



University College London, Institute of Education

**Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and
Adolescent Psychology**

Programme Director: Vivian Hill

**How can practitioners support the special educational needs
and disabilities of young people and young adults on
community-based sentences?**

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Jason Collins

Declaration

'I, Jason Collins confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'

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Abstract

Research exploring the association between youth offending and education has largely focused on youth under the age of 18. Little previous research has examined the experiences of frontline staff working with children and young people (CYP) in the broad age range of 10 – 25 years old, that offend. What research there has been has tended to focus on the effects of imprisonment on CYP's education with limited research on the educational needs of those subject to community-based sentences.

This study aimed to elicit the views of the Youth Offending Service (YOS), National Probation Service (NPS) and Further Education (FE) college practitioners on appropriate interventions to support the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of young people and young adults (YPA) subject to community-based sentences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine participants from a single YOS; six participants from the NPS and three participants from FE college. Participants were recruited based on criteria primarily relating to the level of experience within role.

Thematic Analysis was used to examine the data. The findings identified differences in support needs across the three services. YOS participants identified a need for specific and consistent interventions for the SEND of the CYP they supervised. NPS participants commented on the need for improved access to specialist support despite a work environment they perceived as not conducive to supporting SEND. FE college participants were content with their current SEND support arrangements but there was mention of the difficulties with parental input. Participants across the services highlighted the importance of relationships in supporting the SEND of YPAs.

Educational Psychologists are well positioned to assist other practitioners in supporting the SEND of YPAs who offend (Ryrie, 2006). This would include involvement at the individual level with the YPA, at an organisational level through consultation with practitioners and contributions through research.

Impact Statement

Earlier research has found value in the contribution of EPs when working with the Youth Offending Service (YOS). This study has also highlighted aspects of Educational Psychologists' (EP) expertise that could benefit other agencies such as the National Probation Service (NPS), which suggests that EPs are well suited to make professional contributions to a range of community services.

In relation to young people and young adults (YPAs) who offend, the practitioners in this study have highlighted the importance of relationships, not only with YPAs but between other professionals. It may then be important for EPs to build relationships with agencies such as NPS as it is possible that these services could benefit from EPs expertise in SEND support and training. The findings identified differences in support needs across the three services. YOS participants identified a need for specific and consistent interventions for the SEND of the CYP they supervised. NPS participants commented on the need for improved access to specialist support despite a work environment they perceived as not conducive to supporting SEND. FE college participants were content with their current SEND support arrangements but there was mention of the difficulties with parental input. Participants across the services highlighted the importance of relationships in supporting the SEND of YPAs. Indeed, the findings of this study would suggest that there is an extensive need for specialist involvement, when working with YPAs who offend.

One of the prominent issues raised by YOS and NPS participants was the lack of understanding by educators of their role. This was identified as an attributing aspect to minimal communication and joint working. As such, EPs motivated to work with such a complex group of YPAs should improve their knowledge about the experiences of this group and the role of the responsible services. This may include EPs attending the relevant Criminal Justice System (CJS) related training courses as part of their Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Also, an increase in the teaching about YPAs who offend and the relevant services within the current Doctoral Programmes for Trainee Educational Psychologists (TEP). Such changes would be a good start in not only increasing the knowledge base of the profession but also demonstrating a motivation to understand the experiences of YPAs who offend.

However, an important consideration for EPs must be the adverse educational experiences perceived by participants as factors that may prevent YPAs receiving support for their SEND. These negative experiences may contribute to YPA's non-attendance at schools and FE colleges. They appear intertwined with exclusions and their implications. Consequently, in order for EPs to access these YPAs they may have to arrange meetings through YOS or NPS; services that remain involved. EPs will need to be willing to attend custodial establishments in order to conduct assessments. Not only to comply with the guidance within the SEND CoP (2015) but to legitimise a genuine interest and motivation to work with this complex and vulnerable group of YPAs.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother who passed away a few months prior to the start of the DEdPsy. Words cannot explain the significance of your loss, but I am grateful for everything, and “you know, how I feel about you”.

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Glossary of terms

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - These services assess and treat children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

Community-based sentence - A term used to refer to penalties imposed by a criminal court which involve some form of supervision by the probation service or Youth Offending Service. This also includes periods of supervision in the community that directly follows a period of imprisonment (licence).

Community Rehabilitation Company – A private sector provider of probation services that typically work with lower risk offenders.

Criminal Justice - A system of practices and institutions of governments directed at upholding social control, deterring and mitigating crime, or sanctioning those who violate laws with criminal penalties and rehabilitative interventions.

Custody - A term referring to the statutory detainment of a child or young person in a Secure Children's Home, Secure Training Centre, Youth Offending Institution or Adult Prison.

Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) - An EHC plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.

Education, Training and Employment (ETE) - A person is in education or training if they are enrolled in an educational programme; on an apprenticeship; they are studying towards a qualification or they have had job-related training or education in the last 4 weeks. Employment includes all people in some form of paid work.

National Probation Service (NPS) - A statutory criminal justice service that supervises high-risk offenders, 18 years or older, based in the community. They also work with prisons to prepare for the release of offenders from custody.

Not in education employment or training (NEET) - This term refers to young people aged between 16 and 24 who are not in any education or training as described in the ETE glossary term.

Probation Officer (PO) - A qualified probation officer is someone that has undertaken the diploma in probation studies or someone who has a relevant social worker qualification. They are employed by the Probation Service and are responsible for supervising adult offenders that are subject to community-based sentences. The main difference between a PO and a PSO is that PO's are expected to supervise offenders that pose the greatest risk.

Probation Service Officer (PSO) - They are responsible for supervising adult offenders that are subject to community-based sentences. They have attained an 18-month national vocational qualification in community justice. The main difference between a PSO and a PO is that PSO's are expected to supervise offenders that pose the lowest risk.

Probation Service - This term is an umbrella term that refers to the National Probation Service and includes the multiple private agencies that supervise lower and medium risk adult offenders.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) - Any school established and maintained by a local authority under section 19 (2) of the Education Act 1996 which is specially organised to provide education for pupils who would otherwise not receive suitable education because of illness, exclusion or any other reason.

Recidivism - The tendency of an individual already convicted for an offence to go on and offend again in the future.

Risk of harm - This term refers to the gravity or seriousness of any future offending behaviour.

Risk of re-offending - This term refers to the probability or likelihood of offending behaviour occurring.

Shaw Trust – A national charity that aims to help people gain education training and employment.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) - A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Youth Justice - A system in England and Wales that comprises the parts and processes used to prosecute, convict and punish children and young people under the age of 18 who commit criminal offences. The principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people.

Youth Offending Service (YOS) - A service that is part of local authorities and is separate from the police and the justice system. They work with local agencies including the police, probation officers, health, children's services, schools and the local community, and supervise young people serving a community-based sentence and stay in touch with a young person if they're sentenced to custody.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

In England and Wales, children and young people (CYP)¹ between the ages of 10 and 18 who have been cautioned by the police or convicted by a criminal court are often referred to as young offenders (Baker, 2004). Offenders aged 18 and over are classified as adult offenders and treated as such throughout the criminal justice system (CJS). A lot of the research on CYP who offend explores the context of those in custody and typically those under the age of 18. Thus, most of the recommendations from this existing research are aimed at improving the life experience of these CYP in a custodial setting. There is little research on CYP and young people and adults (YPAs) in non-custodial settings.

Amongst this offending population, there are high levels of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (Chitsabesan et al, 2006, 2007; Hall, 2000; Hughes et al., 2012), but there is little provision made for, and little understanding of, their needs after a custodial sentence is complete and they are back in the community or under a community-based sentence (HMI Probation & HMI Prisons, 2015). The recent SEND Code of Practice ([CoP] 2015) relates to CYP aged 0 – 25 and provides guidance on those under the age of 18 who are detained in custody. However, the CoP does not offer practitioners guidelines for supporting YPAs with SEND over the age of 18 in custody, or YPAs subject to community-based sentences.

¹ Throughout the current study, the term ‘children and young people’ (CYP) will relate to those between the ages of 10 and 25. The term ‘young people and young adults’ (YPA) will be used to represent those specifically between the ages of 18 and 25. This is due to the need to accommodate the various terms used by different services, disciplines and practitioners when categorising persons as children, young people, young adults and adults.

Research exploring the association between youth offending and SEND has largely focused on youths under the age of 18 (e.g. Chitsabesan et al, 2006, 2007; Hall, 2000; Hughes et al., 2012; Ministry of Justice [MOJ] & Department for Education [DfE], 2016). Little research has examined the experiences of frontline staff working with children and young people, in the broad age range of 10 – 25 years, that offend. What research there has been has tended to focus on the experience of education in custody with limited research on the educational needs of those subject to community-based sentences (Talbot, 2008). This current study aimed to elicit the views of practitioners working for Youth Offending Services (YOS), the National Probation Service (NPS), and further education (FE) colleges in relation to appropriate interventions to support the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of young people and adults (YPA) subject to community-based sentences.

Young offenders, in comparison to non-offending peers, have been found to have higher levels of special educational needs and disabilities (Chitsabesan et al., 2006). However, many of these needs seem to go unmet for reasons that include; insufficient continuity of care and inadequate collaboration between the relevant services and agencies (Harrington & Bailey, 2005). It may also be due to the staff from some public services not having the necessary support, confidence, or skills to work effectively with individuals with intellectual disabilities within the YPA group (Hellenbach, 2017). It is therefore important to obtain the perspectives of these frontline practitioners to establish if and how they might benefit from support when working with such a vulnerable and complex group of offenders. This will then help the services working with these YPAs to know what type of support might be required by their workforce and how it can be best

implemented. The types of services who are likely to work with YPAs who offend will vary depending on the circumstances of the particular young person but often include YOS, the NPS and FE colleges.

1.1.1 Special educational needs and disabilities within the offending population
Hughes et al. (2012) found that research studies suggest that 23 – 32% of CYP in custody have a generalised learning disability compared to just 2 – 4% of the general population. There is also a reported prevalence in specific literacy difficulties which may include conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. Between 43% and 57% of CYP in custody have specific reading difficulties in comparison to 10% of the general population. Hurry et al. (2005) also identified a lower-than-average attainment in literacy and numeracy for young offenders serving sentences in the community, with 57% functioning at below level 1 for literacy and a further 63% below level 1 for numeracy.

Speech language and communication needs have also been found to be high amongst youth offenders. Prevalence rates in the general population are between 1% and 7% compared to incidence rates as high as 60 – 90% in the youth offender population (Hughes et al, 2012).

Research by Chitsabesan et al. (2007) focused on children with learning disabilities and one of the criteria for meeting the learning disability definition was having a below-average IQ (IQ = 70 – 84). Within the findings, 41% of young offenders in the study were recorded as being in the ‘mild’ learning disability range (IQ = 50 – 69), which may not be prioritised as requiring urgent or specific attention when compared to other more complex needs. In addition, a mild

learning disability may be overshadowed by what teachers perceive as challenging behaviour. Thus, the teacher prioritises the behaviour and the learning disability is left unsupported.

In order to support CYP, it is important that any unidentified needs are revealed and supported. Unsupported SEND may well relate to behaviour by children that adults, and other children, find difficult to cope with. This behaviour could lead to action such as permanent exclusion from school, which may lead to isolation and exacerbation of the unidentified need. Limited or no school attendance only reduces the likelihood of the SEND being identified and supported. Thus, there is an increased need for other public services, such as YOS, the NPS, and FE colleges as well as Educational Psychology Services (EPS), to work with CYP and their families to provide alternative support in these circumstances.

1.1.2 Youth Offending Services (YOS)

After conviction, young offenders can receive custodial sentences (imprisonment) or a community-based sentence imposed by the courts. If these young offenders are sentenced to a community-based sentence they are legally required to report to a YOS as instructed by their YOS Case Manager (Newburn, 2007).

YOS are multidisciplinary services made up of professionals from probation, police, social care, education, and health. The qualifications and experience needed to be a YOS Case Manager vary from YOS to YOS. The role of the YOS Case Manager includes making sure that CYP adhere to the community-based sentences imposed by the criminal court. Case managers

have a duty to inform the court of any changes in circumstances that prevent CYP from adhering to the community-based sentence (Youth Justice Board, 2013).

1.1.3 National Probation Service (NPS)

Offenders over the age of 18 on community-based sentences are legally required to attend appointments with their Probation Officer (PO) from the NPS (or another probation service agency) (Ministry of Justice, 2010). The role of the NPS is to support these offenders to lead non-offending lives. This may include supporting their ETE (education, training and employment) needs so that they are more able to secure a legitimate income in the future.

The NPS is a statutory criminal justice service that is responsible for the supervision of high-risk adult offenders released from custody into the community. The aim of the NPS is to rehabilitate adult offenders by addressing the causes of crime and supporting them to stop offending (Newburn, 2007). In principle, the idea of the NPS has existed for over a century (Newburn, 2007) and has had five distinct phases of development: a missionary phase, a welfare phase, an alternative to custody phase, a punishment in the community phase, and the current public protection phase (Chui & Nellis, 2003). However, the fundamental purpose of the service has always been to reduce the reoffending of offenders through the process of supervision in the community (House of Commons, 2011).

1.1.4 Further education (FE) colleges

The FE sector is broad and offers a variety of academic, vocational, and recreational options. Providers vary. They include, FE colleges, sixth-form colleges, and national specialists' colleges, as well as independent training providers and local authority providers, all of which offer specific routes to qualifications.

This current study will include a focus on FE colleges, which aim to prepare their students for employment by providing courses to develop vocational skills. In addition to this many FE colleges offer academic and higher education studies. The majority of students would have completed their statutory education; however, many FE colleges offer courses for 14- and 15-year olds as well (Education and Training Foundation, 2018).

1.1.5 Educational Psychology Services (EPS)

While educational psychologists (EPs) are often associated with working with CYP with SEND, they are also associated with improving the opportunities for all CYP through statutory responsibilities, early years support, and preventative interventions (Birch, Frederickson & Miller, 2015). EPSs in the UK are quite varied in their operational structures and the services they provide. This is mainly due to their integration with other services and to different funding models (Birch et al., 2015).

The shifting legislative context has led to EPSs developing new ways of working with a more diverse range of CYP in community settings (Hill, 2017), such as YOS, the NPS and FE colleges. Additionally, the increasing pressure placed on local authority budgets has seen the increase in alternative models of

delivery for EPSs such as selling services to schools and other commissioners (Allen & Hardy, 2017).

1.1.6 SEND CoP (2015) and YPAs who offend

CYP in custody are included in the recent SEND Code of Practice (2015). Yet, it excludes guidance on CYP serving their sentence in the community as well as those over the age of 18 (DfE & Department of Health (DoH), 2015, p. 223):

This section does not apply to children and young people serving their sentence in the community, to persons detained in a Young Offenders Institution for 18- to 21- year-olds or to persons detained in the adult estate.

Ultimately, the SEND Code of Practice (2015) considers the needs of all CYP up to the age of 25, except those serving community-based sentences and those in custody over the age of 18. Most of these offenders will eventually be released from custody and would benefit from support specific to their needs when they return to the community. The limited guidance on supporting CYP in the community and those over the age of 18 has restricted the potential to develop specific interventions that cater for this needs group.

A child or young person is deemed to have special educational needs (SEN) if 'they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her' (DfE & DoH, 2015). The Code of Practice (CoP, 2015, p. 16) defines a child with learning difficulty and disability as a child that:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

The SEND CoP (2015) also lists some of the main changes from the SEN CoP (2001), which have largely originated from the *Children and Families Act 2014*.

From this list there are two changes that are directly relevant to the current study and help outline the value of further research within these areas:

- There is new guidance on supporting children and young people with SEN who are in youth custody.
- The Code of Practice (2015) covers the 0-25 age range and includes guidance relating to disabled children and young people as well as those with SEN (DfE & DoH, 2015 p. 14)

Drawing on the changes in the SEND CoP (2015), the next section will consider the remaining gaps in the current structure when working with CYP who offend.

1.1.6.1 New guidance on supporting children and young people with special educational needs who are in youth custody

The SEND CoP (2015) outlines the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, relevant youth accommodation (Secure Children Homes, Secure Training Centres, Youth Offending Institutions etc), health commissioners and YOS. There is reference to the need for continuity of an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) for those young offenders who have entered the relevant youth accommodation. There is also guidance for those who require an education and health care needs assessment while in custody. Further to indicating the importance of EHCP continuity and initiating assessments while in the relevant youth accommodation, the guidance also refers to the need to provide the required support outlined within the EHCP pre and post release (DfE & DoH, 2015). However, what the guidance fails to do is to provide direction for practitioners who work with CYP

who offend while they're in the community. This group requires more specialist attention and support compared to their non-offending counterparts due to their higher prevalence rates of SEND and exclusion from mainstream school (Chitsabesan et al., 2007).

1.1.6.2 The Code of Practice (2015) covers the 0-25 age range and includes guidance relating to disabled children and young people as well as those with special educational needs

The age range shift from 0 – 19 to 0 – 25 is one of the main changes within the CoP; however, there is little mention of the SEND support provided for YPAs who offend and are detained in custody or in the community and are between the ages of 18 and 25. Within the SEND CoP (2015) guidance it states:

Under no circumstances should young people find themselves suddenly without support and care as they make the transition to adult services (DfE & DoH, 2015 p. 138).

However, it is quite likely that the level of support will reduce if CYP who transition to adult services are working with staff who may not feel confident in supporting the SEND of this group. Supporting these SEND is even more problematic as YPAs between the ages of 18 and 25 are legally perceived to be adults and will not receive the same level of support from services as they would have when they were under the age of 18 (Communication Trust, 2015; Newburn, 2007).

Government research has identified that many offenders over the age of 18 still require support for their educational needs, and links have been made between poor educational outcomes and offending (Chui & Nellis, 2003; HM Inspectorate of Prison et al., 2014; Morgan & Newburn, 2007; Newburn, 2007). A joint thematic review conducted by HMI Prisons, HMI Probation and Ofsted

(2014) reported that 59% of prisoners that completed the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey admitted to regularly truanting at school and almost 40% stated they had been permanently excluded or expelled from school. Forty-seven per cent of prisoners reported having no qualifications and 13% said they had never had a job prior to their imprisonment. Most (68%) of the SPCR prisoners agreed that having a job would help to stop them reoffending. However, almost 50% said they would need help to secure employment and 40% expressed a need for support with education and improving their work skills (HM Inspectorate of Prison et al., 2014).

In terms of disability, 36% reported having a physical or mental disability and this increased to 55% if depression and anxiety were included. Those reporting depression or anxiety were at an increased likelihood of being reconvicted within the year following their release (HM Inspectorate of Prison et al, 2014). Having considered the prevalence of ETE difficulties and disability within the adult offending group it is understandable that some practitioners might be concerned about the arbitrary age cap of 18 within the SEND CoP (2015) for detained CYP. There is no explanation within the SEND CoP (2015) as to why detained YPAs do not receive SEND support beyond 18, when YPAs in the community receive SEND support up to the age of 25.

Furthermore, this age cap at 18 could lead to the withdrawal of services and support for CYP with SEND from the day they turn 19 while in custody. Thus, the SEND CoP (2015) does not fully consider the role of the NPS, FE colleges and adult social care in relation to supporting the SEND of YPAs (Communication Trust, 2015).

1.2 Research problem/summary

Much of the information within this introduction identifies the problems with supporting the SEND of CYP that are subject to community-based sentences. Gaining further knowledge would enable the identification of methods to improve the experience and life outcomes of CYP who offend.

As EPs work with CYP throughout their development, have a good understanding of the developmental needs and psychological theories and models underpinning development, they may be well positioned to support the outcomes of these CYP. This support may involve direct work with the CYP such as therapeutic intervention or assessment and identification of needs. Similarly, EPs could focus their attentions on the wider system which includes the practitioners who work directly with the CYP. Developing approaches used by these practitioners is likely to have a broader impact than individual work with CYPs who offend.

Nevertheless, research exploring the ways in which the practitioners who work with these CYP can be supported is sparse. What research there is, typically focuses on those CYP under 18 (Bryan & Gregory, 2013; Khan & Wilson 2010; Parnes, 2016) and does not consider the continued needs of those beyond this age. Research rarely looks at the SEND of CYP up to the age of 25, or the variety of practitioners that may work with them. Importantly, the recent SEND CoP (2015) does not provide guidance on the necessary support for CYP serving community-based sentences or for YPAs between the ages of 18 and 25 detained in custody. Consequently, there is an absence of professional support and recommendations for practitioners when working with YPAs with SEND who are in the CJS.

1.3 Biographical account

Prior to undertaking the training to become an EP, I worked with youth and adult offenders in a variety of roles. I qualified as a PO in 2008 and quickly seconded into the local YOS where my role focused on transferring YPAs in the community and in custody from youth justice settings to the adult Criminal Justice System (CJS). It was in this role where I noticed that young offenders' often fragmented experience of education seemed to limit the opportunities afforded to them once they became 18.

In my role as the seconded PO, I had a responsibility to identify relevant external agency reports and to ensure that these were forwarded to adult probation. However, when I conducted quality assurance on adult assessments completed by POs, much of this information had often been omitted. It seemed as if the systems in place at the time did not support a seamless transfer of documents and information, which I thought would be particularly problematic for young offenders with SEND.

As a PO I was fully aware of the high prevalence of SEND amongst the service users I worked with. However, I did not feel I was equipped with the time, knowledge or skills to appropriately cater to this need. I later joined the YOS on a permanent basis as a middle manager and became more aware of some of the work that had been undertaken by organisations to support the needs of young offenders with SEND. There were initiatives introduced by Achievement for All, a not-for-profit organisation that focused on supporting the SEND of young offenders. This included the Youth Justice SEND Bubble which was an online learning platform designed to provide free training to youth justice professionals on SEND within the youth justice system (Achievement for All, 2019). The work

in this area developed further subsequent to me starting the Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) training programme.

While working in the youth justice system there was a sense that the prevalence of SEND among young offenders had been identified. It seemed that the next phase was to explore how the identified need could be best supported by the youth justice system and by professionals working at the interface between youth justice and other departments such as education. Also, my previous experience of working with adult offenders motivated me to explore whether practitioners from the criminal justice system had similar resources available to them and whether they found them useful.

1.4 Objectives of the current study

This study aimed to understand the views and experiences of practitioners in terms of the ways YPAs with SEND who are subject to community-based sentences can be supported, to understand where there are gaps and differences in this support and to identify areas where EPs may be able to assist in improving the provision of frontline practitioners. It is intended that by gathering the views of frontline staff the following objectives will be achieved:

Objective 1: To establish the views of frontline practitioners on how they support the SEND of YPAs subject to community-based sentences.

Objective 2: To use the findings from this research to identify how specific support for SEND is delivered for YPAs subject to community-based sentences.

Objective 3: To identify whether and how EPs might be able to support practitioners in better meeting the needs of these YPAs.

Objective 4: To identify preliminary recommendations on how YOS, the NPS and FE college staff can effectively support the SEND of YPAs subject to community-based sentences.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The literature review will start by introducing the strategy used to search for and identify the various literature relevant to the current study. Within the literature review I will be looking at education and crime; the ETE needs of young offenders; desistance theory and research; and the relevance of young offender needs to EP practice.

2.2 Literature search

It was important for the current study to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the subject area by undertaking a critical review of the related literature and research. The target research area to review was related to studies that investigated the links between education, ETE needs, SEND and offending.

A literature search was undertaken using the Psychinfo database, the UCL, Institute of Education library search engine, and Google Scholar. The search terms included: 'education and crime', 'education and offending', 'youth offending and education', 'YOS and education', 'youth offending and special educational needs', 'youth offending and mental health', 'adult offending and education training employment', 'adult offenders and ETE', adult offenders and mental health. A search of relevant websites including the Youth Justice Board (YJB), the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the Ministry of Justice, and the National Probation Service was also undertaken. In order to reduce the scale of material identified and focus on literature relevant to the study, the search was limited to articles between 2000 and 2019. However, through continued reading and recommendations from specialists within the field the

reference list grew throughout the study and included some material outside of the search limitations.

2.3 Education and Crime

The Times 1867, cited in Furlong (1985):

‘Which is best, to pay for the policeman or the schoolmaster – the prison or the school?’

This is an important question that we do not often take the time to consider. When talking about crime, it is a question that relates to whether it is best to invest in prevention and support or deterrence and punishment. The relationship between education and crime is complex, and of course, correlation does not imply causality. Research on education and crime has been inconclusive in identifying a causal relation between the two areas, and this subject is not within the scope of this research. However, a brief overview of some of the research exploring the effect that education may have on crime was deemed useful.

Lochner and Moretti (2001) argue that education significantly reduces criminal participation. They analysed the effect of schooling on imprisonment in the United States using census data and changes in state compulsory school attendance. They used FBI data on arrests to corroborate their findings on imprisonment and to distinguish between the different types of crime. They found that education had the biggest impact on the reduction of murder, assaults, and motor vehicle theft and that additional years of high school reduced the probability of imprisonment.

Machin, Marie and Vujić's (2011) also studied the relationship between crime and education. Much of the data they used was from the Offenders Index Database, which records criminal data history from 1963 onwards. The database does not record the offender's education level, so they needed to use other sources for their education data and match (aggregate) the separate data. Similar to Lochner and Moretti, they presented statistical estimates of the crime-education relationship in relation to the change in the compulsory school age during the early 1970s in England and Wales. Machin et al. (2011), like Lochner and Moretti (2001) found evidence supporting the crime-reducing effect of education. They concluded that the existence of the crime-reducing effect of education potentially had key implications for long-term efforts to reduce crime in the future. Thus, they argued that policies that promote schooling and social capital could reduce crime by improving the skill levels of potential offenders.

Lochner and Moretti (2001) state that education reduces the likelihood of offending and that extended periods in education reduces the probability of CYP being imprisoned. However, their study was undertaken in the United States and only used male data so is not representative of male and female populations in the UK. More importantly, the study does not provide data on how the education factors that reduce the likelihood of offending can be enhanced. So, although we know it is important to keep CYP engaged in education, we are no closer to understanding the important ways and areas for doing this. Also, the study does not explore how the education of CYP in custody is supported and whether it helps them continue in education or secure employment on their release.

The Machin et al. (2011) study presented more findings that support the crime-reducing effect of education. Unlike Lochner and Moretti, their study

explored the offending of both male and female CYP in the UK. However, similar to the Lochner and Moretti study, there is no exploration of how education affects recidivism following conviction, nor does it provide a greater understanding of how sentences may affect educational outcomes. Both studies focused on CYP who had been imprisoned and neither explored the impact of education on those with community-based sentences. Having considered that the CYP in custody and those with community-based sentences are a similar demographic, in terms of educational needs, it would be useful to explore the community cohort further. Even though the experiences of young offenders in custody differ from those in the community, there has been a lack of research focusing on the specific needs of young offenders' subject to community-based sentences.

