a spectrum within the act of engagement, we had not explored it. The

term 'engagement' required further description. I knew for certain that 'turning up' looked like engagement but frequently had some extrinsic motivation and was more like compliance. I wanted to check my assumptions about how it 'feels' and 'looks' to be 'really engaged', 'just turning up' and in-between these.

Furthermore, while the individual ingredients of constrainers, enablers and how they connected was emerging, I didn't have a sense of how they played out together in an actual experience. In Wave Four,[35][41] in an attempt to address these gaps, I developed a final exercise called: 'full-on and fuck all engagement'. Here we laid out their maps from the previous three interviews and photographs of the sorting statements exercise from the previous interview. I asked them to spend some time to identify when they would describe their engagement as 'full-on' or 'fuck all'. We then talk about how they felt and behaved during these experiences and then two in-between experiences (not quite full-on/not quite fuck all).

Finding it difficult to communicate what is going on for them, especially their feelings, had already emerged as a theme, and I wanted to meet this issue in some way. I drew from a workshop I had attended many years ago with a king-sized sheet embroidered with words for feelings. To replicate this in a small way I made six 'feelings cards'[4][36][2] to use if they wanted to help find the word that suited best the way they felt at those times.

Once again, their responses to the exercise were as enlightening as what they wrote down. The questions about what engagement *looks* like encouraged them to physically re-experience the scenario; their voices would change; they would show me a slouching and

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[35] See Appendix ix for example of Topic Guide for Wave Four
[36] See Appendix x for feelings cards

bored body or puppy-like enthusiasm. The exercise felt like a summary, pinning down the feelings and behaviours associated with full-on engagement (and fuck all) tracked over time into singular incidents that they had described at least once before.

4.4.5 Interviews with Support Workers and Significant Others

Interviews with Support Workers were of 54 minutes to 1 hour and 40 minutes in duration. I met them at Futures offices or cafes. They shared with me descriptions of how they came to support/care work, which inevitably revealed something of their personal biography, including their own experiences of disadvantage, previous experiences in similar work; what led them into the work; and what they understand the work to be about/for.[37][43] The Significant Others' interviews[38] were of similar length[39] and took place in their homes, workplaces and once in a car. They described how they came to know the young person and I asked them about specific incidences of engagement with services or activities that the young person had mentioned.[46]

I prompted both SWs and SOs to talk about the young person's engagement with help and what they believed encouraged and made it difficult. Most of them extrapolated further and had more general things to say about a wider group of young people and young people experiencing homelessness generally. They also talked about their relationship with the young people, what sort of relationship they were trying to build with this specific young person and (for SWs) clients in general, why and what their impression was of the effect. It revealed their perspective on the young people's engagement, enablers and barriers to it,

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[37] See Appendix xi for SW Information Sheet and Appendix xii for SW Topic Guides.
[38] See Appendix xiii for SO Information Sheet and Appendix xiv for example of Significant Other Topic Guide
[39] The exact times of Support Worker and SO interviews are listed above in Table One.

and how they went about fostering it. Perhaps unexpectedly, these interviews also became somewhat biographical in nature, as if we can't talk about this sort of work without mobilising our own personal stories of needing help. As the reader will see, Support Worker and significant others all shared personal and sometimes unflattering stories. The richness of the stories was partly to do with the focus on an individual they have tried to help. Rather than more generalised opinions about engagement and help, their stories were grounded in the specificity and described in full colour by recent and current efforts to help, perform and keep their jobs. Often, without prompting, they would recall the same stories as other workers, significant others, or the young people themselves. This gave me the opportunity to lay the variations over one another and see the patterns that connected them. The melody in a jazz riff.

I began these interviews in the same way as with the young people – clarifying that after a long time in helping-type work I had these question that I hoped they could help me answer. I think positioning myself as an insider encouraged them to speak freely, as well as the the frequent contact I had with them prior to the interview about the research and recruiting young people. Also, by helping me recruit young people they worked with, they were volunteering themselves for interview. They had something to say about my area of concern and they shared bravely. I feel strongly that the unflattering stories they tell are not specific to them, just they were prepared to take the risk and talk about them.

4.4.6 Limitations of the methodology and methods used

Case study design is mobilised to enable an 'in-depth exploration of complexity and uniqueness' of a particular case, there are trade-offs, in particular the possibility of

generalisations to the larger population, in my case people experiencing multiple disadvantage and services and people who seek help to ameliorate the disadvantages they experience (Thomas, 2013, p.592).

Longitudinal studies always face the problem of retention over time. Of the original six young people, three stayed engaged for all four waves. This is not surprising considering how mobile the group is and the frequency with which they change contact details, run out of data and are actively hiding from some people. Fortunately, none of the participants withdrew their consent for their data to be used. But in this iterative, longitudinal, participatory method there is the challenge that if a participant wanted to withdraw, it would be difficult to subtract their input to the narrative of the research. For example, they all contributed to the original list of things that get in the way and help with engagement, which we used throughout the waves.

Another limitation was that the methodology did not allow much room for wider engagement; the young people (aside from Mark) were reluctant to suggest significant others who were working with them around addressing their disadvantages – they did not believe that these individuals would be able to offer any insight into how they engage with help. As a result, individuals from probation, the police and NHS services were often discussed but I was unable to obtain direct testimony from them. Ethnography would have better captured a wide view, but I chose case study methodology to ensure the young people are the focus and the view I see is, by in large, where they take me. The issue, however, is that in using this approach the researcher has less control of the 'coherence and

direction'. Moreover, there is a lack of representation from Futures management or strategic staff as well as the investors involved.

It was a challenge to bring the many perspectives together and make strong and clear claims based on a small cohort. I therefore do not make any claims beyond these particular young people, Support Workers, significant others and this particular context. However, where there is overlap in their understanding — where experiences and how they feel about them converge — which is echoed in the literature, perhaps it is possible and useful to apply the insights more widely. Moreover, the young people and their significant others are unlike each other in many ways, but in the case of the young people, we worked together to draw out their common experiences and feelings about trying to get help. This helped to build a richer, more nuanced picture of their contexts and situations, again creating knowledge which is useful beyond this specific context.

The approach of taking different perspectives, SW, young person etc, raised challenges in terms of when accounts were differing, who to 'believe'. Although 'truth' is not the point in this type of research as all the knowledge is produced in a certain context, with certain dynamics and power relations going on, it is difficult not to be distracted by anomalies and yet to represent them. The following is an excerpt from my reflections on Tom's first and second interviews, which illustrates how I experienced and tried to address this challenge.

> Tom's story is harrowing – that was my first feeling. As I walked to the train station, I took this picture which felt like it summed up the experience of the interview.

Figure 13. K Hole

Then, as I listened to the audio, transcribed and analysed and tried to establish an order of events and people, some things did not add up. I interview his Support Worker who says, 'Tom lies'. I began to question the coherence or the truth of his telling.'

The audio for Tom's second interview is scratchy, I imagine that I can clear up the bits that don't add up for me in the following interview. When listening back I note:

'I'm interrogating his story. THIS undermines engagement. It renders recognition unlikely or impossible, trust fleeting. It thwarts care as our minds – on all sides (including my own) become distracted as we bounce from the horror (alarm, shock) of lives to suspicion as we try and find a truth in a narrative riddled with ambivalence. I started out NOT looking for some version of the truth — just their version — I say to them repeatedly 'there's no wrong answers and the whole point of this study is to look at what you've been experiencing as much as possible through your eyes.'

This is what I have tried to do. Recognising that it is stories I am capturing and recalling Maynard-Moody and Musheno's (2003) argument that embellishment in stories depicts 'norms and values and beliefs' (2003, p.32). I would hope that I have written the findings in a way that makes participants feel fairly represented and understood. But as Willis maintains, the findings remain unqualified until there is an opportunity to see if they resonate and are useful for people in need and those in a position to help, as he puts it, 'test reality with the concepts' (p.85).

 Another related challenge is to do with my position as an insider researcher with extensive experience in similar work, and the struggle not to usurp what interviewees are saying with my own experiences and opinion. The perils of interpretation in insider research are well documented (e.g. Taylor, 2011). While familiarity with homelessness service provisions certainly helped me to quickly grasp the content of interviewees' narratives there was always a possibility that it would obscure particularities and lose the thread of the stories shared. Wall working really helped with this, having an ever-present physical memory of their work surrounding me. I was also careful to check findings that chimed with my own. I think success here is apparent in the findings that challenged my thinking, among them findings pertaining to the faith-based organisation, the violent feelings and behaviours the young people talk about, and Max's enthusiasm for Outcome Stars.

4.4.7 Ethical implications of the methodology and methods used

The methodology also raised some ethical dilemmas. Firstly, given the detailed biographies, it was difficult to anonymise the young people and significant others, especially from one

another. I addressed this by explaining this dilemma to all participants at the beginning of interviews before they signed consent forms[40] and at the end of the interview would give them the chance to highlight anything they had discussed that they would prefer I did not reference. I hoped this would give them freedom to edit themselves. Nevertheless, I was still concerned that quotes without all their context might be troubling for individuals who may read the final thesis. As described in Chapter Two the webs of trust and care are delicate and interwoven — a single thread can bring the whole thing down — or at least mess it up. I kept this concern in mind as I wrote, taking maximum care in my representation of interviews.

I worry it might also be the case for workers and clients of Futures. Furthermore, it is possible to identify Futures, despite my attempts to change names and places, the literature cited in order to describe The Programme, makes it fairly easy to work out for someone who cared to. I note the same problem in Jackson (2015) as, having worked across homelessness services in Central London, the identity of the service her ethnography is based in is obvious. I am comforted that it is unlikely that a wide audience will read the entire thesis and plan to publish it in a more accessible form where I can leave these details out entirely.

Given the emphasis placed on attachment in Chapter 3; the fact that the six young people changed Support Worker regularly, and that I was in their lives fairly regularly over a period of time, there was a possibility that I could become the 'reliable' person in their lives, and I was not going to stay in their lives. I think that I managed to avoid causing harm in this way. Thanks to my insider experience of working with people in different contexts, I established

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[40] I discussed this with the young person and obtained their verbal agreement.

clear boundaries from the start and never presented myself as an expert or a person that could directly help. However, this is something I should qualify with the young people. Of the cohort there are four I'm certain I will be able to contact again to finally present them with the results of their work, this thesis, and it is a question I will be asking them.

4.5 The order and nature of analysis

As Thompson and Holland argue, analysis of longitudinal qualitative research demands that we look analytically in two directions: cross-sectionally in order to identify discourses through which identities are constructed, and longitudinally at the development of a particular narrative over time (2010, p.237).

Cross-sectionally, I looked for repetition within the themes that emerged, to test and glean depth from the nuanced expression of them - the distinctions, surprises and striking impressions. Narratively, I looked for how themes related to one another, which environments they clustered in, the qualities of people that facilitated particular dances within a telling of a tale over time.

While I have not adopted a Grounded Theory approach (Bryant and Charmaz (eds), 2010; Charmaz, 2006), the research is indisputably 'bottom-up', and I have intuitively adopted analytical traditions that chime with the approach. The analysis occurred in three overlapping phases: at the end of the Scoping Study, between each wave, and the final analysis. Data from the Scoping Study was simply coded into the questions I had asked and staff. Where findings chimed and were confirmed in the methodological and topical literature, they directly informed the approach to my fieldwork.

Between each wave, I drew out themes pertaining to the things that constrain or enabled their engagement; things that required clarifying; things that I wanted to know more about e.g. contradictions, partial ideas/thoughts (these things went on cards as props to be used in the interviews). I began writing memos making links between themes e.g. the desire to be 'seen and understood 'and 'hiding away', wanting a 'little push' and experiencing force as toxic. Here I explored the deeper meanings of themes, plumbing the significance of an observation, to capture an incident that appears salient but has not yet become a theme (Wiener, 2010, p.304), in addition to thinking reflexively about my choices and how I felt and thought about my assumptions and decisions.

When labelling themes/statements, I used the language of the young people as much as possible to 'preserve' the particular descriptions of their experience of engagement (Charmaz 2006, p.55). This also provided some transparency, as the young people could see how I was thinking about what they said and, I hope, was an indication that I was *hearing* them. For example, 'quick to anger' which emerged from the First Wave and was developed throughout, becoming richer and more complex through the journey, was part of a common language we developed together.

Following Wave Two I began developing 'case profiles' of each of the young people, tracing changes and continuities (Thomson & Holland, 2003 p.236). This involved plotting their narratives to record order, sequence and meaning (Kirkman et al. 2001, p.280), trying to grasp what Saldana calls 'through-line': theatre terminology that denotes 'the prominent, consistent flow throughout the course of the script that drives individual action and the *meaning* of change over time (Saldana, 2003, p.150). From this process I established a final

list of 40 themes spread across the three levels: inside yourself/in other people/ in your environment and services.

Following Wave Four interviews I analysed the transcriptions of Support Workers and Significant Others using NVivo. When coding I used the themes established in the young people's interviews in addition to the questions in Topic Guides.[41] I conducted analysis within each of the themes, noting in particular where ideas converged with and contradicted those of the young people. When working through the code responding to the question regarding 'views on their client's engagement' I found myself re-constructing the Support Workers – trying to make them whole again. I decided to print out the NVivo nodes. Then, when writing up the section introducing them in Chapter Eight, I returned to whole transcriptions and fieldwork notes to ensure the discussion of themes were contextualised and remained embedded in their narratives. The frustrating experience of going back and forth between cross-sectional and narrative approaches to analysis with the Support Workers and Significant Others led me to believe I would need to abandon NVivo for the final analysis of the young people's interviews over time. Furthermore, in *this* study there is the additional perspectives from Support Workers and Significant Others, where I hope to reveal something of the relationality of engagement with help. In addition, I have access to the textually mediated information from Futures that presents a very different view of the young people's engagement over the three-year programme.

The approach I used for the final analysis of the young people's interviews is a layered activity:

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[41] See Appendices xii and xiii

- coding field notes, notes made when transcribing (including theoretical sampling and memos) and complete transcripts according to the '**repeat cross-sectional framework'** (see Table Two below) (Thomson 2007; Lewis 2007).

- highlighting text to indicate the 'domains' particular text is embedded within including housing – setting up a home/resolving accommodation issues; physical and mental health; working and training opportunities; benefits and debt; police and criminal charges

- developing case profiles, focusing on the 'autobiographical narrative' which Kirkman et al. distinguishes from the canonical narrative where the former aims to explore the subjective meanings the participant associates with their narrative as it unfolds in events, relationships and the culture in which they are embedded, the latter aspires to say something more about the 'dominant' or 'standard' experience of a particular phenomenon (2001, p.280-281). Here I focus on events, relationships and/or domains which the participant explores anew in each interview, where an insistence to return feels like either an arrow pointing to the significance, a place they feel comfortable to explore these ideas in, or something they are trying to work through themselves. They are, for example: getting back to work, addressing mental health, or negotiating precarious relationships.

- coding segments of text that directly responds to methodology in a separate document.

- integrating the material produced by Futures and other authorities about the young people.

For Repeat Cross-Sectional Framework (see Appendix xi)

The structure of the following empirical chapters was forged through this process of analysis. The narrative aspect is presented in Chapter Five. Chapter Six illustrates the things inside the young people that have troubled their engagement over time and things that they considered to both get in the way and help. Chapter Seven illustrates the tactics they use to get the help they need, to work the services and people they access to redress the disadvantages they experience. Chapter Eight details the strategies that Futures employed to engage the young people and their response to these tactics. Finally, Chapter Nine highlights the things in people, in services and environments and in themselves that come together to produce 'full-on engagement'.

As Willis explains, while a small and focused study can't tell us everything in his case about 'non-conformist culture', or in mine about engagement with help, the aim is to 'separate out some of the central strong patterns in a grey and confusing daily pattern of institutional life' (1978, p.85). In the end, the participatory elements gave my analysis direction – as the young people troubled over whether trust and care were important, and how important, and the things that had happened that made them say this, their own ranking of their own themes, their hesitations, certainties and conflicts are what I have tried to represent in addition to sheer repetition across the case studies as they return to incidents to describe the boundaries between helpful and unhelpful people and contexts; between wanting and needing help; between hiding away and being understood. From here the patterns emerge.

At the end of each empirical chapter I discuss how the findings resonate conceptualisation of engagement with a focus on attention established in Chapters One to Three, making a pathway to Chapter Nine to understand what engagement looks like and feels like. Chapter Ten sets out the thesis' final conclusions and contribution.

CHAPTER FIVE. INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS

In this chapter I introduce the six young people participating in the study, their Support Workers (SWs) and Significant Others (SOs). I focus on the young peoples 'autobiographical narrative', that is, their subjective meanings, the relationships and the contexts that they are embedded in (Kirkman et al. 2001, p. 280-281). Each section is dedicated to one young person and begins with the first interview, the beginning of our relationship and their descriptions of the first time they can recall needing help. Their SWs are then introduced along with the young people's Outcome Stars (OS), followed by a representation of further interviews with the young people and their SOs, interwoven chronologically.

This way of introducing the characters serves two central concerns: firstly, to not fragment people or see them from particular service or needs-led perspectives; and then secondly to represent as much as possible the richness and breadth of their experiences. It is my attempt to get some purchase on the complex relational dynamic that plays out (between them, their SWs, SOs, their environments) around needing help and being in a position to help. All the young people indicate frustration at needing help still. People who help come in and out and back into their lives. 'Help', what it is, and who does and does not do it, is not consistent.

The first thing that struck me about the Support Workers was how similarly to the young people they presented. All but one of the Support Workers detailed precarity in their lives. This is not surprising considering the precarity of the homelessness sector as discussed in Chapter Two, and in caring roles in general (see Chapter Three). They mostly had also encountered difficult experiences in the past (including homelessness, abuse, disability,

family breakdown) and described how this motivated them to work in caring and/or, informs their approach to the work empathetically.

Futures and The Programme may also be regarded as characters, and their impact seeps through the accounts of the research participants throughout the findings chapters. The discussion section brings the evidence in the chapter together and draws some conclusions to establish the contribution of the chapter to the overall thesis.

5.1. Tom

Tom grew up on an estate in Melbourne associated with unrest. His father was violent towards him. It is the first mark on his map, he was four years old.

> 'Um when my dad was beating me... he used to, like proper, beat me and my brothers up... Um, he used to call me retarded... Literally, it went on for about 16 years.' (09-97, W1)

I arrange to meet Tom at a Cafe. He doesn't make a lot of eye contact and seems to be physically arching away from the table. I prattle on about the research as I take out folders, coloured card, flip chart paper and coloured Sharpies. He is clear and certain about his impression of Gordon his SW to begin with: 'he's a prick', then later when asked directly 'what's the relationship?', he says 'up and down'. He says Gordon reminds him of his dad and later still that he does have a lot of respect for him and 'he sees me as a person'.

I ask him whether he is using any support services other than 'the service'. He says 'my mates'. He goes on to describe his mates as living a 'gang' 'criminal' lifestyle.

'So, I'm stuck in-between having someone [SW] that can't help me and someone that can help me but in the wrong way—it's kinda hard' (83-84 W1).

He draws a distinction between 'wrong and right' way, where the 'wrong way' is associated with violence, crime, drugs, camaraderie, fun times and reliability and the 'right way' with work, paying bills and doing what you're told. He has two children, the youngest is 18-months and was placed in Local Authority care days after she was born; his 'boy' is 7 years old. He is 23. He sees living the 'right way' as a way back to them. He describes some people from his past who helped: they 'listened', 'paid attention', and saw 'the goodness and the badness' in him; he couldn't 'hide nothing' from them. They are all far away in another city, estranged, dead.

He has got a new job at a chain store. He is trying but finding some of the collegial relations challenging. He is haunted by an abusive relationship he has recently fled. When he showed Gordon the marks on his body from the abuse, he advised that Tom should 'just stay away from her'.

5.1.1 Tom's SW Gordon

I meet Gordon at the offices belonging to Futures. He started with 25 clients and now has 11. Gordon has just returned to work after five weeks sick leave, 'burn out'. Before joining Futures two years ago Gordon worked in temping (because the pay is better), as a Social Worker with children and families and later with adults with disabilities but explains that he 'lean[s] towards young people.'

'And that's my strength I think, you know. I don't know if it's something in my own life 'cos my dad wasn't present most of my life and it's something in me which thinks that I could save them, you know, and almost inadvertently trying to save myself.'

Gordon has been working with Tom for 20 months. To begin with Gordon says that 'he has always had a lot of time' for Tom because [he] 'identifies with him…', especially because he shares Gordon's star sign. But there has been some friction in their relationship. He says that Tom has done something that 'really disturbed' him. It transpires that Tom thinks that he should be getting an in-work benefit and while Gordon was away Tom 'convinced' other workers that he was owed this benefit. Gordon believes that Tom made this request 'to deflect from his dishonesty' about why he has not paid his rent. Gordon says that this situation 'threw him,' and that he feels that Tom has 'abused me somewhat rotten'. Gordon says Tom would only get in touch when he needed something. When Gordon needed Tom to do something related to outcomes, he would have to use an incentive. Gordon describes Tom's dishonesty over and over. He explains that Tom says he was in gangs. Gordon thinks 'you wouldn't be alive if you were so deep within it'. He describes Tom as 'quite vulnerable' and says that Tom disclosed domestic violence he was experiencing. Tom showed Gordon the marks on his neck, and he 'got really scared for him'.

I ask what he thinks might get in the way of Tom engaging. He recalls that Tom has children, and they are all in care. Gordon asked Tom, 'what is it about you that chooses this situation in life for yourself?' Gordon thinks that whatever this is, it is what prevents Tom from engaging. He thinks that there might be some underlying mental health issues. He says that Tom used to be on Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and that he 'claimed that he had some mental health disorder'.

5.1.2 Later meetings with Tom

I meet Tom three months later, at another coffee shop 60 miles away. He has disengaged from Futures and moved twice, the final time with his new girlfriend and her son. She sits next to him through the interview. Things seem to have improved, but beneath what looks like employment, stable accommodation and a relationship, is the chaos he has run from. His ex-partner is pressing charges against him for sexual assault, and her friends are threatening him. He has had visits from the police and Social Services. He has had a terrible toothache that makes it hard to sleep.

He is bubbling with animosity about Futures and how in his eyes they made things worse. He needed help with handling the abuse, and he needed help getting to the bottom of his benefits issues. He didn't get it.

Tom's girlfriend gives me her details, so I can keep in touch with him. I call him a couple of weeks after the interview, and he still hasn't been to the dentist. Just over a month later I try again a few times without success. I see that pictures of him have disappeared from his girlfriend's Facebook page.

5.2 Max

Max grew up in Ringwood and describes the people who live around there as 'brutal' and 'horrible'. He is 22 now. From the age of five until the end of primary school he was badly bullied:

> 'I was getting battered every day, every day, every day, I mean every day... like I play
>
> my game every day... not talking a punch and I was down... they was stamping on my

head—they were kicking me in the ribs...like they knew how to fight, and I didn't.'

(Max, W1, 264 -269).

When I meet him the first time he has been at a 'Jobs Fair' with a group of other young, tall, white men from the service and the comparatively small SW, Roshni. They turn up at the exit about an hour and a half after we've agreed to meet. They are in a uniform of tracksuits, caps and trainers. Max knows that I am here for him, and he walks beside me answering my questions about the day. There was nothing new for him, he already knows everything about trades and that's what he wants for work. We make our way to Roshni's car, the lads making banter with each other, arguing with the worker about where the car is, talking about how the fair was boring – someone says 'shotgun' and both the worker and me look momentarily alarmed. One of the lads asks if I will be riding 'shotgun', they explain, in the front seat, pretend to shoot guns and make fun of our naivety. They are all a good foot taller than me, and I say I'm happy in the back. As we are running late, I take the opportunity to talk Max through the information sheet. It feels a little bit physically closer than I am comfortable with. The other lads and the Support Worker chat above us. We get to the point where he feels happy to sign the consent form and we are sort of left without a job to do. The lad in the front pipes up about Australia (despite living in the UK for 21 years, I have a fairly thick accent) and *Home and Away*. Like most other Brits they all want to know why I am here. They talk about how they would like to escape and how boring and cold and awful England is, especially Ballarat. Max seems especially polite and is somehow taking responsibility for me, halting a conversation if the others start sounding a bit cheeky and pointing out parts of the neighbourhood we are going through, 'that street's full of drug addicts' and 'that's the garage my mate works at'. He had especially requested an ASDA

voucher and the Support Worker had forgotten she promised to take us to an ASDA before dropping us at the project for the interview. She finally drops us at a city sized ASDA in the middle of nowhere and we walk through the cold night, scratching for things to talk about, into the light and heat of the superstore.

As we take our seats in café, he recognises a family on another table and calls over to them. He dives into the interview; serious and animated. He makes a big black dot on the flipchart paper between us to mark the first time he can remember needing help, when he was being bullied at five years old.

> '...teachers knew it was going on, I was running to em—I was grabbing them, spinning them around they were like 'what's got me' you know what I mean? [He demonstrates, spinning one way and then the next on his chair looking behind him]. But 'you go over there, and you go over there'. Ten minutes later he's in my face...' (W1, 233-237).'

> He describes himself as:

> 'Angry. Always angry, always. I can't remember anything but anger...' (280 W1).

Despite ongoing bullying Max leaves school with some GCSEs and gets an apprenticeship with a local housing association doing repairs. It marks a high point in his life with strong friendships, a girlfriend and a job he loves that he thinks is 'for life'. But he loses the job because he is unable to pass his driving test, then his girlfriend leaves him, he loses his flat and goes to Futures for help. About his assessment he says: 'Just shut up, listened, done what they told me' (1372 W1).

I ask about his relationship with his SW he says, 'if I'm honest, I don't know him'. He says he can go to Richard if he has a problem about housing.

> 'I don't tell him how I'm feeling, and he don't ask me how I'm
>
> feeling. Richard'd rather drop me a text than phone call me' (1423-1426 W1).

Max says, 'you can't express anything over a text' and that all SWs are 'civil acquaintances'.

5.2.1 Max's SW Richard

Richard appears nervous. He has been working in the voluntary sector for 13 years. He describes a 'nuts and bolts' approach to Support Work, as opposed to a more 'qualitative' approach that wastes time, is 'over-egging the empathy', and a bit 'cloying'.

He describes Max as 'a character, very straight forward', noting that 'he does tend to get in more scrapes than the average person', and that 'it is very rarely his fault'. He thinks Max's scrapes occur because he 'feels bullied, quite easily'. Richard describes his own experience of having an 'anxiety disorder' in order to guess at what might be going on. He shares this information about himself with clients: the embarrassment, the way people look at him and the things he imagines they might be thinking. Richard wonders whether Max focuses too much on his illness and then cautions himself to not take for granted that it took him many years to 'reach that conclusion' himself, that his own disorder should not stop him from doing what he needs to do.

I ask Richard what sort of relationship he is trying to build with Max. He says, 'it's not even about relationship-building, his tenancy is coming to an end, so we have got to rehouse him'. He is not there to be Max's 'best mate'. He wants 'a simple on the level relationship

not cold calculating machine style' and not 'a not empathetic one'. One where 'we can do useful things for him'. But, Richard ends, Max is 'quite poorly' so he needs a 'push to engage'. He expresses the tension between wanting to have a nonauthoritarian 'on the level' relationship while recognising the client is not actually on the level, is 'poorly' and requires some kind of coercion, a push. He doesn't want Max to be something 'out of the Waltons',[42] but to be 'him', just without the 'comic scrapes'.

5.2.3 Later meetings with Max and his Significant Others Ed and Ash

Since we last met, Max has lost his private accommodation tenancy, was moved into a hostel and has just moved into a flat back in Ringwood, an area he has been trying to escape since he was in school. He has a new worker, Roshni. He is full of stories of decorating and furnishing. His friend Ed and Ed's girlfriend help him with installing a cooker and setting up the utilities. He says, 'I need to be able to start doing shit on my own' (1712-1713 W2).

Max nominates two Significant Others. The first is Ed. Max has known Ed since he was in primary school, they are the closest of friends. Ed, he says, with the smile of a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat, was the bully. 'Now you're confused ain't ya?' (1832 W1).

The block of flats Ed lives in is badly neglected. He has turned the stairwell by his front door into a gallery of his daughter's artwork, it brightens the gloom and partly hides the damaged and dirty walls. He opens the door to me, and his 'missus' and daughters are on their way out. She apologises for the mess and explains that the black mould on the walls will not be

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[42] 1970s American sitcom about a loving and trouble-free family – making good, and being good, during the depression.

cleaned into submission. Ed gets us tea. He is 23 and has two daughters of three and six years. He has a job doing house clearance. He seems gentle; makes a good cup of tea and is obviously enormously fond of Max. In the first few moments of the interview he tells me he bullied Max, he says he wasn't 'a very nice kid' but the teachers liked him 'a lot' and that if Max had gone to them for help, they probably would not have believed him. He says that Max was 'just a target'. He says that the area was 'rough', that the parents (not his) were mostly indoors 'working out how to get their drugs'. Ed is deeply remorseful for his early behaviour towards Max; 'I've always said I'm so, so, so, sorry' for being like that. I ask Ed to describe the relationship he has with Max, he says,

> 'well, never got on, then we got on, then I do something else wrong to him, so we never get on... then after a while we just get used to it, and just carry on.'

I ask Ed what he thinks stops Max from engaging now, and he says it could be the individual person trying to help, their 'attitude, the way they pronounce their words, telling you what to do instead of asking you to do it'. He says Max 'really waits for his help', he is a 'bit stubborn'. Ed just helps. Ed thinks Max's 'anger issues' stop him from engaging. He thought Max would get more help in the hostel because he 'was on his own'. Now that he is in his flat, away from services, it will be harder.

It takes nearly an hour by bus from the centre of town to get to Max's flat. The journey towards the northeast is becoming familiar — the poverty folds in — there is less of everything. Max makes an extravagant gesture as I come in, 'welcome to the palace' something like that – it had that feel. The flat is pretty bare, but there is a bed off the floor and a huge brown vinyl settee. It is neat; the DVDs and games are, he points out with some

pride, in alphabetical order. He has been hit. There's a graze above his right eye and it has

darkened a little underneath. I notice it first off – not certain if he notices me noticing. Max

has fallen out with a lot of people, including Ed and Ash, and reconnected with some people

he knew from the past. He has had some trouble in the neighbourhood and feels

threatened. He moved his girlfriend out because he thinks he can't protect her and is

sleeping with a machete by his bed. The threat comes to the door during our interview in

the form of an assertive, fast-talking, hard as the concrete everywhere and sort of polite

mother. She was flanked by two teenage sons. When Max returned, he gave me the sense

that things had been resolved – he made the gesture of shaking hands, sorted. Another

missile dodged. But Max is still on the run, having escaped the hostel he still feels

threatened in his home.

> I'm not sitting here - I've told the police, told the housing manager, I need to get out
>
> of here. The only reason I took this is because I had to get out of there because of
>
> the same reason (906-908 W3).

Max has fallen out with Ed and Ash. He still wants me to interview Ash.

I knock on the door of a semi-detached house and an older woman holding a toddler

answers it. She is not expecting me. I mention Ash, she softens and welcomes me in and

introduces herself as Ash's Mum. There are a couple of young women and three little girls,

one listless on the couch. The only place to sit is by her feet. She doesn't acknowledge me.

Minutes later Ash comes through the door with bags of McDonald's, he serves it all out

taking a chip here and there. We decide to do the interview in his car. Ash says, 'I'm a

normal guy… family man… loyal guy'. He is 24 and has a six-year-old son. He buys and sells

cars. Ash says Max is 'like a brother... I've looked after him for a lot of years'. Ash thinks Max

'needs a good push'. He talks about how boxing had a profound effect on Max, and I ask why he is not still boxing. Ash says it is because they all have girlfriends and are settling down, and Max wouldn't go by himself because he's not good with new people.

The last time I meet Max things are not going well in his flat. A matter of weeks after moving in he has the police around; Max was desperate to get out of the hostel he was in but there is a likelihood that he would get another offer – I imagine it would be hard to convince him at the time, but no one tried. He is upbeat about plans he has with a friend to go into business. He has been working on building sites for £35 a day where roofing on ladders is not out of the question. He wants to work on site officially but doesn't have a licence. Futures had arranged for him to do a CSCS course: 'I went, done the test, failed— didn't go back'. Max has new trouble with a neighbour. He has made up with Ed and Ash. He is worried about his debts. He has not seen Roshni since he moved into his flat. She has texted him a few times. He did not respond. The Programme has finished.

5.3 Braden

Braden arrives with his cap pulled so low that I can't see his eyes. Our meeting is in the supported accommodation project he lives in. We start the interview, and he delivers one-word answers. I still haven't seen his eyes. He says that he is 20, 'turn 21 this year' (these are the most words he has said). I say: 'ooo, big one'. He tips his head up and grins, 'not really, I'm working on it. Working on my own birthday.' He has been bullied, and been a bully himself, and his interviews, like Max's and Tom's, are heavy with tales of violence. He repeats 'booted', 'battered', 'switched', 'kicked off' and 'losing it' throughout. Later in the

interview he talks about the source of the uncontrollable anger he experiences that makes him 'kick off' – the source of two evictions.

> 'I've still got the anger from when me dad's smacking me sister in the face...my sister asleep – popped her nose, gave her black eyes so I gave him a (unclear) pushed the — smack bang and punched him straight in the bollocks' (541-518 W1).

I ask if there was someone around at the time that tried to help. 'Nah... obviously I kept it all in.' He says, 'I always been violent'. Braden traces an image of a child on edge and brutally hitting out at every turn. When I prompt him to start on the map of times he could have used some help, he talks about when he was 19 and made 'intentionally homeless' because of an eviction due to a fire in his flat. The fire was lit in a bin by a mate. He originally stayed with family but there was an incident with his uncle who accused Braden of stealing from him. The Uncle said, 'if I see you around here, I'm going to run you over in my car' (506 W1).

On the street, Braden refused to lay down. He walked for 4 days and nights before he was finally referred to Futures, who were able to help. He writes a long list of Support Workers, I ask why he has had so many, and he says, 'they leave like, agency and all that'. One got Braden on a mechanics apprenticeship, but he did not pass the trial; he does not know why. He loves working on cars and describes the work he did in that week:

> Braden: 'I have to go underneath and cut the exhaust pipe off, with this like um electric saw–man, I'm holding it like that – me arms gone dead, swap arm, it's gone dead, I had to keep swapping my arms...having bits of metal going in my eyes and everything.'

Simone: 'You didn't have protective glasses on?'

Braden: 'nah but I had my hat like that (puts the peak down) covering my eyes, pulling it down just above me eyes so I can see what I was doing.' (207-215 W1).

Despite this experience Braden still hopes that he will get work as a mechanic. As I am trying to finish up, he writes 'work' in the centre of his map. It feels like a most voluntary and self-determined action. Work is help. Mike is his worker now, and Braden likes 'having a little talk with him'. He says, 'I look up to be honest—Mike is like a friend to me'.

5.3.1 Braden's SW Mike

Mike explains that he turned to Support Work because engineering made him feel like he was 'just becoming a robot', and he wanted more 'job satisfaction'. He describes himself as having a 'caring nature'. He started off volunteering in the care sector and over 20 years has 'bounced from various companies'. He got the job with Futures seven months ago after temping for a while and has been working with Braden since then. He describes their relationship as a 'friendship'. He knows this because Braden won't speak with any other of the workers. Mike thinks this is a sign that Braden trusts him. He says of young people that 'they don't seem to trust'.

Mike describes Braden's engagement as 'erratic' and focuses mainly on his lack of engagement with Job Centre Plus, asserting that 'like a lot of young people Braden does not like anything to do with authority'.

'And it's a headache for us because once he is sanctioned, housing benefit stops, then we have to submit a claim and do a rapid reclaim again...filling out forms and sending letters back explaining the reasons why he hasn't signed on.'

Mike suggests that getting paid is what 'motivated' Braden's engagement. He thinks Braden's engagement is affected by, 'growing up as a young lad who wasn't loved'. Memories 'creep to the surface and it causes aggression towards other people...the media...towards authority'. Mike thinks Braden might have some learning difficulties, but that he could never bring this up with him because he would 'lose it'. One of the things he 'likes' about Braden is his enthusiasm for work. He sees how it boosts Braden's confidence. Despite this they are encouraging him to move over to ESA where he will be less likely to get sanctioned, and his employment will be restricted.

5.3.2 Later meetings with Braden

Braden has been to the GP. He says he had to go because staff think he is on the wrong benefit. He did not say anything to the doctor about his difficult thoughts and feelings about his sister's death and being so quick to anger. He seems immensely pleased to have avoided engagement. He is worried about the effects of the medication he is taking. Recently he got 'paralytic' and locked himself in the bathroom; the paramedics and police were called. He says that they suggested counselling but 'nah', 'don't need it'. He says this always happens when he has a drink. I ask if he wants to choose a pseudonym – he says I can use his nicknames: Undead or Mutant. I explain that it doesn't really help with keeping him anonymous. I imagine we will have another chance to discuss this, but we don't. I choose Braden for him.

5.4 Akira

Akira lives in a shared house managed by a housing association. A young woman lets me in, and he calls out from the door to his bedroom. It is tiny with a single bed, one chair and a bar heater glowing orange. It's a bit awkward. I sit on the floor at the foot of the bed, and he sits on the chair opposite, and we begin.

> Simone: 'um, so um can you just tell me a little bit about yourself and sort of where you're at, at this moment?'
>
> Akira: 'Um well, I'm kinda recovering at the moment from ah—like an accident—well, kind of injury...I've been hit like—I got hit with a machete—about five weeks now.'

> Simone: 'with a machete!

The injuries are multiple, one very deep. It was 'random people' who tried to 'rob' his friend outside his house. Akira talks about 'trouble following' him. The incidents he speaks of seem at odds with how he presents. Recently he was incarcerated because of a domestic violence charge that was dropped.