2.4 ETE needs and SEND of young offenders

There is substantial evidence that the literacy and numeracy levels of CYP within the CJS is well below the national average (Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 2002; Social Services Inspectorate et al., 2002; Taylor, 2016). Similarly, a 2005 YJB study reported that 55 – 65% of young people subject to community-based sentences were not in full-time education. Further government statistics reported that 90% of 16 and 17-year olds sentenced to a Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) (a common community-based sentence) in 2014 were missing at least 10% of sessions within a school year from school (MOJ and DfE, 2016) and deemed persistently absent.

These statistics suggest that CYP within the youth and CJS is a population with disproportionately high levels of absenteeism and learning needs. Government reported statistics state that 46% of 16 and 17-year olds sentenced

to a YRO in 2014 were recorded as having SEN without a statement (EHCP). Twenty-two per cent of the same age group were recorded as having SEN with a statement (MOJ and DfE, 2016). However, there is little research to suggest how and whether community-based sentences or the professionals that supervise young offenders in the community, support these SEN or the extent to which they are supported.

Chitsabesan et al. conducted a study in 2007 on the learning profiles and educational needs of young offenders in custody and in the community. The study was commissioned by the YJB for England and Wales and as such was extensive. The research was a national cross section study of 301 offenders who were interviewed and assessed using psychometric assessments such as the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) and the Wechsler Objective Reading Dimension (WORD). A total of 174 case managers in custodial settings and in the community, were also interviewed. The clear strengths of the study were the large sample size, the focus on CYP in custody and in the community, triangulation of CYP and staff views and the inclusion of females and CYP from Black and other ethnic origins. This sample is more representative than many of the other studies that focus on young offenders.

The study had six main findings:

- Approximately 75% of young offenders were temporarily or permanently excluded from school for considerable periods.
- 20% of young offenders were deemed to have met the criteria for 'mental retardation' (IQ>70) and 41% had an IQ below average.

- Many young offenders were found to have difficulties with reading and reading comprehension.
- Young offenders with a learning disability were more likely to offend from an earlier age than those without.
- Many young offenders had significant difficulties in terms of verbal reasoning skills
- Male young offenders had significantly lower IQ and reading comprehension scores than their female counterparts.

These findings influence the practice implications that the researchers have highlighted when working with young offenders. For example, they discuss the importance of professionals in education both in custody and in the community, having an awareness of young offender's 'learning capabilities'. This would include early identification of learning disabilities in order to provide the necessary services. However, they purport that many of the assessment and screening tools currently available to institutions and YOS are not suitable for identifying this type of educational need. They also highlighted that staff that work with these young people are not sufficiently trained or have the time to identify or support CYP with SEND.

A limitation of the Chitsabesan et al. (2007) study is its reliance on psychometric testing. Many of these assessments are not culturally sensitive and are themselves heavily reliant on receptive and expressive language. Thus, using this type of assessment on CYP who offend does not consider the overrepresentation of CYP from Black and ethnic origins within this cohort; or the high level of those from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds (Newburn,

2007). It also does not take into account the high percentage of CYP in the Youth Justice System that have speech language and communication needs (SLCN) (The Communication Trust, 2015). Consequently, the learning disability label may negate other explanations for not being able to access or engage with the material within the psychometric assessments.

In addition, policy and practice implications within the study focus on the introduction of frameworks to identify the SEND of CYP within the young offender cohort as well as providing the relevant training for educating staff in mainstream and non-mainstream settings. However, there is limited information on what these frameworks would look like, how they would function and who would be responsible for ensuring they are utilised. Equally, there is limited information on the type of training required by staff which undoubtedly would vary depending on the experience, qualifications and confidence of staff in educational or youth justice settings.

2.5 ETE needs and SEND of adult offenders

In a recent Justice Committee report on 18 to 25-year olds, the prevalence of neurodevelopmental difficulties, mental health issues, SLCN and other specific learning needs among prisoners and those supervised by probation services was unknown. The committee identified dedicated support for these needs were sparse, inconsistent, and resulted in poor outcomes for the YPAs concerned (House of Commons, 2018).

Hellenbach conducted a study in 2017 on offenders with intellectual disability (ID) who are subject to community-based sentences supervised by the

probation service. The focus of the study was to explore how POs were able to manage the demands of supervising those service users with ID in a structure the researcher described as punitive and rigorous. ID was described within the study as:

A significantly reduced ability to comprehend and process new or complex information. Impairments in their social functioning, particularly in relation to getting by independently. The impairments in intellectual functioning have to be present before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development. (Hellenbach, 2017 p. 1)

The Hellenbach study was based on qualitative methods and consisted of six semi-structured interviews with six POs. The data were analysed using a grounded theory approach and the three main findings related to:

- the identification of service users with ID
- how ID is understood by POs throughout the risk-assessment process
- the role of ID and the effect on the outcome of the supervision

These findings suggested that the interviewees did not have sufficient knowledge and skills firstly to identify service users with potential ID and then to act to support these needs. The interviewees contextualised ID as an inhibitor to securing ETE rather than a SEND that can affect the general experiences of the service user. The probation service was identified as not being equipped to manage the needs of service users with SEND; instead, the assessment and management of these service users were viewed as increasing the likelihood of this group being pulled further into the CJS.

Some of the limitations of this study included the use of the term ID which again raises concerns as to how this label is measured. This then presents the same concerns as those pertaining to the over reliance on psychometric tests as

was the case in the Chitsabesan study (2007). Using terms such as ID places the problem firmly within the child and may encourage practitioners to solely focus on the perceived deficits of the child. This in itself does not help practitioners to understand how to support the needs of these service users.

The researcher also presents the probation service as punitive without providing an explanation that justifies this view. Perhaps an understanding of the researcher's knowledge and experience of the topic area would provide further insight into where the researcher is positioned within the study.

Additionally, the only professional view presented within the study is that of the PO. It may have been useful to gain the views of other professionals that work with this group as they may have provided a broader account of how these service users could be supported by the practitioners that work closest with them. There is also a suggestion that closer collaboration with specialist services by the probation service would be useful. However, it is not clear what type of collaboration would be required. There is also an assumption that specialist training would improve the situation and raise the confidence of practitioners without clarifying how and who would deliver the training.

There is also a brief mention about the possibility of service users having ID and other difficulties such as conduct disorder and the impact this may have on their compliance with their community-based sentence. However, there is no mention of how practitioners should manage this co-morbidity, which specialists they should collaborate with, and what this interdisciplinary work might look like.

2.6 Providing SEND support: the challenge for practitioners

Both studies mentioned above explored how the SEND of YPAs who offend can complicate the role of the practitioners that work with them. Both studies have suggested a benefit in practitioners receiving specialist training and support. However, neither study provides clear recommendations on how practitioners can develop a way of working across agencies to ensure effective provision for these YPAs subject to community-based sentences. There were limited examples given of the current strategies and approaches used to support the SEND of these YPAs, hence, there is a lack of understanding of how this support might be improved especially in relation to the perceived needs of the practitioners involved.

There may also be a need for a broader outlook as both studies focus strictly on the YPA in one setting without considering the effects that the environment may have on SEND, the development of YPAs, and the support available to the practitioner. It would also be helpful to gather knowledge on how supporting the SEND of these YPAs fits with the primary function and role of the services investigated.

2.6.1 Interdisciplinary working and SEND

O'Carroll (2016) stated that the key aim of the recent SEND reforms was to improve the interdisciplinary collaboration between all services working with CYP with SEND. There was also an acknowledgement that applying these principles to CYP who offend presents further complications.

The Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda challenged the traditional structure of support services by integrating education and social care departments under the government umbrella of the Department for Children,

Schools and Families (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). The agenda was not evaluated prior to its dismantling so the long-term impact of this type of interdisciplinary collaboration is not clear (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). As such, there is little learning on multiagency coordination that can be applied to YPAs who are subject to community-based sentences within the new SEND framework.

2.6.2 Risk-management approach

Academic research has many examples of a risk prevention narrative in both the young offender and adult offender literature (Baker, 2004; Johns et al., 2017). This is represented by the announcement of the actuarial assessment tools; 'Offender Assessment System (OASys)' and 'Asset'. The tools are risk/need assessment documents for probation and YOS respectively which aim to help predict the likelihood of offenders reoffending and the seriousness in terms of harm that may be caused (Baker, 2004; Robinson, 2003; Wilson, 2013). The Asset has since been updated to AssetPlus and now contains screening assessments used to help identify SEND (Prior et al, 2011). However, the overemphasis on risk provides a narrow view in relation to these YPAs which may lead to a wider more systemic approach being overlooked (Case & Haines, 2015). Instead, a strengths-based approach that focuses primarily on the YPA's capacities and assets within communities, such as youth groups, is better for the development of YPAs (Lerner, 2004).

2.6.3 Family factors

Family factors are frequently associated with offending behaviour in academic literature. These factors include but are not limited to poor parental supervision,

rejection, large family size, and offending parents and siblings. Much of the research has found family factors to be a predictor of offending (Farrington & Welsh, 2007). However, the current study is concerned with how practitioners perceive the role of family in their efforts to support the SEND of the YPAs they work with. Baumrind (2005) asserts that parenting style is a predictor in the overall development of the child and focuses on how the parenting approach can determine the level of competence of young people and adults.

2.7 Theoretical lens: desistance and bioecological perspectives

It is essential for practitioners working within the CJS to recognise that YPAs with SEND may typically differ from their peers in their thinking and behaviour, and this may require practitioners to differentiate their approach. This implies a need for practitioners to receive specific training in working with YPAs with SEND, perhaps within a developmental framework. It may also suggest the need for input from specialists to support existing staff within the CJS. Such introductions would need to complement the shared priority for the various agencies within the CJS which is to support the 'desistance' of offenders.

The term 'desist' is typically understood as the termination point of a particular behaviour (Maruna, Immarigeon & LeBel, 2004; Weaver, 2019). However, in relation to offending this definition does not appear to capture the correct meaning and has been much criticised by many commentators (Weaver, 2019). Maruna (2001) argues that the termination of offending is a regular occurrence in the criminal careers of those who offend. Many offenders go for days, weeks and months without offending but it would be inaccurate to refer to them as desisting from crime. Even where we can be certain the individual will

never offend again in the future (i.e. death), this definition does little to help us understand when this period of desistance began. To clarify this point, Maruna puts forward the following scenario:

Suppose we know conclusively that the purse-snatcher (now deceased) never committed another crime for the rest of his long life. When did his desistance start? Is not the...concluding moment the very instant when the person completes (or terminates) the act of theft? If so, in the same moment that a person becomes an offender, he also becomes a desister. That cannot be right. (2001, p. 23)

Consequently, Laub and Sampson (2001) reformulated their understanding to make a clear distinction between the termination of criminal activity and desistance. They proposed that 'termination' be the point at which engagement in crime ceases while 'desistance' should be used to describe the period of nonoffending and, more importantly, the processes that helped maintain this period. However, what was meant as a well-intended distinction may only serve to add further confusion by conflating causality with the actual act of desistance itself, which is unhelpful.

For this reason, some authors thought it useful to consider desistance in two distinguishable phases: primary desistance and secondary desistance. Primary desistance would view the term desistance at its most basic level as a crime free gap in the span of a criminal career. Secondary desistance would then focus on the transition from an offending lifestyle to that of nonoffending with an emphasis on the 'changed' person or identity (Maruna, Immarigeon, & LeBel, 2004; Weaver, 2019). It would then be secondary desistance that commands the attention of services such as YOS and the NPS as it is within both their remits to, in some capacity, support this shift.

A theoretical issue within desistance studies has been the way in which the factors that are involved in the process of desistance are conceptualised. There seem to be two main perspectives. Those like Sampson and Laub (1993) argue that informal social controls such as marriage and employment are the key factors in understanding continuity or change in the criminal careers of individuals. Others, such as Giordano, Cernovich and Rudolph (2002); and Maruna (2001) recognise the role of structurally induced change in some cases but placed a greater emphasis on a change in the thinking of the desister.

The former perspective ties in with the view of social bond theorists who argue that engagement in education, employment and family life gives YPAs the encouragement to conform and to move away from an offending lifestyle. In the absence of these social bonds and 'structure', those who offend have less to lose from continuing to offend (McNeil, 2003). The latter perspective views 'agency' (individual choice) and a change of thinking and perhaps identity as motivational factors for desistance. There has been a convergence of the two positions in recent times with weight given to both structure and agency (Bottoms et al., 2004; Bottoms, 2014). However, as with many of the general desistance theories there is limited specific assistance for frontline practitioners in terms of what they can actually do to support these changes (Weaver, 2019). It might be useful for future research to offer suggestions that help YPAs who offend to progress towards being ready to desist perhaps by accelerating the processes identified within structure and agency positions that appear to have slowed or stalled (McNeil, 2003).

Authors such as Johns et al (2017) argue that the desistance perspectives focus solely on offending/non-offending which places the YPA as the source of

the offending problem. Comparisons could be made with the medical model of disability which has been accused of underestimating the relational and social aspect of SEND (Fredrickson & Cline, 2015). It could also be argued that desistance on its own is not sufficient to act as a theoretical lens within the current study, as it does not cater to the SEND of YPAs who offend, which is a main focus of this study.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development may be better placed to guide the understanding of YPAs with SEND subject to community-based sentences and how they might be supported by practitioners. The model was originally proposed to consider human development in accordance with the developing person's context. As denoted by the focus on ecology, Bronfenbrenner was also interested in the interaction between the developing person and their environment. Later, there were reformulations of the theory to emphasise the role of the individual, the importance of time, and the mechanisms that drive the development of the individual (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

The model in its mature form uses four concepts to characterise human development: *process, person, context, and time*.

Process – proximal processes are often posited as the primary mechanisms for development that typically occur within the individual's immediate environment. They are the individual's enduring interactions with people, objects and symbols (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). An example of proximal processes may include playing with a young child, solitary and group play, reading or a one-to-one or group offending-behaviour intervention.

Person – this concept includes the individual’s genetic factors but focuses more on the personal characteristics that accompany the individual into a social situation. The three types of personal characteristics are *demand*, *resource*, and *force*. Demand characteristics relate to features that can be observed by others such as gender, skin colour and physical appearance. Resource characteristics are less easily observed and are interpreted with varying degrees of accuracy. They would include mental and emotional assets such as experiences, skills, and intelligence as well as assets such as loving parents, a secure home, access to healthy food, and ETE opportunities fitting with the needs of the individual. Finally, force characteristics pertain to levels of motivation, temperament and determination. Bronfenbrenner stated that children may have equal resource characteristics but follow differing developmental trajectories depending on these characteristics (Tudge et al., 2009).

Context – this concept has remained largely unchanged from earlier versions of the Bronfenbrenner’s human development theory. The systems framework encompasses processes that mould the behaviours, interactions and development of the individual simultaneously at various levels and across time. The individual’s environment relates to more than one specific setting; it is a mix of interrelated settings that contribute to the developmental process through complex interactions (Johns et al., 2017).

Context comprises the *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem* and *macrosystem* (see figure 1 below) which are the ecologies that are nested together. The microsystem involves the environment where the individuals spend a large amount of their time. This may include a children’s home, school, and YOS, where YPA are engaged in enduring interactions.

The mesosystem is the interrelations between these environments; an example being a YPA's YOS Case Manager visiting the YPA at the children's home. In this example, the YPA is typically situated in both settings (YOS and children's home).

However, there are occasions when contexts that typically do not involve the individual directly, may still have a substantial influence on the development of the individual. An example of this could be the YOS Case Manager having supervision with their line manager and being directed to increase the reporting frequency of the YPA. The YPA may have had no contact with the line manager and may not have attended the supervision but has nonetheless been affected by the outcome of the meeting. This interrelation is referred to as the exosystem (Tudge et al, 2009).

The macrosystem is referred to by Bronfenbrenner as the 'societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context' (2005 p. 150). It envelopes the other ecological systems and is at times influenced by them. A serious offence committed by a YPA with SEND could prompt media and political scrutiny on the services available to support this group of YPAs. This could then raise the SEND support for YPAs high on the political agenda. Such a situation would be an example of the macrosystem.

Time – is the final concept which and is an expansion of Bronfenbrenner's earlier term, the *chronosystem*. The time concept within the mature model now includes ontogeny and historical time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The concept is split into three subfactors: *microtime*, *mesotime*, and *macrotime*. Microtime focuses on what occurs during the process of a specific intervention. Mesotime refers to

how interactions occur, and how consistent they occur within the individual's context. Finally, macrotime focuses on how the historical period in which the individual is developing influences the process of development (Tudge et al., 2009).

By adapting the bioecological lens to the context of the study, YPA's interconnected systems were explored. The model assisted in identifying interactions that inhibit the effective support of YPA's SEND and helped to generate proposals for positive interactions that may lead to effective support. A consideration of this model lent itself to extending beyond a desistance-focused approach.

Further to this, a combination of the two theories promotes consideration of how the interrelating systems outlined within the bioecological model, may contribute to support the SEND and the desistance of the young offender. An example of this could be a student with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) being coerced by co-offending peers from the neighbourhood to supply illicit substances in school. Rather than excluding the student and potentially transferring the difficulty from the school system to the youth justice system; there could be efforts to develop interventions that will assist the student to fully understand the implications of their actions. Also, to understand that they may have been targeted by these peers due to their ASC. School staff could attend joint meetings with parents, YOS and the EP to discuss suitable interventions that would address interactions at the process, person and mesosystem levels that may have contributed to the offending behaviour.

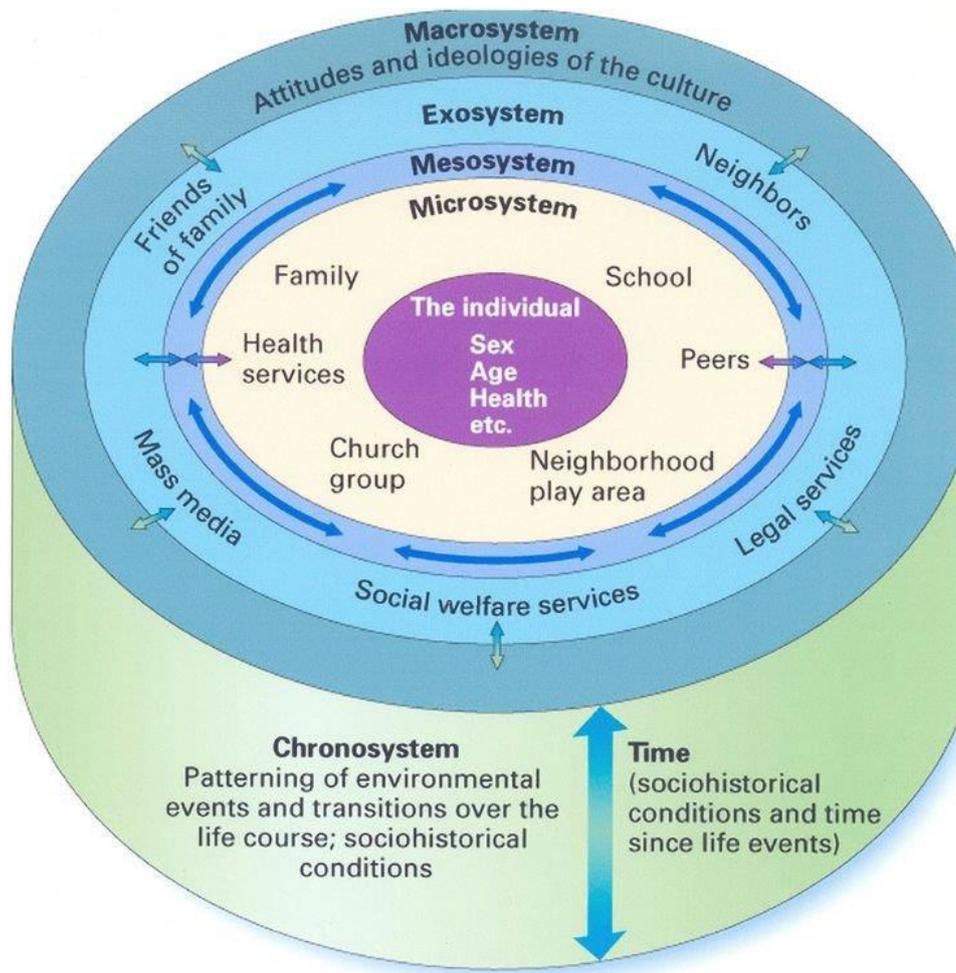


Figure 1: An image of the bioecological model illustrating the various systems that may affect an individual’s desistance

2.8 Relevance to EP practice

The evidence presented in chapters 1 and 2 outlines a clear link between the needs of CYP and the practice of EPs, the most obvious CYP needs relating to the high prevalence of SEND amongst young offenders. Hill (2017) supports this view by stating that the learning needs and the truancy and exclusion rates of

young offenders provides a distinct rationale for EPs working with this group of CYP as well as those at risk of offending. This work could include the development of preventative strategies and interventions and by working with the families and schools of the CYP involved, as well as direct work with the CYP themselves (Ryrie, 2006).

Furthermore, Fallon, Woods and Rooney (2010) suggest an even broader scope for EPs when working with children services teams such as YOS rather than a focus exclusively on SEN. Some of these broader opportunities include research and intervention projects around raising self-esteem for CYP; therapeutic work with young offenders; producing reports for criminal courts and drop-in facilities for parents of CYP who offend. The broader set of skills that EPs possess has been recognised by government which has opened opportunities for EPs to work more closely with agencies within children services and to apply their psychological skills and frameworks in more diverse contexts (Hill, 2017; Ryrie, 2006). This expansion of their role specification is reflected in Hill's (2017) observation that EPSs often now include the word 'community' in their title or within their vision statement. It is also captured in Fallon et al.'s definition of the EP role:

EPs are fundamentally scientist-practitioners who utilise, for the benefit of children and young people (CYP), psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through the functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training, at organisational, group or individual level across educational, community and care settings, with a variety of role partners. (2010, p. 4)

However, due to the omission of guidance and support previously outlined for YPA offenders over the age of 18 in custody and those on community-based sentences, EP's may have an even more important role with this group. They

may find themselves to be in the unique position providing continuity for the CYP who transition from YOS to NPS. This not only provides consistency in terms of the identification and support for SEND but also denotes a service that is committed to working in the best interests of the CYP affected.

Additionally, the EPS is well placed to act as the nexus between traditional educational and social-care cultures, language and practice. This is primarily due to the EPS's fundamental and distinct knowledge of the ecological perspective on the wellbeing of the child and human development (Fallon et al, 2010). Thus, when considering the experience of young offenders, the EP will consider the 'developing' young offenders and how they are affected by the changing properties of the settings they are in (YOS, NPS and FE colleges), and how the relations between the settings, and the larger context in which they are embedded, affect their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Yet, the suitability of educational psychologists to work with young offenders is not to suggest that working with this group will be straightforward. In order to work effectively with this group, it is important to identify and support the needs of CYP. It is also important to identify the needs of those practitioners that work directly with this group. However, there is minimal research that identifies the needs of practitioners that work with CYP who offend and remain in the community, particularly those that work with young people over the age of 18. Hence, there is limited policy guidance, strategies or frameworks that assist in identifying and supporting these practitioner needs or inform the relevant professionals of how the various services involved can best support each other.

2.9 Summary

The literature presented above focused on the relationship between education and crime and the specific needs of the CYP who offend. There was an exploration of theories associated with offending that also covered the role of education, training and employment in supporting CYP to desist from crime. The literature explored the debate on the impact that ETE may have on crime and vice versa but there appears to be a consensus amongst researchers that focus on this topic that there is not an established causal relationship between education and crime. Nonetheless, there appears to be empirical research that identifies education to have a moderating effect on some crimes and recidivism.

The literature review highlighted the lack of attention that has been given by researchers and the government on the impact of the SEND of CYPs subject to community-based sentences and how this could affect their engagement in education. In the limited research that does identify these needs there are recommendations to provide suitable training and practice frameworks for relevant staff. However, further clarity is required on the specifics of the type of training and frameworks required by the various practitioners involved. This can be obtained by gathering the perspectives of the relevant practitioners and then further thought given to how the needs identified, if any, can be appropriately supported.

This study aimed to examine the views of YOS, the NPS and FE college staff on the type of support they require in order to work effectively with CYP with SEND who are supervised by YOS or probation services. There will also be a focus on support that is currently available that may be deemed to be good practice. By acquiring data from practitioners who work directly with these CYP,

the current study aimed to gain a detailed understanding of the nature and extent to which EPs could support the needs of these practitioners, and how the type of support required by practitioners from the different services may vary.

2.9.1 Research questions

The research questions for this study are listed below:

- What factors are highlighted by frontline practitioners as being important for supporting the SEND of YPAs subject to a community-based sentence?
- What specific SEND support is offered for YPAs subject to a community-based sentence?
- What would improve the support for these YPAs with SEND?
- Are there any differences in the support needs reported by each service?

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter outlines the methodological approach that was adopted when undertaking this research. It begins by reporting on the epistemological and ontological position underpinning the research, then presents the rationale for using a qualitative methodology. The design of the study will be outlined, including information about the participants, ethical considerations, and research tools, to provide understanding about how the data were collected. The chapter ends with a detailed description of the process for analysing themes within the interview data.

3.2 Ontological, epistemological and methodological position

A researcher's basic beliefs help guide the way in which their research is undertaken. Guba and Lincoln (2005) characterise ontological belief as asking about the 'nature of reality', and equate epistemological belief with questioning the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the would be known. The methodological belief relates to the ways in which the researcher should best go about acquiring the knowledge that is desired. These belief systems help to define the paradigm the researcher adopts during the research.

A postpositivist position believes in the importance of objectivity and generalisability and that the truth can be identified. However, there is an understanding that the researcher must modify their claims of the truth based on probability and not certainty. The constructivist paradigm assumes that knowledge is socially constructed by those active in the research and that researchers should aim to understand the world and its complexities from the

perspective of those that have experienced and lived it. A basic assumption of the pragmatic paradigm is that there is a 'single real world' and each person has their own individual view of that world. Pragmatists typically avoid the use of concepts such as truth and reality as they believe it often results in endless and useless debate (Mertens, 2010).

The paradigms presented above are not always as clear and distinct in practice (Mertens, 2010). However, it was important that I was able to match the perspective that aligns most closely to my own view in order to guide my thinking and the direction of this research.

This research is concerned with eliciting the perspectives of individual participants despite them deriving from three separate services and having a multitude of different professional backgrounds. Therefore, a social constructivist worldview acknowledges each participant to construct their personal understanding of what will help them to support the needs of the YPAs who offend. The social constructivist approach recognises that people have individual experiences and that they try to make sense of the world in their own ways.