Akira is Ethiopian and has spent time living there and in other African cities. He frequently talks of an older sister who he looks up to and an aunt who is always there. The first time Akira recalls needing help was when he was 14 when he left home. Akira really values help he receives from Futures, especially from Steph, his SW. He says that Steph 'understands' and 'really helps'; he 'trusts her' and 'can tell her anything' because he feels that she will

maintain his confidentiality. He says he is 'ready' to be helped and thinks Futures should not 'waste' their time on people who are not.

5.4.1 Akira's SW Steph

Steph speaks quickly and brightly. She left school at 14, and she was sleeping rough until she was 16 and went into care. She recounts her initial suspicion of services, in particular Social Services, describing herself between 14 and 16 years old as 'trying to hide from the system'. Before starting this job, she had worked mostly with young people in care at first on a voluntary 'peer' basis and formally after completing her degree. She 'jumped at' the job with Futures, especially because she had been a client. She says, 'they put me on the right path'. She was given a three-month contract to begin with, and it was extended twice.

Steph has a case load of 23. She has been working with Akira for six months. Her first impression was that he was very together. Then he disappeared and after a few weeks looking for him she learned he was in prison. Steph says Akira's loyalty to family sometimes gets him into trouble and leads him to deprioritise engagement.

She describes Akira as 'very, very open' and 'easy to read'; he 'has got his head screwed on but he does make stupid mistakes'. Steph mentions the domestic violence charge which Akira denies. She says:

> 'Whether he was telling the truth or not I will never know. I believe him. Because I trust in that relationship.'

5.4.2 Later meetings with Akira

The next time I meet Akira he has moved into a new room in the same house. He has got it

set up, and it feels homely and spacious. His injury has completely healed. He has been

arrested for carrying a knife and is on tag. He is still having trouble finding steady work; he is

broke, and it is getting him down. He mentions that he has a baby on the way. He describes

the mother as a female version of Tupac.[43][50]

Nearly five months later Akira has moved to a seaside town. I meet him at a coffee shop; he

and a young woman are sitting behind tall, cream laden drinks. The new girlfriend stays for

most of the interview. He has a job going door to door getting people signed up to donate to

charities. He is good at it. He says:

> 'It's kind of been straightforward, since we last spoke, I've kind of had everything
>
> happen (pause) the way I wanted it to happen to me' (220- 221 W3).

A lot has happened: the female Tupac lost the baby; his house was burgled; he got this new

job; he met a new girlfriend; and he is now living with she and her mother 140 miles away

from his home city. Here he can go out without carrying a weapon,

> 'feel like a normal person, walk around like a normal person - It just makes me feel
>
> completely free.' (1069-1071 W3).

I thank him for getting in touch. He says that he promised Steph he would do these

interviews and he didn't want to let her down – he knows she has moved on and is sorry he

didn't get to say goodbye. About 10 months after his last interview he responds to a

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[43] Black American Rapper who came from a family of Black activists and was shot dead by an unknown
assailant.

message via Facebook and says he 'is all good'; he is still living by the seaside and has been

busy. A few months afterwards he disappears from Facebook.

5.5 Holly

Holly lives on the 7th floor of a block of flats in Ballarat. I meet her about six months after

she has moved in, and she is in the process of redecorating. There is a lot of colour and a

kitten. It feels homey, but it's cold. I thought I was late, but I am early. She is in her pyjamas

and has one sock on—she changes in the first break. Holly grew up in the countryside. She

hated it; she was bullied. It got especially bad when she was '15 and [she] started self-

harming' (326, W1), the first incident of needing help on her map. Her telling of the violence

of self-harm is as matter of fact as the others' telling of violence. She has not used self-harm

for two years. Like the others, violence is somehow helpful and not.

> 'I like it— because I can sort of cut and I can see the scab, I can see it clearing, see it
>
> healing going, "right, you're not going to do that again are you?"' (366-367 W1).

Holly gets through school and college, she still 'struggles socially', feels uncertainty about

'what people say and what they mean'. She meets a man online and travels 100 miles to join

him against the advice of family and her closest friend. She gets a job, becomes close with

his family and stops speaking to her own. After a car accident, Holly separates from her

partner, moves in with his mum (Milly) and makes an application as homeless.

Holly describes her relationship with her SW (Tracey) as 'on a par'; she is 'fond' of her. She

also says that Tracey 'is a bit crap', and 'she doesn't understand mental health'.

Furthermore, Holly has been trying to get a fridge freezer with incentives promised from

Futures and Tracey cannot seem to make this happen. Holly is 'frustrated'. She is sensitive to power and hierarchy, and she says,

> 'you're just the person at the end of it— the person needing the help— you're the last person in the pyramid...' (2291 W1).

Nonetheless, Holly and Tracey have a 'laugh and a joke'. Tracey accompanies Holly to appointments, including her medical assessment for ESA. She puts Holly forward for courses and workshops inside and outside the organisation. When Holly was bidding for her flat, Tracey 'did a lot of phone calls and chasing'.

5.5.1 Holly's SW Tracey

Tracey has been working in Care and Support Work since she left school. She rattles off a list of mental health and homelessness charities she has worked with. She says it 'was kind of thrown on me', describing a careers teacher who pushed her in that direction. She says,

> 'to be fair I think it was a racist thing... because she was labelling all the black Caribbean people to do the same job.'

Nevertheless, while many years in care work with the elderly 'cleaning bodies and bums... was just a job', Support Work has brought her 'fulfilment'. Tracey has been working with Futures for four years. She has a case load of 25. She talks about 'chaotic' young people on her case load that move from one crisis to the next. She says Holly is not in this category, that Holly knows where she wants to go. She says, Holly's is a 'different type of homelessness'. Tracey's first meetings with Holly were difficult. Holly would either dissolve into tears or disappear outside. Tracey persisted:

'I am like she hates me! Oh my God (laughing). But I carried on. I was like I am not

here to be liked, let me just do my job.'

5.5.2 Later meetings with Holly and SO Milly

Milly is the mother of Holly's ex-boyfriend. He has left her, but Milly has not. Milly's house is

bustling with small children, animals and toys. She is 55 and has lived and worked in the

area all her life. Milly had a series of jobs working in community development. She is cheery

but is 'chronically ill'. Milly helps many local people, mostly with benefits forms; 'the

wording' she knows 'the tick boxes' and how to 'ask the right questions'. She has had 'a lot

of trials and tribulations' herself, and 'if someone asks for help', she will. She has known

Holly for five years. She says before Holly had 'a very bad car crash where she... almost killed

a pedestrian', she was 'a bright, bubbly, happy, savvy, confident young woman'. After the

crash she 'shut down'. She says Holly is 'like another daughter' and explains 'its two ways

this... I helped her and she's helping me back'.

She says Holly was 'very stoic', but in fact she was 'breaking'. She 'couldn't face' doing the

things she needed to do. Milly gave her 'a little nudge' to engage with benefits and the

homeless sector. Milly feels confident about Holly's future. She says that the 'big thing' was

making her 'feel safe'.

In Holly's second interview she tells me that she has dropped out of a course she had been

attending. It sounds to me that the facilitation was poor, but she blames herself. She felt

'lost', thought 'I don't get it, I'm stupid, fuck off, I'm not doing this' (207-208, W2). She had a

period where she did not leave the flat for a month. She tells me about being invited to

speak with Futures' senior management team about mental health issues; she is pleased

with how it went. She says, they were 'enthusiastic'. She has been taking part in Futures'

client involvement activities. She has cut a lot of people out of her life who are 'not good'

for her. She has a new SW, Roshni, and she describes their relationship as like a hairdresser,

'they chat to you... because they're after a tip' (833, W2). She says, Roshni is a 'means to an

end... she owes me vouchers'.

Holly has been attending an employment workshop with Futures. Roshni drives her to the

first session and waits to take her home. She has taken her driver's licence theory test and

got a really good result; 75 out of 77 for hazard perception: 'Amazing! I'm not going to kill

anyone again (laughing)'. She has been to a festival with a friend from college. She is looking

forward to the next series of client involvement workshops.

In our final interview Holly says she has been very low; it might be because of winter. Then

she talks about terrible debt, a period of smoking a lot of cannabis and finally that she has

self-harmed for the first time in two years. She is 'ashamed'. She tells a long tale about

trying to get her incentives from Roshni.

She turned 26 and is too old to participate in client involvement activities. She goes to the

GP about self-harming, and she is pleased about the interaction. Milly suggests that she

should apply for Personal Independent Payment, and she has begun this application. She

wonders why no one from Futures has suggested this before. She wants to return to work,

being unemployed is 'demoralising' and 'demeaning' she talks about having 'always

worked', 'always paid tax' she doesn't want to be 'a drain on society'. She feels 'sick of it all'.

She understands that they had big caseloads on The Programme, but she wishes that they

had done more. She suggests that maybe she didn't push herself enough. I keep in contact

with Holly. After a nine month wait, she has a mental health assessment where she was diagnosed with an 'emotionally unstable personality disorder'– 'that's a horrible name isn't it', she says.

5.6 Mark

I meet Mark at a newly built hostel in Ballarat. It feels like a conference centre - what the CLG imagined would be Places of Change.[44] When I ask him to tell me a little bit about himself, he begins with his hobbies; train spotting and working on bikes. The first mark on his map is:

> 'when I was about 16 when Mum kicked me out cos… any earlier than that I don't really remember or really want to talk about…' (151-156 W1).

Mark talks a lot about relationships: intense, troubling; they burn him and make him recoil away. In contrast is Barnabas, a faith-based organisation he has been engaged with since he first experienced homelessness. He feels like they 'understand' him and 'include' him. Mark's relationship with his Support Worker Roshni is in contrast to the people at Barnabas; he says that she does not 'understand' him and doesn't 'listen', and so he cannot talk to her about 'personal problems'. He says that she is just there 'to pester' him. He works as security at events and festivals, enjoys it and wants to get his SIA[45] badge to increase his chances of getting more and better work. He has asked Roshni for help with this and says

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[44] See Chapter One p.39
[45] Required for working as a security guard.

that she does not come through with things that she promises, and he has not been able to 'build up trust' with her. Later he says they are,

> 'getting to understand each other like how we both work whereas before we didn't really know... what set each other off and stuff... I think we're getting on better I'm getting more help than I was.' (833-835 W1).

5.6.1 Mark's SW Roshni

Roshni worked in IT for 18 years. I ask her if there is anything behind her moving into caring work and she reflects on her experience of domestic violence and the point when she called the police and left her home:

> 'just for that split second of leaving, I am walking through that gate thinking I am not coming back. It's like where the hell are you going? So, I kind of get that anxiety.'

Her mum encouraged her to have a career change and she did a four-year counselling course. She found the work challenging because she wasn't able to offer any advice so moved into Support Work. She has been working at Futures for six months and has a case load of 43.

She paints an analogy of a swimming pool and encouraging young people to get into the water, starting at the shallow end. She says of Mark that he makes you feel like he is in the shallow end, but you *hear* that he has been in the deep end, and he will deny it. She is finding it difficult working with him, together they met with a manager to help 'move forward'. She thinks that Mark 'shies away from authority'. Not that she 'would tell him what to do', she follows, 'but sometimes you do need to in a support capacity'. Roshni finds

Mark to be 'secretive', she suggests that Mark 'has learned to be unwell' and 'is actually quite well'.

5.6.2 Later interviews with Mark and SOs Kath and OP

I meet Mark at a new supported accommodation project. He left the hostel after he was attacked by a man he knew who lived nearby. Despite the fact that the police have broken down his neighbour's door recently, Mark feels safe there. Barnabas helped him move. There is a young man there, Angus, who stays throughout the interview. Mark has a new SW, OP, who has arranged for him to attend a course to get his SIA badge. Mark is really pleased.

Kath works at Barnabas. The project is 13 years old; they have a 'Christian ethos' but are 'open to everyone'. Kath leads me to her spacious office. She 'didn't really want the job' herself, but they tried to recruit and found that she knew more about homelessness than the 'professionals' applying. After 9 years volunteering, she took the job. She says it is very important 'that its community' and that Mark has this feeling like 'we're family to him.' She has ten pages of notes in Mark's casefile which she brings out to refer to, 'he is making a big effort to engage'. In the past, Mark would engage for several months and then 'disappear' and then 'pop back in'. It has only been recently that Mark has opened up about his problems, and 'it's only through relationship' 'that he has felt confident to say it'. Kath says, 'it's all about trust isn't it', that Mark 'needs to feel a part of something to trust it'.

> That is where we win out over statutory authorities. Because they haven't got the time to do that. Sometimes I can spend most of my 18 hours just with one person...

The next time I meet Mark, he tells me that the man who assaulted him has been 'sent down'. He says being on benefits is 'driving' him 'crazy'. He is looking forward to starting his SIA course.

Mark's new SW OP[46][53] has been working with young people for over 20 years. He started with Futures five months ago and has a case load of '30 something'. He says that Mark's engagement is really good; he is working on Mark's plan with him, emphasising 'his plan'. He says that Mark doesn't want to 'deal' with 'everything', and this avoidance is result of 'growing up that wasn't the best' and that he was let down by other services. He says that Mark has 'been surviving by himself for a long, long, time'.

In the last interview with Mark, he tells me about some 'attacks' where he finds it hard to breathe and has called an ambulance twice. He has gone to see a GP who prescribed him with Mirtazapine for sleeping, but he has stopped taking them. He has dropped out of the SIA course. He has had trouble with his benefits which seems to have been when he moved from Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) to ESA. He has had to go to court. He has £2000 in housing arrears debt. Barnabas has arranged for a charity who help with debt to come and visit him tomorrow. He has reconnected with his grandfather. He says they are both 'outcasts' from the rest of his family. I have been in touch with Mark a couple of times since the last interview and he has moved into his own flat, has a job in security, and is still with his girlfriend.

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[46] A character from the children's cartoon Transformers, depicted, according to Wikipedia, as having strong moral character, excellent leadership, sound decision-making skills, brilliant military tactics, powerful martial arts, strong sense of honour and justice, dedicated to building peaceful and mutually beneficial co-existence with humans, the protection of life and liberty of all sentient species.

5.7 Discussion

This chapter shows that trust (built on responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity, flexibility and choice shaped by attentiveness) to forge engagement, is clearly a precious and fickle commodity in the relational dynamics between the young people, their SWs and SOs. Most of the SWs and SOs anticipate mistrust and are able to ride through rejection and uncertainty regarding the trustworthiness of the young people. Others are quick to call out dishonesty. These relationships—Roshni and Mark, Tom and Gordon—appear fractious and injurious to both parties and the work they are attempting together. They call for the young people to account for themselves, in an Althusserian sense of power and becoming, rather than making space for the other in Stevenson's (2017) conceptualisation, as discussed in Chapter Three. Their disbelief stands against Mark and Tom's clear desire to be seen and understood, recognised in both intimate and public spheres (individually and in the face of authorities). Feeling misrecognised in turn increased the young people's mistrust and they enter the encounter. This is in contrast to the other relationships portrayed where Steph, Ed and Ash, for example, were able to suspend disbelief, without *knowing*, like Stevenson's sense of 'withness' that does not depend on knowing the 'truth' about or fixing the identity of another person (2017, p156-157).

All but one of the workers interviewed describe their motivation based on their own experience, a personal connection and a feeling that because of that experience they could help, in part because of empathy but also life knowledge they think they can bring to the role. I guess what is interesting, because we already know 'identifying with the needs of others' is a part of 'voluntary attitude' that builds trust and is common in the sector (Cloke, Johnson and May, 2007, p.1090), is the *way* they bring themselves into the encounter,

affectively and cognitively, and crucially what space they leave their clients to bring themselves in; the 'I' and the 'you' in the encounter.

Tracy has a way, she has ideas about Holly that don't quite match Holly's description of herself although she is curious about Holly, and Holly befriends her, but it feels (from both sides) there's a lot she doesn't understand. Richard's testimony shows the complexity of making his own experience useful; he empathises, considers that he has not let his anxiety stop him then checks himself- it took him a long time to reach that conclusion and Max's situation is entirely different to his own. Gordon, however, slips right into the Kleinian conceptualisation of eros by seeing himself in Tom (as Tom astrologically) and trying to 'save himself', and then becoming offended when the sense of sameness is refuted. In the case of Tom's experience of domestic violence, what happened to him is very much registered by Gordon, who makes scant but clear notes in Tom's file and reiterates in the interview with me how troubled he was by the visible signs on Tom's body of a painful attack, but as Tom points out in the first interview, and the last (where the issue, still unaddressed, is massively affecting his chances of moving on) Gordon should have taken him, or at least advised him, to go the police. Instead, Gordon advises Tom to 'stay away from her'. Gordon responds but without the analytical or caring attention Tom needs. Gordon has decided who Tom is and what Tom needs (Tom lied, so Tom is a liar) and is acting on this basis, he is in a way attending to his imagination of Tom that is actually based on knowledge of himself.

Managing recognition without fixing the identity of the other and empathising is difficult and delicate. While Tracey manages this in some ways, Holly does the heavy lifting regarding the recognition and addressing of her mental illness – explaining things to Tracey and then going to a meeting at Futures. She quite likes these opportunities to

share her expertise and feels listened to, but it feels a bit out of whack that, instead of finding Holly a worker who is more familiar with mental illness, they leave Tracey to 'learn a lot' and bring Holly in to work out how Futures could better help people like her. Holly receives 'recognition' of her mental ill health with a diagnosis nearly a year after The Programme ends; but it comes without a **response**; after waiting X years for an assessment, she now needs to wait X months for therapeutic intervention. There is neither **flexibility nor choice**; if she moves to a different city (which she is considering) she will need to begin the process again. On the phone Holly sounds deflated; the recognition, as Hunter and Povinielli argue, has achieved a kind of 'conceptual closure' (Hunter, 2015, p.178). The care and attention has not been focused on Holly, as a whole self, as a person going forward with a problem, but on the 'problem' which makes her feel labelled and stigmatised.

There is learning here for client involvement and participatory practice. In order to have a voice, to be heard, frequently requires 'clients' to explain their trauma prior to accessing services and throughout, as discussed in Chapter 3, sometimes delivering testimony publicly in order to promote the good practice of the organisation. Sharing experiences that are associated with feelings of shame, like Holly's experience of self-harm and Tom's experience of domestic violence, can both beget solidarity and strength and reify stigma.

The narratives tell of rapid change. People shift in and out of their lives. Pressing needs appear, fall into the background then become prominent again. This supports Lowe and Wilson's (2017) assertion regarding the non-linear complexity of people and need (p.990).

Jackson (2012) argues that mobility can be employed 'as a tactic to respond to a state of uncertainty and danger' (p.733).[47] Here and in the following chapter it is evident that for these young people moving geographically, as observed by Jackson (2012; 2015), is mostly a response to the threat of violence from other young people as in the case of Max, Akira, Mark and Tom. As Jackson writes, we should understand 'mobility as a resource, mobility as loss, and mobility as managing... fixity is not always mobility's opposite, rather some people become fixed in mobility.' (Jackson, 2012, p.740)

Violence seems to be both how participants respond to difficulties and what they are trying to escape. While anger is seen as an impediment to engagement, they describe various forms of violence as something that both harms and helps them. It is what first alerts me to the ambivalence they experience, and this is taken up in the following chapter. The violent tales are so proliferous and easily delivered that I become a bit numb to them. Violence is a curiously strong presence in the work of help (Lipskey, from c3) and appears in all of the following chapters: perpetrated, experienced, anticipated and displaced.

Young people' feelings about their engagement with The Programme and SWs are also precarious, changing—sometimes significantly—within one interview. The longitudinal method applied in this research has advantages here over the capture of a snapshot. It also enables some empathy, on my part, with the Support Workers. My experience of negotiating spaces that are public and noisy in libraries and cafes, or awkwardly intimate in cars and bedrooms; negotiating difficult feelings that are affectively troubling, exhausting and ethically challenging. I compare their massive caseloads and precious little time for

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[47] Other tactics employed to get the help the young people need are explored further in Chapter Seven

reflection, without a permanent desk, to my own laborious planning, listening over and over

to audio-recorded interviews, transcribing, sorting, reflecting, analysing and discussing,

almost, entirely focused on these six young people. Still, I recall not being able to piece

together parts of their narrative, questioning their honesty and feeling ashamed of my

mistrust. In the work, there is not much time or space for attention, and what exists is

shaped by the demands of The Programme. This did not seem the case for Kath at Barnabas,

who had so much space, couches in her office and so much time, and pages of careful notes

that jumped straight to her fingers, I talk more about this distinction in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER SIX. SKINNY JEANS AND DIRTY LOOKS: TRYING TO FIT IN
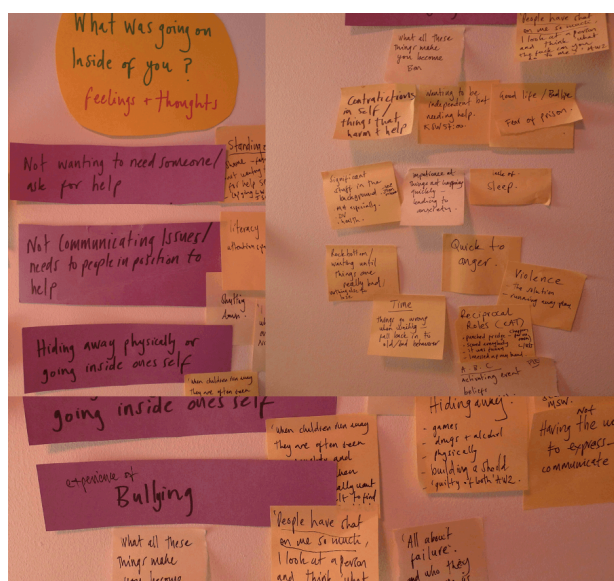
Figure 14. Inside Skinny Jeans and Dirty Looks

In this Chapter I draw out the dangers and risks of engaging with help for the young people even though they know they need it. I illustrate the complexity of their contradictory desires and how, like the workers facing the paradoxical aspirations of the role, create a story to 'underwrite and stabilise' their experiences (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003, p.30), they create their own narratives to explain the contradictions in themselves.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the young people's past experiences of seeking belonging (trying to fit in), and the effect this has on how they see themselves and how they think others see them. It is the context from which they attempt to access and engage with helping encounters. It represents the analysis of the things inside themselves that make engaging with help difficult. The images above are of the Wall Work related to this question.

The young people crave belonging and relationships but have learned not to trust, as a self-care mechanism, because of painful experiences of bullying, abandonment, blame, manipulation and being fobbed off. They become vigilant; they associate asking for help with weakness and vulnerability; they hide away, and self soothe and turn rage and fear (blame and shame) inwards on themselves or, through 'splitting': rage against weakness in others that they fear in themselves. They fear showing their vulnerable and stigmatised parts, so they wait for a crisis before seeking out help. This chapter illustrates the fragility of trust, and the effect of blame and shame has on individual's feelings about trusting others.

6.1 Feeling different

The participants all feel different and are all torn as to how this contributes to how they engage – they mostly like it about themselves. These qualities also make them stand out, sometimes that makes them feel like a target. Their feelings about themselves vacillate from violent to soft, from stupid to brilliant, from in control to aimless and wanting someone to tell them what to do. They simultaneously love and hate; they experience ambivalence. It makes them feel incomprehensible to others and to themselves.

In the first interview Max says, 'I struggle to come across nice' (188) and continually describes himself as a 'vile' and 'horrible person', a person he did not want to become but felt like he had to '…make a stand, I had to prove I was no one to be fucked with' (593 W1).

He also describes himself as a protector. At 16 he 'took on' Ed's baby and ex-partner and looked after them until she went back to Ed, and he still feels protective towards the little girl and able to defend her, 'anyone hurts that kid, even now, even now – they're a dead

man' (126-127 W1). He is seemingly always in conflict with others, and he does not 'want to cause trouble, I don't want to cause waves anywhere… I'm not that type of guy' (153-156 W1). He describes meeting Roshni:

> 'she thought I was a violent man – I, I'm not like that Roshni. But now Roshni understands me a bit better. She knows not to threaten me – put it that way' (small laugh) (1450-1453 W1)

He wants to be seen as not violent, but as a threat that will stop others threatening him. Throughout our interviews I feel and probably look baffled that he could be capable of some of the things he has said and done – in Wave Two when we meet in a local library, I ask him to tell me more about the situation that led to him making some awful threats to a Support Worker (discussed further in Chapter Seven). I say, 'but Max, would you have actually done the things you said' he manages to say yes and no and puts the question back to me with a grin 'what do you think Simone?'. It seems to me that Max holds on to the one tactic that he has experienced working for him (and others) —the threat of frightening consequences — he reassures Roshni, but she still knows not to threaten him. Linked to his ability to be threating is his physicality, he often talks about building himself up. He is saying he is 'strong' but not in his head, 'obviously I'm ill' (207 W1) he is 'a big softy really' (208 W1).

In Wave Two Max tells me about the few months he spent in a hostel he really did not want to be in. He says it was 'horrible' and he felt like a 'fish out of water' (39 W2). He got into an argument with another resident, so he stayed in his room all the time:

> 'Horrible, people around giving me dirty looks, know what I mean? That can cause a problem on its own, dirty looks.' (47-48 W2)

Fitting in with Max and Akira is exemplified through clothes. Max talks about his mates:

> 'They dress like Chavs – like we're all criminal, but we're not, we're not all
>
> criminals, we just have to give off that persona all the time. it's horrible – I
>
> can't put on a pair of jeans cos everyone thinks that – like I'm soft … so I've
>
> got to wear tracksuits. I've got to go buy 100 pounds worth of trainers just to
>
> put the point across that I'm not a faggot.' (1020 – 1024 W1)

Akira likes to wear skinny jeans sometimes, but they are associated with being a 'white boy'
and being from a different part of town. He gets angry when a neighbour he does not really
know approaches him at the bus stop, asks for the time, then begins judging him because of
his skinny jeans. He has an argument with his friends about it one night:

> 'I got pissed off and I kind of set on everybody … since that day nobody says
>
> anything about my skinny jeans.' (little laugh) (433-435 W2)

He describes local areas surrounding the city through the brands young people wear, says,
'everyone judges' (387 W2) he gets called a 'homo' when he posts a picture of a cat on
social media. He thinks it is 'completely stupid' but has 'kind of accepted it I know how it
works' (414 W2). Akira is different in his family as well, he was the 'bad apple'. He had a very
different experience of growing up compared with the other young people. While others felt
on the outside and excluded, he felt like he was 'cool', 'the top boy'. In school he was a
'nutter', 'loud' and 'smart'. He never missed a class and used to get suspended a lot (549
W1). He was 'hyper' and 'wanted to impress people', liked the attention, 'if you didn't have

that kind of attention you weren't anyone' (551 W2) 'everyone knows who I am' (554 W2).

Revelling in and getting the attention he desires, it still surprises him that drama seems to

follow him. This is how he explains his trouble with girls and the recent machete attack – it

makes his life 'unpredictable'. He thinks he 'is a really hard person to figure out' (795 W1).

He is a 'chameleon', 'basically adapt to any environment' (856 W2). This goes some way to

explaining the contrariness in Akira.

Max talks about wanting to be 'a part of the cool kids' *(1104 W1)* in secondary school and

that 'robbing' and *'*crime, crime, crime' (1119 W1) was a part of that. Akira talks about being

able to negotiate with the local gangsters who he had known since he was young, so he

could avoid getting into trouble. They both talk about a peer group that has moved on in a

way that they have not. Max says:

> 'All my mates have moved on from life on their own, they've all got kids,
>
> missuses, one's even engaged – you know what I mean? I'm like, what have I
>
> done? Know what I mean? I'm still doing employability courses.' (218-244
>
> W1)

Akira says:

> 'Most of the people I know my age from young – I've known them from when
>
> I was young, and they've got their degrees and stuff now… that kind of stuff is
>
> what kinda like gets to me.' (388-391 W1)

In Wave Two he says of the people he went to secondary school with:

'Like, a lot of them are either dead, in prison, or not going anywhere with their lives because that's the kind of environment we kind of went to school in.' (519-520 W1)

Akira is most consistently positive about himself. I wonder if this is related to his ability to look back and accept the different and sometimes conflicting memories/constructions of what happened, what he has done and what he can do. He stumbles into ambivalence and makes sense of things in the moment.

From the very beginning of Holly's first interview she wants to make it clear that she is 'different'. She's different to other young people needing help because she's '…an open book, so I'll help someone understand my problems' (256, W1). Different in that she is 'older' than most of the Futures cohort. She is different because of the way she sees depression: 'life is not that bad, just get over it' (1866, W1); she is different because 'nothing bad happened' when she was younger (2445, W1).

Holly talks about not feeling confident at school. She was 'a fat, introvert, 5-foot 10 giant (small laugh) … I stood out' (831-833 W1). When she went to college she was 'still lost – still – how do I be friends with someone? How do I do that?' (651-652 W1). She says she has come to terms with her difference '… because I've never fitted in, I accept that now, I don't fit in, I'm quite happy' (678-679 W1). This being said, I notice how animated she becomes when she is describing a new situation where she *does* feel like she is fitting in. She practically bubbles over with delight when she describes the music festival she goes to where everyone is 'different', and when she attends an employment workshop facilitated by Futures one of the other women attending says to her:

'You've got to come back, you're so much fun!' and I was like 'Oh! it's so nice

to hear' you know, because when you feel like (eeek) you know when

someone says that – it's really nice so (different voice – theatrical) I must

have made a good impression (small laugh) people must have liked me (596-

599 W3).

In the Wave Three ranking exercise she is trying to decide whether feeling different helps or

gets in the way of her engaging with help, and says, 'I like being different' (1500 W3). But

she thinks that because the way she 'perceives things' is 'too different' people don't

understand her and 'judge' her. Furthermore, she comes across as *more* confident than she

is and several times she ventures that this is why she does not get the help she needs from

services, that people see her as more all right than she feels.

I am interested that, intertwined with his description of himself as a gangster and a father,

Tom uses the diminutive 'little shit' (530 W1), 'little lad' (479 W1). In relation to his mother,

he says, 'I was her child with mental health issues' (177 W1). His early years at primary

school were difficult. He was frequently moved to the front of the classroom, and it made

him 'feel low' (349 W1).

'Like someone that ain't normal, like really excluding me and then you feel

like a really little child.' (359 W1)

Tom is very similar in this way to Max and Holly: sensitive to the way people see them,

especially seeing the different sides of them. Tom's stepdad is one of the few people in his

life that he counts as supportive and helpful: 'he can see the goodness in me as well as the

bad and he always has done, like he *is* my dad… '(507-508 W1) I have already mentioned that Tom is perpetually engaged in a battle within himself, between what he sees as a right and wrong life; what he sees as the right and wrong Tom, the bigger and smaller Tom. Facing this ambivalence is all-consuming, it ties him in knots.

> 'I wanna be the bigger person. I want to be the person that can walk away. But half of me wants to walk away and half of me wants to (pause) go, stand up for myself, like (pause)… as much as I'm changing my life, doesn't mean you can mess with me.' (637-640 W2)

It seems like being the 'bigger person' makes him the weaker person, and from his perspective, when one feels under attack, which he does all the time, being the bigger person seems like the wrong choice. 'Changing' threatens the loss of his scary threatening self and the protection it has afforded him. Still, he musters the courage to walk into the police station by himself and sit in front of 'two grown men' and describe how he was physically violated by a woman:

> 'You hear about men doing a domestic in a relationship, but it took a lot of strength to walk into that police station, to sit in that interview with two other blokes and tell them *everything* this girl did to me like that, that made me feel small.' (801-804 W2)

For Tom, it takes a lot of strength to show what feels like an abject part of himself, in particular in front of 'two grown men' but he also tells me and Gordon and his other mates and his new girlfriend sitting inform of him. It makes him feel ashamed, but he has to tell the tale because it helps to explain why he needs help. Mark does not want to talk about

when he was young, and when he does it is more about what happened than how he feels

about it. He has made a family of the Barnabas project – the only place and group of people

he feels included in. Even in his football team he 'felt like I was there to make up the

numbers' (789 W2). He says of Barnabas, 'I'm a part of them and they're a part of me' (767

W1). His life is structured around the many and various projects they facilitate - coffee

mornings, youth club, volunteering, mechanics, support with paperwork and church. All his

friends seem to use this service. In his third interview, with his mate on the couch beside

him, he explains:

> '…Every time I walk in its 'you alright gherkin?' 'how's the gherkin doing?' I got
>
> nicknamed gherkin back from Easter 'cos I'm always in a pickle they say, so
>
> it's always like 'are you alright? 'alright Mark – gherkin – 'how's things?'
>
> 'how's the course?' (791-1-793 W2)

I recall clearly that there was no sign of recognition of the nickname from his mate on the

couch. It was a brief, awkward moment. Mark's inclusion in this project/family seems to

have furnished him with a sense of who he is outside of his hobbies and this person is a bit

of a klutz and a joker. Braden has also made a family out of the ever-shifting staff team at

the hostel where he lives.

> 'I make everyone laugh in here mainly. They call me the human joker. The undead
>
> person. Nah, I got called undead by two.' (768-769 W2)

The way he revels in the 'undead' nickname is resonant of Mark with 'gherkin' and is

curious. How is it in any way good to be called 'the undead' (or gherkin)? But it is familiar.

Having a nickname makes them feel known, welcome, wanted. The difference with Braden

is that this feeling begins to evaporate towards the end of the last interview. At first, he

seems proud and pleased that the staff 'won't let me leave '. That they laugh at him and

'wind him up' and he laughs at them and 'winds them up'. It is a ritual, familiar,

> 'Yeah, and I come back down and like the next day, I come back down again
>
> and… and start again. Start winding them up again' (he's really pleased about
>
> this). (56-58 W2)

He says it makes him feel good 'cos I'm making them laugh' (66). The laughing begins to feel

like something of a defence,

> Braden: 'Yeah, I get worked up too quick, but obviously, when I'm around my
>
> mates, I don't care, like I still get worked up or I have a laugh and a joke about
>
> it at the same time. After I get worked up, I start laughing about it for no
>
> reason (pause) it's one of them, I just laugh at it, I started laughing at it, I do.'
>
> (92-96 W2)

I wonder if, as long as Braden is laughing, it means he does not need to address the

uncomfortable feelings that make him want to 'kick off' in the first place. Towards the end

of the interview the tone of jovial banter becomes darker, Braden sees older residents

moving out and younger people moving in. It is just him who stays, even the staff move on.

He says to staff, 'why you moving them out and you can't move me out?' (1640 W2). I say,

'but you're really happy to stay' and he replies, 'nah, I rather just get out of here soon as'.

(1641-1642 W2)

Then he describes how he frequently gets injured at work, at the markets, and that the day before he had dropped a weight on his hand. He is in pain and carries on working, but it happens again and again. When he returns to the hostel, he tells them about it and,

> 'The staff laugh at me; they laugh at me! I'm like, are you being serious? And they're just sitting there laughing.' (1722-1723 W2).

The feelings of belonging he indicated in Wave One seem to have curdled. He tried to fit in, and he thought he had, but he has been burnt.

6.2 Burnt trying

The young people's desire to fit in, to feel connected with the outside world is both propelled and disrupted by experiences of being bullied, abandoned, blamed and manipulated. And when they do muster the courage to ask for help, they are sometimes fobbed off. These experiences make them vigilant and increasingly less likely to trust.

6.2.1 Bullied

Apart from Akira, they all mention bullying in their primary and secondary school years. They experience it differently, respond to it differently, and that time resonates with them and affects them differently now. To be on the receiving side of bullying is to be excluded and, as Holly puts it, 'every human wants to be accepted' (1306 W1). Commonly, the experience of bullying was the main reason why they changed schools. Holly was moved to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which provided an environment where she was able to complete her studies. Max refused to complete his final year in primary school, changed secondary school once (doing all the paperwork himself) and spent a short spell in a PRU. Braden

moved because of bulling and Mark moved four times in primary school because of bullying.

Tom and Braden explain that being bullied made them attempt suicide:

> 'I used to be bullied to the point I almost killed myself a couple of times. And
> just to make someone feel like that and realise what they're doing.' (Tom
> 979-980 W2).

> 'I tried to take my life bare times. Overdosed myself (pause) ain't done no
> good.' (Braden, 1277-1278 W2).

In all interviews, Max, Holly, Tom and Braden come back to talking about their experience of being bullied, and while Mark does not reflect on this as frequently or in as much depth at the end of Wave Three, he says that the experience affects him still. Tom and Max became the bullies and continue to use violence or the threat of it as a way to resolve the issues they experience. Here, Max conflates 'engaging' with asking for help, and it is equivalent to grassing:

> 'Engaging – it don't help, it just makes it worse. It's like being a grass in the
> mob. You can't be a grass in the mob, you can't… the only way you can help
> yourself with bullying is be a bully, be the bully, you be the bully; that's it.
> Otherwise the bullying ain't going to stop.' (W2, 1736-1739)

While Braden, who thinks it is 'stupid' to become the bully, flies into rages where fridges and doors bear the brunt of his fury, Holly turns her anger in on herself with self-harm. She says:

> 'There was a lot of bullying… I think that affected, but I'm not going to blame
> it on that. It was just... me' (small laugh) (652-655 W1).

These strategies to handle the difficult thoughts and feelings associated with being excluded, mocked and belittled by bullies, have been maintained to the present day.

6.2.2 Abandoned

The experience of being bullied is overlaid with being abandoned, or at least *feeling* abandoned, by the people in their lives who would be expected to protect them. Mark describes being kicked out by his mum when he was 16. This incident was preceded by a series of common teenager events where he was accused of smoking cannabis when he wasn't and getting into trouble for being late. It seems to him like his mum doesn't know or believe him. He feels 'left out':

> 'When I was a kid, I was, I was a kid that was always left out, always, when I was at home, when I was at school…' (752-753 W1)

In Wave One he explains that his mother has been lying to him for 19 years and in Wave Four he discloses that the man who he thought was his father is not, and his mother refuses to tell him who his biological father is. When he first presented to the council as homeless, they called his mother who said that he was welcome back home. He returned home, warning the local authority that he would be back and, months later, was sofa surfing. In Wave Three he talks at length about his younger sister being favoured above him. He goes into minute detail about her getting a phone he had longed for. Over the four waves, Mark talks about reuniting with various members of his family – there is an aunt and an older sister – but these brief unions end in arguments. Our third interview is the day before

Mark's 20th birthday. He refers to 'personal stuff' that is making him stressed, and when I press him, he says:

> 'It's family – as far as I've fallen out with (pause) also this time of year I, I
>
> (pause) want my family around me but it's never going to happen' (494-495
>
> W3).