3.2.1 Reflexivity – a qualitative study with a constructivist perspective

Reflexivity can be interpreted as an ongoing critical self-evaluation of the researcher's position within the context of the study that openly acknowledges the potential effect this may have on the outcome of the research (Berger, 2015). The constructivist position of this research supports the perspective that I, as the researcher, should have a lived understanding of the topic I choose to research.

Further to that, I must recognise and explicitly accept that my experience may influence the process and direction of my investigation (Berger, 2015).

This research came out of my own experiences as a PO and a YOS manager. I worked with youth and adult offenders in a variety of roles. As a PO I became aware of a perceived link between YPA offenders' fragmented experience of education and the limited opportunities afforded to them once they turned 18.

An important focus for youth justice and criminal justice services was the risk of harm and the risk of reoffending of the service users they work with (Robinson, 2003). However, much less attention is given to supporting the SEND of this cohort, despite the overwhelming research and practice experience that suggest this cohort has a high prevalence of learning needs.

An important aspect of this research is to give practitioners that work closely with this vulnerable and complex group of YPA offenders an opportunity to express what they require to improve the SEND support offered to this group. I believe my professional background assisted practitioners to speak openly about some of the challenges and frustrations they experienced professionally. By having this shared experience I felt that I was received as an 'insider', which gave me easier access to the participants, a good knowledge of the topic, and an understanding of the nuances in the responses of the participants. I believe this cultivated greater authenticity within the data and added to the credibility and validity of the study.

An 'insider', in terms of research, may be understood as a member of a specific group or someone who occupies a specific social status (Mercer, 2007).

In the current study I may have been viewed by participants as someone with previous and credible experience of working with YPAs who offend. Nevertheless, in my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, I was no longer a professional with the same remit and aims as my YOS and NPS participants. This meant it was more complex than the dichotomy of member or non-member. Membership may best relate to a continuum as opposed to two polarised points. It could be argued that membership identity is always contingent and situational (Mercer, 2007). Thus, my role as an insider is less about 'better or worse', 'positive or negative', and is instead relative to my professional identity as perceived by the participant.

However, my views on the difficulties associated with providing SEND support for YPA offenders, especially after they turned 18, motivated the study. Therefore, it was important for me to employ precautions (discussed further in the data analysis section) that limited the likelihood of these views from going beyond professional insight to a biased perspective.

3.3 Design

This study took the form of a single case study focused in part on the views of qualified managers or case managers based at a local authority YOS. The single YOS was chosen as it was local to where I was placed during my EP training at the time. Additionally, YOS and the EPS were in the process of forming a working relationship and were both supportive of the research that created opportunities in terms of accessing participants and co-operation from senior YOS staff.

YOSs vary in terms of management structure, team structure, and operational roles of staff. This means that the experiences of one case manager may differ greatly from the experience of another case manager in a neighbouring

local authority YOS. For example, some YOS teams focus solely on young offenders in custody and so, a case manager from such a team may have limited understanding of the experiences of young offenders based in the community. Consequently, recruiting staff from a number of YOSs each with a different operational structure, may have created a level of complexity to the research that may have led to unclear findings.

The views of NPS staff based in the same borough were also gathered. Although the NPS's structure and operational process are representative of many NPS offices nationwide, there are benefits in recruiting staff from the same NPS office. The majority of YPA offenders transferred from YOS to the NPS will be from the local YOS, which means best practice and findings pertaining to the transition of YPAs from the youth justice sector to the adult sector will be relevant to both agencies involved in the research. In a practical sense there is also more likelihood of senior management across the services meeting to consider the findings of the research if they are based within the same borough. This becomes even more likely if the research identifies areas and factors that affect each service. In terms of job roles within the NPS, there is often a mix of professions such as POs, PSOs, forensic psychologists, ETE workers, and housing workers. It was deemed prudent to only recruit POs and PSOs based in the same local authority as they would be familiar with the transition of YPAs from the local YOS and have some knowledge of the ETE options available to YPAs resident in the borough; whereas some of the other professionals mentioned above would not.

This single case study also focused on the views of FE college staff located within the same local authority and/or accepting YPAs from the same local authority as YOS. FE college staff were recruited from two separate

colleges. One of the FE colleges was based in the same local authority as YOS and the other was in a neighbouring borough. A decision was made to interview staff from a college outside the borough because this was a college that YOS staff reported as the most likely to accept and work with their CYPs out of all the local FE colleges. By using the same FE college that regularly enrolled the YOS YPA, participants were given an opportunity to comment on the positives and negatives associated with the YOS and the FE college's working relationship.

3.4 Participants

Participants for the current study were recruited from three services primarily within the same local authority. However, two of the participants from one of the two FE colleges were from a neighbouring borough that accepted YPAs from the original local authority. The three services were YOS, the NPS, and FE colleges.

I met with senior managers from each setting to discuss the suitability and availability of the participants within each setting. The aim was to recruit approximately six participants from each service, giving a total of eighteen participants overall. Instead, nine participants from YOS, six from NPS and three from FE colleges were recruited.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews of YOS, NPS and FE college staff. The YOS staff are primarily the senior staff and case managers responsible for ensuring that CYP comply with the conditions of their community-based sentence; they will return the CYP to court if they fail to comply. NPS staff are Senior Probation Officers (SPOs), POs, and PSOs who are responsible for supervising adult offenders subject to community-based sentences. FE college

staff include lecturers and support staff that are based in the FE college. In order to gain a detailed understanding of people's perspectives and individual experiences a qualitative methodology was adopted.

3.5 Semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview method was chosen to enable the collection of detailed data that answered the research questions and provided insights into individual experiences and views. The qualitative methodology was consistent with the constructivist world view adopted in that it allowed for a multitude of perspectives. It was felt that meaningful data would be best attained by allowing the participants the freedom to discuss the topics that were important to them. It was also important that I was able to ask the participants to expand on comments, which was achievable in a semi-structured interview.

An alternative approach to data collection might have been the use of focus groups, however, these would have been impractical to arrange and would have raised issues with regard to confidentiality of views and experiences. Similarly, focus groups were deemed not appropriate because they could involve a political, bias dynamic.

A co-constructed view as often generated by focus groups, is less suited to this research as it takes away from individual perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2013), which were an important aspect of this research. As these staff often have limited input into the policies and protocols they follow, it is important that they feel their voices are heard and that they are able to contribute fully without interruption or challenge, which could happen in a focus group. An alternative

approach might have been to use a questionnaire to ascertain individual perspectives, but this would have limited participants to the areas and response options selected by the researcher (Frith & Gleeson, 2008). As well, it would have been time consuming and require high levels of application and commitment from participants. It would also have raised concerns about a poor response. Hence, semi-structured interviews were deemed the most suitable method to achieve the aims of the research.

Semi-structured interviews provide a confidential space where participants can discuss issues that they may not feel comfortable speaking about in front of colleagues or management (e.g., a need for development in their own practice). In addition, they provide the flexibility to ask follow-up questions and to follow new and unexpected lines of inquiry. This gave the interviews the potential to provide detailed, rich, and meaningful data.

There were also some challenges attached to using semi-structured interviews that I had to consider. Although, the researcher may be knowledgeable on the topic, their skill as an interviewer is likely to affect the richness of the data they receive (Mertens, 2010). A more skilled interviewer may recognise opportunities to ask a participant to clarify or expand on a subject better than a relatively novice interviewer. There is also the potential for the researcher - participant power dynamic which may inhibit the participant's willingness to speak freely and openly on some subjects (Mertens, 2010).

3.6 Sampling strategy

It was crucial for this study that participants were able to provide data based on their knowledge and experience as well as their personal perspectives so that each participant's account was well informed. As such, a purposive criterion sampling strategy was used to ensure an in-depth level of study could be undertaken for all participants from the three services (see Tables 1, 3 and 5 below).

3.6.1 YOS participants and recruitment process

At the time of recruitment, I had recently been assigned as the link Trainee EP for the YOS, so I was having regular contact with various YOS staff and I had already delivered a presentation that delineated the role of the EPS and explored how EPs could work more closely with YOS staff. Prior to my placement at the EPS, there had been a professional working relationship between the two services. However, my role was to help establish a more structured relationship. This closer working relationship between the two services was in conjunction with a focus from the local authority for SEN teams within the borough to work more closely with YOS and Youth Services. It is possible that this recent working alignment and my existing relationship with YOS helped in terms of the number of staff that agreed to participate and the speed at which interview dates were arranged, despite the challenging time demands on YOS staff.

Initial contact was made with a senior manager within YOS. A meeting was arranged with the aim of providing an information sheet (Appendix 3) describing my research area and making a request for the participation of YOS staff. I also

provided the senior manager with my sample criterion as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria for selection of YOS staff

Participant criteria
Have the relevant social work, probation or youth justice qualifications
A minimum of 12 months YOS experience gained within the last 2 years in the UK
A minimum of 6 months' work experience in the current YOS
Based in the current YOS for a minimum of 2 days per week
A current Case Manager, Senior Practitioner or Senior Manager

Once permission had been granted by the Head of YOS to conduct my research within YOS, the senior manager designated a member of the management team to identify staff that met the criteria and were available for interview. Nine YOS staff were identified and agreed to participate in the study, including the senior manager. Dates and times of interviews were agreed in advance of my attendance at YOS. The education lead and Connexions worker were not interviewed due to them not being available within the required timescale. Table 2 below presents the job role and level of experience of the YOS staff interviewed.

Table 2: YOS Participant details

Job Title	Length in current role (years)	No. of years in service
Practice Manager	1.5 years	12 years
Prevention Practitioner	8 years	8 years
Senior Manager	1 year	12 years
Prevention Practitioner	14 years	17 years
Practice Manager	4 years	8 years
Case Manager	9 years	9 years
Probation Officer	1.5 years	18 years
Specialist Case Manager	6 years	6 years
Practice Manager	4 years	6 years

3.6.2 NPS participants and recruitment process

Initial contact was made with a Senior Probation Officer (SPO) at the NPS office within the borough. I had previously been employed by the NPS and had maintained relationships with managers within the service which may have aided my requests for participation. On making contact I was granted permission to interview the SPO and members of the NPS team who were willing to participate in the research. I provided the SPO with the required criteria as presented below in Table 3.

Table 3: Criteria for selection of NPS staff

Participant criteria
A qualified PO or PSO with 18 months' probation experience
A minimum of 12 months' probation experience gained within the last 2 years in the UK
A minimum of 6 months' work experience in the current NPS office
Based in the current NPS office for minimum of 2 days per week
A current PO, PSO, Senior PO and Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)

I was informed by the SPO that most of the POs and PSOs would meet the set criteria. I agreed dates and times to attend the NPS office for interviews and was provided with names of the current POs and PSOs and their seating arrangements. I then approached the relevant staff individually to provide oral and written information on the research area. NPS staff made clear their concerns regarding the possibility of the interviews being interrupted. There also seemed to be difficulty in specifying times to meet for the interview due to a combination of workload demands and a continued re-organisation of times for them to meet with their clients. Overall, six members of NPS staff agreed to participate in the research. Job titles and experience in years are detailed below in Table 4.

Table 4: NPS participant details

Job Title	Length in current role (years)	No. of years in service
Probation Officer	3 years	4.5 years
Probation Officer	3 years	5 years
Senior Probation Officer	13 years	20 years
Probation Officer	9 years	17 years
Probation Officer	6 years	19 years
Probation Service Officer	1.5 years	1.5 years

3.6.3 FE college participants and recruitment process

Initially, my aim had been to contact an FE college located within the same borough. However, following several unsuccessful attempts to contact a college in the borough I spoke to the YOS Connexions worker and her manager to establish whether they were able to suggest suitable points of contact within the

colleges they worked with. The Connexions worker informed me that very few of the YPA that she had worked with, in the past or currently, attended the college within the borough.

During our discussion, the YOS Connexions worker provided several reasons for this which included her belief that very few YPA who offend wish to attend college within the borough where they reside. This seemed to be the case for longstanding and permanent residents as well as those that were new to the borough. The reasons for this attitude were not altogether clear but may relate to concerns about coming into contact with peers with whom they may have an ongoing dispute.

The YOS Connexions worker also explained that the colleges within the borough had recently undergone significant structural changes and mergers with other colleges, and so Connexions were yet to develop a working relationship with those colleges. However, the YOS Connexions worker provided me with contact details for staff who were based in a college in a neighbouring borough. I contacted the Head of the college's SEND department and arranged a meeting. I provided the Head of SEND with the required criteria as shown below in Table 5.

Table 5: Criteria for selection of FE college staff

Participant criteria
A minimum of 12 months experience in an educational setting in the UK
A minimum of 6 months experience in the current FE college
Based in the current FE college for a minimum of 2 days per week
A current lecturing or classroom-based role

My attempts to contact further FE colleges in surrounding boroughs were unsuccessful. However, I was invited to accompany the link EP for post 16, to a meeting with a different college within the borough, and as a result I was able to request participation for my research from a senior manager at the college. They identified one member of staff who met the criteria and was willing to take part. Overall, I was able to recruit three participants from two separate FE colleges, one within the borough and one from the FE college in the neighbouring borough who had an existing working relationship with YOS.

It is possible that the difficulties I experienced with recruiting participants from FE colleges were associated with challenges in identifying the correct members of staff to give permission for my research. The difficulty with recruitment may also relate to the relatively recent working relationship between FE colleges and EPSs, which has only developed as a result of the introduction of the *Children and Families Act 2014*. FE colleges may not be motivated to engage in research in an area of development. There were also very few members of staff identified by the colleges as being suitably experienced to be able to fully contribute to this study. Table 6 below presents the job role and level of experience of the FE college staff interviewed.

Table 6: FE college participant details

Job Title	Length in current role (years)	No. of years in service
Senior Support Worker	18 years	18 years
Lecturer	1.5 years	10 years
Head of Student Support	3 years	15 years

3.7 Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was sought from the Ethics Committee for the UCL Institute of Education. Key issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw and data storage were discussed with participants prior to the interviews (see Appendix 4). Participants were informed that the information they provided would only be used in relation to this study and it would be stored on encrypted electronic devices (British Psychological Society [BPS], 2014).

3.8 Data Collection

When designing my interview questions, it helped to use each research question as a subheading and to consider questions according to each subheading, so I could elicit data relevant to my topic. Table 7 below gives an example of this process when designing the YOS interview guide:

Table 7: Process of generating interview questions that relate to the research questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions for YOS
What factors are highlighted by frontline practitioners as being important for supporting the SEND of YPAs subject to a community-based sentence?	To what extent do you feel that education and offending behaviour are linked?
	<i>Can you tell me about the purpose of community-based sentences? To what extent does the sentence affect their ETE?</i>
	To what extent does education in the community compare with education in custody? What are the advantages and disadvantages of education in the community?
	To what extent do you feel SEND might affect YPAs ETE outcomes? Why do you think this is? Can you give an example using a YPA that you have worked with or supervised?
	To what extent do you/YOS support the SEND of YPAs? How does this support help their ETE experiences and opportunities?
What specific SEND support is offered for YPAs subject to a community-based sentence?	To what extent do you/YOS support the SEND of YPAs? How does this support help their ETE experiences and opportunities?
	To what extent do you/YOS specifically support the SEND of YPAs that are transferred to Probation Services? How do you know this support is effective? Would you change anything about the current transfer process? Why/Why not?
What would improve the support for these YPA with SEND?	<i>Would you change anything about the current transfer process? Why/Why not?</i>
	What are your views on the support offered for the SEND of YPAs on community-based sentences? How confident are you in supporting the SEND of the YPAs you work with? Why do you think that is the case?
	How could the SEND support offered to YPAs be improved further?
	To what extent do you feel that YOS support the work of schools or colleges? To what extent do you feel that schools/colleges support your work?
	What could school/college staff do to help you more in the work you do?
Are there any differences in the support needs reported by each service?	

Interview questions in bold are the main questions on the guide whereas those in italics are subsidiary or follow-up questions.

Three separate interview schedules were developed based on the research questions, and the background understanding of participants from the

different organisations. In preparing for the interviews I used some basic principles adopted by Mertens (2010) to guide my approach.

My interview guide consisted of open-ended questions with the aim of allowing participants to provide as much information as possible. I found it useful to pilot my interviews with peers and fellow researchers in order to refine my sentence structure and reduce the likelihood of asking leading questions. No issues were raised during pilot interviews that resulted in amendments to the interview guides.

The purpose of the piloting was to ensure that participants found the questions accessible and relevant. I piloted the interview schedule with one participant from each service, so all participants had a professional background in either YOS, probation or an FE college. This 'pre-test' process helped to ensure that the language and structure of my questions were intelligible and meaningful to the intended professionals. Minor amendments were made to the guides following this piloting phase. The process also helped by providing me with a realistic, if approximate idea of how long the interviews might last.

'Establishing rapport' is a key part of a semi-structured interview as it allows the participant to feel comfortable discussing personal information (Braun & Clarke, 2013). So, I started the interview with broad questions that allowed the participant to introduce themselves as a professional. This was a descriptive question that required the participant to provide a general account (Willig, 2013). For example; 'Let's start by you telling me about your role within the YOS', 'What's it like working in YOS as a case manager'. When necessary, I would ask for

clarification on terms to ensure that I understood them as the participant had intended (e.g. 'What do you mean when you say risk?').

The sequencing of questions was important, so the early questions were less probing and direct than the later questions. They gave the participants an opportunity to discuss topics that they would be knowledgeable about such as their role and responsibilities. As well as collating useful data, the intention was to gradually introduce participants to topics and questions that they may not have given much consideration to prior to the interview.

During a semi structured interview there are a variety of different types of questions that can be asked. In the interview guide I primarily asked questions that were interested in experiences, opinions, and knowledge, as my focus was to explore the views of participants on the SEND support they know to be offered and how this might be improved further for the YPAs they work with.

As the research was exploratory in nature, open ended questions were used to allow the participants to speak freely and perhaps provide data that I might not have anticipated. This approach encouraged participants to cover topics that related to the question but that were also salient to them. When necessary, follow-up questions were used to expand on the detail of the responses provided.

Interviews were conducted in an environment that was convenient for all participants, usually the office where they worked. Each participant was interviewed once, and a Dictaphone was used to record the interviews.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process that requires astute questioning, a relentless search for answers, active observation, and accurate recall. It is a process of piecing together data, of making the invisible obvious, of recognizing the significant from the insignificant, of linking seemingly unrelated facts logically, of fitting categories one with another, and with attributing consequences to antecedents. It is a process of conjecture, and verification, of correction and modification, of suggestion and defence. It is a creative process of organising data so that the analytic scheme will appear obvious (Morse, 1994 p 25).

My approach to data analysis aimed to encompass this definition from Morse. I used thematic analysis (TA) to analyse the interview data. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) explain that TA is the search for themes that are significant to the description of the issues of interest. It is a process that requires the reading and re-reading of the data until patterns are evident within the data and emerging themes become the categories and focus for analysis. These themes are often generated and developed through the process of 'coding', which is described by Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 328) as 'the process of examining data, identifying and noting aspects that relate to your research question'.

Other qualitative methodologies were also considered such as grounded theory (GT) and interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA). GT as a method involves the identification and categorisation of 'meaning' from data. The distinctive characteristic of GT is that a guiding theory is not proposed at the outset of the research (Mertens, 2010). As a 'theory', it involves the production of a theory that acts as a framework to explain the phenomenon that is being investigated. However, a limitation for GT in relation to this research is that it subscribes to a positivist epistemology (Willig, 2013), which is not in keeping with the epistemological position of this research. It has also been argued that it

ignores the role of reflexivity (Willig, 2013), which was earlier described as important to the data collection process in this research.

IPA's main concern is the detailed interpretation of an individual or relatively few individuals' conscious experiences. Unlike other types of qualitative analysis, such as GT, IPA is concerned with the internal psychological processes (Howitt & Cramer, 2008), and is less suitable for analysis of the perspectives of several participants, as is the case in the current research. Hence, TA was deemed the more suitable form of analysis for the current study as it has the flexibility to support the epistemological position of the research and manage the number of participants and data sets involved.

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) offered a step-by-step approach to data analysis, although they were clear that this presents somewhat of an oxymoron, as by nature, a qualitative data analysis is in direct conflict with a prescribed step-by-step process to analysis. Hesse-Biber and Leavy suggested a three-step process consisting of: Step 1 – Preparing the data for analysis; Step 2 – Data exploration phase; and Step 3 – Data reduction phase (Mertens, 2010). However, it is arguably Braun and Clarke (2006) that offer the more systematic guide to applying TA. Braun and Clarke outline the following stages:

- Stage 1 – Familiarisation with the data.
- Stage 2 – Initial coding generation.
- Stage 3 – Searching for themes based on the initial coding.
- Stage 4 – Review of the themes.
- Stage 5 – Theme definition and labelling.
- Stage 6 – Report writing.

For the purpose of the research I utilised the Braun and Clarke approach and will detail the stages taken in this study. However, Braun and Clarke did not present their approach as a linear step-by-step process. Instead, they acknowledged that the stages are conceptually distinct, as in practice there is an expectation that there will be notable overlap. At any stage during the process the researcher may refine and clarify the analysis by returning to an earlier stage.

The transcripts from each setting were analysed separately. This was so that any themes relating to a specific setting could be clearly captured and that there could be a clear comparison between settings that directly relate to one of the research questions.

3.9.1 Familiarisation with the data

At this early stage the researcher becomes actively involved with the data. As I conducted all of the 18 semi-structured interviews independently, the interviews would have been my first exposure to the data. After completing the interviews, I listened to the recordings in order to remain familiar with what had been said by the participants.

I ensured that I transcribed at least one participant interview from each service; however due to time demands, someone else completed some of the transcription. This may have been problematic as transcribing can be a good way to gain further depth in my understanding of the data. However, in these instances, I listened to those recordings while reading through the transcript to ensure that it was an accurate account of what had been said by the participants but also as a way of more fully immersing myself in the data. As I read and re-

read all of the transcripts I made notes of potential codes and themes with future analysis in mind.

3.9.2 Initial coding generation

This stage requires the researcher to generate codes by working through the data in its entirety. For the purpose of this research I applied complete coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as I thought that coding, that might at first seem unrelated to my research could become more salient as I progressed through my analysis. Complete coding is also more compatible with my 'data led approach' (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

My analysis very much depended on what was being said and its relevance to my research. Typically, I would code every two, three or four lines, providing the extract captured the meaning of what was being said.

Prior to any sophisticated level of interpretation, I used a coding process that involved recognising an important or interesting moment within the data that captured a richness in relation to my research area. I decided to use In Vivo and Process coding primarily, as described by Saldana (2009).

In Vivo coding, sometimes referred to as 'verbatim coding' or 'literal coding', adopts the language used by the participants within the interview data. By extracting these indigenous terms, it indicated any similarities or differences in professional language and discourse between the three different services. It also maintained the transparency in my process of interpretation.

In Vivo codes also helped identify whether I had fully understood what was salient to the participant and helped to crystallise the meaning of the data

(Saldana, 2009). In addition, using this type of code complemented the data collection process when preparing for an interview by 'learning the local language'.

Process coding refers to '...ing' words solely and signifies a form of action in the data. This can be observable action such as 'sleeping', 'fighting', 'shouting' or more conceptual forms of action such as 'questioning', 'struggling', or 'assuming'. Process coding is particularly suitable when the researcher wants to consider continued action, interaction or emotional responses to events often with the objective of reaching a goal (e.g. '...yet I'm chasing you for information but when it is convenient for you, you want that information from us). In terms of identifying when to apply Process coding, I would review the data in search of process indicators by being alert to transitional words such as 'because', 'if', 'then', 'so', and 'when' (Saldana, 2009).

However, I used other types of coding as well, and there was no rule when I was reviewing the data that a particular word or structure in the data was a prompt to apply a particular type of code. For instance, there would be many occasions that an '...ing word' would be included within the transcript quote but I may have chosen to use an In Vivo code to code it, rather than a Process code, as I believed it to be a better way of presenting the participants true meaning.

3.9.3 Searching for themes based on the initial coding

At this point in the process the themes were developed by fitting the initial coding together in a purposeful way that created meaning in a theme. Braun and Clarke (2013 p. 337) describe a theme as 'patterned meaning across a dataset that

captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, organised around a *central organising concept*.

I used Nvivo to help manage, explore and identify patterns in my data. Nvivo uses the concept of nodes described as places where ideas and categories can be stored (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). I used nodes to store my coding by highlighting selected parts of the transcript and deployed the nodes as labels. This was continued throughout each transcript. After the first four transcripts were coded, I began to recognise patterns and would use the 'notes' tab in Nvivo to record interesting points or potential themes.

3.9.4 Review of the themes

This stage involved tentative formation of themes. By testing the efficacy of the themes against the original data, I had to make several modifications to the themes that did not stand up to the testing. This at times required me to split themes or create sub-themes to explain two different patterns. At times, new themes had to be developed or existing themes abandoned due to them not representing the data sufficiently.

Meetings with supervisors were often used to test and review my themes and helped to identify which themes were aptly representative of the data and which were not fit for purpose. This discussion, supported by overall refinement, supported the development of my final themes.

3.9.5 Theme definition and labelling

In defining themes, I aimed to keep themes as specific as possible. This helped me to clearly differentiate one theme from another. During this stage I discussed my definitions with peers in an attempt to convince them of what the theme described as well as what it explained. Differences in opinions with peers and my supervisor provided a healthy challenge for my working definitions and forced me to revisit my explanation and in part my understanding of the data the themes represented.

Similarly, I shared the definition of my themes with experts with knowledge of YPAs who offend but who have less familiarity of the role, purpose, and practice of EPs. This provided valuable feedback on whether these explanations of the data stood up to the rigours of scrutiny by specialists in the field. This feedback was again shared with my supervisor, who assisted in the refining of my theme definitions.

3.10 Summary

This research adopted thematic analysis to analyse nine transcripts from YOS, six transcripts from the NPS, and three transcripts from FE college staff. A data-led approach was employed throughout the analysis with the aim of accurately reflecting the voice of the professionals from the three separate services. Nvivo was used to facilitate the analysis process by storing ideas and recording the identification of patterns that would inform the generation of codes and, ultimately, themes representative of the data. These themes were then shared with various professionals in order to maintain transparency and test the credibility of the qualitative analysis.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Overview

The findings, following the thematic analysis of the transcripts, will be reported within this chapter. They will be presented separately for each service. There will be a description of each overarching theme and subtheme as well as reporting on the concept that each theme attempts to explain. Direct quotations taken from the data are included to illustrate the findings. Following the presentation of the findings for each service, there will be an overall integrative analysis of the findings across all the settings to identify any similarities or differences. Due to limited space to explore all the findings, some themes and quotes deemed less related to the research questions have been recorded in Appendix 8.