Mark's feeling of abandonment stretches into the way he sees the world around him. He recalls an imaginary past, the 1950s, when you could just ask somebody for help. And if they could not help, they would point out someone who could, 'whereas now people just… seem to walk by' (1287 W3). He backs up this theory with an example from his past where he had a motorcycle accident 'and about three or four cars drove past' *(1293 W3)* but,

> 'one guy – saw that the bike was in the road. I was staring at it; he could see I
>
> was still shocked and panicking even though I had my helmet on – and he
>
> stopped and was like 'are you ok'? I was like 'actually, no, could I have a hand
>
> getting my bike up'?' (1296-1298 W3).

The 'one guy' who stopped does not alter Mark's opinion of society today. He recalls the selfishness of those who did not stop, and he says,

> '… now society doesn't really want to help other people. They just want to
>
> help themselves' (1308 W3)

'Abandoned' is the word Mark uses to describe the block of flats he is now living in. He indicates out the window at the block opposite and explains that it is 'always getting redone, revamped, a fresh look' (592-593 W3) while his block is 'abandoned'. In Wave Four

he says that because of his upbringing he has had to fend for himself, and this makes it hard to ask for help,

> Mark: 'as, as, as you said, everyone needs help. But with the upbringing that I
>
> have had it hasn't necessarily been quite so easy to ask for help, I've alw…
>
> I've, I've, had to defend for myself'
>
> Mark: 'Yeah basically, I've been a wolf that got kicked out of the pack and
>
> (pause) has had to hunt for himself – find some warmth for himself. Whereas
>
> if I was still within the pack, it would be a group effort.' (2166-2168 W4).

Mark's experience of rejection, loneliness and vulnerability – left to fall apart – is contrasted with the potential of safety and group/community effort and support.

All of Tom's many moves have been to live with his partners at the time. He rarely talks about being isolated or lonely, and despite moving from one crisis to the next he strikes me as fiercely independent. It was when he was very young, and his father was violent towards him created a strong sense of abandonment.

> 'I love my mum and my mum would do anything for me, but ah, she weren't
>
> my main protector. She weren't protecting me…' (124-125 W2)

He felt abandoned by Gordon and Futures. It seems that when Gordon was off sick, things seemed to spiral downwards for Tom:

> 'I did and everything was going fine, then all the crap started with (name: ex-
>
> girlfriend). They [Futures] fell out of contact with me, as much as I was trying

to get hold of Gordon, he was like ill or away and they wouldn't, and they

wouldn't send anyone else to replace him for me.' (52-55 W2)

From what I can gather, Braden had moved with his immediate family up and down the

country until the day after his 18th birthday and

'My dad's partner brought me back up here and said 'oh, you got to go to

your Nan and Granddad's' (287-297 W1).

He stayed with his grandparents for about a month, until an incident where his uncle

accused him of stealing from them. From here he moved in with his cousin and they fought

so he had to move out. At this point he had absolutely nowhere to go. In our first interview

he mentions an ex-partner of his father's and suggests that she is someone he can go to for

help. She is a possible Significant Other. There is a younger sister, who he admires, but who

'causes trouble'. By the following interview there is no one, he says, he doesn't have a

significant other and 'I couldn't give a flying monkey's' (1112 -1130 W2). Braden describes

his relationship with his family members as if *he* has abandoned *them*:

Braden: (yawning) 'I don't speak to none of 'em.'

Simone: 'You don't speak to her [ex-partner of father] either?'

Braden: 'None of my family.' (1137-1138 W2)

When Holly was being bullied at school her father was extremely ill and her mother caring

for him. She did not want them to know about how she was feeling because she didn't want

to worry them. When she moved in with her boyfriend, her family and some of her closest

friends stopped speaking to her. After the car accident, Holly fell into a deep depression,

lost her job, and her boyfriend threw her out of the home they had shared. Milly says that Holly asked if she could move back home, and her parents said no. Milly says,

> 'I just saw someone that didn't have a mum and dad that cared for her. Her siblings didn't care for her. It was almost like she was surplus and that's how she felt. And that's how she said it over to me – was that she didn't have anyone.'

6.2.3 Blamed

Akira, Tom, Braden and Max experience being accused of transgressions they deny outright. Once again, these experiences affect them differently. There is rage and indignation; there is also hurt, bewilderment and disappointment. For Tom, the experience is current: his ex-partner, the one who physically assaulted him in the past, has accused him of sexual assault. He emphatically denies it. Tom is not concerned about the possible ramifications of the charge but is furious about the injustice. It is unjust that his ex was never charged for the abuse she made him suffer; it is unjust that Futures never helped him seek retribution; it is unjust that he has tried to keep away from the brutal side of himself and now it rages within him. He directs the rage towards the perpetrator and towards Futures.

> 'I'm not going inside for something I haven't done. If it comes back that the police want me inside… I'll go down for murder. I'm not going down for so-called sexual assault. I'd rather go down for something else and that's what they've made it come to. I've spent so many years of keeping away from that side of myself. Futures could have helped me from doing that and they haven't.' (406-410 W2).

I find the rage that Tom expresses confronting. I go into Support Worker mode and spend

some of the interview establishing if he means what he is saying here. He reassures me that

he would not take such violent action because of all that he has to lose. His girlfriend sitting

next to him in the interview reassures me that he speaks like this to get his anger out but

will not act on it. I try and reconnect him with Futures and local services.

Akira's response to accusations is very different. After he split up with his ex-girlfriend

(Cass), she took out a restraining order on him and then called him, saying she was going to

commit suicide. He went to her and was picked up by the police, charged and held in

remand until the case went to court and he was released. Unlike Tom, Akira talks about how

good their relationship had been, how they would support each other, could push each

other without getting annoyed, and that they 'shared emotions' and 'burdens'. He says, 'it

was perfect, to be fair' (770 W1). His response is different, too, when Cass comes to see him

after our first interview. He surprises himself by being 'heartless' and 'harsh' with her. He

says he usually 'sugar coats' difficult things he has to say – tries to 'smooth' things over. 'I

kind of spilled all my emotions and it was raw, like, emotion and she got the point' (1716

W2). He is pleased about this because he was 'that close to taking her back' (1719-1720

W2). He is much less forgiving of the probation officer who 'breached' him. He admits

missing an appointment. He calls to apologise, and they make him another appointment. He

attends, signs in, waits for an hour and goes[48]. The officer calls him asking why he didn't

attend, and he explains that he did. She does not believe him. In the end he doesn't get into

trouble because they cannot prove he was not there, but it leaves him with the theory that

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[48] Akira reasons that this is how it works at the Job Centre so it *should* be the same at probation.

he was breached 'because she thought it was funny, or she thought I wasn't worth – you know – giving another chance' (1116-1117 W2).

Braden takes the blame for the fire in his flat. As mentioned, he was accused of stealing from his uncle. The family decided that it was Braden who stole money from his uncle's bedroom and broke into his grandmother's car, because the dogs did not make a fuss. This incident sparks the complete abandonment by his family and his four nights street homeless. He is evicted once again for not mentioning being evicted before on his application for housing. He says that his SW from Futures filled in the application form.

> Braden: '…Seriously I be like 'what's your problem with me? Do you like me or not?''
>
> Simone: 'What do you think?'
>
> Braden: 'They don't like me'
>
> Simone: 'Why not?'
>
> Braden: 'I don't know. For some reason they don't like me – try and kick me out of two prop[erties]. The first property [because of the fire], yeah, I can understand that – the second one I can't understand the reason why they did kick me out … (761-767, W1)

Like Akira with probation, Braden determines that the accusation is personal – it is something to do with him and the individuals making the accusations. And like Tom he is left with a feeling of injustice: he has been badly treated, and he has no understanding of how this has happened to him.

6.2.4 Manipulated

There are many other incidents for which Braden is blamed, and I begin to see that he is not particularly unlucky or always at fault but, rather, is being manipulated by people around him. I suspect that he has some learning difficulties. Mike shares my concern, and it is recorded in his Outcome Star notes written by a previous Support Worker. As I read through his transcriptions it becomes more and more apparent that there are many people around him who are taking advantage of his learning difficulties and desire to be included. There are a few tales of friends making him drink to excess and then encouraging him to 'start' on others; there are a number of incidents where friends or family members have come and made trouble in accommodation, he is responsible for. There are also a couple of times where it sounds as if he has been manipulated out of money, clarified in his Risk Trackers. He does appear to realise what has happened in hindsight, 'cos they wanted me to fight one kid and I didn't want to fight him' (540 W1). They got me kicked out over that' (887 W1); 'lost my place cos of the people I was hanging around with' (1502 W1). He cuts people off 'I did have my mates – like I did have friends and all our trust is gone now' (550 W1) and he is left with the people in the hostel, and the staff.

In Wave Two Braden tells a story about a much younger man who has moved into the hostel and whom he has taken under his wing. Braden is trying to stop some older residents from taking advantage of his new friend and he tells the staff about a scam that is going on; his new friend interprets this as bullying. Braden explains to him,

> 'I ain't bullying ya, I'm just getting you like – making you realise what people
>
> are like (pause) 'cos obviously, yeah – people ain't gonna be like that – they're

gonna act like your mate then they're gonna do the dirty on ya. What about

ya get ya in flipping trouble, stuff like that' (1071-1073 W2).

Braden decides he will leave his young friend to make his own mistakes, mistakes Braden

feels he was trying to save his friend from, mistakes that Braden made which, he

uncharacteristically admits here, brought him pain.

'So, I thought forget that, I'm just gonna leave him. I'll get him back when he's

old enough, in 2 years' time, 2 years' time, and he's gonna have the pain what

I've been through.' (1083-1084 W2)

Abandoned again, and hopeful still, Braden thinks 'I'll get him back'. I wonder if I have ever

met such a lonely person.

6.2.5 Fobbed off

Holly is the young person who has used the term 'fobbed off' when she describes contacting

the GP about her worsening anxiety and depression and self-harm in Wave Four. Before her

appointment, she hoped she wouldn't be 'fobbed off' and gleefully notes that she wasn't.

However, she had been fobbed off by others, over and over. First by a GP she had seen

about how she was feeling 'mentally' when she was 15. She was told to come back if the

feelings persisted and was given a leaflet. Again, when she was in A&E after self-harming,

she was given a leaflet for IAPTs. A counsellor never called her back after she missed her

final session. This sort of situation is common for the others as well. Akira explains a 'minor

little' example of trying to get help:

'When I don't need it, people are there to help. When I actually need it at the

time, the moment, people aren't usually there.' (86-87 W2)

He gets work through an agency. He will get his first pay a fortnight after he has worked. He

has signed off JSA and his fortnightly payments are immediately stopped. The agency work

only lasted a week and so he signs on again but has a two-week wait for both his JSA and

employment to come through. Caught in the casual employment/welfare gap, he calls Steph

to ask for food vouchers, and she is not able to immediately respond.[49] He says,

'it's not that I'm being lazy, or I haven't done stuff. I've done what I need to,

but it's actually because of that situation and it's kind of gone sideways' (98-

100 W2)

The result is that he has no food, so,

'…I was kind of like going to Aldi like, kind of like robbing little things… and I

was thinking to myself, what if I got arrested for doing that and then that

would be another thing I would have to face on top' (105-107 W2).

This occurs a short while after his day in court, where he was fairly certain that he was

going back to prison. He is now expecting a child and actually trying to make better

decisions for himself.

'And it's kind of, you know what I mean, it's kind of making me think like

that's how, like, like you said that's… you question… why do people… why is it

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[49] He mentions two reasons: Steph doesn't have a car and he has used up his food voucher credit with Futures.

hard for young people to accept or engage with help? So mostly, sometimes,
it's because of that… it's cos when they really need it sometimes it's not
there. And they have to wait for it or something like that, so... by the time the
help is there they don't need it or it's past that problem.' (107-115 W2)

While in this moment, Akira is levelling the blame for his shoplifting at Futures. Their
absence of intervention at the moment he needed it would have actually masked over some
much larger issues where the practice of Job Centre Plus, the agency employer and state
welfare, enables unethical employment practices and administers benefits in a way that
presumes the claimant is both deceptive and workshy.

Akira is 'fobbed off' by the police after he is attacked. In Wave One he talks about the lack of
interest the police showed when they arrived after the incident; he guesses that it is to do
with his 'age', 'background' (see young and black) and 'where I'm living' (see shared
accommodation with support, see homelessness).

'Well, I'm just guessing but, it's just because of my age and cos of the kind of
background I have, like, where I'm living. Stuff like that. If it was like a year
ago, like, that wouldn't have happened to me. Like a year ago I was working
and like properly had my own flat.' (217-220 W1)

In Wave Two the police still have not followed up on the attack:

'Like the police still haven't done anything by… by the way (pause), and I think
it's because they think that I'm a gang member… and that's why they're not

doing anything about it. But really and truly God knows what's… what's really

happened' (702-705 W2)

He resigns himself to the idea that he will not receive justice for the crime committed

against him:

'I have to live with the fact that I have a scar on my hand and that no one is

going to be accountable for it ever … you know it's just another guy that got

hit. Or it's just another black guy, or a gang member … that got into a fight.'

(715-721 W2)

Mark is referred by his GP to the Crisis team because of his depression and they tell him he

just needs to like himself more and 'be more positive'. His girlfriend tells him that MIND are

really good, and he wants 'to believe her' but 'has no trust in any of the mental health

services' (532-534 W3). Nevertheless, he signs up for an anger management course with

MIND, but it is all desk-based learning. It reminds him of school; he was hoping for practical

strategies for what he could do to prevent his angry outbursts.

Being fobbed off is a recurrent experience for the young people. They try to seek help and

engage, but the offer does not meet their needs. Their experience of service thresholds

feeds the feelings of misrecognition. Parts of them are not seen; parts of them (young,

black, mentally unwell) are judged; they are seen as not legitimate or deserving; they are

stigmatised.

6.2.6 Vigilant

It is not surprising that their experiences of being bullied and attacked, being blamed,

manipulated and fobbed off; of feeling different and longing to be included and accepted,

makes them more alert to potential danger and less likely to trust. They carry these feelings

around with them in the world and when they seek out help. Holly says that being bullied in

the past would not stop her engaging,

> 'But, having that in the past I'm aware of it, so when I go for the help, I expect
>
> a bit of animosity and a bit of, um, push back if you like' (2451 – 2452 W3)

Max says, 'my eyes are always open' (1869 W3), that when people approach him, he

prepares himself, expecting the worst,

> 'I'm like, right, get ready, you know what I mean, cos I know it's gonna end
>
> bad' (1862, W3)

For Max, vigilance is a skill. He says he's got 'a trained sense' (1865 W3). Similarly, Akira says

his experiences have made him 'sharper'. After he was attacked, he started carrying a knife.

He says, 'if I didn't have a knife or something like that on me, I would feel insecure' (1066

W2). For Mark, the recent violent attack makes him feel 'anxious', 'on edge'. He is always

'looking over his shoulder' (341 W2).

6.3 Not wanting to ask for help

Asking for help is often associated with weakness, fear of disappointment and the potential

of being taken advantage of.

Max: 'that's how backwards I am – you know – I'll kick off to get attention.

But really, I should just talk to get attention. I should talk to someone, but I

kick off. My mate says to me 'Max, do you want help?' I'll say 'fuck off I'll do it

myself' – you know what I mean? I don't want your help – I don't want

someone to know that I rely on them. Do you know what I mean? I don't like

that' (there's a real change in his tone of voice here – like he is somehow at

the bottom of himself).

S: 'Why don't you like that? (Pause) what's wrong with not… with relying

on...'

Max: (over talking) 'Shows you're weak. Shows you're weak, init. Show's

you're weak, that's it. So, I can't do it. Oh, now you need my help, you're

relying on me for help. Well yeah, but don't take it for your advantage, you

know what I mean? I'm asking for help, not relying on you for help. Everyone

gets that twisted, mate. They think you're relying on them and you're not,

you're just asking them – you know what I mean? So, if I just don't ask

someone for a favour, I can't get disappointed, can I?'

SH: 'mhm'

Max: 'So, I just don't' (991-1010 W1)

This is how both Ash and Ed experience Max, and it plays out when we talk about his mental

health and his desire to get counselling. He wants me to speak to his SWs, or for them to

contact him. He feels embarrassed that he needs medication. When I give him the number

for the Samaritans and suggest that he calls them if he feels bad and wants to talk things

through, he says he won't call them and say 'oh, I feel a bit suicidal … I won't blub my guts

out to a stranger' (3176-3177 W4) because they will think he is a 'dickhead' a 'fucking sap'.

When I try to reassure him that they won't think that he says he knows they won't say this

on the phone to him but, when they go home, they will say:

> 'Fucking dickhead's on the phone, fuckin' pop a pill, you little twat' ... that's
>
> what everyone thinks – that's what I think anyway. Just pop a pill,
>
> man' (3184-3185 W4)

The sort of reaction he expects from the SWs is also what he thinks himself: 'just pop a pill,

man'.

Not wanting to ask for help is equally complex and charged for Holly, who also doesn't want

to rely on people and associates this with being 'vulnerable', a 'victim' and 'fearful'. She uses

an analogy of wildebeest migration in the Serengeti when they have to cross rivers with

crocodiles in them and there are lions on the other side, and if the wildebeest has 'crooked

its ankle'

> 'it's hobbling, it's trying not to hobble, because if the crocodile sees it, it's
>
> going to go for it, but eventually they've got to get into the water and go
>
> across. And he's taken that (sound like bracing before entering cold water)
>
> I'm going to go, and they have taken that, and if they make it to the other side
>
> – amazing (she claps once). Happy days!' (3194-3197 W4)

She says she is weak because of her mental health problems and if people found out they

could 'take their advantage' (3191 W4). She says that there is a risk that people will 'pity' or

give 'sympathy', but she knows she has to ask to get the help she needs:

'I've got to live with the decisions I make, so if I go, I need help, that's making

me vulnerable, that's in turn making me scared. It's making me fearful.'

(1307-1308 W4)

Akira also feels shame about needing help, but his response is to deal with the trouble

himself and start doing things straight:

'I didn't wanna um make anyone know that I'm in trouble this time around

cos I kinda felt I've just come out of prison. That's happened to me (the

attack) and then now like I'm in trouble again, it's kind of like, kind of made

me feel like I need to start dealing with things my own way and maybe like –

stop relying on people and start doing things straight and stuff like that.' (32-

38 W2).

Feeling afraid and ashamed to ask for help, coupled with the poverty of resources available

to provide help, it is not surprising that the young people wait until they are in crisis to seek

it out. When they do, they are not of the mind to trust people, as Max puts it, when he got

to the point when he 'lost everything' (1311 W1) he just 'shut up and listened... done what

they told me' (1376 W1).

6.4 Hiding and self-soothing

Avoiding seeking out help or engaging in the opportunities that present, the young people

do what they can to mask their needs. Kath says,

'A lot of them ostrich... where they think if they ignore a problem long enough

it will actually go away.'

She argues that this means their problems get more complex and, in Mark's case, the reason why he has got himself in a 'mess'. It is clear that these young people have developed strategies from when they were young that they still fall back on to escape and soothe themselves. Even when they do engage, they are careful about what they will share; it troubles their desire for connection, belonging and receiving help for their needs. They are mostly aware of contradictions between what they want and what they do, but, while the vulnerability that trust requires is always difficult, for this group it feels abrasive, and every service they meet, every Support Worker they meet, every helping encounter they enter into requires they lay their weaknesses out.

6.4.1 Hiding Away

All the young people, apart from Braden, talk about hiding away. It begins as a strategy to deal with the bulling they experienced as children. They go to their rooms, and online. They escape. 'I liked the comfort of my bedroom' (Tom, 950-954 W1). Mark says that he was 'physically' and 'mentally' 'hiding away',

> 'I weren't engaging with anybody – as soon as I'd get home, I'd go sit on me X-Box. Come down for food, come back and play on me X-Box for hours, go to sleep, get up, do paper round, go to school, come back, play X-Box.' (1052-1054 W4)

Holly went online when she was younger and being bullied, but for her it was social media, which gave her an opportunity to create a 'fantasy' self,

'I could be anyone online, you know – I didn't lie to people or anything like that, but I'd almost fantasise that I was a much better person than I was' (613-615 W1).

She says, 'it was all bullshit, but it helped me cope' (624 W1). 'Hiding away physically and emotionally' is a theme that the young people sort in the ranking exercise in Wave Three. Here Holly recalls, 'when I was younger, I used to wear like baggy jeans, baggy t-shirt, big hoodies' (1565 W3). Whereas now she hides away emotionally, she has recently met a man online, but it has not worked out because she refuses to be vulnerable with him because 'it's a weakness' (1561 W3), and in her experience 'people use your weaknesses against you' (1562 W3). She explains that with someone like Roshni, she will 'say just enough so she understands, but not enough to make me feel vulnerable' (1564-1567 W3).

Although she says that it was just her younger self that hid away in clothes, she recalls the excursion with Futures' Involvement Group, which was a valuable experience but her 'anxiety was through the roof '(184 W3) and wearing headphones and a hat 'cuts down the noise and keeps the light out of [her] eyes' (215 W3). She recognises that this tendency to hide away is preventing her from communicating her need for help:

'...and that's a behaviour (hiding away), but a feeling is probably, 'help me, I need help' screaming, sort of thing and that's how I've felt... to me I'm screaming at you, help me, help me, but I thought about it and I'm not actually doing that.' (2860-2864 W4)

I am reminded of Milly describing Holly as 'broken' on the inside but 'stoic' in her appearance.

In Wave One, Akira talks about the second time in his life when he needed help after the death of his godmother, when he,

'Kinda zoned in or put myself in my own bubble and I kind of like – you know how you put a hoodie on and you put – you like tie the laces type of thing. I kinda done that.' (small laugh) (559-560 W1)

But when I come back in Wave Two to explore this with him, and even read him the quote above, he recognises it as 'building shells around the feelings' (468, W2), but does not acknowledge it. 'Yeah, that does happen to a lot of people. I don't seem to do that' (1536 W2). He describes himself as someone who 'struggles' out of a situation rather than hiding away; instead, he tends to present himself as super resilient, able to bounce back from the worst of situations. This is not, however, how things turn out for him; he is 'unpredictable'. All of us – his SW, me and Akira himself – have small shocks at the twists and turns of his narrative.

6.4.2 Drawing and Fidgeting

There are benign strategies that the young people use to make themselves feel better about difficult feelings they have that make engaging in a helping encounter difficult. I noticed in Wave One that three of the young people had mentioned that, especially in the volatile school environment, they would draw and/or fidget. I took this back to all the young people in Wave Two to see if it applied more broadly, and to get a sense of what fidgeting or drawing did for them, how, if at all, it related to them engaging with help. While all of them fidget, the activity has a particular resonance for Mark, Tom and Max.

Mark: (struggling for words) 'I don't tend to stay sat, I'm always doing something with my hands or I'm moving some form of my body… and that is just coping mechanism with (pause) if I'm not fidgeting, I don't feel like – this might sound weird, but if I don't – not fidgeting I don't really take anything in so I kind of have to fidget to listen.' (893 -904 W2)

Max talks about drawing guns in primary school – 'Remingtons' – and how each year the drawings would become more complex and detailed.

'just take your mind off whatever's around ya. You feel uncomfortable, so you put yourself into a position where (pause) you know, where you can just block everything out' (1790-1792 W2).

Max says that he finds colouring 'more soothing, the pictures already drawn, all you got to do is fill in the lines, just fill in the blanks' (1811-1814 W2). In Wave Three, when ranking the things that helped him engage, Max puts 'drawing and fidgeting' above 'incentives'. When I asked Tom to sort through the cards of the things that he and others said affected their engagement with help, he pulled out the card with 'bullying' on it and the card with 'drawing and fidgeting' on it – he explains that people did not understand his 'mentality' and that was why he was bullied:

'One minute I'd be pissed off the next minute I'd be childish; I'd be happy then I'd be sad – but they didn't, they didn't – get why' (1118-1119 W2).

Drawing was his 'way out':

'If I was happy, I'd draw people playing football (unclear) cars, bikes. When I was depressed and being bullied, it was guns, knives, bombs, tanks, explosions, fire,

people getting ran over, people getting stabbed all, all that stuff… So, like they were

two people in one, and I used to be able to look through all my drawings and see

how much one person would come out than the other. That, that helped me in a

way.' (1136-1142 W2).

Drawing, for Max, and fidgeting, for Mark, are tactics to regulate their anxious feelings; for

Tom it is, additionally, a way to physically reflect on the different emotions that he sees as

different people in himself. Apart from Braden, a desire to understand themselves appears

in the narratives of all the young people, a desire that arises when they feel the discomfort

of not fitting in.

6.4.3 Drugs

They all talk about using drugs. It is hard, perhaps impossible, to assess where their (or

anyone's) use is recreational and where it is an actual strategy to deal with unmet needs;

while they often describe the effects as hindering their progress, they mostly don't see drug

use as a significant issue. From Wave One, it is an issue that Mark talked about resolving. He

said he preferred to receive a voucher and incentive rather than cash because, 'I'm trying to

stop doing the drugs' (960 W1). He recognises that in the past he has prioritised buying

cannabis over paying bills, which has contributed to both rising debt and eviction. Kath

indicates that the times Mark disengages from services is when he is using. But from his

accounts he is a recreational user now.

Akira has been smoking cannabis since his early teens, but he feels that he has got a handle

on it and will not, for example, smoke before working 'and can go without it for months,

years, and I can decide to quit it' (1383 W2). Braden smokes cannabis to calm down, including before his anger management sessions with probation. Tom, having spent a long time selling drugs, rarely talks about using, associates it with the 'wrong' way to live, but fell back into using heavily when he lost his flat and job. Holly seems to use to excess then stop altogether. She talks more specifically about cannabis as a 'treat' because 'it takes all the noise out of my head' (588 W4). I feel like it is significant that in the final wave she 'relapses' and self-harms after two years of abstaining, and it is after this incident that she buys a lot of cannabis and smokes it until she makes herself sick. It also puts her into a difficult position financially where she gets into debt with family and friends. In the ranking exercise in Wave Three 'drugs and alcohol' tend to sit in the position of harming as well as helping.

For Max, drug use is an everyday activity and has been since he was 13. He said he had just recently had a whole day without smoking weed and it was 'horrible – oh God I never want to go through that again' (1746 W4). He says it is the first thing he thinks of when he gets up in the morning: 'like I said, calms me down, I can just focus on one thing for hours on end' (1837 W4). The only issue he can see with it is, 'sometimes … the person selling it' (1824, W4). This is perplexing because he also sees drug use as the reason he lost his apprenticeship, which, in his mind, was the most fully engaged he has ever been. Losing this work is viewed, by himself, Ash and Ed as the beginning of a downward spiral into homelessness. He is smoking a lot of cannabis. He tells me he goes through a quarter ounce in a week. He also uses cocaine until he is 'jittering off his seat' – he demonstrates – wide eyed, gurning and fidgeting wanting more. He talks about getting stoned often. The empty vials are displayed in his flat. He talks me through the new varieties from California. On occasion he talks about cutting down cannabis and giving up cocaine, but he refuses to seek

out help and will not talk with his GP about how the substances might react with the medication he takes for depression.

6.5 Waiting for a crisis

So, considering this litany of failure to fit in, hiding as much as possible the weakness of need and addressing it with self-soothing strategies, most of which have consequences of their own, the young people wait until things get really bad, until they hit a crisis that they can no longer hide from. 'When there's nothing else to lose you can only gain' (Max, 1614 W2)

The crisis, or hitting 'rock bottom' (Max, 1867 W2) that pushes them all to seek help, and maintain engagement until it is resolved, is homelessness. Homelessness, for some, is recognised as something that happens when other helping systems have failed.[50] This appears to be the case for all of these young people, possibly apart from Mark, who has Barnabas at his back (it seems) indefinitely. Addressing needs while experiencing homelessness, whether sleeping rough, sofa surfing or staying in a hostel, is unlikely. So, it is fair to assume, then, that once an individual is housed, the unresolved needs lying beneath their homelessness are still there. However, most providers are crisis-led and for them, Futures and The Programme included, obtaining housing is the main result/outcome. Once this is secured, care and attention (and resources) predictably wane. This is the point where tertiary preventative work begins, frequently referred to as Tenancy Support, preventing people from becoming homeless again. But this work is difficult to attract funding for and

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[50] See Chapter One, p.335

justify, especially when there is a case load of others who are in crisis and considering that success against the more tenacious problems of poor mental health, substance abuse and poor employability requires long term, specialist work. There are quicker wins to focus on. The young people are less likely to reach out and the services in.

Max and Holly reveal that, while they love their new homes, a place of their own enables them to hide away once again. As Max explains:

Max: 'It's making me a bit lazy.'

Simone: 'Is it?'

Max: 'Cos I don't want to go out – you know what I mean – I'm like, yeah man, I can just sit here just on my own in my flat all day – the walls are a bit of a mess, but once you get past that you'll be alright. Like I said, I've got food in now, so – I don't gotta go out to the chippy to buy anything, if I want to cook it, I can cook it (pause), it's nice.'

SH: 'It's so nice that you might just want to stay in it all [the] time though.'

Max: 'Not all the time. I do go out, but it's nice to just – I could– yesterday I was in all day. Monday I was in all day (pause) I'll be in all day tomorrow. I probably could have stayed in all day today to be honest.' (555-566 W2)

Ash concurs, he says,

'The thing is with him once he is comfortable, he's comfortable. You know what I mean? If he set up somewhere, he don't care, he settled there now. I'm happy in my little place (pause) that's, that's – the problematic thing isn't it (small laugh)? You know?'

In the sorting exercise in Wave Three, Holly puts 'having a secure place of your own' at the bottom of the list of 'things that affect' her engagement with help. Max puts it into the 'doesn't help at all' column in-between 'violence around you and in your environment' and 'paperwork and forms'.

6.6 Discussion

Firstly, the early experiences of these young people reflect those associated with multiple disadvantage homelessness in the literature, as indicated in Chapter One; poverty, social exclusion, difficult family relations, childhood trauma and very poor experiences with education (Fitzpatrick et al., 2013; Fitzpatrick et al., 2011; MEAM, 2009; Bramley, et al., 2015) and from Chapter Two the ongoing experiences of domestic violence, poor mental health, substance use and time spent in prison (Crane et al. 2014; Watts et al. 2015; Tyler 2006).

Connection, relatedness, feeling a part of something, belonging, was, for the young people, very much on their minds, historically and in the present. Fitting in is something they long for and is associated with engagement. As *for* this connection, they become willing to explore their own boundaries, take risks, be vulnerable (see trust) and engage. As proposed by Winnicott, the craving for belonging is more than to satisfy need or relieve tension, but for relatedness itself (Phillips, 1988, p.9).

Hunter talks about the 'struggle for belonging' and argues that it 'becomes especially hard where there is an obvious tension between the subjective and objective senses of the self, how the self is experienced "inside" as the "real me", and the way this "real me" feels it is misrecognised or not seen at all by others.' (2015, p.6). This resonates with the young

people's experiences of misrecognition by services, authorities and their peers; how *parts* of their ambivalent selves are seen, while others are not.

Their ambivalence ties them in knots. As Hunter argues, unable to contain the ambivalence (the good and bad in themselves and the world around them) and the uncertainty borne of the constant threat of relationship loss, loss of parts of themselves, they turn the 'rage and disappointment' in on themselves as Max says, 'pop a pill you fuckin little twat' (Hunter, 2015, p.7).

They don't feel 'normal' and while sometimes their difference is cherished – it also makes them feel 'vile' or 'weak', 'judged' or 'excluded', like an injured animal, a target for prey. They don't use the word, but these are feelings associated with stigma. They anticipate what others think about them and respond with 'less self-assurance'. They act out 'violent' and 'vile', which Link and Phelan describe as a response to stigmatisation they call 'interactional discrimination'(2014, p.4).[51] While homelessness is stigmatised, it seems to be a more acceptable form of vulnerability when compared with the stigma associated with experiencing anxiety and depression; bullying; manipulation; being abused by a female partner in a heterosexual relationship or being imprisoned because of her. When the crisis of homelessness hits, they reach out without giving too much away hiding the parts of themselves that bring up feelings of shame and showing the singular problem of homelessness. That singular problem is resolved, and they are free and safe to hide again. They 'stay in', are 'kept away' and 'kept down' (Link and Phelan, 2014). But experiences of

[51] See discussion in Chapter Three p.105

homelessness actually provide an opportunity to engage around the other problems which tend to predate and underpin their homelessness. It is a really neat example of how Heidegger distinguishes between two kinds of help, as 'leaping in' where the carer takes charge and responsibility for a given situation — in this case homelessness— and 'leaping ahead' where the focus is on enabling and facilitating in order to leave a legacy of care that extends beyond the intervention.

Furthermore, their experiences of trying to belong are fraught. They all clearly describe what Baker finds as discussed in Chapter Two; relationships that 'swing between the poles of best mate or lover and enemy' (2014, p.770) and back again. Compared with the hopeful pedagogical potential of attention leading to an increased ability to pay attention,' as discussed in Chapter Three, these young people seem to have learned not to trust for self-preservation. They don't want to ask for help, would rather hide away, which sits problematically next to their desire to be seen and understood (recognised) by someone who knows the good and bad in them, loves them despite their ambivalence, will help them, and help them understand themselves. They see the paradox, and given an intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, they will risk engagement – hopefully. But without a reliable environment that can handle their ambivalence, it is not often sustained. They highlight embodied, emotional regulation activities like fidgeting and drawing, both symptomatic of their anxiety and a way to resolve it, I return to this in Chapter Nine.

As Johnson and Pleace argue, while being housed has an 'independent positive effect' it can also remove the discomfort that can provide motivation to address need (2016, p.40). This appears to be the case for Holly and Max, but the response to this is surely not to keep people uncomfortable. In the final wave of interviews, Holly talks about the discomfort she

is experiencing despite being settled in her flat. She wonders if people who have been on benefits for a long time have become 'a bit too comfortable' and whether *she* has. She explains that if she is not comfortable, she won't be able to 'settle' and make the big changes she wants to make in her life, but that presently she is 'so uncomfortable' she 'can't move forward'. She poses a pertinent dilemma: there *is* something productive in discomfort (a product of encountering ambivalence), but also a level at which it becomes intolerable? How is it possible for a Support Worker to be able to tap into this ambivalence in a person and have a sense of when to give a little push, or sit in the discomfort and when to trust that their empathy, flexibility and choice is enough? We know that being responsive is a pillar that builds trust, but to respond to what and how? In the case of Max, Holly and Braden who recognise at times that their drug or alcohol use is a problem, and for the others who do not, their use of drugs and misuse of alcohol (in Braden's case) is recorded on their Outcomes Stars. In no case do they get the sort of response that leads them towards accessing support or treatment. I suspect caring and analytical attentiveness is missing, whether it is because the services they have been in contact with are distracted by CYA work, or an overreliance on empathy is disabling their ability to recognise the individual and respond in a way that supports them to let go of the strategies that immediately soothe but ultimately get in the way of them changing into the people they want to become. Caring attention, 'leaping ahead' rather than 'leaping in' is the capacity — the intervention — that informs a useful journey through this difficult territory in the encounter.

In the following chapter I illustrate how these feelings and behaviours inform and are reproduced in the sorts of tactics the young people employ to try and get help for their needs in their encounters with a range of services.

CHAPTER 7. YOUNG PEOPLE'S TACTICS: WORKING WITH SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

The young people work with a staggering array of services and systems as they try to negotiate help for multiple, intersecting and complex needs. They primarily relate to help with **housing** (including choice-based lettings schemes, hostels, housing associations and landlords); **benefits** (including Universal Credit (UC), JSA, ESA, Personal Independence Payment (PIP); **mental and physical health** (including GPs, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPTs), counsellors and MIND); **criminal justice** (including police, lawyers, courts, and probation); **Children and Family Social Services** (CFSS) and **employment** (including employers and industry training programmes).

I use the term 'work' here, drawing on Nichols (2014) who sees 'all the things young people do in institutional settings (whether they are deemed institutionally effective or not), as well as the activities of any practitioners who work with the youth as youth work' (2014, p.6). She argues that policies, interventions, managerial technologies etc. *make* the 'objectified social relations' (2014, p.12) and contribute to young people's institutional and social marginalisation (ibid, p.6). This resonates with Hunter (2015) who argues that negotiating emotions, in particular fear and anxiety *makes* the institutional space.[52] Together they reveal a picture of institutional work where power and emotions are central, shaping the technologies used, those who work them and those who are worked by them.

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[52] As discussed in Chapter Three

The use of the term 'tactics' is informed by Jackson's 2012 ethnography on youth homelessness, who follows De Certeau (1988) to interpret the mobility of her young participants and distinguishes tactics from strategy as action that takes advantage of and depends on 'opportunities' accepting 'chance offerings' (Jackson 2012, p. 67). It is 'a move made in the present without the luxury of a view of the whole terrain from a secure standing place' (ibid).

In this chapter I describe the young people's telling of their tactics within these institutional settings, in trying to get their needs met. They meet resistance from a system and services rationing resources in the context of austerity (dwindling funds, increasingly draconian thresholds) typically involving layer upon layer of assessment processes and paperwork. Moreover, these processes are experienced as, and can be shown to be, opaque and frequently idiosyncratic.

Their telling reveals the work of fitting into boxes, jumping through hoops, resisting and endless waiting. *You've got to be smart,* Akira says in Wave Two. Accounts show that their tactics include compliance, persistence, threats, bending the truth and locating advocates (frequently Support Workers) who can help steer them through and ease their frustration. Getting what you need sometimes comes down to chance and frequently involves taking risks.

So despite determined attempts to engage with a variety of services and to develop tactics and draw on advocacy support to do so, the experience of the young people is that in general, the housing, benefits, justice and support received are experienced as average if not poor quality. Their mistrust grows at each failed attempt, they become increasingly

vigilant, frustrated, violent, more susceptible to cynicism, reluctant to engage. The work is time consuming and exhausting; they give up, stop caring.

Before describing the young people's work employing these tactics, it makes sense to take in the insecure starting place they are coming from and how their feelings about control oscillate and ultimately, they take responsibility for not having it.

7.1 Reflections on control

Some of the young people reflect on what they have learned about themselves and what they can do to improve their chances. They reflect on control. Holly is reminded by exercises in the employment workshops facilitated by Futures of how control is important to her. She recalls the first interview where I was early and explains how she was unsettled by my surprise arrival. I didn't see this in her behaviour (not knowing her I had nothing to compare it with, as would be the case for any new people in her life), but I do record that she was wearing just one slipper. She says that while 'sitting in isn't good for her' (305 W3) the outside world is full of things that she can't control 'you've got all the cars, people, animals, trees, all that stuff out and about you can't control' (280 W3). Holly does have strategies to help handle her anxiety caused by this feeling of being out of control and she is becoming more confident in explaining her feelings and behaviour. She notes that if she 'compartmentalises' large tasks like sorting her flat out into smaller, separated tasks it helps her to not get overwhelmed.

Akira also reflects on control. In Wave One he talks about escaping the controlling environment of his parents, then feeling a 'bit lost' and needing someone to tell him

'actually this is what you should do' (W1, 384) to keep him on the right track. He says he would like to be 'reprogrammed' and uses an analogy of being hypnotised.

'You know what I mean, do it to yourself, put yourself to sleep tell yourself what you need to do so that you would go back into yourself you wake up and then you don't have to think anything about anything after that because everything just becomes automatic, you already know.' (1055-1061 W1)

In Wave Two I ask him what is going on here and he says,
'basically what I um (pause) what happened is, before I moved out, like I started living alone and stuff like that, I felt like I was hypnotised basically like, like a puppet, being told when to go to sleep, when to get up when to eat when to not eat, when to do this, when to do that like everything was like a programme, like I'm a programme made to run, like, you know what I mean? And that's how I felt, so soon as I was alone and I had all the freedom (little laugh) in the world, I can do whatever, what I wanted... I was happy, in a sense, but then you kind of get bored of it, in a bit, you start realising, ok maybe that's not what I wanted. Maybe all I wanted was a bit of leniency, not full on, to just be out of control and I did realise that cos, when I started living alone and I started like having to do stuff by myself I started realising I do need people to tell me what to do cos I don't even know how to like pay bills, how to do this, how to cook, how to do that, you know what I mean?' (1219-1229 W2).

He hits precisely on the delicate balance of needing guidance, wanting help and wanting to be free from the control of others; and that guidance and help can feel like control, imagining himself as both and neither puppet nor puppeteer.

Throughout the interviews with Mark he talks about responding badly to services and individuals trying to control him; telling him what to do, and then in Wave Three he has a different insight on this:

> 'At Futures they introduce - well, they will try to introduce different things, so I thought I already knew it, turns out I didn't. But it all, it's all down to self (pause) yourself understanding the situation - 'actually that was pretty stupid of me' or 'that was actually quite wise, that was mature to do'... you kind of have to self-teach yourself' (954- 959 W3).

He goes on to say that the help was there, he just didn't want it or see that he needed it – from blaming workers, the system, his family and others altogether, he goes on to taking it completely on himself, he just needed to 'buck up' his ideas (978-994 W3).

7.2 Compliance: jumping through hoops

For all the participants' differences in reflecting on control and resistance to force, they often comply. Complying looks like and is registered by services as engagement. To the young people, however, *complying* is something one must do in order to receive the help required. It is not engagement. It is a performance, it is turning up, saying the 'right' things, *showing* willingness however, it is recorded as engagement. Akira comments on workers at probation, and how he needs to show that he is 'worth helping'

'...if they really want to help you, they just - they're going to have to put in effort to helping you, mostly, and people will only do that when people actually think that you're worth helping at the time.' (1093-1097 W2)

I ask what he means, and he goes on to apply this understanding to his own Support Worker explaining that if young people 'waste her time', 'never turn up' she 'doesn't make them her priority' (1157-1162 W2) will stop 'bothering' with you (322 W1). Turning up can be objectively witnessed and counted, it is a very thin indication of engagement but for Akira here, it is how you show you are 'worth helping'.

While engagement depends on trust in order to get to the bottom of need, compliance looks like what Max does when he first approaches Futures homeless and in crisis -he decides that the best way to get help is to 'shut up and listen' (1375 W1). Like at school when he was sent to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and I ask whether as an intervention it helped.

'I weren't bothered... yeah sound I'll do that, sign me up, I'm easy going init, whatever you want me to do I'll do it... You want me to do this, I'll do this, I'll do this, you want me to… you want me to do ten star jumps, I'll do ten star jumps...' (1209-1216 W1).

Max thinks that showing himself as compliant is going to mean something to Futures and will improve his chances of getting help in the future. He tells me that he was the first person to complete all seven of the life skills modules Futures offers - it is a 'training and education outcome' in the PbR outcome framework. He imagines when 'he actually needs

the help' the staff will think 'Oh Max!... ain't he the one that actually done all them life skills first' (2285-2287 W3).

Tom complies with CFSS to 'prove' that he 'weren't the way he used to be, so I threw the drugs and that into the background' (560 W1). There was no intention to address or even attempt to address his criminal behaviour, but to pass a test to avoid further CFSS engagement, ironically a way to keep 'help' out of their lives. He goes on to reflect that it was strange that when some years later, Social Services got involved again regarding a child born to a different mother that they 'didn't bring any of that up', that they were more concerned about his ability to protect the baby from her mother.

> 'They [CFSS] pleaded with me to go against my daughter's mum, so I went against my daughter's mum thinking, yeah, it'll look good in my favour and that, and it didn't' (745-746, W1).

Compliance shows the young people trying to work out what shape the system wants them in, what they should say and do to be worthy: turn up, shut up, listen, do what you are told – better still, do it before anyone else, when a problem is highlighted, hide it. The *point* of it (need and help) is often far removed from the activity performed. They all comply with The Programme's expectation that they will complete a series of Life Skills modules in exchange for incentives, only Akira gets something out of the experience, and interestingly is the only one who was not offered an incentive to do so. As Cloke et al., (2010) find in their study, the rules are 'unwritten' but complied with because there is an understanding that as a result a 'tangible package of support' (p.175) will be provided. As far as this form of contracting goes, according to Baier (1994), it is neither transparent nor played out by people who have

some parity in power (p.121). This is not to say that compliance has no constructive effect; it could possibly be the beginning of an experience of engagement, but in these cases it seems, as Winnicott argues, it takes these young people away from having stability in themselves.

7.3 Persistence

Persistence hopes for a better result despite what the service or system actually requires. The starkest example here is when Braden is made intentionally homeless because of the fire in his flat, he goes into the council housing department 'everyday':

> '...cos he's seen me every day going in there he thought 'oh yeah, he's in a situation where he does want a place'. That's how I'd been looking at it like' (437-439 W1).

Over this period, he is frequently asked to leave by security and gets into an argument with a Housing Officer who will only offer him accommodation he imagines is full of chaotic drug users. Finally, it seems by chance, he meets with an officer who is aware of The Programme for which Braden is the perfect candidate. While the strategy employed by The Programme is temporarily successful, it does not ameliorate the strategy employed by housing associations to exclude individuals on the basis of past infringements. Braden stays in his flat for 12 months, his Starter Tenancy[53] is reviewed and he is evicted because of not disclosing the eviction from his previous property.[54] Persistence is a difficult tactic to muster without a long view, without stable foundations, without the power in a relationship that makes a

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[53] A 12-month tenancy from which landlords can evict tenants without a legal reason.
[54] Because of the fire in his first flat following which he was served with an anti-social behaviour injunction under the Housing Act 1996 which was upheld.

positive result more likely. Furthermore, services apply strategies to repel persistence as is the case here with security, repeated rejection from a Housing Office, and the legislative power of housing associations, as a result, this relatively brief attempt by Braden is still significant.

I found it difficult to understand Braden and follow where he lived and why he left before and during his time with Futures. But when I received his file I found it fat with correspondence from housing associations, the court, probation and responses from his various Support Workers. Putting this together with Braden's story, a more complete picture comes into view. One worker found a loophole to get Braden back into a housing association managing a large portfolio of social housing that he was barred from; at the time this was a great result for Braden and The Programme's recruitment. But now Braden is doubly barred and his housing options for the future seriously diminished. It strikes me that there has been no lack of attention around the administration of Braden's support and while he has felt cared for and spent a lot of time with Support Workers, no one has had the time to get a grip on what is going on for him and help work out a decent long-term solution. Bramley et al., (2019) make a good point about the lack of transparency in information sharing across agencies that people experiencing multiple exclusion are likely to be in contact with that contributes to the gaps between services that people experiencing multiple disadvantage fall through. There is no doubt that Braden engages well in the turning up respect; he spends a lot of time with workers; all the various services he engages with have similar objectives (addressing employment, training, health, housing and wellbeing) and yet he is very clearly falling through the gap. I see in Braden's file that the Youth Offending Team that was working with Braden had agreed to do an assessment for

learning difficulties with him a few months before I met Mike, who seemed to have no knowledge of this – had he not read the file? If he had, he wouldn't have had to worry about bringing it up with Braden himself (who he thought would kick off) and made a call to the Youth Offending Team to consider how the two agencies could support Braden together to engage in the assessment and help him find the sorts of adjustments needed to address the disadvantages he experiences. There is a distinct difference between administrative tasks focused on the young person and those on CYA work.

7.4 Stretching the truth and bending the rules - 'doing it sneaky'

A common tactic is stretching the truth in order to meet thresholds as they pertain to accessing assistance from the state and services. These thresholds are not transparent and often depend on the discretion of the worker. Kath describes the application process for priority need under the homelessness legislation as 'really random'. At Barnabas they 'coach them a bit' beforehand, she says it is about '*how* you say things' but generally 'the default setting' is that they are not in priority need; sometimes they are accepted but 'there doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason in it'. In cases where she thinks the young person will be accepted, they are often not and vice versa.

In Wave One Holly explains that the only reason she was moved to the PRU where she escaped from bullying was because a social worker was sent to prosecute her parents as she was not attending school. Much later she started to get help when she finally met the vulnerability threshold to qualify as homeless:

'Well, you know, ok you're homeless – right; that's a problem. And that's why I got

more help because people noticed it was a big… oh well you're homeless, you need

help.' (2440-2441 W1)

Kath says that the reason 'why young people lie' is to prove their eligibility for assistance as

homeless. She explains that it is 'complex', and the young people think that you might have

the 'power' to do something to improve their chances. This is why at Barnabas they try to

'get alongside' the young people, in order to ameliorate that unequal power relationship

that encourages deception. The young people never talk about it as lying but as Akira

explains:

'I feel like certain systems that are put into place are there to be bent a little bit, with certain

people you know?... The system is there to help right? And it works with people, but it

doesn't work with everybody... with some people, when you oppress them you just push

em, push em, you just push em away... you make me think you're not trying to help' (1127-

113 W2).

The system needs a bit of flexibility to be able to handle the sheer diversity of people and

need. It taps directly into the paradox described by Hunter in Chapter Four of 'inclusion and

differentiation' and is highlighted by Lipsky regarding the discretion of SLB as they negotiate

'highly scripted work to achieve policy objectives and responsiveness to individual cases'

(2010, p.xii). In Akira's case, he is living in a large house in which by Wave Two he is the only

official tenant, but several of his cousins are living there now. They make up part of his

familial circle, these relationships are a crucial source of support for Akira and drifting away

from them in the past, lead to isolation and substance abuse. So, drifting towards

'everyone', having his cousins around him, seems like a good thing; but he has to be illegal/rule bending to do it.

Braden employs the tactic of stretching the truth in relation to his work on the markets and what he declares to Job Centre Plus. Work is central to Braden, it is help; it builds his self-confidence, makes him feel needed and like he has a place in the world, it gives him routine and structure that detracts from, if not calms the frustration he feels at the abandonment and manipulation he has experienced from his family and friends. When I interviewed his Support Worker Mike, he was keen to get Braden on ESA because they were having trouble getting him to sign on and he kept getting sanctioned, which was an issue because his housing benefit was disrupted, and Futures was not paid. I ask Braden if he will drop some of the hours at work, he says, 'nah, I just do it sneaky... still claim obviously... I'm only doing like (pause) 3-4 hours anyway...' (223-229 W2).

He is getting practice in doing it sneakily as he, minutes prior, proudly told me he has gone up to four days, they are long days, he starts at 2am. The ESA limit is 16 hours and no more than £125.50 per week (he may well not be earning this much but it's cash-in-hand, so he could do it sneakily). Mark and Max use the same tactic with cash-in-hand precarious and poorly paid work, although Max cunningly refers to it as 'volunteering' which is permitted. Kath refers to it as an 'ethical dilemma' which Mike is dealing with as well. Because Braden was not doing it 'sneakily' before. While on JSA, his SW Mike says that in addition to Braden not being able to keep up with the job searches and the 'modules' he was required to complete to secure his JSA claim and

> '...basically, he keeps going back to the Job Centre and telling them that he is
>
> working. Which is right, he is working. He is working. But at the same time, he is
>
> getting cash in hand, from where he is working - you see?'

Mike ties himself in knots trying to explain his frustration that Braden will neither comply

with the expectations of JSA nor bend the truth when attending meetings and hide the fact

that he is working. Futures' resolution to this problem is to get him moved onto ESA, so

their housing benefit is at least safe. But Braden is held in this contradictory place where he

is being told to both lie and comply. Braden is certainly aware and admires 'sneaky' practice;

he talks about his 'brainbox', 'clever clogs' friend who managed to 'pass' his Work Capability

Assessment by faking mental illness, 'he said 'c'mon boy! Like this imaginary dog's following

him' (1068 W1). While it *seems* like a bit of a joke for Braden, being sneaky with Job Centre

Plus threatens his benefits and his housing. The likelihood of him being able to afford rent

on the meagre and unpredictable income from working the markets is slim. He is not aware

how close he is to being made homeless again, and there is no other safety net for him now

The Programme has ended. The others are savvier than Braden, they are sharper to the risks

and the unwritten rules and have a better sense of how far it is possible to bend the truth.

Max explains,

> '...you've got to have a rough background to get help, that kind of thing – like you
>
> got to have a sob story' (2630-2631 W4).

I say, 'do you think that happens?' He says, 'loads of times I have... make things out a lot

worse than what they are' (2635-2638 W4). Three years ago, when he claimed ESA things

were really bad, he was not able to walk out of the house by himself, but this is not the case

any longer and in order to claim this benefit he has to maintain that he is still that vulnerable.

> Simone: 'And how does that make you feel?'
>
> Max: (pause) 'Like I am in that situation, like (pause) like I, like I have to believe it myself.' (2642-2644 W4)

He begins to think he *is* how he is *describing* himself, to hit thresholds, be eligible to get help. While Max is not as disabled by his mental ill health as he was, it is still a significant issue that he is medicated for but wants to access talking therapy to address. In Wave Three he has moved into a flat away from his GP, has not registered with a new one so has not been able to get his prescription, he says, 'I feel like I need my tablets... I've tried to put it off, tried to like better myself without the tablets...it just obviously isn't working' (2044-2016 W3).

Max is confused about the state of and the effect of his mental health on the way that he feels. His consumption of various illicit substances undoubtedly makes this more difficult. It is difficult to explain this story to anyone, let alone a professional. Part of his unwillingness to engage with further help is the duplicity he has deployed by stretching the truth to maintain his benefit. He is afraid of what he might lose, afraid of being found to be completely well when in fact he does not feel completely well, uncertain how much of how he feels is due to stopping his medication or his use of other substances. In Wave Four he says,

> 'I like people like... that will just help you straight from the start, you ain't got to put on the sob stories you know what I mean?' (642-643 W4).

Deception seems to take him further away from understanding and being able to explain his needs and accessing help for them. Akira's issue here and response is different to both Max and Braden. His problem is finding employment when he has a criminal record; in Wave One saying that he will do well in an interview but never receives a call back – he says he has applied for 12 jobs. In the second interview he says, 'I've kind of found ways around it' (992 W2). It turns out that through Employment Agencies he can get work which is 'not permanent' 'not fully guaranteed, but they don't really check you' (994-995 W2). He has found a loophole where a mediating agency appears to 'do it sneaky' on his behalf. But, as discussed in the previous chapter, the unpredictable agency work leads to financial problems because of a gap in his benefits, which leads to him shoplifting.

7.5 Enlisting advocates

Mark in particular finds communicating his needs, especially with 'professionals', difficult; they all struggle. In our first interview he explains that Support Workers attending meetings with him is one of the most useful ways they can support his engagement with help. He gets tongue tied (this is evident in our interviews) and sometimes words spill out in an order he is not intending. He also has a slight physical tick where he makes a clicking sound with his fingers, I notice over time that this becomes more furious when he discusses stressful or frustrating incidents. Advocacy is a common role for Support Workers. While it is fair to say that outcomes with all services will be improved with a 'professional' advocate, it is difficult

to quantify how much of this is to do with how just having anybody there helps to manage the communication; or the fact that there is a witness; or that someone with authority and influence in particular, adjusts the power imbalance and that *this* directly impacts on decisions made. Mark talks about some friends who have fulfilled this role in the past, saying that,

> 'If I'm trying to explain something and I'm not quite (pause) hitting the nail on the head, they will try and fill in the blanks... which is really helpful' (266-269 W4).

By Wave Three, Mark is seeing a woman, in Wave Four he feels comfortable to call her his partner. He has had the ambulance out twice with panic attacks that have left him breathless and going in and out of consciousness. These experiences prevent him from completing his SIA certification to work in security. Both times the paramedics see to it that his breathing is improved and recommend that he goes to his GP. He has spoken about a fear of hospitals and powerful reluctance to engage with any medical services. So, he takes his partner with him:

> 'If I was struggling to say what was going on or how I was feeling she would try to explain better than I could, and the doctor would turn around like, 'this isn't about you, it's about him (clicking) and I was like, well she is actually trying to explain to you in a way that I can't (clicking) and she was like, 'no, you should be talking' so, (clicking) I've refused to go back to my doctors.' (213-218 W4)

The potential for this strategy to help *is* affected by the skills, knowledge, authority and position of the advocate enlisted. Holly has the good fortune to have the support of Milly. Milly has worked as a community development worker in the area for over 20 years. She

observed that people who are worst off didn't have the education and skills to get the 'right benefits'. She is also a personal friend of some managers at the hostel Holly is first placed in and, although Tracey takes credit for getting Holly a place there, it is Milly who makes sure she gets a shared flat rather than being placed in the chaos of a hostel. Following the car accident, it is Milly who ensures she gets an appointment with 'her own' doctor, attends the appointment with Holly and ensures that her 'state' is fully explained and understood. It is Milly who helps her register as homeless and manage the paperwork to apply for ESA. Milly is the sort of advocate one would wish for all people in periods of vulnerability.

Advocacy, however, can be disabling. There is no doubt that when dealing with complex systems that are more likely to respond to a worker than a client, it will be more *efficient* for that worker to take control of the process. Max mentions hating paperwork, and it transpires that his workers fill out the forms for benefits and grants, he just signs at the bottom. Braden, who is worried about the effects of new medication, cannot talk to his GP because 'obviously I don't know erm, the doctors name'.

7.6 Kicking off and making threats

As a final resort, some of the young people 'kick off' and threaten services and individuals; this occurs in situations where they feel threatened or within their rights to strike back, to resist unfair system strategies. For Braden it was the response on day one of four at the Council housing department when he was offered a number of hostels that he associated with ''druggies', people who use 'serious' substances like heroin'. He believed that if he were to move in there he would be associated with that sort of behaviour even if you 'deny it all night long' (350 W1).

'...I've told them, I was like 'you move me into a place with a load of druggies (pause) expect me to come back here (unclear) smashed up'. So, I was not going to move in there, if they moved me in there, I would have smashed it up and get straight back out.' (344-346 W1)

When Max is woken 'several times' by a Support Worker who is 'shouting' at another young person he is angry and expresses it.

'I've like grabbed my tea, my cup, from the kitchen, I've slammed my cup down, I'm like 'you shout any louder you're going to wake up all the fucking neighbours, she's like '*excuse me*?'' (said in over articulated speech) (1464- 1466 W1).

The argument escalates:

'She's like 'I'll get you evicted.' I'm like, oh my God. This is - my bedroom is literally all I've got...' (1475-1476 W1)

'You get me evicted I'm going to blow your car up, I don't care if you're at work, whether outside my house, I don't care, even if you're in a petrol station I will blow your car up, yeah, I will go to where you work, and I will follow you home and I'll even burn your house down.' (1482- 1485 W1).

Futures respond to this incident with the involvement of senior members of staff. Max admits to what he has said, and the Support Worker concerned denies making the threat. While neither staff nor Max can explain exactly what occurred, the Support Worker is no longer employed by Futures. Max is not sanctioned in any way, but he ends the telling of the situation with 'You know what I mean? I've came across proper vile. Proper vile' (1480-1494

W1). He thinks Futures 'dropped it like a ton of bricks' (331 W2) because the worker should not have threatened him, so, in his mind, his behaviour is vindicated. Much later on when he is in his own flat for only a few months, he feels unsafe because of local people threatening him and is desperate to be moved. He takes the appropriate steps: notifying the police, contacting his housing association and finally speaking with his Support Worker. The police send around 'plastic cops' community police (which actually makes him feel more vulnerable).

> 'If you have police in your house, it's not a good sign around here. You're likely to get your windows bricked and your door cut through, fucking call the police again and I'll fucking have ya. This is that type of area Simone...' (703-705 W3)

The housing association tells him that he won't be eligible for a move for another two years. Roshni asks him to get a direct line number for his housing association worker so she can try to advocate for him, he tries, and they refuse. All out of options he wonders out loud whether if he

> '...not threatens them with the newspaper but try and expose them, you know what I mean, because that would like – he's serious, you know what I mean, he needs to get out of the area?' (929-931 W3)

The threat here is associated with 'being serious', as opposed to what? Making up a 'sob story'? Tom is similar to Max in his tendency to deflect to threats 'getting power to help' as he puts it. He shares his feeling that the way Futures goes about helping is not one that he 'understands'

'Futures they sit like, and they just listen and um you don't hear from them, and they

don't help ya... it's hard because the only way I understand (unclear) is through

violence, intimidation, getting the power to help... It's just different...' (93-95 W1)

Despite this he does not mention using this strategy with services. But when he is fired from

his job, and they refuse to pay him salary he is owed he sends a couple of friends to the

workplace to threaten the manager who pays up. When his landlady sends her husband and

father around to collect the rent he owes, they 'start on' (threaten) him.

'I was like, come in this house, and legally I'm legally in my rights (unclear: pitch you)

on the floor and give you a massive (unclear: he is saying attack me and I'm within

my rights to defend myself), please do it!' (496-499 W2)

While Mark describes his tendency to get angry when he is frustrated, especially when he is

feeling forced, his strategies to level injustice could be understood to be threats. In this case

he has been moved to new supported accommodation which is poorly maintained. Housing

Benefit covers the £800 per month charge and he feels that maintenance issues should be

addressed. He describes a frustrating interaction with the person who attends to repair his

leaking toilet with silicone while Mark comments that the silicone won't set on a dry

surface,

'3 hours later, 'Eric! [maintenance person] Toilet's leaking again.' 'Oh, we'll have to

put it through as a job, get a contractor to come out.' I was like 'but I told you, you

should have done that in the first place!' (801-805 W3)

Mark decided to take some action

'...until you fix my toilet, until you fix my door frames, until you fix the problems, I am not paying you my service charge... the only rent you are going to get from me is my housing benefit. And he's like ' you can't do that, you can't do that.' I was like ' no, I have every right to.' So, the whole - the maintenance section of the licence agreement, which they

have to adhere to, they don't adhere to, but they expect us to adhere to our part of the licence agreement' (637-651 W3)

He realises that this action might 'backfire' on him and has only withheld one month, £40, of service charge. While I admire his tenacity in this issue, I am also aware of the debt[55] he has and how this refusal, if it becomes more than a threat, could adversely affect him. In the next wave he reports that the toilet and heating has been fixed but the door frame and now the windows need to be mended. He is paying some of his services charge but has accrued £210 debt in the 32 weeks he has been in the property.

Holly has been waiting for a long time for incentives from Futures, which is the source of a lot of her frustration, consumes a lot of her transcripts and by the Final Wave it has reached a crescendo where she stops being 'professional'. While understanding that Roshni has a lot on her plate with 'problem' clients, demands from 'management' and 'resource' limitations, it is now 'taking the piss' and despite her 'forgiving' nature Holly 'kicks off':

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[55] Including £2000 rent arrears from pre-existing tenancies

'Not extreme because I did apologise... as bad as it sounds it got me the result I wanted but I don't want to be that person, because I shouldn't have to be that person to get that result... and this is my problem I have had to change... I have had to change sort of, how I am with certain things to get what I need, not necessarily what I want but what I *need'* (1621-1641 W4).

While kicking off and stretching the truth are often effective tactics to get some of what they need it takes them further away from addressing deeper concerns, complicating and entrenching their existing needs.

7.7 Dangerous courses: taking back control?

As explained in chapter 5, in Wave Three I notice that Max has a graze above his eye. Behind it is an altercation with some local young people who he has bought weed from 'on tick'. He is nervous about leaving his flat and when he does, he takes his PlayStation with him. During the interview he frequently looks out of the large windows facing a cul-de-sac. This is the main reason that he is pursuing and considering threatening his housing association to get a move to a different area. We exhaust the options he has to handle this situation and he says,

'...the last option would be to make myself actually homeless, that would be the very last option, but at some point, someone will have to help me.' (1086-1087 W3)

Here Max is considering leaving his flat and sleeping rough. Tom feels forced into taking a similarly dangerous option when CFSS are considering removing his son on the grounds that he and his partner are unable to look after the child and that he is a risk, he explains,

'They tried taking him on the grounds we couldn't cope but I was like, no, I'm not having this, and I basically went and sold two keys worth of weed in three days just to get a solicitor. Got a good solicitor and fought the whole way through.' (635-640 W4)

This risky strategy proves successful to a degree with the solicitor convincing the court that he was not a risk and that the couple were able to look after the child, but the case 'tore me and his mum up' (660 W1). He decided to leave before the case was over, afraid that the court would make his partner decide between him and the child. It is curious to note that the first intervention they had with CFSS led Tom to putting dealing into 'the background' while this intervention led him to increase this illegal and dangerous behaviour.

Following an awful Christmas for Holly she has taken a big step towards services. Things got pretty bad for her, and she reached out to a GP who turned out to be helpful. Phew. She is fairly pleased with the result in the final interview; but the lengths she had to go to, or in this case imagine, to get there are troubling:

'yeah, it's like I actually said to my doctor, I said what do I need to do to get the help do I have to put myself back into hospital to get this help? do I have to be, you know somebody found me in a pool of my own blood to get the help? What do I need to do to get this help and it's almost like if you don't fit into this category or these criteria, we can't help ya.' (1664-1674 W4)

Holly does not get found in a pool of her own blood, but she does buy a lot of weed and smokes it until she makes herself sick – then she gets in touch with the GP. She appears to force herself into being poorly enough to get the attention she needs. She calls the surgery,

cries down the phone and swears and they give her a double appointment where she feels she is able to communicate the complexities of how she is feeling and acting. She tells him about her self-harm, drug use, her anxiety and how helpless she feels, he is empathetic, she doesn't feel judged.

7.8 Forced choices

When things feel desperate, when there is a crisis, many of the young people will jump without really considering the implications of their decisions and actions. It is not really a tactic but a response to anxious waiting and desperation to escape from a situation they are in. It looks like engagement because they are moving, turning up and interacting but in a perilous, crisis-led manner. In this example from Tom, he is fortunate not to fall too hard. He is at the police station waiting to be questioned about the charges of sexual assault that his ex-girlfriend has made against him and to raise a charge of domestic violence against her. He has enlisted a lawyer who is travelling from a town a couple of hours drive away. He tells of the moment when he goes in to meet the officers and I ask why his lawyer was not with him. He says 'I wanted to get it over and done with. So, I walked in and...' at this moment his girlfriend cuts in (one of maybe three times) and says, 'you didn't think he was coming' (846-848 W2). Tom had called the lawyer the night before when he tried to transfer Tom through to his office the line went dead. Tom called him back two or three times,

> '...Didn't think he would show up. I don't want to give him the benefit of the doubt and think yeah, he's just going to come through that door, I thought, nah, I just want to get in and get out.' (856-858 W2)

Tom has talked about the 'benefit of the doubt before', it is associated with trust; when people give him the benefit of the doubt and when he is prepared to give others the same lenience. Aside from his natural anxiety about speaking with police, Tom feels a particular sort of shame about being the victim of violence committed by a woman and expects the police to 'tell me to stop lying and that' (840 W2). He was nervous about how the charge brought against him would play out, but this was overridden by his lack of trust that the lawyer would show up and his impatience to 'get in and get out'.

Max was faced with a not dissimilar situation when the first flat he was offered was in the area he grew up in. In our first interview he talked about his total aversion to moving back there. But he 'had' to get out of the hostel he was in where he had altercations with other young people, and now he finds himself back in his old neighbourhood, feeling threatened and he 'has' to get out of there 'for the same reason' (908 W3). Now that will not be possible. Desperation to escape one crisis seems to perpetually land him in another. When I interview Richard, Max's Support Worker, he describes a situation where Max went for an interview with a supported housing project, Richard was supposed to attend the meeting but was running 'ten minutes late and it had already finished' (Richard). Richard explains that,

> 'because... a worker decided to mention problems he had before he went absolutely ballistic in the interview and kind of missed out completely on the whole thing' (Richard).

There are obviously a few forced choices operating here: Max goes in without his advocate present, the supported housing project brings up past issues (arrears, Richard explains) and

Richard is late and unable to advocate for his client who, not uncharacteristically (without the luxury of stable ground which might have been provided by Richard), goes 'ballistic'. If this series of events had not occurred Max might be in different position.

7.9 Chance

Despite the application of tactics on occasions success comes down to chance. After nearly two years of Mark and Roshni maintaining a volatile arrangement where Mark feels that she does not listen to him, Mark gets a new Support Worker (OP). This is a turning point for Mark, who is promptly enrolled on the security course he has been hoping for throughout, he gets a speedy move from the area where he feels threatened and finds in OP a person who listens to him, and he can relate with. How this occurred is a mystery. From OP's perspective, he just happened to pick up the phone to Mark one day and went to meet him because Roshni was not in the office. Similarly, irregular and fortunate for Mark, are the circumstances that led to him being able to lay charges on a man who assaulted him. He didn't want to go into the station for fear of someone seeing him leading to questions and possible reprisals, so he reported it over the phone and emails them evidence which consists of threatening text messages. He waits a week or so and emails the police for an update, the response he gets is 'we have been inundated with kidnappings, err, shootings and stabbings' (166 W3). He does not hear anything further until the flat across the hall from him gets raided by armed police and among them is the detective who he has been emailing. This gives Mark the opportunity to say, 'what's happening?' It turns out that the detective had lost the evidence that Mark had emailed where the perpetrator admits assaulting Mark and threatens to attack him again. He resends the evidence, and the perpetrator is charged, which is what Mark was hoping for.

Akira's lucky break came when he showed up at court, charged for carrying a knife and expecting to be 'sent down'. He had packed a bag. His Support Worker Steph called him on the day of the hearing, Akira had told her the date, so he guesses this is why she was calling, but he was not expecting her to be there. Luckily, The Programme offices are directly around the corner from the court so 'she's managed' to make it to the hearing. Steph put in a character reference, and I presume that the fact Akira was engaged with The Programme would have gone in his favour. The Judge also took into consideration that he had been recently attacked, was feeling fearful and carrying a knife made him feel safer and he was released without being charged.

7.10 Giving up, dropping out and ceasing to care

Finally they, very often, give up and drop out. Holly gives up on the sign language course because the group work made her uncomfortable, she had a disagreement, she felt stupid, and she can't bear to speak to the tutor about how her anxiety is affecting her and what could be done to address it. Mark does not complete the long-awaited SIA course because of panic attacks and gives up on the doctors, the antidepressants prescribed remain unopened in his cupboard. He lasts one session with the anger management course at MIND because it is classroom-based learning that reminds him of school (which he hated) and they won't be teaching strategies, just going through the power point slides they were given up front. For Max, there is the training for the site certificate he failed to complete which he needs to get legitimate work on site. We discuss his attempts to access counselling in every interview, in the Third Wave he asks me to speak to Roshni about it and I agree but press him as to why he doesn't want to speak to her directly.

Max: 'I don't like looking weak innit- I don't like it man. I hate it.'

Simone: 'You don't look weak, you actually look really smart and strong by saying what your problems are as far as I'm concerned.'

Max: 'Nah, it's weak I'm telling ya.'

Simone: 'According to who?'

Max: (I can barely hear him) 'To me.'

Simone: 'Ah'

Max: (long pause) 'Roshni I got a problem with my house, Roshni I got a problem mental condition, Roshni I got a problem with my physical condition, Roshni I got a problem with my mates, got a problem with my family, Roshni I got a problem, (really fast) I got a problem, I got a problem, I got a problem - looks weak, don't it?'

Simone: (pause) 'What's the alternative?'

Max: 'Shut up and put up.' (2462 -2480 W3)

Does it look weak? Or is he exhausted and confused? Easier to shut up and put up. I am struck by the contrast of Max now, tired and despondent in the face of his continuing need, and the image he paints of himself in the first interview as a small child literally grabbing for help.

I call Roshni and she answers. I audio record my experience of the conversation straight after it. She is friendly as usual, tired, yawning. She is working from home. She is leaving the job on Friday. I asked who would be taking over her clients and she said 'nobody' and that '26 out of 36 of her clients are in accommodation and settled'. Roshni says that she has life skills modules to write up and they take a long time. I explain that Max has stopped taking

Mirtazapine because he has not registered with the GP since moving. She is unaware that he was on a prescription. I mention that Max is interested in counselling, and she says she had 'no idea' and says, 'I'm a counsellor!' She said that she has been texting him, but he hasn't got back to her. She explains that she will make her line manager aware of the issue and I receive an email to confirm she does this, and the manager is aware. Box ticked; she has followed the process. But I am confused; how is it possible that she had no idea about Max's mental health issues? Does Max imagine that he is asking for help more than he actually does? Or is he so fearful of feeling weakened that he cannot let a SW know? Or is it because Roshni and the others are attending to CYA work, literally as Nichols (2014) describes it 'outcomes management, data collection, fee-for-service structures' (p.108-9).

In the end, they stop caring. Holly says, 'once you stop caring life becomes a lot easier' (2397 W4). In the first interview Max says, 'I don't care' 19 times. Tom (fired from his job, kicked out of his flat and in such a complicated mess with Universal Credit and housing benefit that not even the most senior workers from Futures can work it out) steals cars and spends everything he has on drugs:

> 'Like I didn't care about the rent, I didn't care about where my life was heading or anything, I just thought, I tried doing it the right way for once and it was kicked up in my face, so, fuck it. And Futures isn't going to help me so why should I help myself. So, that's what I did, I crashed a couple of cars, got extremely high, ah, basically got up to some stupid shit. Went out robbing, went out dealing weed, and um, I met (name of current gf) and then moved up here (pause) that was it like. Along with moving into Grantsville and that, that's all I was doing, robbing cars and smoking weed. I didn't care about nothing else.' (296-304 W2)

7.11 Discussion

The young people do not enter into engaging with systems and services to get help with 'the luxury of a view of the whole terrain from a secure standing' (Jackson, 2012, p.67). It is a battle because resources are limited, but there is no 'option of planning a general strategy... it operates in isolated actions blow by blow' (ibid). As Hoggett argues, having had long term experience of 'hardship and frustration', loss can be tolerated much more than is imagined in system designed around a presupposition that agents are making decisions in an individualistically calculated manner 'shorn of culturally acquired expectations' (Hoggett, 2000, p. 184). These young people are prepared to take very big and rash risks with themselves to get the help they need.

The young people's compliance illustrates how we are shaped by power in hidden ways. They check the shape the system wants them in and try to fit it, they turn up, shut up, listen, do what they are told – better still, do it before anyone else. If service highlights a problem, your bad behaviour in the past for example, hide it. Or, if you are *required* to have a different problem to reach a threshold (which might be entangled with the problem you should hide): bend the truth, choose the right words, tick the right boxes – have the right problem to the appropriate extent. Or 'do it sneaky'. This work begins to make it difficult to grab at the truth for yourself. Winnicott maintained that 'human development was an often-ruthless struggle against compliance with the environment' (Phillips, 1988, p.5). The more we shape ourselves to get what we need, the further we get from what he calls the 'true self', that which 'gives the feeling of real' rather than an 'essence' (Winnicott, 1965, p.148). As discussed in Chapter Three, the task of recognition takes place in the context of compliance – and compliance is an indication of stigma.

The system repels persistence with an array of strategies to ration limited resources (see Lipsky, 2010, pp.81-151). Persistence succeeds when a loophole emerges but as we see in Braden's case, success is limited and the rationing strategies that he manages to dodge in the first place return. Kicking off, making threats and forced choice occur when compliance, persistence and stretching the truth fail, where the strategies of systems and services to ration available resources prove intractable. While, as demonstrated here, these tactics can be effective, they have other effects. Firstly, as they act out the 'violent', 'vile', 'angry', 'threatening' young person/client that homelessness and related systems might be expecting, playing out the stigma associated, as Tyler argues, they become the 'symbolic and material scapegoats... through which welfare retrenchment [and harsh treatment] are legitimized' (2017, p.9). The young people collude with the mechanism that is also making things difficult for them. Fortifying limited and stigmatised views regarding 'young and homeless, unemployed and mentally ill' and justifying unfair systems retrenching already scarce help. Secondly, these tactics amplify the misrecognition of the 'real me' further troubling efforts to belong, be seen and fit in (Hunter, 2015, p.6).