4.2 Findings from the YOS data

The purpose of the interviews was to explore the perspective and experiences of YOS practitioners in relation to the SEND support that is provided to those CYP who are subject to a community-based sentence. Using the data from the interview transcripts, seven overarching themes, each comprising several subthemes, were identified. Appendix 1 shows thematic maps that provide a visual representation of the themes and their related subthemes.

The themes are presented according to their prevalence within the data (see Table 8). For instance, Theme 1 consisted of four subthemes with three of the four subthemes consisting of data from all nine transcripts. The fourth subtheme consisted of data from eight of the nine transcripts contributing to the overarching theme.

Table 8: YOS themes and how frequently they were raised

Theme	Subtheme	No. of participants' data included	Frequency of times each subtheme was raised
Theme 1: CYPs Educational Experience	Educational experience in mainstream settings	9	43
	Educational experience in custody	9	61
	Out of ETE	9	18
	Educational experience in PRU	8	18
Theme 2: Access to SEND Support	YOS access to relevant ETE information	5	24
	YOS access to specialist support	7	23
	YOS access to specialist equipment	5	9
	CYPs access to SEND support	9	33
Theme 3: CYP Factors Affecting Their Learning	Risk and challenging behaviour	8	40
	CYPs perceived attitude to learning	5	31
	Complex learning needs	7	27
	Complex family dynamics	6	28
Theme 4: Transitions and Their Impact	Transience in CYPs location	5	18
	Entry and release from custody	5	12
	Turning 18 and its impact	8	54
	Change in service delivery methods	8	51
Theme 5: Building Relationships with Stakeholders	Relationships with schools	8	44
	Relationships with colleges	4	14
	Relationships with PRUs	5	10
	Relationships with CYP	6	25
Theme 6: Identifying the Needs of CYP	Specialists identifying need through assessment	4	10
	Unmet and unidentified needs	8	26
	Identifying needs using professional judgement	5	12
Theme 7: Providing Support for CYPs SEND	Referring to specialists for SEND support	4	7
	Adapting interventions to CYPs SEND	6	24
	Improving knowledge to support SEND	4	34

4.2.1 Theme 1: CYPs educational experience

All of the participants made reference to the experiences of CYP while in education. They spoke broadly about how CYP reported their experiences in different educational settings and circumstances. The subthemes within this overarching theme are as follows: *Educational experience in mainstream settings; Educational experience in custody; Out of ETE and Educational experience in PRUs.*

Overall, many of these experiences were portrayed negatively with some positive comments made in a few cases. The participants discussed these experiences in relation to the different types of educational settings the CYP had been exposed to. The mainstream settings discussed included primary and secondary schools, and FE colleges, with most participants referring to CYP's experience at secondary school. This would typically relate to the participants' views that CYP did not feel suited to secondary school and there were a variety of perspectives as to the reasons for this.

One of the YOS staff explained their view as to why YOS CYP may not fit into secondary school by suggesting that the school system is designed to support those who are better able to conform to school expectations and it is not necessarily intended to cater for the needs that many of the YOS CYP may be struggling to manage.

Marian: *'The education system I don't think caters for anyone that doesn't really, these days, don't really abide by what they want, because it's all about their exam results and getting the best'.*

There was some consensus on the adverse treatment of CYP who failed to subscribe to the examination process. There was also a lot of focus on the prevalence of exclusions for YOS CYP in mainstream education and the negative impact that this had on the CYP, particularly in terms of them being unable to obtain any formal qualifications.

Participants stated that reports from CYP's experiences in custody were often negative. They reported that the deficits described by CYP ranged from inadequate teaching staff to environments lacking in the safe spaces required for

learning. However, custody was perceived by some participants as providing some positives, such as the introduction of routine and consistency in the lives of CYP that they may have been lacking up until their imprisonment.

Although participants were not advocating the experience of imprisonment or the impact it had on CYP, they recognised that it may be no more adverse on their learning than their current domestic circumstances.

Nina: *'I think the biggest difference is the other factors that the young person has been indoors overnight; you know where they are, they have had breakfast that morning there's someone that wakes them up'.*

The custodial environment was primarily perceived as not being conducive to learning and was purported as providing substandard SEND support.

All participants referred to the situation of CYP being out of ETE with and associated this position with an increased likelihood of recidivism. Explanations for CYP being out of education were rarely provided unless in relation to exclusion. However, YOS staff frequently expressed feelings of discontent with school life among CYP. There was also a sense that being out of ETE was commonplace amongst this group of CYP. The gravity of this circumstance was not lost on YOS staff who for the most part reported high levels of disaffection among CYP.

Diana: *"We know that a lot of young people are quite disaffected and not always in education in the first place or employment or training".*

Additionally, many participants expressed the view that PRUs could be volatile due to the nature of the students that attended. Some staff challenged the efficacy of attempting to educate these CYP, with particular needs, together within the

same setting. There was also a view that PRUs exposed CYP to peers actively engaging in offending behaviour, which suggests a culture of offending within PRUs that may in fact serve to accelerate recidivism.

Stuart: *'I had a kid who was in mainstream school and he was perfect doing everything by the book, no problem, best kid ever. One incident happened where a group of them got into some altercation. They put them into the Pupil Referral Unit. Within a month he committed four robberies'.*

Some participants did not perceive PRUs as conducive to learning and doubted that they successfully prepared CYP for a return to mainstream education.

Martina: *'I suppose what springs to mind is PRUs. I'm not sure how much learning goes on in a PRU anyway'.*

These comments from YOS staff indicate that they perceive the current set up of PRUs as requiring some reform if they are to serve their purpose as an alternative learning provision and an environment that prepares CYP for return to mainstream education. It may be that PRUs from the perspective of YOS are not adequately set up to serve this dual role, and perhaps it is their perceived role that requires reform.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Access to SEND support

Throughout the data there were examples of participants discussing their ability to support the SEND of the CYP they supervised. The type of support came in three main forms; ETE records from the CYP's file, support from specialist practitioners and the use of specialist equipment. These types of support went on to form three of the four subthemes (*YOS access to relevant ETE information; YOS access to specialist support, and YOS access to specialist equipment*).

There was also broader discussion on the SEND support available to CYP supervised by YOS, from the YOS and/or other services including schools, colleges, CAMHS etc. These considerations then formed the fourth subtheme (*CYP's access to SEND support*).

Participants were quick to highlight the benefit of connections with the Education Workers, from Connexions and the Secondary Education Worker. Although the Education Workers were not identified as providing any specific SEND support, they were perceived as helpful in terms of obtaining relevant information from schools and colleges. A few YOS staff highlighted that schools are best placed to build a profile of the CYP at a much broader level than they could as YOS staff. This was mainly due to the time CYP spent within the setting and the records that were kept on their behaviour, engagement and performance over an extensive period. Relevant information also included EHCPs and reports from specialists such as EPs and SALTs.

However, a key concern with YOS staff was when they were unable to access relevant ETE information at crucial times for the CYP; such as to inform the Youth Courts prior to sentence or information to add to their own assessments prior to custody. A pervasive difficulty, presented as beyond resolution, was the inability to access information on CYP during the holiday period when schools were closed.

Marcia: *'Be available during school holidays, that is the biggest bugbear because if you get a new order coming your way during a six-week break you can't find out any information from July till September; it's very difficult sometimes to get information'*.

Participants discussed access to specialist services such as SALT, EPS and CAMHS. Participants seemed to value input from these services; however, some expressed frustration at not receiving the input from these specialists at the rate and consistency desired.

Marian: *'It's not always inconsistent, I mean, I think just in the YOT, like CAMHS workers leave don't they. And then it takes ages to get another one'.*

Some YOS staff observed that schools and other institutions were able to commission or refer to some specialist services for support for their students. Yet, despite YOS CYP having similar or more severe needs, YOS lacked consistent access to these same services. Hence, staff seemed to believe that CYP on community-based sentences were not given the same attention and support even when compared to their counterparts in custody, despite having similar needs.

The data illustrated that YOS staff were confident that the AssetPlus (see Glossary), the main assessment tool, and the screening tools available to them were beneficial in identifying the needs of CYP. Overall, staff seemed to view the AssetPlus and its screening tools as comprehensive and purposeful. Some staff also seemed to portray it as a good indicator of when more specialist help should be sought.

However, some staff were not convinced in terms of the proficiency of how recorded information stored on AssetPlus was being transferred into everyday practice that would support the CYP.

Nina: *'There is so much consideration given especially in the new AssetPlus assessment tool around the delivery of intervention. How we do it? And considering a young person's diversity needs; I do not think it plays out in practice as much as we would like'.*

Finally, there was reference to the SEND support that CYP could access directly through YOS, school, or following referral to an external service. There was discussion on the complexities that may prevent CYP from obtaining SEND support. Some of these complexities included the inconsistency of the services available to them. One member of staff elaborated on the implications of this and stated that offering a service to CYP and then being unable to deliver that service can be problematic and exacerbate the situation.

Marian: *'I just don't see the point; it's doing more harm than good. It must be, mustn't it? You can't suddenly start referring people when all of a sudden, I won't even know my CAMHS worker's gone sick and I'm in the middle of trying to sort out my boy'.*

Other staff spoke about the SEND support offered to CYP while at school and some staff considered there to have been improvements in terms of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs within schools. Some participants stated that teachers were now better trained to support emotional wellbeing and that some schools had counselling hubs.

One participant stated that some schools still struggled to resource the appropriate SEND support and not all were in a position to make substantial improvements in this area. Another participant expanded on the point that schools struggle to support the SEND of CYP by illustrating the problem at a more systemic level. The view was that schools had failed to adapt their systems to adequately cater for the SEND of their students.

Aaron: *'We talk about learning styles and young people the way that people learn, but I don't know if that's fully addressed in schools, I still think*

that the systems they have in place are quite, for vast majority, are not tailored enough for people with special needs’.

4.2.3 Theme 3: CYP factors affecting their learning

This theme focused on how aspects of the CYP and their immediate context may have contributed to the effectiveness and quality of their learning. The theme consisted of four subthemes: *Risk and challenging behaviour*; *CYPs perceived attitude to learning*; *Complex learning needs*; and *Complex family dynamics* (see Appendix 8). In line with much of the research on the education of CYP who offend, YOS staff presented a negative perspective of the quality of CYP’s learning and identified factors relating to the above subthemes as having a considerable influence on their learning success.

The risks to others and themselves mainly through behaviour that could be described as dangerous or challenging, were frequently associated with interruptions in their education. In particular, it was suggested by some staff that difficult behaviour could relate to a lack of understanding or an attempt by the CYP to mask their SEND. More common, though, was the view that the behaviour categorised as risky or challenging was often prioritised while the SEND that may be directly associated with the behaviour remained unnoticed and unmet.

Nina: *‘I think a lot of our young people are difficult to manage in classrooms, so they are not necessarily getting their learning needs recognised because their behaviour is challenging and that is what is being addressed’.*

CYP’s attitudes were also explored, with some participants stating that CYP had an anti-authoritarian viewpoint. It was suggested that this attitude was not only endorsed but encouraged by their peers. Some participants explained the

rationale of CYP's anti-authoritarian attitude by highlighting their declining trust of adults in authority. One participant associated the anti-authoritarianism with the CYP believing that teachers and other people in authority did not like them. It was suggested by the participant that their response to this perceived animosity was an active resistance to conforming.

Yasmin: *'They find that very hard and they see it as the teacher attacking them and being against them, doesn't like them, so it reinforces a lot of difficult feelings and then they end up getting in trouble; they're called disruptive, they argue all the time, or yeah, so maybe that's what happens'.*

Complex learning needs were also identified as an obstacle to learning with many staff making reference to diagnostic terms such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and also acknowledging the impact of cognitive delay on their learning, engagement, and compliance with supervision. However, these terms and diagnoses were made all the more complicated for participants as they perceived that CYP's neurodevelopmental needs were often accompanied by SEMH difficulties.

These complex needs would often materialise through concerning behaviours in terms of risk and violence. The needs often remained unmet and unidentified due to the focus on CYP's behaviour. The presence of SEMH needs was mentioned by most of the YOS participants, and if accurate, may relate to the numerous traumatic incidents that have been reported by CYP.

Sabina: *'For many of the young people their needs are so complex their emotional and mental health often is affected by all manner of traumas that they've suffered through their lives'.*

4.2.4 Theme 5: Building relationships with stakeholders

The importance of relationships with stakeholders was clear throughout the data. Most participants spoke about the relationship with schools, CYP and PRUs. Only four of the YOS staff spoke specifically about FE colleges, which in itself was insightful considering the nature of the research and may relate to the limited contact between participants and the FE colleges.

The perceptions of the relationships with schools contrasted in terms of whether the relationship was positive or negative. There were even contrasting positions made by the same member of staff on more than one occasion. Ultimately, it seemed clear that the relationship with the school was very much dependent on the individual YOS worker and the individual school. YOS staff also spoke about how their relationship with schools was often limited by the Secondary Education Worker who had the most contact with the schools.

Frequency of contact was important in terms of building relationships as well as the type of contact. There were often positive reports of the working relationship when examples of the YOS staff attending the school for meetings or to work with CYP, was provided. Similarly, less positive accounts were sometimes followed by assertions that more joint working would be beneficial for both parties.

Aaron: *'I think it'd be good if we could actually sit down and plan things together to see what will be beneficial for them to do and what would be beneficial for us to do'.*

Overall, YOS staff seemed motivated to continue the work they were doing with schools or to increase collaboration which indicates that YOS staff, at the very least, value the building of relationships with schools. However, some staff did

express the view that school staff were less inclined to form purposeful relationships with YOS, which may relate to a lack of understanding of the contribution that YOS can make to the relationship.

The relationship with CYP was identified as paramount to the role by most members of staff. Staff spoke about making the effort to engage CYP and recognising that it takes a while to build a relationship with them yet having faith that, with persistence, the relationship would develop. Examples of making an effort included attending the school and multi-agency meetings and acting as an advocate for CYP.

There was some acknowledgement that SEND could negatively affect this staff-CYP dynamic if the staff member was unable to work with and engage the CYP. One staff member described going through the motions with CYP whose needs she considered to be a barrier to forming any purposeful relationship or conducting any meaningful work. Conversely, some staff indicated that forming the relationship was the catalyst to CYP having the confidence to disclose their needs.

Sabina: *‘Quite often as you build that relationship with the young person they’ll start to tell you about how they managed to get through school by not being able to understand half the things that were being said to them, or the fact that they can’t properly write, or that they do really struggle with their reading’.*

Staff were open about having more contact with PRUs as well as having more supportive relationships with PRU staff compared to schools and colleges. PRU staff were described as not only understanding the needs of the CYP they worked with but also understanding the contribution of YOS. Staff were more open to

contacting the PRU directly and mentioned having good relationships with more than just one member of staff, including the Headteacher. Generally, the relationship with the PRU was depicted as positive, supportive and mutually beneficial in comparison to other educational settings.

Marcia: *'Well, every school and college is different, but they do support it, we do have a very good relationship with them particularly with the PRUs.'*

Aaron: *'A lot of them apart from, I'd say pupil referral units, don't really have an understanding.'*

Comparatively, fewer staff commented on the relationship with FE colleges, than with mainstream schools and PRUs. This may be due to fewer CYP attending FE colleges being known to YOS, compared to schools and PRUs. It may also relate to staff relying on the Connexions worker to contact FE colleges on their behalf. However, YOS staff recognised that having a good relationship with FE colleges was crucial, particularly as colleges were less inclined to accept CYP involved in offending. It was identified that this makes it exceptionally difficult to place the more high-risk cases such as those that commit sexual and violent offences.

Marcia: *'I think it's crucial to have that relationship, particularly when we're trying to, for example we have cases where young people who have committed sexual offences and we're trying to get them into a college. It's not straightforward because colleges have to safeguard their other students'*

YOS staff formed better relationships with those FE colleges that were willing to give CYP on YOS supervision a chance. These FE colleges were willing to work with these CYP and understood that there might be academic challenges due to SEND and for other reasons. It was suggested that FE colleges, and the CYP

they serve, would benefit from FE colleges having a better understanding of rehabilitation and their role within it.

Other difficulties with forming relationships with FE colleges included many of them being out of borough which places a strain on maintaining these links. It was also stated that with schools there are typically other local authority staff that can provide additional information such as the Education Welfare Officers. However, this is not the case in the FE sector.

4.2.5 Theme 6: Identifying the needs of CYP

YOS staff frequently spoke about the importance of identifying the needs of the CYP they supervised. Some staff discussed the processes used to identify need but mainly staff spoke about the implications for CYP if their needs, were not identified in a timely fashion by schools or other services. The subthemes connected to this overarching theme are: *Specialists identifying need through assessment*, *Unmet and unidentified needs*; and *Identifying needs using professional judgement*.

When speaking about specialists identifying need, there was a sense of relief, as some staff mentioned that they did not feel sufficiently skilled to recognise needs in CYP. A member of staff stated that one specialist may pick up on something that would otherwise be overlooked. Other comments that illustrated an appreciation of what specialists could offer in terms of identification, included the claim that screening tools were no replacement for direct specialist input. There was also mention of plans to recruit emotional wellbeing and mental health specialists in order to identify this area of need at an earlier stage.

Diana: *'The idea being that if we have a few clinicians it would be like an early help, mental health emotional wellbeing type of response to some of these young people's needs that have gone unidentified'*

Many staff made a connection between unidentified and unmet learning needs and challenging behaviour, including but not exclusive to offending. These needs, sometimes perceived by staff as obvious, were not formally assessed or catered for which resulted in the CYP responding negatively within and towards their environment. School was seen as the best opportunity to identify these needs. However, there were suggestions that these opportunities were frequently not taken by schools, to the extent that one member of staff suggested that the school system had failed these CYP.

There were also concerns that missed opportunities to identify SEND could also occur in Youth Court, which could clearly influence the sentence imposed. Yet, the main focus for staff were the implications for the CYP should their needs go unnoticed and unmet.

Marcia: *'If it's not diagnosed and found early enough, it can have a huge impact. I do carry a small caseload from time to time and I currently have a young person who is deaf, and he's known to the Disabilities team, but because of trauma that he's experienced during his formative years, he's now exhibiting severe behavioural problems'*

Finally, there were a few examples of staff using their professional judgement to identify needs. There were many examples provided by participants of YOS staff starting to work with a new case and not being informed of any learning needs. However, once they start to interact with the CYP, it became evident that some underlying issues may be present. There was also reports of staff recognising

that a specific need was not being catered for by the educational institution and making the decision to escalate this to senior management within the YOS.

Throughout the data, there were many reports of staff not feeling confident to support the needs of CYP with SEND, yet most were able to provide examples of when they had identified a need that had not previously been identified by educators.

Sabina: *'It is very interesting how even with the young people that we get that are supposedly coming with no educational or any kind of emotional or health learning need, quite often when you start to rub the surface, you start to realise, ooh there's a bit more going on here, there's something not quite right'*

4.2.6 Theme 7: Providing support for CYPs SEND

This overarching theme is concerned with the ways in which YOS staff support the SEND of the CYP they supervise. The subthemes attached to this theme are *Referring to specialists for SEND support; Adapting interventions to CYP's SEND* and *Improving knowledge to support SEND*.

YOS staff discussed referring cases to external agencies in a multitude of different ways for various reasons. Referrals in regard to SEND typically related to SALT, EPs, and CAMHS. However, there were occasions whereby staff recognised that CYP may have social interaction needs and made the decision to introduce them to other CYP in a community setting such as the Fire Cadets. Additionally, there was mention of working with schools in relation to screening CYP at risk of permanent exclusion for speech, language, and communication needs. Making referrals to external agencies seemed commonplace.

Stuart: *'You come into us, we see education and training employment needs, mental health, substance misuse, we see parenting deficit. We then make referrals to even mental health, to the relevant professionals'*

By adapting the intervention to the needs of the CYP, staff were able to better engage the CYP they supervised. The adaptation was made in numerous ways such as using role play to communicate serious messages or using accessible language. Staff mentioned the importance of utilising the CYP strengths and interests as well as providing techniques to help CYP regulate their emotions. There were also comments on the need to consider the environment of the setting for some CYP. There were even efforts made to change the statutory sentence imposed by the courts in order to accommodate some identified needs.

Marcia: *'I managed to get in touch with the school and they were able to send me over paperwork which provided evidence for me to take back to court, have the Unpaid Work removed and replace it with another requirement because of his special needs'*

Finally, some YOS staff reported that they needed to improve their knowledge relating to SEND. Some spoke about the input they had received from specialists such as direct recommendations or training, as well as actively trying to increase their knowledge base by observing specialists. It was suggested by some that the standard of their work could be negatively affected by their lack of knowledge of and expertise in SEND.

Aaron: *'So any intervention we offer may not be effective because we don't know how to work with that young person, so we might go through the motions but how effective is our intervention?'*

Equally, there was a lack of confidence in relation to SEND. Staff might be willing to adapt the approach or intervention but were uncertain as to how effective their

adaptation would be. Overall, most participants shared the view that they would prefer to have some input or guidance from a specialist, but in the absence of this level of support they would benefit from increased knowledge and, ultimately an increased confidence in working with SEND.

Nina: *'If there are not those specific recommendations in an assessment of that kind, then I think I would adapt my approach in terms of trying to make sure the young person understands, but I do not think I have a lot of confidence in making sure that I'm meeting their learning needs'*

4.3 Findings from the NPS data

These interviews aimed to explore the views of NPS professionals in relation to the SEND support that is provided for their YPAs subject to a community-based sentence. Using the data from the interview transcripts four overarching themes with several subthemes were identified. Appendix 1 shows thematic maps from NVivo to create a visual representation of the themes and their related subthemes (see Table 9).

Table 9: NPS themes and how frequently they were raised

Theme	Subtheme	No. of participants' data included	Frequency of times each subtheme was raised
Theme 1: Service Delivery Factors Affecting SEND Support for YPAs	NPS approach to SEND	6	17
	Limited access to specialist SEND advice and guidance	4	24
	CJS not prioritising ETE and SEND	5	23
Theme 2: Building Relationships with Stakeholders	NPS relationship with YPAs	4	25
	Building relationships with other services	4	14
	Building relationships with FE colleges	6	23
Theme 3: YPA Factors Impacting on Their ETE	High risk and challenging behaviour	3	8
	Still maturing and developing	5	18
	The impact of race and gender	4	9
	YPAs and their complex needs	6	16
Theme 4: Adverse Life Experiences	Adverse educational experience	5	16
	Trauma and its effects	3	6
	Adverse family circumstances	3	4

4.3.1 Theme 1: Service delivery factors affecting SEND support for YPAs

In this overarching theme the focus is on the variety of circumstances associated with NPS service delivery that have influenced the SEND support available to YPAs. These factors were typically seen as being beyond the NPS staff member's control and thus could not be affected by individual attributes such as motivation, skills or knowledge of the NPS staff.

This theme consists of three subthemes which are *NPS approach to SEND*; *Limited access to specialist SEND advice and guidance*; and *CJS not prioritising ETE and SEND*.

There was identification of some specific interventions for 'service users' with learning needs such as a cognitive behavioural therapy-based programme

for service users convicted of sexual offences. This programme included visual images to support learning but was the only programme of its kind available. There was also mention of an induction pack specifically designed for service users with learning needs. However, NPS staff stated that overall, SEND was not prioritised by the service and as a result there was no formal guidance on how they should support the needs of this group of YPAs:

Wendy: *'I don't know that we have; there may be individuals that have that thought, there certainly isn't a policy or a consideration of how we should deal with it differently'*

There were also comments on the lack of priority given to SEND by the CJS overall, which resulted in negative consequences for some of the YPAs affected. One member of staff reported that Youth Justice were better at catering for these needs, and so it was suggested that YPAs should remain with YOS until they reached the age of 25.

Other staff commented on the inflexibility of the CJS in accommodating SEND and how this can result in YPAs being imprisoned due to limited options for staff:

Ayse: *'So I'm breaching (returning back to court due to not complying with community-based sentence) a young man who's got learning difficulties, he was quite aggressive in the interview room and he's missed a number of appointments and I've been quite flexible with him. He's now reached a point I can no longer be like that but when looking at the proposals that I have available to me in the breach, I cannot see one that would work other than custody'*

Due to these complexities another NPS staff member suggested that YPAs with SEND should not be dealt with by the CJS:

Chibunde: *'I just think that those with severe learning difficulties; the criminal justice system is not the place for them'*

Additionally, staff were clear about the limited specialist input they received, which was deteriorating further due to 'Together' (Mental Health Service) no longer providing a service for the NPS. Participants stated that it would be beneficial to have ongoing advice to guide their practice. This was not only in terms of their day-to-day contact with service users but also in regard to specialist input into the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA), which is a multi-disciplinary meeting designed to manage the risk of the more dangerous service users in the community.

Wendy: *'It would be valuable to have somebody from the learning disabilities team as a constant part of MAPPA for instance; not just for individual cases, but for support and advice'*

4.3.2 Theme 2: Building relationships with stakeholders

There was a lot of discussion about the benefits of having relationships with many different stakeholders including the importance of: *NPS relationship with YPAs; Building relationships with other services; and Building relationships with FE colleges*. Hence, relationships formed the subthemes for the overarching theme.

The relationship with YPAs was discussed by most participants and considered topics such as building rapport, identifying their interests and engagement with professional boundaries. It was interesting to hear the comments on YPAs response to authoritarian approaches with some NPS staff stating the approach was necessary while others deemed it to be ineffective. However, there seemed to be consensus on the view that without a relationship, YPAs were unlikely to confide in the staff member:

Moira: *'I'm working with a very young individual, 18 years old. He has minimal family support, there was conflict in his family when I first met him. He came across as somebody who was very internal, he wouldn't talk to me and I understand that because sometimes it's about building trust with us'*

NPS staff spoke explicitly about the relationship with FE colleges and the need for an improvement in communication between the two services. There was mention that there may be professional links between partnership agencies like Shaw Trust (see Glossary) and local colleges. However, this was unsubstantiated and NPS staff did not identify any particular benefit, if these links existed.

There was clear concern pertaining to FE colleges being reluctant to enrol YPAs subject to a community-based sentence, mainly due to the risks associated with these YPAs. However, some NPS staff stated that a better understanding between the two services would help to inform their risk management decisions. There were also suggestions on how the relationship could be developed further.

John: *'I don't think we've got a close enough relationship with them and it may be something that we can look at perhaps in the future, to perhaps involve people from local colleges, perhaps even have somebody come along to team meetings explain what they do and we can explain what we do'*

In terms of the relationships with other services, these services typically included the YOS, Shaw Trust and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) (see Glossary). FE colleges were not included as these were covered independently in another subtheme. In relation to support for SEND, it was reported by some participants that YPAs would receive support from the Shaw Trust when applying for ETE. However, NPS staff did not mention receiving SEND advice from this service in terms of their direct work with YPAs.