The services and systems aspiring to create self-sufficient and reliable citizens actually appear to train them in how to survive being out of control by being unreliable, idiosyncratic and dependent on the threatened, unvalued frontline worker trying to manage their 'wide discretion' (Lipsky, 1980, p.xi) by 'improvising' from personal experience (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003) and covering their arse (Nichols, 2014). Success seems to occur despite of, rather than because of, the helping services and systems – when individuals get lucky.

There is some opportunity, hope perhaps, in enlisting advocates. Considering the adversarial splitting between client and state; a person or institution that sits in-between them is a way

to ameliorate the sizable power difference. A useful advocate seems to have a foot in both camps, representing a fudging of the boundary as is illustrated by Boal's term 'spectactor' merging actor with spectator (1995) and Maynard-Moody and Musheno's 'citizen agent' (2003). The ability of the advocate to develop trust through developing solidarity through shared risk further extends the potential of the advocate (see discussion in Chapter Two). Solidarity alone, as can been seen with Mark's girlfriend at the GP's, is clearly not sufficient to have the same effect if the advocate does not possess some authority in the context. Furthermore, if the advocate takes control, the client remains uninformed and unable to act themselves; Max just signs the forms. Milly, however, seems to straddle these positions; experience as a state-agent, a citizen, demonstrably takes personal risks that are overridden by willingness to help Holly, and wants her to be able to take control demonstrated by the reciprocity in their relationship.

Advocacy done well, exemplifies care. It recognises the 'fragility' of ourselves (Mol, 2008, p.25) and our necessary interdependence (Tronto, 1993), requires caring and analytical attention, action without seeking control, persistence while letting go (Mol, 2008, p.32). Moreover, it usefully plays with the boundaries between control and interdependence, and with a greater parity in power between the client and worker, is perhaps the sort of relationship where the paradoxes in help can be brought out into the open more easily.

This chapter illustrates how while the three pillars (responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity) are useful in building trust in order to engage fully, without both caring and analytical attention, workers only see parts of the complexity of the individual before them. Max was desperate to get out of the hostel he was in but there is a likelihood that he would get another offer – I imagine it would have been hard to persuade him not to move back,

but no one tried (he didn't tell Ash and Ed until he accepted it). Is it because they didn't understand the implications it would have for him? It wasn't because they didn't care – I interviewed Roshni shortly after Max was housed and she was so pleased that she had helped him to get out of the hostel. Holly was really excited about learning sign language; if the tutor had noticed and spoken with her then could she have been persuaded to give it another go? If Tracey, who was there was more able to recognise and respond to Holly's panic attack would she have stayed? In these cases, I think choice, without attention, failed these young people.

CHAPTER 8. SUPPORT WORKERS' TACTICS AND SERVICE

STRATEGIES

Having explored some of the tactics young people use to access help, I build a picture of the tactics and strategies employed by Support Workers and their employer Futures, and The Programme to engage young people. Futures and The Programme use interventions, including incentives, group activities and Psychological Informed Environment techniques. The Payment by Results (PbR) funding mechanism which forces an outcome focus, is a central government strategy, played out by Futures, that calls on all the tactics mentioned above in the service of obtaining outcomes. The Support Workers themselves implement these tools to forge greater engagement, as the frontline face of strategy 'they become the policies' they carry out (Lipsky, 2013, p.xiii).

In this helping work, there are gaps between what we actually do in practice and what we imagine we are doing, what we are told we should be doing, what we aspire to do (Hunter, 2016, video) between 'expectation and accomplishments' (Lipsky, 2010, p.78). These gaps appear in the macro and micro manifestations of helping work; worker-client/state-services. Are we, for example: getting people 'back to work' or fuelling a gig economy, agencies and unscrupulous employers that rely on a cheap, dispensable labour force that will not demand rights (because they are 'doing it sneaky' with welfare) and will be always at the ready, able to drop everything and attend? When we distract a young person from the chaos of troubles in their life with an incentive and a certificate are we preventing them from entering the revolving door of multiple exclusion homelessness or ticking a box? I follow Hunter who argues for 'prising open' these gaps (2016, video) in order to understand the

'paradoxical inevitability of doing 'bad' as you are seeking to do good' within institutional work (Hunter, 2015, p.173).

Different institutional environments have different tensions; in the homelessness sector this is especially pronounced between faith-based organisations and other voluntary sector organisations, as discussed in Chapter Two. Thanks to the inclusion of Barnabas in this study, I am able to draw out some of the differences here.

Strategies and tactics emerge from and take place within the overall precarity of homelessness and this chapter begins with addressing this and moves on to consider each of the Support Workers, and then some of the strategies used within The Programme to encourage engagement.

8.1 Precarity

In Chapter One I illustrated some of the precarity endemic in the homelessness 'industry'; the uncertain and shifting definition, quantification, conceptualisation, the perpetual reinvention of interventions and changes in commissioning regimes. In Chapter Five I touched on the precarity of Support Workers (SW), particularly pertaining to their employment conditions. In this way, the industry and the frontline staff are very like the young people, 'without the luxury of a secure standing place' (Jackson, 2012, p.67). If strategy, unlike tactics, involves 'the possession of a panoptic perspective [and] a solid position from which to make plans' how possible is strategic thinking and action? (Jackson, 2012, p.67). While Futures is in amongst the most solid of positions in the sector and the

most senior staff have a very good view of the homelessness industry landscape, this is not the case for the SWs. Steph loves Futures and her job, but her contract ends in June:[56]

> 'That's a bit of a worry in the back of my head... And then obviously positions come up. And I am like should I go for it? But I am like… but I really love what I am doing. But then I could end up in a pickle if I don't get secure job by that time. So, it's a bit of a worry.'

Continuity of staff is seen to be conducive to developing trust.[57] Braden, who has had six workers, describes the practical difference it makes here:

> Braden: '...Cos it's better off for me to have one person coming in not all everyone at a different day. One person's enough. Not different people every time.'
>
> Simone: 'Yeah, why is that?'
>
> Braden: 'Makes it easier.'
>
> Simone: 'In what way?'
>
> Braden: 'Don't have to keep saying 'oh, what happened, what was the discussion back in the first meeting, like first time. If one person just knows... different pieces, like different bits of you, you just got one person just got everything going on. (153-162 W2)

As solid and informed as possible in the sector, Futures aspired to be able to provide the young people with continuity over the three years, but as staff were not offered open–

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[56] Seven months away
[57] See Chapter Two

ended contracts, as is common when relying upon short-term funding, they experienced

significant churn.

> Steph: 'With the short-term contracts, the staff leaving and stuff like that... and the
>
> fact that the caseloads keep shuffling. I mean some of the young people have had
>
> like five or six different Support Workers in this time. And that can be quite
>
> discouraging to them, and demotivating.'

There are some more limited benefits of high staff turnover. Steph and three of the others

spoke positively about the different strengths of members of their teams and the potential

advantages for young people in experiencing different SWs. One also says that changes in

SWs could ward off the dangers of dependency that might be fostered in a long-term

relationship. Furthermore, Steph indicates that the 'shuffling' of staff was frequently in

response to SWs having a disproportionately chaotic case load, readjusting caseloads to

address this was perceived as a largely positive turn. It certainly was not the strategy. The

Data Manager clarifies that The Programme was understaffed from the start and the

monthly board reports indicate that recruitment remained an issue until the end of The

Programme.

On balance, while it is possible that a client might have an unhelpful relationship with a

worker or the worker does not have the specific skills to help, as Mark experiences with

Roshni, there is something exceedingly valuable about having a single relationship where it

is possible for one's story to unravel over time, where you have a person who knows all the

different 'bits' of you as Braden puts it.

Churn in staffing at Futures is in sharp contrast to Barnabas where Kath has been working

for 9 years and all the other workers for at least four. As a faith-based charity they are partly

protected from the precarity of the industry. Kath reflects on a Support Worker training

programme she has been attending and a module on 'professionalism' and what it 'means

to you'. She explains that they have got all the 'rules and regulations', 'equal opportunities

and safeguarding' but it is not what 'governs' how they work, rather it is 'the ethos of the

place'.

> '... I think the ethos of from the get-go; giving them the impression that you are on
>
> their side... rather than I have got something, you need it, I am in a position of
>
> power, and you are not.'

She says 'we never give up on anybody. No matter how they mess up we will always be

there'. Regarding the Outcomes Stars ubiquitous in the homelessness sector, Barnabas have

refused to use them even when their funder requested it. She says that she has noticed

wherever they go with the young people OSs are the first thing they are asked to do. In her

opinion, self-assessment on a numerical scale over time 'just becomes [sighing] I don't know

(pause) meaningless'.

Barnabas is in a space where fashions of the industry can be inculcated or ignored; the

'ethos of the place' is what they are governed by; different but less fickle masters. When

considering strategies or tactics employed to enable the engagement of young people

experiencing homelessness it seems essential to consider the base from which it is devised

and delivered. Carefully thought-out strategies may be performed tactically where

individuals and services are vigilant to opportunities, they have the power to exploit (Jackson, 2015, p.86).

8.2 Support Workers' tactics

Support Workers implement the strategies of providers and are themselves tools to support and encourage engagement. In Chapter Two I described the development of the Support Worker role in the homelessness sector and in Chapter Three I give an account of agency in frontline roles more generically. The SW role in homelessness is demanding and pressured. They work independently, and it is not always clear who they are working for or against. The different parts of their role and how emphasis changes over time are demonstrated in part by the title of the role. Key workers (suggests a holistic and instrumental role, having the answers, unlocking doors), Support Workers (emphasises care), Navigators (mapping pathways through services and systems), Progression Coaches[58] (goal setting and motivation). These aspirations are tempered by individual's biography and motivations, here I want to illustrate their approaches to the work and the tactics they personally use and how this shapes the way they deliver the *types* of interventions employed by Futures. Lipsky focuses in on the territory of discretion in which SLBs (in this case SWs) develop a number of strategies to survive. I want to reaffirm here that despite their lower social status they still manage wide discretion. Their discretion is where the power lies in these relationships as Kath says, they think we have power to do something, so they lie. I draw out the gaps

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[58] The term used by Futures but only recently adopted and, certainly in the beginning of my research, was not familiar to the young people and only used by some of the staff. This is why I have used the term Support Worker throughout.

between what the SWs 'imagine they do, are expected to do and aspire to do' (Hunter, 2016, video).

Like the young people they are perpetually negotiating 'the system' – as it appears in front of them (in terms of helping young people navigate welfare, criminal justice and medical services) and behind them (in terms of managing the expectations of their employer and their funders).

8.2.1 Mike

Mike illustrates distinctly the precarity of working in the voluntary sector. His narrative in particular highlights the volatility of the work. The detailed telling of his employment history has a pattern: **The situation is dire** i.e. management was problematic, and capacity did not match demands and the focus was on paperwork, hitting targets and, as a result, clients were neglected. The young people were violent 'I got bitten as well, severely bitten' (line 83); 'A lot of aggression there again' (line 105). **He, nevertheless, 'thoroughly enjoys'** the work (line 94); 'if I could turn the clock back, I would love to be there now.' (134); 'Quite horrific. And we have had one or two deaths as well. While I have been working there. But thoroughly enjoyed it.' (Line 182-3). **There is a problem with funding**, and he moves on. He talks me through this cycle three times.

Mike talks passionately about maintaining boundaries as a Support Worker; he 'sticks to his guns' when 'other staff would back down'. He talks about paperwork as a distraction from support work and minutes later as the core work of a Support Worker. Mike thinks it is important to show the young people that you care and have an interest in them

'even when they are screaming in my face, screaming! And I have turned around and I have said I do care. I can feel your pain. I know where you are coming from'.

The chaos, failures and aggression he has experienced loom large, but he survives and—somehow—enjoys the work, holding fast to the potential of care in the face of chaos as the key to engagement.

8.2.2 Richard

Richard sees himself as a Support Worker who can work the 'mechanics' of the system. He has extensive experience working across mental health, disability, legal advocacy and homelessness services. He says that the key to good Support Working is motivation and that neither of the 'extremes' in motivation: thinking that the clients are 'low life who should have achieved more,' nor people who 'want to kind of adopt them' are suitable. He argues that those who want to 'adopt' the clients are those who 'never switch off', 'take calls at midnight' and are likely to burn out. He describes himself as a 'very nuts and bolts', SW, 'quite used to arguing with power structures' and the role as ensuring 'that peoples basic needs are met'.

> 'I am good at like working the machinery of local services maybe getting a bit of a better deal for people than they otherwise might. Or I will know the manager at x y z place and be able to get someone in when perhaps they wouldn't normally have (pause). But in terms of the more kind of qualitative (pause) stuff, um (pause) I tend to—not overlook it—but it becomes right in the back of my mind rather than the front if you know what I mean.'

The term 'machinery' is useful because, from his experience, what I would call 'the system' is something which one works through with a combination of knowing terminology, processes and 'the power structures'; and this is how, in his mind, SWs can be effective advocates. He demonstrated the 'key' in Keyworker. There is certainty about Richard, he possesses competency, he is easy about his weaknesses, unlike Mike he seems on top of the chaos, rather than in it.

.2.3 Tracey

Tracey distances herself from more 'educated' SWs who are more, 'stiff' 'to the book', 'robotic' whereas she, while following policy and procedures, 'will stay behind after work', 'go back to front and front to back' for the young people. She 'knows how to talk without judging', she 'knows where they are coming from'. She mentions having her own trouble with the benefits system. She describes herself as 'childish', 'street', 'unrefined', 'not a good rule taker', as Bad Santa.[68] She talks a lot about fun and laughter in support work. She says that she is also 'professional', not giving out her personal phone number, for example. However, throughout the interview she questions what she is missing, here reflecting on the staff team from the Sports and Development Programme (discussed below) after she says they were 'brilliant', and she would like one of them in her life

[68] From a film, basically a drunken crook who is fired from being Santa in a department store and redeems himself by making a relationship with a vulnerable, lonely kid.

'I think we've got (pause) everybody has got a different way how they talk and communicate with people. And I suppose they went to uni... to learn how to talk to

young people. I never done that. Like I said I (pause) life skills through experience. But in a way I wish I did go to uni. And did some type of degree or diploma on doing things the right way and the wrong way.'

She says the way she is with the young people is because she has been homeless herself and she is 'never going to make anyone feel the way I did.' Throughout the interview she balances these approaches to support work informed by backgrounds of education or experience. Here she paints well the pressure of the day-to-day work:

'You've got to get it right. In a hostel you've got your Support Workers there to help you along, who's there in the day, all day, if you need support. But as a floating Support Worker you are on your own most of the time. And your decisions are based purely on your own decisions... instantly you have to think for yourself... Am I making the right decision for this young person? Am I not? Think, think, think. And I think I have been thinking a lot. I am all thinked out now!' (laughing)

Despite Tracey's confidence in her way of being a Support Worker, she is feeling massive pressure to 'get it right'. She has a lot of discretion which demands thinking, and for which there does not seem to be adequate time or much confidence. It is anxiety inducing, it sometimes goes wrong:

'I probably do the dirty and then clean it up as I go along so nobody don't know... and oh God let me get myself out of this mess. But it's all with good intentions, it's not to hurt or harm nobody.'

She soothes herself with the understanding that she has good intentions; but in general, her tone is panicked, her mind is crowded, questioning; 'am I not doing my job good enough? Have I missed out on something that I should be doing? What is it that I am doing wrong...?' When Tracey talks about the two sides of Holly, 'confident', 'talkative' and 'shaking' - I cannot help seeing these 'two sides' in Tracey who seems to experience similar confident and anxious states, and wonder if the support she gives to Holly is what she would like to receive. She says to Holly:

> 'Leave them outcomes for another week. Because you are a human being... Stay where you are, get better.... I will come back to you when you are in a better place. In the meantime, let's just have a chat.'

Tracey lacks the confidence of Richard, her empathy more grounded in experience than Mike's but very much *in* the chaos, as he is, and clearly expressing the anxiety about getting things 'wrong'.

8.2.4 Steph

As a young person in care Steph became involved in the Children in Care Council, obtaining a new perception of 'the system', learning about her rights and the opportunities that were available to her. She says to the young people in care she works with, 'you are more in control than you think you are because professionals have certain obligations'. This was the time when she realised that 'there is stuff that social workers try and get away with not doing because of budget cuts and stuff like that'. As she was exploring the different degrees of 'control' young people have in statutory versus voluntary sector services as both a client and worker, I ask where she felt more powerful across the three roles.

'I feel more powerful in my role now. I am not as restricted. If somebody swears at me or threatens me, I am like OK. I don't have to go and see you today because I don't feel safe.'

Steph knows the systems and sees where young people get let down. She is open about systemic flaws and encourages the young people by working out a plan (navigating) around the issues.

'Ok, you want a job. And I will be straight with them. I will say that system's rubbish, that system is rubbish. Like you know (pause)... Universal Credit. Very, very complicated. Not working (pause) Or the housing situation is rubbish for you guys because when you get into work... your rent is £280 a week so if you get into work... and I say to them I know that that's rubbish, but I have got a plan of how to do it. So, by admitting that something is not great and saying that there is a way around it, they kind of follow you and it works.'

More 'street' and 'citizen' than bureaucrat she is allied with the client. She describes herself as a 'straight talking', 'honest' and 'open'; a 'real person'. She thinks that this is important in getting young people to 'open up to you' and be honest. She distinguishes the way she is from a 'parent' or 'family' because 'the support won't stop because you've told me you've done something bad', it fits Akira's description of her, but other Support Workers describe 'parenting' in exactly opposite terms. She is also 'strict' on occasions and 'professional', reasserting the limitations of her role and the obligations of safeguarding, duty of care and having to make tough decisions – for example making the call to have a young person sectioned. She describes herself as someone who 'knows how to get it done' and has access

to the resources to enable it. She says 'I kinda make friends with them' and that her approach encourages 'respect' and 'honesty' and means that she 'doesn't waste time' getting to understand what is going on for them, what they need and want and how she can help them to get there. Akira tells me that Steph takes a call from him when drunk and upset at 4am. Of all the SWs Steph seems best able to manage the paradoxical nature of the work being professional, making friends and breaking boundaries, moving the young people on.

8.2.5 Roshni

Roshni speaks frequently about addressing chaos in the young people's lives and at one point, in regard to this, she says, 'I'm the same', using the example of the chaos in her handbag and not having change for parking. She says, 'chaotic mind' 'chaotic purse' 'chaotic living space' – 'the minute there is chaos in any part of your life... it will cause problems for you'. She describes her cleaning her handbag out with some of the young women she works with; 'let me empty my bloody purse. I will show you.'

In describing the work of a Support Worker, she talks about making sure the young people have the 'tools' they need to make change, to ensure 'every box is ticked', and 'presenting choices'. She encourages them 'to look at the emotional side as well as the physical and practical side'. She explains that she takes 'different tones' with the young people, sometimes 'the slightly I am your mate' tone and 'motherly is the wrong word' but 'responsible and caring' and sometimes 'schoolteacher... because certain things need to be done.' She uses the Progression Coach terminology. Her sense is that most of the young people she works with don't have 'their person'. She talks at length about her sister, 'her'

person, and how she is a 'positive' person who she cannot hide from and will 'give her a good shake' and push her to overcome difficulties. She thinks it is important to help the young people locate 'their person'. Although she mentions one of Max's mates and a girl that is often about, she notes that he is viewing a property the following day and she will not be going, that he will go alone.

> 'If it was me, I would take my sister. Drop what you're doing, I've got a flat, come
>
> with me. And she'd say yeah, yeah sure. And she'd get there.'

Tracy was there for Holly when she viewed her flat and as we know Max's decision to take his flat has not turned out very well. Roshni explains that 'sometimes it just needs somebody to walk with them' but she is not able to do it. With a significantly bigger case load than the other SWs, Roshni does not seem to have time to enact the learning from her reflections on the work.

8.2.6 Gordon

Gordon in particular has been affected by precarity, as manifested in changes in the senior team; he has had five different managers in two years:

> 'If that's what's going on here, can you imagine how we're feeling when we're
>
> frontline staff?... but I wonder um, nobody's really looked at well, why is that
>
> happening up there, why are we having such a high turnover'

He describes himself as 'such a conscientious worker' which led to conflict with a manager, that he has not had a fixed desk in over a year and a half which made him fall 'badly behind' with his admin. He is 'compassionate and caring by nature' so it was 'natural' that he took

up this sort of work. As a Support Worker he is: 'professional', 'boundaried', 'clear', 'concise' and 'target-driven' and yet when describing the work, he says that it is often 'crisis led'. He explains this by saying that most of his clients have 'a high level of mental health issues' and that takes precedence (although 'we're not trained to deal with it) and makes it difficult for them to achieve the outcomes anticipated by The Program. I ask him what he thinks the skills of a Support Worker are and he replies: 'flexible', 'resourceful' and 'have a heart'. He says that it is very important to 'not just grasp it [the young people's issues], but just be in a situation where you can empathise.' But Gordon does not empathise with Tom, he mistrusts him, and he wants him to like him:

> 'I don't particularly want anyone to dislike me, and I think he is right now because I'm kind of channelling the truth and we need to know what's going on and I think the more I push, the more he kind of flares up and diverts away from what we need to know.'

As we know, very little is right with Tom, and whatever the 'truth' might be, he flared up and moved away from engaging with Futures. Gordon, just back from a period of leave from what he described as' burn out', is in a very different position to the others. His interview is unrestrained, he says at the end 'I really enjoyed that' as if it had been a chance for him to express his difficult feelings about the work.

8.2.7 Optimus Prime

The way OP works with young people is based on a theory that 'teenagers rebel because that's what teenagers do' and oftentimes they are 'seen and not heard' which can cause multiple problems: their issues are not recognised; they don't feel respected, and they are

weighed down by cultural expectations that they don't want for themselves. OP sees his role as to 'signpost and refer'. He is there 'as a professional that can understand different vernaculars'. He is consciously client centred; it is his job to answer the questions young people ask him and seems proud that he rarely has to say, 'I'll get back to you'. I ask if there is a place for care in the Support Worker/client relationship and he responds, 'I care about his rights.' He is wary of sounding 'sanitised or clinical'. He is cynical about short-term political interest in particular needs (i.e. mental health, youth pregnancy) and inadequate government responses that fail to grasp the complexity of issues. He talks at length about aftercare for people in recovery from drug and or alcohol abuse, where programmes run for six weeks:

> 'but what happens then?' 'Why is [it] not ongoing until that person is... stable? Or feels safe. Or feels confident or their self-esteem can be nurtured and continued into that transition of independence and adulthood.'

This is a 'never give up' motivation. So, it surprises me later when he indicates that he has no problem with the 'outcomes' approach of this PbR programme. He posits a theory about young people in need:

> 'These are people that are being rebellious because they're young they've got mental health problems, and nobody really wants to... [other people/services think] yeah, I can understand where you are coming from but, hm, you're a bit of a - you're a bit of an inconvenience'

He also points to structural issues that mean people from different backgrounds have different issues. As a person with a learning difficulty, he recalls not being able to keep up,

asking teachers to slow down, not being listened to and becoming 'frustrated'. He empathises 'school didn't work out the way that I (pause) expected it to'. He goes on to say that he is not a revolutionary, but he is a 'great believer in change' and that 'listening is the key' he epitomises the Progression Coach model and yet challenges the individualistic focus in recognising the structural problems. He says, 'the way society is going right now', 'it's very difficult for people to have a voice'. He talks about long working hours and austerity and says that 'sometimes kids are missing out'. He says that he was fortunate to have a mother who showed affection and listened but that millions of kids don't get that and its 'fucking horrible'. He ends with:

> 'So, I mean that (pause) it's (pause) a problem. But I can't change it. I've got (pause) I'd like to but (pause) can't. Could, but can't. We all want to.'

OP is confident and proud of the work that he does; extolling the virtues of listening, planning and motivating, he clearly recognises the reality of what young people are up against when trying to make change themselves. His 'client-centred' approach helps him displace the discomfort of this paradox.

8.2.8 Kath

Kath from Barnabas (Mark says they call her Aunty Kath) gives people the benefit of the doubt, 'sometimes too much.' She explains that this is the ethos of the project. She sees her role as (it 'strikes' her in the interview) 'parenting'.

> 'It feels like I am trying to give another young person a chance that my children have had. Do you understand what I mean? Because my children are 29 and 31 now

so...um... yeah. And they're doing very well. So, I just want young people to have a

leg up really and a chance.'

She explains that she helps the young people with 'being organised', 'paying bills', 'facing

problems' things she finds easy. At Barnabas the workers meet with most of the young

people in pairs, she takes the administrative function, scribing, filling forms, ensuring they

have all the information they need to help. Meanwhile, another worker 'chats' and brings

things out of the young people that she does not 'even think of asking'. The two workers

then decide what they will do next. She says,

'I suppose our strengths and weaknesses balance out, because obviously I am 56 – I

am not down with the youth'

and that it is important that the workers have that 'back up'. This strategy appears to

address the difficult dual role of enforcement and support, channelling the contradictory

functions into separate people. Kath's experience is in such sharp contrast to that of Tracey

(all alone with her thinking and decisions), and Gordon whose 'backup' is against him or

rapidly changing. At Barnabas there seems to be luxurious amounts of space, time and

agency.

8.3 Futures and The Programme strategies

Futures employs a wide variety of innovative and industry-standard strategies to encourage

the engagement of the young people it works with. Here I focus on those pertaining

specifically to those used in The Programme and most referred to by the young people

participating in the research. Firstly, it is important to describe the effect of the PbR model

as it is described by the Support Workers and the young people, I go on to explore the use of incentives and a unique project combining sports, community involvement and mental skills, developed within Futures. Finally, the use of trauma-informed approaches and the application of PIEs.

8.3.1 Payment by Results (PbR)

The background of PbR and the aspirations associated with it is discussed at length in Chapter One. The three outcomes for The Programme are: stable accommodation[59], education and training[60], and employment[61]. All the SWs talked about the focus on outcomes and the management of data related to the PbR mechanism, as the most significant difference with The Programme compared to other programmes and projects facilitated by Futures and the sector generally. Futures' Data Manager explains that it is:

> 'completely different (pause) more about, you know, moving young people forward (pause) on top of the heavy data management.'

Richard supports this model and compares it favourably with programmes where Futures is paid on the numbers of people and period of time working them. OP maintains that it does not make much difference; that the outcomes he would hope the young people to achieve are the same. Regarding employment outcomes Roshni explains:

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[59] The accommodation outcome is paid for at move-in and (as it is sustained over) at three, six, twelve and 18 months.
[60] The education and training outcome is paid for at entry, entry level qualification, level one and level two.
[61] The employment outcome is paid for at the start of employment, then at 13 weeks full time and 13 weeks part time, 26 weeks full time and 26 weeks part time.

'So, if I don't get that outcome, I don't get paid on it. And I think in Mark's case, if it wasn't paid on outcomes, I would just have been like yeah, he worked for a bit and its fine.'

It is not literally true that staff pay is related to the outcomes they are able to bring in, but Roshni here indicates that this is the level of responsibility she *feels*.

Richard and Steph highlight the aspiration of the outcomes-focused approach and keep attention on attainment, putting aside the crisis the young person might be experiencing:

'We try—I emphasise the word 'try'—not to focus too much on crisis management. Because you can end up being stuck with the same person for a week. With the best will in the world, when you have got 25 plus clients, which is high by standards of caseloads in general in the sector, you are obviously for every hour you spend with someone, you are not spending it with 24 other people at the same time. So, the emphasis really is meant to be on gaining outcomes for the majority of people possible. Rather than focusing on specific people in crisis. But of course, that's not always possible.' (Richard).

Steph, who comes across as something of a spokesperson for the approach, reflects that in support work 'usually you don't have deadlines' but 'with the outcomes, it means that each month you are very, very focused on progression and their achievements'. She believes that this will build confidence in the young people and raise their aspirations.

'you are kind of like forcing them through it, for them to look back and think actually I've done that, that's a confidence boost. And it changes their kind of perception on what they can achieve.'

The benefits of looking past the day-to-day crises and focusing on attainment to build the confidence and security required to deal with other issues is expressed by both The Programme and Futures senior team. The young people also recall achievements for which they feel some pride, but the actual attainments seem small in amongst their unaddressed needs; prominently debt, unaddressed mental ill-health and certification for employment. Steph also says that she 'likes' the 'external pressure' of achieving outcomes but reflects that it can make some staff 'quite stressed out' especially when working with young people who 'present in crisis you are not going to get a lot out of them' and 'that the Support Workers fear that that is going to reflect badly on them, and why aren't you bringing in any outcomes?'

Gordon comments that the 'external pressure' triggers a lot of running about and chasing 'running behind them, can you do this, and can you do?' Tracey reflects, 'everything is on a deadline' and if you miss the deadlines Futures 'loses money'. She says, SWs have to 'keep on contacting them so much so that they think you are the police'. Roshni talks about Mark getting angry about her asking for pay slips and the different approaches she used to avoid an argument. She says that, despite the problems that this caused in their relationship, it is an exercise in the sort of responsibility expected of adults:

'But I think chasing him for that payslip, which is what adults do. I mean an employer might ask you for references...'

Steph, despite valuing the approach, reflects on how demanding it is and says, that she 'need to get more organised', she has 'random stuff' in her notes 'I don't even know what it means... 'it's a bit crazy at the moment'. In early conversations with senior staff there was an indication that SWs were struggling with the heavy data burden, I asked The Data Manager about what they did to address this. She suggests that the issue was not the burden of recording the data but the staff's response to focusing on

outcomes. She talks about the decision to publish the outcomes SWs individually obtained on the front page of the computer system used to upload the outcomes data:

> Data Manager: 'Because it was just one chart, and it had their names on and what - so you know, no one likes to know that you know (pause) that they may - not that they're under, poor performing, but they may not be doing as well as other people, and no one wants everyone else to know that so, you know if you logged on and there was a chart, and it showed that you were up here with outcomes that you hadn't evidenced and someone was down there, I think you are going to feel like that you need to try and (small laugh)...'

> Simone: 'Lift your game?'

> Steph: 'Yeah, yeah so...'

There is little doubt that SWs experienced pressure as a result of this very public extrinsic negative motivation to achieve, however, none of them directly mention the outcomes league table in interviews.

There is a general consensus that the client group in The Programme 'were a lot more complex than what we thought' (Data Manager), in particular a high level of mental health and substance use issues and that by the end of the second year 'they were expecting people to be more on their feet, and we've got a lot who still aren't' but are still 'overachieving with our outcomes' (Steph). This puzzle is unpicked clearly by Richard who suggests that this outcomes approach '...works very well for people who have got issues but are in a position to overcome them... a medium needs kind of level client...' and works very well for people who are low needs but not as well for those who are perpetually in crisis:

> Richard: 'And there are an awful lot of people who perhaps are never going to make those (The Programme) outcomes roll in. So, while devoting a lot of time to people who are in perpetual crisis – including other people's clients who are in perpetual crisis as well... Er (pause) when it comes to outcomes collection time, it can often be from people who we don't actually see a lot of because they're stable.'

> Simone: 'Yeah, right OK.'

> Richard: 'So it's (pause) its perhaps not as knitted together in that sense as you, you might, you expect to see in a different service.'

> S: 'Right. Knitted together. What would that look like?'

> Richard: 'Well, where the people who [you] are spending the most time [with] are also the ones you're getting the outcomes from.'

While Richard is not suggesting that 'creaming'[62] has occurred, it does suggest that there is incongruence in the model, where the time spent with clients 'perpetually in crisis' is not actually being paid for, or rather, is being paid for by the outcomes of those with low or medium need who require little support. This insight fleshes out Lowe and Wilson's (2017) conceptualisation of 'gaming'[63], not that SWs are cherry-picking, but counting the outcomes of the people doing well, even when it is without the support of Futures.

Of all the young people Holly is most aware of the PbR nature of The Programme, she mentions it frequently, Akira in Wave One talks about it as an exchange, similar to contracting[64] he needs to get things for Steph, and she does things for him. In Wave Two it becomes clear that, rather than her chasing him, Akira provides Steph with contact details for his employers 'so she ends up having to chase it up herself' (142 W2). While Roshni sees the positive effect of outcomes as 'teaching responsibility', Steph circumnavigates the young people and takes the responsibility herself.

8.3.2 Incentives

Futures use extrinsic positive motivation to achieve outcomes in the form of incentives[65] to motivate engagement; an innovation that arose in The Programme. Incentives (vouchers with a cash value) were promised for achieving education, training, employment and accommodation sustainment outcomes. According to accounts from participants in this study, it seems to have been applied differently across The Programme.[76]

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[62] Also called cherry picking, refers to selecting clients that are most likely to achieve paid-for outcomes discussed further in Chapter One
[63] Discussed in Chapter One
[64] Discussed in Chapter Three
[65] I also used incentives in the research process. See Chapter Four

All the SWs talked about the use of incentives, some as a tool to promote the 'value' of persisting with training, education and employment (see engagement) while others described it as a lesson in taking responsibility; regarding the young people's obligation to *prove* their advancement and receiving an award as a result. Some saw it as a means to obtain the outcomes they felt responsible for achieving in order for Futures to be paid. Gordon expressed mixed feelings about the use of incentives, on one hand that it is fair to reward the young people and they are effective, but that it is akin to bribery and that the young people should be internally motivated to take up and sustain outcomes. Steph suggests that there is 'a negative side' but it is the role of the Support Worker to mitigate this by highlighting the value of what it is they have achieved, rather than focusing on the extrinsic financial benefit.

> Steph: that's where I think that the role of the Support Worker needs to highlight the value of the things that they are achieving. So yes, you've been given this 50 quid and its great and we encourage you to come. But also, you've got this as well. [If] you don't do that, I think that you are just teaching them to do very little for money. And be very money fixated. I don't think that's right.

This helps to explain why Akira didn't see the incentives he received from The Programme as being tied to something he had achieved, as in the case of the Life Skills modules. Steph and Gordon associate using incentives in this way with the PbR element of The Programme. Steph says '...because of the Payments by Results, we use incentives. So, we can (pause) I can say to them look, you do this yeah, and you will get a £50 voucher.'

Steph also sees the use of incentives as an indication that Futures understands what makes young people engage. In the first place it is the incentive, because they don't necessarily see the value of attaining a qualification, but then they attain the qualification and see its value. She is using the incentive as a persuasion because she anticipates the value of the increased confidence, but she 'pushes them through'.

Roshni, Tracey and Gordon talk more about young people constantly asking for incentives that they are owed creating an image of a chain of social investors, Futures, SWs and clients all chasing each other for evidence of and payment for outcomes.

> Roshni: 'When they have done say like two level ones [life skills] and they are waiting for two fifty-pound vouchers, but (name manager's) off on holiday for a week and they are like... Have you got that money? Have you got that money? Have you got that money?'

Chasing incentives is an experience Mark and Holly share and one that negatively affects their relationship with their Support Workers. Mark and Holly think they work as a motivational tool but not when it feels like manipulation. In Wave Two Mark brings up incentives he is chasing in Wave Three and Four there is still one outstanding that he has given up on. He originally completed three life skills modules, 'I got three done because Roshni turned around to me and was like 'you can have a food voucher if you do life skills' (1012-1013 W2). This is confusing and troubling. Futures frequently gives out food vouchers, but they seemed to be separate from incentives employed to motivate engagement; here they are intertwined. I ask Mark to explain how this happened:

'It was really weird cos I needed a food voucher so I could eat and she said 'you're not having one of them unless you do one of these' I was like they're… the incentive for them is £50… she was like 'yeah you can get that, but you've got to do these as well to get your food voucher'. So, I'm still chasing that up.' (1017-1020 W2)

Mark repeats this story in Wave Three and Four. It has stayed in his and my mind as this tactic that already has issues is twisted further with the perceived threat of withholding food. Holly believes that incentives are useful saying often, 'I like my incentives'. Talk of them takes up considerable time in each interview – but promised and not provided- they work to further undermine her trust

'Yeah, it's a very good tactic to help people to engage but the problem you've got with incentives is (pause) I've done all these life skills they've asked me, I've still not received the incentive, so again I've lost my trust, I've lost my faith in those people.' (2145- 2148 W2)

For Akira incentives were among the most helpful things in enabling his engagement but he doesn't consider them a replacement for personal motivation to engage perhaps this is because of Steph's way of using incentives:

'When I'm thinking about staying in a job, I'm thinking about staying in a job because I need the job' (1690-1691 W2)

He indicates a danger that people will be:

'Doing it just to get the incentive and not actually learn anything from it, so the incentive has got to be right for what they are doing, but what they're doing has got to be relevant' (2150-2154 W2).

While Mike says that incentives are important for Braden, Braden disagrees. He thinks you: 'ain't gonna get nowhere' (1339 W2) if you do a course you don't want to do because there is an incentive. He proclaims that a person would be better off doing something they actually want to do and goes on to talk about a football course that he has done before and wants to do again but will have to save up for it himself.

8.3.3 Sports and Personal Development Project (SPDP)

Sports and Arts are frequently used as tools to motivate engagement. Seen to be a good in and of themselves, building trust and confidence, they motivate some to participate in other development activities built into The Programme. They provide an opportunity for doing things together, fertile territory for building trust.[77] Futures has teamed up with a local University to develop a programme 'designed to help individuals recognise and build upon their existing psychological skills and assets' (Cummings et al., 2015, p.5). It involves a combination of personal development, sports, problem solving, team building, community and outward-bound activities. The Programme is unique in that it draws on learning from sports psychology to help young people recognise aspirations and learn skills to overcome barriers (Cooley et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is framed as the sort of programme elite sports people use to increase their performance, a radically destigmatising message. Holly and Braden all have some interaction with The Programme.

For Braden, while it is clear he has enjoyed the 'active' elements of The Programme, the paperwork, and sitting down activities do not agree with him, it reminds him of school which he struggled with.

> Braden: '(over talking) yeah, they try to make it like (pause) as active as they can but – nah, (small laugh) boring'
>
> S: 'it's boring?'
>
> Braden: 'I'm one of these that have to be out and about doing something.'
>
> S: 'Yeah'
>
> Braden: 'I don't like sitting in one spot.' (1413-1421 W2)

In Wave One Holly talks about a very positive experience with SPDP, in particular the outward-bound activities in the countryside. Then in Wave Two, looking at SPDP from further back, she begins as if her view has changed, because despite this experience she feels that she has not made progress on her own terms.

> Holly: 'Yeah, I think- I remember saying now - it was a turning point as such... but I think it wasn't so much because I still haven't got anywhere as far as I'm concerned but in my head I think it (breath in) sorted things out, because of (pause) how my ex finished with me and made me homeless I had a lot of resentment, a lot of anger and (pause) just in general, maybe not towards him but, inwardly, if you like, so I think that, cos I love nature, I love water and one of the things we did we went... down to the river, followed the river down, climbed down the side of the rocks and then up through the waterfall… oh, it was so good.' (628-636 W2)

Although she says she has not got 'anywhere', the experience of being away and being in nature helped with the 'anger' and 'resentment' she was turning in on herself. She goes on to recall parts of the experience she did not in Wave One. In particular an exercise where participants map out their own 'dream team' beginning with the people they are surrounded by, how they assist and potentially hinder your progress in different ways, determining how they will position them as if they were a football team. Then it is possible to recognise where the gaps are and perhaps individuals who are not likely to aid progress

> 'It made me think about (clears her throat) it made me think about (long breath out) how do I put it (pause) what matters, and it's not about (pause) (long breath out) this is going to sound so hippy (small laugh) but it's not about things and stuff like that, it's about who you are and who you surround yourself with as such. That's not what they were saying but that's what I got' (700 – 704 W2)

In fact, it is exactly what they were saying and what the activity aimed to achieve. I am interested in how her experience of The Programme would likely have been misinterpreted in a snapshot evaluation of The Programme.

8.3.4 Psychologically-Informed Environments (PIE)

PIE, discussed at length in Chapter Two, is a trauma-informed approach that emphasises the value of SW reflection. All but one of the SWs discusses the adoption of PIE rolled out in Futures over the past seven years and integrated into The Programme. Futures has adopted The Programme with impressive rigour. Support Workers attend three full days training where they learn about trauma and how it effects development and behaviour, as well as a

series of psychotherapeutic formulations to better understand clients[66]. In the training they practice using the formulations, aiming to use them in support work sessions. They are provided with monthly clinical supervision to support them in using the learning and reflect on their practice. Here they share their experiences of working with clients and strengthen their learning to help overcome barriers to engagement. All the SWs[67] are positive about PIE, talking mostly about clinical supervision sessions. Roshni explains that sessions challenge and develop her practice through hearing how differently SWs see and respond to situations and individuals 'you are able to see something in someone else's truth'. From what I have gathered from these workers, it is rare that they are able to use the psychologically-informed formulations in their one-to-one work with young people. Steph seems to have the best handle on the techniques and explains one here:

> 'Because we do ABC which I think is activating event, beliefs, and consequences. Or something like that. And then we break it down and think about it. So, it's kind of like really thinking from the young person's perspective. And understanding why they are behaving the way that they are. And then understanding the beliefs that they have about themselves and being able to challenge that, to change it to a more positive one. So that they (pause) so you can build their confidence.'

Roshni is especially positive about PIE as a trained counsellor, and perhaps the strategies are more familiar to her. She believes that in most organisations that do support work SWs

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[66] The psychological formulations used to establish Futures' trauma-informed approach include (1) cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), (2) dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), and (3) cognitive analytic therapy (CAT) (Cummings, Skeat and Anderson, 2017)

[67] apart from Mike who has not completed the training or participated in clinical supervision

become 'desensitised'. That as they see and experience so much chaos and so many awful situations play out, they become numb to it, stop questioning it, stop having an emotional response to it. She thinks this becomes the culture in organisations and there are two sides to it. Firstly, she gives an example of just accepting that a young person has made some terrible decisions that have landed them in a terrible position rather than helping them 'unpick' and 'reflect' on what happened before, during and afterwards (this is akin to the ABC formulation).[68] She says that this is the result of desensitisation which is not cultural in Futures *because* of PIE. Secondly, she describes SWs experiencing threatening and violent behaviour both around and directed towards them. She says that the culture of Futures is that SWs are 'slightly indestructible', 'that a young person won't hurt you' and that it is 'silly' to be afraid. She brings this theory and an experience of a young person threatening her to a clinical supervision session. Steph is in the session and responds to Roshni by relaying an incident where two young people were fighting, throwing chairs, a window was broken, and she stepped in the middle of the fight. She thought she,

> 'might get hit but they are not going to intentionally hit me, and it might prevent them from hitting each other'.

Roshni says, in Steph's place, she would have got her keys and phone and ran, she reports the surprise of the other workers in the session, to her reaction. Steph (in her interview) says that she would probably do the same thing again but might 'think twice'. Despite defending her fears to the group Roshni says:

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[68] a method of carefully analysing the event (A - antecedent) that occurred before the troubling (B) behaviour and (C) consequence what occurred following the behaviour – exactly as Steph explains above.

'I think the more I have been working at [Futures] I do believe that nobody would do anything to me now. But actually, there is something quite nice about being that scared. Um... yeah, there is something nice about that. Because its raw, isn't it? It's your instinct and its raw... You then learn how to tell that instinct to stop being so silly.'

Roshni describes the end session:

'...They're like what have we learned? And everybody was like that I don't take my safety seriously. I don't take my personal space seriously. And I don't take threat seriously. So (pause) there is that culture.'

I am struck by the feelings Roshni articulates here; her fear, learning to stop *feeling* the fear and others agreeing that they don't take their personal safety seriously; and the conclusion from this session which seems to be, 'it is silly to feel threatened' and that in the culture of Futures these feelings and thoughts are present in the relationship between SW and young person. What does this do to engagement?

There was just one instance where a young person talked about PIE. Braden describes how the hostel he lives in uses the ABC formulation:

'You get like three main warnings, you get three warnings then it goes to the head office, (pause) wait no, ABC after your three warnings' (1287-1288 W2).

I recall that Braden has described incidents in this way in our interviews, but this is not how he understands it plays out at the hostel. When I ask what happens when you do ABC Braden explains:

'So, that's like (pause) if you're caught… if you don't agree with it and put… like, do what they say and improve your behaviour you get kicked out for it' (1296-1297 W2).

In Braden's mind ABC becomes the same as every telling off starting with 'if you're caught' ending with 'do what they say or get kicked out'. While I understand from my brief time with Braden that it would be difficult to engage him in this exercise, I expect that the number of times he has been in trouble at the hostel he must have experienced ABC:

Braden: 'Nah. These lot can't do that - sit down and talk to me about it.'
S: 'What?'
Braden: 'Wouldn't be able to. I laugh at these. Well I've never been in that situation to have it.'

S: 'How many warnings have you had?'
Braden: 'Ah, every so often they wipe em.' (1299-1313 W2)

This is perplexing, for a young person who frequently 'kicks off' and is so troubled by the experience that emergency services are called; the ABC formulation could help. But it seems instead that the slate gets wiped clean, and this intervention that might help is marginalised as the nearly final stage of a standard punishment procedure. This brief exploration of PIE in the work illustrates how a new strategy to enable improved engagement can struggle to be embedded within a culture that is largely maintained by pressurised staff, frequently churned and responsive to external motivations that may actually act against the fundamental principles of the strategy.

8.4 Discussion

This chapter explores what The Program Workers and Futures do to engage their clients. It's possible to map the tactics the staff use across my conceptualisation of engagement that is enabled by trust stabilised by the four pillars: responsive, empathy and reciprocity, flexibility and choice, caring and analytical attention. There is a group of qualities and practices that are resonant with **analytical attention**: knowledge, competence, knowing the mechanics of the systems, having a plan that will work having the answers, caring about the individual's, rights, being conscientious and being professional. There are also group of qualities and practices that are resonant with **caring attention:** caring despite their behaviour, friendship, not giving up, trying to understand what is going on and being transparent about the flawed system. Empathy, is reiterated and there is a sense of reciprocity: getting alongside young people. Maybe because of a lack of trust, there is little said about being **responsive, flexible and offering choice.** Furthermore, the interviews reveal a gap between what they aspire to and how they act. They take a 'professional approach' but turn up late. They 'feel scared', think they should take their safety seriously and learn how to 'tell that instinct that it is silly'. They are 'conscientious' but 'behind' in their work and absent because of burn out. They are 'crisis-led' yet 'target-driven'. They are friends/parents and police; both supporting and enforcing rules.

Before addressing the lack of mention of responsiveness, flexibility and choice let's look at the gap between what a worker might think and say they do and what they are actually able or allowed to do. I am proposing that what pushes them off their path are the paradoxes in help and in helping work (as discussed in Chapters Two and Three) and these paradoxes are forged through the mobilisation of stigma that additionally props up the marketisation of

helping work. Frontline workers do not set out to be inconsistent, but it is inevitable, and, as described in Chapter Three, it produces a number of responses including paralysing anxiety or displacement of that anxiety by establishing a believable narrative to 'underwrite and stabilise assumptions' (Manyard-Moody, 2003, p.30), including attending to CYA work. These responses take us further away from developing trust and attending to our clients and, while there are evidently people and projects that manage to navigate through, we see more failure than we should which neatly fits with the limited value that is placed on helping work.

The paradoxes in help and helping work are magnified by the introduction of PbR and outcomes-focused practice including the use of incentives to reward/motivate engagement. Incentivisation is the key to these measures beginning with the incentives for young people. Applying Grant's (2006, p.73) judgement criteria for legitimacy regarding the use of incentives there is general agreement by SWs and young people that as a motivational tool they can be effective and can 'serve a legitimate purpose' depending on what the young people obtain them for. However, if young people feel forced to stay in unsafe accommodation or employment or substandard training (for example Braden on the mechanics apprenticeship) this would be troubling. Young people *are* 'allowed a voluntary response' (ibid) but they are all in debt, so in less of a position to choose. Finally, the 'effects on the character of the parties involved'; Grant warns that they subtly 'debilitate self-determination by inhibiting and deliberation and judgement of an individual'. The use of incentives can feel like bribery and manipulation; they can be difficult to administrate which leads to late, missed, inconsistently applied delivery, actively creating mistrust and

disengagement – it seems that these negative effects can be ameliorated by the SWs providing they have the skills to work the system.

I want to come back to the seemingly missing responsiveness, flexibility and choice because I wonder if it is related to the trouble incentives caused in some cases. What if the total incentives allocated to each young person was made available upfront alongside the Outcome Stars as a personal fund to assist them to get where they wanted to go; like a personal budget? As it was, incentives usually amounted to £50, scattered across the three years and made in receipt of the completion of an outcome. Cash payments as a part of service delivery around need are controversial, perhaps most prominently in the case of the charity Kids Company which was lauded, then defamed and most recently absolved of any charge related to how they helped their thousands of beneficiaries (Butler, 2021). It might have meant that the young people didn't take part in some of the activities they did, probably the Life Skills modules for Mark and Holly. They might have blown it on weed or trainers. But would there be more a sense of trust developed if Futures trusted them to more independently make the decision what to engage with and how.

This feels like analytical attention needs to be applied to the implementation of interventions, to think through them and understand what it is saying about the group of people you want to engage. Mark saying he wants vouchers because he doesn't want to spend the cash on weed is revealing of what the use of vouchers says about the people we use them with – 'you won't spend this responsibly' and people distributing them 'we don't trust you with cash' and commissioners think about providers 'we definitely don't trust you with unrestricted cash'. Not a lot of trust here. Also, given the opportunity to choose, the person we're trying to help might make a really good decision and feel quite pleased with

themselves. Maybe we're being so careful about what might go wrong we are losing sight of what might go right, by imagining things that don't usually come together – obsessed with the problem we lose sight of the whole person.

While the outcomes approach is received and enacted happily by the SWs there is general awareness that actual activity (time spent with young people) is not 'knitted' to achieving outcomes; from the accounts of this small group of SWs there are a host of young people who achieve outcomes without much input. There is evidence that SWs are focusing attention on attainment of outcomes, there is listening and there is care in services but it is focused mostly on addressing the 'problem' (Noddings, 1986, p.25). As in Stevenson's conceptualisation of 'anonymous care': their accommodation, employment and education become the focus of care, looking away from the messy reality of the crises they are experiencing, and driving misrecognition. Turning caring professionals' attention towards 'gaming' a system based on a linear and simplistic account of infinite complexity (Lowe and Wilson, 2017). The care: being there for them, having empathy is not 'ongoing' (Tronto, 1993, p.103) it halts when they hit the outcomes, and time is better spent with those who have not. Max views his property alone.

CHAPTER NINE. WHAT WORKS COUNTS?

The research findings presented in this thesis operate on a number of levels. We have already seen that there is much known about the qualities, practices and environments that enable engagement, and a good deal of it is reflected in my findings represented in the previous chapter from the perspective of providers and SWs. But there is a deeper level of analysis required, considering the paradoxes shaping structural and interpersonal relationships which go some way to explaining why 'what works' seems to be swallowed and digested whole, without much changing the beast of the homelessness industry. The challenge is how to establish environments where 'what works' can occur systematically, rather than what we have now, where lucky breaks and planetary alignment play a part. I realised too late that 'engagement', like 'wellbeing' could use a scale and in the Final Wave the young people helped me to make a start by identifying extremes of engagement and descriptions of how it feels and makes them behave, I present the results in this chapter. Additionally I bring together the four elements that enable the development of trust and support increased engagement, as discussed in Chapter Two and throughout, with the young people's related experiences and thoughts.

When the young people employ tactics to engage, it is in response to the paradoxes in help and helping work; when they cry out for help and hide away simultaneously, they embody paradox. Some 'prospects' for increasing engagement glimmer through the previous chapters; here is the opportunity to give them centre stage. Hunter cites Dean (2006) who indicates there is no recovery from this irreconcilable paradox of a malaise, and that the entire liberal democratic project is redundant. I'm with Hunter when she decides that the better aim is to '...engage with the 'irreconcilable core of liberal democratic ideals' and

'lived enactments and the challenges and prospects presented through them' (2015, p.5). I hope that I have managed to provide an illustration of the lived enactments and challenges of engaging with help, as told by people primarily in need of help and those in a position to provide it. Engagement isn't just what helping organisations want from their clients, or what significant others want for their significant others, it is what they want for themselves. They light up, become more animated and recall the fine details of experiences of being fully engaged, of the services and people that have helped them get there.

Engagement has been imagined as the extent to which a user uses services effectively, measured through quantifiable outcomes. But what is clear to me is that engagement is a process – the connection or relationship between the (potential) helper and the (potential) helped. When it is good, help can happen, but this "help" is not given by one to the other but achieved together. Engagement is a meaningful relationship that promotes growth.

Engagement happens in relationship. Relationship with others, environments, programmes/interventions and with ourselves. Engagement is experienced as a combination of intentions, feelings and behaviours that operate dynamically in response to an intervention aiming to address need and support positive 'outcomes'. There are states up and down an axis of 'full-on' and 'fuck all' engagement that increase and decrease the value of the helping encounter. The young people in this study describe what the extremes feel like and might look like from the outside.

Being relational, engagement depends to a large degree on trust. Trust, as explored in Chapter Two, is enabled by effective handling of four elements: responsiveness, empathy

and reciprocity, flexibility and choice, and both caring and analytical attention (or attentiveness). This is not a pick and mix bag of practices and qualities. Given the experiences of people facing multiple disadvantage and the paradoxical nature of people in general, help and helping work, as explored in Chapters Three to Eight. These qualities and practices are not helpful all the time but need to be tuned and woven to the individual in need with attentiveness.

In Futures four-levelled scheme as laid out Chapter Two, it is evident that it is possible to turn up and stay in contact a lot without progressing, so contact is not an adequate measure of engagement. It is also debatable that all measured outcomes (achievements) are meaningful or accurate assessments of the degree of engagement, i.e., life skills modules gamed for reward as discussed in Chapter Eight or to some degree a flat in an area that is unsafe as experienced by Max and discussed in Chapter Seven.

The title of this chapter and indeed the thesis is ironic. What *actually* works to engage individuals is infinitely difficult, if not impossible, to count. Attempts to *prove* what works and subsequently *measure* effectiveness (and within NPM account for income) is becoming more common in the sector. My findings indicate that this mindset and following technologies take us further away from 'what works' and ever closer to what Marmott, an epidemiologist, saw in health services under NPM 'hitting the target and missing the point' (2010, p. 88).

9.1 Full-on and fuck all engagement: how it feels and what it looks like

Figure 15. full-on engagement

In Wave Four I asked the final three participants to look over all the material we had produced together. The now ratty old bits of card, of things that helped them engage with help and things that get in the way, things that do both; images of the ranking exercise with my notes scribbled on the edges, their maps. I asked them to think about the actual times they felt 'full-on engaged' and 'fuck all engaged'. Then we talked about what it 'looked like', what their behaviour was, and the feelings they could recall. Mark, Max and Holly coloured in the picture of engagement established through the fieldwork.

Full-on engagement is not all happiness, warmth and good times. They describe feeling 'anxious', 'challenged', 'vulnerable' and 'broken' – Mark, a 'bit nobbish'. Holly says, 'it was uncomfortable... but I knew that to get the results I needed to be uncomfortable' (2615 W4). They face challenges, fail, struggle, drop out, go back and persist. As Butler describes 'subjectification' - 'your belonging shifts and you change - losing relationships and beginning new ones... loss is at the heart of becoming' (1997). Engagement is about more than getting a job and keeping a flat, complying or playing a game, it is a means not always apparent in its ends. Alongside attainment, it is about becoming in the world as social beings it is about development and growth which involves change and change involves loss as well as a sense of 'becoming' and moving forwards. Becoming is at the heart of engagement. So, what makes them risk these feelings and persist in the face of loss?

First, they are compelled to turn up; to a place, a relationship or context where they feel 'welcomed'(Mark), 'certain' (Max) and 'grounded' (Holly). They feel belonging in contrast to the experiences they reflect on in Chapter Six where they don't fit in. For Mark it is volunteering with Barnabas, for Max his apprenticeship, for Holly a double appointment with a GP following a return to self-harm and her experience with Futures' youth involvement project.

There is **transparency** in the offer, they know what it is they can expect and what will be expected of them and, further, what they can expect has a 'point' to the experience; more than this, there is some *future* **point.** Holly and Max say it feels like 'optimism'; Mark feels like he 'has a plan'. They are 'hopeful' (Mark and Holly). Reminding me of Lavau and Bingham's use of Heidegger's distinction between care as 'leaping in' and as 'leaping ahead' (2017, p.32).

This is in contrast to their experiences of fuck all engagement where, for example, Holly still doesn't know what she *could* have got from her engagement with Futures (so asked for a fridge freezer). Mark's experience with an anger management course where he hoped for strategies he could use in his life and got a PowerPoint presentation. He described it as being told to expect a new blue bike when it is actually rusty and red. They feel 'sceptical' and 'hesitant' (Mark), 'not going anywhere' (Max), Holly is 'scared' feeling like she needs to 'protect' herself.

There is some **reciprocity in** their full-on engagement. They are 'giving' of themselves; Mark volunteering for Barnabas; co-ordinating the packing of a furniture van, making careful use of the space to fit in the maximum items, getting 'arsey' when chairs come down before the

wardrobes and frustrate his plan. Max feels 'proper affectionate' about his work because he cared so much about 'getting it perfect' (in sharp contrast to his 'I don't care' mantra), he describes planing a door; almost cutting his hand off, hanging it on the wonk, then straight but with rough edges, and finally right. Holly revealing the 'it-in-her-head-that-shouts' to the GP who she tells 'everything', and the GP tells her in return about his own experience and gives the 'it' the label of 'depression' and her some medication. She also describes using her empathy and ability with language to help other young people express their experience of homelessness in the youth involvement project. Reciprocity (however asymmetrical); giving as well as receiving, makes for **self-affirmation**. Mark feels 'smart' and 'useful'; Holly feels 'achievement', Max says he feels 'adult'; when he gets the door hung right his boss says, 'Max, that's a good job', Max says,

> 'it was brilliant! Made me get up the next day, you know what I mean. He was actually paying attention to what I'm doing so, if I'm getting good at that now, in a year I could be even better' (1148-1150, W2).

In contrast, when fuck all engaged they feel 'worthless' (Mark and Holly) and that 'it's not about me' (Mark).

Engagement is **embodied;** they feel 'energised' (Holly), 'can't sit down' (Mark) and 'do a lot' (Max). They physically feel liveliness, which Winnicott refers to in connection with 'being real', the creative, potential space that depends on being 'held' (Phillips, 1988 in Russell 2018), seen, welcomed, certain, grounded. This is in sharp contrast to fuck all engagement where they are 'slumped in their chair', feel 'unheard', and 'bored' (Mark), speaking in a

'matter of fact tone of voice', 'ignoring' and 'putting off' (Holly), 'I was like that' Max says, demonstrating fidgeting with a pen.

In summary, full-on engagement appears to require a reliable environment where the young people feel able to have difficult experiences and handle their paradoxical feelings about themselves. They are motivated by a future point (hope) in addition to the present activity. A transparent offer where what is expected is delivered chimes with Baier's reflections on trust built where there is parity on what 'good looks like' (see Chapter Two pp.56-57, 339). Buoyed by feeling that they have something to offer, reciprocity builds their confidence. The experience of full-on engagement is demonstrable in their behaviour, their feelings and their physical selves; but it is not static, a conundrum to capture.

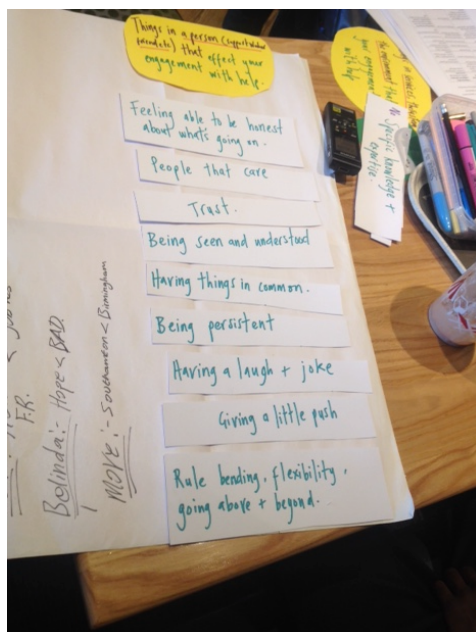**9.2 Things about people and practice that enables engagement**

Figure 16. People and practices that enable engagement

Here, I am working from the four elements that support the development and sustainment of trust, which is the foundation for increasing engagement and the value of the helping encounter established in Chapter 2; reflected on through Chapters 5-8, and filling them out with the young people's analysis of their own experiences of engagement. Each of the three sections to come combine the young people's descriptions of the people they have met along the way who have made them feel strong, aspirational and encouraged them to maintain and increase engagement that is often associated with some sort of personal attainment or growth. These people share some characteristics that map well onto the personal qualities which are likely to develop trust. Some are distant memories for the young people, and I expect they gather some extra sheen each time a new, potentially helping person, does not fill their shoes. They are the people at Barnabas for Mark, and Milly and a long-term friend for Holly. They are OP and Steph from Futures, Ash and Ed and Akira's sister.

While close examination of the encounter can tell us a lot about how we can increase the value of it through more full-on engagement, it is important not to fixate on the worker and ignore how the context of the systems they work in and their own selves and the contexts they experience enter into the encounter and shape it. For workers to be able to practice attentiveness, the contexts they work in need to support that. Ultimately services and systems that can accommodate and nurture the four elements must also demonstrate and practice them. This section is informed by the ranking exercise the young people did in Wave Three and by discussion in previous interviews.

9.1.2 Empathy and reciprocity: 'on a level' and going 'above and beyond':

The young people describe the people who have engaged them and helped consistently as **'on a level',** there is a feeling of parity in the power dynamic, they do not 'look down at you', or 'treat you like a child'. It is often possible to see something of their own vulnerability; they are often in some ways like the young person. There is an exchange or some level of reciprocity. They often **'go above and beyond'** the expectations of their roles; they put something of themselves at risk on your behalf; they don't give up.

Mr O was Max's head of year in secondary school, he was, 'always polite - always. He'd never try and belittle me; he'd never try and like stand over me' (889-890 W1). For Akira, Steph is on a 'friendly level instead of just on a professional level' (173 W2). Even though Max was perpetually at risk of permanent exclusion, Mr O 'pushed his job - he pushed his job to keep my education basically' (833-844 W1). He has a clear recollection that by helping him Mr O was putting his own job on the line, and that looking out for Max was beyond his job. The worker who sneaks Braden a cigarette out of the view of the CCTV is most cherished, she was the only one who could calm Braden down. He says 'what a shame she left'. For Tom it is a secondary school teacher Miss S, who stuck up for him when he was being bullied from year seven to 11, she 'wanted to help'. When he was 13 and in prison, she would come to see him every fortnight and fill in parts of his education over the 2 years he was interned. Akira gets very upset one evening and sends a text to Steph at 4am, she responds, asking about his welfare, he knows that he shouldn't have, and she shouldn't have responded, but it makes him believe that she cares, and this builds trust. Experience of these relationships contributes to the capacity they have for trusting people in general, indicating webs of trust effectively created and the possibility of their repair and maintenance.

Going above and beyond, both bending the rules a little and putting in sustained and exceptional effort undoubtedly builds trust, these workers are perceived to be taking some risk themselves and it is experienced as solidarity.

There is some indication that empathy plays a part, that knowing something of your situation, your history, being in some way like you helps, but the young people do not place the same degree of emphasis on empathy as the SWs

9.2.3 Attentiveness: 'seeing and understanding the good and the bad in you', 'reliable'

The Mr Os and Millys listen and come to **'see and understand' 'the good and the bad'**, the weak and strong in you; they are 'not judgemental'. Caring attention involves authentic emotional engagement (Fisher and Freshwater, 2015, p.767; Lemma, 2015, p.409 & p.420) where, as Object Relations has it, damage can be done, remorse experienced and the desire to repair the damage enables establishment of connection, 'and the ability to care and be cared for by another' (Froggett, 2002, p.3). This is clearly demonstrated in Max's repeated falling out with Ash and Ed, Holly's college mate who abandoned her when she moved away and then reconnected, and with the possibility Barnabas gives Mark to kick off, disappear for a while and return. These relationships provide experience of the possibility for repair within relationships. They demonstrate that trust provides a context for difference and difficulty to be seen and experienced without the trusting relationship being permanently harmed.

Max says of Mr O, 'it was like... it was like I'd known him all my life, it was like he's been there watching me, to know, it was like he knew me... and that's why he wouldn't give up on me'. (889-893 W1). When Max says, 'he knew me' this means knowing him and all his

foibles; doesn't make him 'out to be a fucking saint' (1809 W1). Tom says the same of his stepdad and his cousin; Holly of her college mate.

Being seen and understood remains the key component of good care for the young people. Receiving some validation does not have to mean you are fully known or fully knowable. Many of us don't feel we fully know ourselves but the opportunity to be seen and validated by others as we try to work out who we are and where we are going perhaps helps our own ability to see and understand (and develop) ourselves. It is the way attentiveness can be pedagogical, not to be confused with responsibilisation-tinged self-help, but by experiencing attention, it is possible that the individual can better mobilise attentiveness themselves – towards themselves, others and their environments.

Max here describes how it leads to trust and can be used to support engagement with other services, addressing other needs:

> 'you need to be noticed – 'oh, so why?' 'Oh well you've got anger, I'll refer you to a psychiatrist' 'no I don't want, you're my key worker I want to talk to you, understand what I'm trying to say... Trust – slowly working to depth – instead of just going – bang – go see a psychiatrist – you've got to go see a psychiatrist they're the only people that can help you... 'nah, I don't want to see a psychiatrist, I'm going to have to tell them everything I've told you since I've started working with you – I want to see you, I want you to work with me... I want you to come with me... explain – where I can't because if they don't understand me, I'm going to get angry and they're going to kick me out – you know what I mean, so yeah there's being seen and understood and then there's just listening and telling' (1637-1675 W2).

Here, Max identifies another element of how attentiveness can help moving forward by supporting a segue between services for different and distinctive needs. Discussed briefly in Chapter 1 and then again in Chapter 7 is the significance of partnership working, and Max describes how it could be improved through attentiveness as opposed to 'just listening and telling' and referring on.

Holly does not value care so much, sorting the cards in the Third Wave she imagines that Roshni would say care is the most important thing, but she thinks it comes after being seen and understood, after knowledge and expertise and before trust. She also says that care is what makes us human and if you stop caring it means you have given up and then finally that it is difficult,

> 'because I don't like people that care about me, and it goes back to my feelings if I weren't here no one would be bothered. And it sort of satisfies that (pause) that inner need if you like, because if people care it's like, oh, I can't go top myself, because so many people care, that's why I don't like people to care'. (1704-1707 W3)

So, care places expectations on her, expectations that she will take care of herself, at least preserve her life. Perhaps the low value placed on care is related to the low value she places on her own life in this moment. Perhaps the presence of 'caring people' threatens her feelings of autonomy. As discussed in Chapter 2 (regarding care gone wrong) and Chapter 3 (regarding recognition and compliance) there is a relationship between care and control. Holly notes that an individual could have all the knowledge in the world, but because of how she thinks and feels about herself, if they look down on her, she will not be honest and then they won't be able to understand her in order to help address her needs. I would like to

suggest that this is good evidence for the necessity of attentiveness; all the care and knowledge in the word is made defunct without the non-judgemental withness that characterises the practice of attention.

Transparency is important, the young people often dropped out of a programme because it was not what they had imagined it to be and disengaged with support when promises were made and not kept. Transparency, like trust, hangs in delicate webs, so inconsistent messaging led them to stop believing altogether which could mean that ideal opportunities were overlooked. There is also a confusing overlap between services. He was getting support from Futures (with six different Support Workers in two years), Probation, Job Centre Plus and another local charity for help with employment, he was sent on just one apprenticeship which seemed to take advantage of his time and was reckless with his safety. In his final interview I ask him if he is still looking for work as a mechanic and he says 'nah, not bothered', he will stick with working on the markets. This leads on to a question about agencies working well together. There is an indication that many voluntary sector and state services are chasing outcomes independently, and the possibility that the young people are being supported in a fragmented way where, as Braden puts it, lots of people know 'bits of you'.

9.2.4 Responsive and flexibility: accessible, resourced, flexibility and choice

In this section, I have combined responsiveness with flexibility and choice as in order to be responsive to the individual, flexibility is required. It implies that there is choice – both for the helper and the helped. I added 'resourced' because a response and ongoing responsiveness requires resource. The young people describe people and programmes and services that can be trusted to do what they say they will do. Actually providing tangible

support in the first place (Lemma 2010, p.416) a readiness and *ability* to change the nature of the action to address the need (Tronto, 1993, p.160). Mark explains that when he meets with OP he says 'I'll get on that' and he trusts that he will.

While resources are implicated in responsiveness and flexibility, they are not much discussed in care, although they are implied in the problem of the low value of care and caring work. The young people all recognise the benefits of a well-resourced service. While they talk specifically about incentives (including the offer of lunch and a travel pass) which do motivate them to engage, more important is time and expertise. Time in Max's mind was a measure of care. The knowledge and expertise young people experiencing homelessness might require is broad, all the SWs have their areas of expertise but Mark had to wait almost the entire three years of The Programme to be referred onto OP who had personal links to security training and was able to obtain a place for Mark. However, when it came to getting Mark moved to new supported accommodation it was Barnabas who realised Mark's application had been sent to the wrong individual and were able to step in and hurry the process. While all the participants were experiencing problematic debt, it was only Mark who at our very last interview was referred to a charity that could help via Barnabas.

It seems impossible that any one person, possibly even one service, could have all the knowledge required to support the very different young people who experience multiple disadvantage including homelessness. Futures' vast SW team and specialist workers were of great benefit, as acknowledged by the young people and SWs. However, for appropriate knowledge to be shared, a SW is required to know what the young people need. For example, nearly two years into The Programme, Richard discovered that Max was registered on the Local Homefinder system but did not know how to bid for properties. It was Richard,

not Max that shared this with me, not entirely surprising considering how ashamed Max is about the things he cannot do (passing his driving test and setting up his utilities, for example). Richard is not lacking knowledge. In fact, among all the SWs interviewed, he possibly has the most experience and specific knowledge of housing pathways in this geographical area. But Richard not knowing this about Max — not finding this out — increased the time Max spent in temporary accommodation and possibly contributed to him taking the first place offered in the exact location he did not want to return to and trying to leave almost immediately. Again, I have no way of knowing if things had been different what the results would have been. Nonetheless it seems to illustrate that knowledge without attention reduces its potential.

The accessibility of helping services and people was also an important aspect contributing to how well the young people engaged. Futures maintained contact with the young people by phone - in most of the geographical areas there was not a physical centre. This was a source of frustration for most of the young people. While all the young people have phones, they also have debt, this meant that they frequently did not have credit to respond. Furthermore, their numbers changed. They all had limited access to the internet, but Facebook was often the most reliable way to get in contact with them. Contact in person was preferred but they all qualified this with understanding that SWs were busy, Holly and Max thinking that others were probably in greater need.

The young people's engagement is improved when services are accessible and they are very often not. They are well used to waiting for a response from services and commonly talk of being rejected by one, referred to another, and back again, as illustrated clearly by Tom's experience with transfer to Universal Credit and the housing complications that ensued.

One year after our final interview Holly finally received an assessment for her mental health. The first time she sought help was 19 years ago. She is pleased to finally have a diagnosis but will need to wait another nine months to begin therapy. She is considering moving to another city and in this case, she is under the impression that she will have to start the process again.

When Holly began her interaction with the Involvement Group at Futures, we were all in high spirits; Holly who persevered, despite so many challenges, to speak with a MP, sit in Parliament and go to London (for the first time, days after a terrorist attack), Milly who could see Holly taking this experience further, perhaps building a career in support work, and me. Through our conversations she had emphasised feelings of belonging and rejection and a strong desire to be in places that she belonged in all or most of herself; furthermore she exhibited a strong desire to root out and address injustice – particularly around mental health and her experiences with self-harm. The other part of the puzzle that I had was direct experience with the Involvement Group (initially when working with Groundswell on a project that Futures was involved with, during my induction to Futures and finally from an interview with the individual who had been leading this area of work at Futures for 9 Years). In that interview we talked about Holly and how the worker experienced her engagement. Firstly, her account of Holly as one of a group of 15 was textured and detailed – she recalled what was going on at the points where Holly's engagement felt perilous and what happened when it stabilised and increased. Her account is very close to Holly's, except for one crucial moment where Holly suggests that the initial plan for preparation to go to parliament and speak to the experience of young people experiencing homelessness was insufficient and unhelpfully far from where she was living. This was heard (seen/recognised – demonstrating

attention) and responded to with provision of additional workshops closer to where Holly lived. Holly then surprised everyone by maintaining her engagement, which tested her immeasurably, and she overcame. But Holly, before the three-year programme ended, aged out of the accessibility criteria for membership in the Involvement Group. I had been invited to attend a training day as an observer, but it was postponed and then she aged out. I wonder about this decision on the part of Futures. For all the trouble Holly had experienced this seemed like a measly formality to get in the way. The truth is we will never know whether if she could have continued she would have; whether there have been many others knocked back by the same threshold before, and if there would be an uproar if it was flexed in this case. Nonetheless, it is an illustration of what is at stake when proffering 'flexibility' as a pillar for full-on engagement. I think that attention as described is what makes the difference here again — and the worker in this case demonstrated it — but the result; the accumulation of information patched together, was no match for criteria.

9.3 Discussion

In considering what we know from homelessness and care literature on the development of trust and its role in increasing the value of the encounter through deeper engagement; I have brought out the significance of attentiveness. I have also emphasised the need to understand the reciprocity required in the interplay of 'I' and 'you' in the encounter as well as how related parts of services and systems need to tune in to the four elements in order to support frontline workers, the face of policy, and hence the way it is experienced.

I have described the look and feel of the extremes of engagement with help, and the sorts of people and practices that make the difference, according to these six young people. I

think they have so willingly and carefully contributed to this description of engagement in part thanks to my commitment to trying to forge the quality of relationship that enables attentiveness, reciprocity, and responsiveness in the production of understanding about their experiences. The final chapter concludes this thesis with some recommendations and clarification of what I hope this thesis contributes to knowledge, practice and methodology.

The methods used with, and so the attention given to the young people in this study have provided an in-depth understanding of how seeking help is experienced and shaped. Full-on engagement might look like individuals pushing at boundaries, being a bit 'nobbish', that along with attainment and addressing needs, it is about becoming, which requires loss, feelings of despair and the opportunity to repair.

CHAPTER TEN. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter draws together the main contributions of this thesis in relation to methodology, knowledge and practice and reflects on the main findings in relation to five core research questions. It then discusses the implications of these findings and ends with a short personal postscript.

Before setting out the contribution made by the thesis, we recap the research questions from section 4.2.3 of the methodology chapter. These questions have been reframed in the light of examiner comments and now include a more specific question capturing the unique methodology of the study exploring the relationship between the key participants in engaging with help: the young people themselves, their Support Workers and their significant others.