Conversely, there was an acknowledgement by NPS staff that NPS were more effective when collaboratively working with partnership agencies. Some staff referred to the benefit of building relationships with services that specialised in supporting people with SEND

Chibunde: *'If we had, say, a link with Adult Social Services or whatever, learning disabilities team, at least we could approach them and say this is the situation, what would you advise us on going forward? Just more support, I suppose, in the community and with partnership agencies and through NPS itself.'*

4.3.3 Theme 3: YPA factors impacting on their ETE

This theme refers to the factors specifically related to the YPA that has a direct influence on their engagement in ETE. The subthemes covered by this theme are *High risk and challenging behaviour, Still maturing and developing* (see Appendix 8), *The impact of race and gender* (see Appendix 8), and *YPAs and their complex needs*.

The term 'high risk' is by and large a by-product of the NPS as it is now. It was modified in 2014 to manage the service users that were deemed to pose the greatest risk in the community. High risk is not a classification exclusively for YPAs but is given to service users of any age managed by the NPS. NPS staff were clear within their transcripts that the management of risk was their primary focus with some staff stating that this was sometimes at the expense of rehabilitation. It was clear that protecting the public, or the service user themselves, was the immediate focus, even if this meant the young offender was delayed in accessing ETE suitable for their needs.

Ayse: *'I know that the national probation service has done a lot of work to make sure that when we're sending service users off to university or*

college, that is a safe placement for them, and then we're not putting other people at risk'

Finally, the complex needs of YPAs was repeatedly commented on by NPS staff. There was mention of literacy difficulties and/or dyslexia. However, the complexity often came with the suspicion of their being multiple needs with a probable undertone of SEMH that often presents in behaviour deemed to be challenging, disruptive and disturbing. This complexity of need raised concerns as some NPS staff associated it with exclusion from mainstream school and increased likelihood of imprisonment.

Wendy: *'If we look at the early lives of the people that we work with who have some kind of learning disability, have difficulty with reading, there would almost certainly or quite likely to be behavioural issues at school, and that would've turned into getting expelled'.*

Ayse: *'I feel that am I punishing him for bad behaviour that's maybe stemming from his learning difficulties...his behaviour has been unacceptable but then like proposing custody for somebody you think would be vulnerable in a custodial environment also feels completely unfair and a bit disproportionate'.*

4.3.4 Theme 4: Adverse life experiences

In this overarching theme, attention is given to the difficult and problematic circumstances experienced by many of the service users that are supervised by NPS staff. These distressing ordeals are explored in the following subthemes: *Adverse educational experience, Trauma and its effects (see Appendix 8), and Adverse family circumstances (see Appendix 8).*

The negative educational experiences of NPS service users was discussed by most of the participants and was often seen as a contributing factor in their offending behaviour. These experiences included those in mainstream school,

special school, PRUs, FE colleges, and in custody. The adverse experiences included struggling academically, exposure to risk, and non-attendance. However, the main discussion evolved around exclusion from a setting.

Chibunde: *'Being excluded from school and being sent to a pupil referral unit, that doesn't bode well for anybody, because it's a bunch of like-minded people in one room that have had behavioural issues or whatever else. How is anybody ever going to flourish and work in that environment?'*

4.4 Findings from the FE colleges data

Using the data from the transcripts from the three participants, four overarching themes were identified. Each of the overarching themes consisted of between two and five subthemes. Although the participants' data were initially analysed according to their FE college setting (see Appendix 1), the overarching themes from the two separate settings matched. As there was some overlap in what was said by the participants, some of the subthemes were merged.

Table 10: FE colleges themes and how frequently they were raised

Theme	Subtheme	No. of participants' data included	Frequency of times each subtheme was raised
Theme 1: YPA Factors Affecting Learning	Complex SEND	3	22
	Risk and behaviour	3	30
	Unidentified SEND	2	7
	Impact of problematic parenting	1	6
	Adverse educational experiences	1	12
Theme 2: Building Relationships with Stakeholders	Building relationship with YPAs	2	8
	Building relationships with probation	2	8
	Building relationships with YOS	2	20
Theme 3: An Emphasis on Success	YPA moments of success	2	14
	Indicators of effective practice	2	10
Theme 4: Approaches and Strategies to Support YPAs Learning	Approaches supporting SEND	3	31
	Approaches used to address risk	3	46

4.4.1 Theme 1: YPA factors affecting learning

Both participants discussed the factors directly relating to YPAs opportunities to learn. These were factors or issues that the YPAs brought with them into the FE college (or other learning environments) that had an impact on their ability to access the curriculum. The subthemes relating to this overarching theme are: *Complex SEND, Risk and behaviour, Unidentified SEND, Impact of problematic parenting, and Adverse educational experiences*

Complex SEND was described by using diagnostic terms such as ASD, learning disability and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), and how these conditions affected or were exacerbated by YPA's offending behaviour or family circumstances. Additionally, there was discussion about the impact that

diagnostic labels had on YPA's self-concept and confidence in education to the extent where one participant expressed a doubt about the existence of some conditions.

Robyn: *'In many cases they come from you know, they may have learning difficulties or disabilities, they may have mental health needs but also they may come from, they may be looked after children, they come from not very nice backgrounds, so it's about how we can then support the wider learner and not just around their offences'*

Leigh: *'I don't like to sit on their disability so much... I get ones that have got...like authoritative dissociative disorder, where they don't like when people in authority tell them what to do, but no one does, so that's life, I'm not taking that as a disorder'*

This theme covered the medicalisation of YPAs, and the problems associated with this. One participant expressed concerns that some YPAs may become dependent on the medication and begin to make excuses for their inability to engage in education, if they have not taken their medication. The suggestion being that medicalisation removes the agency of the YPA to manage their behaviour in the absence of prescribed substances.

Leigh: *'They think, I need this medication, if I don't have it I'm going to kick off and it becomes an excuse, so last week he came in without his medication and all of a sudden it was nah, I haven't taken my medication, Miss, that's it, that's it, I can't control myself. But you're telling yourself that. Who's telling you that?'*

There was focus on SLCN and the impact this had on their learning and compliance with their community-based sentences. SLCN was described as being prevalent within this group of YPAs (see Appendix 8 quote 1 and 2).

The focus on behaviour in this theme centred on risk and offending. There was a brief discussion on the types of behaviour or offending that raised concerns such as the carrying of knives, drug dealing, and 'county lines'. However, the

overlapping concern was 'gang' or serious group offending. This was not only in terms of having affiliates of opposing groups on the same campus, but also the likelihood of YPAs refusing to attend due to the concerns they had for their own safety.

Robyn: *'We only are aware of that because there was an incident in the college and we had to suspend this young individual and in a conversation with the mum, she then explained to me that it wasn't safe for her or her young person to attend a disciplinary meeting here'*

There were also comments on the difficulties associated with many of these YPAs having SEND that remained unidentified. Some of the explanations provided included the needs not being picked up earlier, during school. There were links made to unidentified SEND and risk related behaviour and the difficulties this caused for those concerned.

Joy: *'I think ADHD is a problem, I think there's a lot of offenders that have not been diagnosed and so they're actually in youth offending establishments and probably still not diagnosed and probably getting into loads and loads of fights and trouble and confrontations, simply because they've not been identified'.*

An interesting point was raised pertaining to the impact of custody on YPAs and their ability to adjust to learning environments in the community. It was suggested that SEMH needs associated with institutionalisation were often disregarded and ultimately remained unmet.

Robyn: *'They may not have a diagnosed mental health issue but the kind of trauma that they've been through by actually being in prison and being institutionalised, for me, means that they need to have that intervention, they need that support, that counselling and we don't do it, we don't do it'.*

There was a brief discussion about the input of parents and the possibility that this could have an adverse impact on the YPA's ability to learn independently. Examples were given in terms of parents being overprotective towards their children and not allowing them the space to develop and mature; as well as parents not being sufficiently supportive. These parenting approaches were associated with YPA's inability to progress in education as well as being a contributory factor in their offending behaviour.

Leigh: *'It's not just the fact that he's offended but he's got a whole background with his family as well you see, so it's like parents that are here, but not here, you know, so when we're looking at the youngsters in education, we're also looking at what they bring from home'*

There was also recognition that previous educational experiences were likely to affect the way YPA's approached education at the FE college. There was an understanding that many of those subject to community-based sentences had experienced extremely difficult circumstances and so had difficulties with motivation. At times, it was an achievement for some YPAs to even be present in a lesson. However, much of the comments centred on the reluctance of mainstream education and educators to make the effort to actively engage and support the YPAs as children. Ultimately, creating an even greater challenge for educators within FE settings.

Leigh: *'In their old school they were just chucked out because the teacher couldn't deal with them. Chucked out because you were naughty. Chucked out because you were being a disturbance, 'oh let's just exclude him, because it's easier to do that than to deal with the situation'.*

4.4.2 Theme 2: Building relationships with stakeholders

There was a lot of emphasis on the importance of building relationships with YPAs, the probation service and YOS, and so the following subthemes were developed: *Building relationships with YPAs*, *Building relationships with probation*, and *Building relationships with YOS*.

The value that was placed on building relationships with YPAs was illustrated by the roles that were in place to offer YPAs support, such as the 'Opportunities Coach'. It was explained that this member of staff would work closely with groups deemed to be at risk, such as LAC. There was also discussion on mentoring roles and there was mention of perhaps introducing a new role for someone to work closely with YPAs deemed to have affiliations with gangs. This emphasis on relationships with students seemed to be underpinned by the perspective that every YPA benefitted from feeling that someone had an interest in them as a person.

Joy: *'I think they need that support; they need to know that somebody's bothered if you like, that somebody cares about what is happening to them'*

The relationship with the probation service was presented as being underdeveloped. While there was value placed on developing this relationship, there was an acceptance that more of their students on community-based sentences were supervised by YOS as opposed to probation. Yet, for the cases that were supervised by probation there was evident frustration at the limited communication between the probation service and the FE college. It was stipulated that poor communication may be due to the probation service's limited resources, rather than a lack of motivation to communicate on their part.

However, the probations service's level of communication was reported as being worse than that of most YOSs.

Robyn: *'I mean I don't feel that there is enough communication, particularly, I mean probation is probably worse than youth offending, most definitely we tend to get a lot less from them, and it's a lot harder to get information'*

When discussing the relationship with YOS, participants were clear that communication varied depending on which YOS was involved. It was explained that there had been a risk related incident that had occurred in the college due to a YOS not updating the college on the heightened risk. This lack of communication was taken seriously by the college which was making efforts to consult with the Head of the YOS regarding the matter. There were examples of practice from other YOSs that were deemed as exceptional for YPAs and hence improved the relationship between the college and these YOSs.

Robyn: *'What she also did, which was fantastic and I've never ever seen it or experienced it by any other youth offending team before, is that she regularly came to the college so we shared the timetables of these individuals, so she then regularly came to the college like on a fortnightly or monthly basis. She would just kind of hang around in the student lounge and see what her kids were up to'*

It was clear that this member of college staff valued it when staff from YOS attended the college.

4.4.3 Theme 3: An emphasis on success

Throughout the interviews, participants were keen to highlight areas of success. These successes typically consisted of exceptional progress by YPAs or policy and practice implemented by the college. Consequently, the two subthemes

connected to this overarching theme are *YPA moments of success* (see Appendix 8) and *Indicators of effective practice*.

In regard to practice that was deemed to be effective, the comments included reference to statistics. There were statistics provided on the percentages of YPAs transitioning from the Learning Disabilities and Difficulties Department to mainstream education. There were also percentages provided for the retention of YPAs that declared themselves 'offenders'. These percentages were deemed to be very high and were purported as evidence that the policies, strategies and approaches used by the college to support the needs of YPAs who are subject to community-based sentences. Credit was given to the Principal and the Executive Team for understanding the importance of these issues and providing an inclusive education.

Robyn: *'You know there are other colleges who don't kind of prioritise that work and will maybe not want those individuals because they know how hard they have to work with those individuals and how much money, it's going to cost, we're lucky that we have an executive team that don't see it that way'*

4.4.4 Theme 4: Approaches and strategies to support YPAs learning

Throughout the interviews, FE college staff gave examples of ways that they support the learning of YPAs subject to community-based sentences. There were a variety of different approaches discussed that centred on addressing two independent but related topics of SEND and offending. Accordingly, the following subthemes were formed: *Approaches supporting SEND* and *Approaches used to address risk*.

Several approaches were used to support SEND in the FE college at an organisational, group and individual level. Participants discussed the Learning Disability and Difficulties Department having an integral role within the college. There was reference to the relevant training courses such as mental health training for all staff as well as the Wellbeing Centre located on site. Additionally, there was discussion on the direct support for students such as in class-support for high-needs learners. A recent approach that was discussed was the piloting of a Communications Group to help address the SLCN that have been identified in many of the YPAs they work with.

Joy: *'I do communication groups with groups of students, it's something that we're piloting this year'*

Addressing offending behaviour was at the organisational, group, and individual level. One of the participants spoke about a sharing information agreement the FE college had with the metropolitan police, which enabled the swift sharing of information relating to offending. Partnership working included collaborating with charities that specialised in working with YPAs who offend, like the St Giles Trust. There was a protocol outlining the tiering of the risk for individuals, as well as a system of having face-to-face interviews and risk assessments with every prospective student that declares an offending history.

There were numerous approaches used to address risk and offending within the college. This included discussion of the work done to promote risk management practice among other local FE colleges (see Appendix 8 quote 3). However, the involvement with risk focused work seemed to depend on the processes within the FE college rather than a generic way to reduce risk. Not all

participants viewed risk focused work as a part of their role (see Appendix 8 quote 4)

4.5 Comparison of the similarities and differences between settings on the SEND support offered to YPAs

There were a few themes shared by all or most of the settings but none more consistently so than the consideration given to the risk and behaviour of the YPAs in this group. In each case, the concerns relating to risk were not restricted to the risks posed to others by the YPA but also included the vulnerability of the YPAs themselves. There were several discussions about the impact that these risks had on their ability to learn, and at times the teachers' ability to teach these students. Risk and behaviour were often apportioned blame for YPAs having to be asked to leave the class, being excluded from school or in some cases receiving custodial sentences. There was also mention from the FE colleges that in relation to assessment, some YPAs were deemed too great a risk to even be allowed to attend the FE setting.

There were instances when the behaviour may not have related to risk of physical harm per se. However, it may have been deemed as sufficiently disruptive for the YPA to be asked to leave their current education provision. It may also have been that the behaviour was illicit and warranted a direct return to custody or further sentencing.

Additionally, participants from all settings made the connection between unidentified needs and risk related and/or offending behaviour. The explanation for these unmet needs, varied from participant to participant, but typically eluded to the point that mainstream primary and secondary schools missed the

opportunity to have these students assessed for SEND while at school. There was a suggestion by many of the participants that the failure of mainstream schools to identify these needs at an earlier stage had impacted adversely on the YPAs and their education.

Some participants reported that behaviour perceived as disruptive and challenging by teachers may have been underpinned by the child having a need that was not being adequately met. There was also mention of the overlap between YPAs involved in the youth justice system and those looked after by the local authority (see Appendix 8). Hence, there were comments that frequent changes in schools due to transience in accommodation may also reduce the school's ability to arrange the required assessment of need. Other examples provided were persistent non-attendance at school by young offenders and the pre-occupation with exam results by school staff and the school system.

In most instances, the settings identified good communication with other services and agencies as an effective way to inform their risk assessments and ultimately reduce the potential risk posed. This sentiment related to another common theme of the importance of building relationships. A direct relationship with the YPA was often seen as the best way to identify any SEND as the YPA would be more willing to trust the practitioner and disclose relevant information. By getting to know the YPA, participants explained that they were much more able to introduce suggestions or approaches that might otherwise meet with resistance.

In terms of the relationships with professionals from other services, this was often perceived as an integral part of risk management. The punctual sharing

of information and fluid communication between key professionals enabled each service to have a current and accurate assessment of the YPAs needs. Many participants also stated that by YPAs seeing agencies working together, they would be less inclined to try to mislead professionals about having conflicting appointments.

Participants from all the settings, except the local FE college, expressed the view that communication between YOS, the NPS and FE colleges was not as consistent and comprehensive as desired. However, participants from each setting reported to being receptive to an increase in communication, particularly in terms of having professionals attend their settings for team meetings or for more informal meetings. Also, despite the local FE college not expressing an interest in increased communication with YOS and the NPS, there was concern raised pertaining to the impact that community-based sentences have on college attendance. This conflicts with YOS and NPS participants stating that they make efforts to ensure that reporting instructions do not interfere with ETE. This may be an example of how active communication between services may improve YPA's attendance in college.

It was also clear that each setting had *approaches* and strategies at the organisational, group and individual level to support the SEND of YPAs. At the broadest level, themes relating to this area sometimes overlapped with *Building relationships with YPAs*, and professionals having the insight and professional judgement to support these needs when identified. However, at a more specific level, YOS staff mentioned having some access to specialists such as EPs, SALTs and CAMHS. NPS staff spoke about interventions using visual prompts and images in order to be accessible for those with specific learning needs like

dyslexia. These adaptations were limited to only a few interventions but were available throughout the service irrespective of their geographical location. Both FE colleges had either departments or teams with the sole purpose of supporting the SEND of their students.

YOS and NPS participants had notable similarities in terms of their willingness to gain further knowledge and training on how to best support the SEND of YPAs. They were willing to engage in structured training; however, some participants from both settings acknowledged that more than just a one-off training session would be required. There was mention by some YOS staff on the importance of having regular refreshers from specialist staff.

Similarly, an NPS participant suggested having ongoing support from a specialist contact in the 'Learning Disabilities Team' who could provide advice as required. Both YOS and the NPS also identified changes in terms of their specialist mental health support. Some YOS staff raised concerns relating to not being able to gain access to CAMHS input at crucial times, while the NPS stated they were losing access to their mental health specialists who were previously co-located with them and regularly available to offer advice and guidance.

Each setting also made reference to factors directly relating to YPAs subject to community-based sentences that would affect either their access to SEND support or their overall opportunity to learn. There was variation between settings on what constituted 'complex' SEND. However, whether it was due to the multiplicity of need, the effects of youth justice involvement or the interrelation between SEND and risk of serious harm, there seemed to be a consensus that the SEND of these YPAs were complicated and challenging to manage. The type

of needs discussed were often ASD, ADHD, ODD, SLCN, learning disability and mental health concerns. There was sometimes mention of YPAs with hearing impairment and YPAs involved with substance misuse.

The experiences of YPAs within education did not go unnoticed by most of the participants. There were comments on YPA's dissociation with education at some level whether this occurred through permanent exclusion from mainstream settings or persistent non-attendance. YPA's educational experiences were often described as difficult, challenging and adverse, and the impact this had on their preparedness and motivation to continue with ETE seemed notable. These experiences were also often attributed to mainstream teachers being unable to effectively manage the behaviour of YPAs who possibly had unidentified learning needs that were accompanied by a history of adverse childhood experiences.

There were notable differences in the way settings supported the SEND of YPAs subject to community-based sentences. As would be expected, the FE colleges had a primary focus on the education of their students. Also, with YOS, education seemed to hold an integral place within their work as an organisation. Although their primary aim was to reduce the likelihood of reoffending by their CYP, there was a clear emphasis on education, which was apparent through their retention of Education Workers, their process of recruiting a SALT and YOS participants' frequent discussion of the importance of education in their role.

Although NPS participants mentioned their access to the Shaw Trust and consideration of ETE status during assessments, there was a view that ETE support had declined in recent years. Some participants were clear in their

disclosure that risk management was the NPS's priority and as such there was less focus on ETE, and little attention given to SEND. There were also comments pertaining to NPS staff having minimal access to specialist advice, guidance and training. NPS staff were the only participants that did not mention EHCPs when discussing the approaches used to support the SEND of their service users. It may be worth considering if NPS staff are aware of the process of requesting an EHCP assessment for their service users and the benefits associated with this.

Comments related to access to specialist input generally referred to SALT, mental health services, and specialist in-house staff such as mentors and learning support. YOS participants were the only group to mention accessing or requiring the support of EPs. There may be several reasons for this including them having access to an EP and their being an effort in the local authority to ensure the SEND of YPAs known to YOS are met. However, it should be considered that NPS only work with YPAs over the age of 18 and the work between FE colleges and EPSs is relatively new in some instances. Also, FE college participants did not express any difficulties with accessing specialist support and seemed content with the services available to them.

The overlaps and intricacies of the views of staff from the different services are presented in figure 2 below and will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

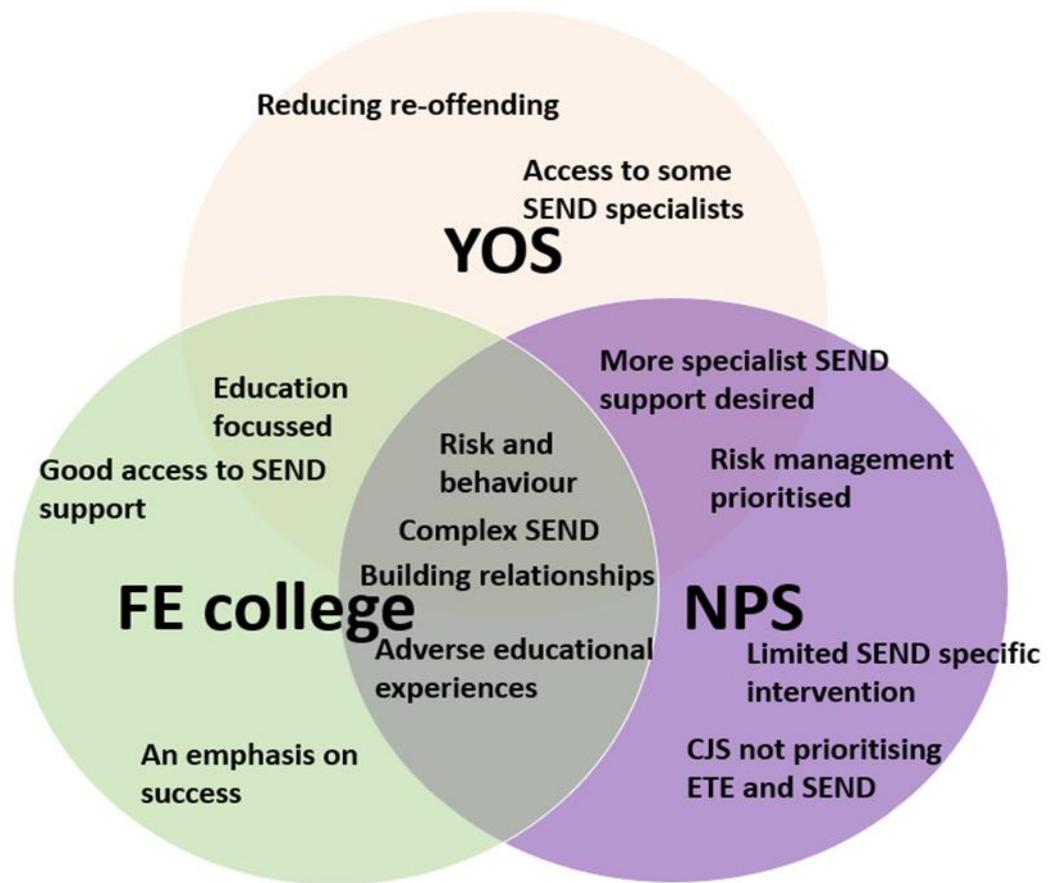


Figure 2: Views of staff identified from the different services

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Overview

The aim of the study was to explore how the special educational needs (SEND) of young people and adults (YPAs) on community-based sentences are supported by practitioners from Youth Offending Services (YOS), the National Probation Services (NPS) and further education (FE) colleges. There was exploration of the factors affecting this support, and to what extent the support and challenges varied between the services. Data pertaining to each setting were analysed separately and the overlaps and differences were identified in a subsequent stage of analysis.

Throughout this chapter, the findings will be discussed in relation to the research questions with consideration given to earlier research relevant to the topic. Following this, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory is used as an interpretive lens to provide an understanding of the factors affecting SEND support for this group of YPAs. From the perspective of the participants, the theory helps to explore the extent to which interactions between individuals and systems may affect the development of these YPAs who are often in challenging circumstances.

Finally, there will be discussion on the limitations and strength of the study as well as thought given to how the findings may have implications for educational psychologist practice. A broader discussion on the implications for practitioners that support YPAs subject to community-based sentences is then concluded with general recommendations offered.

5.2 Research questions, main findings and relationship with previous research

5.2.1 Research Question 1: What factors are highlighted by frontline practitioners as being important for supporting the SEND of YPAs subject to a community-based sentence?

The ***Access to SEND Support*** and ***Providing Support for CYPs SEND*** overarching themes were comprised of data that illustrated important factors when supporting these YPAs. Some participants explained that inconsistent access to specialist support was problematic in terms of YPAs receiving prompt assessments and adequate intervention. There were then expressions of preference by participants for SEND support to be ongoing as opposed to singular or intermittent training.

The ***Service delivery factors affecting SEND support for YPAs*** theme contains data that indicated that participants did not consider the criminal justice system (CJS) to be conducive to the development of YPAs with SEND despite providing some examples of how the CJS catered to the needs of this group. Participants spoke of the inflexibility of the system and there were suggestions for professionals with SEND backgrounds to be available to provide advice and to attend the MAPPA.

NPS participants discussed the perceived prevalence of individuals with SEND on their caseloads and stated that some of these YPAs should not be in the CJS and should instead be receiving support from health or education services. However, they also expressed uncertainty about which departments or services to contact in order to request support for these YPAs. This would indicate that NPS staff may lack clear guidelines on how to acquire adequate SEND support for their service users.

A joint inspection by HMI Probation and HMI Prisons in 2015 covered similar topics to those that were discussed by participants in this study and highlighted that SEND screening tools were not used routinely. Overall, the findings suggested that the problems with supporting SEND (specifically learning disabilities like ASD) were mainly related to their identification. Within the current study, there was a perception from some participants that they would be unable to recognise that a YPA may benefit from an assessment if they were not already familiar with that YPA. Ultimately, if the SEND remained unidentified then there would be no attempt to address these issues by adapting the original approach or referring to the relevant SEND specialist.

NPS practitioners in the current study stated that they were unaware of specific guidance that informed their practice when working with service users with SEND. This finding echoed the joint inspection which reported that despite there being guidance and screening tools available, staff perceived these to be inaccessible. Equally, many frontline managers were not aware of or were unable to implement these guidelines and tools (HMI Probation & HMI Prisons, 2015).

Further to this, problems would exist in those instances when individuals were adequately assessed and identified, yet there was no suitable support offered following assessment. It seemed clear that many of the YPAs with SEND were unlikely to benefit from the conventional offending behaviour interventions. Hence, intervention should be adapted to their needs on a broader scale than for just those convicted of sexual offences. This is in keeping with the Disability Rights Commission, which states that individuals with learning disabilities and difficulties should be encouraged to participate and have choices as opposed to an approach based solely on risk and vulnerability (Loukes, 2007).

The limited access to direct support from specialists, suitable training on various types of SEND for frontline staff and the difficulty staff encounter with accessing guidance on working with these YPAs is concerning. Several years following the Bradley Report (2009) and a couple years following Hellenbach's (2017) study, many of the problems highlighted by their findings remain. This may be interpreted by some as the CJS treating these YPAs unfairly on account of their SEND. The current research themes indicate a culture within the CJS that prioritises risk to the extent that the development of YPAs with SEND is adversely affected.

In these instances, the role of the EP may be less about identifying SEND and more about identifying ways to modify the system. By solely identifying the SEND in an individual, the 'problem' is placed firmly within the YPA. Thus, serving to allow the systems around the YPA to remain the same. Instead, the objective for the EP might be to change the attitudes and behaviours of the practitioners supporting the YPA. The aim being to change the functioning of the immediate systems around the individual in order for the YPA to then change (Beaver, 2011).

Wallace (2014) discusses a similar view and states that for the desired development of the YPA to be achieved, it is important to recognise that the interaction with their environment must be bidirectional. Although it is expected that relationships and interactions within the immediate setting influence the YPA; the YPA also influences that environment. Further to this, it is not sufficient for the practitioner to 'move' the YPA; rather for transformational development to occur, YPAs must sense that they have 'moved' the practitioner with their effort, accomplishment and thorough engagement in the developmental process (Wallace, 2014).

Data within the *Relationships with CYP, NPS relationship with YPAs* and *Building relationships with YPAs* subthemes highlights that participants recognised the importance of the relationship between practitioners and YPAs. Participants viewed the development of trusting and supportive relationships as integral to identifying SEND that might otherwise remain undiscovered by services. In order to fully appreciate the usefulness of these processes it may be helpful to explore a theoretical perspective on the value of the practitioner-YPA relationship. There are two essential components to this: developing an effective practitioner-YPA relationship and using it to enhance the positive development of the YPA (Johns et al., 2017).

Much of the literature that is focused on effective working relationships with offenders is concerned with adult offenders and desistance or it pertains to social work relationships with vulnerable or involuntary service users (Trotter, 2006). Yet, the principles are similarly fitting for work with YPAs subject to community-based sentences and include honesty, building rapport, establishing trust, non-judgemental attitudes, empathy and mutual respect. Case and Haines (2015) mention the importance in YPAs perceiving a sense of 'legitimacy' in the working relationship with their practitioner. By the practitioner demonstrating their confidence in the YPA's capability to progress and develop, they are showing a trust in the YPA. This mutual trust may then facilitate an increasing belief in the YPA that they can change. The findings from the current study suggest that relationships are what underpin the engagement and development of these YPAs who are subject to community-based sentences.

However, in order for the working relationship to be used to support SEND, YPAs cannot be perceived as 'problems' that require control but instead should

be seen as people to be developed. This is not to suggest that the potential risks posed by YPAs should be ignored or that a risk management approach must be abandoned. However, the problematic discourse of YPAs subject to community-based sentences being narrated primarily in terms of risk and deficits is unhelpful and requires reframing (Lerner, 2004). The findings of the current study highlight the difficulty practitioners experience when attempting to support the SEND of their YPAs.

The *Risk and challenging behaviour*, *High risk and challenging behaviour* and *Risk and behaviour* subthemes epitomised how the pre-occupation with risk, by services, could be a barrier to adequate SEND support. Participants often mentioned challenging behaviour being associated with YPAs being in environments that did not support their needs. This may include difficult relationships with teachers or peers, difficulty understanding the task in the classroom or being in spaces deemed unsafe by the YPA. Consequently, some participants perceived YPAs responding to this mismatch between their needs and their environment by attempting to mask their needs through disruptive behaviour (Cross, 2011). Such behaviour could limit their access to ETE as they were assessed as being too high risk to function safely within certain environments.

Some participants were clear that the priority for them was risk even at the expense of rehabilitation, which may include support for SEND. Robinson (2003) discussed the complex arrangement of control and rehabilitation by stating that the probation service thinks about its 'offenders' specifically in terms of their risk and as such risk assessment is accepted as the core task. Consequently, the introduction of this risk focus brought about new notions such as 'risk

management' to emphasise efforts to control offender's behaviour and potential risk.

The disadvantage with a risk-based model is that it relies on individualised psychosocial factors that limit consideration of the broader contextual factors. By individualising the problems, the solutions are also restricted and narrowed (Johns et al, 2017). An example of this may be responding to the discovery of a YPA using alcohol excessively by recommending substance misuse intervention without also considering the underlying cause for their increase in alcohol use. Action such as this may endorse risk management by undermining the value in a longer-term risk reduction approach. This corresponds with the findings of the joint inspection which reported that research on initiatives that included support being provided by specialists such as SALT have shown a reduction in violence and challenging behaviour (HMI Probation & HMI Prisons in 2015).

The role and input of an EP may have particular relevance in terms of fully considering the contextual factors involved in risk. EPs have a large knowledge base that could assist practitioners in developing problem-solving approaches that help them to make assessments at a broader level (Ryrie, 2006). An example of this would include using problem analysis frameworks during consultations with practitioners, YPAs and YPA family members. Similarly, EPs could help to facilitate discussion about the value of identifying the cause of a behaviour or whether focus should solely be on the solution (Beaver, 2011).

Participants indicated that the personal characteristics of YPAs may affect their receipt of suitable support for their SEND. This then highlights factors that EPs should consider when supporting the needs of YOS practitioners. These data

were largely apparent within the ***CYP factors affecting their learning, Adverse life experiences*** and ***YPA factors affecting learning*** overarching themes. Many of these comments included the influence of YPA's adverse educational and familial experiences as well as their limited access to support from parents and significant others. There are numerous literatures suggesting a correlation between YPAs who offend and negative educational experiences (Audit Commission, 1996; Farrington & Welsh, 2007; Hayward et al., 2004; Lochner & Moretti, 2001). This study reinforced these findings and highlighted participants' perspectives on the role of exclusion from mainstream education settings.

Participants mentioned that exclusions deprived YPAs of access to suitable education provision and often resulted in them remaining out of education, attending a PRU or reoffending and occasionally entering custody. Each of these scenarios was deemed as providing YPAs with a sub-standard learning environment and ultimately preventing their access to appropriate educational opportunities. These opportunities overlap with Bronfenbrenner's notion of social and material resources and barriers to these would ultimately affect their skills and experience (Tudge et al., 2009).

Ironically, the complexities of YPA's learning needs were reported as reducing the likelihood of YPAs receiving the SEND support they required. There was acknowledgement by the participants of the high prevalence of neurodevelopmental difficulties and mental health difficulties as recorded in much of the literature (Chitsabesan et al, 2006; Hughes et al, 2012; Khan & Wilson, 2010). However, these difficulties were then accompanied by limited access to parental support and guidance, and exposure to abuse and traumatic experiences that had to be considered in conjunction with the perceived risk to

themselves and others. These factors may correlate strongly with SEMH needs, which contribute to a co-morbidity that is not always considered when trying to identify YPA's needs. Often education systems do not appreciate this co-morbidity and specialists sometimes must determine the primary need. Consequently, this may inhibit the true complexity of the YPA's need being established (Cross, 2011).

YPA perceived characteristics were also prominent within the overarching theme ***Adverse life experiences***. This theme included problematic educational and family experiences with a focus on the trauma that YPAs experienced and how this would have affected their lives. Research on adverse childhood experiences ([ACE] e.g. child abuse, witnessing domestic violence, and exposure to substance misuse) has indicated that individuals that have ACEs during childhood and adolescence have a greater likelihood of having physical and mental health problems during adulthood. (Hughes et al., 2017).

Individuals with more than four ACEs were likely to live in disadvantaged areas, have no qualifications and be unemployed. Although ACEs were more commonly found to occur in poorer communities, when this was accounted for, ACE counts still correlated with worse health, criminal justice and educational outcomes (Bellis et al., 2013).

In addition to increased efforts to focus on preventing ACEs from occurring, there have been recommendations to support these who have already been affected by providing intervention that increases the resilience of YPAs. Due to the extensive range of psychological research undertaken on this topic (Gulliford & Miller, 2015), EPs are well positioned to promote resilience in these

YPAs. The EP's suitability relates to the growth of therapeutic intervention in EP practice and EPs in situ within community and school settings (Hill, 2017).

YP's perceived attitude to learning, which was also concerned with YPA's personal characteristics, related to adverse educational experiences. This centred more on their depleted trust in teachers or those professionals perceived as authoritarian. The teacher-student relationship has been identified as affecting the behaviour of students, with negative relationships reported as being associated with greater levels of difficulties in behaviour (Stanforth & Rose, 2018). This may be particularly so with this group of YPAs who have been reported as being difficult to engage in education at times due to school related factors such as relationships with teachers (O'Carroll, 2016).

The ***CYPs educational experience*** overarching theme included data on attendance at mainstream settings (primary, secondary and FE college), PRUs, education received in custody and CYP being out of ETE completely. Primary schools, PRUs, and FE colleges were deemed by some participants as being more inclusive than secondary schools. However, primary schools were perceived as failing to apply early intervention for SEND.

Statistics have indicated that persistent disruptive behaviour was the most common explanation provided by schools for fixed-term and permanent exclusion in 2016/17. Additionally, almost half of all fixed term and permanent exclusions were of children with SEND (DfE & Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2017). Many YPAs who offend fall into these groups and as research suggests are significantly affected by exclusionary practices.

This account of YPAs who offend and their experiences within mainstream settings is disappointing for several reasons, including the potential positive impact schools can have on CYP's behaviour that seems less evident in these cases. The ethos of the school and the diversity of its student intake is likely to have an important influence on the YPA's development of resilience. Several studies have indicated that through positive experiences in schools, YPAs can acquire skills that enable them to make more effective plans for their lives. When YPAs from backgrounds strongly correlated to offending careers, who were able to adopt these skills were less likely to affiliate with anti-social peers. This then had a notable impact on their life choices such as career options (Hayward et al, 2004).

Conversely, some participants perceived PRUs to be unsuitable settings for learning irrespective of them having positive and effective relationships with PRU staff. Literature also suggests that student's resilience will develop better in mainstream schools. Alternative provisions may be able to change some behaviours, yet still present a challenge in the generalisation of this modified behaviour in the 'real world'. Hence, PRUs and other reintegration models with an intake of CYPs presenting with serious or persistent disruptive behaviour are unlikely to succeed in preparing these YPAs for a return to the mainstream. This is even more unlikely given that the structure and functioning of these settings vary greatly from the mainstream schools (Hayward et al, 2004). Consequently, the current model used to reintegrate YPAs that have been excluded from the mainstream may require radical reform if it is to effectively enable these YPAs to have access to suitable educational opportunities (Parnes, 2017).

Additionally, the mainstream schools that are typically more receptive to these YP with 'challenging behaviour' often tend to experience greater social problems they have to contend. As such, if successful reintegration is to be achieved these schools may require additional resources (Berridge et al, 2001).

The ***Educational experience in custody*** subtheme characterised participants' perceptions of a low standard of education in custodial institutions. Although data included the mention of screening for SEND on entry to custody, there was minimal confidence in the delivery of suitable intervention. This seemed to relate more to the functioning of custodial environments in terms of a priority in containing and controlling risk, as opposed to encouraging development. Such environments were not viewed by participants as being conducive to learning and in fact could be perceived as counterproductive for supporting YPAs with SEND.

In the current study some participants discussed the potential benefit of custody providing a structure that supports the attendance at an educational facility, which may differ vastly from previous arrangements for some YPAs while they were in the community. However, there is research that suggests this reliance on custodial institutions to provide structure creates a deskilling effect by removing YPA's opportunity to practise applying decision making and planning skills (Hayward et al, 2004). Although participants may perceive that some YPAs attend education more regularly in custody, there is no evidence to suggest transformational learning is taking place. Also, the support offered for SEND is insufficient and regarded as a major weakness within custodial establishments (SEU, 2002).

There is also the consideration that the novelty of custody fails to prepare many YPAs for the reality of education in the community. In the community they will be primarily responsible for their punctuality and attendance. This might be a contributing factor to why so few are successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools on their release (Hayward et al., 2004). It may perhaps be beneficial for there to be a shift in focus from 'education' in custody to 'learning' (Little, 2019). A preoccupation with academic attainment may not be the most effective method for the overall development of these YPAs. Instead, a focus on equipping them to develop the skills required to maintain the ETE opportunities they may encounter could prove more effective. Thought may then be given to developing the social skills that can support their transition from custody to the community. EPs may have a role in working with practitioners in custodial establishments to think about how the ETE in custody could be adapted to support this transition on release.

As for the ***Out of ETE*** subtheme, it was found that participants typically associated being out of ETE with an increased likelihood of recidivism. The only explanation given for YPAs being out of ETE was permanent exclusion which may not account for all the instances when this occurred. However, this finding reflects Martin et al.'s (1999) finding that a considerable proportion of YPAs involved in persistent offending had been permanently excluded from school. Interestingly, participants frequently associated exclusion with unidentified needs. These findings support earlier research that identifies the correlation between those who are excluded and those with considerable social and educational disadvantage and/or who offend (Berridge et al, 2001).

Another overarching theme, ***Building relationships with stakeholders***, consisted of data describing the linkages and processes between YOS, the NPS, FE colleges, PRU, and schools. Findings varied in terms of the participants' views on the relationships with other organisations. Nevertheless, most participants valued having interagency relationships and suggested that further collaborative work would be an effective way to improve these relationships.

The YOS interaction with FE colleges seemed complicated by geographical difficulties as many of the colleges that YPAs attended were out of the borough. This resulted in fewer opportunities to develop sustainable relationships with FE college staff. Some YOS participants stated that some FE colleges were unwilling to give YPAs with criminal histories a chance, especially violent and sexual offences. These participants suggested that FE college staff may benefit from learning about the role of YOS and the importance of getting these YPAs into ETE.

Conversely, YOS participants described a mutually beneficial relationship with PRU staff and explained they had frequent communication with PRUs, including regular visits to the PRU. Participants perceived PRU staff to have a much greater understanding of the role of YOS and importantly the needs of the YPA. It seemed that it was this mutual understanding and reciprocity that typified the strong relationship. Ideally, this example of positive interaction should be replicated with all the key stakeholders.

Participants suggested that there was limited, if any, communication between the NPS and FE colleges. Primarily, the discussion by NPS participants focused on ways to build constructive relationships with FE colleges in the future

such as through promoting the NPS/FE college relationship; having FE college staff based at the NPS; attending FE college appointments with YPAs, (if the latter consent to this); and having supervision appointments at the FE college. One participant suggested FE colleges attend the NPS office to recruit YPAs, thereby making them feel that they are wanted by the institutions that they may perceive do not want them.

Participants commented on relationships with other services and agencies including the Shaw Trust and CRCs. There was consensus on the need to work collaboratively with other agencies including specialist SEND services such as the Learning Disability Teams (LDT) within Adult Social Care. However, there was no reference to structured arrangements that facilitated collaborative working with an aim to support the ETE needs of YPAs. In order to address this, EPs may see a benefit in contacting their local probation service to discuss an interagency arrangement. This may include the drafting of local protocols to guide how the services could work collaboratively to support PO's to work effectively with service users who have SEND.

Throughout much of the literature relating to SEND there is an apparent emphasis on the necessity of good communication and the development of policies and protocols to promote a commonality between agencies (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). However, this challenge should not be underestimated when supporting a group as heterogenous and complex as YPAs with SEND and is discussed in more detail in the Research Question 3 section.

Finally, within the ***Entry and release from custody*** subtheme some participants discussed the preparation for YPAs being released into the

community in terms of securing suitable accommodation and education provision. This may require several professionals based in the community having to communicate and exchange information in relation to the YPA's impending release. The YPA's thoughts on the rate and suitability of the arrangements secured is likely to affect their emotions and behaviour while in custody. As a result, it is important at this stage that where decisions and actions are being taken by agencies without the YPA or their parents' direct involvement, that YPAs are made to feel included in the process. Some of the YOS participants identified that having a staff member with a responsibility for resettling YPAs into the community was a relative strength in these circumstances.

5.2.2 Research Question 2: What specific SEND support is offered for YPAs subject to a community-based sentence?

The data that most aptly identified the specific SEND support provided by YOS was contained within the ***Access to SEND support*** and ***Providing support for YPs SEND*** overarching themes. The relevant finding within the former theme was the comments by participants on the usefulness of the AssetPlus assessment tool and the degree of attention given to SEND. Within the AssetPlus there is a speech, language, communication and neuro-disability section based on a screening tool applied by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). This section also incorporates elements of the Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool (CHAT). Within this section the practitioner is required to answer a series of questions relating to SLCN and neurodevelopmental needs to inform decisions on steps to provide adequate support (YJB, 2014).

Overall, participants found AssetPlus to be a comprehensive tool when screening for SEND. However, as asserted by one of the participants, AssetPlus assists in the collating of information but the job of analysis remains securely with the practitioner, who is required to assess the relevance of the information and interpret meaning in order to decide how to respond appropriately (Robinson, 2014). At times this may lead to a request for specialist involvement such as an EP. In this instance where a practitioner may feel stuck on how to work with a YPA, an EP may use consultation as a vehicle for change. Consultation is a model that EPs use to work with others in order to make a difference. Consultation would provide a space for practitioners such as YOS staff, PO's and FE college staff to have reflective conversations that facilitate change. It is not the actions set at the end of the consultation process, instead it is the process itself, that makes the difference (Wagner, 2017).

The latter overarching theme shifts us from the use of specialist equipment to the provision of specific SEND support. Referrals to specialist services was described as common practice by YOS participants. However, there was also mention of informal practices associated with the adaptation of interventions and the immediate environment for the YPA when in YOS. This type of practice shifts the problem from a 'within-child' perspective to a recognition that environmental factors can influence the presentations of SEND as they may be, at times, context-specific.

More formal adaptations included the amendment of a community-based sentence to take account of the SEND of a YPA. However, this raises the question as to why the SEND of a YPA would not be considered at an earlier stage prior to the court imposing a sentence perceived as unsuitable.

Circumstances such as these may benefit from EP involvement at an earlier stage prior to sentence, or at an organisational level with court staff, so that the SEND of a YPA involved with the YOS can be catered for at the earliest opportunity. The finding suggests a benefit in YOS having systems in place to assess YPAs for SEND prior to sentence where possible.

Also, many participants expressed a need and a willingness to improve their understanding of SEND, with many preferring the option of having specific guidance from the relevant specialist. As discussed by Ryrie (2006), the purpose of YOS is to act on behalf of the courts by providing reports and information; supervising YPAs sentenced to community-based sentences; and delivering interventions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Thus, an EP with a role in this context should be involved in tasks that support these purposes. This may include providing guidance via relevant reports, outlining recommendations to support need or through consultation with YOS staff. Further to this, the findings would indicate that practitioners prefer regular and fluid access to specialist input in. Hence, EPs working with YPAs who offend would have to think about how best to achieve this which may include being co-located within a team or allocating sufficient time to these services.

The specific interventions or approaches used to support the SEND of YPAs in the NPS were perceived as minimal by participants and hence were contained within the subthemes ***Limited access to specialist SEND advice and guidance***; and ***CJS not prioritising ETE and SEND***. Participants mentioned that there was a sex offender accredited programme that had been adapted to meet the needs of individuals with SEND. This resonates with earlier research findings that there was only one community-based accredited programme that

had been adapted for individuals with learning disabilities and was only available in relatively few probation areas (HMI Probation & HMI Prisons, 2015).

A participant also mentioned an induction pack that had been designed for individuals with learning needs. An induction pack refers to important documents such as a copy of the licence conditions, brief behaviour policy and PO's contact details. However, due to the heterogeneity within SEND, it is unlikely that the adapted induction pack will be equally suited to all the presenting needs of the service users. For instance, a YPA with severe literacy difficulties will require different support than a YPA that struggles with social and communication needs.

There was also reference made to Together, which is a national charity that provides a range of mental health services including one-to-one support and supported accommodation (Together for mental wellbeing, 2019). Together specialises in supporting service users supervised by probation and was described by the participants as knowledgeable about learning difficulties as well as mental health issues. However, participants explained that these services were no longer co-located in the office, so they no longer had access to this service. Therefore, the findings of the current study seem to suggest NPS support for SEND has either stagnated or declined since the 2015 joint inspection.

The theme ***Approaches and strategies to support YPAs*** outlines a range of ways that FE college participants felt their colleges supported this group of YPAs. The FE colleges were described as having departments that specifically focused on the SEND of YPAs. There were also centres and professionals that directly supported the SEMH needs of YPAs such as wellbeing centres, counsellors and psychotherapists based on the FE college grounds. Alongside

in-house support systems, participants made reference to making referrals to external specialist agencies.

These findings were consistent with earlier research suggesting that a balance of in-college and external specialist support is beneficial when supporting the mental health needs of YPAs (Warwick et al., 2009). FE college participants also briefly discussed the identification of SEND by stating that there was a system of tutors and support staff to make referrals for YPAs who they thought may have SEND. There was mention of Learning Support Assistants (LSA) who provided one-to-one support for YPAs in the classroom. Other support staff included mentors. Both were described as aiding YPAs inside and outside of the classroom. Perhaps these staff would be ideal persons to communicate with YOS and NPS staff to provide an accurate and transparent update of the YPA's progression at an FE college.

Data within this theme included the piloting of communications groups. This may be seen as particularly relevant to YPAs subject to community-based sentences due to the high prevalence of SLCN in this group (The Communication Trust, 2015). For those YPAs that prefer to focus on preparing for employment there was discussion on supported internships. These were introduced in August 2013 and are study programmes designed for 16 – 19-year olds who are in full or part-time education. The aim is to enable YPAs with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to eventually secure paid employment by developing the relevant skills gained through 6 to 12-month work placements. Supported internships are available to YPAs with EHCPs up until the age of 24 (DfE, 2017), which emphasises the importance of probation staff identifying and referring YPAs with needs for an EHC needs assessment.

5.2.3 Research Question 3: What would improve the support for these YPAs with SEND?

An area for improvement that was deemed to support the development of YPAs with SEND was greater attention given to accepting and retaining them in mainstream education. Earlier research has illustrated the disproportionality of YPAs with SEND that were excluded from school (DfE & ONS, 2017) and participants highlighted this as an area of concern that required remedial action. Stanforth and Rose (2018), argue that there is a clear relationship between exclusion and inclusive practice, and provide examples of when the use of inclusive practice has reduced the fixed-term exclusions within schools. In their research on developing ways that effectively include YPAs with SEND in schools, Ainscow et al. (2013) promote that schools should review existing beliefs and attitudes that inform their practice in relation to exclusions. By examining these beliefs and experimenting with evaluated alternatives to practice, they can foster an inclusive culture within their schools. This approach was deemed to be more effective than any organisational strategies or arrangements.

In the current study, YOS practitioners expressed their frustration with FE colleges that were less inclined to accept YPAs with offending histories. If applying Ainscow et al's. (2013) findings to this context, EPs may be well positioned to use their developing relationships with FE colleges to promote the inclusion of YPAs subject to community-based sentences within FE colleges. This could range from providing training for FE college staff on the importance of keeping YPAs subject to community-based sentences in education. Delivering training jointly with YOS or NPS staff may help to promote the roles of these

practitioners and forge greater understanding between the services. It may also include EPs raising YPAs subject to community-based sentences in planning meetings with FE college staff. This could entail monitoring the progress of the YPA and checking to see whether FE college staff require EP input in supporting their needs.

There was also consideration given to the effectiveness of learning within PRUs as they are currently structured. Parnes (2017) recommended an alternative to this structure by suggesting the adoption of the virtual school model for LAC to be implemented for YPAs involved in the CJS. This would be represented with a designated person within a local authority having a senior responsibility for the education of this group of YPAs. This may serve to complement the current virtual school model having considered the overrepresentation of LAC in the CJS (SEU, 2002). This model may also act as an aid for YOS practitioners to access ETE information during school holidays, which was found to be a problematic area when completing assessments for court.

Another aspect raised by participants was the need for further guidance and advice on working with YPAs with SEND. Some participants were specific with the type of support they preferred which extended beyond the realms of general one-off training. This was not to suggest that participants found one-off training sessions on SEND unhelpful. On the contrary, some participants spoke about the value they received in having training sessions on specific types of SEND such as ASD training. The importance of alternatives to one-off training sessions seemed to relate more to the specificity and continuity often required when supporting YPAs with SEND.

Examples of ongoing support and specificity included recommendations in specialist reports, direct discussion with specialists as required and regular 'refreshers' delivered by specialists. This type of guidance then facilitates the translation of recorded SEND information, into an informed way of working with YPAs and their needs.

Based on NPS participants' comments on factors affecting YPAs receiving SEND, there appears to be a need for greater transparency and accessibility of related guidance for SEND. Frontline staff need to be familiar with induction packs and accredited programmes that provide alternative ways to deliver information to YPAs with SEND.

There needs to be adaptations made to more accredited offending behaviour programmes in the community and in custody. According to previous research, this is not a new finding and probation sentence plans have been found to not fully consider the learning disabilities of the individual and the way in which they may affect their engagement and compliance with their community-based sentence (HMI Probation & HMI Prisons, 2015). According to Carr (2009), CBT is the most desirable anger control intervention when working with adults with intellectual disability in a community setting. Carr emphasises that the intervention relies on a strong therapeutic relationship between the service user and the professional. As aforementioned, therapeutic intervention is becoming an increasing focus for EPs. Hence, EPs may consider their role in supporting practitioners to deliver such interventions in a way that takes account of the SEND of the YPA involved.

NPS staff also requested the presence of SEND professionals at risk focused meetings such as MAPPA and a general need to develop relationships with external organisations that were skilled in working with YPAs with SEND. Specific services such as the LDT were mentioned, and a suggestion was made to approach them with the intention of discussing how the services could work together. This is a narrative that is often promoted by public services (Ansari et al, 2001), and is echoed throughout the SEND CoP (2015), but successful interdisciplinary collaboration has been historically difficult to achieve.

At an individual level there have been many obstacles to interdisciplinary collaboration; including that many professionals have chosen to work in a sector because they are attracted to it and view it as important. Their training is designed to reinforce these preconceptions, so it is possible that they perceive the views of other groups as less important. There are also variations in the professional language used which may create communication problems. The difference in funding streams is likely to result in different agenda priorities. Plus, the occurrence of tensions between services due to perceived status, management structures and workload demands (Frederickson & Cline, 2015).