The overarching research question is: **What factors inhibit and what factors enable young people with experience of complex and interlinking disadvantages, including homelessness, to engage with help?**

1. What does engagement look like and feel like?

Full-on engagement feels like belonging. Be it a physical building, a relationship or a context, the young people feel welcomed, certain and grounded – they know what to expect and what will be expected of them. **Full-on engagement is both cognitive and embodied.**

The young people in this study all fidget, it is a response to anxiety and it helps them focus and stay in the room when they want to flee. The experiences of full-on engagement, in all

but one case, occupy them physically. Building, boxing, sport, packing a van; the experiences are both embodied and cognitive; Winnicott would say, psycho-somatic (Phillips, 1988, p.78). **Full-on engagement feels like having a plan, it feels hopeful. Full-on engagement also feels challenging.** They feel vulnerable and uncomfortable.

2. What gets in the way of or increases the likelihood of full-on engagement?

Feeling seen and understood and 'on a level' with the others in a helping encounter increases the likelihood of full-on engagement. Responsiveness, empathy and reciprocity, flexibility and choice are the key elements, these along with and shaped by attentiveness are the formula for full-on engagement highlighted by this study.

Accessing help in the first place is a perilous activity for the young people, needing help is stigmatised and they feel it. Max thinks if he calls the Samaritans they will think 'pop a pill, you little twat' 'that's what everyone thinks' he says 'that's what I think anyway. Just pop a pill man'.

As trust is foundational, environments or expressions of mistrust will erode the possibility of engagement, as does feeling judged or belittled. CYA work and other activity to displace the anxiety caused by the paradoxical nature of helping work shifts attention away from the person in need. Simply not knowing or understanding what a helping encounter can offer or the actual offer not living up to its promise gets in the way of engagement.

3. How do past experiences (biography) of needing help and trying to get it shape (or not) ongoing attempts to access help?

The young people are coming from experiences of bulling, abandonment, being blamed, manipulated and fobbed off. They want desperately to fit in and to address their mental health, employment and debt issues but have been burnt by failed attempts. Despite failed attempts they continue to try to engage, this is in part because of the positive experiences they have had of help in the past. But when the encounter begins to go wrong for them, they feel threatened and desperate, and re-enact what they have experienced; they bully, abandon, blame, manipulate (do it sneaky), stop picking up the phone or just say and be what they think they should to get the help they need. Their telling of poor experiences of engagement and excellent experiences are equally as vivid. Perhaps if there was an opportunity to share these experiences early on in the encounter, helping services would be less likely to act in ways that resonate with poor experiences and more likely to really see and understand the person before them and respond with this knowledge.

4. What can comparison of the narratives of young people with those of frontline workers add to our understanding of needing and getting help (or not)?

The paired narratives enabled a fuller understanding of the 'dynamic of interaction' in the helping encounter (Bartels, 2013, p.476) particularly how trust is sought, established and easily demolished, as discussed in Chapter Five. I think it is useful to understand how both workers and young people feel precarious, and this effects how they respond to trusting and being trusted. In the exercise from Wave Three I asked the young people to sort the cards pertaining to what helped and hindered their engagement inside and outside of themselves and then asked them to complete the same exercise as if they were their Support Worker. Holly took to the exercise with gusto and on completing it she said (repeatedly) that she would like to see how Roshni would have actually arranged the cards. I wonder if, as

frontline staff, we share too little of what we think about the people we work with and what we are trying to achieve with them as well as there being too little opportunity for young people to talk about what they experience as helping. The combination of support and enforcement divides frontline staff and their clients, there needs to be more opportunity to build solidarity to work towards what they want to achieve and to resist the systemic and social problems that get in the way.

5. How does power 'in here' and 'out there' (Hoggett, 2000) get in the way of systematising practices that could more universally foster engagement with help and how people come 'to collude with' it (Tyler, 2013, p.10)?

Need is stigmatised, as is homelessness, and caring work is misrecognised and undervalued, if not also stigmatised. The expectations of frontline workers are paradoxical, and the confusion and anxiety this induces creates displacement of attention on to activities that are often unrelated to people whose needs require attention. People experiencing multiple disadvantage particularly need attention to engage, without engagement interventions fail, policy is adjusted, and new practice is applied but the stigma and paradoxes remain. The industry is precarious, embedded in fickle commissioning cycles, dependent on rapid compliance with new administrative technologies and miracle solutions (mostly reinventions of previous ones). It is subject to public outrage, public fear and public disgust at the stigmatised images of homelessness which the industry sometimes produce and are required to address.

We collude by continuing to look away from the paradox and by perpetuating a stigmatised understanding of people experiencing homelessness in order to continue the work. This formula to explain why what works often doesn't work is underdeveloped and untested, but

I feel strongly that it offers a new way to understand what's going on through a new relation to the paradoxes in help and helping work.

10.1 Contribution

This thesis is an attempt to explain how things get stuck: why it is so difficult, not just in the homelessness sector but across helping sectors, to embed practices that successfully engage those in need of help. Its original contribution to knowledge is threefold.

i) Methodologically it develops innovative participatory research approaches and brings together different methods in a way that mitigates some of the limitations of each.

ii) It contributes to academic literature by drawing on scholarship about care and trust from different disciplines and applying it to the homelessness domain, and by developing the concept of 'engagement' which is under-theorised within the homelessness literature and sector, in particular, approaches and concepts which enable the development of trust, which is fundamental to engagement. From this literature I draw out key elements that support good engagement and use my empirical data to flesh out what engagement entails in practice and particularly to develop the idea of 'attention.'

iii) I contribute to practice in the homelessness sector through recommendations of ways to practice and develop engagement, especially through the complex notion of 'attention.'

10.2.1 Contribution to methodology

Building on the traditions of participatory research and co-production, case study design, creative and qualitative longitudinal research (QLLR), this thesis provides innovative solutions to mitigate the limitations of each. Participants become collaborators in the

mission to understand and conceptualise engagement and help to develop the tools used.

By including both the young people and their significant others, the method captures 'engagement' from multiple perspectives and enables a rich and more fine-grained picture of power and the relational in helping work, specifically how fickle and contradictory it is. This is an attempt to avoid fragmentation. In addition, the tools I used to elicit collaboration were in themselves original; for example, the card game in the scoping phase of the research (p.422). Using these tools and methods allowed me to gain insights that I would not have got from more conventional tools and methods.

The study was underpinned by the values associated with **participatory and co-produced** research. This enabled young people's own assessments of the factors that made the difference for them to be made concrete and heard. This is most clearly evidenced by the full-on and fuck all engagement framework, which was very much a jointly constructed finding (See Chapter Nine).

Using the **longitudinal case-study** approach helped me to build a more complex picture of what was going on regarding the young people's experience of needing and engaging with help. Their assessments were developed over time, so that they considered, reflected on and reconsidered, in order to arrive at a fine-grained understanding of what makes the difference when trying to engage with help. For example, in Chapter 5 (pg. 211) Mark strongly believes that Futures, or more specifically his worker Roshni, has let him down. A new worker helps in a way that Roshni did not, but Mark's anxiety, and how it manifests physically for him, gets in the way of him completing the course. Using the longitudinal case-study approach helped me to build a more complex picture of what was going on, Mark

engaged differently with different Support Workers and it made a difference, but his struggle to engage in long-term work is not just the result of one or other Support Worker or intervention 'failing'.

The use of a variety of **creative methods** allowed for flexibility in how the participants thought about the questions and responded to them. As I indicate in Chapter Four, participants responded more or less and differently to the methods utilised; while Max and Mark are engrossed with their Life Maps, Holly finds the ranking exercises help her to sort her thoughts and feel like she is explaining her story in a way that will not be misinterpreted but refuses throughout to pick up a Sharpie. Because of the participatory and longitudinal nature of the study I could then find out more about how the methods did and did not work for them and shape the following interviews in consideration of this.

Drawing on the narratives of **significant others,** including workers, allowed for a view of a relationship or 'encounter' (Bartel, 2013), in the context of help, which has been a 'key issue' in public administration for 80 years but as yet has not been 'captured as a distinct phenomenon' (Bartel, 2013, p.475). Many writers across health and social care report from the perspective of the user specifically or the frontline staff (Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003; Durose, 2011). Some exceptions are Paul Willis (1978) who, in his landmark ethnography on the experience of working-class boys transitioning from education to work, interviews the boys' parents, teachers, work colleagues and employers. More recently, Groundswell's (2009) *Escape Plan* included interviews both with people who had experienced and 'escaped' homelessness and their nominated significant others (sometimes past Support Workers), exploring what contributed to this escape. What is particular about

my research methodology is that the players and the subject of the study (engagement) are explored **in context**: of a programme, organisation, and larger legislative and societal context **and** followed over time, as well as reflecting on the past.

This approach, in all its parts, allowed for emergent knowledge about the efforts employed to develop trust and how they are received; contradictions in desires and behaviours over time; the friction between what is expected and what is delivered in relationships around need and help. It also allows for some unpicking of how 'relational ontology' — the complex and dynamic interweaving of the 'you' and 'I' in relationship (Bartels, 2013) — as explored in Chapter 2, impacts on the value of the 'public encounter', evidenced in Chapter 5. By matching the young people's stories with the accounts given by their Support Workers, my methodology enables a more reliable evaluation of both.

The approach was not without issues that limit the extent of the contributions made, as discussed in Chapter 4. Nonetheless, this original approach to knowledge production enables a small but important aspect of engagement to emerge – that is that it can look from the outside like an intervention is not working, whereas in fact meaningful and transformative work is going on that cannot necessarily be measured within conventional frameworks and understandings. Furthermore, some workers are aware of this despite the denial of the assessment frameworks they must respond to.

10.2.2 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis has made a specific contribution to the literature on homelessness by drawing on concepts from diverse disciplinary literature to gain more understanding of how engagement with help works and does not work.

There is little in the homelessness literature exploring what we mean by 'engagement', or what good or sustainable engagement looks like (See Chapters 1 and 2) and there is still little to inform 'how to enhance the quality of the encounter' (Bartel, 2013, p.427). This research contributes to addressing this gap in knowledge, focusing particularly on the concept of 'attention' as a key component of engagement.

Part of my original contribution to the homelessness literature is drawing from literature about care and trust from a diverse range of disciplines and applying them to start to build a fuller, more comprehensive idea of what engagement could look like in the homelessness sector: what makes it happen and sustains it and how can we start articulating it. My empirical data adds texture and detail to this, particularly around the concept of 'attention,' which I have identified as key to effective engagement. The following paragraphs trace the insights derived from this focus on attention through several chapters of the thesis.

Rather than simply mental focus, the 'art of attention', a central 'value' of care (Sevenhuijsen, 2003; Tronto, (1993), describes a process of; 'thinking, feeling, hesitating, imagining, checking and acting' (Stengers, 2015; Lavau and Bingham, 2017). An activity that requires 'the suspension of judgement' and 'responsiveness' (Sevenhuijsen 1989; 2000; 2003; Tronto 1993). My interviewees articulate a specific component of 'attention' which seems vital for sustaining meaningful engagement. This is to do with the seemingly

irreconcilable aspirations and set-up of this type of helping work. Where the helper is in a position of both supporter and enforcer, tasked with building trust and moving people on as quickly as possible.

In Chapter Five, both the young people and workers talk about trust, honesty and believability. The SWs' attempts to establish trust include making a narrative about what is behind the young person's situation and behaviour (frequently using their own experiences to colour their narratives); taking at face value what the young person presents with and adapting to the requirements of The Programme. Attention is split between what they are pressured to achieve, what they personally believe about the young person's situation, how the young person presents and what they actually say. There is little guidance and support on how to manage this, and in the minds of the young people there is a feeling that SWs have not always got this right. This is reflected in the young peoples' shifting feelings about control; they want both control and 'a little push'. They want autonomy, encouragement and some external motivation.

In Chapter Six we see the paradoxical desires of the young people to be seen and understood and yet because of past experiences of bullying, abandonment and manipulation they want to also hide and are wary of trusting others. They take these desires and fears with them in their interaction with services established to provide for their needs.

Chapter Seven illustrates how the way services see young people — what they pay attention to — directly affects how the young people present and think about themselves and their needs. They respond tactically to the misrecognition they experience in working with Social Services, the police, housing, probation, mental health services, health services and the Job

Centre – making themselves the right shape to get the services they need (see Povinelli re: making the most marginalised do the work of recognition).

Chapter Eight shows the Support Workers interviewed encountering paradoxes in the work, they describe themselves as 'conscientious' but 'behind' and absent because of burn out; as 'crisis-led' yet 'target-driven' and as friends/parents and police, both supporting and enforcing rules.

My empirical data offers a detailed picture of the complex, contradictory landscape which Support Workers and young people experiencing homelessness navigate every day. Formulaic, 'packaged' approaches often miss the centrality of 'conflicting emotions' (Rottenberg & Segal, 2020), 'ambivalence and messiness' (Stevenson, 2003) and 'inscrutability' (Hall, 2003) when engaging with or seeking to engage others with help. The Support Workers I spoke with were learning through their experience and intuition the complexities of truth and the need to suspend disbelief, or believe that two opposite things, normally kept separate, can be true at the same time. All of us working in the homelessness sector need ways to think about our work which can accommodate this complexity and these paradoxes. The concept of 'attention' makes room for that.

10.2.3 Contribution to practice.

The key contribution to practice from this thesis is the centring on the idea of attention and its crucial role in enabling trust and fostering full-on engagement, as well as some guidance on how to pay attention (see Chapter 9). From this, I am able to develop several recommendations for organisations in the sector. Firstly, the importance of recognising these 'softer, relationship-based' aspects of the work that are so crucial but are often

unseen (especially in outcomes-based payment systems) and the need for training for staff at all levels on what 'attention' looks like and how they can recognise it and develop their skills and practice. The other key recommendation is to do with building reflective practice into this sort of helping work in the homelessness sector. Futures' commitment to and practice of PIE is a really good start but despite the enthusiastic adoption of PIE in the homelessness sector more generally, the potential of reflective practice has not been nearly met.

The next significant insight is regarding the complexity of frontline work with people experiencing multiple disadvantage, including homelessness, that we leave to the most poorly compensated and insecure roles; leaving those who take them up in a difficult situation. Some might say 'c'mon, it's just sympathy and role-modelling' and this is certainly the tack most of the SWs take at times. Like Roshni when she empties her bag with the young women clients and they sort their bags together and she can say 'see, that was easy and it feels so much better!'. The practical learning being the articulation of what the SWs have learned through doing this very hard job; learning that might help people starting out to at least know what to expect. This insight responds to my sense when I began this project that there is something just out of our sight that derails our intentions regarding help. An unspoken, impervious thing I have given some language and attention to here.

On a wider scale, I am suggesting that all players in the homelessness industry could benefit from spaces, people, services and systems that are attentive and reliable, enabling safe territory in which to develop a new relation to paradox and ambivalence in the work. One where the discomfort can be faced and felt, where 'splitting' can be explored – always

knowing that there is no closure or answer but that the exploration will take us ever closer to what Winnicott calls 'real' (Winnicott, 1971). The way that helping services are commissioned is key to establishing such territory.

Finally, my contribution to practice, from my work with the young people and their significant others, is the understanding that despite all this gloom and doom there is hope, actors have a degree of agency, front line workers can use discretion for good as well as harm, young people can engage in a way that goes beyond compliance when their long-term interests are understood, and the system incentives align to them. People want to help and to be helped - this is the point at which I began this research journey, and in my mind, it is the key insight evidenced in the empirical data and in all the literature touched.

10.2 Implications of the findings

Reliable environments are crucial for the young people, their SWs and the industry; we all want to belong and feel safe, it doesn't mean we won't feel discomfort, be a bit 'nobbish' and kick off. However, these difficult feelings and behaviours are symptomatic of ambivalence and unreliable environments. Reliable environments are crucial for the young people, their SWs and the industry. Young people want to and can engage in a way that goes beyond compliance when they are 'seen and understood' but this is dependent on trust. Reliable environments are possible and are exemplified in full-on engagement.[69] Here the webs of trust can be repaired and with this trust the pedagogical value of attention can be realised. Meanwhile, it is essential

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[69] See Chapter Nine

to recognise the discretion and constraints faced by frontline workers. Reflective practice can make a huge positive difference in SWs' and their organisation's ability to enable engagement.

We must resist NPM and efforts to marketise helping work. The environment it establishes, coupled with precarious work culture, turns the innovative and hopeful practice of PIE into yet another outcome, vulnerable to gaming. Competition actively disrupts trust and 'colonise[s] the reflective or questioning faculty' (Young, in Froggett, 2002, p.163), under capitalism we are convinced it makes us strive for our best but that is a story we tell — one I do not believe — and I think this research, limited as it is, tells a different story. Instead, I look into the paradoxes that make helping work difficult – staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016), rather than trying to tidy it up. Moreover, to provide reliability for young people experiencing homelessness — or anyone in need — our services and systems need to be working together, co-ordinated, making the best use of the resources they have between them, not competing for funds and stealing outcomes.

While some characters got to speak more than others and there is an underrepresentation of Futures and the paperwork, the methodology employed in this study has brought to light how power 'in here' and 'out there' impacts on attempts to engage and be engaged with help. I hope that the story it tells is recognisable to the characters represented in it and to those who have had similar experiences. If it is, the evidence is reliable, it cannot hope to be generalisable: however, the depth presented enables it to be transferable and relatable, so a basis

for future work which contributes to the understanding of power and helping relationships.

This thesis has shown that there is potential to do research differently in a way that engages meaningfully with the participants so that they can have a stronger voice in knowledge production. Furthermore, drawing on the narratives of significant others, including workers, allowed for a view of a relationship or 'encounter' (Bartel, 2013), in the context of help, which has been a 'key issue' in public administration for 80 years but as yet has not been 'captured as a distinct phenomenon'

This thesis has shown the value of such an approach by locating both parties in this relationship as precarious, engaging in tactics rather than strategies to address their powerlessness, in showing how their ability to achieve successful engagement is hampered by historical experiences of engagement with a wide variety of public services yet revealing the potential for trust through attention to enable access to real help. The implications of this approach go way beyond identifying key success factors in those relationships to expose the impacts of system and programme design, including Payment by Results and incentives on individual motivations and behaviour.

Postscript

The last time I speak with Holly she is on shaky ground. The high-rise she lives in is going to be demolished, she is torn about accepting the deal of a new placement in the area and moving altogether to be closer to her family and old mates. Her father is chronically ill, her sister has made a crowd funder to pay for treatment. I have trouble getting in contact with

Max to give him an update on my progress (the three numbers I have for him are disconnected). But Ed responds to a text and is fortuitously with Max, so we get to talk. He sounds bright and says he was talking about me just the other day 'wasn't I Ed, I was wondering how Simone was doing'. He has finally registered with his GP and says he needs to go to the Job Centre soon to go onto the work programme – then says, 'well, not soon'. He has been working and 'volunteering' a bit, sometimes with Ed. I ask about his difficult neighbour relations, and he says it is resolved because after the neighbour threatened Max with a shovel, he 'whacked' the neighbour. He anticipates my concern.

Mark is happily doing well; he has a job in security at a university and has moved in to a flat with his girlfriend. We don't speak but his texts sound upbeat. By the time I work out that Akira is in prison, COVID 19 has hit, and it is difficult to plan a visit – he calls and texts a few times from different numbers. A few months later he appears on Facebook working out and on various beaches with what looks like a mostly white, mostly female crew. He looks happy and posts life affirming memes. I remain ignorant to Braden and Tom's new engagement pathways.

The CEO of Futures reads this thesis in an earlier draft and to begin with is crushed and a bit cross. We manage to work through the issues and agree some changes. Much later I receive an email from them:

> "I wanted to let you know that I have certainly taken account of your findings from young people, particularly their feeling of commoditisation as a result of the Payment by Results elements and have used that information to inform potential

programmes. I wouldn't have been aware of that without your research, so thank you!" (Private Correspondence with CEO of Futures)

I hope the war against increasing marketisation and competition in the homelessness sector has nearly been won without regard to my conclusions here, by the experience and literature before it. A recent report examining commissioning in the homelessness sector in England finds the status quo to be 'traumatising' and concludes:

'Strategic planning requires time and infrastructure; innovation is only possible when people are not constantly re-tendering and firefighting. We increasingly recognise that traumatised individuals need safety and predictability if they are to let go of previously self-protecting but now maladaptive behaviours. Similarly, those commissioning, providing and receiving local homelessness services need sufficient reassurance that there will be continuity of resource if the adaptive behaviours we have identified are to be nurtured and sustained. Our report has demonstrated that – ironically – the fixation on value for money has sometimes led to scenarios in which value for money is ultimately undermined.' (Blood et al., 2020, p.46)

I hope though that this research contributes a little to our understanding of how the complex encounters with help look and feel, some reasons why when we want to do good we end up doing bad, and some advice about how caring and attentiveness can help us to relate differently to the inevitable ambivalence in the work and ourselves, in order to increase the value of the encounters we have. Even if the extremes of market principles that we see in the PbR model are uniformly denounced and put behind us, there will still be this concern to grapple with as the model merely wakes us up to the revanchist and stigmatising times we are living through.

I have been fortunate enough to be staying on a narrow boat on the Oxford canal to complete the corrections to this thesis. A part of the deal is getting to know the mechanics of the boat as running the engine for a couple of hours a day is required to keep the batteries charged (giving me light and power). In order to run the engine, I lift up a couple of planks at the bough and slightly turn a tap on a tall thin brass cannister – this lets a little oil in to keep the engine lubricated. Sometimes I check the levels in the four batteries and add a little more deoxidated water. I turn the key, a light comes on, there is a high-pitched sound and I turn the key a little further until the light goes off and count 20 seconds, turn the key fully on and the engine kicks in – the sound continues until I put the ignition out of gear and rev it a little. Two or three hours a day gives me the power I need. As with any complex machinery, things go wrong, as I am alerted by a strange smell, sound, or power failure I tend to and tinker with the parts of the machine I understand, whether it fails or succeeds I learn a little more about it and myself. It makes me think that attentiveness is best understood and learned 'psycho-somatically' (Winnicott in Phillips, 1988, p.78) it might be an art, but it is not out of reach.

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In order to check my assumptions regarding the relevance and value of the topic and related questions; to obtain feedback and ideas on methods, participant selection, recruitment and engagement, I undertook a Scoping Study with Futures staff and clients. I gathered data over a three-month period, through one-to-one interviews with staff (N3) and young people (N2); participant observation on a three-day residential with a group of young people (N21) and staff (N 12) and a three-day training programme with staff; and a focus group of young people (N7) from Futures' Client Involvement Group.

Inspired by Q Methodology (Watts and Stenner,2012; Simons, 2015) and the way that sorting subjective statements created a kind of aliveness I had not experienced in research before, I wanted to try to develop a derivative activity. I developed a card 'game' (see figure X) that:
- explained who I was, what I wanted to understand through the research and why I

  thought it was important

- possible questions

- possible methods

- possible ways to encourage young people to participate

- possible ways to promote the opportunity

When testing this exercise with fellow students I noted that the neat, newly laminated, brightly coloured cards barely left my own hands; and the lengthy instructions were just a little bamboozling for the participant. I was demonstrating and enjoying laying out and sorting the cards myself while the scoping participant watched on barely daring to pick up the cards themselves. Dissolving this desire to control, and the participants' inclination to not take control for fear of 'getting it wrong' takes more than using the objects themselves. When conducting interviews, the staff persisted and seemed to enjoy the card game in the main; but the young people lost interest quickly (to be fair we were on a three-day excursion in a beautiful location and there was a lot of distraction). One night I put the cards out on a table in the recreation space and young people randomly picked cards up and asked me what it was all about. I let go of ideas I had about how the 'game' should be played, and they led a discussion about the things that sparked their interest and concerned them. Someone would say: 'this is important! trust' and a 'natural' conversation would erupt. This turned out to be one of the most productive scoping sessions I had.

During the interviews I found that:
1. Both young people and staff responded positively to the research objective (see Figure

   below), and were particularly drawn to the Red Cards
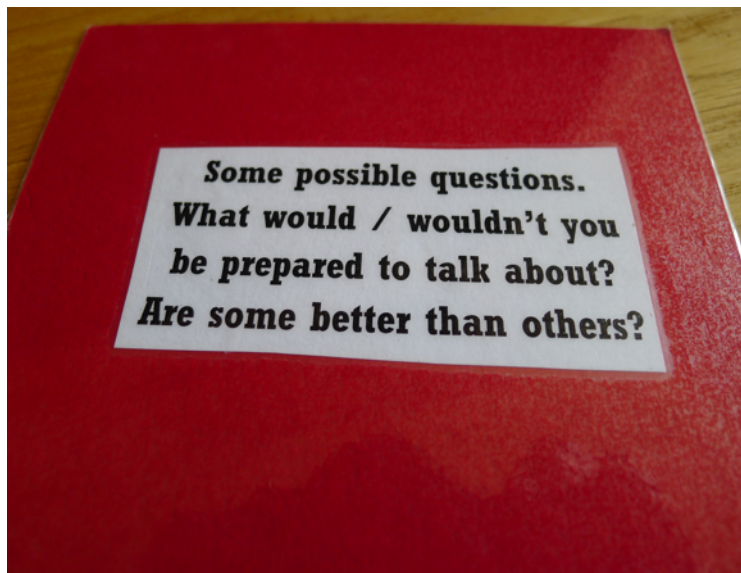
Red cards have been handled more and there was an extra card written by a research participant: 'What is the nature of the relationship between you and your Support Worker?' It did not sit too well with me, but I used it in the main research as a question for all young people, Significant Others and Support Workers.

There was a crucial discussion with the Clinical Supervisor about asking *anyone* about thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. They are difficult to distinguish, they relate in complex ways, it's not always easy to find words for them. She is right of course. But I wanted to try exploring this stuff. I experimented with ways to ask these questions in a careful and useful way. The images below show how I represented the question in the Scoping Study and the final research.
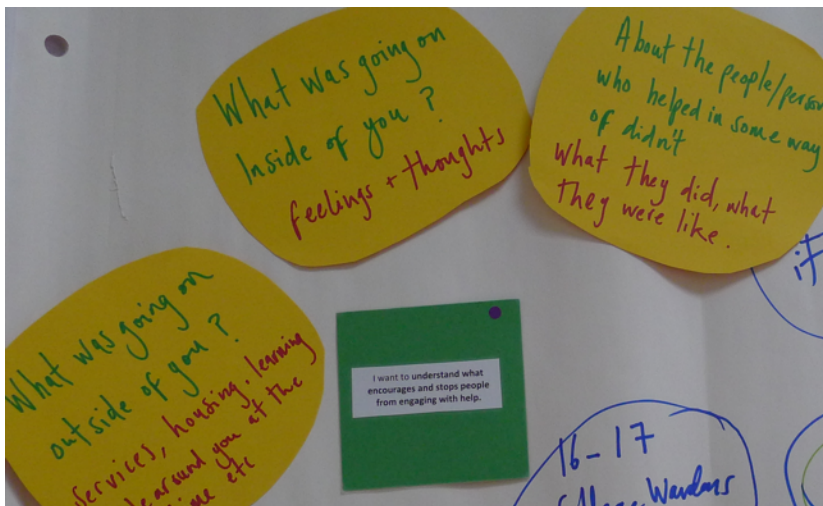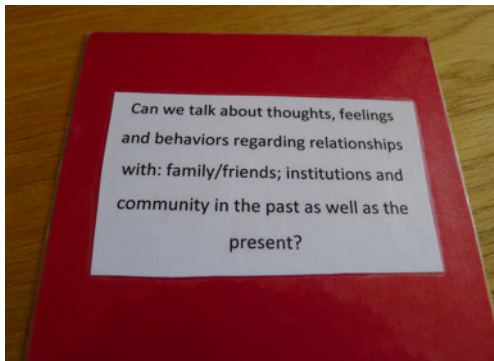
2. The things that would motivate young people to be involved in the first place are 'helping other people', getting a chance to tell their story and that incentives were an essential, but not the most important factor. Valuing and respecting respondents' unique contribution, clearly communicating with staff and young people alike and tailoring timing, environments and refreshments to individuals is key to fostering engagement over time in the research. The word tree below constructed through NVivo indicates the centrality of being valued in the data.
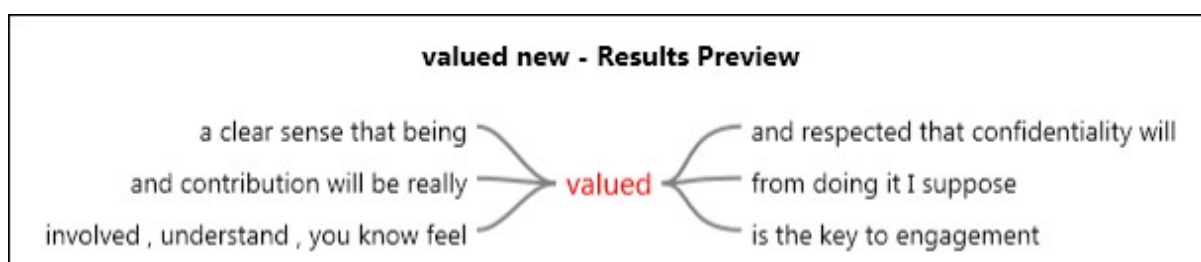
3. Regarding ethical implications I was especially concerned about the possibility of 'retraumatising' young people by asking them to recall times when they needed help. Young people and staff referred to the standard safeguarding procedures, including providing a list of services young people could access for help with feelings and thoughts that might arise from participating. Additionally, the Clinical Supervisor suggested that it was worth asking participants if they wanted any information to be fed back to Support Workers. She considered that while confidentiality would be important, young people might want an opportunity to have an issue that they found difficult to express presented to their Support Worker or another member of staff.

Participant Observation

The opportunity to be a participant/observer during a three-day residential was fortuitous. I had long days and nights as well as the bus journey there to get a sense of the young people, the project and in a particular, very managed space. I also got a chance to observe the relations between Futures Support Workers, MST workers and the outward-bound staff from the residential centre. In addition to conducting a small number of interviews I would take time out to write notes.

The three staff teams interacted very differently with the young people. The outward-bound staff would expertly guide them through activities; inviting interaction and drawing out learning about trusting and being trusted, feeling fearful and taking risks, being uncomfortable and riding through it, and were consistently at the ready to catch them (physically) and provide uplifting analogies. The Organisation staff seemed mostly along for the ride with occasional banter and enforcement of rules, I noticed young people would often draw them close when they were having small issues. One was very motherly, another obviously competent with a long history in youth clubs, another 'one of the lads'. The core MST team seemed to be holding the experience, as the 'orgestrators' they would run a session each day, responding to the events on the previous day, and explaining the point of the day to come. During an activity they were perpetually vigilant – first on the scene when there had been some upset. They were consistently calm.

One evening there was an incident and a young man who was often at the centre of trouble going down had fallen out with people and decided to leave. I record so that I won't forget:

the sound of him wheeling his bag up the gravel road at 1:00 in the morning – then returning and howling "I was waiting up there for 10 minutes and no one came to get me … I know about duty of care"

But I did forget it. A lesson in documentation and the need for scrupulous analysis. We were in the middle of nowhere, he packed and went and waited – the frustration of pushing against something that doesn't push back. The humiliation of escaping and failing. He howled. But in this space, he was safe to do it. The MST team jumped into action, there were long conversations and more yelling and he was disciplined (I don't recall how) but back in activities the following day.

In a note after an evening chatting with a small group of participants I recorded:

> Conversations about the difference between Futures and MST staff with YP say Futures make you feel guilty until you do something you don't necessarily want to do. MST listen, want you to do better.

I noticed:

That despite my own long experience working with people and on just this sort of activity I felt anxious at one point 'in a panic'. It was not really clear why I was there – it had been explained but to everyone, apart from the MST team who invited me, I was an anomaly. This meant I had some awkward conversations with both staff and young people in my attempts to engage them with an interview – or just in conversation – frequently with a large bag of chocolates and sweets I was giving out as an incentive to do an interview. On the way up a mountain I attempted to engage a young man in a conversation about music, hoping to steer it towards questions pertaining to the research. It did not go well, I don't know much about music and he might have suspected a hidden motivation. Later I write:
> 'he literally walked back up the mountain away from me – turned his back and waited for me to carry on and make some distance between us – I really respect his decision not to connect and how he saw it through'

I also anticipated anxiety in our future discussions. But the following day we managed to have a good chat about an NHS training programme he had started. I thought, engagement is not always what it seems.

There was a lot of discussion about relationships, especially the client-worker relationship and I observed a lot of relating. I hadn't realised how difficult it would be to keep notes. I was engaged in all the activities and there was very little time unprogrammed. When it was, I was sharing a room with four others and from the end of day one I was exhausted. So, I gathered a sense of relationship and noted down only a few examples. This increased my enthusiasm about observing SW and YP sessions and also made me recall my own anxiety and how it is easy to talk too much:

> After lunch a young woman was sat with one of the workers. She gave an opening to engage. He was going on and on, I think it was about routine – he was talking about himself, which was quite humble of him – but there was no sense that he was looking for her to interact with the conversation, it felt like nervousness and, in my mind, she was being patient then engaged and said something thoughtful about the topic of

conversation, and I noted that he didn't pick up the opportunity to engage with her, opting instead to continue the monologue.

While away I managed one recorded interview – sweets weren't enough of an incentive to motivate this group to engage with the research. One afternoon I put the laminated cards on the table, there were two young people in the rec room. One picked up a stack of cards and started looking through. He came across the card about the sorts of questions and picked up on the word 'trust' he went into a story about a Support Worker he had who went the extra mile for him, I recorded:

> The Support Worker had really helped because he had taken a picture of him after he had been beaten up and was facing charges for hitting the other bloke – the police had lost the photo and the young man's Support Worker come to court to verify it.

The young man went on to talk about how angry he was that this worker had been taken off him and the new worker was not working out. He read from another red card 'Looking back to when you were younger and mapping out times where you could have used some help and did/didn't get it' then went on to have a discussion with a young woman who said, 'I've been failed all my life', which began a conversation.

It made me think firstly that I was on the right track with the suggested questions – especially those about trust and engagement over time. The two young people continued chatting and others came in and contributed. It also made me realise that the cards worked, but the game did not, they needed to be in control, input needed to be voluntary and feel voluntary.

The Focus Group with Client Involvement Group
This was the final stage of the Scoping Study and, having a very brief time with them, I narrowed down on what would make them honestly contribute over time, or shut down and disengage. I asked them to reflect on past experiences in pairs; together we summarised their ideas and the group voted on the things that made the most difference for them personally, as illustrated in the images below.
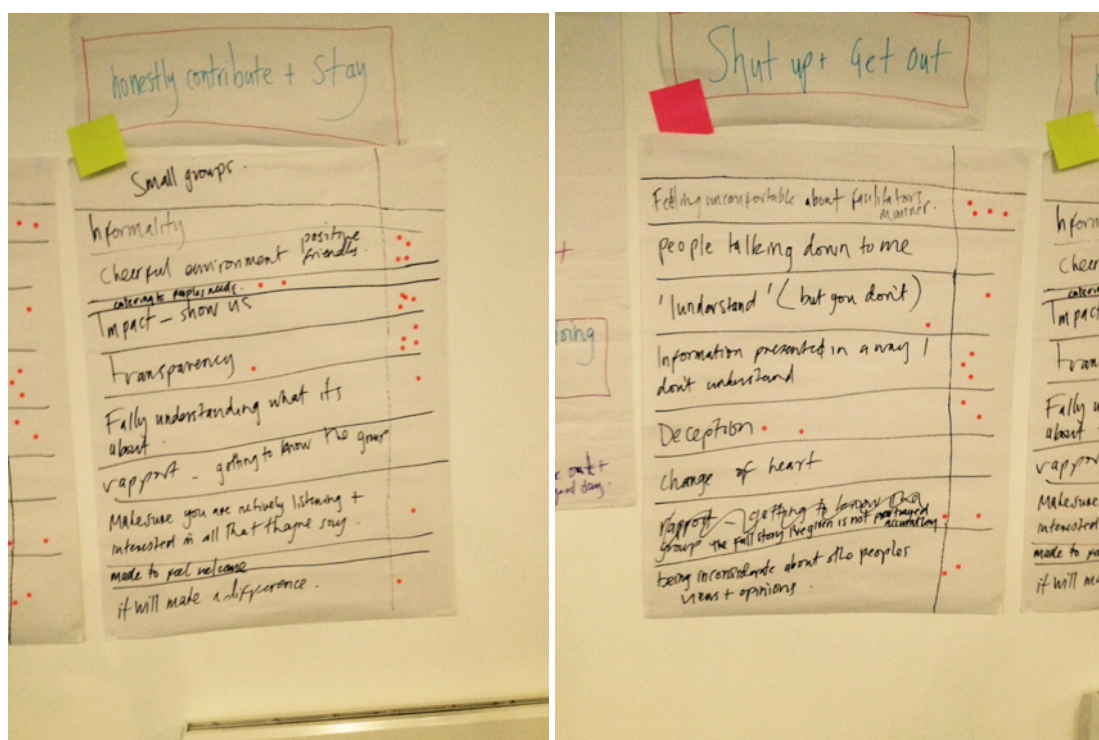
The responses from the NYRG have informed my manner with participants, the way in which I design and present information, and the attention I pay to being transparent regarding the potential impact of the study, my analysis of their data, and safeguarding concerns.

A couple of young people in this group talked about tailoring to individuals' needs, specifically referring to learning disabilities, but in discussion with the group it broadened out to being about being patronised and lied to: 'being talked down to', being told 'I understand' when it's clear you do not, being 'deceived'. This part of the discussion reaffirmed my commitment to co-construction and is reminder of how it needs to be constantly tested and checked.

Conclusions

The findings from the Scoping Study have shaped my research questions, recruitment, and honed my ethics in practice in the additional following ways:

- I conducted a literature review into trust and care.

- I included questions pertaining to the sort of relationship young people had with their

    Support Workers and asked Support Workers what sort of relationship they were trying to

    build with young people.

- I encouraged Young People to allow me to observe their meetings with Support Workers,

    but this never occurred.