The Every Child Matters agenda challenged the typical structure of support services by creating the government umbrella of Department for Children, Schools and Families. The agenda was not evaluated before it was dismantled so the long-term impact of this type of interagency collaboration is unclear. As a result, there is little learning on multiagency coordination that can be applied to young people and adults subject to community-based sentences within the new SEND framework. However, it seems that all services would benefit from evaluating interdisciplinary collaboration and the findings may impact

how this is undertaken successfully in the future. Whatever the findings, there is an argument that evaluation should focus on the process of collaboration as well as the outcomes. This will ensure the potential gains achieved through the process of partnership working are not discounted (Ansari et al, 2001).

5.2.4 Research Question 4: Are there any differences in the support needs reported by each service?

YOS participants provided examples of the support they received for SEND such as specialist screening tools within one of their main assessment systems (AssetPlus), access to specialist reports and EHCPs, training on ASD and access to EPs, CAMHS and SALT (previously). Subsequently, YOS support needs were more specific and related to a desire for more consistent and regular input from SEND specialists. The need for specialist input pertained to practitioners receiving guidance on ways to appropriately work with their YPAs with SEND in order to improve the effectiveness of their interventions. Hence, EPs should consider psychological approaches that enable YOS practitioners to reduce the YPA's risk of reoffending by utilising the specialist resources at their disposal. This may include using consultations with an EP to inform sentencing proposals prior to a YPA being sentenced by a court.

NPS participants reflected their support needs in the overarching theme **Service Delivery Factors Affecting SEND Support for YPAs**. Participants expressed a view that the NPS did not effectively cater for the SEND of service users. There were also suggestions that the support for mental health and learning disabilities had declined, leaving uncertainty among staff about how to effectively support the relevant YPAs.

There was no mention by participants of EHCPs, or the process required for a YPA to obtain one. This may indicate that NPS staff are largely unaware of the role they can have in supporting YPAs to request an EHC needs assessment. Following the changes from the SEND CoP (2001), probation services can notify the local authority of a YPA whom they suspect may have SEND, if they have concerns. The local authority must then determine whether an EHCP needs assessment is warranted. Should the local authority agree to the EHCP needs assessment being conducted, then they must seek information and advice from a range of sources including an EP (DfE & DoH, 2015).

It may then be prudent for EPs to consider how best to assist practitioners such as POs/PSOs in supporting YPAs with SEND within an environment that does not actively support this process. EPs may then explore how small changes may generalise to significant change within the culture of the NPS. Perhaps a small change by a PO as an individual that is recognised and rewarded by the NPS as an organisation, presents the realistic possibility of a spiral of change. The EPs skill in co-ordinating the individual effort and the response by the NPS could be a valuable intervention.

FE college participants presented as being content with the SEND support available to them and these perspectives are captured within the **Approaches and Strategies to Support YPAs Learning** overarching theme. However, the subtheme ***Impact of problematic parenting*** highlighted the parenting styles or practices that were perceived to directly impede the YPA's learning. This differs somewhat from data on parents from YOS and the NPS which focused on the impact of difficult family experiences, abuse, exposure to offending or parental absence and non-involvement (see Appendix 8). The ***Impact of problematic***

parenting subtheme also accounts for the involvement of parents that may act as a barrier to YPA support.

The quality of parental involvement is important and to be involved is not necessarily enough for the positive overall development of YPAs. Even when parental involvement is not deemed to directly impact on YPA achievement, it may have positive effects on their SEMH (Pomerantz, 2007). Earlier research has found that controlling behaviour has been linked with maladaptive behaviour by children and adolescents. Rather than encouraging achievement, as may be intended, authoritarian parenting may cause children to withdraw and become anxious, adversely impacting on their learning (Baumrind, 2005). As such, parenting intervention should focus on supporting the autonomy of YPAs characterised by positive perspectives on their potential. This may include supporting parents to feel empowered and having some influence on their child's development in a setting. Parents who deem themselves to be lacking control over their child's behaviour may resort to a lower quality of parenting (Pomerantz, 2007).

From an EP perspective, this finding is a useful reminder of the impact parents can have on the YPA, even within an FE college setting. The Children and Families Act (2014) has applied the right to make a request and decision directly to CYP (from the end of the academic year they turn sixteen). However, parents often remain closely involved (DfE, 2014), so providing there is consent from the CYP, EPs may find value in encouraging parents to attend full consultations with the CYP and FE college staff. This then provides an opportunity for the EP to facilitate a collaborative partnership between YPAs, their parents, and FE college staff. Involving parents in collaborative work has been

reported to be especially important in families with little previous engagement (Wagner, 2017).

5.3 Theoretical conceptualisation using desistance and bioecological models combined

The primary aim of YOS and NPS is to reduce the likelihood of reoffending of their service users. This aim is directly linked to the desistance literature (Burnett, 2004; Maruna, 2001; McNeil, 2003; Robinson, 2014), and informs much of the current practice of both services. However, within the current study practitioners from these services have expressed a concern with the effectiveness or appropriateness of their intervention when working with YPAs with SEND. Hence, EPs working in this context should use their psychological skills and knowledge to enable practitioners to work more effectively with this group of YPAs.

The bioecological model combined with desistance theory assists in the conceptualisation of the interrelated systems nested around YPAs with SEND who are subject to community-based sentences. Using the *process, person, context, time* (PPCT) model, this study provided many examples of how participants perceived YPAs to have been affected by these systems.

5.3.1 Using the process concept to support desistance

Participants perceived many of the YPAs who offend to have had difficult relationships with perceived authoritarian figures. These types of interactions occur within the *process* concept and also include the interactions between practitioners and the YPA which were captured within themes such as ***Relationships with CYP***. YPAs who offend are often working with practitioners on an involuntary basis and may be resistant to input from perceived authority

figures. EPs should then focus on ways to develop the YPA – practitioner relationship. This may include helping practitioners to identify the rapport skills they used effectively so they can be applied more often in their work with young offenders. This may include approaches such as video interactive guidance (VIG) and video enhanced reflective practice (VERP) whereby the EP could use clips of authentic situations to enhance relationships. The EP could then feedback to the professional or parent on the techniques they used to positively interact with the young offender which should encourage them to apply them more frequently and improve the effectiveness of the working relationship.

5.3.2 Using the person concept to support desistance

The *person* concept is concerned with personal characteristics such as **Complex SEND**, which was identified as an important factor, by participants in all services, when supporting the SEND of YPAs. This often included supporting specific learning or educational needs while having to consider the risk of harm posed by the YPA. In these instances, the EP should use consultation to jointly identify with practitioners to what extent the complex SEND may interrupt the process of desistance. It may also be useful in these circumstances for the EP to have direct contact with the young offender by way of contributing to an overall assessment. An example of this could be using self-reporting questionnaires that help to screen for social emotional and mental health difficulties that may be experienced by the YPA. The scoring from these tools may support discussion on the next steps for the YPA or practitioners to consider.

5.3.3 Using the context concept to support desistance

The concept of *context* assists in understanding the interrelation between the YPA and their immediate environment and how this affects the development

of the YPA. Other influences on the YPA's development were those individuals within the immediate environments and the interactions they had with each other. This consists of exploring the eco-systems of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem in relation to their influence on the YPA offender's desistance from offending. Further to this, the EP should understand their own oscillating position within the eco-system in order to understand how they can best support the practitioners and ultimately the SEND and desistance of the YPA offenders.

Microsystems: The *microsystems* provided by participants typically included the home, educational provision, CJS, peers, and the community. The ***YP's educational experience*** theme included data on attendance at mainstream settings (primary, secondary and FE college), PRUs, education received in custody and YPAs being out of ETE completely. These settings and contexts can all have an influence on the YPA's readiness to desist and the EP may have an important role in identifying how the YPA's interaction with these microsystems might be changed in order to support desistance. However, this may require the EP conducting observations and assessments within these settings. This would include EPs attending custodial establishments to prepare for their resettlement in the community on release; entering the home environment for those young offenders who are being home tutored; and EPs meeting with young offenders in community settings like YOS, youth clubs and neighbourhood projects when the young offender is out of ETE.

Mesosystem: The overarching themes of ***Building relationships with stakeholders*** related most to the mesosystem. The theme consisted of data describing the linkages and processes between the microsystems of YOS, NPS,

FE college, PRU, and Schools. Findings were varied in terms of the participants' views on the relationships with other organisations. Nevertheless, most participants expressed a value in having interagency relationships and suggested that further collaborative work would be an effective way to improve these relationships. In order to effectively contribute and be involved in interagency working it will be fundamental for EPs, who work with YPAs who offend, to regularly attend interagency meetings.

Some of the interagency meetings that already exist, such as MAPPA, were designed to manage immediate risk. However, the EP's role in this instance would be to emphasise the focus of secondary desistance, which is to support the transition from an offending lifestyle to a non-offending lifestyle. This would require a broader approach than a punitive response to an increase in the risk of the offender. The EP could encourage and facilitate wider systems work that would support a shift from an offending to a non-offending lifestyle. An example of this might be a recommendation for FE college staff to attend YOS and NPS settings in efforts to recruit YPAs subject to community-based sentences to attend their colleges. This would create a space for these YPAs to ask questions and gain insight into what FE colleges have to offer. Equally, EPs could encourage that staff from one service attend the team meetings of other staff in order to share ideas and to remain up to date on relevant developments.

Exosystem: There are several instances within the CJS whereby interactions between two or more settings, at least one of which the YPA does not attend, may lead to a change in the processes in the YPA's immediate setting. Indeed, it is hoped that the current study is an example of a Trainee EP working at an exosystem level. Research into supporting the needs of practitioners that

work with YPA offenders is intended to improve the experiences of YPAs within the CJS.

For instance, within the current findings there was no mention of specific support for YPAs with SEND detained in custody. Following the changes from the SEND COP (2001), YOS can now inform their local authority of suspected SEND of a detained YPA, if they have concerns. The local authority must then determine whether an EHCP needs assessment is warranted. Should the local authority agree to the EHCP needs assessment being conducted, then they must seek information and advice from a range of sources including an EP (DfE & DoH, 2015). This is then another example of processes at an exosystem level that would result in an assessment within the custodial setting for the YPA. It is then the responsibility of the EP to understand that their recommendations following an assessment of a YPA offender should not simply consider their suitability for an EHCP but should also consider the effect they may have on their desistance.

Macrosystem: The theme from the YOS participants that best suits the *macrosystem* concept was the ***Change in service delivery methods*** subtheme. The data within this subtheme primarily centred on the impact of the political climate on the resources and functioning of the YOS. Participants appeared frustrated with the lack of resources available to them during a political period of austerity. This corresponds with earlier literature which has indicated a shrinkage in the YJS since 2008 with a drastic reduction in the number of children entering the YJS and a similarly dramatic fall of 58% in the use of imprisonment for YP (Bateman 2015; Johns 2017). This has resulted in a contraction of the secure estate and left behind a population of YP on community-based sentences

presenting with extreme challenging behaviour, a manifestation of the most complex of needs (Johns, 2017).

However, the statistics do not categorically reflect a reduction in the seriousness or the volume of YP offending. Instead, the point made here is that YP's behaviour is mediated via adjustments in legislation and policy that prescribe the practices of youth justice agency staff. These practices then impact on how YP are processed through the YJS. The EP may then use the desistance and bioecological models combined to highlight this point to practitioners, so they are less focused on macrosystem level changes beyond their immediate control and more aware of the influence they have as practitioners in supporting desistance. This then includes encouraging focus on process concepts and microsystem level interactions as discussed above.

The ***Service delivery factors affecting SEND support for YPAs*** theme contains data that indicated the perceived influence of the *macrosystem* on the YPA. It was clear that participants did not consider the CJS to be conducive to the development of YPAs with SEND despite providing some examples of how the CJS catered to the needs of this group (i.e. adapted sex offender programme for individuals with learning disabilities). However, NPS participants spoke of the inflexibility of the CJS.

The EP is well positioned to use a combined desistance and bioecologically informed approach to consider how the context could be changed in order to support the desistance of an offender with SEND. EPs have numerous problem-solving frameworks that can be utilised to generate solutions and interventions informed by the unique context of the offender (Harker, Dean &

Monsen, 2017). This may include using the interactive factors framework (IFF) which is a problem analysis framework that compliments the principles of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (Monsen & Frederickson, 2017). The IFF could be adapted to incorporate the PPCT and secondary desistance concepts and used in consultation with YPA offenders, practitioners, and family members to identify the initial guiding hypothesis and to systematically integrate the problem dimensions. The EP would then critically explore the hypotheses using the combined concepts of the two models to guide their own understanding and to influence the applied work of the practitioners involved.

5.3.4 Using the time concept to support desistance

Finally, there is the concept of *time*, which can be applied to the current study in terms of ontogeny and historical time. As a result of the changes in the SEND CoP (2015), this study was concerned with YPAs with SEND up to the age of 25. YPAs are approaching a chronological age that allows them to make decisions that may directly affect how their SEND is supported. Also, the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 illustrates that we are in a period when government departments acknowledge the specific circumstances of CYPs with SEND and are detained in custody.

As EPs are applied practitioners, adept in using individual and systemic frameworks to facilitate change (Beaver, 2011), they are suitably positioned to assist other practitioners in supporting the needs of YPAs with SEND who are subject to community-based sentences. This would include involvement at the individual level with the YPA, at an organisational level (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) through consultation with practitioners, and perhaps by influencing local protocols through research.

5.4 Limitations and strengths of the study

A noticeable difference between the settings was the numerical difference in the number of themes produced per setting. This may relate to the difference in the number of participants recruited per setting. Both YOS and NPS met my desired objective of at least six participants. However, recruiting FE college staff proved more difficult and resulted in the recruitment of staff from two different settings, one within and one outside the local borough. The analysis was completed on one participant's transcript in the local FE college and two participants' transcripts in the out-of-borough FE college, which reduced the quantity of my data. This has influenced the diversity of the data and ultimately my ability to draw out meaningful themes.

The objective of this study was to elicit and analyse the views of different professionals that work with YPAs with SEND who are subject to community-based sentences. It was intentional to identify areas for development from the perspective of professionals in order to directly support the work they do. However, due to their absence, I was unable to interview YOS staff with responsibilities for education. They may have been able to provide an alternative insight into the strengths and challenges of supporting the SEND of CYPs who attend YOS. Although, these staff are not specialists in supporting the SEND of CYP, they were likely to have had greater contact with schools, PRUs, and FE colleges than the YOS case managers.

Also, with more time it would have been useful to gather the views of the YPAs and their parents in order to explore any overlaps or contrasts in the opinions of how best to support this group of YPAs.

Additionally, with greater time, it would have been interesting to elicit the views of the other services that were frequently mentioned by the participants, including PRUs, schools, social services and prisons. This may have provided alternative perspectives that would have shed light on the other systems that influence the development of YPA's with SEND subject to community-based sentences. It would of course have been extremely challenging, within the scale of this study, to co-ordinate interviews for such a variety of participants, particularly considering the ethical and practical issues associated with eliciting the views of such a vulnerable group.

Overall, this study provided an opportunity to gather perspectives from a range of professionals. It has highlighted some of the challenges associated with multiagency and interdisciplinary collaboration that are commonplace in the lives of many YPAs involved in the CJS. As with previous research exploring the educational needs of young people who offend (O'Carroll, 2016; Ozarow; 2011; Parnes, 2017; Ryrie, 2006; Wyton, 2013), this study has identified a role for EPs in supporting these young people, their parents and the practitioners and services involved.

5.5 Implications of the findings on EP practice

Earlier research such as by O'Carroll (2016), Ozarow (2011), Parnes (2017), Ryrie (2006) and Wyton (2013) has found value in the contribution of EPs when working with YOS. This study has also highlighted aspects of EPs' expertise that could benefit other agencies such as the NPS, which suggests that EPs are well suited to make professional contributions to a range of community services. The

extension of the age ranges from 0 – 19 to 0 – 25 has increased the number and types of services that are now particularly relevant to the work of EPs.

In relation to YPAs who offend, the practitioners in this study have highlighted the importance of relationships, not only with YPAs but between other professionals. It may then be important for EPs to build relationships with agencies such as NPS, CRC, local children homes, and foster carers as it is possible that all these services could benefit from EPs expertise in SEND support and training. Clearly, senior managers in the EPS would have to consider whether they have the resources to cater to this growing service user base and whether such work is compatible with the way the EPS is commissioned. However, the findings of this study would suggest that there is an extensive need for commissioning of specialist involvement, when working with YPAs who offend.

Within the findings, a recurring discussion point was the problems associated with multiagency and interdisciplinary collaboration. One of the prominent issues raised by YOS and NPS participants was the lack of understanding by educators of their role. This was identified as contributing to minimal communication and disjointed work. Therefore, EPs motivated to work with such a complex group of YPAs should improve their knowledge of the experiences of this group and the role of the responsible services (BPS, 2017) i.e. NPS, CRC, YOS and custodial establishments. This may involve EPs attending relevant CJS related training courses as part of their continuous professional development. Also, an introduction/increase in the learning about YPAs who offend and the relevant services within the current doctoral programmes for trainee educational psychologists. Such changes would be a

good start to not only increasing the knowledge base of the profession but also demonstrating a willingness to understand the experiences of YPAs who offend.

The understanding of the experiences of YPAs who offend requires EPs to become familiar, from a 'YPA offending' perspective, with some of the points raised by the participants in this study such as risk, parenting factors and considerations of perceived complex SEND. All of these areas are within the realm of expertise for EPs who are equipped with a selection of psychological frameworks, models and techniques to guide their practice in these areas.

However, an important consideration for EPs must be the adverse educational experiences perceived by participants as factors that may prevent YPAs receiving support for their SEND. These negative experiences may contribute to YPA's non-attendance at schools and FE colleges. They appear intertwined with exclusions and their implications. In order for EPs to access these YPAs they may have to arrange meetings through YOS, the NPS or Social Care; services that remain involved. EPs will need to be willing to attend custodial establishments in order to conduct assessments. Not only to comply with the guidance within the SEND CoP (2015) but also to legitimise a genuine interest and motivation to work with this complex and vulnerable group of YPAs.

5.6 Recommendations

Areas for further research may include exploring the role of EPs in traditional adult services such as the NPS, CRCs, LDTs, and FE colleges. As would have been ideal in the current study, it would be good to hear the voice of the YPAs and their parents to elicit their experiences of the support they receive from

professionals in these settings. Having considered the difficulties expressed by participants in regard to the continuity of services for YPAs after turning 18 years old, it should be explored whether professionals like EPs are well positioned to support this continuity.

Senior managers within the services that support these YPAs may see benefit in developing local protocols that validate and implement multiagency collaboration. This may require designing an evaluation framework that observes processes and outcomes at a *context* (micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem) level. It would clearly be a complicated and labour-intensive exercise, and processes as well as outcomes would need to be evaluated for it to be justifiable. A growing evidence base pertaining to interdisciplinary collaboration may help to overcome existing information-sharing difficulties such as the inability for YOS to request current education information outside of term time. An evaluation framework may also help to establish approaches that improve the quality of collaboration between agencies, including proposals recommended by participants such as attending team meetings of other services.

Another potential reform would be a change in policy by the DfE and DoH to recognise YPAs with SEND who are subject to community-based sentences and YPAs between the ages of 18 and 25 years old in custody, as individuals with specific circumstances that warrant professionals to apply additional consideration when supporting their SEND. This may include guidance on completing EHC needs in the shortest possible time as is the case for LAC. Addressing YPA's SEND may be a crucial element in avoiding a punitive sentence that is not commensurate or does not fully consider their educational needs. This would also apply to other mechanisms within the CJS such as a

breach, which may follow an instance of non-compliance with a community-based sentence.

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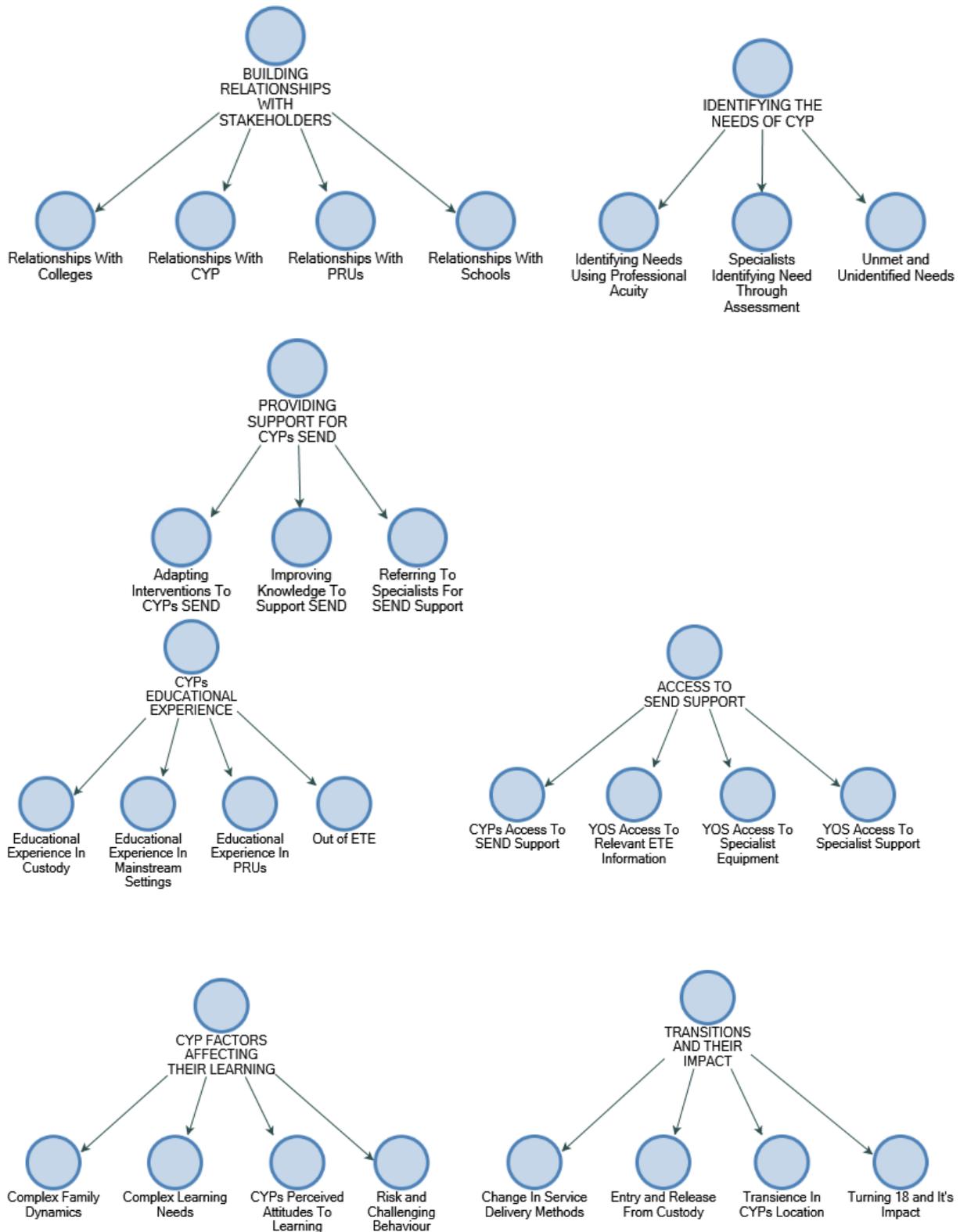
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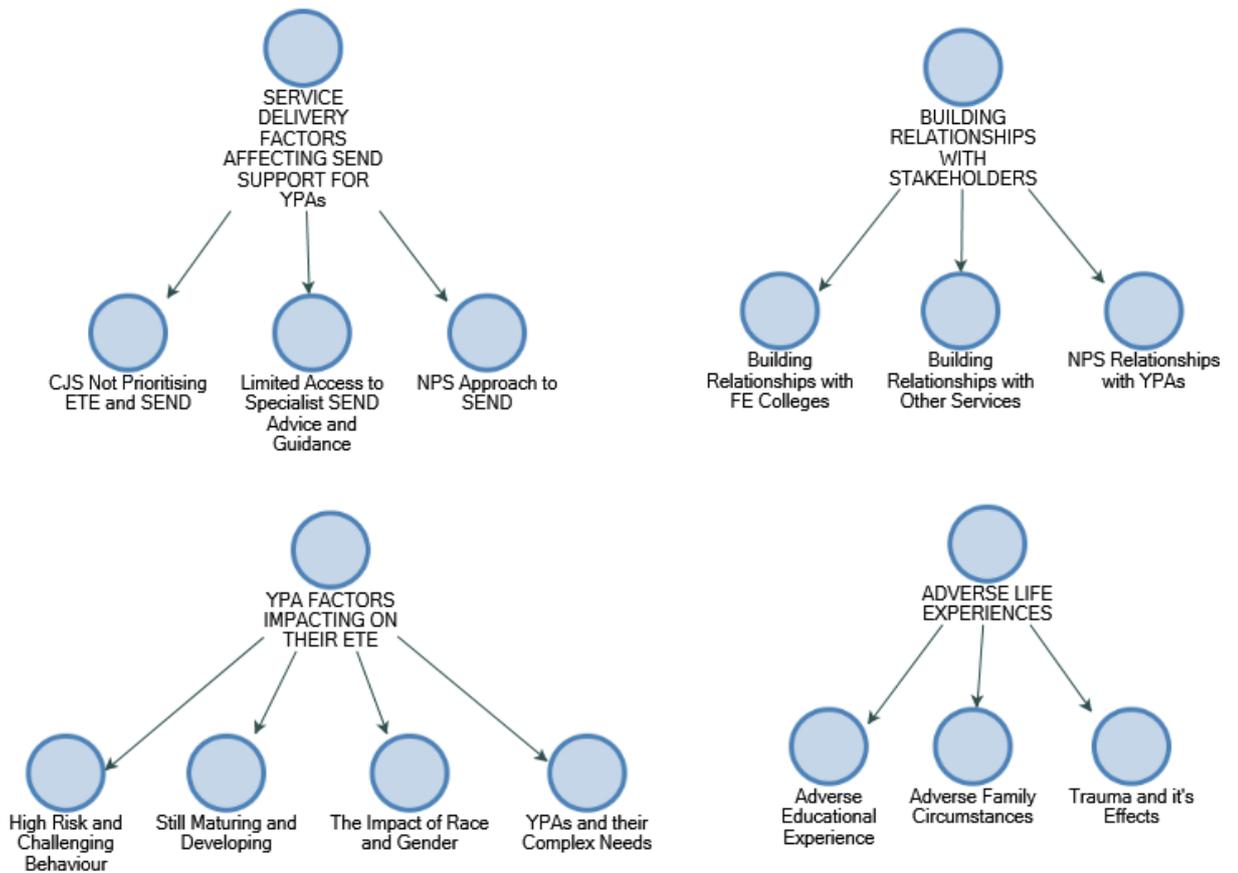
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APPENDICES

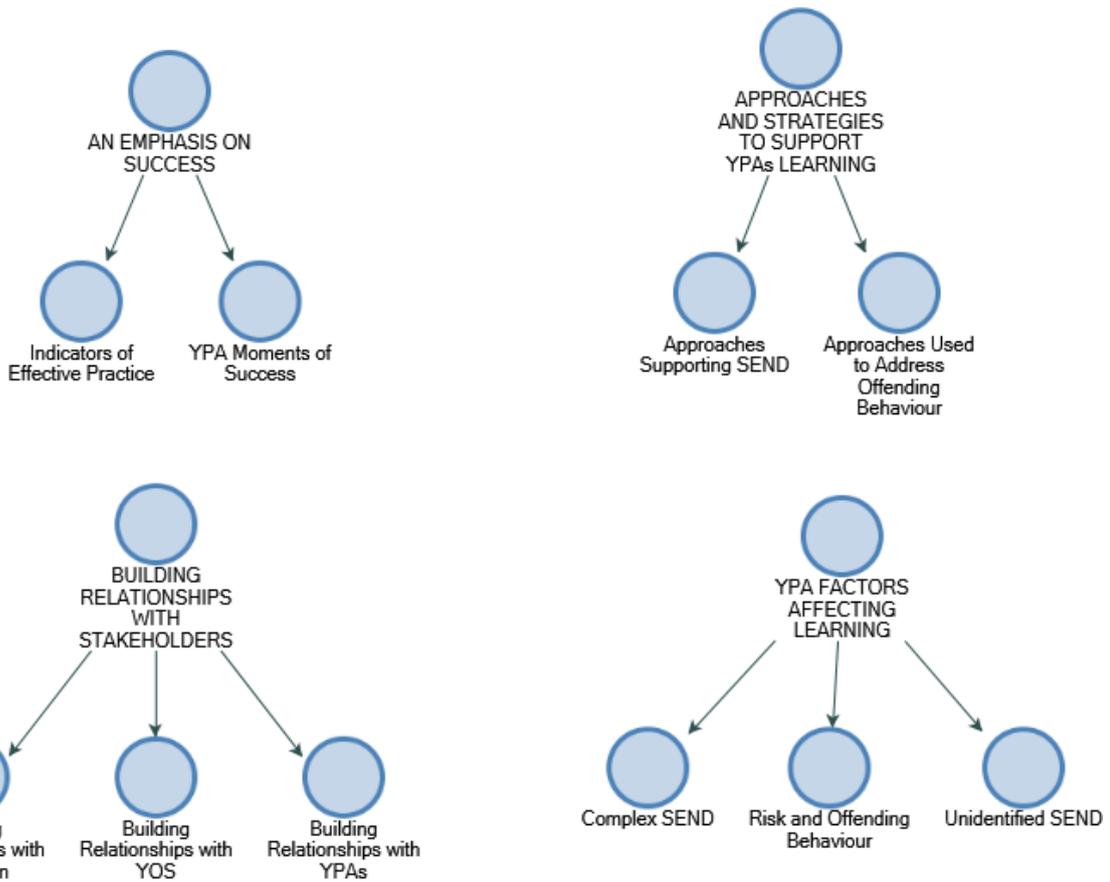
Appendix 1 Original Thematic Maps from Nvivo: Thematic Map – YOS



Thematic Map – NPS



Thematic Map – FE colleges





Appendix 2 Interview guide for YOS Staff

- 1. Let's start by you telling me about your role within the YOS. What's it like working in YOS as a case manager? *Have you always wanted to work in YOS? What made you want to work for YOS?***
- 2. To what extent do you feel that education and offending behaviour are linked?**
- 3. Can you tell me about the purpose of community-based sentences? *To what extent does the sentence affect their ETE?***
- 4. To what extent does education in the community compare with education in custody? *What are the advantages and disadvantages of education in the community?***
- 5. What are your views on the professional relationship between YOS and schools/colleges? *What are your experiences of working with schools/colleges?***
- 6. To what extent do you feel SEND might affect YPAs ETE outcomes? *Why do you think this is? Can you give an example using a YPA that you have worked with or supervised?***
- 7. To what extent do you/YOS support the SEND of YPAs? *How does this support help their ETE experiences and opportunities?***
- 8. To what extent do you/YOS specifically support the SEND of YPAs that are transferred to Probation Services? *How do you know this support is effective? Would you change anything about the current transfer process? Why/Why not?***
- 9. What are your views on the support offered for the SEND of YPAs on community-based sentences? *How confident are you in supporting the SEND of the YPAs you work with? Why do you think that is the case?***
- 10. How could the SEND support offered to YPAs be improved further?**
- 11. To what extent do you feel that YOS support the work of schools or colleges? *To what extent do you feel that schools/colleges support your work?***
- 12. What could school/college staff do to help you more in the work you do?**

Appendix 3 Information Sheet

How can professionals support the special educational needs and disabilities of young people & young adults on community-based sentences?

Hello,

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research project on approaches to improve the education and life outcomes of young people and young adults (YPA) on community-based sentences.

There is limited information about the type of approaches that support educators to teach YPAs who offend or that supports justice professionals to 'work' with YPAs with specific educational needs. Further, little is known on how these YPAs will be supported as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

In this study, we want to know your views and experiences of approaches to education/supervision for YPAs on community-based sentences; finding out what works well and where improvements could be made.

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist involved in improving the educational experiences of YPAs who offend I very much hope you would like to take part.

Who is conducting this project?

My name is Jason Collins and I am a student on the Doctorate in Professional Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology programme at the Institute of Education, University College London.

What would happen if I take part?

Interviews will be conducted at the office/school where you are normally based. This is to minimise any disruption to your working day. There will be a set of questions on the topic, interviews could last between 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interview, with your permission, will be audio-recorded (please see Consent Form). This will help me to accurately analyse the spoken data. I am particularly interested in what you think is currently working well and what could be improved further.

What happens to the results of the research?

The results of this survey will be used to support staff from Youth Offending Services (YOS) and Probation, and educators who work with YPAs who offend. They will also be used to support employers and training professionals that work with YPAs who offend. The results may also eventually be published in an academic or practitioner journal.

The information we collect is kept strictly private and confidential. Participants are identified to researchers by a pseudonym only and all information and results are kept on a secure computer and locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home.

I will not include the names of any person in any reports or presentations. You will be given the chance to check over the report before the final version is released to make sure that you or the children with whom you work cannot be identified.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you whether or not you want to take part and take time to consider this decision. Feel free to discuss this decision with a friend, family member, colleague or someone else you know well. You can also contact the researcher (email: Jason.collins.16@ucl.ac.uk) to discuss this decision.

Included in this information pack there is a form for you to sign if you decide to take part. Anyone who signs a form is still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect your professional role in any way.

What should I do next?

If you would like to take part, please fill in the enclosed form and return it to me. If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions at any time), please do not hesitate to contact me at Jason.collins.16@ucl.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed and approved by UCL Institute of Education's Research Ethics Committee.



How can professionals support the special educational needs and disabilities of young people & young adults on community-based sentences?

Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in this study, please complete this consent form and return to Jason Collins in person or at the address below.

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I have read and understood the information sheet about the research. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that participation is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and that if I choose to do this, any data I have contributed will not be used. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that if any of my words are used in reports or presentations, they will not be attributed to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that I can contact Jason Collins at any time and request for my data to be removed from the project database. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name: (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact telephone: _____

Contact address: _

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Jason Collins
UCL Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way London WC1H 0AL

Appendix 5 Demographic details

Please note that any information you may supply today will only be used for the purposes outlined here. The information you provide on this form will not be shared with other participants and will be kept secure and confidential. Completing this form is voluntary and you may choose not to complete this form without explanation.

Please circle as appropriate:

GENDER: Male/Female/Prefer not to say

AGE:

IS ENGLISH YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE? Yes/No

JOB TITLE:

LENGTH IN ROLE (YEARS):

LENGTH IN SERVICE (YEARS):

LENGTH BASED IN THIS OFFICE (YEARS):

Appendix 6 Timeline for research

RESEARCH STAGES	APPROXIMATE DATES
Submit Year 2 Interim report	By 24 April 2018
Apply for ethical approval	15 June 2018
Dates agreed with YOS, NPS and FE college to start data collection	YOS 30 August 2018 NPS 22 August 2018 FE college 1 October 2018
Pilot interviews	July 2018
Start of data collection	NPS 29 August 2018 YOS 3 September 2018 FE college 1 October 2018
Completion of data collection	1 October 2018
Analysis of data	November - December 2018
Start Thesis write up	December 2018
Submit entry to the examination for Thesis application	24 January 2019
Final draft submitted to supervisors	6 June 2019
Thesis submission	19 June 2019
The Viva Voce Examination	Between end of June and end of July

Appendix 7 Extract from a participant's transcript

Interviewer: Good afternoon Diana, thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. Let's start by you telling me about your role within youth offending

Diana: Do you want me to go through all of the stakeholders? I can do, but also to advise and support the head of service who has a number of other areas that he oversees so actually I'm the person that's mainly dealing with the day to day things of the service. At the moment, I'm managing four senior practitioners; I manage the CAMHS clinicians; I manage the reparation officer; the performance officer as well, the senior administrator so all the operations of the service and everything that happens within the service as well.

Interviewer: Thank you. There're just a few terms that I need a bit of clarification on, so you've mentioned senior practitioners and CAMHS workers; just a brief note on what they do

Diana: Yes, so our senior practitioners are actually responsible for supervising caseworkers, and that will be a mixture of social workers and youth offending service officers. Some who will be tasked with prevention work, some who are managing court orders as well, some of them are supervising sessional staff, volunteers, so there's a number of activities that they're monitoring. And the CAMHS, so that's the child adolescent mental health services. Although they call themselves something different now. I think it maybe Wellbeing Hub now. Yes, they're moving away from CAMHS, but we have a Clinical Nurse specialist and I line manage her. We will also be getting a Speech and Language Therapist and I'll be line managing and trying to develop that role again within the service.

Interviewer: So, what's it like being a service manager in the YOS?

Diana: Busy, very busy, and I think at the moment we are waiting to make some changes to our structure, just in recognition of the number of staff that I'm supervising at the moment, and to allow me to do a bit more strategic work so it is busy it is a very busy role and sometimes it seems that there's more and more to do.

Interviewer: And have you always wanted to work in YOS?

Diana: Have I always wanted to work in YOS? what from a small child ((laughter))? Well, I started out, my route was probation, so I did

probation for a while and then but when I was doing my social work qualification, I actually wanted to work in children and families and I just got; I was on a bit of a detour with probation. Probation was my first placement, I really enjoyed it, my tutor was saying to me you've got to do probation for your final year, so I went into probation. I really enjoyed that actually. I loved it. But then I thought, oh let's see what's it like working in a youth offending service. They're younger. Maybe easier to change as well, and because they're still learning, they're still maturing and growing. So that's where I went into the youth offending service.

Interviewer: Brilliant thank you. Just moving on a little bit, to what extent do you think education and offending behaviour are linked?

Diana: Actually, I was thinking about this on the way to work as I usually do think about something. But I was thinking about a couple of cases that I've been doing case studies for, and looking at that link with a person's opportunities, and this one young person actually did complete GCSEs. And you could see how her exit away from offending was easier from another person who didn't get any qualifications. And that made me think about how well it's incorporated in what we do day to day, and with orders and what else we might be able to achieve to actually strengthen that part of a person's life.

Interviewer: How well do you think it is incorporated in what you do?

Diana: How well do I think it is incorporated? I think at the moment there's a lot of challenges. Challenges with financial constraints, having the right type of people as well to keep a young person engaged in education. So, I feel there's more work that could be done in that area. Yeah, so how well is it done within the youth, well within the youth offending service we absolutely make contact with the school that the young person, if they're attached to a school, or employment, or training. We do make those links because we know that it's a factor to help a young person or child desist from further offending. But in terms of what we can do to further strengthen somebody's access to education; even in school it has those difficulties and challenges I spoke about in terms of financial constraints. Behavioural young people with undiagnosed learning disabilities or learning needs even that is a massive challenge And, that's why people with those needs are overrepresented in the you know the criminal justice system anyway

Interviewer: Ok, thank you. Can you tell me a little bit about the purpose of community-based sentence and when I say community-based sentences, I include licences in that, so those who've been released from custody as well, anything where they're serving their sentence in the community?

Diana: So, the purpose of it is to prevent re-offending. So that's the basis of our work to prevent further offending but actually to strengthen any factors, any strengths, that the young person has got anyway to help them deter. But at the bottom of it, it is about preventing re-offending and improving outcomes and life chances for children and young people.

Interviewer: And in your opinion, to what extent do community-based sentences affect a young person's education training or employment?

Diana: I think when they're in the community they're on a community order and not licence; I'll speak about that after. If they're engaged in school it's ok, we will work with the school. We have examples where our practitioners will go into the school just to support what's happening as well. Definitely when we had our Speech and Language Therapist, she went into a school to support them with some of the concerns we had, that the young person was raising and felt they weren't being heard really in school. So that was an excellent example of how that works. So, there are things we can do. I think we can do more. I think, I think not just the youth offending service, but more can be done in that area of supporting children to remain in school or to be in the right type of provision for them. Now if we talk about licence, obviously there's been that interruption when the young person's been in custody. There shouldn't be, it should be a seamless, you know entry and exit. But we know that a lot of young people are quite disaffected and not always in education in the first place, or employment or training, so there are times when going into custody is the first time, they're actually settled to do a piece of education or training. And we have in the past shown that we can support them to exit into provisions as well, and we can use release on temporary licence to support that, so we have got tools to help that transition. It's not easy though. It's not easy, and I think having a reduced number of secure estates doesn't help, you know. We know we've got issues around lots of young people being condensed in areas as well, which causes other problems where we're finding that young people are locked in their room for a significant part of the day, and not always accessing the right type of education, and intervention that's needed. Or

there's a delay on that, so I think there's challenges in the secure estate as well

Interviewer: Sure, why are those challenges there do you think? What's the main thing behind those challenges?

Diana: I think it's a funding issue again. We had so many other secure estates just when I first started there were others. Custody figures started coming down, they started closing down secure estates that were meant for young people and then we've seen that now the numbers are starting to creep up again, we haven't got the space to manage those young people, and we're putting a lot of young people from places where they could be rival gang issues. There's lots of concerns at the moment, and I think the secure estate are doing as good a job as they can do.

Interviewer: And you kind of touched on it a little bit there already, but to what extent do you think education in the community compares with education in custody?

Diana: It's not the same, and I know that the idea was to have that twenty-five hours in custody. It's difficult with the challenges that I'm talking about in terms of gang associations and rivalry and having to manage all of that in one area it's very difficult to achieve. So, there will be some young people who access those services and then again, if we've got a number of young people who have undiagnosed concerns or needs, then again unless they have those diagnosed or identified they're still not going to get the right provision.

Interviewer: Yeah, and is there a difference do you think in terms of accessing the correct provision for those undiagnosed when there in the community compared to when they're in custody?

Diana: I think looking at some of the cases that could well be why they become disaffected from school, and why they go onto be excluded. One of the things that the Speech and Language Therapist we had here was talking about was having everybody who was close to exclusion assessed or screened for speech language communication concerns. You know, was that the barrier to them settling in a school? Was there anything else that we could do to keep them there?

Interviewer: Ok, and again just moving on slightly, you mention the relationship between YOS and schools what's your view on the professional relationship between YOS and Further Education colleges?

Diana: It's not as strong. Although I would say our connexions worker does have good links and we have definitely been trying to make link with the safeguarding leads in these places because of the gang issues that we have as well. I think it's better with schools, but it's not terrible...

Appendix 8 Truncated Themes and Quotes

YOS Findings

Theme 3: CYP Factors Affecting Their Learning

Complex family dynamics

Trauma, which was mentioned by a few participants, was often linked to CYP's SEMH needs and implications such as not having the emotional readiness for school or behaving aggressively. These traumatic events may have occurred within the family setting for some of the CYP in the YOS. The backgrounds of many of these CYP were described as challenging, complicated and complex. There was a lot of discussion on the absence of parents or the failure of parents to be more involved in their children's lives. One participant was clear about being frustrated at parents primarily being blamed for their child/children being involved in offending. This staff member suggested that more thought should be given to considering the difficult circumstances that parents often describe finding themselves in.

Sabina: *"I find can be a little bit depressing because you're working with the most deprived families in the borough"*

It did not seem coincidental that social care was often involved with the families that were provided as examples. Many of the children were described as being in the care of the local authority. As a result, some staff suggested that input could be provided by mentors to make up for the absence of the CYP's biological parents. This may include practices such as taking an interest in the CYPs education or experiences at school; acting as a positive role model and

accompanying children to anxiety provoking situations like YOS appointments and court dates.

There was discussion about families sometimes having a direct influence on the CYP offending either by promoting the behaviour or being involved in offending themselves. Participants were also confident in making the link between abusive behaviour by parents and the trauma experienced by CYP.

Martina: *“she was encouraged then to go into a refuge and then the dad was arrested and then he was let out on bail and then he went and set fire to the house thinking that the children were in there”*

Accounts like Martina’s above provided explicit anecdotes on the harrowing and extreme circumstances that some CYP experience that may affect their learning and performance in education.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Transitions and Their Impact

Transitions were remarked on frequently throughout the data with much consideration being given to *‘Transience in CYPs location’*; *‘Entry and release from custody’*; *‘Turning 18 and its impact’* and *‘Change in service delivery methods’*. These topics went onto form the subthemes within this overarching theme.

CYPs transience was often seen as a notable issue in terms of disrupting educational engagement. The delays in securing new placements were described as contributing to CYP remaining out of ETE for long periods. CYP were described as being unable to become settled. It was also much more difficult for CYP to access services for their needs such as CAMHS and substance misuse intervention. There was difficulty in practitioners being able to collate or

have access to relevant information such as behaviour in schools or up to date EHCPs as these documents would often not be provided during the transfer process. This may place demands on staff as they would then have to chase up these documents from professionals from outside the borough which delays YOS staff from completing their assessments comprehensively. This may then impact on sentence decisions at court or making safe and informed custody placements for CYP.

Marian: *“but as I say with this particular boy, I’ve had to chase up his plan, I’ve had to chase up education, I’ve had to because he’s from another borough”*

Sabina: *“they have got a unit or a school or some form of educational provision that meets their needs, something’s happened, they move, that often is the first thing, then that’s gone and is the last thing then to be sorted”*

CYPs entry and release from custody were identified as clear points in the CYP’s life whereby their education was punctuated by difficult transitions. Entry into custody would expectedly disrupt any prior ETE attendance. However, a seamless integration from release into an ETE provision was expected by YOS staff and there seemed to be consensus that YOS had good measures in place to support this process. Mainly, the YOS had a specialist worker that focused on ‘resettlement’ which was described as:

Marian: *“resettlement is if young person’s serving a custodial sentence, they need to be able to be settled back into the community, and it starts from resettlement, starts from the day they go into prison”*

By allocating a specific member of staff to an area, such as entry and release from custody, the YOS seem to have reduced the effect of a potentially

problematic and often critical point in the transitions of some of the CYP supervised by YOS.

A subject that was discussed by participants was the movement between the constructs of childhood and adulthood. *Turning 18 and its impact* was concerned with the transfer from YOS to adult services. Due to the nature of YOS as a service this was often focused on the transferring of CYP from the YOS to the NPS and the impact this had on the support they received. Just prior to their 18th birthday CYP that remained on most of the community-based sentences, which were due to expire at least a few months after they turned 18, were often transferred to NPS to continue serving their sentence. However, YOS staff were of the view that CYP may not yet have the maturity to manage this change in responsibility and expectation despite their age.

Marian: *“you get treated like a child one minute, you turn 18 then all of a sudden you’re expected to be an adult and grow up. I don’t know, I just I don’t know”*

YOS staff discussed the unrealistic expectation of CYP having the knowledge, skill and inclination to pursue the support they required to successfully complete their community-based sentences. YOS staff perceived 18 as the age where services were withdrawn or far more difficult to access. They recognised having no contact with adult services, so they were wholly reliant on the NPS to continue the support they had provided the CYP up until this point. Many staff described feeling detached from the process and relied on the seconded Probation Officer to facilitate the transfer.

Although there was an expectation to transfer these cases over, with the process starting sometimes six months prior to the CYP's 18th birthday, there were examples by some staff of when this transfer may not be appropriate. There was also discussion about the feasibility of extending the YOS remit to 25 in order to negate some of the difficulties with the current system such as lack of maturity of the CYP concerned, withdrawal of services, and the experience of transition that many of these CYP find problematic.

Stuart: *"I know he's seeing our substance misuse workers; he's seeing our child adolescent mental health service so he's there but how's that going to work when he goes to probation? I don't know because once you're 18, as I said, services they tend to evaporate"*

Diana: *"I've been reading recently as well, there's been an ongoing discussion about YOT keeping young people until they're around twenty-one or twenty-five"*

The impact of political decisions such as austerity measures were discussed in relation to the reduction in funding and ultimately the reduction in services YOS could provide. This was a main component of the *Change in service delivery methods* subtheme. Participants comments exposed a perceived lack of resources that some staff felt was necessary to conduct their roles at the optimum level. Participants spoke about the effect of staff shortages and the difficulty this caused in terms of higher caseloads and having to cover areas of work they might not historically be expected to do in their role. This resulted in added pressure on staff.

Equally, there was a recognition that many services, including education establishments, had been affected by austerity measures and there was some sympathy with the difficulties that arose as a result. Overall though, the inability

to be able to help people as much as staff would like was a prominent topic within the data.

Martina: *“it’s when people haven’t got anything, and you really want to help them but there’s only so much you can do with a lack of resources”*

NPS Findings

Theme 3: YPA Factors Impacting on Their ETE

Still maturing and developing;

It may be expected that many YPAs would need time to transition from YOS to NPS or to be able to conduct themselves in a mature manner. However, NPS staff seemed conscious of the complexities this development may pose within the CJS context. The desire for immediate gratification and susceptibility to social pressure were described as being associated with their age and relative immaturity. NPS concurred that YPAs greatest struggle was with accepting responsibility for completing their sentences successfully.

The difficulty this creates would include receiving more punitive sentences due to non-compliance, particularly if this was frequent and persistent over a period of time.

Myleene: *“I think it would be slightly more challenging because you know, just young people in general regardless of disabilities, they can be challenging with compliancy. It could be anything, I don’t know”*

John: *“some, it may never happen with but others, it may be that they grasp it within 6 or 12 months of coming in here, others it can be 25 or 26 before they suddenly say ah, I understand this, this is how it works”*

The impact of race and gender;

Participants perceived the race and gender of YPAs as affecting their experience within the CJS. There was a discussion on the disproportionality of Black males within custodial settings and a link was made to the disproportionality of Black males being excluded from mainstream schools. A NPS staff member also stated that the majority of their caseload consisted of young Black males which reflect the findings of recent research reports.

Chibunde: *“As reports will tell you, especially the David Lammy report that young Black males are more likely to receive custodial sentences than their probably White or Asian peer group, and even me as a Probation Officer working in Uptown...I have a lot of young Black males on my caseload in other Probation Offices that I’ve worked in, it has been the same”*

Similarly, there was discussion on the impact of gender and how males were more likely to become involved in offending depending on their neighbourhood and school, whereas these factors were perceived as being less pertinent with females. There was also reference to the obvious disproportionality of males in the CJS compared to females. Thus, there were difficulties in terms of finding perceived suitable options for female service users and many opportunities were catering for stereotypically male roles that were not desired by male service users.

Myleene: *“it’s more of a male role, so it’s more to do with like construction sites, railway courses. It’s a bit difficult for the female service users and some of the males... they’re not very hands on, more like they want an office job...something a bit more relaxed”*

Theme 4: Adverse Life Experiences

Trauma and its effects

In terms of traumatic experiences, NPS staff were aware of the link between trauma and problematic behaviour. Traumatic experiences were discussed as being frequently reported by YPAs as occurring during their school years or perhaps before these times. It was recognised that these experiences were likely to impact on the YPAs behaviour and learning.

Wendy: *“there is also another aspect which education needs to be supportive of; that it’s not just about [inaudible] but it’s about trauma, so many of these children, I think it’s a common indicator with all of them, there is a trauma running through their lives”*

Adverse family circumstances.

There was also reference to the complex family circumstances that YPAs have come from and the effects this may have had on their lives and ultimately their offending. There was mention of foster care and turbulence within the family dynamic which may have included constant moves between family members and social care. However, it was also recognised the impact of YPAs behaviour on their significant others and how this could limit the support received from their familial network.

Moira: *“I brought him into the interview room, and I sat with him and I said to him: Why do you want to speak to me? And he said miss, I’ve just come out of prison my family don’t want to know, and that’s only my fault for the crimes I’ve committed, and the problems I’ve caused in the family”*

FE college Findings

Theme 3: An Emphasis on Success

YPA moments of success

There were several examples given of YPAs progressing from difficult circumstances to some level of achievement. The achievement varied from effectively transitioning from education in custody to education in the community; to receiving qualifications despite experiencing great hardships. The spectrum of achievement was necessary due to the gravity and complexity of the hurdles that many of these YPAs had to overcome.

Robyn: *“the young person was looked after, has been in, I couldn’t tell you how many care homes, has had a horrendous life himself and was absolutely committed to coming to college and changing his life”*

Reference number	Direct quote
Quote 1	<i>“they’ve got youth offending, sometimes they have a strict timetable given to them by youth offending. What they don’t do is tell youth offending that they’re here, so then what happens is they get in trouble with youth offending for not attending these timetabled activities, then they go to those and get in trouble here because they’re not attending college”</i>
Quote 2	<i>“the biggest identifier we’ve had so far now is the EHC plan Education Health Care Plan. Those clearly outline aims and objectives for students and there’s been a lot of students on these that have been identified as having communication difficulties”</i>
Quote 3	<i>“we spread the word of what we do. One of the things that we did a few years ago when we first set this up was to invite all the local colleges within this area of London to actually give them our paperwork and say this is what you need to be doing. This works for us; it can work for you”</i>

Quote 4

“I think again there’s like a whole other team that deal with it so I would say it’s like the safeguarding team that would deal with things like that not necessarily me as a teacher but I am aware of who his team are and if they need to contact me they can, to confirm ‘yes he’s coming to college, yes he’s okay””