- I critically listened back to audio recordings of interviews to develop an awareness of when I took over or missed cues where the young people had tried to take the conversation somewhere and I had not picked up on it. The longitudinal element meant that I often had the opportunity to come back to it. It also gave me an opportunity to say, 'I could tell in the interview you wanted to say something/something different, /talk about something different) and I cut you off or didn't listen'. I hoped that this would flag to the young people that I was trying and aware and listening.

- The problems with the card 'game' were really helpful in designing the interactive tools I used in each of the waves of interviews. I discuss this more in Chapter Four.

APPENDIX II INFORMATION SHEET

Engagement with help. What Counts?
Invitation and Information for young people.

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project exploring what helps and gets in the way when people are in need and try and get help.

Have you used a number of different services in your life that have tried to help?

Have you found that sometimes they do help and other times not so much?

Could you talk about those times and what helps and gets in the way of you getting the help you need?

Taking part in this research will be a chance for you to tell *your* story - it will be used to **improve things for people who might have similar experiences to you.**

What is the purpose of the study?
People need help and there are people and services that are there to give it. But it often doesn't work, and people can miss out on the help they need which may mean that things get worse for them.
I hope that by exploring times when **you** have needed help and have or haven't got it will help us understand what is going on here so that we can learn how to better engage people, so they get the help they need, at the very earliest point in time.

Why have I been invited, and do I have to take part?
I am recruiting eight individuals from **Futures (The Programme). I randomly selected young people, then checked to make sure they were all a bit different in terms of age, where they were from and the sorts of services they have used in the past.** After reading this information sheet, you can ask any questions about the research study. If you agree to take part, I would like you to complete the consent form. **It is not compulsory for you to take part.**

What will I have to do?
You will be asked to participate in four interviews over the next year. The interviews will last approximately 90 minutes and involve you discussing your experiences of engaging with help and the relationships you have had with people who have and haven't helped. During this interview, what you say will be audio recorded. The recordings will only ever be heard by me to help me remember exactly what you say.

You will be offered a **voucher of your choice** for participating in each interview in recognition of your time contributing to this study and any expenses you might incur, for example travel or lost income. Over the course of the research, you may receive up to £100 worth of vouchers for your participation broken down as follows:

Interview 1 in February 2017 = £10.00
Interview 2 in June 2017 = £20.00
Interview 3 in October 2017 = £30.00
Interview 4 in February 2018 = £40.00

After each interview I will want you to have a look at what I have understood from our conversation – this will be a chance for you to say 'No, you've got that wrong' or 'Yes, that's what I meant'. We will work out the easiest way to do this – it could be in writing, on the phone or in person.

Can I withdraw once the research has started?

Yes! You may withdraw at any time, without any explanation or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact Simone Helleren (Researcher, contact details provided below) to inform me of your decision. The deadline for withdrawing from the study is 2 weeks after your interview takes place. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed and not included in the study. You will not be required to return any incentive already received, but you will not receive any further incentive.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

This research study operates under The Organisation's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. This means that anything you tell me will be in confidence and will not be shared with anyone else without your consent. There is an exception to this rule however, if you tell me anything which indicates that someone's health and safety is at risk, including your own, I may have to share this information. If this happens, I will keep you informed of any actions I am taking. Futures' confidentiality policy is available to you on request.

Who do I speak to if I have any concerns?

Sometimes taking part in research can bring back painful memories or feelings. If this happens there will always be someone to talk to and to get support. Your Support Worker and other Futures staff should be your first port of call and if it is felt that additional support is required, they will make the necessary arrangements. Do not hesitate to let your Support Worker know how you are feeling. I will also leave you with a list of local support providers just in case you would prefer to speak with someone not working for Futures.

About the researcher

I'm a PhD Student at University of Birmingham. Before starting this PhD, I worked for 25 years in Australia and

the UK with children, young people, and adults with experience of homelessness, criminal justice and

substance use, mostly within voluntary sector services, and some local authority work. Because of what I'm

trying to understand, the interview might feel like counselling, but it isn't and I'm not a counsellor – so I might

ask you something like 'is this ok to share?' and it's ok to say "actually no".

What will happen to the results of the research study?

By participating in this study, you are also agreeing that your results may be used for scientific purposes, including publication in journals, so long as your anonymity is maintained. There are no known risks associated with participation in this research.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) data from this investigation will be kept for a period of ten years following completion of the study. Data will be kept securely and will only be accessed by the study investigators. After this time period, all the date collected (including audio files) will be destroyed.

My overall findings will be used to improve our understanding of engagement with help. It will be written up in my PhD and findings might be published in academic journals. You will not be individually identified in any publication. A brief summary presenting the results and findings will be available upon request at the end of the study. You will be invited to a presentation of the findings and given access to the full report when it is published.

For further information get in touch!

Simone (Sim) Helleren
(Contact details deleted for publication)

APPENDIX III CONSENT FORM

What Counts? Engagement with help.
Interview Participant Consent Form- Young People

> *****VERY IMPORTANT***** Create your unique participant number below
>
> **Your date of birth:** ☐ ☐   ☐ ☐
>   D   D   M   M
>
> **Your number of siblings brothers and sisters:** ☐ ☐
>   *For example:*   0   2

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions to my satisfaction.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before the deadline described on the information sheet without giving any reason or my rights being affected.	
3. I understand that I can choose not to answer a question if I wish without giving any reason or my rights being affected.	
4. I give consent for the data that I provide to be used for research purposes.	
5. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped, in order to be analysed, and that these recordings will be kept securely.	
6. I give consent to be audio recorded during the interview.	
7. I understand that any data collected about be me will be kept confidential, and that any published research will contain changed names.	
8. I agree to take part in the above study.	
9. I agree that the researcher may obtain access to information recorded about me by Futures.	

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

APPENDIX IV TOPIC GUIDE DATA MANAGER

Filling in the gaps

- Go through what information you have for each of the young people and get copies of missing information (outcome stars, life skills assessments, any documentation – arrears demands, health records, times met with Support Workers etc.

Engagement

- Could you explain the engagement categories for The Programme and why they were developed?

- How were young people placed in the different engagement categories i.e. what information was used, to select the 'engagement' profile for each of the young people? Did this change over time? Who would make the call to shift young people into a different category? And what would that mean?

- How were the young people in my cohort categorised over their time in The Programme?

Data for Fair Chance

- I recall meeting with The Programme Manager early on and them saying that staff were struggling with completing the outcomes monitoring to begin with – can you tell me a bit about this? Adopting a new system and embedding it?

- In your mind, being probably most familiar with this data, what are the big stories in it?

APPENDIX V TOPIC GUIDE WAVE ONE

Introduction

Throughout the interview, we will work with this paper and these Sharpies as we talk, making a sort of map of times when you could have used some help and did or didn't get it.

- You can draw or write yourself (or I can/ we can)
- You can change it
- We'll probably use this again in the other interviews if you're still happy to take part

Before we start on the map, I want to find out a bit about you and your situation now and after we do the map, I have some questions about you and your current Support Worker.

Remember, you don't have answer anything you don't want to, and you don't need to give me a reason.

1. About you

Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your situation at the moment?

Prompt if necessary
   a) Housing
   b) Work/training/education
   c) Who's your Futures Support Worker and how long have you been working with them
   d) Are you receiving any other support?

2. Looking back

Can you think back to when you were younger and think of times when (you could have used some help and did or didn't get it? (Perhaps when things went wrong – or were difficult)

For each memory/ time I'm hoping you can tell me something about these 3 things:

   a) What sorts of things **outside of yourself** (like people, services, hoops you were expected to jump through) made getting the help you needed **easier or** more **difficult**?

   b) About the **people who helped in some way or didn't** – do you recall what they did- or what they were like that made it **easier or more difficult** for you?

   c) About what was going on inside of you at that time; **what you were feeling and thinking** and how those thoughts and feelings made things **easier or more difficult**

at the time?

3. About you and your current Support Worker

Throughout, ask: what is it that happens between you and your Support Worker that makes you say this?

  a) How would you describe the relationship you have with your Futures Support Worker?
  b) What sort of relationship do you think your Support Worker is trying to build with you?
  c) How do you think this relationship affects the things you want to do in your life?
  d) Does this relationship affect the way you think and feel about things?

4. Ending questions

The interviewer provides a brief summary of the aims of the interview and asks: Is there anything we have missed?

- Would you like to raise anything else at this point?

- Arrangements for other interviews, data to be accessed, significant other possibilities and information to assist with contacting them.

- In our following meetings is there anything you'd like to be different to this time around? (i.e. where/ when/ time allocated).

- Do you think meeting together for three more interviews (and the other things that have been agreed in terms of significant others, data, participant observation, verification etc.) is the best approach to getting your whole story around engagement with help?

- How do you feel about receiving a voucher as an incentive for your involvement in this sort of project?

Closing

I would like to again thank you for participating in this interview and remind you that any comments that you made here today will remain confidential and for research purposes only.

APPENDIX VI EXAMPLE OF TOPIC GUIDE WAVE TWO
Wave Two: Introduction and agreement to continue

Go through information sheet

Add: Because of the nature of the interview it could feel like counselling, but it's not. I'm not a counsellor. You don't need to tell me anything you don't want to, please feel free to say, 'I don't want to talk about that'.

Add: Confidentiality Research team Amanda, David, Jenn and Harriet.

Questions

Consent Form

Incentive

Establish that there are no wrong answers.

Something about ANT – young peoples' perspective – the details are important.

Topic Guide Wave 2 - 060703

Go back to the question: considering this is what I'm trying to understand through your experience. BRING OUT MAP 1 (we'll just keep it here and if we get time – think about if there is something/someone/some service missing)

1. Anything you'd like to say about the last interview?

I have some things and thoughts I think it might be interesting to explore - there are lots - it's a chance for you to see how I am interpreting what you have said and for you to say, 'I think you got this (a bit or a lot) wrong'.

2. What's been happening since we met? (Work on new Flip Chart)

Think of times when you could have used some help and did or didn't get it? (Perhaps when things went wrong or were difficult)

For each memory/ time I'm hoping you can tell me something about these 3 things:

    d) What sorts of things **outside of yourself** (like, services, hoops you were expected to jump through, your environment (housing, areas etc.) made getting the help you needed **easier or** more **difficult**.

e) About the **people who helped in some way or didn't** – do you recall what they did- or what they were like that made it **easier or more difficult** for you.

f) About what was going on inside of you at that time; **what you were feeling and thinking** and how those thoughts and feelings made things **easier or more difficult** at the time.

3.Some Stuff that might be happening/ Some things to return to about engagement/ Some cross-cutting themes

I want you to choose the ones you'd like to talk about in service to the question **and** in terms of what you are interested in exploring and not.

3.1. Some Stuff that might be happening:
3.1.1 How's the recovery from attack?
3.1.2 How's the job hunt going – still getting turned down because of criminal record?

3.2. Some things to return to about engagement:
3.2.1 00:20:31 – you said, 'if you're smart and can take advantage of the help'. **Can you tell me a bit more about this?**

3.2.2 [00:34:03] after saying he needed to **have someone telling him what he should be doing** – i.e. like going to school – he talks about how he actually loved his life as a 14 year old because he was free of his mum telling him what to do… you also said that the help you needed when you were 14 was someone to tell you to go back to school and keep you on the right track – from what you've said this is what your parents were telling you – **what's that about? Who did the message need to come from? How did it need to be delivered? What stopped it from working when your mum and stepdad I think…** (you say later – learning in a sharper way)

3.2.3. You mention that **some people feel ashamed of being homeless** – what's that about? How do you think that gets in the way of engaging with help? How does not being ashamed effect you and how you engage?

3.2.4. Vol Org. 1 and Probation Officers, Vol Org. 2 fulfilling a particular role (help with getting a council flat and stop you doing things you're not supposed to), fracturing trust?

3.2.5 [00:40:30] he is talking about cycles or phases – like this is something he goes into and out of – different to some of the others where it seems to be a perennial 'stuckness'.

3.2.6 **Friendly not-so-professional help works** – you linked professional with judgement: "we're both people – can feel like people are looking down on you and people start feeling rejected and don't want to take the help" "like I expect her to not judge me for it but understand it, kind of like try and help me through it". **Is there anything else you'd like to add about professional/friendly services that are there to help?**

3.2.7 Sister 'like and it's, it's kind of good cause we kinda like bounce off each other if you know what I mean [01:03:48] also says this about Steph … **I'm not sure I know what you mean by bouncing off – can you tell me a bit more?**

3.2.8 Being Hypnotised – string puppet, don't have to think about it- struck me because you were also pretty certain that mostly you made your own mind up about things. **How and why would this help you?**

3.2.8 The voucher thing – yp saying if it's cash it will go on weed and they would actually rather buy food – **do you think there is a link between young people using weed and how they engage with help?**

3.3. Some cross-cutting themes. These are things that I understood from your experience of engaging with help that other young people interviewed also mentioned. Can you tell me a bit more about how they impact on your engagement with help in the past and currently?

- **Not wanting to need someone/ ask for help** – not really "dependent".

- **Efficacy of Incentives on Fair Chance-** you talked about it like an exchange of information – she does things for you; you give her what she needs.

- **Being listened to – understood (by people who helped)** / from his perspective: Sister…"she knows me more than the rest of my family and she can talk to me, she can get me up and running and stuff and only a certain amount of people can do that to me like 'cos I'm really stubborn person and I shut in sometimes and I'm like don't listen - everything just bounces off me" "Like Steph, she knows everything" – "but she knows me different from other people" – "mirroring people" " I have that kind of personality I only come across the way you come across to me".

- **Things that harm as well as help**: Ex GF "she's kinda like a bit on both sides, she's wrecked my life, I I've got a criminal record because of my ex and um, she's kind of made me in a sense as well. Like when I was with her, we had a really good relationship and we pushed each other to accomplish our own goals and stuff like that and it was quite nice".

- **Wanting to get out/moving around/ somewhere different /fresh start:** thought you might be in Camden.

- **Hiding away:** hoody and going into yourself "bubble up in my own world".

- **Most people begin as you did at age 14-16.**

4. Is there something missing from the map?

5. Significant other you said: she'd be a fun one – she'd enjoy it. Who what – how can we arrange? Emphasis concern about anonymity.

6. **Consent – revisit.**

7. Contact details check – if I lose him ok to try these contacts to track him down?

Appendix VII EXAMPLE OF TOPIC GUIDE WAVE THREE

- Information and consent.

- Go back to the question: considering this is what I'm trying to understand through your experience.

- Check in about the central research question – what do they think I mean by it?

- BRING OUT MAP 2 (we'll just keep it here and if we get time – think about if there is something/someone/some service missing).

1. Anything you'd like to say about the last interview?

I have some things and thoughts I think it might be interesting to explore - there are lots - it's a chance for you to see how I am interpreting what you have said and for you to say – 'I think you got this (a bit or a lot) wrong' or 'You're on the right track – this is getting close to how I feel/think about it'. (I reckon we should take a break between these parts).

There are three parts: what's been happening generally and about times when you could have used some help; a couple of things you said last time about engagement with help; and some thinking about themes that have come out so far from your interview and others.

2. What's been happening since we met? (Work on new Flip Chart?)
- Allow time for a general update

Prompts
- Client Involvement Group
- Driving test
- Work
- Secret Garden Party
- Dad and the cats
- Cov Cyrenians – they originally made an offer of one-to-one support, counselling and group work – what happened here – was it badly promoted? Did she hear of anyone else getting it? Was there a little box at the end of a form or something??
- How is her relationship with Tracey?

Think of times since we last met when you could have used some help and did or didn't get it? (Perhaps when things went wrong – or were difficult)

For each memory/time I'm hoping you can tell me something about these 3 things:

g) What sorts of things **outside of yourself** (like services, hoops you were expected to jump through, your environment housing, areas etc.) made getting the help you needed **easier/**more **difficult**?

h) About the **people who helped in some way or didn't** – do you recall what they did or what they were like that made it **easier or more difficult** for you?

i) About what was going on inside of you at that time; **what you were feeling and thinking** and how those thoughts and feelings made things **easier or more difficult** at the time?

3. Some things to return to about engagement/ Some cross-cutting themes/ some new cross-cutting themes
I want you to choose the ones you'd like to – in service to the question **and** in terms of what you are interested in exploring and not.

3.1 Some things to return to about engagement:

- I want to return to the things you have said about **feeling anxious.** This seems to be in the background to the more practical help that you are trying to get. For example you were talking about needing incentives that were owed to you to buy some new clothes and treat yourself a little with getting coffee out – and in the background was this very scary thought that the weight loss might be connected to something more serious.
- **Root cause help and symptomatic help:** check this new distinction out with her

3.2 Some cross-cutting themes: these are things that you mentioned that help or get in the way with you engaging with help (and support) or make it easier and other young people mentioned. I would like you to do some choosing and ranking (ordering) with them and I'd like you to talk me through why you are choosing them and ordering them the way that you do – then I'd like to take a picture of them (if that's ok).

A) Which ones apply to you? (Take picture)

B)   Can you put them in order from 'big deal' (top) to 'not much of a deal' (bottom) when it comes to you trying to engage with help and support now? (Take picture)

C)   Which ones do you think your Support Worker thinks apply to you/how do you think they see you? (Take picture)

Things that affect engagement with help Inside yourself	Things that affect engagement with help in people helping	Things that affect engagement with help in services, structures, the environment,
Fear of prison	Rule-breaking and flexibility – Support Workers/staff who go above and beyond	Incentives (when they are actually delivered)
Helping other people	Giving a little push	Getting along with people around you
Sport, fitness, arts activities	Having things in common	Drawing/fidgeting – makes being in a difficult situation bearable
Mental Health	Being persistent	Accessibility - easy to contact and access
Quick to anger	Having a laugh/chatting	Having a secure place of your own
Waiting until things get really bad/ rock bottom	Being seen and understood	Having a routine
Not wanting to need someone/rely on someone/ask for help	Feeling able to be honest about what's going on	A service with resources
Hiding away-going inside	Knowledge and expertise	Experience of bullying in the past
Putting off engaging with help and support until you really need it (rock bottom, desperation, having no choice)	Feeling like you can trust	Something or things that happened when you were much younger that are too, hard, painful – to recall
Finding it hard to communicate your needs and or issues/shutting down	People that care	Things that harm as well as help
Feeling different/standing out	Being forced	Violence: around you, in your environment
Finding reading and or writing troublesome	Being looked down on/patronised/treated like a child	Paperwork: forms
Lack of sleep	Not authentic/Hairdresser relations	Hostel culture
		Weed other drugs
		Chaos around you
		No family around

Things that harm as well as help: someone said "So I'm stuck in-between having someone that can't help me and someone that can help me but in the wrong way…"

Violence: feeling in fear of it, always knowing it and seeing it as a solution, being surrounded by it (the place you are living, relationships). Someone said: "And it was sound after that, it was all right, it was, no one said anything, no one did anything. (pause) It's mad init, it's mad what a bit of violence can do."

Not wanting to rely on other people: you said hating that you have to, knowing you need to, feeling you shouldn't have to now that you are older.

Trusting people is hard: you said **'**you know it's I can sit there with people and just because people have shat on me that much I look at a person and I think 'what the fuck can you do to me?' Also being cautious about who knows what information about you, who will they tell, what will they do with that information.

Standing out: someone said: 'like a fish out of water'

4. How I can understand more about you and how you engage with help e.g.

- Interviewing someone else who you think knows a lot about you and how you engage with help now or in the past.

- Understand how where you live and hang out affects how you are able to engage by doing a walking interview with you.

- Show me something you do that helps e.g. gaming, sports.

- Invite me to see you engaging e.g. The Programme support work session, ESA interview, training, trying to find support (with a service, the council, online).

- Talk me through some photos, certificates – things you have that might help to tell the story of your engagement over time.

5. Life skills training
- Did you do it?
- Why?
- Was it useful? In what way? What did you get out of it?

APPENDIX VIII EXAMPLE OF TOPIC GUIDE WAVE FOUR

- Information and consent and incentive (with card with my contact details in it, explain why - last interview etc).
- Go back to the question: considering this is what I'm trying to understand through your experience.
- Check in about the central research question – what do they think I mean by it?
- BRING OUT MAPs 1, 2 and 3. Explain that we're going to look across all three maps in addition to completing the 4th.

Anything you'd like to say about the last interview?

There are five parts to this interview:

- Clarification of some things from the last interview: I have some things and thoughts I would like to explore/clarify from your last interview, it's also a chance for you to see how I am interpreting what you have said and for you to say, 'I think you got this (a bit or a lot) wrong' or 'You're on the right track – this is getting close to how I feel/think about it'.
- What's been happening generally since, and about times when you could have used some help.
- Taking a long view and looking across your maps from all four interviews and thinking about what great and poor engagement looks like and feels like – I'm calling the extremes 'Full on' and 'Fuck all'.
- Some ideas for discussion and a few final questions– they are based on all the previous interviews and some things I have read.
- What happens next, the report etc.

(I reckon we should take a break somewhere!).

Part 1. What's been happening since we met? (Work on new Flip Chart?)

- Allow time for a general update

Think of times since we last met when you could have used some help and did or didn't get it?

(Perhaps when things went wrong – or were difficult)

For each memory/ time I'm hoping you can tell me something about these 3 things:

j) What sorts of things **outside of yourself** (like, services, hoops you were expected to jump through, your environment (housing, areas etc.) made getting the help you needed **easier or more difficult**?

k) About the **people who helped in some way or didn't** – do you recall what they did, or what they were like that made it **easier or more difficult** for you?

l) About what was going on inside of you at that time; **what you were feeling and thinking** and how those thoughts and feelings made things **easier or more difficult** at the time?

Part 2. Some things to clarify from the last interview

- Your knee! Talked about it from the first interview – obviously a problem from before – can you tell me about how you came to get it sorted?
- Security training/ volunteering and work, how's this all coming along? Who and what's helping and getting in the way? Mentioned that some mates were encouraging him not to work – can he tell me a bit more about this?
- Couldn't go to training because "I weren't able to breathe, I had chest pains, my stomach was going all weird, my limbs were heavy…" did you get to the bottom of this one?
- His accommodation- getting things fixed, the youth committee and problematic staff member, withholding services charge.
- How's it going with the gf?
- Mental Health – gf suggested MIND, he's got numbers and brochures and thinks he might give it a try – did he?
- Did you get your vouchers for life skills in the end?

Part 3. Engagement – how much? How can we tell?

Let's look across the past 18 months mapped out and think about if there are times when you could say you were experiencing these extremes?

- Starting with 'full on', is there a time/incident/experience where you were totally engaged with something that was to help/further you in some way: what are the **feelings** and what is the **'behaviour'** (so if someone was to see you at this time what would they see?

- And what about 'fuck-all' engagement is there a time/incident/experience where you were not engaged with something that was to help/further you in some way: what are the **feelings** and what is the **'behaviour'** (so if someone was to see you at this time what would they see)?

- Here's some cards with words for feelings, do you want to have a look through and add something to what you already have here?

- Can we think about the *degrees* between full on and fuck-all engagement are there incidences that you would say you were 'not quite 'full-on' engaged and not quite 'fuck-all' engaged? Once located ask: what are the **feelings** and what is the **'behaviour'** (so if someone were to see you at this time what would they see)? Finally, is there something in the middle of these two?

Part 4. Some ideas for discussion and final questions

4.1 Being persistent, giving a little push, forced
Everyone put 'being persistent' and 'giving a little push' as things that a person could do to help them engage. Two people included 'being forced' but there was a lot of discussion about when, how and who could do this in a useful way. There's an ongoing debate about the 'morality'/ 'ethics' / and I guess value of **making** people do things that the state and services think would be best for them.

4.2 'Being seen and understood'
This card was near the top for everyone and yet most of you also chose 'find it hard to communicate needs and issues/shutting down' and 'hiding away mentally and or physically'. What can services or people trying to help do about this? I wonder what might make it difficult to be totally honest about your experiences, describing where you are at and what you need/want?

4.4 'Not wanting to need or rely on someone/ not wanting to ask for help'
This card was also at the top (or nearly) for all of you. The most significant thing in yourself that makes engaging with help difficult – what's the problem here? If you were to imagine someone who relies on people and frequently asks for help, who are you thinking of?

4.3 How young people's interaction with services 'makes' them?
"… how states – *states of being* (human life) and *states of belonging* (political life) are made and unmade and how we might critically engage in this process of making and unmaking (Butler and Spivak 2007).
I am interested in how engagement with services makes people into users/service users. I'm thinking especially about times when people involved in this research have disengaged – kind of gone 'fuck it I'll work this shit out myself' and part of it seems to be that the help isn't working for them but is there something else about how they are *supposed to be* to get the help they need? Do you have any thoughts about that? Do you think that needing and using a service like Futures changes you in some way?

- Coming back to the central question for the last time, looking back over our work over the last 18 months do you have some last thoughts?
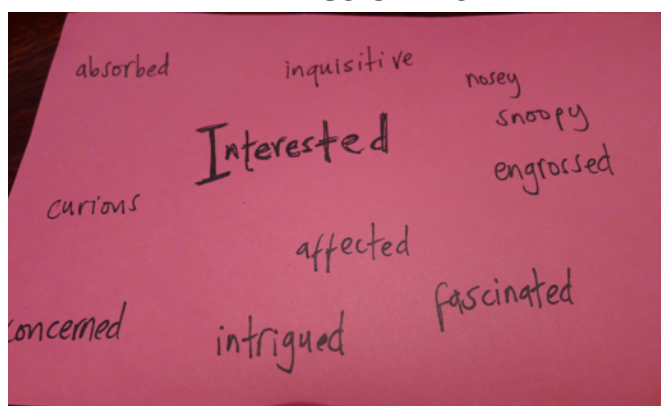
- You had three years with Futures, can you recall what you hoped to get out of the help they were offering? To what degree would you say that you got it?

- Looking back at our 'full on/fuck-all' engagement scale – where do you think you were on it over the three years of the Futures programme?

- What's next for you? In the next few years where do you want to be? What sort of life do you want? What would you like to 'become'?

- What help do you need to get there?

- So, the thing is I've been trying to keep you 'engaged' with this research – anything you want to say about how that's worked for you?

What happens next?

- I hope to **finish** the book by December next year…
- It would be great if you could select a **pseudonym** for me to use instead of your name when I write about what you've told me –
- **Personal acknowledgement**. I've spoken a lot about how I will do my best to anonymise your contribution but maybe you want to be in the report somehow – I can thank you in the Acknowledgements without saying why for example.
- Is there **anything you've told me over time that you are at all nervous** about?
- **How do you want to find out** about the final report: I could do a presentation for you and the other young people, I could email it to you, we could meet, and I could show you it one-to-one?
- **Keeping in contact** – I'd like to let you know if something for the research gets published – I might want to write a book from it – it would be good if I could have a contact for you that will still work in a year or 3 years' time.
- **Who should know about what we have discovered together**? Considering what we've discussed over the four interviews – when I finally pull it all together, who should I be trying to get to take notice of it?
- **Samaritans number.** 116 123.

APPENDIX IX FEELINGS CARDS

OPEN	HAPPY	ALIVE	GOOD
understanding	great	playful	calm
confident	cheerful	courageous	peaceful
reliable	sunny	energetic	at ease
easy	lucky	liberated	comfortable
amazed	fortunate	optimistic	pleased
free	delighted	provocative	encouraged
sympathetic	overjoyed	impulsive	clever
interested	gleeful	free	surprised
satisfied	thankful	frisky	content
receptive	important	animated	quiet
accepting	festive	spirited	certain
kind	ecstatic	thrilled	relaxed
	satisfied	wonderful	serene
	glad		free and easy

		merry	bright
		elated	blessed
		jubilant	reassured

LOVE	INTERESTED	POSITIVE	STRONG
loving	concerned	eager	
considerate	affected	keen	free
affectionate	fascinated	earnest	sure
sensitive	intrigued	intent	certain
tender	absorbed	anxious	rebellious
devoted	inquisitive	inspired	unique
attracted	nosy	determined	dynamic
passionate	snoopy	excited	
admiration	engrossed	enthusiastic	hardy
warm	curious	bold	secure
touched		brave	
sympathy		daring	
close		challenged	
loved		optimistic	
comforted		re-enforced	
drawn toward		confident	
		hopeful	

ANGRY	DEPRESSED	CONFUSED	HELPLESS
irritated	lousy	upset	incapable
enraged	disappointed	doubtful	alone
hostile	discouraged	uncertain	paralysed
	ashamed	indecisive	
sore	powerless	perplexed	useless
annoyed	diminished	embarrassed	inferior
upset	guilty	hesitant	vulnerable
hateful	dissatisfied	shy	empty
unpleasant	miserable	stupefied	forced
offensive	detestable	disillusioned	hesitant
bitter		unbelieving	despair
aggressive	despicable	sceptical	frustrated
resentful	disgusting	distrustful	distressed
inflamed	abominable	misgiving	woeful
provoked	terrible	lost	
fuming	in despair	unsure	tragic
indignant		uneasy	in a mess
cross	bad	pessimistic	dominated
worked up	a sense of loss	tense	

INDIFFERENT	AFRAID	HURT	SAD
insensitive	fearful	crushed	tearful
dull	terrified	tormented	sorrowful
nonchalant	suspicious	deprived	pained
neutral	anxious	pained	grief
reserved	alarmed	tortured	anguish
weary	panic	dejected	desolate
bored	nervous	rejected	desperate
preoccupied	scared	injured	pessimistic
cold	worried	offended	unhappy
disinterested	frightened	afflicted	lonely
lifeless	timid	aching	grieved
	shaky	victimized	mournful
	restless	heartbroken	dismayed
	doubtful	agonized	
	threatened	appalled	
	cowardly	humiliated	
	wary	wronged	

APPENDIX X INFORMATION SHEET SUPPORT WORKERS

What Counts? Engagement with help.

Participant Information Sheet *Support Workers*

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study exploring what enables and constrains people from engaging with help.

What is the purpose of the study?

People need help and there are people and services that are there to give it. But it often doesn't work, and people can miss out on the help they need which may mean that things get worse for them.

I hope that through exploring with young people when they have needed help and have or haven't got it will enhance our understanding so that we can learn how to better engage people, more systematically, at the very earliest point in time. In order to understand young peoples' engagement with help more fully I am asking them to think about people they know who they think might have 'insight into their engagement with help', or 'significant others'.

Why have I been invited, and do I have to take part?

You are the Support Worker for (Name) who is participating in this study; I hope that you will be able to give a perspective on their engagement with help. I also hope you can reflect on your experience as a Support Worker with Futures and The Programme to help the young people you are working with and what makes this more and less difficult. After reading this information sheet, you can ask any questions about the study. If you agree to take part, I would like you to complete the consent form. There is no compulsion to take part.

What will I have to do?

You will be asked to participate in an interview. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and involve you discussing your experiences of working within Futures.

During this interview, your conversation will be audio recorded. The purpose of these recordings is to help me to later analyse what is said during the interviews and will only ever be heard by me.

Can I withdraw once the research has started?

You may withdraw at any time, without any explanation or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact Simone Helleren (Researcher, contact details provided below) to inform me of your decision. The deadline for withdrawing from the study is 2 weeks after your interview takes place. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed and not included in the study. You will not be required to return any incentive already received.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

This research study operates under The Organisation's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. This means that anything you tell me will be in confidence and will not be shared with anyone else without your consent. There is an exception to this rule however, if you tell me anything which indicates that someone's health and safety is at risk, including your own, I may have to share this

information. If this happens, I will keep you informed of any actions I am taking. The Organisation's confidentiality policy is available to you on request.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

By participating in this study, you are also agreeing that your results may be used for scientific purposes, including publication in scientific journals, so long as your anonymity is maintained. There are no known risks associated with participation in this research.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) data from this investigation will be kept for a period of ten years following completion of the study. Data will be kept securely and will only be accessed by the study investigators. After this time period, all the data collected (including audio files) will be destroyed.

Our overall findings will be used to improve our understanding of engagement with help. It will be written up in my PhD and findings might be published in academic journals. You will not be individually identified in any publication. A brief summary presenting the results and findings will be available upon request at the end of the study. You will be invited to a presentation of the findings and given access to the full report when it is published.

Further information and contact details
Simone Helleren
(Contact details deleted for publication)

What counts? Engagement with help.
Interview Schedule Support Worker

1. About you
Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your work with Futures?
   a) Probe: What led you to taking on this Support Worker role with Futures?
   b) Probe: How long have you been working with this organisation?
   c) Probe: How long have you been working on The Programme?
   d) Probe: How many young people are you working with?

2. About your work with (name of young person)
Where appropriate, sub-questions are followed by the follow up question: what is it that happens to make you say this?
   a) How long have you been working with (name)?
   b) Over the time you have been working with (name) how would you describe their engagement?
   c) What sorts of things (like people, services, systems) affect (name's) engagement?
   d) Do you have a sense of the thoughts and feelings (name) might experience that affects the quality of their engagement?
   e) What is the nature of the relationship you are trying to build with (name)?
   f) How would you describe the relationship you have with (name)?
   g) How does the relationship between you and (name) affect the things that you want and need to achieve?
   h) How does the culture of Futures affect the relationship between you and (name)?
   i) How does the nature of the Fair Chance programme affect the relationship between you and (name)?

3. Ending questions

The interviewer provides a brief summary of the aims of the interview and asks: Is there anything we have missed?
   a. Probe: Would you like to raise anything else at this point?

Closing
I would like to again thank you for participating in this interview and remind you that any comments that you made here today will remain confidential and for research purposes only. But if you have got any worries about something you have told me, please get in touch.

APPENDIX XII INFORMATION SHEET SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

What Counts? Engagement with help.
Participant Information Sheet (Significant Others)

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study exploring what enables and constrains people from engaging with help.

What is the purpose of the study?
People need help and there are people and services that are there to give it. But it often doesn't work, and people can miss out on the help they need which may mean that things get worse for them.

I hope that through exploring with young people when they have needed help and have or haven't got it will enhance our understanding so that we can learn how to better engage people, more systematically, at the very earliest point in time. In order to understand young peoples' engagement with help more fully I am asking them to think about people they know who they think might have 'insight into their engagement with help', or 'significant others'.

Why have I been invited, and do I have to take part?
(NAME) who is participating in this study has nominated you as a 'Significant other'; they think that you might be able to give me a different, insightful perspective on their engagement with help**.** After reading this information sheet, you can ask any questions about the study. If you agree to take part, I would like you to complete a consent form. It is not compulsory to take part.

What will I have to do?
You will be asked to participate in an interview. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and involve you discussing your experiences of (NAME'S) engagement with help and a bit about how you have come to know them. During this interview, your conversation will be audio recorded. The purpose of these recordings is to help me to later analyse what is said during the interviews and will only ever be heard by me.

You will be offered a £10.00 cash incentive for participating in the interview in recognition of your time contributing to this study and any expenses you might incur, for example travel or lost income.

Can I withdraw once the research has started?
You may withdraw at any time, without any explanation or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact Simone Helleren (Researcher, contact details provided below) to inform me of your decision. The deadline for withdrawing from the study is 2 weeks after your interview takes place. If you choose to withdraw, your data

will be destroyed and not included in the study. You will not be required to return any incentive already received.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

This research study operates under The Organisation's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. This means that anything you tell us will be in confidence and will not be shared with anyone else without your consent. There is an exception to this rule, however, if you tell me anything which indicates that someone's health and safety is at risk, including your own, I may have to share this information. If this happens, I will keep you informed of any actions I am taking. The Organisation's confidentiality policy is available to you on request.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

By participating in this study, you are also agreeing that your results may be used for scientific purposes, including publication in scientific journals, so long as your anonymity is maintained. There are no known risks associated with participation in this research.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) data from this investigation will be kept for a period of ten years following completion of the study. Data will be kept securely and will only be accessed by the study investigators. After this time period, all the data collected (including audio files) will be destroyed.

Our overall findings will be used to improve our understanding of engagement with help. It will be written up in my PhD and findings might be published in academic journals. You will not be individually identified in any publication. A brief summary presenting the results and findings will be available upon request at the end of the study. You will be invited to a presentation of the findings and given access to the full report when it is published.

Further information and contact details

Simone Helleren
(Contact details deleted for publication)

APPENDIX XIII EXAMPLE OF SIGNIFICANT OTHER'S TOPIC GUIDE

What counts? Engagement with help.

Topic Guide **Significant other Max Wave 2**

1. About you

a) Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

2. About your relationship with (name)

a) How long have you known (name)?

b) How did you come to know (name)?

c) How would you describe your relationship?

3. Your thoughts about (name) and her/his engagement with help.

Where appropriate sub-questions are followed by the follow up question: what is it that happens to make you say this?

Notes for Max		
Primary School (teachers)	The Blue Room (Woodway)	BEST Team Secondary S
Academy	PRU	Boxing (training)
Foyer	apprenticeship	Housing Association 2
Housing Association 3	Housing Association 1	The Organisation
GP	Courses w The Org	Mates (lost Accom)

j) Over the time you have known (name) how would you describe their engagement with help generally?

k) (Name) talked about his/her engagement with help and over the time they have known you mentioned these services/people specifically **(RE: List above**). I wonder if you can recall what was going on at those times (might not recall or even have been mates with him at the time) and how the following things (or other things) might have made getting the help he needed easier or more difficult:

- What sorts of things **outside of (name)** (like people, services, hoops he/she was expected to

jump through, his/her housing, environment) made getting the help he/she needed **easier** more **difficult**?

- About the **people who helped in some way or didn't** (i.e. GP, counsellor) do you recall what they did or what they were like that made it **easier or more difficult** for her/him?

- About what was going on inside of her/him at that time; **what she/he was feeling and thinking** and how those thoughts and feelings made things **easier or more difficult** for her/him at the time?

3. Ending questions

The interviewer provides a brief summary of the aims of the interview and asks:

a) Is there anything we have missed?

b) Would you like to raise anything else at this point?

Closing

I would like to again thank you for participating in this interview and remind you that any comments that you made here today will remain confidential and for research purposes only. You will be anonymised, but Max will know when he reads the report that it is you. Considering this is there anything you have said that might be sensitive, that you might not want Max to know?